

VET Toolbox project: Skills4Transport – Work Readiness
January 2022 to August 2023

Moving Mozambique forward: lessons learnt





“The VET Toolbox programme aims to improve the effectiveness of VET systems in selected sub-Saharan African countries by making them more opportunity-driven, turning investments into drivers for inclusive economic growth, social development, and decent job creation. It is co-funded by the European Union (EU) and the German Government (BMZ), and implemented by the British Council, Expertise France, GIZ, and LuxDev. GIZ is implementing the VET Toolbox in Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Uganda.”

Context

Before Dercia Mause started an internship at a transport and logistics company in Maputo, Mozambique’s capital city, she gave no thought to the sector, even though her father is a mechanic who works in the industry. Now she loves her job as a clerk at the company that gave her the internship.

Dercia secured her internship after completing workplace readiness training through the VET Toolbox 2 project. Knowing that she had completed this training encouraged Transportes e Logística to offer Dercia an internship. Then, because she had received the training, Dercia performed so well during her internship that she was offered full-time employment.

In Mozambique, the VET Toolbox 2 project came from discussions the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ) had with companies in the country’s transport and logistics sector. This was how GIZ became aware that big transport and logistics companies were struggling to find smaller Mozambican companies that could feed into their network in the country, for instance, when dealing with last-mile deliveries.

GIZ also discovered that transport and logistics companies were reluctant to employ vocational education and training (VET) college graduates, mainly because they lacked work-readiness skills.

The VET Toolbox 2 project in Mozambique ran from January 2022 to August 2023. The project is a multi-donor action jointly financed by the European Union and the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development. The action is implemented by Enabel, the Belgian Development Agency; the Luxembourg Agency for Development Cooperation; the British Council; Expertise France; and GIZ.

Through the VET Toolbox 2 project GIZ aimed to improve Mozambique’s youth employment rate in two main ways: firstly, by ensuring that VET college graduates had the work-readiness training they needed to gain internships, graduate and find employment; and secondly, by providing training to micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) that would improve their professional capacity, especially in how to answer tender documents.

Kiluva Taveira Mocumbi, general manager of Transportes e Logística, says that in her experience, young Mozambicans have relatively low levels of education, and they also often lack the soft skills that they need to succeed in the workplace.

“Through the VET Toolbox project, which facilitated a relationship between business and the VET colleges, we were able to define and profile the skills that we need. It made it easier to find a person who is almost exactly what we needed,” she says.

Kiluva and Dercia are two of the few women working in the transport and logistics sector in Mozambique. Just 22.4% of employees in the sector are women, according to the first-ever diagnostic report into women’s participation in transport and logistics in Mozambique. The report, which is yet to be finalised, is one of the products of the VET Toolbox 2 project.

The Mozambican government views transport and logistics as a growth industry. The country is a critical transport and logistics hub for many Southern and Central African countries that do not have seaports of their own. The government plans to improve the sector’s infrastructure through three development corridors that link its major commercial ports – Maputo, Beira and Nacala – to its inland areas and neighbouring countries.





“Through the project, we discovered this: if you want to create employment, supporting MSMEs is an effective avenue to youth employment,” says Valentina Gil, GIZ’s adviser to the Employment and Skills for Development in Africa programme.

The MSME training is starting to pay off. “After the training, we felt comfortable competing directly [for contracts] and not needing to be subcontracted. That was the biggest impact for me, on top of the other things we learnt,” says Nassira Chitara, owner and director of the Maputo-based NAA Transport.

In February 2022, at the EU-AU Summit in Brussels, the EU and the African Union agreed to the EUR 150 billion Global Gateway Africa-Europe Investment Package that aims to support Africa’s inclusive, green and digital recovery and transformation after the Covid-19 pandemic.

The investment package is focused on accelerating the continent’s green and digital transitions; creating sustainable growth and decent jobs; strengthening health systems; and improving education and training. While the VET Toolbox 2 project existed before this agreement was reached, it fits neatly into its ambit.

Meanwhile, Dercia is gaining valuable experience working at Transportes e Logística in Maputo.

“I am so proud of myself. I love my work,” she says, adding that she is pleased to be able to help her family by working in a professional sphere.

“I want to continue learning from this job and to help to develop this company (Transportes e Logística) with my skills. The VET Toolbox 2 project was a good opportunity for me as a young woman. Normally, it is a challenge for women to work in transport and logistics, also for young people in general, but through it I got the skills I needed to work and to behave properly in the workplace,” she says.



