

Editorial

Vocational education and training (VET) has been widely discussed in the international arena as a bridge between school and work. Today's school leavers and graduates are tomorrow's workers and employees. Hence, a competent workforce with relevant skills and professional knowledge are crucial to ensure productivity, sustainable economic growth, international competitiveness and social cohesion.

As transition and developing countries are transforming into economies dominated by the service sector, occupations and jobs are undergoing dramatic changes that have implications for the demands of the labor market. Mobility within professional life is gaining momentum and the demarcation between academic qualifications and practical occupations is diminishing. Consequently, national and regional skills development and training systems need to be flexible in undergoing necessary reforms.

GFA assists national and regional governments as well as private stakeholders in their efforts to reform and strengthen human resources and skills development systems by developing customized qualification frameworks and modular occupational standards, and by implementing credit transfer systems within the framework of lifelong learning.

This newsletter focuses on the achievements of a VET project GFA recently completed in Turkey and provides an overview of the company's contributions to the national VET reform program in Egypt.



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Human Resource Development through Modernizing Vocational Education and Training in Turkey

It has been widely recognized internationally that qualified workers with skills required by the labor market are crucial for economic growth and social integration. Hence, the European Union (EU) supports reform and modernization efforts of the vocational education and training (VET) sector in countries wishing to join the EU. Turkey, a candidate country preparing for accession to the EU, uses resources of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) to improve the quality of VET provision.

Turkey centers its VET reform on four crucial pillars. Modular, demand-driven curricula are developed as part of the National Qualifications Framework aligned to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). Capacity building and training is provided to key education stakeholders at the heart of reform implementation. Modern technical equipment is procured for learning spaces. Awareness and public relations activities are to raise the profile of VET provision countrywide. Looking at one particular project in detail will help to demonstrate current TVET reform efforts in Turkey. Between June 2008 and May 2010, GFA provided technical assistance for the Human Resources Development (HRD)-VET Project, funded by the EU and the Repub-

lic of Turkey at 5.4 million Euros. The project sought to stimulate employment through the provision of modern and high quality VET provision that meets the demands of the labor market and raises the awareness about self-employment and business opportunities in east and south-east Turkey.

Curriculum Development

A regionally competitive labor market relies on the availability of a qualified and skilled labor force. Therefore, workers need to be trained in occupations corresponding to the needs of a modern economy, but they also need to have qualifications which are recognized beyond the scope of their own country.

Candidate countries for EU accession such as Turkey work towards aligning their qualifications systems to the EQF. This will ensure that Turkish qualifications correspond to the requirements of the European Credit Accumulation System for VET (ECVET) and the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). Therefore, the HRD-VET Project team fostered the development and revision of modular and competency based curricula with allocated credit points. This process particularly



Presentation at VET center in Turkey

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focused on economic areas dominant in Turkey, for example IT, food, mechanics, metal work, textile or tourism.

Capacity Building

Effective capacity building requires the transfer of knowhow and skills to project stakeholders as the VET reform success largely depends on the quality of delivering and implementing national curricula. The HRD-VET Project trained teachers on topics such as student-centered methodologies and teaching techniques for modular and competency-based vocational education curricula.

School managers were trained in change management, leadership and coaching. Both groups were particularly encouraged to put their training experiences to practice in their working environments at Turkish schools.



Curriculum development workshop

Procurement

To ensure high quality VET delivery, newly developed curricula and training based on up-to-date pedagogical knowledge needs to be complemented by appropriate technical equipment. Consequently, the HRD-VET Project further supported pilot VET schools through the procurement of advanced vocational equipment, worth 10 million Euros, to furnish workshops and laboratories.

Awareness Raising

In many countries, VET is still viewed as second class education. Awareness raising is therefore an important tool to inform the



Training the use of newly procured equipment

public about VET benefits and strengths. The HRD-VET Project emphasized the role and necessity of VET through an Awareness Raising Package. The package, inter alia, included a project website, career days, information seminars promoting the Lifelong Learning approach, and national and international seminars and conferences on entrepreneurship.

