

ILO STED programme targets sectors for growth through increasing skills in developing economies

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The Skills for Trade and Economic Diversification (STED) programme is improving skills to help spread the benefits of trade and economic growth. In Myanmar, STED is being implemented with support of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) As Myanmar continues to expand its trade and business relations with the world after years of isolation, it is looking to tourism to provide a welcome and much needed source of jobs and foreign income. But what are the opportunities and business capability needs of the tourism sector for Myanmar and what are the best ways to address them through skills development measures? It was to answer these kinds of questions that the International Labour Organization developed the Skills for Trade and Economic Diversification (STED) programme. STED is a strategic analytical and implementation tool used to provide guidance for skills development policies in various economic sectors. In Myanmar's case, with the support of the Swedish International Development cooperation Agency (SIDA), the ILO began employing the STED methodology in 2015 to survey and facilitate cooperation among all stakeholders involved in the tourism sector and develop training resources for tour guides. The collaboration resulted in a three-tiered, competency standard for guides, with a new course curriculum for each tier. "Level one is for local guides or site guides; level two is regional guides; and level three are the national guides. Each level will require increased training in literacy and other guiding skills," explains Daw Khin Than Win, Deputy Director General, Ministry of Hotels and Tourism for Myanmar, adding, "Our guides are our diplomats...they need to represent the best of our country." The

STED methodology stemmed from the realization that a skilled workforce is critical to achieving economic prosperity and building more inclusive societies. With the right skills in the workforce, enterprises can be more productive and competitive in both local and global markets. Economies can grow faster and the benefits of development and trade can be spread more widely and evenly among workers. The process begins with a review by ILO and national experts in skills and employment, enterprise and trade, working in close consultation with country level constituents to identify and prioritize suitable sectors. Once the sectors that offer the best opportunities for trade development are selected, a process of extensive collaboration and research begins with the relevant worker, business, government bodies and other institutions and experts in the sector. This collaboration develops concrete recommendations for policy and training. What's more, the process of developing these recommendations develops an increased understanding of the importance of skills development and improved dialogue among the key players, which help contribute to tangible improvements within the industry. To read the full story download the PDF.

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