



3rd International Congress on Vocational and Professional Education and Training in Winterthur

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
**Introduction to the
Swiss Vocational Education and Training System &
the SDC's approach to
Vocational Skills Development**

6th June 2018

On the 6th of June 2018, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC invited for its already second side-event in the run up to the international VPET-Congress in Winterthur: the SDC VSD Day. With the aim to bring the particularities of the Swiss Dual System and SDC's engagement in Vocational Skills Development (VSD) a bit closer to the guests, a full day-program dedicated to VSD was organized.



[All photos, slides, videos, documents and links are on our e+i shareweb.](#)

A truly international event...

More than 100 guests from over 25 countries were welcomed by Mrs. Ambassador Ruth Huber, member of SDC directorate, who elaborated on the objectives of the day and the high importance of this event to network and exchange about challenges and successful solutions in improving vocational education and training (VET) programs and systems worldwide. Furthermore, she explained that SDC strongly believes in VET as a main precondition for economic and social development and that SDC is therefore committed to increase its education activities by 50% over the period of 4 years between 2017-2020. This clearly makes VSD a cornerstone and priority of Swiss development cooperation.



Switzerland notices a growing demand for support in the reform and/or expansion of its partnering countries' VET programs and systems. This is a sign of the increasing recognition of the dual vocational training approach and its effect on youth employment and social and economic integration.

... with experts from the Swiss center of competence for VET

Mrs. Dr. Prof Oertle, director of the Swiss Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (SFIVET) explained how the Swiss Dual System combines theory in vocational schools with practice at the work place and thereby ensures that trained people have relevant skills-mix for the labor market. Costs are shared between the private sector (60%) and the public sector (40%). Companies are receiving a return on investment for practical training of apprentices. A direct benefit for training companies can arise in the sense of higher productivity of the apprentice over the years in relation

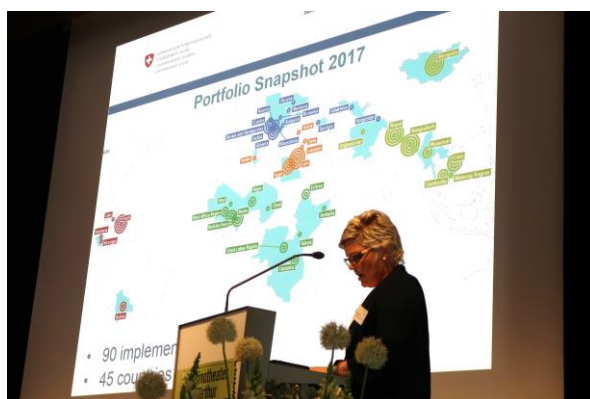
to the expenses for apprenticeship salary and training. Other companies benefit indirectly, by reduced hiring costs and shaping of the competences to the specific company needs. Dr. Oertle pointed to the different pathways between general



education and VET-careers, and vice-versa. In fact, two third of Swiss youngsters choose a VET training in the first place. The permeability of the system and its lifelong learning approach are part of the success of the Swiss VPET system, alongside the strong collaboration with the private sector.

The Swiss Dual model can serve as an inspiration to be adapted to the particularities and contexts of all its partner countries. It was stressed that SDC's aim is not to export or replicate the Swiss model in its cooperation with its partner countries, but to strive for embedded solutions. An important source of information in adapting dual VET to transition or developing countries is the knowledge hub of the Donor Committee on dual VET, a joint initiative of Switzerland, Germany, Austria and Fürstentum Liechtenstein.

... and our very own VSD specialists



This fact was underlined by the presentation of SDC's engagement in Vocational skills development (VSD) by Mrs. Colarte-Dürr, Senior Advisor for VSD at the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC. The audience learned that SDC supports about 90 projects in 45 countries and that a significant part of its

budget is earmarked for VET interventions. Hence, SDC is implementing vocational education and training projects in the majority of the partner countries in eastern Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America. All interventions aim at a systemic change by preventing unemployment and skills mismatches and by offering perspectives to youth which ultimately also fosters a country's economic competitiveness. However, there is no one-size fits all solution: VET systems have to be adapted to the different challenges and contexts and it is therefore crucial to work in strong partnerships with partnering governments and local partners from the private sector and/or civil society.

Two practitioner's perspectives...

To see the very different dimensions of VET projects, two project spotlights were presented: Skills 4 Life Training in the refugee camps in Kakuma Kenia, and a private sector development project with apprenticeships in the woods sector in South Serbia .

... and study visits

After a networking lunch, the guests split into four groups for study visits in order to experience dual vocational education first hand. Among the 4 visits were:

- Georg Fischer, a global industrial corporation and VET-providing company that trains apprentices in more than 15 professions
- Login, a VET association of more than 50 companies from the public transportation sector that trains 2000 apprentices in 25 VET programs.
- Biz, a state career guiding center that secures the informed choice of professional career paths of the youth
- Strickhof, a VET school that offers company-based training in the agricultural sector

During the full-day program, the guests broadened their understanding for the elements of success of the Swiss dual system of Vocational Education and Training both theoretically and practically. The opportunity to exchange was used intensively during the day. There are many



important challenges remaining on the road to successful VET systems and continuous improvement and adaptation is needed everywhere. The interest of the participating partners from government, private sector and civil society proof of a high engagement to continue the path towards improving vocational education and training systems.