



NEWS UPDATES

September 2020



YOUNG Africans need more and better jobs, not more training

ILO and German officials meet Beirut blast clear-up workers

ACHIEVING a European Education Area by 2025 and resetting education and training for the digital age



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The BIBB turns 50 - with innovative strength into the future!

2 September 2020

Since it was founded in 1970, we have been researching, organizing and developing vocational training and further education in Germany. Initially as the Federal Institute for Vocational Training Research (BBF), then from 1976 as the Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB). As part of our philosophy of a permanent and sustainable science-policy-practice discourse, we have been contributing over five decades to enabling many people to have a professional future through education and qualifications and to secure the competitiveness of Germany as a business location.

We are therefore happy to take our anniversary year 2020 as an opportunity to look back on the eventful past of our institute and of course to look ahead.

From the foundation of the BBF until today, a lot has changed and developed in the vocational training system. As you can see from the expansion of our tasks, we have been able to benefit from this to this day. In addition, many innovations for vocational training came from the BIBB during this period. We want to tell you about this in the online chronicle "50 Years of BIBB" as part of an exciting journey through the history of BIBB.

The eyewitness interviews planned for the end of the year will offer a very personal look at the history of the BIBB : We

let the former presidents of our institute speak, who look back on their term of office.

But - and this is very important to me personally - in the coming weeks we will of course also be looking at the current and future challenges for our work, vocational training and vocational training research in Germany: How is vocational training changing as a result of digitization? What effects do we expect from the ongoing corona pandemic? Which strategies are now necessary to shape the future of vocational training and which proposed solutions for politics and practice can the BIBB develop? All of these are important questions that should be answered on an anniversary.

This future-oriented look ahead is also illustrated by our key visual, specially developed on the occasion of the anniversary : The "ascending" number 50 is an example of further development and progress and thus meets the core of our self-image.

After all, vocational training has to continue to develop and at the same time meet the requirements of the present and the future. With this in mind, we will bring in the expertise we have gathered over the last few decades with a great deal of innovative strength in order to find answers to the diverse challenges that vocational training is currently and will be faced with again and again.

Young Africans need more and better jobs, not more training

7 September 2020



When the world rebuilds after the COVID-19 crisis, Africa will have a unique challenge to face: bringing its overwhelmingly young workforce into decent, productive, and secure jobs. Africa has the world's youngest population, a fact that some hope will mean fewer deaths and serious cases, despite the region's health care systems being extremely underfunded.

Even before the global pandemic, many young Africans struggled to find productive employment, often finding themselves underemployed or perpetually engaged in low-paid, low-productivity, precarious self-employment. This trend, paired with a persistent, although, we argue, unfounded, worry among political leaders and the international community that some frustrated young people may turn to violent crime, militant extremism, or protest, has fostered a plethora of youth employment initiatives. Most of these initiatives focus on delivering post-school vocational training or entrepreneurship coaching to young people—and their impacts on youth earnings or the overall economy have not been particularly encouraging.

NOT A 'YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT' CRISIS, BUT A 'MISSING JOBS' CRISIS

In our recent Brookings paper, we argue that such efforts are bound to fail because Africa's "youth unemployment" crisis is actually a "missing jobs" crisis. Indeed, many people in Africa do not so much lack skills or education as the opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills in ways that drive their countries forward economically. We argue that, rather than

this being a problem specific to young people, in fact, people of all ages face a staggering shortage of formal, productive jobs—the type that could be considered "good" or "decent" work.

The dominant focus on bringing about youth employment through training is a case of a false problem diagnosis leading to the wrong interventions, which are not only ineffective in the short run but also waste urgently needed resources. Churning out better qualified and more motivated job seekers has not created more jobs—and instead has drawn funding and attention away from strategies that could create more jobs. The problem needs to be recognized for what it really is: a crisis of missing jobs.