Study Visits

HRD-VET study tours aimed at offering the participants an overview of VET provision in EU countries. This was achieved by visiting VET institutions, ministries and bodies managing national qualifications, accreditation and certification. Participants learned about practical aspects of the EQF, educational and training standards and curriculum development in line with ECVET. In addition, visits to universities illustrated the impact of ECTS on higher education.

VET Information Centers

Another field of activities was the establishment of VET Information Centers in pilot provinces. In this context, staff was trained and the establishment of VET Information Centers in Erzurum and Gaziantep was supported. The VET Information Centers will be an integral part

of the VET activities in the provinces in learning, teaching and research processes. Aside from providing information on VET concepts and topics, the Centers will provide an opportunity to learn about occupations by using guiding software in a computerized environment. Also, the VET Information Centers focus on dialogue and cooperation between VET institutions and the labor market.

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High quality equipment in VET institution

Reform of the Egyptian TVET System

Egypt and the EU are implementing a joint comprehensive program for a nation-wide reform of the Egyptian technical vocational education and training (TVET) system. The reform goal will be achieved through the establishment of an appropriate, consistent national TVET reform policy, created primarily by a sector oriented and demand-led approach.

The reform program assistance to the reform of the TVET System in the Arab Republic of Egypt is implemented through seven individual service contracts awarded to different consulting companies. GFA was awarded contract 3 related to Enterprise-TVET-Partnerships (ETPs) and contract 7 related to TVET and labor market oriented background studies.

Contract 3 – Enterprise-TVET-Partnerships

In the framework of the above mentioned program, GFA Consulting Group provides assistance regarding the establishment and operation of seven ETPs. The project implementation phase of this contract started in 2008 and has a budget of 6.8 million Euros. ETPs are a vehicle through which demand-focused TVET programs are developed. The seven ETPs, established under this contract, play an intermediary role between the stakeholders' organizations in the industry and the TVET service providers. As a platform for training providers and enterprises, ETPs define sectoral and regional priorities for curriculum development and training packages. Through a comprehensive and diversified series of institution and capacity building activities in pilot ETPs, GFA supports the development of human and institutional capacities to formulate and



Hotel VET school in El Gouna

implement a national TVET reform policy. As a result of a formerly fragmented TVET provision, the reform in Egypt focuses on the development of an integrated and unified TVET policy based on local, regional and sectoral requirements.

A modular and competency-based TVET approach shifts the education focus from an input-oriented system towards an output-oriented Lifelong Learning (LLL) approach, recognizing all forms of prior learning. This new approach will lead to a National Qualifications Framework (NQF), which is currently being elaborated by the project team in place. The technical assistance team defines new occupational standards based on mappings in selected sectors, training needs analyses and assessments of TVET providers. The occupational standards are developed in line with the upcoming NQF. The underpinning curricula and training programs follow a modular and student-

oriented approach. The project focuses on tourism, hotels and restaurants, building and housing, civil engineering, leather and tanning, chemical industries as well as printing and media.

Contract 7 - TVET and Labor Market Oriented Background Studies

The centre piece of the reform process of the Egyptian TVET system is the National TVET Master Plan (NTMP). The master plan will integrate relevant knowledge that derived from the TVET reform program into the new national TVET strategy and convert it into a comprehensive plan for national implementation. Eight TVET and labor market studies are the main resources and instruments for the Project Management Unit to implement the TVET Master Plan. The studies are implemented by Helmut Schmidt University, Hamburg and GFA Consulting Group. The resulting scientifically researched body of knowledge will ultimately form part of the TVET Master Plan. The strategic research covers TVET and human resource development strategies for selected sectors, decentralized education and training for employment, and the national accreditation and certification system. Other topics are management information systems, policy platforms and networks, governance and finance, and the reform policy and implementation strategy related to TVET.



