



International
Labour
Organization

Regional Training on Apprenticeship Systems in the Gulf countries



17-19 June 2014, Manama, Bahrain



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Abstract

Background and context

Structured apprenticeship programmes are increasingly recognised as key policy tools to facilitate school-to-work transitions, as they combine (a) directly applicable experience at the workplace, and (b) applied knowledge and skills that enable the trainee to understand the logic behind the job s/he is tasked with, cope with unpredictable situations, and acquire higher level and transferable skills. These programmes also give the apprentice a chance to demonstrate his/her productivity potential to companies who may be otherwise reluctant to hire fresh graduates.

As part of its facilitating role of the G20 Task Force on Employment, the ILO published in November 2012 an “Overview of Apprenticeship Systems and Issues”¹ that provides elements for a definition of apprenticeships. The paper also reviews success factors of apprenticeship programmes, including (a) structured legal and policy frameworks, (b) strong participation of social partners, (c) established promotion, administration and oversight of apprenticeship programmes, and (d) a fair and cost-effective financing system. Out of this position paper the so-called “Key Elements of Quality Apprenticeships”² have been developed.

A regional one-week training on apprenticeship systems took place in Jordan in May 2013. One of the outcome recommendations was for the ILO to provide country specific support for the establishment of apprenticeship systems. Oman is starting such a system in September 2014. Yemen is building on previous training provided by GIZ to strengthen its apprenticeship programmes through an ILO project. Saudi Arabia has had long experience linking training centres under the TVTC with companies for on the job training.

As a follow-up of the work started in the region, the ILO organized – in cooperation with the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) – a regional seminar to share experiences and agree on practical steps for the improvement of apprenticeship systems in countries of the Gulf region. The 3-day seminar took place in Bahrain, from 17th to 19th June 2014.

Participants

A group of 25 persons (19 men and 6 women) participated in the workshop (see annex II for a list of participants). There were delegations from four Gulf countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and Saudi Arabia). Participants were government, employers’ and workers’ representatives, or came from training institutions.

The seminar was co-hosted by ILO and the GCC Executive Bureau. It was facilitated by the ILO experts Mr Patrick Daru, Mr Yasser Ali, Ms Joumana Karame and Ms Lea Zanola.

Purpose

The workshop was meant to (1) share experiences and to reflect on existing workplace based learning practices in the Gulf countries, (2) enhance the level of understanding of quality apprenticeships, and (3) identify practical steps to upgrade workplace based learning into full-fledged apprenticeship systems. The main outputs of the seminar are a clear vision of the next steps to be implemented to this end.

¹ See http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/how-the-ilo-works/multilateral-system/g20/WCMS_190188/lang--en/index.htm

² See http://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS_218209/lang--en/index.htm

Methodology

The methodology used was highly participative and action oriented, relying primarily on the knowledge the participants have of workplace based learning systems, on participatory games and exercises, and on complementary presentations. The sessions combined interactive subject matter discussions, and group assignment designed to enhance teamwork, and build networks.

Content and structure

On the first day, participants agreed on a working definition of apprenticeship, established distinctions with other forms of workplace based learning, and identified four interconnected “building blocks” for the establishment of apprenticeship systems. In addition, country examples from France, Switzerland, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates were presented, as well as ILO experience from Jordan in upgrading informal apprenticeships.

The second day was dedicated to certain key issues related to apprenticeships, such as social dialogue, International Labour Standards, financing, and skills tracking and testing.

On the last day, participants analysed their countries main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to upgrading their national practices related to workplace based learning into apprenticeship systems. They identified solutions and defined concrete actions to be taken within the next year for the establishment of these.

Agenda

Time	DAY 1	Day 2	Day 3
08.30-09.00	Opening remarks by GCC and ILO Representatives	Refresher from the previous day	Refresher from the previous day
09.00-10.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation of participants (4 corners game) Detailed introduction (couples) Expectations + seminar expected outcomes Validation of ground rules Facilitator: Patrick Daru	Tripartite governance for decent work outcomes: Role of the Government employers and trade unions in the governance and administration of apprenticeships. Role play: Joumana Karame and Lea Zanola – introduction and instruction Yasser Ali – advisor Patrick Daru – conclusions	SWOT Analysis per country + plenary reporting: What are the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for the upgrading of workplace based training in the GCC? Facilitator: Yasser Ali
11.00-12.30	Introductory exercise: towards a definition of apprenticeship in the GCC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defining apprenticeship group work + presentation Table training schemes group work + presentation Proposed ILO definition 4 pillars of apprenticeships Q & A Facilitators: Patrick Daru, Yasser Ali, Lea Zanola	Skills tracking and skills testing – tools and methodologies Example from Jordan + plenary discussion Facilitator: Yasser Ali	Drafting of a solution tree to improve the apprenticeship systems in the GCC – participatory exercise Facilitator: Patrick Daru
12.30-13.30	L u n c h	L u n c h	L u n c h
13.30-15.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case study: Switzerland (Lea Zanola) Case study: France (Patrick Daru) Case Study: Saudi Arabia (AbdAllah M. Hajar, Chairman Saudi Aramco Workers Committee) Case study UAE (Dr. Khodair Abid Al Obeidi, Director of ADVETI Schools Systems) + Plenary: what have we learnt? Facilitator: Patrick Daru	Financing apprenticeships – who pays for what? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Levies, apprenticeship funds etc. Exercise – potential sources of funding / how to combine them / what to be careful about? Facilitator: Patrick Daru	Group work preparation and presentation of action plans, and review process: What could and should be done after 1 month, 6 months, 1 year at country level + ILO assistance required. Facilitator: Lea Zanola
15.30-17.00	Upgrading informal apprenticeship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A recent Jordanian experience (film + presentation + Q&A). Facilitator: Yasser Ali	International Labour Standards and apprenticeships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Checklist + country group work + presentation Facilitator: Patrick Daru	Evaluation Concluding Remarks by GCC and ILO Representatives
	Feedback session	Feedback session	

