



Hybrid DREAM Event  
15 December 2021

# TVETs: creating employment opportunities with lowland programs

## Proceedings

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## Context

The Ethiopian lowlands have their own potential and challenges for development, but they share a concern with other parts of Ethiopia: how to improve livelihoods and how to create employment opportunities? The challenge is particular for young people: how to provide them with a future and hopeful vision and make them contribute to lowland development? There are many skills that are in much demand, such as masonry, that if would be more widely available could be the basis for a rewarding job. TVETs play a large role here, as they bring practical skills to young people that can serve as the basis for gainful employment or business.

The challenge is how to do this effectively and how to reach scale, both to fulfil the demand for such services and to make a significant impact in employment creation. To address this challenge, three TVETs in Afar and Somali Region have set up practical trainings that can be provided on demand and against payment – with the idea that different organizations can engage the TVETs to provide such trainings on request.

The hybrid DREAM event on 15 December 2021 discussed the first experiences made with the training courses against tuition fees offered by the three TVETs in Afar and Somali Region. The owner of the courses are the TVETs, they are acting like private sector entrepreneurs selling skill trainings. While conducting the courses, jobs are created by the TVETs as they need to engage consultants to manage the job. For the pastoralist and agro-pastoralist trainees, the skill training provided is often the first opportunity to allow a decision between livelihood options. The event also discussed how the lowland investment programs could buy-in supporting a larger spin-off to increasing skills and capacities of members of the pastoral and agro-pastoral communities, leading towards sustainable jobs and stronger local economies.

This event took place in the larger series of discussion on Coordination, Cooperation and Capacitation for Lowland Development of the DREAM program. Following the Development of Resilience Empowering Alternative Measures in Arid and Semi-arid Lowlands of Ethiopia conference (DREAM- I) held in Afar, September 2019, three Pre-conferences were executed: (i) Coordination Pre-Conference held on 3rd November 2020, (ii) Co-operation Pre-Conference held on 12th November 2020 and (iii) Capacitation held on 26th November 2020 as well as a number of Learning Events: (1) Fodder and Rangeland Nexus on 9 March 2021 and (2) Educational Institutionalization on 28 April 2021 (3) Strengthening Woreda level Planning and Coordination on 16 June 2021 (4) Financial Management Capacity at Woreda Level on 29 July 2021 and (5) Gully Management under problem-solving coordination on 31 August 2021.

This event was hybrid, with both online presence and a physical meeting in Jigjiga.



## 1. Opening - Dr. Frank van Steenberg (MetaMeta)

Dr. Frank van Steenberg opens the event and welcomes all participants to the hybrid event. He emphasizes the importance of the topic the event, titled “TVETs: creating employment opportunities with lowland programs”, which will discuss the activities of TVETs in contributing to solving employment challenges. He mentions that there are many development opportunities in the lowlands but also a lot of un(der)employed young people, causing frustration and a loss of talent. TVETs play a big role there, they provide education to people to develop the skills that enable them to get into job positions and get a hopeful future. GIZ-SDR has been working with three TVETs on a program that not only brings skills to people but is also available for students based on a tuition fee, paid by themselves or sponsors.

The program of the hybrid event included three presentations on and from TVETs, after a keynote speech by Dr. Elisabeth van den Akker. Following this part, there is room for panel responses and group discussions.

## 2. Keynote: Employment and building skills: a major challenge in the lowlands. The opportunities with the GIZ SDR program - Dr. Elisabeth van den Akker (GIZ-SDR)

Dr. Elisabeth van den Akker welcomes all participant and is happy to share experiences and have discussions today, all focused around developing the lowland areas of Ethiopia. She mentions that it has become clearer for her in the past years that training institutions in the country are the centre of development, as they are facilitating passing on of skills. Skills are opportunities for people to take a job opportunity. *“If you know how to do the job, you can get the job. For the lowland areas and the difficult to reach (agro)pastoralists, this is an extremely important topic which has been neglected in the past. We can work on it, put it in the focus, and find solutions on how to overcome bottlenecks, as it is in the end all about jobs and income, especially for the younger generation.*

*The Strengthening Drought Resilience program comes from the NRM side and natural resources use, which is for the (agro)pastoralists the base of income. But what happens if the natural resources are degrading and not producing as much as needed? Then we started with Dry Valley Rehabilitation Productive Use Approach, looking into the degraded drylands, and trying to bring them back to production. Again, for that, skills are needed to do that. This is all known, what is then new now, about how we suggest doing it? In principle, what we have done now and what is probably still not completely realised, is that we put training institutions in the middle and made them the owner of the courses. Thereby, they are taking over complete responsibility. From her perspective, these institutions are ready for this. They can act as a private sector element. This worked perfectly for the three institutions which she works with. These institutions successfully took over responsibilities. The courses the trainings institutes offered, with support, have put the tuition fee in the middle. Looked was into the costs of training one person on an issue. Based on that budget, the courses could be announced, and any development projects and others can buy-in students. The responsibility to do the course correctly is 100% at the level of the training institute. The tuition fees also cover costs for*

