

A LEARNING SERIES

WORKING TOWARDS AGILE AND RESPONSIVE SKILLS AND (SELF) EMPLOYMENT ECOSYSTEMS IN AFRICA

A Systems Approach to Addressing Youth Unemployment

LEARNING BRIEF 2

ENTREPRENEURSHIP & THE INFORMAL SECTOR





A Compilation of Learning Briefs
Spotlighting Innovation, Impact,
Tips & Strategies

LEARNING BRIEF 2
ENTREPRENEURSHIP & THE
INFORMAL SECTOR



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NEW
MAINS
SUPERMARKET

2A

CONTENTS

PAGE



ACRONYMS



ADS	Social Development Agency
ANEM	National Employment Agency
ANGEM	National Agency for the Management of Micro-credit
ANSEJ	National Agency for the Support of Youth Employment
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
LSETF	The Lagos State Empowerment Trust Fund
MJS	Ministry of Youth and Sports
NAYE	National Association of Youth Exchange
SMMEs	Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

SETTING THE SCENE:

ENTREPRENEURSHIP & THE INFORMAL SECTOR IN AFRICA

The informal sector includes a wide range of situations and activities across the globe. The term ‘the informal economy’ refers to activities that generate income and have market value but frequently operate outside the formal structures and regulations relating to taxation, licensing and industry standards. It is estimated that informal activity contributes to up to a third of low-income countries’ economic activity. In the informal sector, the average ‘business’ is established for survival, and its owner may lack natural entrepreneurial skills and insight.

Because of the well-documented challenges youth in many countries face in entering the formal economy – and the limitations on the ability of the formal economy to absorb all job-seekers – the promotion of entrepreneurship is seen as a critical lever to address unemployment, and to stimulate economic growth by creating jobs through supporting micro-enterprises. The ultimate goal of skills development innovations focused on entrepreneurship is to straddle the divide between the informal and formal sectors. Successful micro and medium enterprises can transition into the formal economy and, in turn, create jobs for others, thereby contributing to economic growth.

Successful entrepreneurial skills development initiatives need to be multi-layered. They usually include scaffolding processes, such as access to finance, links to supportive agencies, local government structures or related businesses, and incubation processes. Training curricula must address a range of competencies, including mindsets, basic financial literacy, and regulatory frameworks, and provide content training linked to the entrepreneurial offering and its value chain. Another critical element is the development of support networks, from peers involved in similar endeavours to phased mentorship throughout training and post-training. While the initiatives showcased in this Learning Brief are based on different models and delivered through several types of providers, they all touch on these elements.



ABOUT THIS LEARNING BRIEF

This is Part 2 of the Learning Series **WORKING TOWARDS AGILE, RESPONSIVE SKILLS & (SELF) EMPLOYMENT ECOSYSTEMS IN AFRICA**. The Learning Series is a compilation of four Learning Briefs based on four focus areas identified as critical fields for effective skills development to address youth unemployment.



DISABILITY INCLUSION



ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND THE INFORMAL SECTOR



GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE



DEMAND-LED SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Projects promoting **entrepreneurship and the informal sector** are becoming increasingly important in addressing youth unemployment, given that the informal sector can provide some form of livelihood for those excluded from formal employment. The goal of skills development in this area is to improve prospects in the sector. This can be done by equipping youth with the entrepreneurial skills which will enable them to grow successful micro or small businesses in the sector, and transition to the formal economy if they so wish.

This Learning Brief on entrepreneurship and the informal sector discusses illustrative lessons learned and tips and strategies for different components grounded in programmes, learning experiences and innovations. These are made real provided through skills development engagement.





In this Learning Brief, **The Lagos State Employment Trust Fund (LSETF)** in Nigeria shows how strategic partnerships can accelerate youth employment opportunities when creatively coupled with practical training approaches.

The Study Tour site visit initiative, **The Ekurhuleni West TVET College Centre for Entrepreneurship Rapid Incubator** in Johannesburg, presents a strong case for long-term one-on-one business development support and financial backing to maximise business outcomes for SMMEs.

National Youth Exchange Association in Algeria exemplifies how creating a supportive network for small businesses and entrepreneurs can foster a resilient and enterprising spirit in young Algerians.

The Case Study with Discussion Paper on **Recognition of Prior Learning** in Kenya explores various pathways to the informal sector, also known as the *Jua Kali*.

AN ECOSYSTEM APPROACH TO SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

This Learning Brief is framed by recognising that skills development programmes, initiatives and training organisations exist within an ecosystem that can enable or hinder the achievement of their goals. Since there are linkages and connections across the ecosystem, there is a need to create alignment and synergies, work in collaboration and create partnerships.

Understanding this helps skills development agencies navigate and influence their ecosystems for impact. What are the enablers that can unblock the system? How can these be leveraged to replicate and scale good practices? Who are the primary stakeholders that need to be engaged? How can practical contextual barriers to youth employment be reduced?

The six ecosystem components illustrated below are suggested as a starting point for growing this understanding and will be explored in relation to each good practice in this Learning Brief.



LEARNING BRIEFS AS A METHODOLOGY

Learning Briefs distil the lessons learned and evidence gathered by people working on the ground. The sharing of evidence-based knowledge, real experiences, case studies, success stories and effective strategies across the continent promotes better planning and implementation of developmental interventions.

Each Learning Brief speaks to one of the focus areas listed above, presenting insights concerning various ecosystem components and practical solutions to problems encountered. Each part of the series is a chance to learn about common and unique challenges and new tools and solutions already being applied by practitioners in distinct public and private sectors across Africa.





THE LAGOS STATE EMPLOYMENT TRUST FUND (LSETF) EMPLOYABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAMME: FACILITATING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR JOB AND WEALTH CREATION

Introduction

The Lagos State Employment Trust Fund focuses on technical and vocational trade training in skills areas which easily translate into entrepreneurial activities and small businesses. Beneficiaries who aim to be self-employed through one of these trades are supported in terms of access to finance, links to potential markets, some work exposure and a relevant starter kit to set up their venture.