Objectives

In Mozambique, the VET Toolbox 2 project aimed to increase the employment of young people by taking advantage of opportunities in the transport and logistics sector. It was complex, addressing this aim from several angles.

Firstly, it sought to train 300 young people in work-readiness skills so that they could find jobs more easily. Because women’s participation in Mozambique’s transport and logistics sector is low, the project also aimed to ensure that 35% of the young people trained were women. Another goal was to train 120 MSMEs in professional skills in the hope that the training would lead to the MSMEs winning more contracts with larger transport companies, which would, in turn, lead to job creation, especially for the youth.

Furthermore, the project sought to enhance the quality and relevance of Mozambique’s VET system by strengthening the VET colleges’ links with the private sector so that they are better able to respond to the needs and demand for transport and logistic sector skills.

In addition, the VET Toolbox 2 project sought to support government reforms that had already been made in Mozambique to improve the relevance of VET college training and boost employment, particularly youth employment.

Implementation

The VET Toolbox 2 project in Mozambique was implemented between January 2022 and August 2023 along two main transport corridors, for Maputo and Beira. Its main objective was to increase the employment of young people in the country.

The project was run in partnership with the French non-governmental organisation Essor (the International Solidarity Association), the ACB (Beira Commercial Association), four VET colleges, government institutions linked to professional education, and private transport and logistics companies.

While the project attained many of its targets, the short timeline for implementation limited the achievement of other targets. The project was also quite complex, involving many partners and stakeholders, which hampered implementation to some degree.



These reforms include the government's approval of the law of professional education and its establishment of the National Authority for Professional Education (ANEP) to roll out and regulate the National Framework of Professional Qualifications (NFPQ). The framework comprises professional qualifications that have competency-based curricula. All curricula developed are approved by sector-based technical committees composed of private companies operating in the sector of interest.

To ensure sustainability, it was crucial to consider the ANEP framework and its requirements when setting up initiatives to support the VET system. The training courses that have been put together through the VET Toolbox 2 project are in the process of being accredited through ANEP.

The roll-out of the National Qualifications Framework, under which the NFPQ falls, is quite advanced in some economic sectors, such as tourism and hospitality; industrial maintenance; and management and administration, but not in the transport and logistics sector.



Work-readiness training

As the project went on, it emerged that many young people in Mozambique leave school without having the fundamental knowledge that is vital to the transport and logistics sector, such as being able to calculate mass and volume.

A programme of 40 contact hours of VET college-based work-readiness skills training was put together. This training covered employability skills; life skills; emotional intelligence; gender inclusion; basic transport and

logistics knowledge; health and safety; and digital skills. The young people who participated also learnt how to look for jobs using job search websites, how to communicate using the most common online platforms, and how to search the internet for resources and information on developing their professionalism.

The project exceeded its goals of training 300 young people, 35% of them women.

Work-readiness training: results				
Goal	City	Men	Women	Total
300 (of which 35% should be women)	Beira	161	59 (26.8%)	220
	Maputo	42	57 (57.6%)	99
	Total	203	116 (36.4%)	319

In addition, the VET Toolbox 2 project aimed to secure internships for at least 75% of its trainees. So far, 193 of the 319 trainees (60.5%) have completed, or are completing, internships. This figure will change as the internships are ongoing.

Also, the project saw VET colleges' labour market insertion (employment) departments taken through capacity-building activities. This contributed to their improved ability to negotiate partnerships with businesses and place more graduates in internships, and even entry-level jobs.

The negotiation of internships was also improved due to dialogue platforms being established, through the VET Toolbox 2 project, between the private sector and VET colleges. Particularly in Beira, this facilitated better alignment between the VET Toolbox 2 project training and the skills that businesses need from young employees.



MSME training

The VET Toolbox 2 project facilitated MSME training that was arranged to help small businesses professionalise. GIZ collaborated with the ACB in Beira and, in Maputo, with the Institute for the Promotion of Small and Medium Enterprises (IPEME), in implementing the MSME-oriented part of this project.

The training aimed to help MSMEs access the value chains of lead companies in the transport and logistics sector in Mozambique. GIZ is confident it will meet its target of training employees from 120 MSMEs.

A training programme comprising 20 learning hours was developed. It includes topics such as the legal obligations of transport companies, how to interpret the terms of a tender for the contracting of services, and how to calculate costs when preparing a financial proposal.

However, MSMEs experienced difficulties in securing time for staff to attend the training sessions. Furthermore, due to the lack of training courses available in Mozambique for people working in this sector, sending staff for training was not something MSMEs were used to. Over time and given the benefits that trainees experienced, this hurdle was overcome.

