



REPUBLIC OF COTE D'IVOIRE
Union – Discipline – Work

MINISTRY OF STATE
MINISTRY OF EMPLOYMENT,
SOCIAL AFFAIRS
AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING



“Providing Africa’s Youth with Skills and Training for Jobs”

The ICQN/TVSD 2014 Ministerial Conference

Abidjan, 21, 22 and 23 July 2014

Hotel NOVOTEL

DRAFT Action Plan for Inter-Country Cooperation for the 2014-2017 Period in the Framework of the ICQN/TVSD

2010/2014: the ICQN’s founding themes

Since its first Ministerial Conference in July 2010 until now, the Inter-Country Quality Node on Technical and Vocational Skills Development (ICQN/TVSD) has enabled all of its member countries to exchange experiences in the field of vocational training for young people. It has involved them in a process of cooperation on schemes and measures to help them to prepare properly for their entry into the world of work.

In September 2011, the Ministers jointly agreed upon the ICQN’s priority areas for work and discussion. These priorities led to the organisation of two thematic inter-country seminars. The first focused on youth employment in the participating countries and analysed the factors that determine failure and success. The second examined methods for recognising and validating the different ways in which young people acquire skills, and thus how best to establish national qualifications frameworks with proper emphasis on the vocational training of young people.

2014: an uncompromising assessment of social and economic exclusion among young people

The 2014 Ministerial Conference was preceded by extensive preparatory work on youth training and employment policies and practices in Africa. Over 25 countries have produced high quality reports analysing the current situation of young people with regard to the world of work.

- **High numbers of young people are excluded from the world of work.** This is the case in all countries. It constitutes a social time bomb and hampers economic development. It reflects the generational divide between national public and private officials and the young people for whom they are responsible. Africa must offer its young people a new social deal, otherwise a generation will lose out, with serious repercussions.
- **The economic reasons for this generational divide: a short-sighted perception of the factors that really drive development.** African economies cannot be perceived in the same way as

the development of large companies, which often create little added value and few new jobs. They are primarily made up of self-employed people and micro/small businesses – the so-called informal economy – who are genuine creators of wealth and even though they are for the most part ignored by public vocational training policies. However, as microeconomic actors, these young people and adults need improved technical and vocational skills. This is essential for the development of dynamic national economic growth and job creation policies.

- **The institutional reasons for this generational divide: underesteemed and underfunded TVSD.** Almost everywhere, national strategic policies focusing on the need to train as many young people as possible are undermined by the very limited numbers actually enrolled on courses in training establishments. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that the training provided does not develop the skills required for existing and emerging jobs. It often necessitates corrective and remedial measures. Furthermore, the limited resources allocated to such training goes to formal training establishments while the large number of young people trained by the productive sector are left out.

2014-2017: an ICQN/DCTP focus on priority courses of action identified by the member countries

Bearing this situation in mind, the country reports show that a process of transformation is underway, giving cause for optimism that there is a possible solution to the extensive exclusion of young people from the world of work. But the solution can only be achieved if the process is consolidated and not just experimented with, which means the countries clearly need to discuss together and pool their efforts. The country reports provide the ICQN/TVSD with material to work on in future years as well as a number of potential courses of action which should be further detailed and pursued together.

Course of action 1: achieve a continuum between education and training

The lack of any continuum between education and training is a major cause of exclusion among young people, given that those who leave the school system having failed or without a recognised level of achievement end up outside the system with no opportunity to train in order to enter the world of work. The country reports show that there are hitherto unacknowledged pathways between education and training. They describe some interesting examples of young people moving from school into new, reformed or dual forms of traditional apprenticeship and how these are being incorporated into existing training systems. All these experiences need to be made more formal and further developed.

Course of action 2: train for existing and emerging professions in cooperation with all economic and business partners

There is a clear consensus that, aside from the small number of countries that are very proactively pursuing reforms and the existence of certain establishments that are considered to be places of experimental training, little training currently on offer gives the young the skills they need for the jobs available.

This applies to the skills required by the informal economy, which employs the vast majority of young people, and for which recent studies show that apprenticeship offers the best preparation. It also applies to high-growth economic sectors which lack the new or high-level skills required by emerging occupations and jobs. As well as training people for self-employment and low-skill activities, it is

necessary to train workers and technical staff with the skills required by current technological and occupational developments. It is therefore urgent to put an end to the mismatch between skills development and labour market needs, and, in partnership with the business and professional world, to devise a new training system that tailors supply closely to demand.

Course of action 3: make training establishments more responsive to local training market needs

The whole public and private training system, in particular with regard to the shift from TVET to TVSD (i.e. the taking into account of all formal, non-formal and informal forms of skills development), cannot be transformed without major changes in the way existing training establishments operate. These establishments should establish interactive relationships with local populations and get involved in the development of traditional and new apprenticeships. They must also provide initial training for community jobs, continuing training for entrepreneurs and training to help jobseekers into the world of work. All this will necessitate a significant change in the profiles and practice of trainers.

Course of action 4: invest in better skills for entrepreneurs and trainers

No changes can be brought about without a genuine effort to bring together all of the various stakeholders involved in skills development. This should include:

- trainers at existing establishments to update the way they train for particular occupations;
- entrepreneurs and master craftsmen in the informal economy, by providing educational tools to help them train the numerous young people for whom they are responsible;
- all TVSD stakeholders to promote a system of governance based on partnership combining quality and efficiency, needs analysis and efforts to tailor supply to demand.

This process cannot be truly successful without countries making an effort to share the most successful experiences in this field.

Course of action 5: design and implement inter-country schemes and systems for helping young people into employment

National pilot projects are often too limited when it comes to implementing the right solutions to problems that are generally shared by other countries. The ICQN should help to propose and implement measures that are of a similar if not an identical nature in the following areas:

- collaborative development of tools and incentives to encourage the private sector and socio-professional organisations to take on young people;
- the design and implementation of collaborative strategies and schemes designed to have a real impact on young people's access to the world of work;
- the design of an environment favourable to both self-employment and the development of micro/small businesses;
- the signing of inter-country agreements to enable young jobseekers to enrol on courses in recognised, high-quality establishments outside their country of origin.

This inter-country cooperation can only be brought about if the ICQN/TVSD forges the institutional and financial conditions for the production of studies and research to develop a proper knowledge bank in this area.

In conclusion

The experts' meeting of 21 July, which will be held to prepare for the Ministerial Conference of 22 and 23 July, will refine these courses of action with a view to providing ministers with an action plan for the 2014-2017 period that is both realistic and effective. The purpose will be to choose the potential courses of action that will become priority topics for the next three years. This action plan will be used to step up efforts to give young Africans the best possible opportunities to become fully-fledged participants in their continent's future rather than be left on the sidelines.