The Lagos State Employment Trust Fund (LSETF) in Nigeria was established by the Lagos State Employment Trust Fund Law 2016 to address unemployment and promote entrepreneurship in Lagos State by empowering its residents with job and wealth creation opportunities.

This goal is attained by improving access to finance, strengthening the institutional capacity of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises, and formulating programmes/policies designed to improve the business environment in Lagos State. The dual vocational training approach ensures that beneficiaries under the project are provided with job placements and funding opportunities (for those who chose the entrepreneurial route) to practise the acquired skill and knowledge.

The LSETF Employability Support Project is an 18-month project designed to help address the unemployment scourge among the youth by assisting them to gain requisite knowledge and skill through vocational training and subsequently helping them get job placements. The project aimed to train 10,000 young people to gain skills in 6 sectors – Manufacturing, Hospitality, Entertainment, Construction, Health and Garment Making- to help place them in line for immediate employment. As of 2022, the first batch of youth trained at eight vocational training centres across the state have graduated.

Lagos State Employability Support Programme's Impact

The programme has achieved significant impacts in supporting the training of young people for the market.

Trained over
14 000
young persons in various trade skills

Placed over
5000
youth in jobs within its focus sectors

Supported over
25
Vocational training centres
with access to infrastructure

The Challenge

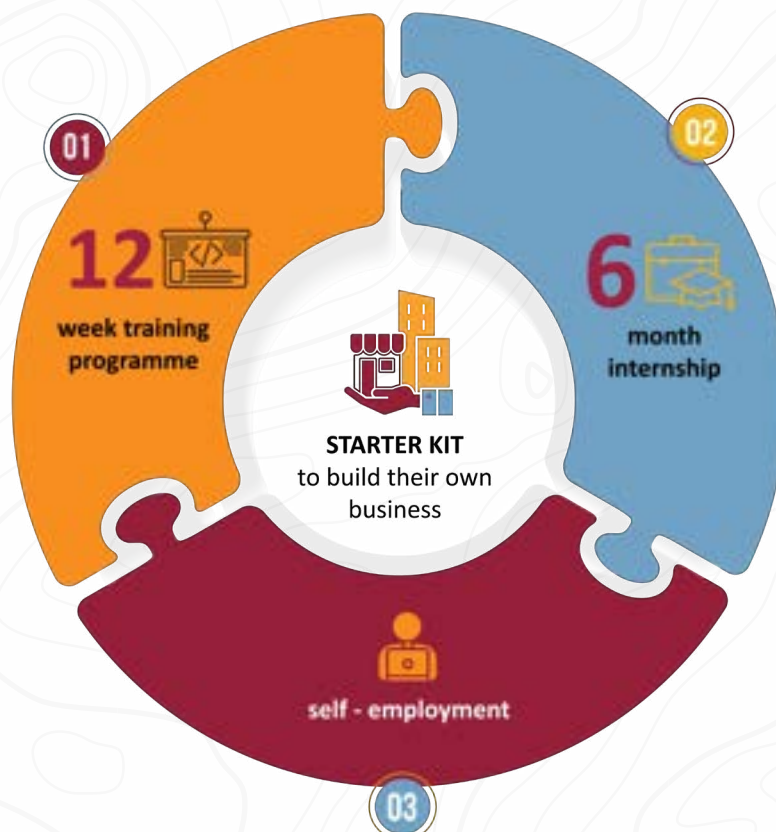
Youth unemployment is a major developmental challenge in Nigeria, with the unemployment rate at 42%, according to the National Bureau of Statistics.

The root cause of unemployment in Nigeria is anchored by the shortage of satisfactory jobs and the fact that job seekers lack the skill required to secure gainful employment in the labour market.

Lagos State Employability Support Programme's Solution

The **Employability Support Programme** aims to develop the skills and competencies of Lagos State youth across various in-demand trades such as plumbing, fashion designing, beauty, solar installation, agent banking and waste recycling, among others. At the end of the 12-week training period, beneficiaries are placed in internships or given starter kits to start their own business.

How Lagos State Employability Support Programme Works



The 12-week training programme aims to provide beneficiaries with the requisite skills to succeed in a 6-month internship arranged by the programme or, with the assistance of a starter kit, to continue toward a path of self-employment.

An example of this process within the construction sector sees students being trained in masonry, formwork, carpentry, and bar

bending courses. Students received hands-on training sessions at major construction sites within the state facilitated by the **Deque academy of design**. Manufacturing courses facilitated by **Gabson Engineering** include mechanical engineering and metal arc welding. This training provides students with critical market-demanded skills allowing them to find gainful employment or start their businesses.

Lagos State Employability Support Programme's Ecosystem: Good Practices

The success of any project is predicated upon various ecosystem components. These include the identification of beneficiaries and their needs, stakeholder engagement, collaborative partnerships, and sufficient resources to meet project objectives. Of particular concern for **LSETF** is fostering collaborative partnerships and effective beneficiary needs analysis to ensure the needs of students are met.

Creating Partnerships

The unique approach to TVET involves a holistic end-to-end pathway from skills to satisfactory jobs. At the programme's inception, consultation sessions were held with a consortium of business partners to support the programme by offering co-development, delivery, and placement opportunities. With inputs from business partners, the programme worked with **Arc Skills**,

a globally recognised capacity building and skills solution provider, to develop industry-focused curricula for the various sectors to address the industry skills needed.

To ensure quality delivery of the programme, funding and infrastructure were provided to partner vocational training institutions. The improvement of existing infrastructure and the acquisition of new tools and equipment allowed for quality instruction. The provision of reskilling and upskilling sessions for trainers further enhanced institutional capacity. Lastly, access to decent jobs was embedded into the programme, providing job placement and entrepreneurship opportunities post-training. Working with business partners is invaluable as they offer internships and placements to certified graduates of the programme.



Partnering with the right people and building an ecosystem around what you do is essential. The programme has been successful because they have found partners to match and increase their impact.



