

## Practical Apprenticeship Tools in Africa

Based on the high attendance and active participation at a recent webinar on practical apprenticeship tools in Africa, this is an area that warrants a lot more deliberation – not least for its potential to increase the employability prospects of young people and the productivity and profits of businesses, which together will drive growth across the continent.

A number of African countries are already offering apprenticeship programmes, and attention is increasingly being given to the practical tools that can facilitate their implementation. Participants attending the webinar, hosted on 6 September 2022 by the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), through the Skills Initiative for Africa (SIFA), were in the fortunate position to be able to hear about three of these tools first hand. The tools were identified through a mapping activity conducted by the German consulting company GOPA Worldwide Consultants, and each offer a unique approach to rolling out a successful apprenticeship system.

### Encouraging employers through recognition

Presenting this innovative initiative from Tanzania, Kennedy Rwehumbiza, Head of Policy, Research and Advocacy at the Association of Tanzanian Employers (ATE), explained how the **Employer of the Year Award (EYA)** focuses on making employers' engagement in apprenticeships and internships a valuable human resources initiative within the company. Through an annual prestigious national employers' event, the initiative recognises and highlights employers' engagement in apprenticeships and internships at the same level as other human resource initiatives. The event provides a platform for identifying, ranking, and recognising excellence within a number of categories of ATE member types, including large and small companies, public sector, and even non-governmental organisations (NGOs). This ensures that the EYA is fair and thereby more attractive to members. The AYE has a set of specific objectives, including recognising and benchmarking ATE members that have excelled in putting outstanding management policies and best business practices in place, developing a set of guidelines for improved management and best business practices, and motivating organisations to engage in apprenticeships and internships.

### Linking work and study from beginning to end

The **Work-Study Booklet**, implemented by the Menzel Bourguiba Sectoral Training Centre in Tunisia, really encapsulates the concept of apprenticeships as a journey. Taking the audience through the tool, Naceur Guesmi, Director of the Menzel Bourguiba Training Centre, and her colleague Amel Fatnassi, together with Lina Costa Branco from GOPA demonstrated how the booklet provides 'common ground' for all the parties involved – the apprentice, apprenticeship master, training centre, and enterprise – and facilitates ongoing exchange of information between them. Along with serving as a permanent source of information about the rights and duties of all parties, the booklet is also a 'dialogue tool' which makes clear reference to the training contract concluded between the apprentice, training centre and employer, and ensures the alignment of the training with the work needs (in the company), as well as the company's responsibility for the intern with the training centre's monitoring. For the apprentices themselves, the booklet is an invaluable resource that not only equips them with the relevant concepts and techniques related to their specific job, but also helps them apply the skills acquired in the training to concrete actions in the real world of work, and develop good work habits, an entrepreneurial spirit, and a sense of professional responsibility.

### Leveraging levy funding to incentivise employers

Highlighting the key role of both financial incentives and policy in apprenticeship programmes, Dalia Mwiya from the Namibian Training Authority (NTA) illustrated how levy funding – one of the policy

objectives of the NTA's Work Integrated Learning (WIL) initiative – can be a powerful tool for incentivising employer engagement in apprenticeships. The requirements that employers need to meet in order to qualify for levy funding for their WIL workplace programmes, including apprenticeships, are outlined in a set of WIL guidelines and procedures that were developed by the NTA with funding from this training levy. The guidelines are underpinned by an incentivising model that allows registered employers and apprentices to access levy funding, from grants for employers who hire and register apprentices to additional funding for training infrastructure development and the recruitment of trainees with disabilities or from other priority groups. The funding is administered through an innovative process of staged payment tranches that promotes recruitment, attendance, retention, and achievement. In addition, the tools that are used to support the WIL initiative, such as logbooks, application forms, information booklets, and promotional materials, promote the further dissemination of the guidelines and their successful application by employers, trainees, and training providers.

### **Key lessons for continuity and sustainability**

Along with the different ways apprenticeship programmes can be implemented practically and effectively, all three tools demonstrate the importance of continuity of the work achieved through these programmes in order to ensure economic growth and increased employability is sustained across the continent. From Tanzania, for instance, the critical role that an employer body can play in the apprenticeship journey – from the policy level through to implementation – emerges. Moreover, this example shows how all employers can be involved in the apprenticeship system, from private and public sector down to SMMEs. From an apprentice's perspective, Tunisia's experience teaches us apprenticeships are not only about the hard technical skills that a young person needs, but also the "softer" skills, such as work-readiness.

Getting all role-players involved is another key aspect as seen, for example, in Namibia's Apprenticeship Week, which brings together the college, employers, the informal sector, and the learners, to get the best return on investment. Namibia's integrated funding model also highlights how financial assistance gets more people involved in the apprenticeship process. Perhaps most illuminating, the lively chat throughout the webinar showed how thirsty people are for knowledge and practical information, and how important rich discussions like these are for lesson-learning and replication – essential ingredients for sustainability.

SIFA has pulled all these lessons together into one convenient toolkit, which will be made available on the [ASPVEE website](#) within the next two months. This promises to be a valuable resource which all stakeholders will not only be able to use for their own work, but contribute their own good practices to as well.

And the conversation doesn't end here! In November, SIFA will be running its third and final webinar in this series focusing on a range of other useful tools for implementing apprenticeship programmes and incentives. Watch this space for more details!

Have you successfully used apprenticeship facilitating tools in your country? Share them with the SIFA community by mailing them to [aspvee@nepad.org](mailto:aspvee@nepad.org).