

SIFA

NEWSLETTER



NAVIGATING THE CRISIS: MACROECONOMIC TRENDS

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Three months ago, upon publication of the AUDA-NEPAD programme Skills Initiative for Africa's first newsletter, we all assumed, it would be possible to exercise control of the COVID-19 pandemic in a reasonable period of time.

At the time of writing, the global rate of infection is rising while the death toll has amounted to more than 1 million during the ongoing pandemic. Africa is doing considerably better than other continents, and our hope is, that it will stay this way. While this is true for the numbers of infected persons, African economies are suffering badly. Exacerbating the problem, most African countries do not have the option of richer countries: increasing the national debt to finance buffer programmes for workers and industries.

It goes without saying that the pandemic's impact on skills development in Africa is part and parcel of our work. Exemplarily, we would like to refer you to the article on the learning briefs for youth skills development in Kenya and South Africa as well as the work SIFA is doing with the International Labour Organization regarding skills anticipation, just to name a few.

On a positive note, the pandemic has also brought countries closer together: SIFA is aligning with the Association of Technical Universities and Polytechnics in Africa (ATUPA), formerly known as CAPA, on sharing experiences of private sector collaboration with technical universities and polytechnics. Seven peer-learning webinars on the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) were held with technical support of the European Training Foundation (ETF). The webinars focused on the operating principles of the ACQF within the context of National Qualification Frameworks. This activity has revitalized the intention of some African countries to establish their own qualification frameworks. The overall theme of this work-based skills training, in which SIFA has participated, has been flagged by several initiatives. These include the Global Apprenticeship Network (GAN) seminar, which is a collaboration within the updated work plan of the TVET Cluster of the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA). We see a much-needed re-orientation towards curricula emphasis on college-based practical training co-existing with training in an industrial setting, combining theoretical and hands-on learning. The first steps have been taken and we anticipate with eagerness the next ones. We hope that you enjoy reading this Newsletter.

By Unami Mpofu, AUDA-NEPAD and Ernst Hustaedt, GIZ

OUTCOMES OF MACROECONOMIC AND LABOUR MARKET ANALYSIS STUDY



Packing Tablets for Kinapharma pharmaceuticals. Accra. Ghana. Photo © ILO, Lord R.

The study

The African Union Commission (AUC) and the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) commissioned a macroeconomic and labour market analysis study, with support from GIZ Programme Skills Initiative for Africa (SIFA). The study took place in 8 countries, namely: Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Togo and Tunisia.

The reason for the study was to analyse economic trends in the different countries in order to identify important sectors for employment and income generation in the future. The subsectors were identified and ranked, based on their current ability and forecasted potential to create jobs, generate income and support growth. The potential impact of COVID-19 on these sectors is also factored in to ensure that decision makers get a proper base to make decisions for the post-pandemic era.

The methodology

Different macroeconomic indicators were weighted at a sectoral level to come up with a sector ranking. The projection of GDP growth and employment growth relied on economic data over the last 10 years, up to 2018. This data, obtained mostly from the respective National Bureau of Statistics and international organisations such as ILO and The World Bank, went through an initial validation process at country level. The economic model utilised to rank the sub-sectors was based on a weighting system relying on the following sector-level macroeconomic indicators:

- Historical employment and GDP growth;
- Forecasted employment and GDP growth factoring in the potential impact of COVID-19;
- Employment elasticity of output;
- A sub-sector's prevalence in the literature surrounding government priority;

- A sub-sector’s susceptibility to COVID-19 as found in the literature;
- The persistence of an economic shock of the Covid-19 type at a sub-sector level (i.e., how long it takes for a sector to at least slightly recover from an economic shock), and
- Whether the subsector is gender-equitable by means of either:
 - An increasing trend of female employment between the historical and forecasted periods, or
 - Employing a female-majority workforce.

Key priority sectors

The study revealed varying priority subsectors from one country to another. However, three main subsectors namely: **manufacturing, wholesale and retail**, and **agriculture** appeared in at least 50% of the countries studied as one of the key priority sectors likely to absorb more jobs post-COVID-19.

Manufacturing and wholesale and retail came across as the most recurrent sub-sectors, likely to provide more employment opportunities, from a demand side perspective. This is no surprise, as many African countries were already heavily investing into manufacturing as a pathway to development pre-COVID-19. Given the state of industrialisation in many African states, the manufacturing sector will seek to employ an increased number of qualified and non-qualified personnel. Although the manufacturing sector is one the most affected by COVID-19, due to the effects the pandemic has on import logistics, the strong historical gains in this sector have not been completely eroded as a result of the focus and importance most economies place on manufacturing.

The previous historical gains in the **wholesale and retail** sub-sector are expected to shrink post COVID-19. However, this sub-sector remains a priority to many countries, mainly because of the preponderance of informality, which has demonstrated some resilience throughout the pandemic. Contrary to what was anticipated, evidence suggest that the **informal sector** in many African countries, as opposed to the formal sector, **appeared to be the least affected** because it adjusted its practices more quickly than the formal sector to health and sanitary protocols in order to continue to provide services to the population after shorter lockdown periods observed on the continent. Informality also suggests, that entrepreneurs were able to adapt their businesses to react quickly to new demands for products such as sanitizers, face masks, PPEs and sanitizer holders.

The study revealed that agriculture came out as a priority sector in only half of the countries. Due to increased mechanisation and use of technology, the agriculture sector has been sluggish over the

last few years and this may explain why this sector is not likely to absorb more people post COVID-19, and recover quickly from the pandemic.

Informal employment and underemployment

Another key finding of the study is the confirmation that informal employment is very high across the continent. Underemployment might be one of the reasons explaining the high number of people observed in the informal sector. While what is considered informal sector is not quite clear, because many self-employed consider themselves as belonging to the informal sector, what is certain is the fact that the informal sector is mainly found in the **wholesale and retail** subsector. Many countries, such as Kenya, are currently attempting to connect informal sector and formal TVET. Since the line between SMEs and informal sector is really blurred, Kenya is currently developing a partnership framework on how SMEs would engage with the informal sector.

With increased innovation in the technology observed on the continent, it is possible to envisage a scenario where technology is leveraged to upgrade skills development in the informal sector.

Although the **ICT sector** was not mentioned as one of the priority sectors, it was noted during discussions with stakeholders at country level that this sector is growing rapidly and will require more attention since it attracts a lot of young people. However, the reason why ICT did not make it in the top priority sectors, despite its growing importance, is that the sector is not yet big enough. The observed skills mismatch in this sector and the cross-functionality of IT require some attention, as boosting skills in this subsector would in turn have positive impact on other subsectors such as agriculture, industrialisation, transport, etc.

Way ahead

The mismatch **between labour supply** through the education system, including TVETs, and **the demand from the private sector** were noted in all countries. Further studies to deep dive into the key priority sectors and assess already existing and needed skills will complement this study to provide a full picture of the demand and supply side of labour markets in member states. These studies will inform evidence-based project design and implementation. Studies will be published on ASPYEE or could be requested by email.