This lack of jobs leads to precarity—in three dimensions—for people of all ages. The first dimension is income risk, because most Africans—whether young or old, working in the household farming or business sector or the emerging "gig" economy—are forced to carry all the risks associated with variable weather, crop pests, sickness, price fluctuations, market disruptions, theft, and so on. The second dimension is instability, as many activities on family farms or in informal businesses are temporary and/or seasonal, which leads to perennial underemployment and low income for those stuck in these sectors. The third dimension is a lack of social protection, because most Africans work under conditions in which labor protections and laws do not apply, and few countries have a meaningful safety net.



ILO and German officials meet Beirut blast clear-up workers

8 September 2020

ILO Acting Regional Director for Arab States, Frank Hagemann, and German Ambassador to Lebanon, Andreas Kindl, have met with workers who have been employed under an ILO programme that is helping clear the wreckage of the huge explosion that tore through Beirut in August.

Within days of the blast, the ILO mobilized its on-going Employment Intensive Infrastructure Programme (EIIP), so far creating around 200 decent jobs for Lebanese nationals and Syrian refugees, 15 per cent of whom are women. Its aim is to help restore livelihoods and provide much-needed income in the aftermath of the blast, which claimed the lives of around 190 people and caused devastating damage to homes and businesses across the capital.

The ILO's response is being supported

by Germany through the German Development Bank (KfW), which is funding EIIP, and through additional financial support provided by the Netherlands under the Partnership for improving prospects for forcibly displaced persons and host communities (PROSPECTS), which helped up-scale interventions and reach more vulnerable workers.

Officials toured an area of the city which was hard hit by the explosion, and spoke to workers as they cleared rubble and debris.

"The ILO was able to quickly respond to the blast and its aftermath by creating jobs for Lebanese and Syrian workers in the clear-up works," said Hagemann. "Many of these workers were previously unemployed, and their economic vulnerability was compounded over recent months by

the multiple crises affecting Lebanon. With the support of our development partners, the governments of Germany and the Netherlands, we will continue to promote employment and rebuild and restore livelihoods, to help meet the decent work needs of Lebanon and its residents," Hagemann added.

"We appreciate very much the ILO's fast response to direct resources and to direct the assistance they are doing in the employment intensive infrastructure programme to places like here, close to the blast (...) and have workers working here since almost thirty days, clearing the rubble," said Ambassador Kindl during the work site tour. "I have seen that Lebanese and Syrians are working together and I have seen that there is a relatively high percentage of women working on the site which is a very good thing."



UNEVOC - Promoting quality in TVET using technology: A practical guide

14 September 2020

Technology has altered many aspects of life, including education and training. As a result of technological developments, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) has become more accessible to students, and the quality of education and training has improved too. Teachers and trainers can use digital tools to manage their tasks effectively and engage learners in digitally-rich

environments. Learners can also use technology to learn new skills and to collaborate and interact with teachers and trainers.

The COVID-19 pandemic has however underlined the current difficulties in effectively integrating technologies in the delivery of education and training.

This practical guide helps TVET

institutions to understand the organizational plans needed to build up their capacity to stimulate digital learning. It also guides teachers that want to develop their competencies, improve their pedagogical strategies with use of technology, and learn from existing practice.



CEDEFOP COMMUNITY OF apprenticeship experts holds annual meeting

16 September 2020

The members of Cedefop's community of apprenticeship experts held their annual meeting, which this year was a virtual event, on 16 September.

A long-term initiative of Cedefop's Department for Learning and Employability, the community aims at strengthening and expanding the knowledge on apprenticeships in Europe. The experts' voluntary collaboration is expected to improve the understanding of apprenticeship schemes and ultimately support their quality implementation in Europe.

Access to stable expert contact points in the countries provides insights on national developments and the

national relevance of EU/European initiatives, by also covering existing gaps in information retrieval from the countries in specific areas of concern. In this sense, the community is conceived as a knowledge hub and reference point for apprenticeships in Europe.

The community currently gathers 31 experts from EU Member States, the UK, Iceland and Norway. The meeting's main objectives were to take stock of the 2020 activities and to look forward to the community's strategic orientation for 2021 onwards.