*consultants and administration. This set-up leads to employment for the people involved, while for the students it means skill creation and increased employment opportunities.*

*Experiences and ways forward are key components of today's event. At the end, we aim to have at the end a model in which other development projects can also buy in. For this, adaptation, trials, and further improvement are needed."*

### 3. Presentation 1 | Creating skills, business, and job opportunities – the experience of Gewane ATVET College (Sintayhu Mersha)

Gewane AVET College is located in Afar Region, Gewane Woreda. It was established in 1970 as an agricultural training centre and provides short trainings (2-9 months) in the field of agriculture, animal production, range land management and utilisation and animal health. In 2001, the training centre was involved in a three-year program with the objective to produce middle level skilled manpower that would play a significant role in the implementation of agricultural transformation and overall economic development.

Currently, the college is under the newly re-established labour and skill minister. The college has full mandate to provide trainings, to produce, adopt and transfer low level technology to the community and to organise, support, evaluate and monitor small and medium enterprise and transfer up to the highest level.

This training institute was established by the willingness and full participation of the pastoralist community and has a strong focus on sustainable land management. The college has an admission capacity of 700 trainees at a time.

TVET is the kind of training and education that provides individuals with skills that prepare them for the employment opportunities. The techniques in delivering include formal, informal, and non-formal training. The labour and skill minister underlined that the ministry is in a strategic position to transform the national labour market and the socio-economic landscape of Ethiopia in general.

Two trainings have been provided in the program in the GIZ-SDR program, on fruit nursery management & multipurpose seeding production and on dry-stone measures, as per the signed bilateral MoU between GIZ-SDR and Gewane AVET College. 44 trainees participated from Afambo, Gewane, Gelealu, Dubti and Asayta. 5 trainees were female, 39 were male. Based on some selection criteria, trainees were selected. These criteria included: preferably young and able-bodied person, no addictions, highly motivated, disciplined and no conflict between trainees. Then, the content of trainings is presented, on which more can be found in the PowerPoint presentation. Through the trainings, employment opportunities have been created, as presented via the very successful example of a newly established permanent fruit nursery site, which has also good access to market. The training institute is furthermore involved in different lowland programs and aims to connect with other educational initiatives.

The presenter mentions several strengths of the trainings, including ownership creation, increasing motivation, increasing confidence of trainers, highly experienced project staff from GIZ-SDR. Furthermore, there is a demo of a water spreading weir and a permanent fruit nursery site. Regarding weaknesses, there were too high expectations, and the timing was

challenging due to conflicts. Opportunities are found in the tuition fees, as this was the first experience with courses against tuition fees. Furthermore, there is a lot of opportunity to work together with stakeholders and partners on many topics. Threats are natural disasters like flooding, water scarcity, location disadvantage, conflict among clans and regional and national security challenges.

After the presentation, there is room for questions. Questions are asked on the selection criteria, the market for the products from the fruit nursery, the research with other universities, internships, and the regions on which is focussed.

Elisabeth van den Akker answers some of the questions while others are to be discussed later in the panel and group discussions. She mentions that GIZ-SDR started in Afar in 2013 with a small project and later got more projects focusing on only Afar. The Swiss development cooperation would then like to use the same approach involving GIZ-SDR, which allowed GIZ-SDR to also work in Somali region. There will be more in Somali region in the coming years. Elisabeth mentions that khat chewing people should not be excluded from jobs or trainings, but that discipline is important. Elisabeth also answers a question on the role of the project and what is the coordination mechanism to ensure effective coordination and cooperation amongst stakeholders. She mentions that the role of GIZ-SDR there is developing, jointly with regional government and institutions in Afar and Somali region, measures strengthening drought resilience of the pastoral and agropastoral population. Regarding coordination and cooperation between stakeholders, she mentions that this is an issue that is being worked on constantly. The DREAM conference cycle is exactly therefore organized. Then there is a question on job creation via the training, which was not explicitly mentioned in the presentation. Elisabeth mentions that it is too early to already see the long-term impact of the recent trainings.



Figure 1: Pictures of the courses at Gewane College

#### 4. Presentation 2 | Creating skills, business, and job opportunities – the experience of Adadale Polytechnic College (Tefere Ayalew)

In the presentation, first an overview of the ongoing training programs is provided, followed by experiences on employment opportunity creation, connection with main lowland programs and connection with other educational initiatives. Lastly, reflected is on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Currently, there is a Basic Masonry Training (BMT) against tuition fee per trainee. The training also includes literacy and numeracy skills as well as training on constructing. In this training, 35 trainees participated per round. After 9 rounds, 315 trainees have graduated. Each institution, project and program are invited to send trainees for the individual tuition fee. In the training, there is both room for theory and practice and after the training, trainees can be directly employed.