Managing Beneficiaries

Listening to what is needed and starting programmes based on the need and the market is vital. The programme was designed with feedback from industry engagement sessions with stakeholders from the six key sectors of the economy. The forum identified job roles with significant skills gaps and guided in developing an industry-relevant curriculum that would empower young Nigerians while providing a skilled labour pool to reinvigorate the Lagos business ecosystem. Through this needs analysis, students are trained for identified needs within the business ecosystem, increasing the potential for gainful employment of students post-training.

Providing budding entrepreneurs access to infrastructure through traditional job hubs is also vital to the programme's success. The hub is a physical location where businesses with similar product or service offerings are aggregated to form a solid synergic ecosystem that serves customers' needs. Three Hubs were identified for the pilot phase of this programme, and are:

- 💡 Fashion & Creative hub
- 💡 Laundry & Cleaning hub
- 💡 Catering & Kitchen hub



Through its engagement with key stakeholders and partnerships, the programme can meet the Nigerian market and its beneficiaries' needs. Through its need-driven approach, training

within identified fields allows Nigerian youth to develop crucial and market-demanded skills to find gainful employment.

Stories of Success







Sangotayo Gabriel Iseoluwa

Meet Sangotayo Gabriel Iseoluwa, A beneficiary of the Lagos State Employability Initiative





ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

-  [Lagos State Employment Trust Fund Website](#)
-  [Training Website](#)
-  [LSETF/UNDP Graduation Ceremony](#)
-  [LSESP Testimonials](#)




EKURHULENI WEST TVET COLLEGE CENTRE FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP RAPID INCUBATOR: MOVING YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS FROM JOB SEEKERS TO JOB CREATORS


Introduction

The Centre for Entrepreneurship Rapid Incubator is a flagship programme providing a viable alternative route for TVET graduates. While those with TVET certification certainly have higher employment prospects than those with only a school leaving certificate or less, many still find it difficult to find jobs in the formal sector. This programme links the technical and vocational skills already obtained to entrepreneurial knowledge and skills through the incubation programme, which provides a rich context in which TVET graduates can develop business ideas and start-ups.






The Ekurhuleni West TVET College is one of the 50 TVET colleges in South Africa funded and maintained for training and upskilling community members with skills and trades needed in industry, manufacturing, and infrastructure development. The college has been hosting numerous novel programmes in artisanry, vocational training and dual trade programmes in the country. **The college is host to The Centre for Entrepreneurship Rapid Incubator.**



The Rapid Incubation programme allows student graduates an entrepreneurial platform to commercialise their vocational skills and move them from “**job seekers to job creators.**”




The programme seeks to use the skills of TVET graduates to encourage and promote entrepreneurship culture and provide the student incubates with the necessary tools and techniques to establish their businesses, thus contributing to economic growth and job creation.


The Rapid Incubation Programme is part of the Department of Small Business Development’s programme to address the issue of youth unemployment in South Africa. It is the first incubation programme in South Africa to offer seed funding to the incubates through structured pitching sessions, for which the incubates can apply.

The Challenge

South Africa’s development primarily depends on the industrialisation and the capacitation of its youth’s critical and competitive technical and vocational skills and trades. With a population of 60 million, 35% is youth with an unemployment rate of 60% amongst those aged between 20 and 35.



Many small businesses fail because they lack the capital and support to accelerate their business growth. Each entrepreneur’s uniqueness can be captured through business incubation, receiving support and customised services to maximise business potential.



The Centre for Entrepreneurship Rapid Incubator's Solution


The college, through its numerous delivery sites, is one of the Department of Higher Education and Training in collaboration with the Department of Trade and Industry's response to the growing issue of unemployment. Through affordable skills and trades, the college seeks to equip those seeking upskilling, trades and vocational training through three different streamed approaches to studying: National Certificates, Nated programmes, short courses

and occupational programmes. Through rigorous training in any of the abovementioned vocations or trades, students are equipped with skills that enable them to either secure employment, create employment or further pursue educational interests of their choice. Through the colleges' quality and risk assurance department, there is a consistent quality education and training for students, the college, and the industry.



Incubators are seen as a powerful tool for supporting **Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs)** growth and various socio-economic needs, such as job creation, technology transfer, reviving economic activities at the local and regional level, poverty alleviation and economic integration of previously disadvantaged groups.

Minister Lindiwe Zulu of Small Business Development launched **The Centre for Entrepreneurship Rapid Incubator** at the college on 14 June 2018. Through the centre, young entrepreneurs, and small business owners from Katlehong and surrounding communities have access to infrastructure, networking, and mentoring. The centre seeks to assist up-and-coming entrepreneurs in overcoming barriers identified in their entrepreneurial journey and reducing youth unemployment. The centre is a source of hope for the people and a tool to fight unemployment, poverty, and inequality. The centre is a partnership between the Small Business Development Department, through Seda, and the **Ekurhuleni West TVET College**.



The centre is furnished with state-of-the-art equipment, an ideas lab and a Maker Space and is aimed at providing support to youth-owned enterprises, which often have little to no capital or funding. The model has unique support instruments, like idea pitching and polishing, and a dedicated seed fund for viable ideas or business models with good market traction.

While the Rapid Incubator focuses on the college, it also services all sectors and small businesses in the Katlehong catchment area to unearth innovative ideas and assist business ventures run and owned by the youth.

How The Centre for Entrepreneurship Rapid Incubator Works



The Centre for Entrepreneurship Rapid Incubator Ecosystem: Good Practices

Providing Access

Through the provision of in-demand skills and trades, many college graduates can find employment in the abovementioned industries or instead opt for self-employment, having attained the needed skills. This implies better and improved social mobility and the creation of value chains in communities of origin upward. The college's location in the Ekurhuleni metro means a constant demand for vocational and trade-trained graduates. This is due to the heavy presence of the industry in Johannesburg. In addition to this is the college's proximity to other industrial hubs such as Sasolburg and Vereeniging in the South of Gauteng and the Mpumalanga mining and Eskom power production and mining economic corridor. The college serves as a feeder for many manufacturing, industrial, processing, steel works, petrochemical and plants.

