

## Editorial

*For many years, development experts have been challenged by increasing youth unemployment in the so-called developing world. They have learned that youth unemployment does not only lead to economic imbalances and widens the gap between the rich and the poor but also severely contributes to political instability. Many Middle East and Arab Mediterranean countries bordering Europe failed to provide employment perspectives for young people which contributed to a radicalization of youth. Some of the impacts of such failed policies hit Europe in the context of the so-called refugee crisis.*

*The Europeans are mostly asking for short-term solutions. But the mistakes of the past cannot be corrected overnight. Country-specific medium-term strategies have to be defined and implemented in order to provide a solid contribution to fight youth unemployment. GFA consultants assist in this drive for coherent employment policies in which demand and supply as well as match-making with employment agencies, service providers and legislation need to be taken into consideration. This newsletter provides some best practices under very diverse conditions by highlighting examples from Mongolia, Egypt, Ghana and the Palestinian Territories.*

*The fight against youth unemployment has to be embedded in a booming private sector. This requires better access to the rich countries' markets in Europe, the United States of America, Australia and Asia through mutual fair trade agreements.*



Klaus Altemeier  
Managing Director  
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## Youth employment – A pillar for political stabilization and economic development

**Many countries focus on job creation as the key to poverty alleviation in their national development strategies. But employment problems remain severe and multi-dimensional in large parts of the world. Persistent unemployment problems, e.g. in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region cause economic weakening of fragile states. The lack of an economic perspective puts young people under particular pressure. This often results in migration, increasingly towards Europe. The loss of human capital puts the long-term development of affected countries at stake and contributing to the ongoing refugee crisis. Creating perspectives for young people by offering relevant education, qualification and decent employment is therefore a major task for all crisis-ridden countries.**

Especially in post-conflict environments, employment and self-employment are crucial as they enable ex-combatants and returnees to re-establish sustainable livelihoods, and social and cultural participation. Employment is therefore an essential peace-building tool. But the creation of jobs is difficult even in times of peace. In conflict-stricken settings, sound strategies should promote more stable, inclusive and remunerative employment opportunities that help mitigate regional

and social disparities that often fuel conflict. GFA has been working in the field of youth employment and labor market development for many years, and in various cultural and political contexts. GFA consultants explicitly focus on a coherent employment policy rather than a narrow labor market policy, which often neglects related fiscal or sector policies, economic regulations and tools. As the private sector should play a key role in employment promotion, all GFA interventions follow an integrated approach by adjusting labor market regulations, formal and informal qualification systems, private sector integration and service provisions for both the demand and the supply side.

GFA Consulting Group has learned many lessons and gained valuable insights into main aspects of employment promotion, developed successful tools and mainstreamed youth into both employment policies and other sector developments. The company's corresponding measures tackle all three elements of a comprehensive employment and labor market policy: the demand side of employers, the supply side of employees and employment seekers, and the matching process with employment agencies, service providers and legislation.



*Mason apprentices at work in Mongolia*



*Apprentice at automotive workshop in Ghana*

### **Integrating non-formal and informal skills and qualifications in Ghana**

The informal economy in Ghana generates 80-90% of employment in the country, which makes it an anchor for economic and social stability. The Ghana Skills Development Initiative (GSDI) as part of the BMZ/GIZ Programme for Sustainable Economic Development (PSED) aims at capacity building in the informal sector. To that end, the project seeks to improve the quality of the traditional apprenticeship system which suffers from structural deficiencies. In close cooperation with the Council for TVET (COTVET), GSDI piloted a modernized apprenticeship training system that follows a cooperative approach. Cooperative apprenticeship training (CAT) is a unique TVET concept since it is based on a traditional system that complies with modern standards. It has been influenced by the German dual TVET system of training and education in two learning environments, a micro or small sized enterprise and a formal TVET institution.

Apprentices not only benefit in terms of acquiring vocational competences but

stakeholders also report a boost in their confidence levels. Participating in the innovative TVET model improved their self-esteem and their economic standing. This can be expected to have further positive impact for the employability of Ghanaian youth. Positive spill-over effects reached other apprentices and workers who benefit from the newly obtained competencies and methods applied by their fellows. The involvement of all stakeholders at an early stage of the design ensured ownership and encouraged commitment. Initial discussions involved COTVET and trade association representatives. The development of occupational standards, documents and materials heavily relied on inputs from the private sector and TVET institutions. Ongoing discussions and revisions keep all the stakeholders informed and engaged. The continuous and close cooperation between training providers and master craft persons link the formal school-based approach with the demand-oriented day-to-day reality of the informal economic sector.