Summary of opening remarks

The training comes within the framework of an agreed joint plan of activities which recognizes the reinforcement and promotion of the existing cooperation and consultations between the Executive Bureau of the Council of Ministers of Labour and Social Affairs of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) and the ILO as an important priority of the two institutions within their efforts in promoting the Decent Work Agenda.

A consultative meeting was held in February 2013 to identify the key priorities of the joint ILO-GCC Executive Bureau work plan. The 2014-2015 plan, signed during the implementation of the first joint activity in Bahrain in February 2014, includes:

1. Supporting employment policy development (implemented in February);
2. Seminar on the impact of the skills components of the policies of nationalization of the labour force;
3. Social Dialogue and dispute resolution;
4. Small and Medium Enterprise promotion;
5. Recruitment policies and migrant workers' rights;
6. A study to assist in the formulation of prototype legislation, which conforms to the directives of C.189 for application in the GCC states;
7. Labour inspection.

This workshop, as all the activities implemented within the framework of this joint plan, involves representatives of ILO social partners from the GCC countries. Active participation of tripartite constituents in social dialogue will be promoted throughout. These activities will initiate other follow-up actions at the country level.

ILO is also promoting the development of decent work country programmes in the GCC countries and has recently signed with Oman the extension phase of their DWCP during the International Labour Conference in June 2014, in Geneva. The ILO has an on-going programme with Yemen and other programmes are under development with Qatar and possibly Kuwait.

When it comes to apprenticeship systems, several points need to be highlighted:

- Apprenticeship is only one of the training formats that include workplace based learning; others may also be valid (internships, etc.) but there is documented evidence linking apprenticeship to positive youth employment outcomes;
- We are talking about apprenticeship systems rather than isolated programmes; thus the importance of the legal and policy framework, structured social dialogue etc.
- There are important assumptions behind the success of the apprenticeship systems in developed countries that need to be reviewed in light of realities in the field before adopting them. Copycat systems do not work.

The workshop is only an introduction to apprenticeship systems but the ILO is looking forward to increased cooperation with each of the countries represented to strengthen workplace based learning practices, and apprenticeships. The workshop was planned as a participatory workshop and it was hoped participants will find it both useful and enjoyable.

Day 1, session 1: Introduction

Presentation of participants

A participatory introduction exercise provided an overview on the background and experience of the participants as well as the systems and main issues in the countries.

- The majority of the participants came from a government institution and some from workers organizations, private companies and chambers of commerce.
- All agreed that workplace-based learning is either the best way or one of the ways to ensure that skills are labour market relevant. Nobody thought that it doesn't work in the GCC.
- The majority of participants had the required decision making power to contribute to upgrade workplace based practices. Some persons would need significant technical support; some had already the required technical knowledge.
- There was a lot of experience with vocational training programmes within the group.
- In some countries, there is a long history of workplace-based training, mostly in an informal way. There is an increased recognition of the need to set-up a policy framework for it.
- Most of the existing training programmes are for lower-skilled jobs.
- The nationalization of the labour force is a huge challenge in the GCC. In several countries, more than 80% of the population are foreigners.
- Social dialogue was acknowledged as important for skills development systems – at national level, within the sectors and within the companies.
- It was also acknowledged there is a need to identify a fair financing system which encourages workplace-based training. Subsidies may increase outreach to poorer segments of the population, but may also distort the training market.

Participants' expectations

- Exchange of experiences between companies and governments
- Learning from ILO experience in improving apprenticeship systems
- Clarifying the concept, reaching a common understanding
- Learning about social dialogue in apprenticeships
- Spreading the culture of apprenticeships in the region
- Promoting the model and involving the local industry
- Working towards a unified GCC system on apprenticeships linked to regional competency standards

Expected outcomes of the workshop

The expected outcomes of the workshops were redesigned to take into account the participants expectations:

1. Reach a greater understanding of workplace based learning practices in GCC and build common understanding of apprenticeship concepts among participants through knowledge exchange;
2. Increase commitment and reach a unified vision for a plan to upgrade workplace based learning practices into full-fledged apprenticeship systems - with the involvement of local industries, and in line with commonly agreed methodologies.