Creating Partnerships

The college, its staff and its curriculum are under the regulation and oversight of the Minister of Higher Education and Training. Through youth skilling and training, the college collaborates with the Department of Trade and Industry. This occurs through the provision and attainment of in-demand industry-specific trades and qualifications. The college has collaborated on a joint trial run of a dual vocation programme with the German government and the department of Trade and Industry.





ADDITIONAL INFORMATION



Ekurhuleni West TVET College



NATIONAL YOUTH EXCHANGE ASSOCIATION: CREATING A SUPPORTIVE NETWORK OF ENTERPRISING YOUTH.

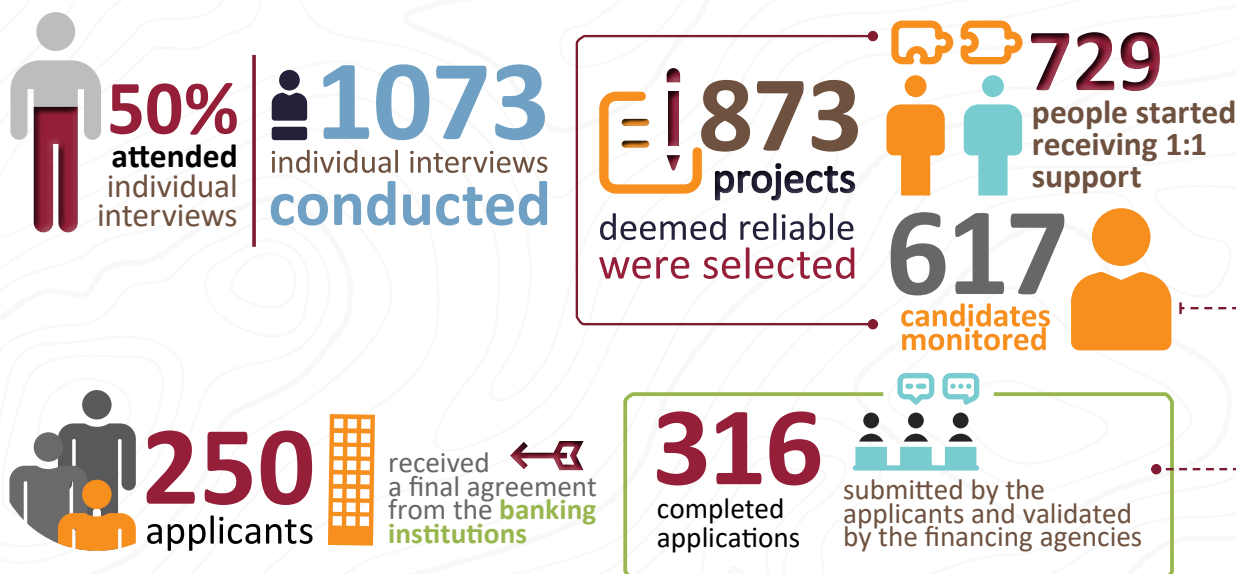
Introduction

The **Bab El Amel** programme targets an area often neglected (or developed post-training) in TVET and skills development focused on entrepreneurship. This is to harness the power of a network or professional community to provide targeted guidance and technical support to young entrepreneurs. Many networks in skills development for entrepreneurs consist of alumni or peers who connect informally or according to need; in this example of innovation in this focus area, however, the spotlight is on sharing key information in structured ways to those who aspire to set up micro-enterprises, and linking them into the relevant network for administrative and technical support - and, potentially, further training or employment opportunities




The **Bab El Amel** pilot project aims to integrate enterprising youth in Algeria into professional networks to support micro-enterprise establishment. Through the provision of seminars and training opportunities, the project, under the umbrella of the **National Association of Youth Exchange (NAYE)** through the support of its partners, aims to address the unemployment of young people under the age of 35 in Algeria.

Bab El Amel's Impact



The Challenge


Despite the progressive policies applied by the Algerian state, youth unemployment is a significant challenge in Algeria. The private and public sectors cannot generate sufficient employment opportunities to meet the challenge of integrating the flood of new entrants into the labour market each year. Official national statistics reflect the extent of young people's vulnerability in the labour market. Additionally, insufficient systems exist to integrate enterprising young people into professional networks.



In Algeria, in 2013, the unemployment rate in the 15-24 age group stood at 24.8%, one in four young people. It affects 21.9% of young men and 39.7% of young women. The phenomenon is all the more worrying socially since 45% of young people aged 15 to 24 are in the labour force or have left the school system to work (10% for young women). Therefore, the 15-34 age represents 82% of the total unemployed.

The Bab El Amel Solution

Initiated in 2011-2012, the pilot project **Bab El Amel** enabled the establishment of a technical support system for young people who aspire to create a micro-business.



The initiative, supported by the **National Association of Youth Exchange (NAYE)**, aims to address the unemployment issue within Algeria through the professional integration of young, enterprising individuals. The **Bab El Amel** project is a non-financial reception and support system. Its mission is to identify, inform, and provide technical and administrative support to young people who aspire to create micro-enterprises within Algeria.

The **Bab El Amel** project aims to offer struggling young people with existing projects reception, support, and accompaniment structures. In this way, targeted individuals can be directed towards training courses leading to qualifications or the creation of their income-generating activities. **Bab El Amel**, through a free support-advisory framework, provides beneficiaries with individualised training and mentorship. The project provides aspiring entrepreneurs with training related to the creation of micro-enterprises, assists in the design of reception structures, provides meeting opportunities for beneficiaries to develop strong professional and collaborative networks, and finally ensures the connection of beneficiaries to carriers of projects.



The initiative's success has resulted in acclaim from the Algerian community as a novel approach to employment support. The project has reinvigorated the Algerian State's commitment to providing technical support for creating micro-enterprises and considering partnering with and directly funding the project. The success of the piloted project further allowed for the establishment of a sustainable, scaled funding strategy through the grant provided by the Social Development Fund of the French Embassy in Algeria and the financial support of the Fondation De France.