### **School-to-work pathways: Career guidance in Egypt and Mongolia**

Active labor market measures (ALMM) can take on many forms. All effective ones combine a number of core elements. They integrate employment-seeking individuals, upgrade skills to increase employability, include vulnerable groups, and promote gender equality. Support is provided to enter employment, and coun-

seling helps young people establish an informed choice about their future career. On behalf of the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), GFA supported improved career guidance and counselling for secondary school and VET students in **Mongolia**. Two career guidance desks at VET schools proved successful so that they were up-scaled to other provinces. In order to further enhance the capacities of existing and future desks, trainings were initiated for counsellors and teachers responsible for career guidance at VET schools. A manual on a standard quality framework for counselors was jointly developed with VET schools, polytechnic colleges, schools and enterprises that are operating career counseling. It includes a model occupational standards for the career counselor profession, quality guidelines and standards for career guidance, and a model code of ethics for the career guidance profession.

In **Egypt**, GFA supported the school-to-work transition and career development of young technical secondary school (TSS) students and graduated job seekers. Career guidance (CG) is very new to Egypt as a policy field and a service. As a starting point for the development of respective services, the Ministry of Education together with GIZ's Employment Promotion Program focused on transition routes from TSS to employment and/or higher education piloted over three subsequent school years. Activities were based on three main pillars: self-awareness, op-



*Career guidance class at secondary school in Egypt*

portunity awareness, and transition making. GFA trained 143 career guidance facilitators from 12 governorates. They will support students to manage the first transition from school to work, and boost attitudes, skills and tools useful for critical work-related transition management. Trained and experienced CG facilitators received further training to become multipliers who will transfer their knowhow to additional schools and regions. Central and regional School-to-Work Transition units were established to coordinate and sustain CG services for students. They supervise and improve program outcomes in line with the needs and available resources of the pilot regions.

### Developing labor market information systems in Mongolia

On behalf of SDC, GFA initiated the development of a local labor market information (LMI) tool in the Western Region of Mongolia as to support the identification of future labor needs and to achieve better employability. As a result, regional VET stakeholders will know better about regional labor market demands and adjust their VET planning accordingly. Two regions carried out a detailed analysis of LMI data sourcing and data procedures. Skill gaps and training needs were identified and a training program was developed for relevant stakeholders including governors, representatives of local government, VET and employment councils. Outputs included piloting a labor market demand (LMD) survey in selected districts, and an LMI working group comprising members of the local VET and employment council. GFA helped establish other working groups responsible for LMD identification in related provinces. A manual on conducting labor market demand surveys at the local level was developed and disseminated as best practice example to stakeholders in other regions. The country's Public Employment Service indicated an interest in incorporating elements of the approach in its national LMI system.

### Increasing demand-driven qualifications in the Palestinian Territories

Four years after the Arab Spring, more than 350 million people in the MENA region have been affected by profound social and economic changes. Against the backdrop of these transformation



Secondary school students at garment internship in Egypt

processes, BMZ has set up a special initiative to meet the growing challenges of stabilization and development in North Africa and the Middle East. Since February 2015, GFA has been supporting the implementation of the More Job Opportunities for Young People program of GIZ in the Palestinian Territories in the context of this initiative. Together with the Baden-Wuerttemberg Cooperative State University and the Steinbeis Business Academy, GFA has introduced an innovative approach of dual higher education at the Al-Quds University that combines on-the-job training and academic studies. The related objectives are ambitious in striving to improve employment opportunities for Palestinian youth. Three demand-driven dual study tracks in IT, electrical engineering and economics have been developed with related enterprises. This includes a practical training phase and apprenticeship contracts with the companies concerned.

The GFA team of experts set up a new faculty at Al-Quds University and developed tailor-made curricula, study courses and practical guidelines. Moreover, GFA will train multipliers for in-company training and establish cooperation networks between the university and the industrial sector to facilitate a strong partnership between the corporate and academic world. The new dual study tracks have been established for 200 youths, a quarter of which will be women. There will be employment options for at least 80 graduates out of the 200 students enrolled in the program.