Regarding the connection with lowland programs, it is mentioned that these connections were limited. The training provided was like other TVETs and not in a unique and well-studied way connected to other main lowland programs and integrating into the real needs of the pastoral and agro-pastoral communities for livelihood options. Noted is that there is opportunity for employment creation following challenges / problems, e.g. deforestation, flood hazard, land degradation, soil erosion, overgrazing, encroachment and range land degradation.

Regarding experiences with other educational initiatives, it is mentioned that the training institute has long-term experience in urban employment opportunities and hosted several short courses on urban employment opportunities with NGOs and governments. Type of careers are e.g. mason work, construction work, kitchen operation, hairdressing and many more.

The new training model allows trainings institutes to be independent, is seen as a strength. Furthermore, it allows the institute to see strengths and weaknesses, and to sell products and services, as well as identify job opportunities and carrying out a project. Weaknesses are found in the security challenges, budget release process, trainees awareness gap and punctuality. Threats are natural disasters, like flooding, and both regional and national security challenges. Opportunities are found in have courses against tuition fees, which was done for the first time. Other opportunities are found in the creation of jobs and further development of courses. There is also interest / demand from other programs to collaborate with the training institute.

There is a question from a representative from the Ministry of Agriculture who appreciates the presenter's explanation on the trainings. He mentions to not have heard something specifically on youth employment, both self-employment and wage employment, and livelihood creation for them. He then asks on post-training interventions, such as mentoring, and on experience with achieving the objective of helping the youth. Livelihood creation is also on the agenda of other programs, who want to learn from experiences in TVETs. This will be discussed in the group discussion.

Elisabeth replies to some questions asked in the chat. She mentions that the tuition fee covers all costs that could occur during the training and that CoC Certificates are also included in the trainings (CoC = Certificate of Competence).



*Figure 2: Graduates of Adadale College*

## 5. Presentation 3 | Creating skills, business, and job opportunities – the experience of Gode Polytechnic College (Mohammed Farah)

The presenter mentions that there are currently two programs with in total 683 students. Trainings have been provided building and maintaining water spreading weirs. In the agriculture sector, trainings are provided on animal production, crop production, NRM, animal health and agricultural cooperatives. There are also other trainings for other sectors, e.g. on furniture making and cell phone maintenance. Thereby, employment opportunities have been created in masonry, hair dressing, nurseries, driving, ruminant fattening, onion and tomato production, poultry production, furniture making, GMFA and honey production. In the region there is also demand for related skills. Following the trainings, there is currently an area under cultivation.

The institute is in a lowland area and has therefore potential to connect with main lowland programs on crop production, NRM, animal production. Furthermore, there is gully erosion that must be managed and can be used for crop purposes. Rangeland improvement for enhancing for (agro)pastoral livelihoods.

Strengths are found in the presence of experienced trainers, an internationally and locally benchmark curriculum and internationally benchmark methodology and practices in delivering quality training. Furthermore, there is availability of different trainings and workshops, enough classrooms and trainee's dormitory. There is furthermore a substantial amount of budget allocated for operation and fixed costs for the college. Lastly, there is a lot of youth in the region.

Weaknesses are the limitation in mobilising participants to join trainings as well as shortage of start-up capital or materials for TVET graduates for self-employment creation and shortage of some training materials.

There is a lot of potential, as there is a lot of unemployment among youth and skills are needed. There is also lots of opportunity to collaborate with local and international NGOs, private companies, governmental organisations, and industries, a.o. to facilitate scholarship for short-term trainings. Lastly, the Shebelle River across the Gode town has potential to irrigate millions of hectares.

The awareness is however limited at different levels of local communities. Furthermore, the mindset that TVET is secondary to university and the aspirations for white collar jobs is a threat. The presentation is ended with pictures from successful trainings on amongst others masonry and water spreading weirs. Trainees from these trainings are working in this sector after the training.