The project has, therefore, provided an opportunity to create income-generating

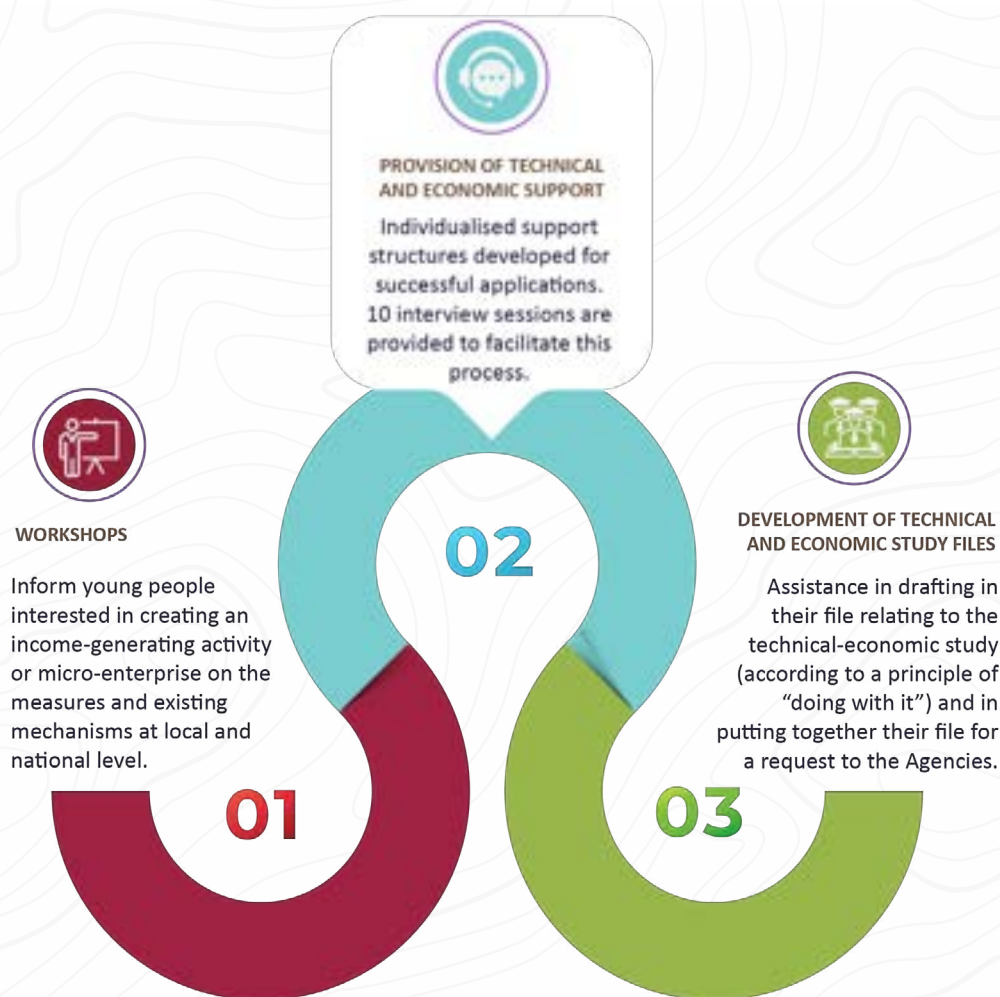
activities for the Algerian youth and started a national commitment to support professional integration and technical support services for enterprising youth within the country.

On a global level, the project has been able to have its relevance recognised by the public authorities and has contributed to making the NAYE a respected interlocutor. The appointment of the NAYE as a member of the ad-hoc committee for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the resolutions taken during the National Socio-economic Youth Conference organised by the Ministry of Youth in November 2014 is a good illustration of its success.



How Bab El Amel Works

The Bab El Amel project provides beneficiaries with the technical support required to develop their micro-enterprises successfully.



The Bab El Amel Project Ecosystem: Good Practices

Any initiative’s success depends on a range of factors within an integrated ecosystem. It requires the consideration and management of beneficiary needs to access complex stakeholder engagements, collaborative partnerships, and resource requirements. Of particular interest for the **Bab El Amel** project, is **Providing access** and **Creating partnerships**.

Providing Access

The concept of access within the Algerian employment ecosystem is particularly interesting to the **Bab El Amel** project. The project addresses the unemployment of Algerian youth and the lack of technical support and professional integration services within the country. Beneficiaries are provided access to support for developing technical and economic studies to launch their micro-enterprises. The project directs beneficiaries toward existing support mechanisms and provides training and mentorship to ensure that their business plans are effectively drafted for success with financing agencies.

Creating Partnerships

Through partnerships with various financing agencies, the **Bab El Amel** project provides beneficiaries with relevant training and mentorship to prepare them for the development of micro-enterprises. The expertise provided by the partners allowed for developing training materials pertinent to the needs of beneficiaries and offering quality personalised support to project leaders wishing to compile credit application files.





ADDITIONAL INFORMATION



National Association of Youth Exchange Website




DISCUSSION PAPER: RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) IN KENYA - TRANSFORMATION IN AN INFORMAL ECONOMY

Introduction

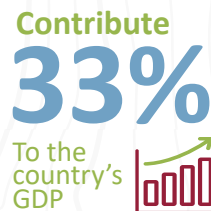
The Jua Kali informal sector predominantly drives the Kenyan economy. 84% of the Kenyan working population is employed in the informal sector. The name Jua Kali, “fierce sun” in KiSwahili, is derived from the thousands of workshops where people manually work on auto parts, furniture, metal wares and handicrafts under the hot sun daily because of a lack of premises. Gradually it came to refer to anybody in self-employment.

Kenya has a large reserve and talent pool of informally skilled and trained persons. This pool of workmanship thrives in the Jua Kali. Despite Jua Kali’s prolific contribution to the economy, the sector is plagued by systemic challenges that prevent the achievement of its full potential. Challenges include access to the market, access to relevant financial services such as pension and insurance, lack of infrastructure, recognition of learnings, and skills upgrading framework.




Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) has been identified as a relevant tool for addressing the existing shortage of quality skilled workforce. The approach works through the exploitation of the island of untapped potential of the unrecognised, disadvantaged and discouraged skilled persons who acquired competencies through informal and nonformal means but cannot be certified to practice.

Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs)



Informal SMEs accounted for

83.6% of the  **840.6 thousand** new jobs created in 2018.


- KNBS 2016, SME Report

Overview

This discussion paper is a semi-condensed presentation of findings elaborated through various sources, including Community of Practice presentations, interviews with key stakeholders in the education, private and informal sectors of Kenya, case studies, media reports and additional desktop research to invite discussion and stimulate debate.

This paper includes a series of questions about the role of RPL as a pathway for persons operating in the informal sector to attain sustainable (self) employment while addressing the skills shortage in the formal sector. The discussion questions aim to guide thinking and stimulate engagement amongst practitioners, the private sector, researchers, and scholars who are already active or specialists in the fields intersecting skills development (technical and vocational education and training) and labour to engage in and help shape debate.

The Jua Kali informal sector predominantly drives the Kenyan economy. RPL has proven to be a relevant tool for addressing the existing shortage of quality skilled workforce, and the experiences of the key players in the RPL ecosystem, during the recent piloted phase (2021-2022) highlight some of the successes. It is however vital to also unpack some of the key learnings to spotlight opportunities for further collaboration and engagement by all ecosystem players to reap the full rewards of the new RPL framework.



In the journey to explore RPL as a tool to enable access to viable pathways to sustainable (self) employment in Kenya, this discussion paper unpacks the following vital questions-

💡 How does the Jua Kali fit into the National Big Four Agenda?

💡 How can skills involved and utilised in the informal sector be recognised as formal skills and trades, worthy of utility in the formal sector?

💡 How does RPL work in Kenya? and how does the KNFJKA fit into the ecosystem?

💡 What can we learn from the KNFJKA members' experiences in the RPL pilot process?

💡 What are the opportunities for growth and development?

How does the Jua Kali fit into the National Big Four Agenda?

The Government of Kenya prioritised the implementation of the '[Big Four Agenda](#)' in the development period between 2018-2022 which comprises Food Security; Affordable Housing; Manufacturing and Affordable Healthcare.

👉 The role of the TVET sub-sector in creating jobs under this agenda is premised on a solid linkage of TVET programs to the informal Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) or *Jua Kali*.

The Ministry of Education's State Department of Vocational and Technical Training (VTT) has initiated dialogue with the KNFJKA and other actors in the informal sector intending to explore targeted collaborations between the informal Jua Kali/MSMEs sector and TVET institutions in teaching and learning to benefit both students and existing workers in the Jua Kali sector.

How can skills involved and utilised in the informal sector be recognised as formal skills and trades, worthy of utility in the formal sector?

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process used to identify, access and certify a person's knowledge, skills and competencies acquired in non-formal and informal learning.

This includes work or life experiences matched against prescribed standards or learning outcomes. The process weighs skills and talents used by those involved in the informal sector, without prior or limited formal training, on function, practice, and production to determine the scale and value of work to obtain formal accreditation. This is important as it enables growth in value chain-driven labour and improves access of those in the informal to the formal market. The process further facilitates the upskilling and recognition of labour and value contribution of a population cohort that possesses the capacity to perform work based on informally acquired skills but has never had the opportunity or privilege to obtain formal training or education.

How does RPL work in Kenya?

A New Framework Approach:

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is anchored in the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF). The 10 Level Qualifications Framework is broadly segmented into four sub-sectors: Basic education, TVET sector, University education sector and Industry/Skills Sector. Under the guidance of respective sector regulators, the Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) coordinates these sectors. Through RPL, artisans can get tested in their vernacular language for the



best assessment. The RPL process involves proper assessment and certification of individuals by gauging their skills and relevance in the job market.

In the past, training and assessment systems have predominantly focused on academia, but through RPL, assessment is based on the individual's ability to solve real-time industry problems. This also ensures a demand-driven approach to skills development in the sector. Additionally, in the past, aspects like expression through English and KiSwahili were heavily weighted in assessment, but over time it has been understood that in addition to language skills, greater focus must be placed on ensuring that those being certified should fully demonstrate the skills being sought by the industry. The assessment process also considers the potential employers' input during upskilling stages to ensure a comprehensive approach. Individuals being assessed must also produce a portfolio of evidence - a package of information given to an assessor from a qualification awarding institution. Artisans are provided with support in the compilation of their portfolios. Moving forward, assessments will consider tests in vernacular languages to get the full scope of the artisans' knowledge and accurate placement

Key Players in the RPL ecosystem

Crucial relationships are at play in skills compliance and trade recognition through RPL. These include but are not limited to:

- 💡 **The national government** through the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labour.
- 💡 **The National Qualifications Authority** under the ministry of education and the National Qualifications Framework.
- 💡 **Kenya National Federation of Jua Kali Association (KNFJKA)** and its respective members.
- 💡 **International Rescue Committee (IRC)** and International Labour Organisation (ILO) through the inclusion and refugee lobbying.
- 💡 **The Private sector** through organisations and companies such as [Base Titanium](#) that have vouched for the skilling and participation of employees in the program.
- 💡 **German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and the European Union** through the lobbying and fund provision for the standardisation and formalisation of RPL in contexts such as Kenya.

How does the Kenya National Federation of Jua Kali Associations (KNFJKA) fit into the RPL ecosystem?

The Kenya National Federation of Jua Kali Associations (KNFJKA), established in 1992, is the largest umbrella membership organisation representing skilled Jua Kali artisans organised in registered Primary Jua Kali Associations across 18 sub-sectors of the informal sector in Kenya. The members operate in common clusters called work sites across the country. The Federation works closely with The national, regional and continental institutions, including the Common Market for Eastern and Southern

Africa (COMESA) Business Council, Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), the private sector, civil society, and development partner organisations. Examples of sub-sectors include, but are not limited to, Clay/Pottery crafts, Herbalists and Environmental Conservationists, Automotive Engineering works, and Electrical/Electronics and ICT device repair trades. For a complete list of sub-sectors, visit their [website](#).