### Success factors for youth employment policies

Based on the conceptual and practical experiences outlined above and many other projects, GFA has identified success factors for youth employment policies based on but not limited to

- support and encouragement of cross-cutting and inclusive public employment services,
- involving employers in on-the-job training, practical work experience and in-sector agreements,
- recognition, certification and accreditation of experience,
- mentoring of youth during their apprenticeship training and experience at work,
- mainstreaming youth employment issues to the work and training of employment agencies staff,
- introducing school structures for counseling and career guidance to reach young people early and pro-actively,
- analysis of students' and job seekers' soft and hard skills to define potentials and options as to avoid disappointment and ill-matched education and training,
- mentored and monitored transition from school to work with clear responsibilities and mandatory tracing,
- development and improvement of local labor market information systems,
- listening to the voice of the youth.

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### Baseline study on green innovation centers for agriculture and food

In a large-scale baseline study for the GIZ Green Innovation Centers for the Agriculture and Food Sector (GIAE), GFA conducted over 5,000 household interviews among commercially active small-holder farming enterprises in 10 GIAE countries. The GIAE program under the global One World, No Hunger initiative of BMZ aims at raising income and employment and improve food security by promoting agricultural innovation networks and know-how dissemination related to agricultural value chains. Information on the farming households' income situation, agricultural production, processing and marketing was collected in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Malawi, Nigeria, Togo, Tunisia and Zambia. Extensive focus group discussions held with women, youth, and farmer groups revealed expectations towards emigration, the roles and decision making power of youth and women in agricultural households, and the implementation of agricultural innovations. The study has been led by a GFA in-house team from the Africa and EMENA department, supported by academics from the Kiel Institute for the World Economy and the University of Hohenheim.

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### Sustainable cropping alternatives in the Mekong Delta

Since 2011, GIZ together with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the Vietnamese Ministry of Agriculture and Rural De-

velopment (MARD) are implementing a project on integrated coastal zone management in the Mekong delta in Vietnam. Dyke construction and mangrove afforestation and maintenance help protect the sensitive coastline of the Mekong against erosion and safeguard endemic flora and fauna habitats. GFA is implementing a six-month study to identify sustainable and financially attractive cropping alternatives for farmers in the region. The Mekong Delta itself is one of the most intensively managed agricultural zones in the world and home to more than 17 million people. The main crop in the delta is irrigated rice. Rising seawater levels and evapotranspiration in irrigated areas lead to increased salinization of soil. This makes rice cultivation a risky and questionable option. The GFA team identified potential substitutes to rice cultivation through field visits, stakeholder interviews and discussions with local farmers and politicians. The feasibility of different crops will be evaluated through stakeholder interviews and a cost-benefit analysis. Results from the study will be fed into the conceptualization of the GIZ project's third phase starting in 2017.

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### Malaysian policy making on sustainable consumption and production

GFA was in the lead of international consultant teams of Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) policy support components in Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines. The Malaysian project's overall objective was to support the government in selecting, adapting, and

implementing suitable economic and regulatory policy instruments to promote SCP in order to enhance the long-term sustainability of Malaysian consumption and production patterns. In the period of February 2012 to January 2016, SCP Malaysia was implemented with funding by the European Union (EU) under the national policy component of the SWITCH-Asia Programme. The project had an outstanding performance and delivered excellent results. It has elevated SCP from a niche to a mainstream paradigm for the future development of Malaysia towards an advanced, inclusive and sustainable nation. The concept of SCP was prominently integrated in the Eleventh Malaysia Plan 2016-2020 as the key mechanism to pursue green growth, the game changer towards productivity, resource efficiency and natural protection.

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### GFA fund raising campaign for refugees in Hamburg

In 2015, more than 22,0000 refugees newly arrived in Hamburg, bringing the total to 61,000. In light of this challenge to its host city, GFA was intent on contributing to regional help. The company launched an internal fund raising appeal with a special incentive: A total of 7,435 euros donated by GFA employees were matched by GFA so that a total of 14,870 euros could be collected. In December 2015, the donation check was handed over to Sprachbrücke-Hamburg, an initiative that facilitates regular discussion groups and other activities for refugees as to overcome language barriers.

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