Day 1, session 2: Defining apprenticeship

Elements of apprenticeships provided by the participants

- System of training
- Based on social partnerships
- Based on rules and policies
- Based on occupational standards and competencies
- Happening at the workplace
- Providing skills for life
- Aimed at increasing employability

Distinguishing apprenticeship from other training schemes

In groups, participants discussed different training schemes (such as traineeship, internship, and formal and informal apprenticeship) and their characteristics (school- or work-based, off-the-job training, programme of learning, duration, wages, legal framework, social protection, assessment and certification). They reported in plenary. The table below highlights some disagreements on the contents of the various training formats.

نوع التدريب	علاوة التدريب S or W	off-Job X	مراجع التعلم	الفترة F/V	الأجر X	العلاقة X	المكان X	نوع التدريب
Traineeship	S/W	/	/	F	/	/	/	Traineeship
Internship	S/W	/	/	F	/	/	/	Internship
Formal Apprenticeship + Cadetship التدريب الرسمي + التلمذة المهنية	S/W	/	/	F	/	/	/	Formal Apprenticeship + Cadetship التدريب الرسمي + التلمذة المهنية
Informal Apprenticeship + Traditional Apprenticeship التدريب غير الرسمي + التلمذة المهنية	W	X	X	X	X	X	X	Informal Apprenticeship + Traditional Apprenticeship التدريب غير الرسمي + التلمذة المهنية

The facilitator's conclusion was that apprenticeship is the only form of training, which incorporates all the components mentioned in the table. It includes both school- and work-based elements. The learning programme is based on agreed competencies against which the apprentice is assessed and certified at the end. It has a fixed duration. Apprentices receive payments and benefit from social protection, as defined in the legal framework. Based on these conclusions, the following working definition was proposed:

„Apprenticeship is a unique form of vocational education, **combining on-the-job learning and school-based training**, for specifically defined **competencies** and work processes. It is regulated by **law** and based on an oral or written employment **contract** with a compensatory **payment**, and standard **social protection scheme**. A formal **assessment** and a recognized **certification** come at the end of a **clearly identified duration**.“

What makes an apprenticeship system successful?

The aim of the ILO is not to export country specific systems, but to identify key factors of success, and also assumptions behind the replication of national systems. Two elements were highlighted, of specific relevance to the GCC:

- **Labour market segmentation** - In Germany and other “apprenticeship countries”, there is very little labour market segmentation. A plumber for instance is a well-respected person and can make a good living. In addition, everyone – women and men alike – can choose the qualifications they want.
- **Dialogue** - Social dialogue is omnipresent in the traditional “apprenticeship countries”. Especially employers are involved at every stage of the apprenticeship system. In the GCC, space for dialogue needs to be established, as well as the capacity of the unions and the chambers of commerce to contribute to skills policies and systems.

It was highlighted that the jobs for women vary from country to country due to traditions, religion and customs. In Oman for instance, the new generation of women start to choose technical occupations.

Another point discussed related to labour market segmentation was migration. The downward pressure exerted by migrants on wages and working conditions contributes to reduce the appeal of TVET level qualifications for the national labour force. There is first a need to identify the jobs the nationals can take with decent work conditions as a focus of apprenticeship programmes. It was also acknowledged that the less the decent working conditions of migrants’ jobs had ultimately a negative impact on the employment status of nationals.

It was also highlighted that apprenticeship systems should apply to all levels of skills development, including tertiary education.

Then, the proposed **four building blocks of apprenticeship systems** were discussed. They were identified based on a review of various national apprenticeship systems:

1. **Social dialogue** - It is a prerequisite for a successful apprenticeship system and must be based on mutual trust; all parties involved should have an active role in all activities of an apprenticeship system (from design to governance and implementation). It was acknowledged that in the Gulf countries, there is an issue of space for such a dialogue – related to restrictions to freedom of association, but also of capacities of social partners to contribute to this dialogue at national / sectoral and company levels. There were positive examples quoted however of progress both in terms of space and capacity (Saudi Workers committees, Oman elections for both chambers and unions, increased capacity of the unions due to the ILO project on workers literacy).
2. **Clear roles and responsibilities**: The division of labour between the schools and the world of work must be clear; the enterprises must be in the driving seat, and the training providers strongly connected to the firms. Once roles are clarified, specific tools can be designed based on competency standards for skills tracking, training materials, and assessment.
3. **Legal framework**: Formal laws and regulations will avoid exploitation and unsafe working conditions; apprenticeships should be included in the labour law; the contract should cover all aspect of work, school, wages and social protection; the certification should be officially recognized nationally.
4. **Shared financing**: Benefits and costs should be shared between firms, government and trainees (when feasible). Care should be brought not to disrupt the market with wrongly targeted and wrongly calculated subsidies.

Day 1, session 3: Case studies on apprenticeship systems

The French experience

France is interesting as a case study as it has many features of a developed apprenticeship system but still struggles to expand its outreach, possibly because of greater labour market segmentation, than in Germany for instance.