By Erick Sile, Advisor SIFA

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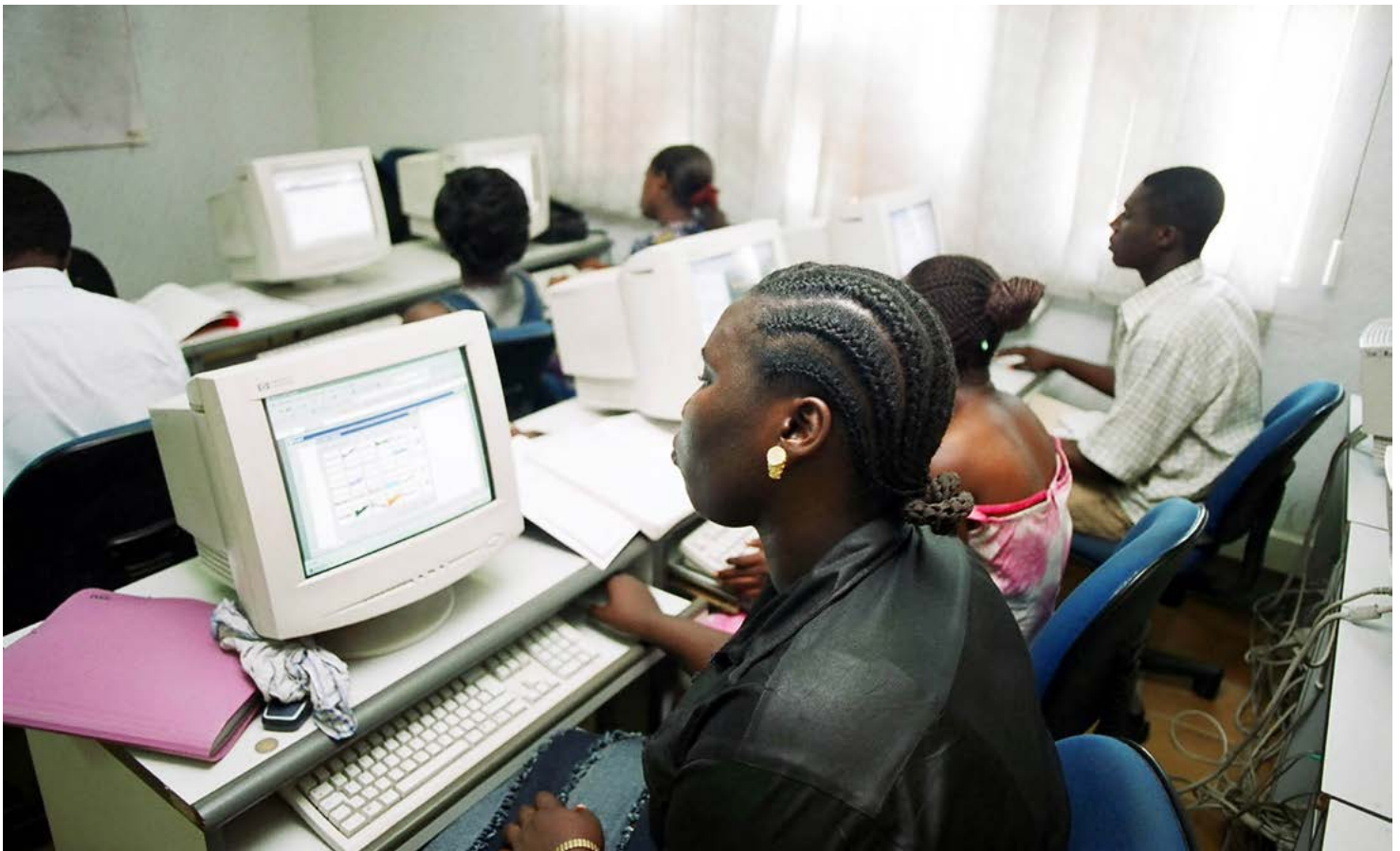
SKILLS NEEDS ANTICIPATION IN LIGHT OF COVID-19 LABOUR MARKET IMPACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused massive labour market disruptions. According to the ILO COVID-19 Monitor, there were estimated 195 million jobs losses in the first quarter of 2020 alone. In such a scenario, where the labour market situation is rapidly evolving, anticipation skills needs becomes a policy imperative. Within this context and as a response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the labour market, the ILO developed a rapid skills assessment Guidance Note to assist Member States to identify skills and labour shortages and surpluses resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The SIFA Skills Anticipation Component is using this Guidance Note to conduct rapid assessments in Cameroon, Ghana, and Kenya.

Results of the rapid assessments will help to signal the occupations in which workers are at risk of losing their jobs, to identify reskilling and upskilling requirements, and to identify opportunities for new labour market entrants, arising from effects of the pandemic. Based on these findings, appropriate recommendations for skills related crisis mitigation measures will be developed.

The member states participating in the rapid skills assessment will be able to use the results of the rapid assessment to address critical questions, including if current skills are sufficient to cope with the rising labour market demands in the post COVID-19 economic reality.

By Naomy K. Lintini, ILO
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Computer Training Center, Accra, Ghana. Photo © ILO, Lord R.

COVID-19 LESSONS TO SHAPE A BETTER FUTURE



During May and June 2020, the African Union Development Agency-Nepad (AUDA-NEPAD) hosted a series of webinars in English and French to examine member states' experiences and responses to the COVID-19 lockdown conditions. These webinars were followed by the documentation of good practice experiences and a survey to gather information about which measures were taken by institutions. **As a result of these sessions, two learning briefs were developed:**

COVID-19's wake-up call: Finding ways to make digital and remote learning a reality

Provides an overview of the innovative responses of learning institutions in Kenya and Nigeria; and a summary of the lessons learnt. The innovative practices implemented by these institutions range from the use of Zoom, Google classroom, YouTube and WhatsApp for learning. In addition to this, institutions had to adjust their curriculum to suit online learning, and this included the introduction of new topics such as mental health in the curriculum to meet emerging needs. Most importantly, training institutions had to ensure that all learners have access to devices, and that lecturers received training to facilitate learning online.

These good practices are featured on the ASPYEE-portal of AUDA-NEPAD, <https://www.nepad.org/skillsportalfor youth>.

Livelihood Skills Development for Youth in Africa: Approaches to remote & digital learning during COVID-19 and beyond

The brief illuminates the most salient ideas; challenges such as the digital divide and psycho-social issues drawing out some

implications for national and regional policy. The paper highlights the expressed needs from member states for re-imagining youth skills development and employment in order to curb the economic and social impact of COVID. Policy changes are urgently needed: Firstly, the need to shift from the narrow supply and demand labour-market centred approach to institutional building and strengthening systems. Other policy implications outlined in the brief include the need for commitment towards bridging the digital divide across the continent and zero rating and vetting more Open Educational Resources (OER's). The fourth policy implication is the need to adopt social protection measures for Africa's growing vulnerable youth populations.

Together, these learning briefs provide an overview of the impact of COVID-19 on an institutional and national level as well as on a systems level. Drawing from experiences of various stakeholders on the ground, the briefs not only present challenges and short-term solutions but they provide recommendations for sustainability of interventions and propose a new pathway for the future of youth skills development and employment.

By Ziphon Tshapela, Junior Technical Advisor, SIFA

Links

Learning briefs both available in English and French

<https://www.nepad.org/skillsportalfor youth/publication/learning-brief-covid-19s-wake-call-finding-ways-make-digital-and>

<https://www.nepad.org/skillsportalfor youth/publication/learning-brief-livelihood-skills-development-youth>

COVID-19 LEARNING BRIEF

COMPARATIVE OBSERVATIONS FROM KENYA AND SOUTH AFRICA ON YOUTH SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

This learning brief provides a snapshot overview of two country responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, at a point in time, focussing on implications for youth skills and employment. The purpose is to leverage lessons and insights from the COVID-19 experience, to shape our thinking about the transformation processes required for the future. Further it highlights specific interventions from policy makers, public and private sector, as we look beyond the crisis.