Impact


 **1 673**
registered

Primary Jua Kali Associations

General membership
+6 000 000
artisans 

Spread across

18  sub-sectors




Their main objectives include:

- ✦ Protecting, representing, and developing the interests of the Jua Kali artisans in registered primary associations.
 - ✦ Acting as the primary vehicle for consultation, experience exchange and coordination between donors, Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and Non-governmental institutions.
 - ✦ Providing a forum for the continuous consultation and monitoring of the implementation of Jua Kali programmes and reviewing relevant policy implementation strategies.
 - ✦ Promoting in conjunction with other stakeholders an environment conducive to developing a vibrant Jua Kali sector in Kenya.
 - ✦ Promoting the formation and registration of primary Jua Kali associations along the clustered industrial sub-sectors and as per applicable guiding policies and legislations.
 - ✦ Promoting capacity building in management skills among the Jua Kali artisans in member associations through training, seminars, and any other means.
 - ✦ Enhancing the participation of women in the Jua Kali sector.
 - ✦ Sensitising the Government and interested bodies on the needs, opportunities, and responsibilities of the Jua Kali sector.
 - ✦ Facilitating the transfer of appropriate technologies and protecting innovations and inventions by the Jua kali artisans in registered primary Jua Kali associations from piracy and encouraging their commercialisation where possible.
 - ✦ Assisting the Government in identifying and reviewing relevant laws that hamper the growth of the Jua Kali sector in Kenya and the East African Community region.
- For more information about the KNFJKA programmes, visit their [website](#).



What can be learnt from the KNFJKA member's experiences in the RPL process?

The KNFJKA has embraced RPL. Collaborating and partnering with the National Industrial Training Authority (NITA), a Qualification Awarding Institute (QAI) on RPL. 400+ members participated in the RPL pilot project between 2021 and 2022. Graduates received a skills certificate from NITA after undergoing rigorous tests and assessments and went through the first-ever graduation for all RPL beneficiaries countrywide in July 2022.





"The idea behind the Recognition of Prior Learning is to recognise key economic drivers in the country. People who are rich in skills but lack requisite papers."

- Dr Juma Mukhwana, Director General Kenya National Qualification Authority (KNQA)



Experiences & Opportunities for Development

The following table summarises the KNFJKA members' experiences linked with opportunities for improving the RPL process in Kenya.

EXPERIENCES OF MEMBERS	OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH
 <p>Language as a barrier to skills expression:</p> <p>In the informal Jua Kali environment, there is no requirement to know how to communicate in a basic language like English or KiSwahili. Most Federation members have not had the privilege to access or complete basic education and come from significantly marginalised and difficult social backgrounds. This made the language barrier a great challenge.</p>	<p>Conducting facilitation and assessments in vernacular languages</p>
 <p>Communication and awareness limiting understanding:</p> <p>There needs to be more awareness about RPL. Many key stakeholders and media members need help understanding the procedure, processes, requirements and standards.</p>	<p>Increasing RPL awareness among the RPL stakeholder ecosystem including Government, scholars, practitioners, industry and potential candidates.</p>



When something is good, everyone wants to join:

Actors are rushing in to seek to be involved. However, without the knowledge that they need to be involved from the point of their mandate.

Harmonization mechanism of the education and training sector operating in different Ministries;

Strengthening the RPL legal and institutional frameworks

Integration of the RPL system with the legal framework for the education and training sector and the social-economic policies in the country

Increased industry involvement in the education and training sector in Kenya

A National Skills Development Council to oversee the operations Sector Skill Councils in implementing RPL



The Federation has already started to look for alternative funding opportunities to continue the RPL process.

Creation of a sustainable RPL funding model

THE ROLE OF THE TVET SECTOR IN FOSTERING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Introduction


A Guideline on Fostering Entrepreneurship through the TVET sector was developed by GDI - Global Development Incubator with the support of representatives from GIZ. The guideline highlights the importance of entrepreneurship as a driver of economic growth. It presents a model for fostering youth entrepreneurship looking at how TVETs fit within this model and their role through existing case studies across the continent. [Access the complete guideline in English and French.](#)

Entrepreneurship: A critical driver of growth for African economies

Many African economies struggle to integrate working-age youth into waged labour, resulting in graduates seeking employment in the informal sector. TVET colleges present an opportunity to train future entrepreneurs who can sustain themselves and become employers of labour.

A model for fostering youth entrepreneurship that works

There is a significant discrepancy between jobs generated in Africa and the number of individuals entering the workforce (7 to 9 million). TVET colleges aim, through a focus on training students for self-employment or nano-enterprises (1-5 workers), to meet the seven needs of entrepreneurs (developed through the Global Development Incubator):

-  **Access to market information and linkages:** Allows entrepreneurs to identify and meet market needs, identify and connect to economic growth areas, form connections with actors along the supply chain, and guidance on the procurement of contracts.





Skills development: Developing hard and soft skills and providing work-based learning opportunities.



Access to finance: There exists a financing gap for micro, small, and medium-sized businesses. Entrepreneurs require various financial services, including awareness of financing options available, facilities for making deposits and payments, and opportunities for accessing credit, equity and guarantees. It is also essential that the structure and terms of funding be favourable to encourage entrepreneurship.



Motivation and attitude toward entrepreneurship: Negative socio-cultural perceptions of entrepreneurship must be overcome. Additionally, potential entrepreneurs must be made aware of the practicalities of starting a business and developing a long-term business orientation.



Mentorship and access to networks: Access to experienced partners is crucial for developing leadership skills.



Personalised coaching and technical assistance: Provides entrepreneurs with support regarding the day-to-day challenges of starting and maintaining a business.



