

Dual apprenticeship in the informal sector

The cases of Benin, Togo and Senegal



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I. Some facts and figures

The place and role of the informal economy

- The informal economy plays a major role in creating employment and national wealth in West Africa (90% of jobs and more or less 50% of national wealth)
- The informal sector is the major training provider in Benin, Togo and Senegal (in Senegal the TVET system concerns 7000 trainees while the car repair sector trains 348 000 apprentices)

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The place and role of the informel economy (2)

- Craftworkers and micro-entrepreneurs are aware of the need to adapt their products and services to the level of technology and quality required by the market (example of Togo) but do not have the means to do so
- Professional organisations are working on how to upgrade the skills of apprentices and mastercraftsmen at the same time (example of Benin)

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II. The case of Benin

A broad, unified approach to reform

- The agreement of the economic and social partners at the beginning of the 90s which included the informal sector in the overall reform process
- The definition of a national training policy in 1998 with a view to including an improved traditional apprenticeship system into an overall vocational and job training system
- The creation of the Ministry of TVET and the FODEFCA (training fund) in order to support the reform

The organisational dynamics of Benin's key stakeholders

- The key role played by the FENAB
- The Government's regulatory action
- Social partner responsibilities in the informal sector
- The structuring role of donor agencies in the reform process

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From traditional to dual apprenticeship

- Identification of specific qualification levels (CQP, CQM) for apprentices and craftworkers
- Creation of a series of regulatory instruments (guidelines for introduction, organisation, evaluation, contract and financing)
- Coordinated management

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The training scheme

- Apprentices are aged over 14 years and have completed at least 4 years of primary school
- The training course usually lasts for three years
- The apprentice attends the training centre once a week
- The course at the training centre consists of three 200-hours phases

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The assessment scheme

- The dual apprenticeship consists of a skill-based approach
- It includes the drawing up of job descriptions and portfolios of activities and skills
- The assessment method establishes a balance
 - between theory and practical tests (30% and 70%)
 - between continuous assessment (60%) and examinations (40%)

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First outcomes

- 294 apprentices assessed in 2006 (99,31% certified)
- 3000 per year are planned for the coming years
- Companies prefer to hire someone with a CQP rather than someone with a CAP
- There are different financing schemes (Swisscontact, French cooperation, training centre and apprentice)

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First outcomes (2)

- Lack of national resources to support the new scheme
- The difficulties that craftworkers and families have in paying their 5% share
- High cost of assessment sessions (54 707 FCFA per trainee in 2006)
- Weakness of the system in helping young people to enter work at the end of their training

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III. The case of Togo

The Togo experience

- The scheme has been designed and organised in the same way (dual training, CQP, job description...)
- Some specific data
 - The average starting age for the apprenticeship is 16 years
 - The duration of the training is between 2 and 5 years
 - The apprentice attends the training centre for one week a month
 - The educational requirements are different for traditional occupations and more modern or urban occupations

Outcomes of the Togo experience

- The close relationship between the training centre and the craftworkers (follow-up of the apprentices, common work on content, etc.)
- The strong demand from the craftworkers to
 - be trained at the same time and in the same way as the trainers
 - have the possibility to access new technologies and equipment
 - identify strategic areas of occupations and skills with the training centres

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Outcomes of the Togo experience (2)

- The lack of human resources inside the ministry to follow up, assess and extend the system (lack of information, of assessment means...)
- The lack of financial means inside training centres to maintain and update equipment
- In spite of this, the “dual apprentices” are well considered by the modern companies
- The lack of formal jobs means that financial resources are needed to help the apprentices to create their own jobs or activities

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IV. Some information about Senegal

An on-going process

- The TVET ministry intends to take the best from all apprenticeship experiences in order to set up a model dual apprenticeship approach within the formal system
- Social partners and professional organisations are involved in piloting this scheme
- Three “opportunity studies” supported by the AFD analyse the current situation regarding traditional apprenticeship in the clothing/textiles, car repair and construction and public works sectors

A pro-active process

- The studies make some proposals about what future form the reorganised apprenticeships could take
- The TVET ministry has set up a specific general direction in order to pilot and coordinate the different schemes
- A meeting between all the partners on the 9th of May will discuss the reform proposals made for each sector

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V. Conclusions

Dual apprenticeship and the informal economy

- The cases studies underline that the reform of traditional apprenticeship is at the top of the agenda in West Africa
- The reforms are an answer to the needs of the countries to stimulate the creation of jobs and activities for the young generation
- The reforms link formal and informal training and aim to develop a comprehensive and integrated training system (new paradigme)

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Dual apprenticeship and informal economy

- Public/private partnership and coordinated management involving all stakeholders are vital for the success of the reforms
- Dual apprenticeship may become one model for successful post-primary training in Western Africa
- A reorganised apprenticeship system is the only way of ensuring a maximum of young Africans acquire the skills needed to stimulate the informal economy and encourage the shift from a survival-based approach to a development-based approach

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Some questions for the future

- What are the costs of dual apprenticeship in comparison to the present TVET system and who will pay for what?
- How can the skills of trainers, masters and apprentices be improved at the same time (link between initial and continuing training)?
- How can dual apprenticeship be continuously adapted to new occupations and jobs?
- How can the new system be managed by a balanced partnership of public authorities, social partners and the various stakeholders?
- How can trade unions be encouraged to take an interest in the future of the informal economy?

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