Executive summary

The global Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has not only impacted health, lives, and economies, but also the labour market and the education sector. Governments, policymakers, private sector groups, trade unions, and other stakeholders are attempting to respond to rapidly changing circumstances.

Collation of information for this brief is a collaboration between GDI, GOYN and Accenture South Africa on behalf of the AUDA-NEPAD. It leverages reports, opinion pieces as well as primary data on COVID-19.

Purpose: to provide a reflection on the COVID-19 experiences of Kenya and South Africa on youth skills development and employment through observations, insights and lessons for the future.

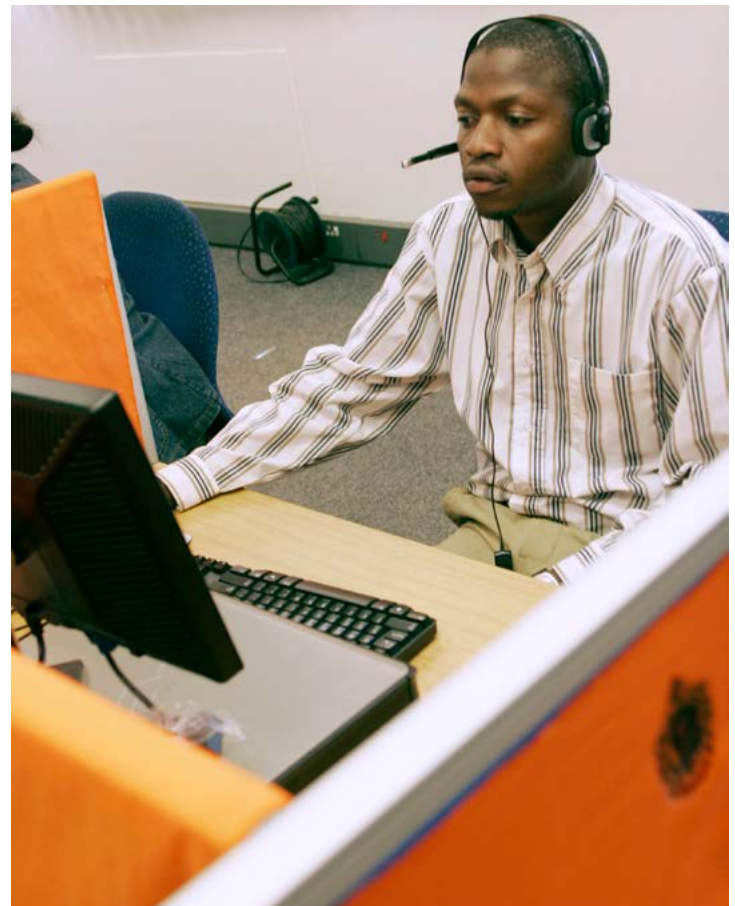
A) Identifying commonalities between Kenya (KE) and South Africa (SA)

COVID-19 has exacerbated systemic issues such as economic inequality, inadequate systems and infrastructure (IT, health, sanitation, education), gender-based violence, and youth and informal workers’ vulnerability.

On the positive side, both countries have demonstrated adaptability, transparent decision-making and multi-sector collaboration in handling the rapidly changing crisis.

B) Learning from Kenya and South Africa: COVID-19 impact and response

- A challenging skills and job market for youth has been made worse by the pandemic: In Kenya, 1.7 million people have lost jobs due to COVID-19 while in South Africa, an estimated 3 million jobs have been lost to date. Youth and self-employed informal workers have been the worst affected.



Telefonist in a call center. South Africa. Photo © ILO, Lord R.

- Micro, medium, and small enterprises (MSMEs) have been hard hit. 77% of Kenyan MSMEs have had to dismiss employees, and 71% of MSMEs in South Africa experienced halted or disrupted operations, negatively impacting cash flows.
- 13 million Africans are expected to fall below the poverty line due to economic effects of COVID-19.



Woman hairdresser braiding a customer. Kisumu, Kenya. Photo © ILO, Crozet M.

The impact of COVID-19 mentioned above has prompted a range of actions by various stakeholders:

Public sector and policymakers have driven top-down directives like lockdowns and stimulus packages.

Strong bottom-up cross-sector collaboration has been most powerful to observe. For example:

The private sector has launched youth initiatives, such as Safaricom’s digital learning initiative for youth (KE) and MultiChoice Group’s partnering with the government to create new jobs (SA).

Civil society response is evident through platforms like Kenya Emergency Network for Innovation (KENI) in Kenya, the Kenya COVID Response WhatsApp group, and COVID Business Rescue Assistance (COBRA) in South Africa.

The private and public sector have also collaborated in providing social grants for vulnerable populations like the unemployed (e.g. the COVID-19 Adaptation Fund supported by GDI and Instiglio), and relief funds for MSMEs. (e.g. the Solidarity Fund in South Africa

and the Mastercard Foundation SME partnerships fund in Kenya and, the Collaborative for Frontier Finance Working Capital Facility. Finally, there have been coordinated multi-stakeholder efforts. E.g. Global Opportunity Youth Network (GOYN) recruited youth health workers in partnership with the County Government of Mombasa, Swahilipot Hub Foundation and Catholic Relief Services (KE).

C) Recommending the path forward to COVID-19 – readiness and transformation

It is vital for all to think not only about recovery to pre-crisis levels but also of coexistence with COVID-19. Perhaps even more importantly, COVID-19 is a springboard for total transformation. The new normal underscores certain imperatives:

- Sustaining collaborative problem-solving through collaborative structures, financing, and accountability.
- Scaling up public service delivery and social protection for all formal and informal workers.
- Re-thinking youth skills and employment by reducing the digital divide, promoting continuous demand-driven skills development, and encouraging youth innovation and entrepreneurship.
- Making MSMEs and informal workers resilient by providing access to skills, finance and markets.

This brief was written by the Global Development Incubator (GDI) in partnership with Global Opportunity Youth Network (GOYN) on behalf of SIFA.

Footnotes

- 1 Q2 2020 Quarterly Labour Force Report, Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (Q2 2020) South Africa Aug Breaking Barriers, Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator, (Aug 2020)
- 2 Q1 2020 Labour Force Report, Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (Q1 2020)
- 3 Preliminary results of COVID-19 impact survey, FKE (April 2020)
- 4 COVID-19 Small Business National Survey Report. pdf, NSBC (May 2020)
- 5 How severe will the poverty impacts of COVID-19 be in Africa? World Bank (June 2020)

Links

<https://www.nepad.org/skillsportalfor youth/publication/covid-19-learning-brief-comparative-observations-kenya-and-south>

[Digital learning](#)

[New jobs](#)

[KENIA](#)

[COBRA](#)

[Solidarity Fund](#)

[Mastercard Foundation SME](#)

[Working Capital Facility](#)

[Swahilipot Hub Foundation](#)

[Catholic Relief Services](#)

THE POTENTIAL RISE IN FOOD INSECURITY IN AFRICA DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

COVID-19 is taking its toll. The negative impact of the pandemic is spreading daily. Governments and non-governmental organizations around the world are facing multiple challenges: minimizing the shocking health impact and protecting human lives as well as ensuring sufficient food supplies, and the functioning of services to those most in need. All this, while coping with the economic consequences of COVID-19, which is expected to push an additional 548 million people below the poverty line. Between present disruptions and future threats to the food supply chain, the COVID-19 outbreak has generated extreme vulnerability in the agriculture sector. It is therefore crucial to mobilize all available instruments, institutions and stakeholders from both public and private sectors, and civil society to ensure appropriate and timely response.



