



# Promoting Gender Equality & Social Inclusion (GESI) in Dual VET in the Context of Development Cooperation

DC dVET Policy Brief

# 1

## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, promoting GESI in the design, implementation and monitoring of development projects has become increasingly important. Inclusive dual VET projects can lead to a win-win-win situation for individuals, companies and a country as such - if the realities of different disadvantaged groups are truly understood, the biases and stereotypes addressed, stakeholder commitment elicited at all relevant levels, and if the change is monitored by means of relevant qualitative and quantitative approaches.

DC dVET has assessed the topic of inclusive dual VET by conducting research and a number of interactive online events with various stakeholders. The results are documented in detail on the DC dVET website<sup>1</sup> and summarized in this policy brief.

# 2

## DEFINITION & RELEVANCE OF GESI IN DUAL VET

**How can GESI be defined?** Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) in dual VET refers to equal access to (dual) VET and the labour market for all individuals, regardless of their gender, age, religion or ethnic background, and with special consideration for vulnerable members of the society, such as persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, ethnic minority groups, or migrants.<sup>2</sup>

**How can GESI be understood?** The definition shows that GESI categories are not homogeneous. Rather, dealing with GESI means dealing with complex realities and addressing barriers and multiple disadvantages faced in different ways by different groups.<sup>3</sup> Social exclusion tends to be cumulative, a phenomenon termed „intersectionality“: When it comes to access to education, for those disadvantaged they also tend to be left behind regarding their participation in (dual) VET and the labour market.

**Why is GESI relevant in dual VET?** Fostering GESI in dual VET has become a priority primarily for two reasons:

- The business sector needs to address skills gaps and shortages which could otherwise affect productivity and competitiveness and GESI broadens the pool of potential employees.
- The aim of social justice in line with SDGs 4 and 8 calls for the right to education, lifelong learning and decent work for all populations and individuals.

# 3

## ADDRESSING THE COMPLEX NATURE OF GESI IN DUAL VET

The crucial first step towards addressing GESI in dual VET is to understand the multiple barriers which affect the various disadvantaged groups. Frequently, several of these barriers will affect one and the same disadvantaged group simultaneously (see also reference on intersectionality above). For instance, cultural stereotypes may determine which professions are deemed suitable for women and may lead to less value and consequently fewer financial resources being assigned to “typically female“ professions. For the same reason, women will be less aware of alternative VET routes as they are not sufficiently communicated to them. Moreover, features like demanding entry regulations, standardised training delivery at fixed times and venues, high costs, and geographical distance to learning venues may all apply simultaneously and are all barriers that potential VET candidates need to overcome.

<sup>1</sup> [Gender & Social Inclusion on dual VET | DC dVET \(dcdualvet.org\)](https://www.dcdualvet.org/)

<sup>2</sup> Sources: adapted from UNESCO-UNEVOC, Gender Equality in Education, [Access, Equity & Quality \(unesco.org\)](https://www.unesco.org/) and ILO R195 - Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195) - [https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100\\_ILO\\_CODE:R195](https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:R195)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.dcdualvet.org/themen-und-ressourcen/gender-und-soziale-inklusion/>

These various barriers and their implications are illustrated in the following figure:

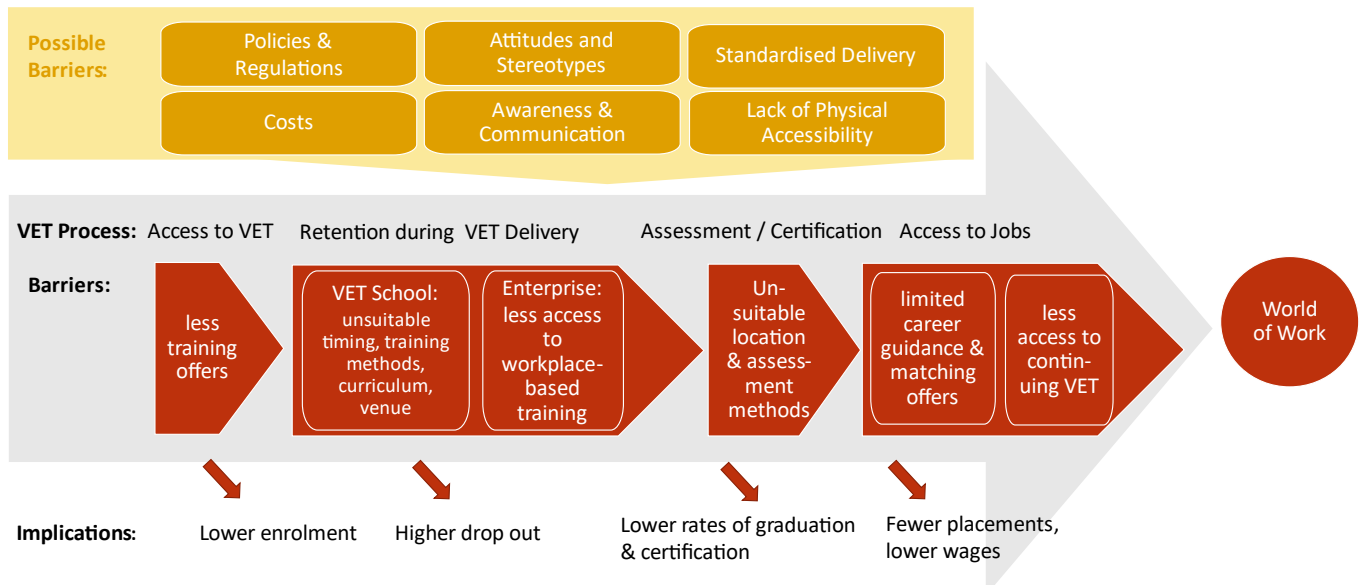


Figure 1: Barriers to GESI and their implications<sup>4</sup>

These barriers have implications along the different stages of the VET process and can produce undesirable outcomes ranging from lower enrolment in VET, higher drop-outs and lower rates of graduation, to fewer placements in the labour market.

Consequently, addressing the complex nature of GESI requires cultural sensitivity, in-depth understanding of existing realities of individuals from disadvantaged groups, and interventions at various levels. For this, the following questions can serve as the basis for developing a checklist, which can be adapted to the requirements of individual target groups and projects:

#### Guiding questions to address GESI in dual VET:

- Are appropriate efforts made to identify and understand the characteristics of disadvantaged groups and the nature of the barriers they face?
- Are the cultural norms and biases of all partners and stakeholders analysed and taken into account?
- Are appropriate measures taken in order to raise awareness at all levels to overcome the cultural biases and stereotypes identified?
- Is a GESI culture addressed in the administration, institutions, and in programming of the project itself?
- Are dual VET programmes designed from a learner-centric view, considering flexible and diversified rather than standardised delivery options? This contributes to reduce access barriers faced by women and other care givers and to address diverse groups of learners.
- Is GESI promoted at both learning venues, i.e. the VET institutions and the companies?

<sup>4</sup> Source: DC dVET, adapted from [ILO 2021, The future of diversity Guide and assessment tool on the inclusiveness of TVET and skills development systems for all \(ilo.org\)](#)

## SUPPORTING GOVERNMENTS IN REALISING INCLUSIVE DUAL VET

Governments have a decisive role in providing an enabling environment and acting as positive drivers for GESI. In recent years, an array of portals and platforms have been introduced which provide helpful resources, tools and best-practice approaches to assist governments in promoting GESI.<sup>5</sup> Various governments have made concerted efforts to achieve noticeable progress in establishing inclusive (dual) VET.<sup>6</sup>

To create a transformative impact in partner countries, development cooperation with governments should focus on the following principles:

### Guiding principles to support governments in realizing inclusive dual VET:

- *Address politics, policy and programming simultaneously:* Political commitment to GESI at all levels is key. Consequently, transformative change requires implementing multiple interventions at several levels, comprising the political will (politics), the government vision or strategy (policy), and the realisation of a concrete project (programme). Therefore, adequate funding and human resources need to be provided.
- *Foster appropriate framework conditions and stakeholder cooperation:* Appropriate legislation and partnerships and collaboration with all stakeholders can additionally help governments in partner countries in promoting GESI in dual VET.
- *Use both targeted interventions and mainstreaming of GESI:* A two-fold focus is required that does include both, interventions targeted to specific groups and efforts towards mainstreaming GESI. Moreover, it is key that all guides and tools are applied throughout the entire project cycle.