Apprenticeship is a form of *alternance*, or dual training, for 16-26 years old trainees - between one to three years training with 60-75% time in company. There are currently 1,400 certificates for apprenticeship programmes (industrial as well as services and agro food) from semi-skilled level to master degree. Current expansion of apprenticeship contracts is in higher-level education as well as service sectors. There were 427,650 apprentices in 2008/9 with a yearly increase of 4% on the period 1997-2008 and a policy objective of 800,000 for 2015 (that will not be reached).

There is a long history of apprenticeships from middle ages, and strong involvement of the parliament with regular updates of the legal framework (most recent one is 2011).

Apprenticeships can be conducted in one or several companies, for one or more activities related to registered professional qualifications; there is a quota of 4% *alternance* contracts in companies of more than 250 workers.

Apprenticeship programmes are funded through outcome based agreements between regions and central authorities. Programmes are therefore funded by the tax on companies for training, apprenticeship tax, regional funds, and European Social Cohesion funds; exemption from the apprenticeship tax is conditional on firms training a specified number of apprentices.

Accredited public / private training centres focus specifically on apprenticeship (CFA / Centre de Formation en Apprentissage) with intensive involvement of a network of employers; Trainers use the workplace experience as a basis to design the training sessions; Master craftsperson in companies must have demonstrated technical experience, and are supported by pedagogical tutors from CFA;

Apprentices have a work contract, a salary (share of min wage); they are protected under the labour code, even when in the training centre. They benefit from an ID card with discounted access to transport and public services. Skills tracking is implemented based on standard documents (liaison document + liaison book + checklists for self-use). Quality assurance is overseen by sectorial tripartite commissions focusing on evaluation of training providers, of system, of outcomes.

Career guidance – there are 4,300 counsellors in 574 information and orientation centres, and legal provisions for online services and online counselling.

The Swiss Experience

In Switzerland, around two-thirds of young people coming out of compulsory education enrol in an upper-secondary vocational education and training (VET) programme. Apprenticeship in partnership with a host company is by far the most common form of this VET programme. More than 230 occupations are available in Switzerland for apprenticeship programmes. Commercial and retail employee was the most popular occupations in 2012 for trainees; next came health care and social care worker, electrician, cook, IT specialist, mechanical engineer and automotive mechanic.

Apprenticeships are considered as one of the cornerstones of the Swiss economy, thus the commitment of the employers is very high. 30-40% of the companies in Switzerland offer apprenticeship positions. The legal basis for Switzerland's VET system is the Federal Vocational

and Professional Education and Training Act, which applies to all non-university education and training programmes.

The importance of VET in Switzerland is reflected in the fact that vocational education is even mentioned in the Constitution, saying that “The Confederation and the cantons shall ensure that general and vocational courses of study achieve equal recognition in society”. Accordingly, the Swiss education system is highly permeable and has no dead ends.

As the Swiss education system is decentralized, the 26 cantons have the main responsibility for its implementation and supervision, while the Federation is responsible for strategic management and development of the system. The professional organizations are involved at all levels, and mainly responsible for curricula development and qualification procedures.

Apprenticeships in Switzerland have a duration of 2-4 years. They combine practical on-the-job training at the host company (3-4 days / week), vocational classroom instruction and general education at the VET school (1-2 days / week), and industry courses in the intercompany training centres run and financed by the professional organizations.

The private sector also bears the costs for the apprentices' salaries. Public funding is mainly used to cover the costs for the schools. In addition, the public sector finances career guidance and apprenticeship placement services, and invests in precaution measures to prevent early dropout of VET programmes (individual mentoring during compulsory schooling to choose an occupation, bridge-years for those with difficulties in transitioning between compulsory school and VET, case management for youth with multiple problems).

A study among 2,500 companies in Switzerland showed that the host companies' return on investment in apprenticeships is positive in general. In 2009, 75% of companies generated a benefit (the figures differ across industries, size of the company, and length of the apprenticeship).

The Saudi Arabian Experience

Saudi Aramco is helping to develop the next generation of highly skilled workers and intellectually curious citizens. Saudi Aramco dedicates significant resources and project management capacity toward developing an array of programmes and institutions aimed at advancing national educational ambitions. This is part of Saudi Aramco's legacy of investing in education, which started when Saudi Aramco opened its first school for Saudis in 1940.

Whether students are still in school, just starting out, or are an experienced professional in their field, Saudi Aramco can offer a wide variety of opportunities, such as careers and world-class training and development to student and scholarship programmes. Among these programmes are: College Continuation Program (CCP), College Prep Program for high school graduate, College Degree Programme for Non-Employees (CDPNE) for high school graduates, Apprenticeship Programme for Non-Employees (APNE) and Vocational College Graduates for Non-Employees (VCGNE).

The Apprenticeship Programme for Non-Employees (APNE) helps participants obtain the required skills to fulfil operational, maintenance, administrative and clerical jobs.

