

Lessons learnt from Informal apprenticeship initiatives in southern and eastern Africa

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Presentation Summary

Why Informal Apprenticeship important

What are limitations of Informal Apprenticeship

Which initiatives were taken for upgrading IA

What are the outcomes and lessons learnt

Importance of Informal Apprenticeship (IA)

Formal training is only the tip of an ice-berg.

In some countries, only 5% of youth acquire skills through formal training.

Understanding IA helps to explore the bigger learning system under the surface...



What is Informal Apprenticeship (IA)

- IA is the system of skills transfer from a Master Crafts person (MC) to a young apprentice who learns skills of the trade on the job by way of observation, imitation and repetition while working with the MC.
- The training is based on an agreement (written or oral) between MC and apprentice in line with local norms and practices.
- Training is not regulated by law.
- The characteristics of IA in SE Africa vary from those of western Africa.

Why IA is important for SE Africa`

Situation in SE Africa

- Formal training systems have inadequate training capacity to meet social demand
- Concentration of formal training centres in urban areas
- Formal trg. focuses on formal economy- still relevance of trg questionable
- A large % of school drop-outs & they are not eligible for formal training
- Poor population, high cost of trg., governments too have insufficient resources

Advantages of IA

- SMEs in informal economy have vast potential to impart skills to a large number of youth
- IA provides easy access to youth for training in nearby workplaces
- IA are more relevant to labour market demands, particularly informal economy – covers technical & business skills, establish business networks
- IA provides access to school drop outs
- IA are cost effective- affordable for the poor, no or low cost for govt.



**Is IA so good!
Are there any
challenges?**



Shortcomings of IA system



Shortcomings of IA system ...contd.

1. Quality of training varies due to:
 - Lack of uniform standards
 - Variations in technology and facilities of MCs
 - Variations in knowledge, skills & productivity of MCs
 - Lack of quality assurance mechanism
 - Training is neither systematic nor structured
 - Underpinning knowledge is not provided
2. Recognition of skills, mobility & links with formal training system are limited (**only 3% of app. appeared in NTT in Malawi**)

Shortcomings of IA system ...contd.

3. Poor working conditions, safety and health at work
4. Limited social protection
5. Exploitation of apprentices takes place due to:
 - Agreement between MC and apprentice is weak
 - Training period is not fixed
 - MC may not impart full skills set
 - MC may use apprentice as cheap labour
6. Associations don't exist or play limited role in IA (**only 9% MCs belong to an association in Malawi**)

Shortcomings of IA system ...contd.

7. Occupational segregation and gender inequality is a challenge



(85-95% women)



(> 97% men)

Initiatives taken to improve IA system

- **Strengthen the capacity of small businesses**
 - **Providing access to BDS and micro finance**
 - **Providing training to MCs- Technical, pedagogy and business skills**
- **Improve skills of apprentices by:**
 - **Providing short term training - theory, technical & business skills**
 - **Rotating them in various small businesses**
- **Provide vocational and career counselling**
- **Provide post training employment support - mentorship, financial and BDS**
- **Introduce contracts**
- **Provide link to formal certification**

Initiatives taken to improve IA system

- **Form SBAs & register them**
- **Strengthen capacity of SBAs to:**
 - **function as cooperatives**
 - **function as regulators of IA**
 - **develop standards & design training**
 - **provide vocational & career guidance**
 - **develop & register contracts and resolve conflict**
 - **assess skills and award certificate**
- **Provide incentives for MCs to participate in IA**



