

# Sector analysis

(Summary)

## Vocational Education and Training



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## 1. Definition of the sector

VET: VET comprises all more or less organised or structured activities that aim to provide people with knowledge, skills and competences necessary to perform a job or a set of jobs, whether or not they lead to a formal qualification. VET is independent of venue, age or other characteristics of participants and previous level of qualification. VET may be job specific or directed at a broader range of occupations. It may also include elements of general education<sup>1</sup>.

TVET (Technical Vocational Education and Training) represents the technical education part of VET.

In general, we prefer to use the term 'VET', since VET covers the whole sector, including TVET.

### *Types and levels of VET*

VET includes different types of education and training:

- Formal: associated with schools and diploma's.
- Informal/Non-formal: provides planned learning outside school contexts, like seminars, conferences, workshops, apprentice models and extension programmes.

The distinction between formal and informal, but also between informal and non-formal can vary from country to country.

Another distinction that can be made is between initial and continuing vocational education (and training):

- Formal VET is often called 'initial vocational education'. Initial VET concerns mainly youngsters, and includes general education (personal development, preparation on society) and practical education (preparation for a job or self-employment).
- Continuing vocational education and training stands in general for training/refreshing courses of adults, (potential) employees and employers (concerns mainly practical training).

VET includes also different levels of education and training: from VET for illiterate persons to VET on primary and secondary education level, high school and university level.

The content of the education that is offered by VET-institutes can differ from self-employment-oriented to job-oriented.

### *VET and poverty*

Under certain conditions (see below), VET can offer on individual level a good opportunity for poor people to learn a job, thus improving their chances on the job market.

On micro-, meso- and macro-level, VET can stimulate economical development, when it is offering education and training that applies to the requests of the job market.

### *VET and gender*

In general, VET is open for boys, girls, men and women. In practice, it is possible that girls and women are excluded from VET due to the male-oriented subjects that are offered, or due to the way of recruiting students.

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<sup>1</sup> Definition from CEDEFOP (2005), The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training. UNESCO-UNEVOC uses a similar definition: 'VET is a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences, and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life'.

## 2. Developments in the sector

Gradually VET is acknowledged worldwide as a type of education that prepares youngsters and adults to enter the job market or to improve their position in the job market. In the past, - especially in Africa but also in other regions- VET had a very bad performance. Institutions invested a lot in equipment, buildings, etc, but didn't pay attention to the connection of the curriculum with the job market and flexibility in the training. Due to these weaknesses VET was seen as a type of education that was expensive, and at the same time not very effective. And still there are worldwide examples of these types of VET.

Since economical development is recognized (by international donors, governments etc) worldwide as a part of development of growing importance, VET also receives more attention. VET is seen as a good instrument to influence the local business environment positively.

In general, it can be said that the following development are influencing VET worldwide:

- Globalisation: a flexible curriculum is of growing importance since the job market is developing faster due to globalization (e.g. upcoming markets like India, South Africa); globalization is also an opportunity for poor countries: labour is moving to the poor (and 'cheaper') countries; this offers also opportunities for VET;
- Image of VET: academic education and white collar jobs are still very much preferred according to professional training and manual labour. This image not only influences the population but also policymakers and donors.
- Other?

## 3. SWOT of the sector

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improves the efficiency of education;</li> <li>• Strengthens youngsters and adults with limited education to enter the job market;</li> <li>• Strengthens the economy by supplying skilled people (with entrepreneurial or job-related skills);</li> <li>• Offers a good alternative next to academic education</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor infrastructure and equipment</li> <li>• High costs per student, difficult to make it self-sufficient</li> <li>• Lack of good training of teachers;</li> <li>• Poor connection between primary education and VET</li> <li>• Poor connection between VET and job market</li> <li>• Old fashioned or inflexible curriculum</li> <li>• Poor possibilities to offer apprenticeships</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involvement of government and business sector in VET-sector (preferably in a consortium composed by the different actors); for instance: government gives incentives to companies that facilitate apprenticeships.</li> <li>• Development of a good linkage between primary education and VET, and between VET and job market;</li> <li>• Development of trainers trainings;</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No or limited involvement of government and business sector into VET</li> <li>• In some countries small formal sector, therefore difficult to involve in apprenticeships</li> <li>• Weak economical climate, difficult to facilitate students to find a job</li> </ul>

The SWOT will be further explored per country.

## 4. Strategies

Based on this analysis the following items are important in developing a strategy for VET:

- Importance of integration: link between VET and primary/secondary education, and between VET and higher education, and/or job market; JBC (organizing apprenticeships, student tracking system); SME (training for employees)
- Importance of involvement of drop outs in VET;
- Importance of flexibility of curriculum to be able to respond to the requests of the job market (importance of feedback of ex-students, companies through JBC);
- Importance of capacity building of management and teachers of VET to enable them to offer actual, flexible and practical education;
- Importance of VET-networks (regional or national) to learn from each other, to be a strong actor towards government and business sector, and to share services like trainings;
- Importance of lobbying and advocacy, to stress the importance of VET (and to fight the negative image) and to improve the environment of VET.

## **5. Actors**

### *Providers of VET (actors)*

VET can be provided:

- In educational institutes (public, non public);
- Through a co-operation between educational institutions (public, non public) on one hand, and industrial, agricultural, commercial or any other related to the world of work, on the other.;
- By companies (enterprise based VET).

Apart from the provision of education, the following actors can be involved in VET: branches of trade, Chambers of Commerce, labour and employer organizations, etc.