The United Arab Emirates' Experience

Three years ago the Abu Dhabi Vocational Education & Training Institute (ADVETI) has been established in cooperation with the Royal Charity Initiative. The institute provides vocational education on secondary and post-secondary level. They worked on changing the attitudes toward TVET by improving technology and infrastructure within the training centres and introducing an NQF that will facilitate transition to other education paths. There are VET levels in parallel to general education, up to an applied master diploma. The number of students increased rapidly, from about 30 in 2010 to more than 4,000 in 2014. All the books are in English

and e-learning becomes more and more important - it saves time and the students like it. Apprenticeships are provided from grade 10 to 12, and the admission criteria are (1) age 14-16, (2) being a national, (3) having completed grade 9, (4) providing a health certificate. For the apprenticeship, the student, the parents, and the company sign a contract. The salaries provided by the different companies are unified in order not to make the selection based on money. More information is available at: <http://adveti.abudhabi.ae>, and <http://www.sts.ac.ae>

Participants' reflection and conclusion

- The private sector should have the lead in the design, management and oversight of apprenticeship systems;
- The duration of an apprenticeship programme should be 2-3 years;
- There is a need for a clear policy vision to structure the approach to apprenticeships at national level;
- The apprentices should get wages and social security coverage;
- The programmes must be constantly updated to keep in line with technological changes and new labour market requirements;
- Apprenticeships are not a charity measure for school dropouts but can deliver positive employment outcomes at most levels of qualifications;
- Apprenticeship is part of a career path and should lead to career progression – they should lead to decent jobs;
- Customized curricula are needed to ensure cohesion of the national approach around pre-defined standards;
- The level of subsidies is crucial to increase outreach to poorer segments of the population but not distort the market;
- Qualified training providers are key not only to deliver the training but to build trust with private sector companies and follow-up with trainees on the job.
- Information management is crucial (integration of different data systems);
- Beyond apprenticeship, there is a need to review the education system and their relevance to the market;

Day 1, session 4: Upgrading informal apprenticeships

Yasser Ali presented a pilot of the ILO for the upgrade of informal apprenticeships in micro and small businesses in Jordan. The rationale behind this approach is that apprenticeships should be organized where the jobs are, and informal on the job training remains the main mode of skills transmission in the informal economies. The aim was to improve the efficiency of training as well as the occupational safety and health standards and working conditions.

The model piloted in Jordan included training for the managers and master craft persons, improvement of the contents of the training, of the skills tracking systems and assessment for an occupational licence, linkages with training centres, provision of equipment. The related video was shown: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y6_aCVdUPEw . 89% of the graduates were successfully employed after this intervention.

Questions and comments of participants focused on the following:

- Nationals in the Gulf can't open a car workshop because of the competition by cheap migrant workers. In Jordan the labour market for nationals is undermined by Syrian refugees, because they are skilled and accept low salaries.
- The attractiveness of the TVET level professions depend both on the quality of the training and the decent jobs that result from it.
- The ILO didn't provide subsidies to the employers; the employers wanted apprentices and were interested in improving the training.

- Everything was based on negotiations; the process of building trust was a long one, identifying win-win solutions one after the other. Professional associations played a crucial role in the process.
- Gender ILO challenges discrimination and gender stereotypes as everyone should be able to choose the occupation s/he wants – e.g. in Gaza there was a lack of workers in the construction sector, so the ILO successfully trained female engineers with the Islamic University of Gaza in supervising construction sites. In the Jordan pilot, all recruits were male and no progress was achieved in this regard.

Day 2, session 1: Role play on tripartite governance of apprenticeship systems

Participants were asked to divide into three groups and work on a fictitious case where they had to impersonate an employer representative, a government official or an employee representative. They were assigned one of these three roles - always different from their real function. The starting situation was the following: The Prime Minister of the country Saturnia – one of the participating women – wants to set up an apprenticeship system for young people, and gathers her ministers of labour and education, as well as representatives from the social partners in order to discuss the following questions:

- What should be the rights and obligations of the employers and those of the apprentices?
- How should the training be financed?
- Who should determine labour market relevance of the curriculum, formulate the curriculum and the training standards, do examinations and certification?
- How should complementary school-based training be organized? How much training should take place in school and what subjects should be covered?

The three groups spent 45 minutes preparing for the tripartite meeting with the Prime Minister, which lasted for another 45 minutes. They had to select two representatives each, who would present their point of view on how to implement the apprenticeship system at the meeting. While discussing and trying to reach a consensus, they had to keep in mind the interests and concerns of the institutions they were representing.

The discussion was very lively. The Prime Minister decided to first listen carefully to the concerns of the social partners, which already took about 20 minutes. However, all four questions could be discussed and preliminary agreements were made.

A debriefing session allowed identifying the following lessons learnt:

- Social dialogue at national, sectoral and company levels is the only way to achieve consensus and agreement, and thus real outcomes; there is a need for a strengthened legal framework in the Gulf countries for this dialogue to happen;
- A discussion focus and clear sequencing is required - discussing everything at once is not effective;
- Negotiation and compromises are also required: it is important for each party to know what they can and cannot give up;
- Talking with ONE voice is crucial for each party, but it is also important to understand the other parties' positions (wearing the other party's hat) and their underlying interests;
- The blaming culture in the Gulf needs to be changed - there is a need to understand that either ALL will lose or ALL will win;
- Issue of trust: building trust is crucial but needs time and should be done in an incremental manner through practical actions;
- The capacity of representatives to analyse the others' positions, to define their parties' own, and to negotiate is very important;

- Agreement on an action plan/time table is needed; there is also a need for accountability for the decisions made - who will follow up in applying what has been agreed?

