



BRIEFING NOTE

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The City & Guilds Centre for Skills Development is an independent, not for profit research and development body which is committed to improving the policy and practice of work related education and training internationally. We work with organisations around the world - principally with policy makers, employers, practitioners and learners - to share knowledge and help to lead the debate on policy and practice, aiming to achieve our vision of a world in which all people have access to the skills they need for economic and individual prosperity. We are part of the City & Guilds Group.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED AREAS

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1. INTRODUCTION

Vocational training programmes are frequently used by external agencies as a means of securing economic opportunities for unemployed youth and ex-combatants in conflict-affected areas. However, they often fail to deliver their intended economic outcomes. Many participants are unable to subsist or generate an income following their training.

This briefing note outlines the importance of vocational training and jobs creation for youth and ex-combatants in conflict-affected areas, documents organisations that deliver these programmes, and details a number of common problems that they tend to face. It also explains what the implications are for policy makers, practitioners and researchers.

2. IMPORTANCE OF JOBS CREATION FOR YOUTH AND EX-COMBATANTS

Young people are two to five times more likely to be unemployed than adults, and the UN's High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change contends that high unemployment levels amongst youth and ex-combatants in the aftermath of conflict can increase the likelihood of a return to violence.^{1, 2} This security risk is compounded by the fact that 40% of post-conflict countries relapse into armed conflict in ten years or less, according to the World Bank.³ UNESCO-UNEVOC says:

*'Providing vocational and livelihood opportunities that connect directly to opportunities either in employment or in community reconstruction could certainly be seen as demonstrable outcomes of a peace process and provide incentive for continued peace by providing alternatives to those previously involved in conflict.'*⁴

¹ Cunningham, W. (2009). Unemployed Youth: Facilitating the School-to-Work Transition. World Bank Presentation.

² United Nations (2004). A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility.

³ World Bank (2009). Fragile and Conflict-Affected Countries. Retrieved on 1 April 2011 from <http://web.worldbank.org/>.

⁴ UNESCO-UNEVOC (2007). Education for Livelihoods and Civic Participation in Post-Conflict Countries.



Vocational training's skills-centric and employer-facing approach is repeatedly viewed as a solid step towards those 'alternatives' in conflict-affected areas. What is more, vocational training is often a more rapid route into the workplace as compared to formal education. UNESCO-UNEVOC explain that 'young men and women often do not have the time, due to current or future family obligations, to devote to completing a primary or secondary schooling cycle.' Able-bodied young people also represent an enormous potential pool of labour to assist in post-conflict reconstruction. In the aftermath of conflict, international organisations frequently project the image of young men and women rebuilding *their* nation for *their* future.

3. VOCATIONAL TRAINING DELIVERY MECHANISMS

External agencies tend to offer most or all vocational training programmes in conflict-affected areas. National government sponsored programmes, private institutions and employer-led apprenticeships struggle to persist through the course of conflict.⁵ Often infrastructure for training is damaged, public sources of funding and private cash flows are scarce, and teachers and trainers are either displaced or at times have suffered conflict-related deaths.

External Agencies that Provide Vocational Training in Conflict-Affected Areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Care International• Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)• Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)• International Labour Organization (ILO)• International Organization for Migration (IOM)• Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)• Save the Children• World Vision International

4. INTENDED ECONOMIC OUTCOMES OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMMES

The desired economic outcomes of vocational training programmes in conflict-affected areas can be grouped into four categories.

- **Paid employment.** This can be through a private, public or non-profit enterprise. However, it should be noted that the private sector accounts for 90% of jobs in developing countries.⁶
- **Self-employment.** The idea is that trainees are instructed in a specific skill and encouraged to be entrepreneurs.
- **Working groups.** This is where groups of people are trained in a skill or a set of skills and encouraged to formulate income generating activities as a team.
- **Subsistence and income focused agriculture.** This is where pastoralists and agriculturalists are introduced to more sustainable and profitable methods of animal husbandry and farming.

The intended economic outcome of a vocational training programme is usually based on the specific economic circumstances. For instance, paid employment is an option in northern Uganda where there is an emerging private sector, but not so much in southern Sudan where the private sector is by and large non-existent.

5. DISCONNECT BETWEEN VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

In spite of the evident importance of securing sustainable livelihoods for youth and ex-combatants in conflict-affected areas, there is a recurring mismatch between vocational training and employment or subsistence in these settings. UNESCO-UNEVOC describes this disconnect as 'perhaps the most significant failure of post-conflict TVET [Technical and Vocational Education and Training] initiatives.'⁷ The exact empirical scale of this disconnect is impossible to measure as post-training follow-up is often either weak or simply not practiced.^{8,9} However, the following country examples illustrate its prevalence.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ World Development Report (2005). A Better Investment Climate for Everyone. World Bank and Oxford University Publication.

