

Upgrading Apprenticeship Systems in Africa: Experience and Lessons from Ghana



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The Vocational Skills and Informal Sector Support Project (VSP), Ghana



- World Bank supported project (1995-2001)
- To upgrade the skills of master-craftspeople and informal apprentices in 5 trade areas
 - dressmaking and tailoring, electrical installation, refrigeration and air-conditioning, carpentry and joinery, block work and concreting.
- To encourage a shift in formal vocational training towards shorter, competency-based packages for those already in employment.
- To strengthen institutional capacity (e.g. NACVET)

VSP Project Components



- *Apprentice training*: short practical courses (12 weeks), provided through public and private training institutions;
- *Training of masters*: skills upgrading courses for the MCs in both technical skills (4 weeks) and entrepreneurial, accounting and costing skills (2 weeks);
- *Informal sector associations (ISAs)*: involving local ISAs in designing the training courses, selecting the participants and choosing the tools for the equipment kits for the graduates.

Approaches of the VSP



- ISAs distributed 'in-take vouchers' among their MCs who in turn passed them on to deserving apprentices.
- Apprentices could select their own centre offering the desired training course. Participating apprentices had have been subject of apprenticeship training for at least 18 months.
- VSP provided incentives for MCs & apprentices to be trained: a small training allowance; the opportunity to purchase tools at subsidised rates; and a 'World Bank' certificate on completion.

VSP impact: apprentices



- 14,565 apprentices trained
- Apprentices trained indicated that they experienced improvements in:
 - reading technical designs;
 - turning out better finished products;
 - skills to make more interesting products;
 - improved prospects as they are sought after by some employers;
 - enhanced self-esteem.

VSP impact: MCs



- 9,304 MCs (c.20% female) received technical training and 7,666 MCs (c.30% female) benefited from entrepreneurship training.
- MCs reported improvements in their technical efficiency and productivity.

Main challenges during implementation of the VSP



- Weak institutional linkages
- Lack of interest on the part of informal sector associations
- The voucher scheme was flawed
- Inferior tools
- Limited coverage

Lessons Learned (I)



- VSP made some impact on redirecting the provision of VTI training towards short, practical training for people already in employment; more likely in private rather than public training institutions;
- Training fees are acceptable for participants when training is felt to be relevant, but there is a need to pay allowances to poorer trainees;
- (Financial) Incentives for trainees, training institutions and other participants is important;

Lessons Learned (II)



- VSP demonstrated complexity of procuring & distributing tool kits for individuals under a project. Consideration should be given in future projects to the provision of cash subsidies for graduates to purchase their own tools in the marketplace;
- Information on demand for skills is crucial for adjusting training offerings;

Lessons Learned (III)



- The involvement of ISAs in the design of training programmes is important but a strong role of ISAs in the selection of participants can cause problems;
- Vouchers allow students to choose their training providers, which fosters competition among the providers (result = either lower cost / higher quality). VSP shows that a concentration of VTIs needed for a voucher system to provide real trainee choices and stimulate competition among providers;

Lessons Learned (IV)



- 4/5 VSP trade areas male dominated: VSP likely benefited male more than female apprentices.
- In order for graduates to get integrated post-training support, relationship between key govt. & non-govt. institutions concerned with vocational training and employment start-up needs to be improved.

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