Outcome of the initiatives



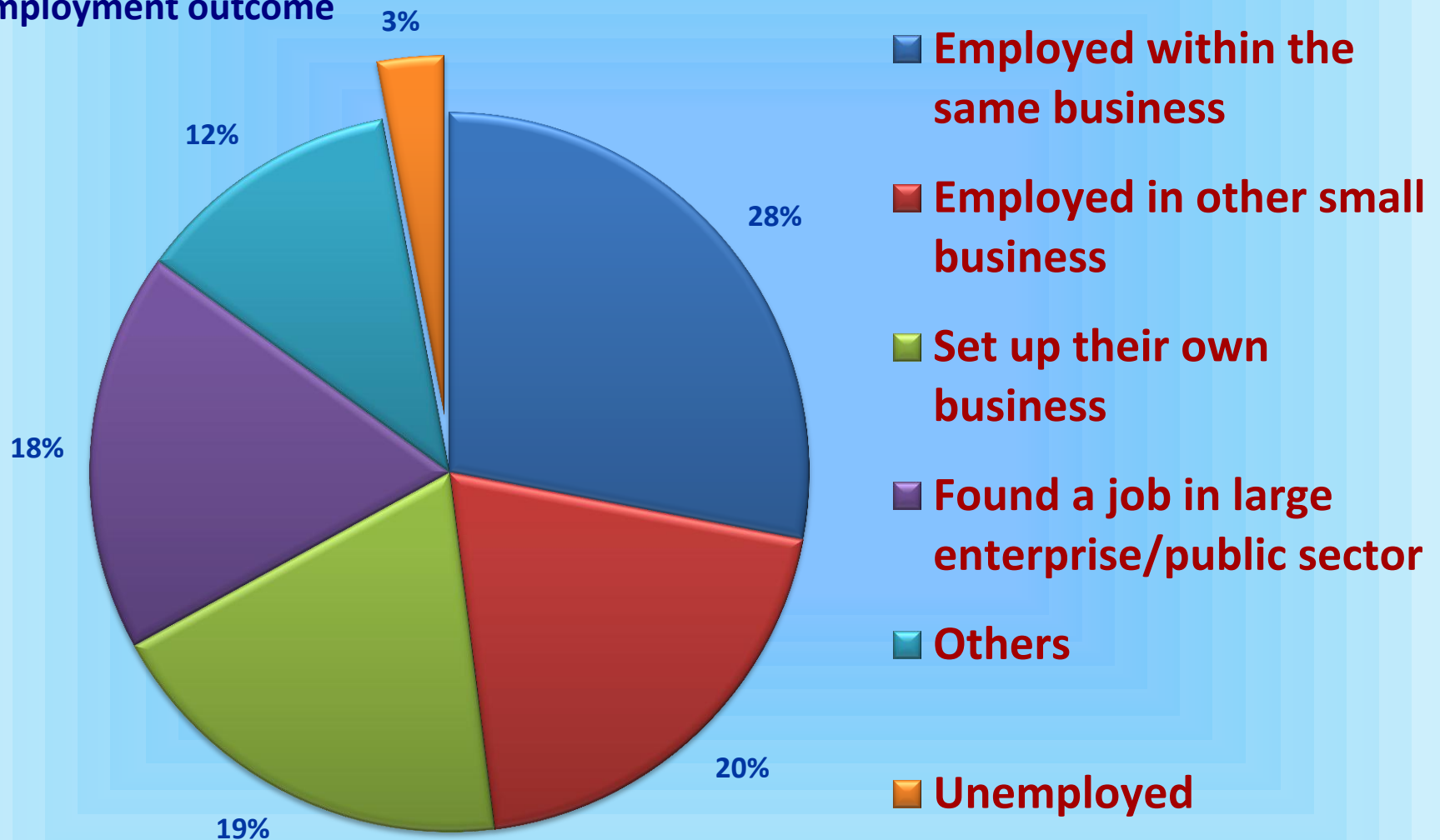
Outcome of the initiatives

Outcomes are generally good, but challenges also experienced.