A survey of 86 of the MSMEs that participated in the training shows that 100% declared they had been using the knowledge they gained during the training.



Lessons learnt

Discussions were held with representatives from the many partners and stakeholders involved in the VET Toolbox 2 project to gather feedback from them on how the project was implemented, and the lessons that can be learnt from it.

Dialogue platform between business and VET colleges established

Through the project and for the first time, dialogue platforms were established, bringing business and vocational training providers together. There are strong lessons to be learnt from the overall success of the dialogue platforms, especially the one set up with the ACB.

Dialogue platforms allow VET colleges and businesses to highlight their needs and share opportunities. This made it easier for VET colleges to secure internships for VET Toolbox 2 trainees and, in some cases, jobs. Through the dialogue platforms, businesses could speak directly to colleges and list the skills they need from young people entering the job market.

Also, the platforms gave business leaders an opportunity to share their experiences with each other and discover skills that they commonly lack. This informed the content of the MSME training. Furthermore, the platforms made it easier to identify appropriate MSMEs for training, to organise this training, and to ensure the skills taught were appropriate.

A lesson learnt is that dialogue platforms that have a sectoral focus and bring together businesses and vocational training providers can contribute to more demand-oriented VET college training.

Contrary to the dialogue platform established in Maputo, the Beira dialogue platform is anchored in a well-established business association that is able to bring together the interests of businesses, the association and the VET colleges. This has made it effective and sustainable. Another lesson learnt is that the “Beira model” should be used as an example to encourage the establishment of similar dialogue platforms.

One possible way to anchor the Beira dialogue platform to a national-level dialogue would be for the Beira platform to feed information to the sectoral technical committees set up by the National Professional Education Authority. These committees update occupational qualifications and propose new qualifications related to the sector.

VET colleges’ labour market insertion (employment) departments’ capacity to negotiate partnerships with businesses improved

Through the project, VET colleges’ labour market insertion (employment) departments were taken through capacity-building activities. This contributed to the colleges’ improved ability to negotiate partnerships with businesses and place more graduates in internships, and even entry-level jobs.

The college’s employment department staff were trained in how to collect and store data about students’ internships and employment. They were also trained in how to search for internship and job opportunities, and negotiate internship placements with businesses.

This contributed to more partnerships being established between the partner VET institutes and businesses. As a result, more young people had access to opportunities for formative internships (for final-year trainees) and pre-professional internships (for graduates). This meant more trainees could graduate with a National Professional Education Authority certification (as internships are a condition of certification).

In addition, college lecturers were trained in how to provide career guidance to students and to impart competencies such as workplace readiness and digital skills for job searching. A total of 18 trainers were upskilled through a Training of Trainers programme.

In general, in Mozambique, contact between VET colleges and industry is left to a college’s department of labour market insertion

(employment) and is most often only made when the colleges are looking for internship opportunities for the students to fulfil curriculum requirements. Often, these departments, despite existing in the formal structure of the institute, do not exist physically and are under-resourced. This work is often left to a technician from the pedagogical department, who has, on average, four hours per week to perform the functions of this department.

The lesson learnt is that these departments need more capacity building. This can improve their ability to negotiate partnerships with companies and place more young graduates in the internships they need to graduate with National Professional Education Authority certification.

Ultimately, this can lead to more young people being able to secure jobs because they will have officially recognised qualifications.

The capacity-building function for the colleges’ departments of labour market insertion (employment) should focus on:

- How to conduct market research to identify the skills required by businesses
- How to develop young people’s employability and work-readiness skills
- How to search for internship and job opportunities, and negotiate with companies



- How to better collect and keep data about students' internships and employment

Building capacity in the VET institutes should be accompanied by strong cooperation with the government institutions in charge of vocational education and employment. Close cooperation with the Insti to Nacional de Emprego (National Employment Institute) is particularly recommended as it could contribute to the strengthening of links between VET institutes and businesses. This is especially important when it comes to creating partnerships between VET colleges and businesses for finding internship and employment opportunities for young graduates.

Work-readiness skills training helps VET college graduates gain employment

Employers in Mozambique's transport and logistics sector who hosted project trainees as interns expressed satisfaction with their attitude and behaviour. This shows how work-readiness training that's adapted to the needs of the transport and logistics sector is crucial for improving the employability of young beneficiaries.

Initially, digital skills and technical English were not part of the work-readiness training. These were added because of feedback received from businesses that took on interns.

The lesson learnt is that work-readiness skills training boosts young people's chances of success in finding internships. College trainees need internships to graduate with a formal National Professional Education Authority certification.