A woman purchases eggs-laying birds on a rural market in Ethiopia. Photo © Ayele Gizachew, SIFA

Agricultural Extension and Food Security in Africa

60% of the African population are dependent on agriculture for their livelihoods and access to food. Therefore, any distortions to the sector can threaten the food security of the continent's poor.

In Africa where many countries are already grappling with food security challenges, at least 60% of the population depend on agriculture for their livelihoods and access to food. Recent estimates suggest that 73 million people are threatened by food insecurity on the continent. Furthermore, since last year, several countries, particularly the Sahel and Southern Africa Region, have been severely affected by climate change. The unprecedented locust plague in the Horn of Africa has put additional pressure on regional food systems. The region is particularly at risk, given

the prevalence of conflict and political instability. A regional slump in food production and a fall in global demand may prolong the negative trade effects of COVID-19, with poverty and food insecurity expected to continue to rise in 2021. DNA Economics, an economic think tank, has predicted that the agricultural sector in Africa will take 3-5 years to recover post-COVID-19.

In addition to the impact of extreme climate shocks on agricultural productivity, there is a strong positive correlation between economic recession and food insecurity in Africa. Despite the continent's huge resource endowments (including a wide availability of arable land, and a young, growing labour force, among other factors), the continent's agricultural production alone, hampered by distribution, access, and affordability challenges, is insufficient to meet its food security needs.



Left: A boy sells eggs to pay his school fees.

Right: A farmer carries his chicken to a rural market in Ethiopia. Photos © Ayele Gizachew, SIFA

Administrative restrictions imposed by governments, such as lockdowns, travel restrictions, and physical distancing measures have also worsened the risk of food insecurity. These restrictions are being felt particularly strongly by low-income households, and those working in the informal economy due to their loss of livelihoods and inability to access markets.

Impact of COVID-19 on Skill Development in Africa

In many countries, TVET schools and training centres are closed as a measure to counter the COVID-19 pandemic. Work-based learning, apprenticeship training and internships are affected by the closure of workplaces. The few businesses that remained open allow only essential staff to work at their facilities. In a few countries where training centres remained open, trainers and students follow the WHO's recommendations on infection prevention and control. However, training attendance has been largely affected due to government restrictions to public transportation. In addition to this, uncertainty contributed to demotivation among students. In some cases, students that live at nearby school compounds moved back to join their families. Certifying exams and assessments were postponed. Students, and especially those completing their graduation in the current year, are afraid of not being able to complete training and are concerned about entry into the labour market. Trainers face the challenges of readapting training content to environments where interactions with students are largely reduced, and to an academic schedule that has been disrupted. In effect, the positive impact of agricultural transformation through sustainable vocational education is inevitably hampered.

How to curb the impact of COVID-19 on food security

To curb the COVID-19 impact on food security, the following recommendations are made:

- Building productive capacities against economic vulnerabilities.
- Improve capabilities to better manage food and the pandemic crises.
- Avoid needless export restrictions which might affect the continent's longer-term efforts to tackle both poverty and food insecurity.
- During this pandemic, governments should prioritize and ensure the movements of food and associated essential services.
- On the continent, there should be reduced commodity dependence which has been among the key factors increasing their vulnerability to food insecurity.
- Full implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) which enables and support the procurement of food from closer regional markets.

By Dr. Ayele Gizachew, SIFA Country Consultant, Ethiopia

Links and Resources

<https://unctad.org> (COVID-19: A threat to food security in Africa)

www.fao.org (Extension and advisory services: at the frontline of the response to COVID-19 to ensure food security, Legal considerations in the context of responses to COVID-19 to mitigate the risk of food insecurity)

<https://www.ilo.org/> (Technical Note – Survey with TVET providers, policy-makers and social partners on addressing the COVID-19 pandemic in West Africa)

Stringer, A. (2014). One health: Improving animal health for poverty alleviation and sustainable livelihoods, *The Veterinary record* 175(21).

DEVELOPING THE ACQF MEANS BUILDING BRIDGES

Education, skills and qualifications are at the heart of African renaissance. Therefore, the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) is a vital policy underpinned by key strategies and initiatives of the African Union (AU):

- Agenda 2063¹
- African Continental Free Trade Area²
- Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment (AU Free Movement Protocol)³
- Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25)⁴

Development of the ACQF was officially launched at the inaugural workshop held at the AU headquarters on 2 to 3 September 2019. The process (2019-2022) is participative, based on analysis and evidence, and builds on African and global experience. By mid-2022, the ACQF policy and technical document, supported by an action plan will be submitted for AU decision-making. A set of technical guidelines, a web platform with qualifications database and tools, and a Network of experts trained during the ACQF development process will contribute to make the ACQF a sustainable reality.

Most importantly, from the start of the COVID-19 Pandemic the ACQF process turned digital, took the road of active networking, peer learning activities, and mutual understanding between National Qualifications Framework (NQF) stakeholders. This process combines learning and knowledge building with socialisation – creating bridges.

The ACQF mapping study is the first building block of the process, providing an updated and comprehensive overview of the state-of-play and dynamics of qualifications frameworks on the continent. The study integrates knowledge and data collected through a combination of information sources:

- i) the online survey, which received responses from 33 countries;
- ii) deeper analyses at country and regional level and
- iii) desktop research of legislation, technical information and online resources.

Vision for ACQF

Enhance comparability, quality and transparency of qualifications from all sub-sectors and levels of education and training while supporting people’s lifelong learning outcomes;

Facilitate recognition of diplomas and certificates;

Work in complementarity with national and regional qualifications frameworks, and support the creation of a common African educational space;

Promote cooperation and alignment between qualifications frameworks (national, regional) in Africa and worldwide.

The mapping study comprises several types of analysis:

- a. ACQF online survey report;
- b. Available online: Country reports (Angola, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Morocco, Mozambique, Senegal, South Africa, Togo) and reports on qualifications frameworks of three Regional Economic Communities (REC) - East African Community (EAC), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and Southern African Development Community (SADC);
- c. Comprehensive analysis and synthesis overview. Countries and RECs were selected for analysis based on four criteria, namely (1) coverage of all four languages of the African Union; (2) coverage of different stages of development / implementation of NQFs; (3) coverage of different African geographical regions; and (4) RECs with more tangible development of their

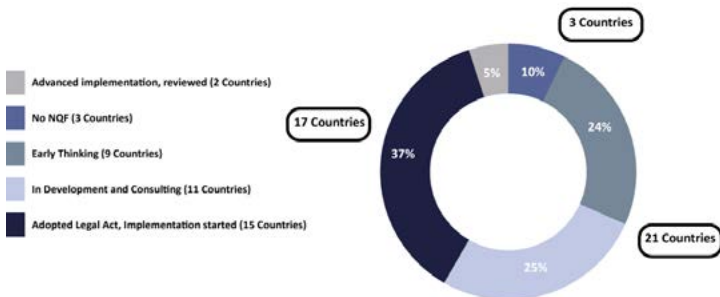
Regional Qualifications Frameworks (RQFs).

The ACQF mapping study pioneered the publication of analysis on qualifications frameworks / systems of a number of African countries and RECs, not included in the recent editions of the Inventories of Qualifications Frameworks. These are countries whose NQF experiences are rarely known, albeit meaningful: Angola, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Senegal, Togo and the qualifications framework of the East African Community (EAC). These cases have enriched our knowledge of the NQF models in the different cultural and regional contexts of the continent. Understanding and building on diversity to improve transparency and comparability of qualifications is a fundamental dimension of the ACQF development process.