Day 2, session 2: Skills tracking and testing

Skill tests measure the candidate's capability to perform duties according to specific occupational standards. Assessing the skills of the trainee has many benefits:

- Benefit to the labour market as there will be a good database available, help in labour market regulation, support in linking wages with qualifications;
- Benefit of increasing employment opportunities, ease transition from school to work, help employer in recruiting qualified employees;
- Benefit to training programmes in improving its quality, and in the identification of training needs.

Three elements are needed to set up a skill testing system:

1. Occupational standards
2. NQF
3. Strategies and tools for testing

A testing and certification system should be developed based on basic principles; in particular, testing methods should be in line with the competency in focus. Competency based assessment is the most effective method. There is a need to define standard test circumstances and to foster a wide engagement of relevant partners. Skill testing systems have the following main stages: test design and test implementation, each of which is characterised by several steps.

Skill test strategies include written tests, direct observation, presentation of products, projects and portfolio, simulation, and interviews.

Skill test tools include the following: test specification table, evidence matrix, practical test assessment form (rating scales and checklists).

Skill tracking tools include skill scorecards, self-evaluation forms, trainee logbooks, and field visit records.

Day 2, session 3: Financing apprenticeship

The facilitator presented the sources, types and recipients of apprenticeship financing and talked about the need to find the right combination for each situation. Participants were then asked to match policy objectives and financing instruments:

Policy objectives	Financing instruments
1. Well-resourced apprenticeship	a. Tax exemptions
2. Market relevant apprenticeship	b. Training subsidies for employers
3. Equity, outreach to marginalized groups	c. Levies
4. Incentivize training	d. Training fund
5. Decentralisation of decision making	e. Trainees' fees
	f. Trainees loans
	g. Training cum production

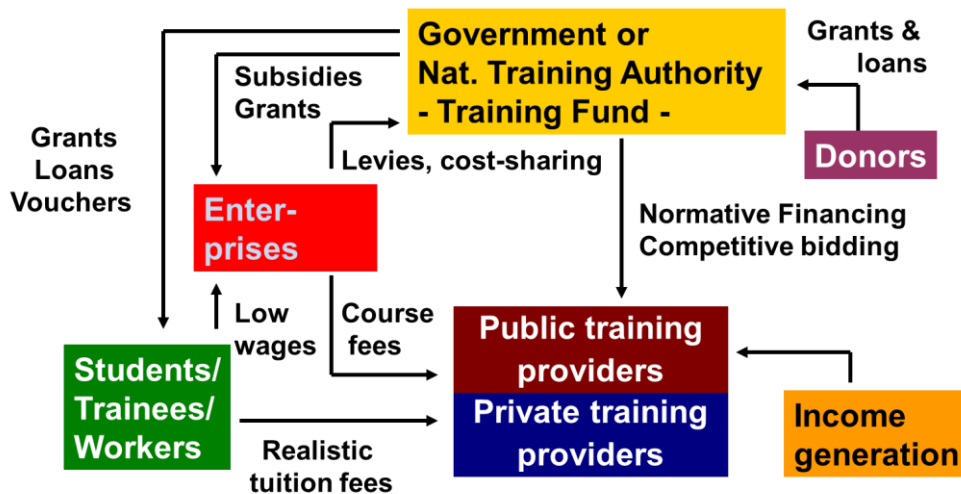
Some of the following combinations were discussed:

Policy objectives	Financing instruments	Comments
Well-resourced apprenticeship	Levies and training fund	As a general rule, a well-resourced apprenticeship system should rely on various sources and avoid over-reliance on a single source of funding.
Market relevant apprenticeship	Tax exemptions, training fund	Tax exemption can indeed encourage participation of employers in apprenticeship systems for competencies they identify; the same applies to training a fund if its governance is tripartite, and if not “hijacked” for changing political priorities.
Equity, outreach to marginalized groups	Training fund, reduced training fees, training subsidies for employers	Training subsidies can compensate poorer trainees for costs and opportunity costs of participation in the programme. It is sometimes sufficient to cover transport costs. The level of subsidies should also be limited to avoid functioning as a pull factor in itself (irrespective of the training contents).
Decentralisation of decision making	Training cum production	VTCs are likely to function well as training cum production centre, provided the management of the profits generated stays with the centre and is not returned to the public budget or a central fund, for instance.

Main success factors behind training funds

- Training funds are better when they have a tripartite governance structure, but the question of capacity of the board members is also crucial;
- Autonomous funds do function better as they do not depend from changing political priorities;
- The income of the fund needs to be secured – for instance in Jordan as in other countries of the region, the training fund is financed with a share of the expatriates work permit fees, as part of policies of nationalization of the labour force;
- Funds which also play the role of a training provider are less effective (as this does not allow for check and balances);
- Open and transparent decision-making is needed – for instance funds can support training programmes that meet certain criteria.