SFIVET - EHB LAW CREATES THE BASIS For A Competence Center For Vocational Training

16 September 2020

The new SFIVET Act regulates the tasks and organization of the Federal University Institute for Vocational Education and Training (SFIVET) and creates the necessary foundations for a Swiss-wide competence center for professional education. With the institutionalized involvement of organizations in the world of work, a central requirement of the Swiss Employers' Association has been incorporated into the law.

After the Council of States, the National Council has now also acted on the Federal Council's bill (19.070) and unanimously accepted the proposal. In the summer session, the Council of States followed the proposal of its commission and thus also the demand of the Swiss Employers' Association (SAV), which ensures the institutionalized involvement of organizations in the world of work (OdA).

The councils agreed on the main goals of the new legal basis, the strengthening of vocational training and proximity to the world of work. This focus is also shared by the SAV. It is also a central concern of employers to strengthen the Swiss-wide orientation of vocational training.

The new law creates the necessary basis for the positioning of the Federal University of Vocational Education and Training (SFIVET, previously "Federal University Institute for Vocational Education and Training") as a competence center for vocational training in the Swiss university landscape. It regulates the tasks and the organization of the SFIVET as a public institution of the federal government with its own legal personality.

It is therefore crucial that the SFIVET, as a national competence center, can offer its services for the benefit of the national bodies and other vocational training players. The positioning as a university is particularly important for the certificate and diploma courses for teachers at the vocational school.

The academization of vocational training must be prevented, but further development of vocational training in the interests of the stakeholders should be promoted. Systematic involvement of the OdA and the social partners will be decisive for this.

EU education ministers discuss new impetus for vocational education and training

17 September 2020

The EU ministers for education met informally within the framework of the German EU Presidency in Osnabrück on 16 and 17 September to discuss a new impetus for vocational education and training (VET) and to kickstart the Osnabrück declaration to modernise European VET and deepen cross-border cooperation within a European Education Area.

Following a consultation phase, the declaration is set to be adopted on 30 November 2020. Speaking at the meeting, Cedefop Executive Director Jürgen Siebel stressed that the objectives of the draft Osnabrück declaration are spot on: 'They put VET centre stage in the green and digital transformations and the recovery within the EU and in our neighbourhood.'

He went on: 'While initial VET remains important and needs to be developed, continuing VET will gain relative importance, accelerated through digitalisation and the Covid-19 crisis, and addressed in Objective 2.'

With Cedefop's lead in labour market and skills intelligence, said Mr Siebel, 'we will help policy-makers to address the green and digital skills demands, curricula, and training-delivery methodologies, as requested in Objective 3. For Objective 4, Cedefop and our sister agency, ETF, provide the backbone of VET's international dimension: Cedefop with the European qualifications framework and national qualifications frameworks, guidance, validation and recognition, and ETF with its neighbourhood outreach activities.'

The Cedefop Executive Director concluded: 'With ETF we are ready, willing and able to support, facilitate and monitor the Osnabrück objectives – as we have done for Riga in the past.'

Mr Siebel also had the chance to discuss Cedefop and its contribution to evidence-based VET policy-making with German Federal Minister for Education and Research Anja Karliczek who chaired the event.

ENCOURAGING RESULTS

Following the conclusion of the two-day meeting, Ms Karliczek presented the results in a press conference. She



said that the Osnabrück declaration is 'a clear signal of how we want to shape VET and how much potential it has,' adding: 'All Member States and social partners will sign the declaration, showing our commitment to VET. This focuses on four key goals: increasing economic resilience, establishing a culture of lifelong learning, also in a cross-border sense, embedding principles of sustainability in VET, and strengthening support of its international dimension.'

According to Ms Karliczek, 'VET is the best opportunity for young people to successfully enter the labour market. One thing we all agreed on is that advanced vocational qualifications are an excellent parallel career opportunity to university studies, and we want to continue to expand on this and make it very attractive for young people.'

