

Public-Private Dialogue

www.publicprivatedialogue.org

Senegal / Education and Employment Opportunities for Youth

by

Laura Dillon-Binkley, International Technical Advisor, Education Development Center (EDC)
Melanie Sany, Youth Team Lead, Education Development Center (EDC)

*Presented at the Public-Private Dialogue 2017 Workshop
(Tunis, May 9-11, 2017)*

Background and Context

EDC's workforce development programs seek to successfully transition youth into jobs through targeted support and activities that help them apply their training and experiences. To ensure youth get the marketable skills they need, there are two key sets of partners we work with: Government (by ensuring market-driven skills training and work readiness learning are embedded in public education institutions) and the Private Sector (by providing work-based learning opportunities, mentorship and employment to youth). Only through bringing public and private institutions and actors together are we able to ensure that private sector needs are informing public school curricula and programming at the secondary and TVET levels. Without this coordination between the government, educational institutions (public and private) and the private sector, there is often a gap between the supply and demand of relevant job skills. Below are three examples of EDC's workforce development programs that are using Public-Private dialogues to achieve success.

The MasterCard Foundation-funded ***Projet de l'amélioration des performances de travail et d'entreprenariat (APTE-Senegal)*** (Work Readiness and Entrepreneurship Strengthening project) started in September 2016. The project will focus on 200 lower secondary schools and 50 technical vocational education and training (TVET) schools throughout the country, providing students with career counseling and transition to work services, including entrepreneurship coaching and mentoring, job shadowing, internship and job placement. APTE-Senegal will work closely with government institutions to support reform in educational curriculum to integrate more work readiness and entrepreneurship training, as well as improve linkages between skills taught and skills needed by private employers. Through entrepreneurship clubs, a network of private sector actors and businesses will mentor youth in career planning. This network will also provide work-based learning opportunities through internships, job-shadowing, continued skills training and entrepreneurship activities. In addition, APTE-Senegal will assemble a Steering Committee composed of representatives

from across government ministries, the private sector, parent-teacher organizations, youth and private citizens to ensure broad coordination and input into project activities to ensure effective linkages can be made between skills youth receive and skills employers need.

Youth and Inclusion Dimension

The project is focused on helping youth 15-24 years of age to more effectively link to the job market by better ensuring that educational and other institutions provide youth with the skills current employers need. In Senegal, target beneficiaries are youth in TVET and secondary schools. By engaging stakeholders across government, the private sector and civil society, youth employment-related challenges are discussed, solutions are found, and opportunities for formal and entrepreneurial work are enhanced.

Partnership, Structure and Processes

The project is creating structure at the national and local levels that brings together government representatives from across ministries, private sector actors, students, parents and civil society to not only inform and oversee project interventions but also to create longer term public-private linkages to ensure the sustainability of improved training and employment opportunities for youth.

Steering Committees or alliances under this project will be housed in the relevant ministry—such as the Ministry of Education and/or the Ministry in charge of TVET—to ensure learnings gained and linkages made are institutionalized. The private sector will participate either through the Chamber of Commerce or individually. At the national level, the committees will look at broader reforms to curriculum and integration of work readiness and workforce development activities into school programs. At the local/district level, steering committees will provide a more decentralized way for interaction with the private sector, and focus more on ensuring work-based learning opportunities such as internships, job shadowing, etc. are identified and youth are placed in them.

Results so far

No results so far as project is just starting.

Expected Results

- Train 1,575 Senegalese teachers to roll-out EDC's Work Ready Now! Curriculum;
- Build the capacity of 30,000 youth across six provinces in employability, professionalism and entrepreneurship.

Challenges

One challenge encountered has been scaling linkage of youth to work-based learning and employment opportunities in contexts where most employment is through small and medium enterprises (SMEs) rather than large companies. This means that only a few youth might be placed with each employer, creating issues when trying to provide thousands of youth with work-based and employment opportunities.

Another challenge is ensuring that a strong market assessment and mapping are done from the beginning with all relevant actors, and that non-traditional actors such as women's associations of entrepreneurs and similar actors are involved. If the right representatives from across ministries are not involved, if there is not sufficient representation from the private sector across trade areas, and if influential civil society actors (such as from associations) are not included, resulting project interventions and public-private linkages will be weaker.

Biography of the Author

Mrs. Laura Dillon-Binkley

International Technical Advisor, Youth Team

Mrs. Dillon-Binkley currently provides support to youth entrepreneurship elements of youth development and workforce readiness programs with the Education Development Center (EDC). Most recently she was the deputy head of a \$40M USAID-funded Alternative Basic Education (ABE) project in Liberia that provided literacy, numeracy, work readiness and life skills as well as livelihoods training to youth ages 13-35 with no or minimal levels of education. The project worked through Ministry of Education schools and teachers, provided ABE classes to employees of large multi-national companies, and linked youth to internships in the private sector. County Alliances were organized to bring together government, private sector and civil society actors to further support advancing youth opportunities. Prior to that, Mrs. Dillon-Binkley has worked on or supported activities in agriculture, food security, community development, governance and anti-corruption, and demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants. She has a Master of Business Administration and a Master of Arts in International Peace and Conflict Resolution. She has experience working throughout Anglophone and Francophone Africa, as well as Afghanistan, Iraq, Nepal, and Haiti. She is a native English speaker and speaks fluent French.