As a conclusion, it is recommended to combine several sources of funds for greater sustainability, as described in the following chart.



Funding mechanisms in the GCC (as described by the participants)

- **Bahrain:** big companies are exempted from paying taxes when they invest sufficiently in their own training centres; others pay training levies;
- **Kuwait:** subsidies are provided to the private sector for training nationals as a first step in private sector jobs; the goal being to increase the number of jobs in the private sector for nationals;
- **Oman:** unemployment benefits are given to job seekers; they are conditional to training;
- **Saudi Arabia:** out of the working permits 200 Saudi Riyals are for the training fund, for training of nationals.

Participants also contributed suggestions on what to improve in apprenticeship financing in their own countries:

- **Bahrain:** allocating government profits from real estate etc. to apprenticeships, and using the unemployment fund to support apprenticeships;
- **Kuwait:** funds should support incubators and entrepreneurs (also for apprentices to establish their own businesses);
- **Oman:** allocating government profits from real estate etc. to apprenticeships;
- **Saudi Arabia:** Allocating charity funds and government surplus budget to a national apprenticeship system, also encouraging businessmen to contribute voluntarily.

Day 2, session 4: International Labour Standards and apprenticeship

Based on a review of 33 ILO conventions and recommendations directly or indirectly related to apprenticeships, the ILO developed a checklist in order to review national legal frameworks related to apprenticeships (see annex). In country groups, the participants discussed whether these standards were part of their country's legal framework, and if not whether they would recommend for them to be included. The checklist was not reviewed in plenary but the take home message was: an apprentice is a worker and should benefit from the same rights and protection extended to other workers under national law.

Day 3, session 1: SWOT analysis of national training systems

In the morning of the third day, participants were asked to analyze their current training systems and to establish a **SWOT** table related to the possible upgrading of workplace-based training into full-fledged apprenticeship systems in each country (see below). The **Strengths** and **Weaknesses** describe the (positive or negative) characteristics of the existing system, **Opportunities** and **Threats** relate to external elements and factors, which could either be exploited to the advantage of the apprenticeship system, or hinder its improvement.

Bahrain	
Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Law on training institutions (but not on apprenticeship); ▪ Full support of the government; ▪ Experiences in apprenticeships due to many programmes in the MoE; 	Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No comprehensive study on labour market needs; ▪ No unified training strategy by the private sector companies; ▪ Low salaries for apprentices; ▪ Weak guidance and mentoring of trainees; ▪ No systemic framework for apprenticeship;
Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Benefit from international / GCC experience ▪ Monitoring body 	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Competition with migrant workers ▪ Private sector does not cooperate ▪ No testing / certification centres ▪ Low appreciation of manual jobs

Oman	
Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promising job opportunities in the private sector; ▪ Professional standards developed in partnership with the labour market institutions and companies, training programmes now developed; ▪ Strong potential workforce because of the high share of youth; 	Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Weak social dialogue and decisions always taken by the government; ▪ Weak career guidance system thus low appreciation of plumbers and other blue collar jobs; ▪ Salaries are low in the private sector;
Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Availability of financial support from the government; ▪ Many qualified training institutions (public and private); ▪ Major projects launched for on-the-job training (e.g. oil and gas), thus many apprenticeship positions would be available; 	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Apprenticeship not included in the labour law; ▪ Weak social dialogue; ▪ Biggest challenge are the migrant workers or the lack of interest of the nationals to work in those fields;

Saudi Arabia / Kuwait	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Big companies ▪ Good training institution and qualified trainers ▪ Resources to support the private sector and the trainees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Weak social dialogue, blaming culture ▪ System relies heavily on government resources ▪ Many migrant workers who accept low salaries ▪ Social status of manual jobs is very low ▪ No unified system / framework for apprenticeship, only ad-hoc programmes ▪ Government has no vision for apprenticeship ▪ No proper understanding of the concept of apprenticeship
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strong trade unions ▪ Good databases available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some companies control governmental decisions due to clientelistic structures

The experiences of the different countries were discussed in the plenary and summarized as following:

Summary for the GCC	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Labour nationalization ▪ Availability of experiences in apprenticeship ▪ Legislations ▪ Occupational standards ▪ Employment opportunities ▪ Funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Weak social dialogue ▪ Lacking career guidance ▪ Low wages ▪ Limited labour market information
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learn / exploit foreign labour skills ▪ Economic projects ▪ International experiences ▪ Qualified training institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No legal framework ▪ Bad social image of VET and the related jobs ▪ No skills testing centres ▪ Low private sector participation

Day 3, session 3: National action plans

Bahrain

Timeline	Proposed actions	ILO assistance required
1 month	Forming a tripartite committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Technical support ▪ Follow-up with the cabinet ▪ Support from international experts to assess the Bahraini system (including for a baseline study and control group to measure the impact)
6 months	Determine the general framework and submit it to the higher authority (cabinet)	
1 year	Implement the plan on pilot basis, and review the experience before scaling up	