More similar training, in the transport and logistics sector and in other sectors, would be beneficial to young people and their prospective employers.

Competency of transport and logistics MSMEs improved

The project trained staff from selected MSMEs in how to respond effectively to tenders and secure contracts. Developing the professionalism of MSMEs in the transport and logistics sector has already borne fruit.

When MSMEs are more adept at such work, they are able to function better and access more business opportunities. This, in turn, can bring more jobs and business opportunities to local communities. Many of the businesses that took part in the training have reported that they have used the training when answering, and winning, tenders.

Most of the internship and job opportunities for trainees and college graduates that were identified through the project were provided by MSMEs. This demonstrates the importance of upskilling MSMEs because when their professionalism is improved, it promotes business growth and youth employment in this sector.

First diagnostic research on women's participation in the transport and logistics sector

When the project began, there was no research available on women's participation in the transport and logistics sector in Mozambique. That is why, through the project, the first diagnostic research on women's participation in Mozambique's transport and logistics sector was commissioned and conducted. A final report is yet to be published by the researchers, Mukadzi-Colaboratório Feminista.

The project aimed to train staff from 120 MSMEs. In total, 104 employees from MSMEs selected for the training have been upskilled, 26% of them women. This number will increase as training continues.

There are few courses and training institutions in Mozambique that are specifically geared towards the transport and logistics sector, even though the Mozambican government's plans indicate that the country sees the sector as important for its economic development. Also, the sector is characterised by rapid technological advancement that results in quickly evolving training needs.

The lesson learnt is that transport and logistics MSMEs in Mozambique require continued support and training. The pace of the sector, and the rapid technological advancement that characterises it, make the development of modular short courses more applicable and appropriate.

When it is published, the final report will contribute to the country's knowledge base on women's participation in the sector. It can then be used to plan other interventions that can improve women's involvement in the transport and logistics sector, and in the broader economy.

Preliminary research results show that the number of women working in the sector in Mozambique is very limited. Women made up just 22.4% of the workforce of the 60 transport and logistics businesses surveyed for the diagnostic report.

More research on women’s inclusion in the transport and logistics sector, and in other professional sectors in Mozambique, is needed.

According to preliminary research results, some of the reasons leading to so few women working in transport and logistics are:

- Gender stereotypes and sociocultural barriers
- Few women attending technical courses linked to this sector (in 2019, only 26% of all students studying towards any technical or vocational qualification were women)
- Companies do not have gender policies or mechanisms against sexual harassment and/or actions that can be taken to promote the integration of women into their workforce
- Women do not see the sector as attractive, as there are few other women working in it and very few female role models in transport and logistics
- Working conditions in the sector are often not reconcilable with women’s traditional role in the family unit

The research shows that businesses and business associations in the sector are interested in including more women. However, it also revealed a need for capacity building in companies regarding raising awareness about the importance of inclusion and diversity actions and policies, as a way to support the greater inclusion of women.

Based on the collected perceptions and experiences, corroborated by statistical data and a document review, and informed by experiences in other countries and regions, the research reveals much scope for better inclusion practices. The strategic actions proposed by the study include:

- Raising awareness of the importance of increasing women’s participation in the transport and logistics sector by setting up an “exchange” allowing companies to share the benefits of increasing diversity and inclusion, plus good practices as well as training and capacity-building interventions
- Supporting the creation and development of a women’s forum/association in the sector and of mentoring programmes for women, including opportunities for their further professionalisation
- Launching a campaign to break down gender stereotypes that inform women’s choice of profession, using the media and social networks to raise awareness and disseminate success stories of women in the sector (role models)
- Developing a “Gender Equality and Inclusion Seal” to be awarded to companies that perform well in this area. This seal could be associated with incentives and facilities that will benefit the companies
- Supporting vocational education institutions to attract and retain more women in technical courses in the STEM subjects – science, technology, engineering and mathematics
- Helping institutions to adopt gender policies and actions aimed at encouraging and supporting young women, raising community awareness of the importance of girls’ and women’s inclusion in the sector, and establishing greater links between vocational education institutions and companies in the sector in order to broaden the opportunities available to women

