Thematic factsheet

Gender Mainstreaming

The overarching goal of VET Toolbox is to demonstrate that local skills development systems can be flexible and more responsive to the labour market's needs. When skills systems deliver the competent local workforce needed to support investments in Sub-Saharan Africa, foreign capital can create local benefits, including decent jobs and income generation.

As a predecessor of the Team Europe Initiative "Opportunity-driven skills and VET in Africa" (TEI OP-VET) the VET Toolbox is piloting an opportunity-driven approach to VET, linking skills development with investment opportunities for local value creation through employment. By targeting decent employment for women and youth, VET Toolbox ensures inclusive action to realize local benefits for all.

Key Achievements

Employment Outcomes: 39% of employed graduates are women, surpassing the target of 35%. Female employment rates average 68%, compared to 77% for men, a significant achievement given the male-dominated sectors targeted by VET Toolbox projects.

Gender-Focused Actions: Gender mainstreaming efforts have been pivotal in achieving these outcomes, including gender analysis, awareness campaigns, and flexible training modalities.

Actions Promoting Inclusivity

The VET Toolbox consistently mainstreams gender in training and employment through the following actions:

Gender Analysis: Conducting gender analysis to understand sector-specific challenges and opportunities for women.

- *In Mozambique (GIZ), a study on women in transport and logistics informed a gender-inclusive approach.*

Sensitization and Awareness: Engaging public and private partners through Public-Private Dialogues (PPDs) to promote gender inclusion.

- *In Ghana (British Council), sensitisation efforts led to 53% female participation in agricultural skills training.*

Targeted Promotion: Raising awareness to encourage women's participation in male-dominated sectors.

- *In Nigeria (GIZ), the Skills4Riders project motivated women to join delivery rider training through gender-inclusive campaigns.*

Flexible Training Modalities: Adapting training schedules to accommodate women's family responsibilities.

- *In Uganda (GIZ), women-led MSMEs were encouraged to participate by allowing them to bring their children to training sessions.*

Inclusive Learning Materials: Integrating gender-sensitive content and modules into curricula.

- *In Nigeria (GIZ), female delivery riders received modules on safety, including harassment prevention and nighttime safety.*

Role Models and Success Stories: Promoting gender role models to inspire participation in non-traditional fields.

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- *In Ghana (British Council), TIBZAA FARMS trained the first licensed female tractor operator, who now serves as a role model.*

Opportunities for Improvement

While the VET Toolbox has made significant strides, a holistic approach addressing both the supply (training) and demand (workplace) sides is essential for sustained gender inclusivity.

Supply Side (Training)

Comprehensive Gender Analysis:
- Conduct deeper gender analysis during sector selection to identify and address gender-specific barriers.
  - **Current Gap:** Limited gender analysis during project design hindered the ability to address barriers effectively.

Gender-Sensitive Curriculum Design:
- Ensure curricula challenge stereotypes and include diverse role models and inclusive language.
  - **Current Gap:** Initial curriculum design lacked gender sensitivity, limiting its impact on challenging traditional roles.

Accessibility:
- Address timing, location, and language barriers to make training accessible to all.
  - **Current Gap:** Infrastructure and scheduling constraints may have limited participation for some groups.

Safeguarding Measures:
- Implement clear policies and reporting mechanisms to address harassment and discrimination.
  - **Current Gap:** Safeguarding measures were not explicitly highlighted in project design.

Gender-Sensitive Trainers:
- Train trainers to recognise and address biases, use inclusive language, and create equitable learning environments.
  - **Current Gap:** Lack of prioritisation for gender-sensitive trainer training.

Gender-Inclusive Infrastructure:
- Upgrade training centers to include separate restrooms, safe spaces, and childcare facilities.
  - **Current Gap:** Budget constraints limited infrastructure improvements.

Demand Side (Workplace)

Mindset Acceptance:
- Address employer and colleague biases through awareness campaigns and role models.
  - **Current Gap:** Limited engagement with women's associations and mindset barriers in workplaces.

Minimum Inclusive Standards:
- Establish anti-discrimination policies, equal advancement opportunities, and flexible work arrangements.
  - **Current Gap:** No clear minimum standards for inclusive workplaces

Gender-Inclusive Workplace Infrastructure:
- Advocate for facilities like restrooms, lactation rooms, and safe transportation.
  - **Current Gap:** Workplace infrastructure improvements were not prioritized.

Cross-Cutting Issues

Engagement with Women's Associations:
- Actively involve women's associations in planning and implementation.
  - **Current Gap:** Limited engagement with gender-focused organizations.

Public-Private Dialogue (PPD):
- Ensure balanced gender representation in PPDs through quotas or targeted invitations.
  - **Current Gap:** Proactive measures to enhance female participation were lacking.

Key Recommendations

To further enhance gender inclusivity in VET, the following actions are recommended:

Financial Commitment
- Allocate dedicated budgets for gender-sensitive approaches, including infrastructure improvements and safeguarding measures.

Representation and Participation
- Ensure balanced gender representation in decision-making processes, particularly in PPDs.

Mindset and Cultural Shift
- Challenge stereotypes through awareness programs, role models, and success stories.

Infrastructure Improvements
- Upgrade training centers and workplaces to be gender-inclusive, ensuring safe and accessible spaces.

Training and Capacity Building
- Conduct thorough gender analyses during sector selection.
- Develop gender-sensitive curricula and provide training for trainers on inclusivity.

Safeguarding and Accessibility
- Implement clear safeguarding policies and allocate budgets to address accessibility barriers.

Workplace Inclusivity
- Establish minimum standards for inclusive workplaces, including anti-discrimination policies and flexible work arrangements.
- Advocate for gender-inclusive workplace infrastructure.