

Skills Initiative for Africa

The Challenge

The growing extent of youth unemployment poses a fundamental challenge for the whole of Africa. In total, around 60 percent of the unemployed are under the age of 25 and young women are especially affected. Even though, the access to quality education and appropriate job opportunities are essential for the reduction of poverty, political stability and participation as well as sustainable development, educational programs with a practical orientation are hard to come by in many African countries. The lack of educational opportunities results in both poor personal and occupational prospects and is one of the reasons why many young people choose to leave their homes in search of a more prosperous future.

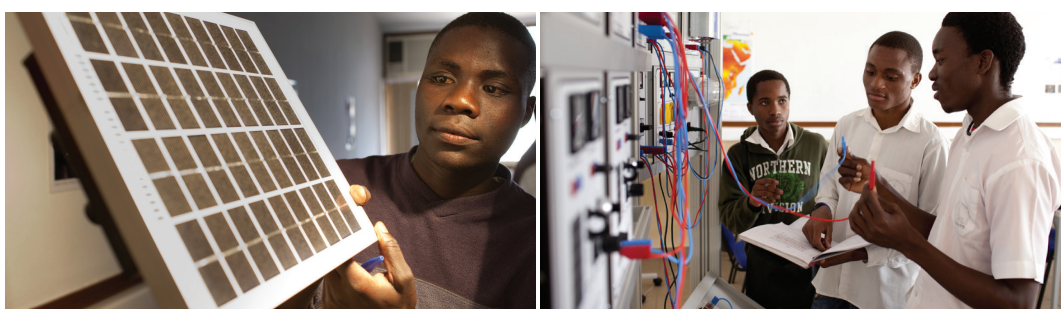
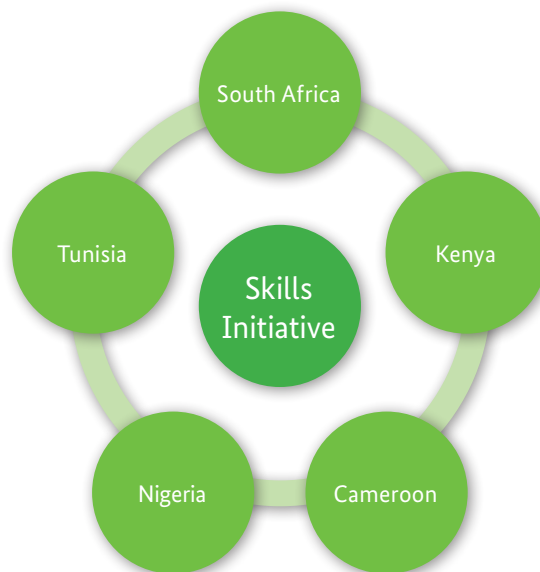
Many African partners have understood the significance of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and have initiated a number of national programs. Nonetheless, a shortage of qualified teachers, scholarships and an adequate infrastructure as well as an absence of practical vocational curricula and missing or outdated technical and didactical equipment still pose significant challenges to the successful implementation of such programs. One of the biggest challenges is the fact that a regional approach is still missing. The replication of national role models and their innovative approaches in other countries is an important step towards successful and sustainable vocational programs.

Our Approach

In response to these challenges the president of the AUC, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, and the minister of the BMZ, Gerd Müller, initiated the Skills Initiative for Africa. Its goal is to strengthen occupational prospects of young people, especially for women and youth from poor areas.

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| Project name | Skills Initiative for Africa |
| Commissioned by | Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Germany |
| Project region | Africa (continental) |
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| Executing agencies | African Union Commission (AUC); Implemented by NEPAD |
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Pilot countries were selected to act as multipliers in their respective regions and to serve as role models for other countries. These pilot countries are Tunisia, Nigeria, Cameroon, Kenya and South Africa.



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Skills development in Cameroon,
Ethiopia and Mozambique



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Establishment of a financing facility for the Skills Initiative

Often times generating financial resources for innovative approaches of skills development poses a bottleneck when it comes to the implementation of such initiatives. In response to this challenge, KfW supports the NEPAD agency as the technical arm of AUC in the establishment of a financing facility, which shall function as the centerpiece of the Skills Initiative. Following a competitive application process, innovative practical skills development programs in pilot countries can receive funding. A guiding principle for the selection of projects is their relevance in addressing common challenges of African Union member states in skills development. Furthermore, special consideration shall be given to the support of women and youth from low-income families. The initiative shall also initiate a close cooperation with employers and the private sector aiming at labour-market orientation of the training contents, integrating the employers in the delivery of practical training on the job to improve employability. These factors are the fundamental criteria in the assessment and selection of applications for funding. Public and private institutions as well as NGOs and companies are eligible to submit requests in regards to their skills development programs, among others, for the construction and rehabilitation of infrastructure, the procurement of technical and didactical equipment and the sponsoring of scholarships. Moreover, the financing facility will also offer financial resources for innovative, small scale pilot projects.

Structural capacity strengthening and establishment of an African dialogue platform

The GIZ supports the Skills Initiative through capacity development at NEPAD and AUC. Furthermore, the GIZ assists these organizations with the preparation of best practice approaches in the pilot countries in order to improve the quality, access and relevance of skills development programs. Likewise, the establishment of an African dialogue platform to showcase innovative and successful approaches shall promote continental exchange and networking opportunities and thereby stimulate an increased quality and relevance of skills development activities across the continent.

Outlook

The Skills Initiative for Africa promotes occupational prospects of young Africans through the support of innovative skills development programs and a close cooperation with the private sector. The regional approach ensures a process of communication and mutual learning and addresses challenges on a continental level.

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Skills Initiative for Africa

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