As anticipated, qualifications frameworks are at different stages of development and implementation across the continent. Discussion and exchanges through the ACQF process unveiled NQF dynamics of different types and pace. For the purposes of dynamic analysis, the mapping study uses five stages to categorise the different situations of qualifications frameworks’ development and consolidation:

1. Qualifications framework not in place, development process not started
2. Qualifications framework at early thinking stage, first steps to develop the NQF
3. Qualifications framework in development and consultation with stakeholders, experts
4. Qualifications framework in place, approved as legal act, implementation started
5. Qualifications framework in implementation for some time, reviewed, improvements adopted

ACQF Mapping-NQF in Africa, by Stages (01/11/2020) 41 Countries



Source: ACQF Mapping study: a) online survey, b) country visits and reports, c) desk research, d) continuous exchanges (peer learning webinars).

The mapping study found the following situations in the different African geographical regions:

- The majority of qualifications frameworks in Africa at the stage of implementation are in countries of the Southern African region, where the SADCQF is well-established. These NQFs have been implemented for a longer period, and as a result, have more mature legal bases, operational instruments and governance structures maintaining and assuring integrity of the NQFs. Two of the newest NQFs are located in SADC: Eswatini (approved in 08/2020) and Lesotho (approved in 06/2019).
- Recent developments in East Africa, notably in Kenya (since 2014) are noteworthy with the establishment of the legal base, governance structure, new online register of qualifications. Burundi's NQF is the legal approval process. Ethiopia designed the technical-conceptual bases of its NQF, but start of implementation still requires enabling drivers.
- In West Africa, we found a more diverse panorama of qualifications frameworks: some countries, notably Senegal, and Togo, have established sectoral qualification systems, such as the Licence Master Doctorat (LMD) in higher education, and a TVET system of levels of qualifications, but no comprehensive integrated NQF yet. Ghana implements an 8-level TVET framework and is developing an integrated NQF encompassing

higher education. Cape Verde is a rare example in the region of a comprehensive NQF, with a decade of operational experience governed by a specialised entity, which was not well known before the ACQF mapping process. Other West African countries such as Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau have started in 2020 the early stages of their NQF development processes.

- In Central Africa, Cameroon is implementing the LMD framework in higher education since 2007, and a system of qualification levels and types in TVET. As the country's education strategy 2020 gives priority to establishing a national qualifications framework, a stakeholders' group started reflection in 2017 and a specific project with sizeable resources has been approved to start in 2020.
- In the North, Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia have legally established their NQFs for some time and continue working to put in place implementation structures and registers of qualifications.

NQFs are associated with a range of strategic and policy objectives which can be clustered as related to:

- **Integration, coherence and permeability between the learning outcomes and qualifications of all subsystems.**
- **Quality, transparency, enhanced visibility and trust of end-users: by introducing learning outcomes approaches, stakeholders' participation in qualifications development and approval, and accessible users' information through digital and online instruments.**
- **Parity of esteem and value of learning in different contexts and subsystems: academic, vocational, formal, non-formal.**
- **Inclusion: qualifications can be obtained via validation of non-formal learning, recognition of experience from work and life, accessible for people with scarce schooling.**
- **Regional and global comparability and recognition of diplomas and certificates.**
- **Wider societal and economic goals in particular: increase the stock of the qualified labour force; enhanced employability of holders of qualifications; strengthen competitiveness and productivity of the economic sectors; align the qualifications system with demand and changing skills needs.**

Remarkably the ACQF peer learning webinars conducted from July to end October 2020, turned out to be major sources of updated information on the ongoing dynamics and initiatives related to national and RQF in Africa. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, these peer learning webinars largely replaced the originally planned ACQF workshops 2020 and allowed the ACQF stakeholders to stay connected, aware and informed.

ACQF peer learning 2020 - combination of QF experiences



ACQF peer learning approximated countries and gave us access to vast knowledge on NQFs in Africa – we can benchmark, analyse tested solutions and compare how we are doing”, says a participant.⁶



The restrictions of COVID-19 paved the way to digitalise a significant part of the ACQF activities. And this digital transformation is contributing to build more bridges and better mutual learning interactions between the stakeholders. Participants started networking and sharing information, as their countries engage with the starting steps of NQF development. Knowledge circulation emerged, African NQF expertise is moving.

In the seven peer learning webinars conducted from 2/July to 29/October 2020, 22 cases (national and regional qualifications frameworks) – from Africa, Europe, Middle East and Asia – were presented by experienced and high-level representatives of the competent authorities and agencies. The journey started with the case of a vibrant NQF (Kenya) and will be concluded with one of the youngest NQF initiatives (Sierra Leone).

Interest in experience sharing and peer learning regarding issues related to qualifications frameworks and systems is high among the African countries. The ACQF is seen as a catalyst for policy learning, for convergence of practices and tools enabling comparable and transparent qualifications, and eventually for fair mobility.

Most countries expect the ACQF to support developments of qualifications frameworks and operational mechanisms at the regional and national level. These are important contributors to fulfil the ambitions of Agenda 2063 and CESA-25. Not policy borrowing, but transparency about differences and similarities. These are the bridges for mutual understanding inherent to the participative ACQF process.

By Eduarda Castel-Branco, European Training Foundation

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Links

- ¹ [Agenda 2063](#)
- ² [AfCFTA , Factsheets on AfCFTA](#)
- ³ [AU Free Movement Protocol](#)
- ⁴ [CESA 2016-2025](#)
- ⁵ CEDEFOP, ETF, UNESCO, UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning, Global Inventory of Regional and National Qualifications Frameworks (edition 2019). [Three previous editions are available online.](#)
- ⁶ [ACQF peer learning: Full content](#)

DRIVING WORK-BASED LEARNING SOLUTIONS FOR AFRICA

COVID-19 AND BEYOND



Photo: Rido/Shutterstock.com

The Global Apprenticeship Network (GAN) in partnership with the AUC, AUDA-NEPAD and the British Council convened a webinar on 14 August, linked to the International Youth Day, to engage on current policy and practical solutions to COVID-19. All partners highlighted the need to ensure a robust and agile response to the pandemic which has been progressing unabated globally. Of relevance to the discussion was the profound impact on the world of work.

In addition to the threat to public health, the economic and social disruption occasioned by COVID-19 threatens the long-term livelihoods and wellbeing of millions. How the damage of the global outbreak spills over on the African economy in the medium-term, may be far more severe than its health impact, given the continent's weaker economies, the extent of the informal economy, and the dependency on aid and international donor support. Key issues for Africa to emerge sustainably from the impact of COVID-19 and beyond, include the need to focus on skilling the current and future

workforce, and bridging the digital divide.

This focus was emphasised by all of the speakers who included Prudence Ngwenya, Head of Human Resource and Youth Development at the African Union Commission, Robert Njoroge, the Skills and Enterprise Portfolio Lead for Education & Society, Sub-Saharan Africa, at the British Council, Unami Mpofu, Senior Programme Officer of Skills and Employment for Youth at AUDA-NEPAD, Cheryl James, Regional Coordinator in Southern Africa for the Skills Initiative for Africa (GIZ SIFA), Magnus Johnson, Philanthropies Lead for Sub-Saharan Africa at Microsoft, Bella Mupurua, GAN Liaison for the Namibian Employers Federation (NEF) and Gladys Quarshie, National Apprenticeship Expert for the British Council's I-WORK project.

Ms. Ngwenya noted that almost all 55 Member States on the continent have temporarily closed educational institutions to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, thus gravely impacting learning opportunities. It was further highlighted that

prior to the emergence and spread of COVID-19, education and training systems in Africa were already facing critical challenges on access, quality, and relevance. For the marginalised, including girls and women, those displaced and in refugee camps, the situation was already dire and unfortunately, they have remained most at risk. Coupled with these factors is the fact that the digital divide between Africa and developed regions has become more exacerbated by COVID-19.