Lessons learnt – summary

Key successes	Challenges and observations	Lessons learnt and recommendations
<p>Dialogue platform between business and VET colleges established</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easier to identify appropriate MSMEs for training and to organise training • Easier for VET colleges to increase their visibility in the industry and secure internships for the VET Toolbox 2 trainees • Businesses are able to speak directly to colleges and list the skills they need from the young people who are entering the job market 	<p>Because the sector is so busy, it is difficult to get businesses to participate regularly in the dialogue platform.</p>	<p>Platforms that have a sectoral focus and bring together businesses and vocational training providers can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to more demand-oriented VET college training, including through short training courses for employees • Facilitate the sharing of opportunities and the creation of links, partnerships and synergies between businesses, and between businesses and local VET colleges
<p>Improved capacity of VET colleges’ labour market insertion (employment) departments to negotiate partnerships with businesses</p> <p>This led to more graduates being placed in internships and entry-level jobs. This also led to more trainees receiving their final certification, which requires internship.</p>	<p>In general, VET colleges do not have working relationships with businesses or business associations.</p>	<p>These departments need much more capacity building.</p>
<p>Soft skills and employability training help VET college graduates gain employment</p> <p>Employers in the sector who hosted project trainees expressed satisfaction with their attitude and behaviour, showing how work-readiness training that’s adapted to the needs of the transport and logistics sector is crucial for improving beneficiaries’ employability.</p>	<p>Digital skills and basic English were later added to the training due to feedback received from businesses that took on interns.</p>	<p>Soft skills and employability training boost young people’s success in finding internships that allow them to graduate with a formal ANEP certification. It also boosts their chances of being employed after their graduation.</p>

Key successes	Challenges and observations	Lessons learnt and recommendations
<p>Competency of transport and logistics MSMEs improved</p> <p>The project trained staff from selected MSMEs in how to respond effectively to tenders and secure contracts. This has shown that when MSMEs are more adept at such work, they are able to function better and access more business opportunities. This, in turn, can bring more jobs and business opportunities to local communities.</p>	<p>There are few courses and institutions geared towards the transport and logistics sector. Also, the sector is characterised by rapid technological advancement that results in quickly evolving training needs.</p>	<p>The lesson learnt is that transport and logistics MSMEs in Mozambique require continued support and training to become more professional and to be integrated into larger value chains.</p> <p>Because of rapid technological advancement in the sector, modular training is more applicable and appropriate. More modules can be developed, based on the specified occupational standard, and accredited with ANEP.</p>
<p>First diagnostic research on women's participation in the transport and logistics sector contributes to a knowledge base from which other interventions can be planned and implemented</p>	<p>When the project began, there was no research available on women's participation in the transport and logistics sector in Mozambique.</p> <p>More research on women's inclusion in the transport and logistics sector, and in other professional sectors in Mozambique, is needed.</p>	<p>The lesson learnt is that research adds to a knowledge base from which appropriate programmes and interventions can be developed.</p> <p>The research revealed a need for capacity building in companies and in the technical and vocational education and training sector.</p>

Conclusion

The VET Toolbox 2 project succeeded in creating a bridge between the VET colleges and the transport and logistics industry through the dialogue platforms that were established. It is important that these dialogue platforms continue to be supported and further strengthened. Instrumental in this support will be the continued capacity building for VET colleges.

Through implementing the project GIZ learnt that there is a need to better align training, whether technical or in work-readiness skills, to industry needs, taking into consideration that the transport and logistics sector evolves at a rapid pace. Information technology skills and technical English are important to the sector.

It was also clear that there was a need to better prepare the local MSMEs to take advantage of business opportunities offered by lead companies. Increasing MSMEs' professionalism is key if they are to gain access to larger companies' value chains.

Finally, the project conducted Mozambique's first diagnostic research on women's involvement in the sector. This research shed light on this topic, such as the conditions under which the women who do work in the sector operate, and identified actions that can help to increase women's participation in the industry.

In short, the VET Toolbox 2 project in Mozambique was a success. Several business and government representatives said they hoped it would continue, and there is a lot of scope for similar projects in the transport and logistics sector.

In fact, all young people in Mozambique would benefit from similar work-readiness skills training tailored to other economic sectors. Likewise, MSMEs in other sectors would benefit from similar capacity-building training.

The transport and logistics sector is dynamic, and the rapid pace of technological change affects it deeply. The dialogue platform that was established between VET colleges and the ACB is already playing an important role in alerting the colleges to the pace of technological change and the skills that are needed to deal with it.

The project revealed how few training courses were available for people working in the transport and logistics sector. Through the project, new training modules, for young people's employability and for MSMEs' professionalism, will soon be formally accredited by ANEP. The main reason for accreditation is so that the work done has sustainability and wider impact. Once the training modules are accredited, other training providers can offer similar training, including, but not limited to, GIZ partners and in cities other than Beira and Maputo.

If new training courses are developed, it would benefit businesses in the sector if these were modular, structured courses so that employees can be gradually upskilled without being away from their workplaces for too long.



Thank you.