- **Sales and income of MCs increased**
- **Perception and demand of IA from youth increased**
- **Increased cooperation between government bodies, training institutions, MCs, private sector, BDS and MF providers**

Employment outcome of IA

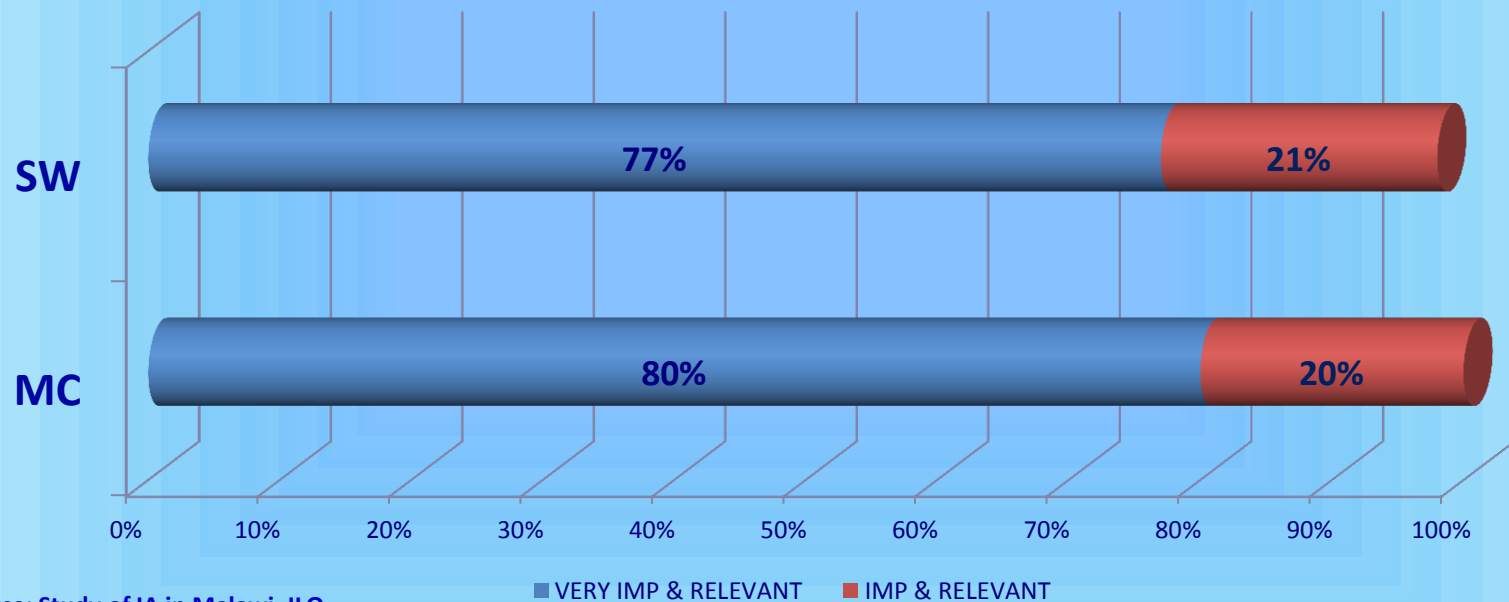
Employment outcome



Relevance of IA to LM needs

- 87% of the MCs covered under the sample have learnt skills of the trade through IA