Favourable policy and regulatory environment: Successful entrepreneurship requires an environment that supports business creation. Administrative burdens should be kept at a minimum, requiring a policy and regulatory framework which is easy to navigate.



Where do TVETs come in?

TVETs are considered one of the most practical solutions to the employment gap, providing graduates with the necessary skills to start their businesses and providing training for future entrepreneurs. This is supported by the African Union's Continental Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Strategy. TVETs cannot meet all entrepreneurs' needs. This requires buy-in from a variety of actors.

- 💡 **Policy:** requires execution by national governments, the AU and RECs.
- 💡 **Finance:** requires engagement and execution by the diaspora, private equity funds, business angels, donors, and development banks.
- 💡 **Human capital:** actors include primary and secondary schools, universities, and TVET institutions.
- 💡 **Support services:** actors include donors, foundations, NGOs, startups, hubs and incubators.

The goal is to ensure that all TVETs include entrepreneurial training within current programmes and to launch and scale an integrated suite of support. TVETs cannot deliver their full promise through training

alone and organisational and programmatic changes to unlock their full potential. Three such contributions have been identified:

- 💡 **Deliver:** TVETs must deliver specific interventions themselves, capitalising on their direct engagement with entrepreneurs and their primary expertise in training. Courses should provide technical and practical skills related to particular fields and financial, accounting, and management skills required to start a business.
- 💡 **Coordinate:** TVETs should coordinate stakeholder efforts to ensure collaboration and synergy. Leveraging stakeholder connections to meet the identified entrepreneurial needs is crucial.
- 💡 **Advise:** TVETs do not have the authority to influence the outcomes of various processes. Where this is the case, TVETs should play an advisory role, and other actors (such as the government) must take responsibility for their actions.

Access the [complete guideline](#) in English and French.



LESSONS LEARNT, TIPS & STRATEGIES

This Learning Brief has been written for practitioners and policymakers interested in good African practices, successes, and lessons learnt regarding **Entrepreneurship and the Informal Sector** in the context of “Working towards agile, responsive skills and (self) employment ecosystems in Africa.”

Your perspective might be that of a policy maker, a training provider, a researcher, a funder, an implementer, an evaluator, or a beneficiary in the key thematic and intervention areas identified in the **Continental Education (CESA)** and **Continental TVET Strategies**.

This section draws lessons from the experiences of initiatives and programmes highlighted in this Learning Brief for application in your varying contexts. With an appreciation of the challenges, stories of success, research and observations shared by practitioners across the continent, lessons are generalised for ease of replication. Building on these lessons, the section further provides a set of tips and strategies that you are encouraged to apply to your context where possible.



LESSONS LEARNT

Partners

Solid partnerships can ensure buy-in and collaboration from industries, companies in the private sector and trade associations to create a true pathway - from the classroom to employment or income generation.

Creating an ecosystem within the larger skills development ecosystem is key. It is this network of key contributors (such as high-level government partnerships, institutional and business partnerships, and international donors) that can allow for success.

Access Required

A physical Hub where youth working in different trades can meet supports **sharing of services** and strengthens entrepreneurial capacity.

Appropriate physical location near industrial hubs works as an enabler for ideas generation and uptake.


The programme needs to provide **varied forms of support**, ranging from pitching skills to mentorship to physical resources such as equipment.

Beneficiary Group

For young entrepreneurs, information needs to be mediated. Structured, planned and facilitated workshops are the best ways to help youth understand the factors that will impact their enterprises.

Simply providing the information is not always sufficient. Follow-up activities help beneficiaries use what they have learned to their own contexts, whether this is to apply for credit or to link into other forms of support such as funded training.





Promote success by providing strong support to entrepreneurial start-ups; support need not be limited to finance only.

Research

In support of **entrepreneurship in the informal sector**; it is best to focus on vocational training in trades easily managed by a micro-enterprise. This means conducting research about what works and what does not work.

Tracking of participants from start to finish of the programme and beyond provides data to inform future incubator models and further skills development interventions in entrepreneurship.

Key Stakeholders

The success of a pilot project needs to be widely shared so that funded upscaling can happen.

Resources Required

Long-term investment in small business development programmes is a condition for success and impact. Programmes need to offer different forms of support at different phases, in order to ensure that a sustainable business is created.



TIPS & STRATEGIES

💡 Formalising entrepreneurial training and skills development by embedding these programmes in public institutions allow for greater government engagement, public funding, and upscaling.

Entrepreneurial training programmes that create sustainable impact are usually integrated, long-term interventions.

Entrepreneurial skills are not successfully internalised in stand-alone programmes delivered in isolation from a context in which they can be applied. Some features of successful programmes include

- Embedding training in entrepreneurial behaviours and foundational skills (such as financial literacy or business management competencies) in a specific vocational or industry context.
- Running entrepreneurial modules in tandem with technical training.
- Moving beyond theory modules to practical application and delivery within a project or an incubation model.
- Allowing sufficient time for ventures and start-ups to progress through different stages, given that there are different things to be learnt as a micro-enterprise or incubated venture evolves.

💡 One of the most important outcomes of any intervention aimed at promoting entrepreneurship is to enable youth **to access what they need for success**. This includes access to market-related information, to supply chain contacts, to potential partners or to financing options.

💡 Successful programmes use a number of **different mechanisms** to promote understanding, application and know-how in entrepreneurship. These include hands-on training, mentorship, personalised coaching, and setting up opportunities for relevant work-experience which can then be transferred to the entrepreneurial context.

💡 Government needs to be drawn in to provide **enabling policies and incentives** for the development of micro-enterprises in the **informal sector**.

💡 For skills development in entrepreneurship to show **meaningful impact at scale**, a range of **key stakeholders need to be involved in active partnerships**. This includes government at national and local levels, the private sector, employer and industry bodies, the formal and non-formal training delivery providers, local and international donors, and professional bodies and networks.



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The Learning Brief also draws from expertise and knowledge sharing through **case studies, webinars, and research papers.**

- A Guideline on Fostering Entrepreneurship through the TVET sector