⁷ UNESCO-UNEVOC (2007). Education for Livelihoods and Civic Participation in Post-Conflict Countries.

⁸ Ketel, H. (2008). Equipping Youth for Life: Youth Education Pack in Burundi. NRC Evaluation Report.



Afghanistan

Ex-combatants who participated in the Afghanistan New Beginning's Program (ANBP) (2003-05), which provided reintegration assistance and job training to Afghan militia forces, reported high levels of dissatisfaction with the ANBP. Bhatia and Muggah (2009) explicate that this is 'partly attributable to their conviction that they were owed jobs rather than merely training' – a mere one in four ex-combatants claimed to 'have found a long-term and sustainable activity.' One ex-combatant said: the ANBP 'promises things and we get nothing [...] no one gives us a job [...] we are all so disappointed.'¹⁰

Liberia

Moberg and Johnson-Demen (2009), in their evaluation of the Norwegian Refugee Council's Youth Education Pack (YEP) project in Liberia (2006-07), which afforded vocational training to war-affected youth, assessed that 'apart from youth who have gained short-term employment with an NGO project, only a handful of youth can sustain themselves on the income from the skill learnt at YEP' and that 'this is a frustration to many.'¹¹

Sierra Leone

Hanlon (2005) observes that 'too many [ex-combatants in Sierra Leone] have been trained for tailoring, tie-dyeing, and soap-making, when there is not a sufficient local market [for these skills].'¹² Supply therefore outstrips demand in this case.

Sudan

UNESCO-UNEVOC states that 'assuming that the success of a programme is not measured by completion rates but rather by the number of graduates who use the skills learned to earn a living after programme end, there are not many successful training programmes in southern Sudan.' UNESCO-UNEVOC finds that 'at the moment, graduates are frequently frustrated.'¹³

Uganda

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) reports a 'sharp disconnect between training programmes for youth and subsequent employment or income generation' throughout northern Uganda despite an 'abundance of NGO-led training schemes.' By way of example, IOM comments that 'hundreds, if not thousands, of female youth underwent NGO-led vocational training in the basics of sewing, but struggled to utilise these skills to generate a primary or secondary income.'¹⁴

6. CAUSES OF DISCONNECT BETWEEN VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

The causes of the disconnect between vocational training programmes and economic opportunities in conflict-affected areas for youth and ex-combatants are in part specific to the intended economic outcomes (i.e. paid employment, self-employment, working groups, or subsistence and income focused agriculture). Some of these causes are laid out in the table underneath and separated into factors that can be addressed by programmes and factors that are largely external to programmes.

⁹ Scanteam (2005). Back to a Future: Youth Pack 2003-2005 – Sierra Leone. NRC Evaluation Report.

¹⁰ Bhatia, M. V. and Muggah, R. (2009). The Politics of Demobilization in Afghanistan. In: Muggah, R. (ed.) (2009). Security and Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Dealing with Fighters in the Aftermath of War.

¹¹ Moberg, L. and Johnson-Demen, A. (2009). Small-small steps to rebuild communities with YEP. NRC Evaluation Report.

¹² Hanlon, J. (2005). Is the International Community Helping to Recreate the Pre-Conditions for War in Sierra Leone? United Nations University WIDER Research Paper No. 50. Retrieved on 1 April 2010 from <http://www.wider.unu.edu/>.

¹³ UNESCO-UNEVOC (2007). Education for Livelihoods and Civic Participation in Post-Conflict Countries.

¹⁴ International Organization for Migration (2009). Labour Market Analysis: Amuru, Gulu, Kitgum and Pader.



Factors programmes can address	Factors external to programmes
<p>Paid employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to identify and pay attention to existing and future demands of potential employers • Lack of private sector engagement 	<p>Paid employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of paid jobs available in local market
<p>Self-employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to identify and pay attention to existing and future demands of potential consumers • Failure to provide trainees with functioning tools and materials and start-up capital to form a business • Supposition that ex-combatants, accustomed to chains of command, can in all cases be entrepreneurial 	<p>Self-employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of purchasing power amongst potential local consumers
<p>Working groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to identify and pay attention to existing and future demands of potential consumers • Failure to identify and pay attention to existing and future demands of companies, organisations and governments for contract work • Failure to provide trainees with functioning tools and materials and start-up capital to formulate a business 	<p>Working groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of purchasing power amongst potential local consumers • Lack of contract work available from companies, organisations and governments
<p>Subsistence & income focused agriculture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to identify and pay attention to existing and future demands of potential customers 	<p>Subsistence & income focused agriculture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of purchasing power amongst potential consumers • Inability to access land • Irregular temperature and rainfall patterns

There are also more generic causes for the disconnect between vocational training and economic opportunities, which are applicable to most intended economic outcomes. These include:

- **High training costs.** Vocational training programmes are often lead more by supply than demand in conflict-affected areas as a result of high training costs. For instance, UNESCO-UNEVCO note that ‘since all electricity in southern Sudan is run by generators, gasoline [must be] transported into the region at great cost.’ Consequently, ‘skills training centres usually focus on skills that do not require heavy investment, such as carpentry or agriculture.’¹⁵ The African Union’s 2007 vocational training strategy document also expresses that unit costs for vocational training are ‘necessarily higher’ than unit costs in primary or secondary schools because of ‘smaller student-to-teacher ratios [and] expensive training equipment [and] materials.’¹⁶
- **Funding constraints.** Vocational training and jobs creation initiatives for youth and ex-combatants are persistently under funded in conflict-affected areas.^{17, 18} These funding constraints severely hamper their effectiveness. For example, the Center for Political and Social Research in Pristina reports that IOM’s reintegration programme for ex-combatants in Kosovo was ‘limited in scope’ because it ‘suffered from chronic under funding.’¹⁹
- **Inadequate provision.** Graduates from vocational training programmes in conflict-affected areas are often unable to get jobs because the training that they received was simply not good enough. The African Union’s 2007 vocational training strategy document says that ‘in general, the quality of training is low [because of] emphasis on theory and certification rather than on skills acquisition and proficiency testing, inadequate

¹⁵ UNESCO-UNEVOC (2007). Education for Livelihoods and Civic Participation in Post-Conflict Countries.

¹⁶ Meeting of the Bureau of the Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Union (2007). Strategy to Revitalize Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Africa.

¹⁷ UK Government Stabilisation Unit (2010). Stabilisation Issues Note: Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration.

¹⁸ International Alert (2009). Socio-Economic Reintegration of Ex-Combatants: What Role for the European Union?

¹⁹ Center for Political and Social Research (2005). Reintegration of Former Combatants in Kosovo.



instructor training, obsolete training equipment, and a lack of instructional materials.²⁰ The duration of provision is also often too short to properly learn a trade.²¹

- **Failure to ensure that vocational training is holistic.** Vocational training programmes in conflict-affected areas often fail to grant due consideration to psychological and social factors.²² War-affected youth and ex-combatants frequently suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). For example, Vinck et al report that 1,774 (74%) out of a sample of 2,585 met PTSD symptom criteria in northern Uganda in 2005.²³ Ex-combatants also face profound stigmatisation for their role in the conflict. Regardless of the fact that almost all ex-combatants in northern Uganda were forcibly abducted as children, most face high levels of stigmatisation upon return.²⁴ These psychological and social factors impact their ability to compete in local labour markets and to perform in the workplace.

7. IMPLICATIONS

For policy makers: Increased funding should be made available to vocational training and jobs creation programmes for youth and ex-combatants in conflict-affected areas. Labour market analysis, teacher training and post-training monitoring and evaluation should be prioritised. Policy makers are also well positioned to negotiate with the private sector to create direct links between vocational training and jobs.

For practitioners: The existing and future demands of potential consumers and employers should be thoroughly assessed before vocational training programme implementation, and vocational training programmes should be directly linked to economic opportunities. Training in and of itself is not enough. Vocational training programmes should additionally ensure that they are:

- Staffed by appropriately qualified and effective trainers.
- Comprise sufficient instructional equipment and materials.
- Be long enough to learn a trade and short enough to generate interest from youth and ex-combatants – many of whom are likely to have family obligations.
- Be responsive to psychological and social factors as well as economic factors.
- Monitor and evaluate post-training economic outcomes of trainees.

Critically, practitioners should also ensure that they do not create unmet expectations. If practitioners cannot guarantee jobs or functioning tools post-training, then they should be upfront and clear about that.

For researchers: quantitative research is required to understand the empirical scale of the vocational training-jobs disconnect in conflict-affected areas. Inquiries into the consequences of this disconnect are also needed as resultant frustration amongst youth and ex-combatants is rife. Pinpointing vocational training programmes that have produced successful economic outcomes and extracting transferable lessons from these programmes would be invaluable.

8. RECOMMENDED FURTHER READING

UNESCO-UNEVOC (2007). Education for Livelihoods and Civic Participation in Post-Conflict Countries.

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²⁰ Meeting of the Bureau of the Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Union (2007). Strategy to Revitalize Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Africa.

²¹ Hanlon, J. (2005). Is the International Community Helping to Recreate the Pre-Conditions for War in Sierra Leone? United Nations University WIDER Research Paper No. 50. Retrieved on 1 April 2010 from <http://www.wider.unu.edu/>.

²² UNESCO-UNEVOC (2007). Education for Livelihoods and Civic Participation in Post-Conflict Countries.

²³ Vinck, P. et al (2007). Exposure to War Crimes and Implications for Peace Building in Northern Uganda. Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Vol. 298 No. 5: 543-544.

²⁴ Anaan, J. et al (2006). The State of Youth and Youth Protection in Northern Uganda. AVSI and UNICEF Publication.