

Country Experience for Effective Vocational Education and Training Strategies to Reduce Youth Unemployment in the Gambia

Presentation By

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Background:

Demography:

- The Gambia is on the West Coast of West Africa
- The population of The Gambia at the 2013 census was 1.8 million and the population density is 176.1 per square kilometer,
- The current population of Gambia is 2,790,705 based on projections of the latest United Nations data. The UN estimates the July 1, 2023, population at 2,773,168.
- In terms of age structure, The Gambia is dominated by 15- to 24-year-old segment (57.6%).
- The youth population constituted 690,836 at the time of the 2013 Population and Housing Census representing 37.2 percent of the total population.
- Of a total youth population of 690,836, 12.0 percent were aged between 13 and 14 years, 31.0 percent between 15 and 19 years, 26.6 percent between 20 and 24 years, 23.1 percent between 25 and 29 years and 7.3 percent aged 30 years.
- The youth are almost equally distributed between urban and rural areas—50.1 percent in the urban areas and 49.9 percent living in the rural areas.

Background Cont...

❑ Vocational Training and Education:

- Education in general, and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in particular, play a critical role in economic growth through human resource development.
- Specifically, TVET endows a country with skills required to improve the productivity of industries, raise income levels for citizens and improve access to employment opportunities for youth.
- However, in The Gambia, like in many developing countries, TVET has only recently been given attention and focus from the government, private sector and populace that is warranted.
- The consequences of this lack of attention towards vocational education are the growing problem of youth unemployment and underemployment, which is a recipe for high crime rates, poverty and political instability. Cognizant of the adverse consequences of youth unemployment and also the benefits of a vibrant TVET





Background Cont.....

❑ **The vision**

- "A decade to develop an accessible, relevant and high-quality TVET system in The Gambia for increased Youth Employment".

❑ **The strategic objectives**

- The plan of action (PoA) of the TVET Roadmap did respond to this vision by addressing constraints and leveraging opportunities in a comprehensive manner.
- To this end, particular efforts were made to address the following strategic and operational objectives

Background Cont.....

- ▶ **Strategic objective 1:** Strengthen coordination framework to a demand-driven TVET system responsive to labour market needs
- ▶ **Strategic objective 2:** Reinforce training and learning resources for promising value chains with high youth employment opportunity
- ▶ **Strategic objective 3:** Improve urban and rural access of skills development programmes and their perception
- ▶ **Strategic objective 4:** Increase labour market monitoring through sector advisory arrangements
- ▶ The roadmap provided The Gambian Government with a solid foundation on which to develop its future TVET policy. The development and implementation of the roadmap is being led by MoHERST, based on the advice and guidance of the recently established National TVET Committee.
- ▶ It underpins the role of employers and the private sector to articulate and help ensure that TVET reflects skills and labour market needs, working in partnership with government and social partners

The Technical and Vocational Training Landscape in The Gambia

- The Gambia, like many developing countries, faces obstacles in both youth engagement and SME competitiveness. On the one side, SMEs face difficulties finding the skilled employees they need to be competitive and trade
- Technical and vocational education and training play a critical role in economic growth, helping to develop skills required to improve the productivity of industries, raise income levels for citizens and improve access to employment opportunities for youth.
- To reconnect young populations and SMEs, the Gambian Government has focused on the prime intermediary between them – TVET – by developing this National TVET Roadmap.
- The Gambian TVET system can only support youth employment and SME competitiveness if it is able to ensure a homogenous quality of training delivery, alignment of courses to employers' needs and education accessibility in rural regions.
- The roadmap aims to achieve this through coordinated action at the regional and national levels. The objectives and activities of the Roadmap rely on a detailed diagnosis of the TVET and apprenticeship systems, as well as their supporting policy and regulatory frameworks

The Technical and Vocational Training Landscape in The Gambia Cont....

- The International Trade Centre (ITC) supported the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (MoHERST) to develop this TVET Roadmap, as part of the Jobs, Skills and Finance (JSF) for Women and Youth in the Gambia project, managed by the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF).
- The TVET Roadmap served as a guiding compass for the Government to equip young people with relevant skills so that they can seize existing economic opportunities.
- The initiative, which directly supports the country's National Development Plan to empower youth, focuses on strengthening the policy and coordination of TVET, improving training quality and learning resources, improving the accessibility and perception of TVET and reinforcing labour market monitoring.
- It also builds on the existing apprenticeship framework and leverages it to cover “the last mile” in technical education through formalization and quality assurance

Current TVET and Apprenticeship Provision

- Apprenticeships are being widely delivered across many sectors of The Gambia's economy.
- They are recognized as an important means for young people to develop the skills required to pursue a career in a particular trade or profession and many apprentices appear to use their apprenticeship as a springboard to become self-employed on completion of their apprenticeship, although some apprentices do appear to stay with their master craft persons.
- A master craft person is approached by a potential apprentice or their parent to provide training and development in the workplace and the master craft person then provides unpaid on-the-job training.
- An apprenticeship varies in length and is at the discretion of the master craft person to The content of an apprenticeship is at the discretion of the master craft person within a particular trade or sector. Mastercraft persons have different perspectives on what should be included:
- The master craft persons have a range of different experiences and skillsets, which influences their perspective.
- Similarly, the nature of their business and how busy they are also having a significant impact on the quality of the apprenticeship. In some cases, if a master craft person does not have sufficient work, the apprentice is left idle.

