

FACTSHEET

VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

May 2020



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC



Vocational skills development (VSD) is a cornerstone of Swiss development cooperation. Vocational training bridges the world of education with the world of work: graduates increase their chances of finding decent employment and earning a better income. A skilled workforce raises companies' competitiveness. As such, VSD has a direct bearing on poverty alleviation and on social and economic development.

Challenges

- › **High un- and underemployment:** 172 million women and men are unemployed globally and almost 700 million workers are living in poverty, in part due to a lack of adequate skill sets. The lack of work prospects for a growing number of people threatens to undermine social stability.
- › **Inadequate coverage:** Of all secondary students in the world, only 11% are enrolled in vocational education and training. Low social acceptance and attractiveness, affordability and other barriers hinder access to vocational skills development, especially for the poor and vulnerable.
- › **Low relevance:** There are still major gaps in labour market relevance and the quality of training available. A shortage of skilled workers reduces companies' productivity and impedes a country's long-term economic development.

Lines of intervention

The SDC responds to the needs and priorities of its partner countries. The Swiss dual vocational education system serves as an inspiration. However, the various elements of this system have to be adapted and embedded in local structures. The SDC proposes skills development solutions that match the local context, along the following lines:

Skills for youth

The SDC strengthens vocational education and training systems and institutions. It reinforces the permeability of education systems, paying attention to linking basic and vocational education. The private sector's engagement in the governance, funding and delivery of vocational training is essential to improve the quality and social acceptance of such training.

Skills for the vulnerable

The SDC proposes training accessible to the poor and disadvantaged, women and men. There is a special focus on inclusion and equity. This may include non-formal training offers, for example in refugee camps. Particular stress is placed on the linkage of VSD with basic education when addressing these specific target groups.

Skills for jobs

By integrating entrepreneurship, career counselling and matching as complementary measures of skills development programmes, the SDC facilitates the integration of job seekers and graduates in the world of work. In doing so, it capitalises on synergies with private sector development initiatives and access to finance.

Skills for the economy

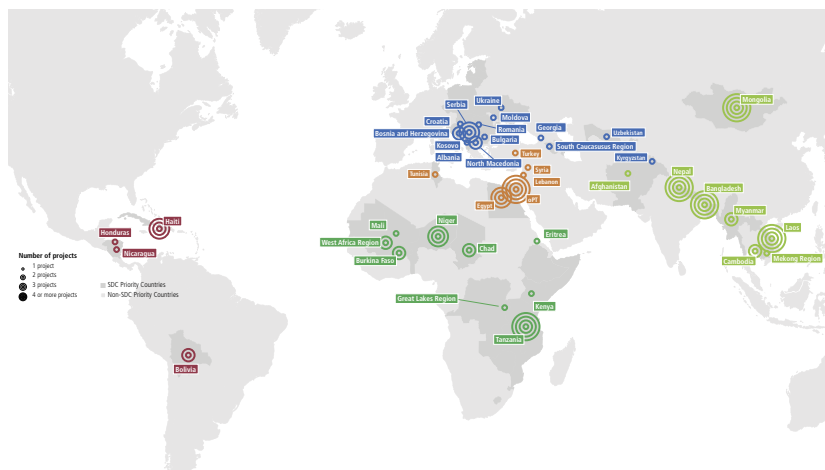
Vocational skills development needs to meet the demand of local and regional labour markets. Quality skills are beneficial to the whole economy, especially when training is developed and implemented together with the private sector.

Skills for sustainable development

Skills development is used as an instrument for the advancement of other SDC priority themes and global issues, for example by building professional competences for reconstruction. Skills training for migrant workers can bring benefits for all: the coun-

SDC projects in vocational skills development (VSD)

Project portfolio in 2018



Project examples



Niger: vocational training for young people in rural areas

Since 2011, the SDC has been committed to improving the education and training system in Niger, particularly for young people living in rural areas. The project – inspired by the Swiss dual system – collaborates with associations of local craftsmen and farmers. Apprentices alternate between on-the-job training and basic skills and literacy courses given in local languages. By 2020, some 43,000 young people had benefited from this training.



Haiti: training for sustainable reconstruction

South-west Haiti has been repeatedly devastated by earthquakes and hurricanes in recent years. SDC engineers are now working with those affected to build more stable houses from locally sourced materials. Local bricklayers and carpenters have received advanced training in improved local building techniques. By the end of the first project phase in 2021, 500 new homes for families in urgent need will have been built.



Kosovo: connecting jobseekers and employers

More than 50% of the young people in Kosovo are unemployed. By connecting employers and jobseekers through online and offline job mediation services, including career guidance and skills training, the SDC is helping to reduce unemployment and drive economic growth. Since 2017, the project has had a particular focus on the economic empowerment of women, low-skilled youth and minorities such as the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities.



Bangladesh: joining forces with the textile industry

Bangladesh is famous for its textile sector; however, there is a shortage of skilled labour. The SDC is therefore working jointly with the United Kingdom with a view to providing 110,000 poor women and men with initial training courses. To achieve this goal, the project is working with the private sector. Already some 160 textile factories – including suppliers of well-known labels – have begun to invest in the systematic training of their employees.

tries of destination, the countries of origin and the migrants themselves.

Partners

Successful vocational education and training relies on close collaboration with a broad alliance of partners from government ministries, local authorities, vocational schools, NGOs and – of utmost importance – the private sector. Developing these partnerships is a priority for the SDC.

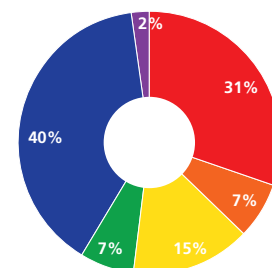
In many countries, the SDC works with other bilateral donors. Particularly close cooperation exists with Germany, Austria and Liechtenstein – all countries with traditions in dual vocational education and training. Since 2015 these countries have joined forces in the Donor Committee for Dual Vocational Education and Training (DCdVET). The International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and various development banks are key partners at the multilateral level.

To make use of Swiss expertise, close coordination is maintained with other Swiss federal offices and the Swiss Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (SFIVET). Additionally, the SDC partners with the NGO-led Swiss Forum for Skills Development and International Cooperation (FoBBIZ).

Strategic relevance of project portfolio

In 2018 the SDC supported the implementation of 77 VSD projects (or projects with a substantial VSD component) with yearly disbursements of CHF 41 million. Most projects are located in East and South East Asia (23 projects in 8 countries), Eastern Europe and Eurasia (18 projects in 14 countries) and Sub-Saharan Africa (15 projects in 11 countries).

Expenditures by region (2018)



Imprint

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA
 Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC
 3003 Bern, Switzerland
www.sdc.admin.ch
 Photos: SDC, Layla Barakè, Sudokkho project