*Figure 3: Training at Gode College*

## 6. Panel responses

The panel reflects on how the programs presented relate to creating employment opportunities and to the feasibility of paying the tuition fees. Sara Worku (Alliance2015) first congratulates GIZ for supporting this interesting program. She mentions that job creation is “a new thing” in lowland area, as the focus for that has been in urban and highland areas. It is sometimes difficult to address the need of the (agro)pastoralists communities, which trainings discussed today responded to. In her experience, there is a huge challenge in to find skilled persons in lowland areas in for example infrastructure, addressing the importance of trainings. She has good experience in working with TVETs in urban and highland areas and sees it as a good initiative from GIZ-SDR to also focus on lowlands. Having lowland content-specific extension services is also a challenge for her, therefore collaboration and sharing knowledge is important. She mentions that via trainings youth will find a job more easily and highlights the importance of certificates. Furthermore, trainings should be practical, especially also in some short trainings. Another important aspect, that is often lacking, is linking with soft skill trainings which are crucial. Regarding the medium and long term, she mentions that engaging with the private sector is important. From the sustainability point of view, engaging private sector, and not only NGOs and projects/programs, from the beginning is very important. She makes a final point on promoting also other agendas while working on trainings.

A question is asked by a representative from the Ministry of Agriculture on training modules on marketing, which is important for creating employment for youth in lowland regions. Then he asked on post-training monitoring and evaluation and how that is arranged for the trainings discussed today. Another question from him is on the dissemination of knowledge and experiences between training centres. He also raises the topic of sustainability, especially on how to continue after the funded project.

Tezera Getahun (Pastoralist Forum Ethiopia) mentions that two years ago in Afar pastoralists were very interested to participate in activities. However, trust has not been developed by e.g. sugar cane factories / plantation. He asks participants whether they can reflect on it. The second point he raises is that the educational level is sometimes a problem for the participants. Tezera asks whether also lessons learnt from other trainings centres are considered, such as the Barefoot College in India.

Frank van Steenbergem summarises that many questions are related to successful upscaling of what has been learnt. He repeats that addressing the unemployment issue and the demand for skilled labour can be linked via the lowland programs. He then introduces the group discussions to take place online and in Jigjiga and Semera.

## 7. Group discussions

There are two main questions discussed in the group discussions:

1. *What are the options for creating more employment in the implementation of the ongoing programs through job opportunities, engaging micro-enterprises, local skill development, procurement, bringing more money in the local economies?*

The potential is huge. There is a high demand for skilled people on topics such as masonry, animal fattening, onion, honeybee, and others. There is also a lot of potential in value-added services, such as processing from milk. There is a need to get practical and to contextualise for the lowlands. However, there is a lot of potential for local skilled people.

The focus for these trainings has been on urban areas and less in rural areas, where there is also demand that needs to be streamlined. Engaging trainings in the different investment programs, which is already done, is a promising way to do so.

There is a need to build a consortium of different parties to match demand for skills and training. Gaps in the value chain can be addressed in this way and the trainings provided can then better match the skills needed. This consortium can also be used to create internship opportunities. Regarding the consortium, it is suggested that other projects and institutions should also be on board. There is comment on the dynamics of pastoralism, which should be considered in changing policies and curricula.

Regarding the content of the training, it is mentioned that next to skills related to a profession, more is needed to get a business started or to be a disciplined staff member. This can also be addressed and included in the trainings, for example via business-trainings.

2. *How to optimise the impact of the TVET program? How can the current plan of paid trainings contribute to reaching scale in employment creation?*

The point of increasing the popularity of the program is mentioned; awareness is currently too low, also from local decision makers. The image of TVETs can be improved by having a common label and potentially by linking with universities and/or private colleges. Local communication channels can be used to create awareness and make the trainings more popular. Communicating on success stories with (potential) partners and programs is a recommendation to also reach these goals. A step further is creating an alumni network, who can be role models and reflect on trainings.

Increasing the diversity of programs based on needs and resources is furthermore important. There are good initiatives from different sides to scale up, but increased participation from different parties and stakeholders is needed.

The program is also seen as expensive sometimes by individuals. Therefore, involvement of other actors (NGOs, governments) is needed to fund for people who are not able to pay.

Post-training support is also raised to bring the trainees into the real world. The idea arose to have an employment mediation centre to match offer and demand.

## 8. Wrap-up

Elisabeth van den Akker mentions the intention to set up a consortium / working group with different stakeholders (government, NGOs and others) and invites participants to come up with parties to be included in this group to jointly work on the next steps.

Frank van Steenberghe thanks all participants for the exciting event and progresses that have been made so far. Elisabeth van den Akker mentions that training is not in the center of the GIZ program, but that it is one of the vehicles to reach the goal of drought resilience. She is however delighted to see all the initiatives and interest, for which the consortium is being set up. She mentions to have learnt about the importance of capacitation of TVETs themselves, which she would like to follow up on in the in the future. Regarding the beneficiaries of the trainings, she addresses the importance of looking into the real need of the trainees and to involve the trained people in an alumni network and in a market for offer and demand. She thanks all people for active participation and involvement.

Lastly, a recently made video, by MetaMeta, on today's topic is shared. Participants are asked to provide input for further improvement of this video. The video is well received, and the next version will contain more lowland footage.

The presentations of the Learning Event can be found on the website <https://sdr-africa.com>.

