

## GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

### AVSI – Cote D'Ivoire

Project: Integrated project to support the empowerment of artisans in Cote D'Ivoire

#### Good Practice: Formation professionnelle, recyclage et redynamisation des Organisations Professionnelles d'Artisans (OPA)

##### Brief summary

In a context of rapid changes in terms of new technologies for economically strengthening artisans, our project organised an upgrading training sessions for artisans. This was done through in strong partnership with the OPA because they are the first level of artisan federations for the crafts trades.

##### Key Areas of the Good Practice

- Vocational training and consolidation of craft activities (3.6)
- Strengthening the association and structuring capacity of craft associations (1.9)
- The exploitation of the resources and trainers of craftspeople by other craftspeople (3.2)
- Craft innovations appear as a result of the new skills acquired through training (3.6)
- Networking between private, public and associative actors, creates a new dynamic (1.10)
- Consideration and introduction of the specific needs of artisans in the curricula of vocational training centres of the State becomes a requirement, because in general the existing modules exclude them, because of their low levels of training. (3.6)
- Complementary training (management, literacy, management, marketing, etc.) become essential conditions for the creation of small craft enterprises (3.2)
- Equipment, because access to resources and factors of production adapted to new market requirements are factors that perpetuate artisanal activities (3.6)

##### Context - Brief description

• **Strategy: How was our approach built?** The starting point was the evaluation of the training needs of craftspeople according to the different trades. This evaluation was done with evaluation sheets during focus groups, which made it possible to know the different levels of skills the craftspeople had acquired. Then we involved 50 OPA. As a reminder, the OPA group craftspeople of the same trade. They are the final link in the chain of actors and organisations working for artisans in Côte d'Ivoire.

• **Involvement and enhancement of national training centres:** With the support of AVSI, in collaboration with the OPA, the Project mobilised the network of State Training Centres to provide training tailored to the needs of the artisans. The training modules have been relaxed with regard to content and schedules. Like all centres of this kind in many countries, the content of the training was inadequate in relation to the needs. The collaboration with the project allowed them to meet the expressed needs. There were 10 schools and public vocational training institutes (Centre for Professional Development of Automotive CPMA of Vridi, Centre for the Development of the Profession of Mechanics and Electricity CPMME and CPM-Bois de Koumassi, Electronics and Computing Centre Applied CELIA of Treichville, National Pedagogical Institute of Technical and Professional Education IPNETP, Technical Education Centres CET, Vocational Training Centres CFP and CBP, etc. Additionally, six private training centres (CNPS, CERAP-ASMU, RIVKA Concept Design, Michèle Yakice, SYNAPECECI-Gandour Institute, Ebène-Coiffure Institute, etc.) were associated. The

network that was thus formed and supported has allowed the upgrading training of 331 master craftspeople who the Chamber of Trades has now certified. The project has also rehabilitated some centres such as the Yamoussoukro Metals and Mechanics Training Centre.

- **Training operational framework:** Considering the professional and social needs of the craftspeople and in agreement with the training centres the timing of the sessions was flexible. The artisans gathered at a rallying point and went to the training centres according to 2 modalities. The first category chose a day of the week to attend the trainings. The other days are spent working in their own workshops. The second category chose to work mornings in their workshops, spending afternoons in training centres. This dual approach allowed them to regularly combine the content of the training modules with their workshop activities.

- **Follow-up of the training:** Each learner signed a follow-up sheet for each session, with the monitoring carried out by the supervisor via the training centre administration. At least 140 hours of training was required. Teachers organised regular practical evaluations with notes that described the level of progress of the student artisan. Each OPA organised the participation of "master craftspeople chosen from within" to participate in the training. At the end of the training, the latter would be in charge of replicating the training received to the other members of the OPA.

- **Equipment support as a factor in the consolidation of OPA:** After the retraining courses for master craftspeople, the project facilitated the acquisition of tools and working materials as a common resource for members. For example, after the training of mechanics on "new techniques of repairing the electronics of cars", the project supported the acquisition of a car scanner for the OPA mechanics. Each member can borrow the equipment from their OPA to perform the work in his garage. In return they pay a small fee to the savings mechanism of the OPA. This has the advantage of improving the quality of the work, to maintaining the clientele, but above all, has allowed the accession of new members. This is because belonging to the OPA guarantees them access to a new working tool, such as the scanner.

**Important impact:** The revitalization of 50 professional crafts organisations (29 in Abidjan, 10 in Yamoussoukro and 11 in Bouaké). They have been supported through the Regional Chambers of Trades. 625 artisans were trained in 21 sessions on health and safety at work, management of a small-scale business, association management, financial education and literacy, etc. 74 workshops for nearly 3,500 craftspeople were conducted on exchanges between persons in different trades. The Master craftspeople who were trained in the professional schools of the State have, in turn, organised trainings and workshops to exchange experiences. The aim was to promote a peer training approach and to highlight the internal skills and resources within the OPAs.

These workshops were organised in a decentralized way, in craft studios, in neighbourhoods. We noted with interest that there was design training provided to persons in certain trades such as potters, weavers, tailors and seamstresses. In addition to the strengthening of interconnections between trades, they are likely to improve the position of artisans in their respective sectors (value chains). Potters have changed the design of their traditional utilitarian pottery. They have adapted some of their products from the utility to the artistic sector, even making items such as clay necklaces and bracelets. Shirt manufacturers use traditional weaving patterns and fabrics to decorate their products. Here again, it is about acting in niches with new and greater potential for new markets.

#### **4. Sustainability of the Good Practice**

The vast training network built around the national vocational training centres, which now

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integrates the training modules for artisans with low literacy levels, is an important lever for sustainability. The peer artisans who train other craftspeople is an added value for sustainability because the OPAs now have in-house resources to update the skills of their different members.

### Lesson Learned

The OPA is the base that supports the mobilization and structuring of crafts. They have strong influences on their members and have a large capacity of implantation in the field. They are listened to by their members. "The more the OPAs are strong and structured," the more the craftsmanship will be better.