European Commissioner for Jobs and Social Right Nicolas Schmit said: 'Our success with the digital and green transformations, the social and economic future of Europe, its prosperity very much depend on our education and VET systems. The Commission took quick action in this area because we saw this connection between economic change and VET. In July we presented our renewed skills agenda, which includes a Council Recommendation on VET to be adopted in November.'

He thanked Ms Karliczek for launching the Osnabrück declaration: 'It's a challenge for all of us, for the Commission and the Member States, to find out how we can shape this cooperation. Our goal is to implement this declaration. We have set ourselves clear goals and that is what we need to work on over the next four-five years.'



Switzerland - Access To Funds Is More Important For Vet Than Replenishment

17 September 2020

After the Council of States, the National Council increased the federal contributions to the promotion of education, research and innovation in the years 2021-2024. Employers welcome the federal government's prioritization of vocational training, but consider an additional increase in funding to be unnecessary.

The message for the promotion of education, research and innovation (ERI) joined to the first chamber now the National Council on appeal. After the vote in both councils, the overall package adopted amounts to a good CHF 28 billion. The National Council increased federal funds for education, research and innovation by a further 53 million francs. A good 26 million francs of this goes to vocational and advanced training.

The Swiss Employers' Association (SAV) welcomes the fact that the Confederation and Parliament recognize the importance of vocational training. However, he rejects an additional increase in the federal funds allocated for this. The amount earmarked in the embassy (4.3 billion francs) for professional and advanced training would have been sufficient.

On the other hand, employers advocate that the funds for project and innovation contributions in vocational training should increase at an above-average rate of 11.2% annually, which enables more flexibility in financing. Important challenges such as the further development

of vocational training, equal opportunities and crisis management can thus be tackled in a focused manner. While the necessary financial resources are available, their access for organizations in the world of work (OdA) must be significantly simplified. The SAV regards additional financial resources as neither necessary nor expedient.

The employers have also spoken out against an increase in the flat-rate contributions to the institutions for vocational training (CHF 20.4 million), which the National Council has now approved. There is a risk that the increased flat-rate contributions will make the system more expensive without having any positive effects. After this decision, the employers' association expects that these flat-rate contributions in particular will be precisely evaluated and their effectiveness checked before the next ERI period.

In the opinion of the SAV, the allocated funds must primarily be used in vocational training for topic-related projects of the Vocational Training 2030 initiative, which is part of the association, and with the participation of organizations in the world of work (OdA). In this way, the apprenticeship market can prepare for the future and the excellent image of vocational training can be consolidated and expanded.

Parliament still has to approve the funds in the ERI embassy with the budget.



Europe: How VET schools in Europe are reopening

22 September 2020

Starting the school year 2020/21 in the midst of a pandemic poses a host of new challenges for schools, teachers and training providers.

The coronavirus pandemic in early 2020 meant that vocational education and training (VET) schools in Europe had to resort to extended closures and convert physical classrooms and work-based learning spaces into digital learning environments overnight. With the start of the new school year, most European countries are reopening their VET schools under specific protective guidelines for practising social distancing, reinforcing hygiene measures, and ensuring school premises are disinfected and well-ventilated.

Cedefop's network of ambassadors tackling early leaving from VET shared their insights into the measures taken by 16 European countries (Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Turkey and the United Kingdom) for the reopening of VET schools and the challenges that VET providers and practitioners are facing in implementing them.

Most countries have opted for a hybrid system with a blend of physical and virtual learning. This gives schools the freedom to choose the best combination, such as alternating between morning and afternoon classes (in Hungary and Belgium); allocating certain days of the week to online learning (in Finland and Italy); or teaching certain subjects online (in Portugal and Spain). Most countries allow distance learning for teachers, students and their families if they are at higher risk due to serious pre-existing health problems.

VET providers and principals are establishing and testing out a 'new normal' for schools. They have faced challenges in the past – the 2008 economic recession, the H1N1 pandemic – but nothing to the extent of the coronavirus fallout. Teachers are faced with a Herculean task. The lost learning time students suffered from the abrupt move to distance learning needs to be addressed, particularly for student populations with special needs or of low income. Instruction must be flexible as schools face the prospect of applying an unfamiliar hybrid learning system, or should a spike in Covid-19 cases force schools to return to remote learning.



