

Vocational training

Linking practice and theory in a meaningful way

There have never been as many young people in the world as there are today. And never before have they suffered from lack of employment as in the recent past: according to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), in 2017 more than 40% of young people worldwide were either unemployed or poor despite being employed. One viable solution to addressing this lack of prospects and preventing a “lost generation” from emerging around the world is vocational education and training – in the form of training programmes that combine practice and theory in a meaningful way. This not only helps young people to acquire skills that make them more competitive on the labour market, they also enhance their personal and social skills which enable them to engage better with society. As a result, vocational training and education have experienced a renaissance in recent years.

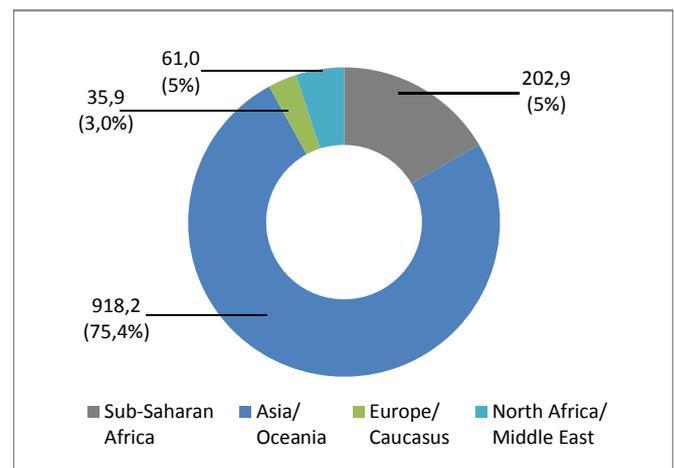
Vocational education and training have been an integral part of German Development Cooperation for many decades. But after interest waned in the eighties and nineties, it has been rising noticeably again for some years now. Germany's commitments have nearly quadrupled since 2010. Thus, Germany is today the largest bilateral donor in vocational training worldwide and was in 2016 even ahead of the World Bank and the EU.

Increasing investment in vocational education and training is due in part to high youth unemployment worldwide, increasing conflicts and demographic change. Demand for follow-on education has increased as a result of international efforts in other areas of education, such as primary and secondary education. The German model of training is particularly in demand because its two-pronged approach makes it highly effective. The extremely low rate of German youth unemployment by international standards of 4.8% is evidence of its success. It is essential that the establishment or improvement of vocational education and training systems in other countries take place and focus above all on practical vocational education and training.

Context

The increased appreciation for vocational training is also evident in the various international documents in which vocational training has been integrated: while the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) from the year 2000 still concentrated on basic education, the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) now contain the guiding principle of lifelong learning. SDG 4 – Lifelong learning opportunities for all – gives vocational training a separate subgoal and also appears in several other subgoals. The G7 summit in Elmau in 2015 also highlighted the importance of vocational education and training. The final document calls for at least a third more women and girls to be enrolled in vocational training programmes by 2030.

Current portfolio for vocational education (EUR in millions)



Source: own illustration

The KfW development approach

To meet the growing demand, KfW is financing the construction, expansion and equipping of vocational schools and training centres. It is also supporting the management and the teaching staff of these institutions. Particular attention is being paid to ensuring that vocational training is geared to the needs of the economy and the labour market. To this end, the local economy is involved as much as possible in the planning and implementation of the projects. KfW is therefore also supporting vocational training funds, for example, that create targeted incentives for cooperation between vocational institutions and industry.

In addition to traditional financing instruments like grants and loans for vocational training institutions, KfW is also pursuing approaches that directly benefit trainees, for example by awarding training grants or stimulating demand through voucher systems. KfW Development Bank is currently financing a total of 69 projects with a volume of EUR 1.2 billion, most of them in Asia, with Africa in second place. It can be assumed that commitments for vocational education and training will continue to increase, not least of all because vocational education and training is regarded as a means of addressing structural causes of migration.



Contact

KfW Group
KfW Development Bank
Competence Centre Sustainable Economic Development
and Education
Palmengartenstrasse 5-9
D-60325 Frankfurt am Main
Phone +49 69 7431 - 9787
Kc-bildung@kfw.de



Vocational students in Togo. Source: KfW Group, photographer: Cornelia Tittmann

Togo – Vocational farming training

Togo is one of the poorest countries in the world. The opportunities for young people are particularly unfavourable: around one-third of all youth in Togo are unemployed or underemployed. This has to do with the difficult economic situation, but also with insufficient educational opportunities. There is a specific lack of vocational training capacity that could improve young people's prospects on the labour market. And the existing facilities are inadequately equipped, have too few machines, work and teaching materials. And some of the buildings are in dire condition.

This is why KfW is helping Togo to expand its vocational training capacities. Agriculture is one of the most important economic sectors, which is why KfW is focusing on farming and related professions (such as production and maintenance of agricultural equipment or transport of agricultural goods). With a total of EUR 10 million, KfW is supporting the renovation, expansion and equipping of public and private training facilities. The executing agency is the Togolese Ministry of Vocational Education and Training (METFP). A total of 7,000 young people will ultimately benefit from better education and training measures. They will be taught in renovated buildings with better materials and will also be able to gain practical experience in preparation for the labour market. The project thus makes an important contribution to improving vocational training in Togo overall.