Other Strategies to enhance TVET in The Gambia

- ❖ The African Union's heads of state and government adopted the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 2016-2025) as the framework for a transformative education and training system in Africa
- ❖ They have further requested member states and partners to promote the alignment of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) skills and to expand TVET opportunities
- ❖ Aware of the potential that TVET represents for sustainable development, the Government of The Gambia is currently reforming its TVET sector.
- ❖ The TVET units of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology and the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education are currently developing their respective curriculum frameworks, which will serve as guidelines for teachers and set the standards and regulations that will ensure that TVET education is mainstreamed into the overall education system of The Gambia

Other Strategies Adopted for TVET in the Gambia Cont...

- ▶ In line with CESA and its TVET strategy, UNESCO Dakar had partnered with the Gambian Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (MoHERST), the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MoBSE) and other key stakeholders in the Gambian education sphere to reinforce the TVET system in the country through the implementation of this project.
- ▶ This project aimed to contribute to the development of sustainable, affordable, accessible, relevant and quality Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in The Gambia through the following results:
- ▶ Relevance of the TVET system strengthened through supporting the development of the TVET policy in The Gambia.
- ▶ Quality of TVET improved through enhanced TVET institutions management, TVET teacher training and provision of pedagogical resources and equipment.

Other Strategies to enhance TVET in The Gambia

Cont.....

- Perception and attractiveness of TVET pathways improved through skills competitions, an incubator system and communications campaigns.
- The project had impacted the overall TVET system through actions such as the development of an improved TVET Policy and TVET EMIS and communication strategies to improve TVET perception.
- Besides, specific TVET skills and other areas targeted by the project through targeted measures:
 - ▶ Equipment provision (Computer Science);
 - ▶ Review and development of curricula (Carpentry and Joinery, Electrical Installation, Motor Mechanics, Welding and Fabrication, Plumbing a Pipe fitting, Building Construction)
 - ▶ Further and Adult Education and (Teacher Training, Road Construction, Industrial Electronics and Web Application Development) and
 - ▶ The celebration of Skills Competitions to enhance TVET visibility and positive perception (electrical installation, fashion and designing, refrigeration and air conditioning amongst

Overall Goal of the Project

- The overall goal of the project was to create an enabling environment that will give young people, especially girls, a better chance of finding decent employment by providing them with lifelong learning opportunities as recommended by SDGs 4 and 8, through Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).
- The direct beneficiaries of this project were Gambian institutions such as the Gambia Technical Training Institute (GTTI).
- The National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority of The Gambia (NAQAA), Policymakers, private sector stakeholders and Teaching staff in TVET institutions, including TVET institutions leaders.
- At least 1,000 young Gambians benefited indirectly from this project.

The Project Expected Outcome

- Development and approval of a TVET Policy, development and review of TVET curricular.
- Provision of modern industry-standard equipment for training and upgrading of teacher trainings.
- Create teacher training institutions.
- Strengthening of the management information System (EMIS) creation of an incubator system organization of a Regional (RSC) and National Skills Competition (NSC)
- Development of a guidance and communication strategy to change the perceptions of TVET.

Empowering young Gambians through entrepreneurship Through YEP.

- ▶ The Gambia Youth Empowerment Project (YEP) started 01-Feb-2017 and Ended 31-Dec-2022. The project was to address the economic root causes of irregular migration by supporting youth employment and entrepreneurship.
- ▶ The YEP was a six-year project and was funded by the European Union (EU) Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa (EUTF for Africa
- ▶ **Partners:**
 1. European Union
 2. Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment of the Republic of The Gambia
 3. United National Development Programme



**BENEFICIARY
PHOTOS**



Empowering young Gambians through entrepreneurship Cont....

▶ **Key Highlight on Guiding Principle**

- Focus on the creation of decent jobs and the improvement of the quality of work.
- Multi-dimensional and multi-sectional approach
- Involvement of organizations representing the interests of young people

▶ **Achievement At Glance**

- ▶ Key progress has been registered in agriculture and access to finance (immigrants and miniloan) schemes offered to youth. Employment in the skills training has been impressive with over 50% employability of graduates

Empowering young Gambians through entrepreneurship Cont....

❑ **Challenges Faced in Implementation:**

- Challenges included difficulty in reaching remote communities and increase the number of women in traditional skills training areas.
- Supported about 600 out of over 1400 applicants.
- Limited resources to provide more toolkits to youth who have been trained to enhance self-employment outcomes.

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