Cedefop and Eurofound to present key findings from the European company survey 2019

23 September 2020

EU agencies Cedefop and Eurofound will present the results of the European company survey 2019 (ECS 2019) at a virtual launch event titled 'Workplace practices unlocking employee potential' on 13 October.

This will be the first of three webinars during October to discuss the survey's key findings and their implications for policy and practice. The fourth iteration of the survey has been carried out jointly by the two agencies, strengthening the aspects related to skills strategies, utilisation and learning. ECS 2019 provides comparative data on workplace strategies and practices for work organisation, human resource management, skills use and skills development, employee participation and social dialogue, in companies across the 27 EU Member States and the United Kingdom.

The report demonstrates how companies can design their workplace practices to generate outcomes that benefit both workers and employers. It shows that by bundling practices

that increase employee autonomy, facilitate employee voice and promote training and learning, businesses can boost performance while improving aspects of workers' job quality.

This webinar is aimed at EU and national policy-makers and social partners, as well as the business community, employee representatives, human resource practitioners and researchers. It will be an opportunity to discuss the fresh findings and explore ways to create a work environment that motivates and helps employees to use their skills and knowledge to the full.

European Commission's Director-General of DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion Joost Korte will set the scene alongside contributions from Cedefop Executive Director Jürgen Siebel and his Eurofound counterpart Juan Menéndez-Valdés. This will be followed by a presentation by the report authors Giovanni Russo, Cedefop, and Gijs van Houten, Eurofound, as well as a panel discussion.

ILO - COVID-19 leads to massive labour income losses worldwide

23 September 2020

A new ILO analysis of the labour market impact of COVID-19 reveals a “massive” drop in labour income and a fiscal stimulus gap that threatens to increase inequality between richer and poorer countries.

The devastating losses in working hours caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have brought a “massive” drop in labour income for workers around the world, says the International Labour Organization (ILO) in its latest assessment of the effects of the pandemic on the world of work.

Global labour income is estimated to have declined by 10.7 per cent, or US\$ 3.5 trillion, in the first three quarters of 2020, compared with the same period in 2019. This figure excludes income support provided through government measures.

The biggest drop was in lower-middle income countries, where the labour income losses reached 15.1 per cent, with the Americas the hardest hit region at 12.1 per cent.

The ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work. Sixth edition, says that the global working hour losses in the first nine months of 2020 have been “considerably larger” than estimated in the previous edition of the Monitor (issued on 30 June).

For example, the revised estimate of global working time lost in the second quarter (Q2) of this year (when compared to Q4 2019) is for 17.3 per cent, equivalent to 495 million full time equivalent (FTE) jobs (based on a 48-hour working week), whereas the earlier estimate was for 14 per cent, or 400 million FTE jobs. In Q3 of 2020, global working hour losses of 12.1 per cent (345 million FTE jobs) are expected.

The outlook for Q4 has worsened significantly since the last ILO Monitor was issued. Under the ILO’s baseline scenario, global working-hour losses are now projected to amount to 8.6 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2020 (compared to Q4 2019), which corresponds to 245 million FTE jobs. This is an increase from the ILO’s previous estimate of 4.9 per cent or 140 million FTE jobs.

One reason for the estimated increases in working-



hour losses is that workers in developing and emerging economies, especially those in informal employment, have been much more affected than by past crises, the Monitor says.

It also notes that the drop in employment is more attributable to inactivity than to unemployment, with important policy implications.

While many stringent workplace closures have been relaxed, there are significant variations between regions. 94 per cent of workers are still in countries with some sort of workplace restrictions, and 32 per cent are in countries with closures for all but essential workplaces.

THE “FISCAL STIMULUS GAP”

The 6th edition of the Monitor also looks at the effectiveness of fiscal stimulus in alleviating labour market impacts.