## SUPPORTING THE BUSINESS SECTOR IN TAKING ON AN ACTIVE ROLE IN ESTABLISHING INCLUSIVE DUAL VET

Many companies already embrace diversity as part of their business strategies as fostering diversity in the workplace can create a number of tangible benefits. First, it enables companies to address skills gaps and shortages. In addition, there is evidence that diversity can create innovative learning environments, a positive company reputation and increase productivity up to 35%.<sup>7</sup> Overall, the more companies can see that GESI also makes business sense, the more they will be determined to promote it.

Still, many companies need guidance and preparation to be ready for inclusion. Development cooperation can provide such guidance in the following ways:

### Guiding principles to support the business sector in realizing inclusive dual VET:

- *Foster sensitization and awareness:* First of all, fostering GESI in companies requires sensitisation and awareness raising at all levels. They need to be aware of the (potential) business case and be involved in the design of VET programs from the beginning.

<sup>5</sup> These include, among others, [ASPYEE](#) (an interactive portal in Africa); [International Disability Alliance \(IDA\)](#); [UNESCO's right to Education Portal](#) and the multi-donor supported [VET Toolbox](#). Source: DC dVET [Gender & soziale Inklusion](#) | [DC dVET Geberkommittee für duale Berufsbildung \(dcdualvet.org\)](#).

<sup>6</sup> For instance, South Africa has created the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS), which aims at improving access to training opportunities. The Bahamas support remote access to training and IT-industry based certifications, while in India, the skills council for persons with disability focuses on standards and skills training for individuals with disabilities. In Bangladesh, the national skills development policy (NSDP) employs a combination of financial and non-financial incentives to promote women's economic empowerment and the inclusion of disadvantaged groups.

Source: [Gender & Social Inclusion on dual VET](#) | [DC dVET \(dcdualvet.org\)](#)

<sup>7</sup> ILO, 2022, [Diversity and inclusion - Transforming enterprises through diversity and inclusion](#).

- *Create leadership commitment and engagement:* GESI in companies requires the commitment and engagement of their leadership. Therefore, awareness raising needs to start at that level. In addition, collaboration with business associations or chambers should be sought to promote shared commitment to inclusive dual VET.
- *Enable the implementation of GESI:* To support companies in implementing GESI they can be supported in creating safe and inclusive training and workplace environments for specific target groups.
- *Collaborate with different partner associations:* To foster the collaboration with specialized organisations, NGOs, or government agencies it makes sense to map new occupations and labour market opportunities for specific target groups, implement GESI in a systematic way, and promote and share role models and good practices.
- *Match jobseekers and companies and monitor the outcome:* Careful matching of jobseekers and companies is important for creating mutually beneficial long-term employment relationships. Utilizing IT platforms can greatly assist the matching process.

## 6

## MEASURING GESI IN DUAL VET

Focusing on GESI in dual VET intends to initiate and promote transformative change. Such change is not only evidenced by the numbers of disadvantaged individuals that have completed training and joined the workforce, but also by qualitative indicators, such as the sense of empowerment that these individuals experience, or the opportunities they encounter in the labour market.

Measuring such transformative change must go beyond applying quantitative indicators at an aggregated level, taking into account the following points:

### **Guiding principles to measure GESI in dual VET:**

- *Identify and measure relevant qualitative indicators in addition to customary quantitative ones:* Participatory qualitative and quantitative research is necessary for this purpose. Household data should be gathered to assess changes in the overall behaviour affecting individuals that have completed inclusive dual VET programmes.
- *Measure transformative change not only at beneficiary level, but also at institutional level:* Besides the beneficiary level, also the institutional performance of implementing partners regarding their GESI responsive behaviour and practices should be taken into account. Baseline and end line studies can be conducted to assess their organizational change.
- *Focus on understanding data and make optimal use of them:* Existing data can provide rich information if studied in depth. Wherever feasible, data should be disaggregated beyond gender so that intersectionality faced by individual disadvantaged groups can be made transparent. For instance, distinguishing solely between men and women and disregarding their social classes, educational backgrounds, age or family status will only yield a very crude impression of their respective realities.
- Use *tracer studies* to monitor training and subsequent transition to work.

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## IMPRINT

**Editor:** Donor Committee for Dual Vocational Education and Training DC dVET  
Hardturmstrasse 123, 8005 Zurich,  
[www.dcdualvet.org](http://www.dcdualvet.org)

**Publication:** 1<sup>st</sup> edition, Zurich January 2024

*The content of this policy brief is based on existing work of the DC dVET and work of external authors which do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Donor Committee and its members.*

*Gender-specific terms and formulations apply in principle to both genders.*