Opinion of MC and SW about importance and relevance of training to their job



Source: Study of IA in Malawi, ILO



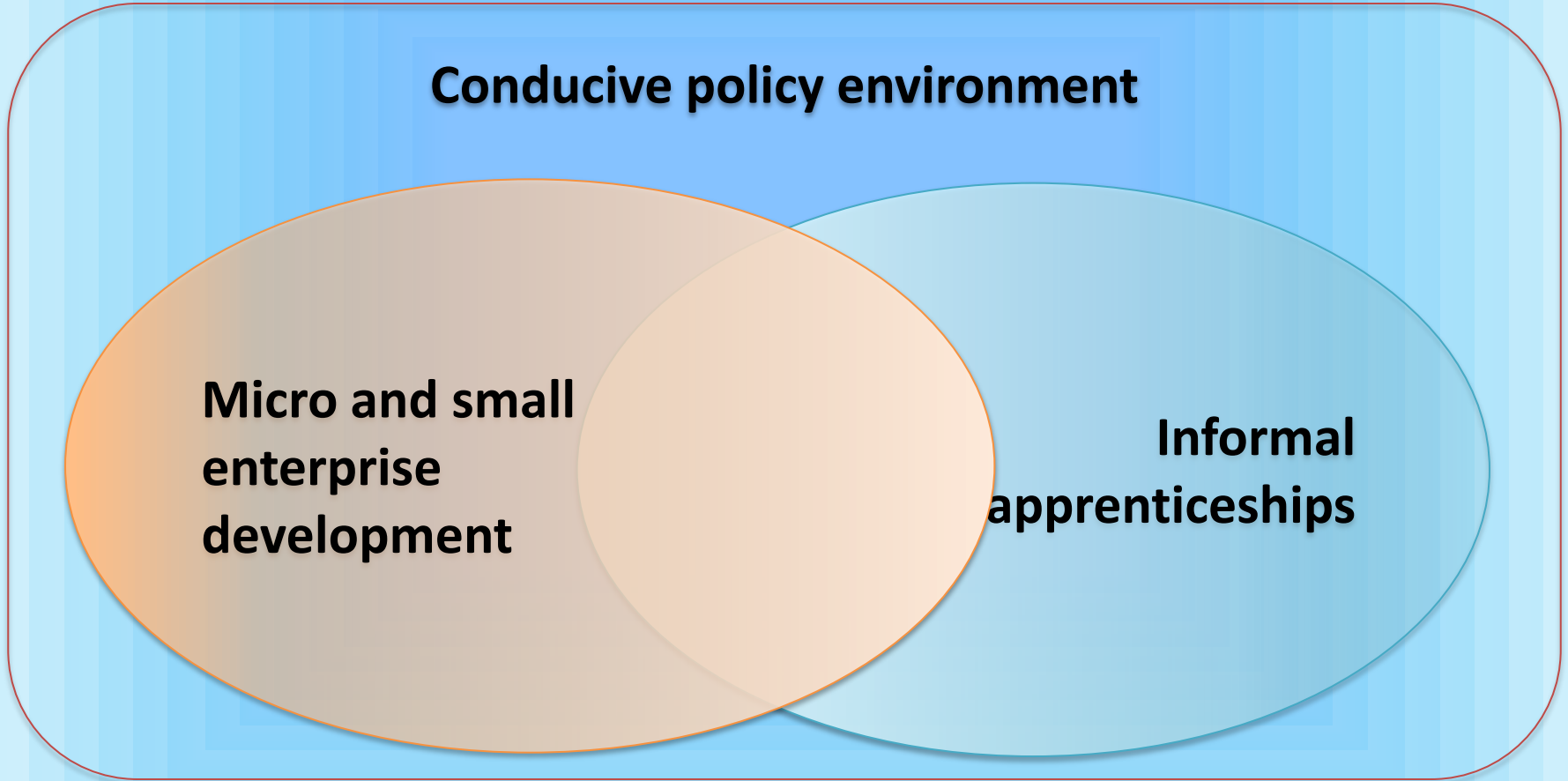
Lessons learnt

- An integrated strategy addressing both informal apprenticeship and SME development is more effective

Conducive policy environment

**Micro and small
enterprise
development**

**Informal
apprenticeships**



Lessons learnt

- **MCs want to see tangible benefits for them before participating in initiatives to upgrade IA.**
- **Non financial incentives are more effective:**
 - **Access to finance at low interest rates**
 - **Marketing of products and access to new markets**
 - **Land and sheds**
 - **Sales outlets**
 - **Electricity and modern tools**
 - **Capacity building**

Lessons learnt

Selection of MCs and number of apprentices are critical factors

- **Selection of MCs should be based on their interest and needs**
- **Don't oversaturate the market with apprentices in a trade/ area**
- **Provide vocational & career counselling**
- **Use sectoral approaches to select trades having growth potential**

Strengthen links between training centres, MCs and medium and large enterprises and other institutions

Lessons learnt

- Capacity of associations of MCs needs to be strengthened significantly for them to function as quality assurance agency
- National competency standards and RPL methods are, generally, not suitable micro and small businesses.
- Have specific strategy and budget for promoting gender equality
- **Customise strategy for UIA i.e. build on local practices.**

Thank you very much for your kind attention