The rapid response of the African Union’s Youth Division, through the development of a strategically focused youth and partner strategy, was commended. Their proposed solutions cover a wide range of policies from health and sanitation, education, and innovation and entrepreneurship. The AU is also adopting the African Digital Transformation Strategy framework that seeks to offer an integrated approach to transforming Africa’s education and training systems through a focus on: digital connectivity, online and offline learning opportunities, teachers as facilitators of learning, safety online and offline, and skills focused learning provision. The need for collaboration and partnerships to address the widespread impact of COVID-19, was encouraged and emphasised as a key driver of change.

The need for strong partnerships addressing the challenges facing the continent, was further highlighted by all speakers as well as the need to think innovatively with regards to solutions was reiterated.

The speakers shared the work that they have been doing, the solutions that have been implemented to address responses to the impact of COVID-19, and the future of work landscape. Some of these include:

- The British Council’s I-WORK (Improving Work Opportunities – Relaying Knowledge) project. The aim of the project was to enhance technical and vocational education and training to give people across the Commonwealth better opportunities to gain meaningful employment.
- TVET and skills development related resources from the British Council can be accessed through the [link here](#).
- SIFA’s work includes: Macroeconomic sector analysis studies to identify the impact of COVID-19 on economic growth and employment opportunities, Skills Guidance Note: Rapid Assessment of Reskilling COVID-19 (together with the ILO), COVID-19 comparative study: Kenya and South Africa, SIFA Funding Window III for innovative responses, addressing the impact of the pandemic on technical and vocational training.
- All resources are available on the [ASPYEE portal](#).
- Microsoft has launched an exciting Skills for Employment Initiative with a target to train 25 million people across the

globe on the top ten jobs in tech. In partnership with LinkedIn, LinkedIn Learning and GitHub, Microsoft has also developed a repository of courses, encouraging people to learn new skills, which can help for reskilling those that have been furloughed. More information on the initiative can be found [here](#).

- The Namibian Employers’ Federation (NEF), together with the help of the ILO, has been able to produce a number of guides that assist with COVID-19 related challenges - the “Work From Home Guide”, the “Business Continuity Plan” template, the launch of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Labour Law Guide, and the “Guide on COVID-19 Infections at the “Workplace”. These, together with the “Business Survey on the Impact of COVID-19 on Namibian Business”, can be found [here](#).
- The Ghanaian Competency Based Training framework, the establishment of a National Technical and Vocational Education and Training Qualifications Framework (NTVETQF) and sector skills bodies, as well as upgrading, equipping and retooling of institutions. These are important elements of institution building and creating an enabling and responsive TVET framework for improved delivery.

The speakers in the webinar all emphasised the need for countries to review learning systems and initiatives and assess the role such solutions can play to improve skills acquisition, workforce development competitiveness, economic development and youth employment. The discussion also took into consideration current challenges such as career pathways, access to lifelong and work-based learning as well as improved vocational education systems which offer a sound return on investment ratios. Effective skills development policies and work-based learning practices aligned to the future of work, and a commitment from all partners is required to ensure that the most vulnerable and marginalised are not pushed further into poverty.

By Cheryl James, SIFA Regional Coordinator Southern Africa

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Links

Soft copy of the thought-piece and recording of the [“Driving work-based learning solutions for Africa: COVID-19 and beyond”](#)

RENEWABLE ENERGY TO THE RESCUE

ELECTRICITY FOR ALL!



Young girl doing her homework in rural Cameroon. Photo: USAID, Power Africa

In Cameroon, people prefer to gather in some particular houses to watch a football match, a TV series or simply charge their mobile phones. These houses, which are powered with solar energy, do not experience frequent power cuts. For those who have access to electricity from the national grid, the high cost is a big expense for their households.

For several years now, Cameroon has been facing a significant energy deficit. According to the World Bank, 48% of the population has no access to electricity, and 26% of this population lives in localities without connection to the national electricity grid.

On the other hand, Cameroon is the largest economy in the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) and is endowed with rich natural resources, including oil and gas, minerals, high-value species of timber, and agricultural products, such as coffee, cotton, cocoa, maize, and cassava. Despite its low level of industrialization, companies in various sectors are processing these natural resources in various domains such as agro-processing, mining, metallurgy, cement production, and breweries, among others.

Cameroon’s growing population means an ever-increasing demand for energy. Aside from population growth, the demand for energy is growing in response to the expanding growth of the commercial and industrial sectors. Cameroon is starved with electricity with a generation capacity of about 1300 MW for an estimated demand of about 3000 MW. Likewise, within the context of limited electricity coverage throughout the country, the demand for renewable energy, such as solar energy, has been ascending, becoming the only reliable source for many households. In order to overcome this production deficit, the Cameroon government and municipalities are strategizing to address this energy shortage.

This demand comes along with the demand for the appropriate skills in the renewable energy technology sector, which creates new job opportunities especially for young people.

Alternative sources of energy have been considered for several years. Technological advancements have globally lowered cost, as evident in the decreasing cost of solar panels, wind turbines, and other sources, rendering it capable of displacing the fossil-fuel, finite sources of energy, which are environmentally unfriendly.

Renewable energy deployment is expected to play a leading role in meeting global climate and environmental sustainability imperatives and lead a path towards sustainable and inclusive growth.

In 2015, a wind energy pilot project in the Bamboutos Mountains (Western region of Cameroon) was initiated with the construction of a 42 MW power station expandable to 80 MW.

Studies are currently underway for the construction of a 20MW solar power plant in Lagdo, in the northern region of Cameroon.

Solar power plants are currently operational in the municipalities of Lomié and Djoum, respectively in the eastern and southern regions of Cameroon.

166 mini-solar power plants with a capacity of 11.2 MW are also under construction and will supply about 22,000 households in the 10 regions of the country.

There are four major hydroelectric dam projects also under construction: Mekin (15 MW), Memve'ele (211 MW), Lom Pangar (reservoir dam), and Nachtigal (420 MW). Two of these projects are financed by the World Bank: the Lom Pangar Hydropower Project which will unlock up to 6,000 MW in hydropotential on the Sanaga River, and the Upstream Nachtigal Hydroelectric Project which will support construction of a 420 MW dam. The Nachtigal power plant will be connected to the Southern Interconnected Grid, which represents approximately 94% of the national electricity consumption in Cameroon.

In Cameroon, the shortage of jobs and the shortage of energy is evident. Therefore, competent technicians, trained in renewable energy, able to operate technology and equipment as well as their installation and maintenance, are needed.

The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) finds that jobs in renewable energy would reach 42 million globally by 2050, with additional 21 million jobs through energy efficiency measures and 15 million jobs through system flexibility.

The SIFA Project: Center of Excellence in Renewable Energy at the University of Yaoundé 1

To meet the demand of well-trained technicians that are able to install, repair, and maintain photovoltaic and wind-power systems, SIFA is financing the construction and supply of equipment of a Center of Excellence in Renewable Energy at the University of Yaoundé 1, combining both theoretical and practical aspects of training.

The state-of-the-art equipment will make it possible to simulate the real-time operation of electrical power generation, transmission, and distribution systems. Young Cameroonians and those from neighboring countries are encouraged to take advantage of this

training opportunity to acquire employable skills for the renewable energy sector.