In countries where sufficient data is available for Q2 2020, a clear correlation exists, showing that the larger the fiscal stimulus (as a percentage of GDP), the lower the working-hour losses. In that period, globally an additional fiscal stimulus of 1 per cent of annual GDP would have reduced working hour losses by a further 0.8 per cent.

However, while fiscal stimulus packages have played a significant role in supporting economic activity and reducing the fall in working hours, they have been concentrated in high-income countries, as emerging and developing economies have limited capacity to finance such measures.



Achieving a European Education Area by 2025 and resetting education and training for the digital age

30 September 2020

Today, the Commission adopted two initiatives that will strengthen the contribution of education and training to the EU's recovery from the coronavirus crisis, and help build a green and digital Europe. Setting out a vision of the European Education Area to be achieved by 2025, the Commission proposes new initiatives, more investment and stronger cooperation of Member States to help all Europeans, of all ages, benefit from the EU's rich education and training offer. The Commission also adopted a new Digital Education Action Plan, reflecting lessons learned from the coronavirus crisis, and devising a plan for a high-performing digital education ecosystem with enhanced digital competences for the digital transformation.

The Communication on the European Education Area outlines how cooperation can further enrich the quality, inclusiveness and digital and green dimension of Member

State education systems. It shows how together, Member States can shape a European Education Area based on freedom for learners and teachers to learn and work across the continent and for institutions to freely associate with one another in Europe and beyond.

The European Education Area is underpinned by six dimensions: quality, inclusion and gender equality, green and digital transitions, teachers, higher education, a stronger Europe in the world. Initiatives will inter alia look at ways to enhance quality, notably with regard to basic and digital skills and to make school education more inclusive and gender sensitive and improve school success. They will help strengthen understanding of climate change and sustainability, foster the greening of education infrastructure, support the teaching profession, further roll out European Universities and enhance connectivity among



education and training institutions.

The Communication sets out the means and milestones to achieve the European Education Area by 2025, supported by Europe's Recovery Plan (NextGenerationEU) and the Erasmus+ Programme. In addition, it proposes a framework for cooperation with Member States and engagement with education stakeholders, including a reporting and analysis structure, with agreed education targets, to encourage and track reforms. Efforts to establish the European Education Area will work in synergy with the European Skills Agenda, the renewed Vocational Education and Training policy and the European Research Area.

The Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027) proposes a set of initiatives for high-quality, inclusive and accessible digital education in Europe. It is a call to action for stronger cooperation between Member States at European level, as well as with and between stakeholders, to make education and training systems truly fit for the digital age. The coronavirus crisis has put distance learning at the centre of education practices. This has shed light on the pressing need to improve digital education, as a key strategic objective for high-quality teaching and learning in the digital age. As we move beyond the emergency phase imposed by the outbreak of the pandemic, we need a strategic and longer-term approach to digital education and training.

The Action Plan has two long-term strategic priorities: (i)

fostering the development of a high-performing digital education ecosystem and (ii) enhancing digital competences for the digital transformation. In order to strengthen the cooperation and exchange in digital education at EU level, the Commission will create a European Digital Education Hub, which will foster collaboration and synergies between policy areas relevant to digital education, create a network of national advisory services and strengthen the dialogue between stakeholders from the public and private sector.

Both initiatives will also feed into the third European Education Summit, which the Commission will host online on 10 December to bring Ministers and key stakeholders together to discuss how to make education and training fit for the digital era.

MEMBERS OF THE COLLEGE SAID

Executive Vice-President for a Europe Fit for the Digital Age, Margrethe Vestager, said: "Education and training have faced huge disruption due to COVID-19 and a quick shift to distance and online learning. The mass use of technology has revealed gaps and exposed weaknesses. This is also an opportunity to reset education and training for the digital age. 95% of respondents to the public consultation on the Digital Education Action Plan see the crisis as a turning point for the way technology is used in education and training. This is a momentum to shape and modernise education for the digital age."



MONTHLY VIDEO



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**OECD – SCHOOLS, EDUCATION
AND COVID-19**