Practical training in the leather and shoes sector

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GFA Delegation Meets Health Minister Dr. Philipp Rösler

GFA Consulting Group organized a study tour to Germany and Switzerland on behalf of the Ministry of Health of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. The objective was to learn about health financing mechanisms. The delegation, led by the Vice-Minister Dr. Nguyen Thi Xuyen, was accompanied by technical experts of the Ministry of Finance and the Peoples Committee of Gia Lai Province. A representative of the Delegation of the European Commission to Vietnam joined the tour as the European Union significantly supports the health sector development in Vietnam. The delegation had fruitful discussions with senior staff of the finance departments of two regional hospitals in Germany and Switzerland. In addition, the delegation met experts of the World Health Organization in Geneva to discuss lessons learnt from health financing reforms. Without any doubt, the highlight of the study tour was the reception of the delegation by Minister Dr. Philipp Rösler at the Federal Ministry of Health in Berlin. Dr. Rösler underlined his interest to strengthen the cooperation with the Ministry of Health in Vietnam.
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GFA Successfully Completed FSC Re-Accreditation Audit

GFA is one of the leading certification bodies offering Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification. On behalf of FSC, auditors of Accreditation Services International (ASI) assessed GFA's accredited system, e.g. based on ISO Standard 65

and FSC Standard 20 001, in September 2010. ASI will recommend granting GFA re-accreditation for FSC forest management and chain of custody certification worldwide for another five years.
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Employment Promotion in Timor Leste

In August 2010, GFA started implementing the GTZ-funded Employment Promotion for Young People project in Timor Leste. The project aims at enhancing self-employment of youth in cooperatives so that young people may gain a sustainable income. The GFA team will foster practice-orientation in agricultural education and support the inclusion of entrepreneurship modules in the curricula. A decentralized advisory and support structure will be established that provides start-up assistance and training. At the national level, the project will facilitate an exchange of knowledge and experience between the Ministries of Economics and Development, Education and Agriculture and Fisheries to further develop an integrated VET system.
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Strengthening the Ministry of Education, Eritrea

Since January 2009, GFA in cooperation with the University of Kaiserslautern and the *Institut für Bildungstransfer* implements a two-year distance learning project in Eritrea to support the managerial and professional capacities of the national Ministry of Education. The project is part of the support to the Education

Sector Program funded by the European Commission. It introduces principles of Lifelong Learning (LLL) into the ongoing process of professional upgrading of educational managers. Tailor made study programs are delivered at levels equivalent to Diploma, Bachelor and Master, all of which apply the distance learning approach. Students' needs are met by a blended learning approach of independent studies and tutorial seminars. The project is based on the accredited study program MA for School Management, and participants will earn internationally recognized credit points according to the European Credit Transfer System awarded by the University of Kaiserslautern.
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Evaluation of Vocational Training Project in Macedonia

GFA currently carries out an independent ex-post evaluation of GTZ's Promotion of Vocational Training Project in FYROM. This project targeted students participating in vocational programs in motor mechanics, engine fitting and electronics. One international and one local evaluation expert assess the project in line with the standard Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation criteria – relevance, effectiveness, impact, efficiency and sustainability. The project is evaluated in light of its contributions to the Macedonian national VET reform agenda, to poverty reduction and the promotion of sustainable development. The summary evaluation reports are available at <http://www.gtz.de/de/unternehmen/31617.htm>
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GFA Consulting Group is a growing consulting organization active in economic development. The main sectors of the company comprise agriculture and rural development, natural resource management, environmental investment, water supply and sanitation, private sector development, decentralization and public sector management, financial systems development and health. GFA Consulting Group presently works in more than 70 countries and collaborates with selected, specialized partner companies both nationally and internationally.

GFA vision – to be the partner of choice for clients in our core service areas.

GFA mission – to improve the livelihood of beneficiaries through our professional services.

GFA core values – to offer high performance in service delivery, technical excellence in our main sectors, innovative approaches and products, and credibility with our clients when putting projects into practice.