The SIFA project, a partnership between the University of Yaoundé, as national partner and Lucas Nülle, as international partner, is



Training equipment Lucas Nülle. Photo: © LN

likely to impact skills training and job creation in the renewable sector.

Central features of the project include:

- Hands-on training providing practical learning for better understanding through application.
- Digital learning content and learning software, creating possibilities for designing, preparing and following up lessons, especially in light of the recent COVID-19 pandemic.
- The modular structure, made up of individual panels that can be combined in a modular way, allows for a flexible set-up for teaching and in the future. Didactically, it enables the university to use the training systems for very different purposes: Beginners to advanced students, continuing education or initial training. No matter who: All are learning on the same equipment.

The project does not only set up the equipment and train the teachers, but implements the concept in its entirety.

On this basis, the University of Yaoundé 1 and German based engineering company Lucas Nülle GmbH cooperate, defining structures and marketing measures to enable access especially for low-income and female students.

Along with job creation through skills training, economic growth is most likely spurred even in rural areas.

The extent to which the country can leverage the opportunities offered by renewable energy, is an important policy challenge.

By Alain Tsemogne Sado, SIFA Country Consultant, Cameroon and Sabina von Kessel, SIFA Communication and Design Expert

EDUCATION WILL BE HAMPERED BY THE PANDEMIC - ESPECIALLY GIRLS' EDUCATION

SCHOOLS ARE CLOSED IN KENYA!



Sheila sits at the table she shares with three other family members, working her way through her textbooks as she studies for the exams marking her final year of primary school. Her mother Florian is helping her with her homework. She is worried that due to the COVID-19 pandemic which led to the closure of all schools in Kenya, she might fail her examinations or may be forced to repeat the same class. Photo: Brian Otieno, Kibera

Mid March 2020, the Kenyan government abruptly closed schools and colleges nationwide in response to COVID-19. Nearly 25 million pupils and students ranging from pre-primary school to tertiary level are out of school and unaware of when they will resume their learning. The resumption is planned to be in January 2021, making it the longest period pupils and students have ever stayed away from learning in schools. Education and training are important, as they provide the foundation for social well-being, skilled labour, economic growth, and stability in a country. The social and economic costs will not be borne evenly, with devastating consequences for marginalized learners, especially for girls in rural, marginalized communities. The impact of closed schools is felt everywhere. Topics related to girls range from female hygiene to gender-based violence and educational deficiencies. Many girls rely on free sanitary pads distributed at their school but with the schools all shut, they no longer have access to

them. *"I used to get sanitary towels from my school in Kibera. Now that schools are closed, I have to use pieces of cloth, which is very uncomfortable,"* says 16-year-old Nisera. According to Plan International, COVID-19 related school closures hit girls the hardest. This is because being out of school increases teenage girls' vulnerabilities. Depressing economic times, with schools closed, are known to push teenage girls from poor families into sexual activities in exchange for food and other forms of necessities. As a consequence of their vulnerability, school closure during the pandemic will not only result in early and unwanted pregnancies, but also in early marriages or contraction of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) including HIV/ AIDS.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the UNESCO has launched a campaign which calls for efforts to safeguard progress made on girls' education, ensure girls' learning continuity during school closures, and promote girls' safe return to school once these reopen. It also



12-year-old Elizabeth, Standard 6, and 10-year-old Justin, Standard 5, follow a 'social studies lesson' on the EDU TV while doing their homework at home in Kibera. Photo Brian Otieno, Kibera

sheds light on the 130 million girls who were already out of school before the pandemic, and calls on the international community to urgently work together to guarantee their right to education.

The Digital Divide

Digital learning has been proposed as an alternative, but it does not help students living in rural areas and informal habitats which are congested and without electricity or internet access.

The Kenyan Ministry of Education and other agencies have indicated, that learners should undertake online learning or technology-mediated learning on TV, radio, ed-tech apps, and mobile phones. While such learning may take place in urban areas, for many marginalized children in remote villages in parts of Kajiado, Narok, Samburu, Turkana, and Kilifi counties, for example, electricity does not reach households resulting in the exclusion of children from online learning. Additionally, parents have been forced to take the role of the teacher in this new norm of learning. This is an extra burden on the parents, especially those who may not have advanced in their schooling. A lack of financial resources, to buy internet bundles regularly, is also affecting students from participating in learning.

Teachers have to make ends meet

Since schools were closed in March 2020, teachers, employed by the Board of Management (BOM) in public schools and private schools, have been struggling to a point of doing odd jobs to make ends meet. They have not been paid their salaries since then. Some of these teachers have now turned to menial jobs to survive. From operating boda bodas (motorcycle rider) to casual labour such as working at construction sites, they have been forced to venture into alternative income generating avenues.



Joseph Maina has transformed classrooms in his school to keep poultry for commercial purpose.

In Kirinyaga County, Mr. Maina of Mwea Brethren School is rearing 1,100 chickens, in what used to be the classrooms, to eke out a living and pay outstanding bank loans, which he had obtained to expand his school. Mr. Maina says, some teachers in his school have called him to ask if there is anything they can do. "But unfortunately, we don't even have enough to feed ourselves," he says.

SIFA's response to the pandemic

SIFA is developing innovative measures to contribute to mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 crisis.

These include:

- Assist projects that introduce more affordable digital learning approaches in schools and colleges so that pupils/students can continue learning at home as they wait for normal resumption of schooling. Further, these innovations will continue even after resumption of schools and colleges and will enable them to embrace blended learning more easily in their delivery of training.
- Support projects that deliver renewable energy – solar and wind in rural areas where the national grid has not yet reached. This way learners and teachers can access electricity and internet in schools and at home.
- Support projects that engage youth— especially girls in conserving the environment through recycling and use of energy saving technology at domestic level.
- Engage with the private sector— e.g. Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA), in supporting access to affordable internet bundles for the poor and marginalized youth in rural and slums areas to enable them continue with online learning.
- Support programmes to train and counsel teachers to embrace online teaching.
- Aid programmes to offer short courses to train teachers on specific skills leading to income generation during the COVID-19 period. Those in the rural areas in courses such as bee keeping, poultry farming, horticulture farming of vegetables and tomatoes. Those in urban areas in courses such as liquid soap making, sun drying vegetable and fruits and making reusable sanitary pads for students from poor and marginalized communities.

By James Wamwangi, SIFA Country Consultant, Kenya

RESPONDING TO THE NEED TO STRENGTHEN TVET CAPACITY FOR BUILDING SUSTAINABLE AND IMPACTFUL PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR

A PARTNERSHIP JOURNEY

Message from the field

A baseline survey was conducted by SIFA in early 2020, involving CAPA-ATUPA member institutions (TVETs) with a view of mapping joint TVET (supply side) and private sector (demand side) initiatives on skills development among the participating TVET institutions across the African Continent. The survey primarily focussed on the supply side (TVET) institutions.

The finding of this survey indicated a huge interest and need to further strengthen the capacities of TVET institutions towards structuring and implementing sustainable partnerships with the private sector. In addition, respondent institutions expressed their desire to learn and implement policies that support sustainable partnerships with the private sector.

through the process, and that these could form inputs to policy recommendations to support TVET/Private Sector partnerships.

Collaborating with local partners

The need to strengthen partnerships with the private sector for the quality and quantity of skills demanded by the labour market, cannot be over-stated enough. Pockets of success exist in and around the continent which form the basis to inform this partnership journey. SIFA will engage in broad stakeholder participation platforms to harness and gather from the experiences on the ground by following this approach:



Intervention to respond

The SIFA team will embark on a “journey” to uncover potential models and approaches that may be implemented by TVET management towards establishing and building impactful partnerships. The process will also seek to understand mechanisms that will allow for replication or scaling of the models and/or approaches. The process will result in a handbook/guideline based on practical lessons from diverse innovative, successful, and sustainable partnership engagements between the TVETs and private sector across the African Continent. Furthermore, it is expected that key observations and insight will be gained

Do you want to be part of the process?

Collaborate with us!

Please contact us, if you are aware of any potential good practice examples of collaboration and partnerships on the Continent. We are looking to understand the approach that underpins these successful, sustainable, and effective partnerships.

Zarina Khan, GIZ Senior Technical Adviser to AUDA-NEPAD
 Stephen Gichohi, GIZ Junior Technical Adviser to AUDA-NEPAD
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GENDER MAKES BUSINESS SENSE (GMBS)

TRAINEE-FOCUSED AGRI-BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT LEARNING PROGRAMME



ATVET4W graduates and partners, as seen here in Ghana and Burkina Faso, can benefit from the GmBS programme. Photos: Left, GIZ/AgricToday, Right, Butterfly Works

Skills-development has traditionally brought together trainees in a central location, where the trainers join them. COVID-19 has brought enormous restrictions: Meeting of larger groups are often not allowed by law or trainees feel unsecure and in danger. But even before the restrictions and fears, it was starting to emerge that there are more effective ways of training for skills development. One of these ways is using the trainee’s authentic environment, while another is a small trainer-trainee ratio. The efficacy of skills-development is in ensuring that the experience is focused on the trainee.

The Agricultural Technical and Vocational Education & Training for Women (ATVET4W) project has a skills-development approach that focuses on the trainee, as well as on gender. It is called Gender Makes Business Sense (GmBS). GmBS is a set of agribusiness development tools for entrepreneurs. It has been designed to find gender-empowered solutions to increase income and create jobs for the individual and their community’s

well-being. GmBS is market-oriented, and includes gender-transformative entrepreneurship in the agricultural and food sector.

The objectives of GmBS are: improving women’s employability, increasing the income and decision-making power of women agripreneurs, and developing gender-transformative business leadership. Implementing GmBS (and the specific training programme within) the Power of Three (P3), is designed around andragogic principles, which in essence means ‘*leading adults*’

whilst pedagogy literally means ‘*leading children*’. Adult agripreneurs have knowledge of their business and have been successful or at least surviving for some time. GmBS exploits this knowledge, builds on it and uses it to create better and more sustainable opportunities for women in agriculture. Learning processes are therefore rather experiential moving ‘*from what we know*’ into more unknown territory – gender-empowered solutions.



GmBS approach to skills development in entrepreneurship for ATVET4W 2020-2022

The programme has been designed with an aim to reach at least 3000 beneficiaries from rural areas of six African countries:



Domestication of the process by aligning the approach into national strategies and context.

It also includes ownership of the programme. The concertation with partner institutions will lead to the development of an operational guide which will cover the agreed timeframe for training delivery, the planned availability of staff for training on tools and practices.



Selection of partners including training institutions, facilitators and mentors.

For this, memorandums of partnership will be signed with partner institutions.



Capacity development for the selected facilitators and mentors in power of three.

Their role and responsibilities include co-facilitation, mentoring, and developing the beneficiaries' agribusiness growth plan. This clearly means moving away from traditional learning methodologies to adult-driven approaches; which is why the notion of facilitation and mentoring is important, creating the opportunity to *'learn for yourself'*, to *'learn through experience'* with the facilitator being the guiding or helping hand, and the mentor being the trusted and experienced advisor.



Training provision for agripreneurs including at least 70% women.

They will be guided to set up a vision and then to develop their agribusiness growth plans. This step will strengthen facilitators' and mentors' capacity to work with agripreneurs and will enable coaching support sessions to embed gender empowerment in agripreneurship. This underscores the importance of self-exploration through facilitating the development of an own vision and business plan while mentors occupy a more guiding than instructional role, thereafter.



Implementation of agribusiness growth plans.

At this stage, mentors will ensure the monitoring and the evaluation of the programme's impacts. On the other hand, pro-Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) indicators will be used during tracer studies to measure the extent of women's empowerment.

The benefits expected from GmBS are multifaceted. They include: greater access to the labour market for women agripreneurs, increased awareness and commitment to affect gender transformative change in their daily lives on the part of the community, and enablement of agripreneurs to deal with business challenges, and identify critical steps to implement identified changes for business profitability and personal well-being.

By Ingeborg Adelfang-Hodgson, with contributions of the ATVET for Women Team: Johann Engel, Miriam Heidtmann, Sara Jabril, Lamina Ratovonasy and Joan Githinji
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THE GERMAN AMBASSADOR TO CAMEROON VISITS GICAM

COLLABORATION BETWEEN GICAM AND SIFA

The Regional Coordinator Office for Central Africa of the Skills Initiative for Africa (SIFA) has declared its intention to support the Employer's Union of Cameroon (GICAM) in strengthening its Centre for the Development of Small and Medium Size Enterprises (CDPME). Speaking last October, the 30th, on the occasion of the visit of the German Ambassador to Cameroon to GICAM, the representative of SIFA reiterated that the collaboration with GICAM

is going to constitute a volte face in the relations between SIFA and the Cameroonian private sector.

In cognizance of the primordial role which the private sectors plays in skills development and job creation, SIFA has opted to have GICAM as the main private sector partner to act as an important interface through which it would reach out and work with the wider Cameroonian, private sector. GICAM has over 750 members with a turnover of 9,860 billion Francs CFA representing 64.8% of the turn-over of the entire Cameroonian private sector, employing about 221,075 people which makes up about 27.2% of direct employment offered by companies in Cameroon. Conscious of the role played by SMEs in the development of Cameroon as elucidated by the large number of SMEs operating in Cameroon, and their attended impact on job creation, GICAM established the CDPME to provide business intelligence, support entrepreneurship, monitor, and advice the diaspora on SMEs related matters.

True to its mission of enhancing skills development and job creation via a strong collaboration and with the private sector, SIFA is keen on supporting organizations which work towards the development of SMEs. No wonder, the project is keen to work with GICAM to support the CDPME. Aware of the new-found collaboration which now exists between the GIZ and GICAM through the SIFA project, H.E. Dr Corinna Fricke, the German Ambassador to Cameroon in her maiden visit to Douala, accompanied by Mr Rico Langeheine, GIZ Country Director and Mr Alfonce Tata Nfor, Regional Coordinator of SIFA for Central Africa, visited GICAM on the 30th of October 2020 to learn more about their collaboration with the SIFA.

Speaking after the GIZ Country Director, the Coordinator of SIFA used the opportunity to announce the imminent support of his project to GICAM in the following areas:

- Full equipment of the Incubation Centre of CDPME
- Funding for training of trainers (ToTs) for GICAM
- Support to GICAM to participate at PROMOTE 2021
- Incubation of projects by SMEs under GICAM



Taking the floor after all the other speakers, the ambassador re-echoed the indispensable role the private sector plays in the development of any country and pointed out that although private actors have the right to create and run their businesses for profit motives, they should however not lose sight of their social responsibilities. After taking a few questions from the audience, the Ambassador was handed a copy of the White Book on the Cameroon Economy. This was immediately followed by a guided tour of the CDPME by Dr Andre Kwam – Chairman of the SMES and Financing Commission of GICAM. This visit will certainly act as a boost in the relations between SIFA and the Cameroonian private sector.

By Alfonce Tata Nfor
Regional Coordinator for Central Africa
GIZ/Skills Initiative for Africa (SIFA)

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