Oman

Timeline	Proposed actions	ILO assistance required
1 month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Submit a report to the relevant authorities ▪ Recommend that the chamber of commerce takes responsibility in sponsoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Technical assistance to support the process ▪ Tripartite workshop to develop a framework
6 months	Determine the parties to be involved, including tripartite partners for the design of a national apprenticeship system	
1 year	Incorporate the system in the law	

Saudi Arabia

Timeline	Proposed actions	ILO assistance required
1 month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Present an action plan to the Ministry ▪ Conduct a tripartite workshop to raise commitment ▪ Determine responsibilities and roles 	Assess the finalized and agreed action plan
6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implementing the plan ▪ Setting up the policies in coordination with the private sector 	
1 year		

Kuwait

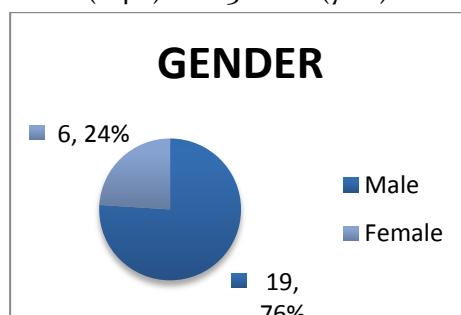
Timeline	Proposed actions	ILO assistance required
1 month	Obtain an approval from authorities, and reach an agreement on starting an apprenticeship system in the country.	Support to convince the authorities
6 months		
1 year		

Evaluation

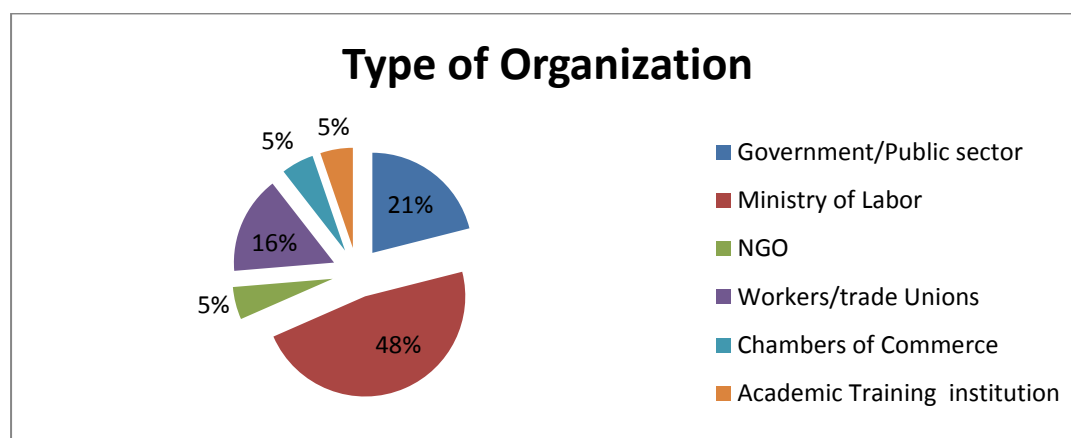
Participants' profile

A total of 19 participants filled in the training evaluation forms.

- Out of those, 6 are females (24%) and 13 males (76%) as shown in graph below:



- There was big representation of Government/Public sector with 68% (13 persons); 9 out of those 13 are working for the Ministry of Labour in their respective countries.
- 3 out of 19 (16%) of participants are trade union representatives.
- There was low participation from training and academic institutions (only one participant or 5% of participants).
- One of the participants represented an NGO and one the Chambers of Commerce.



Main evaluation results

- The analysis showed that before participating in the workshop, most participants didn't have enough information to judge the workshop learning outcomes.
- Most of the participants expressed that the workshop objectives were mostly achieved.
- Most of the participants think that the training content was very appropriate.
- Participants think that gender issues were partly to mostly integrated in the training.
- As for the learning methods, participants evaluate them as appropriate.
- Most of the participants think that the experts were excellent and others think that they are good and that the group of participants contributed to their learning.
- As for the material used in the training, the participants rated that as appropriate, and they think logistics and administrative support were well organized and efficient.

- All the participants stated that they would either rather likely or certainly apply what they learned in the workshop.
- The participants' satisfaction with the overall quality of the workshop was high.

Most useful aspects of the workshop

- The collaborative nature of the activity with participants from other GCC countries
- Discussions and group work
- The comprehensive illustration of all issues related to apprenticeship
- Different apprenticeship schemes, case studies and good practices in other countries
- Role of apprenticeship in promoting social dialogue
- Sharing experiences
- Analysis of common concerns
- How to involve the private sector
- How to advocate for government support
- Advocacy and guidance
- Role play session
- Development of action plans
- ILO experience in apprenticeships
- Brain storming during group work sessions
- UAE experience
- Sessions' facilitation
- SWOT analysis
- The separate work in country groups
- The creative methods used in training delivery

Subjects that need more time

- Details of apprenticeship systems
- Role of apprenticeship in promoting social dialogue
- SWOT analysis
- Definition of apprenticeship
- How to avoid the weaknesses when developing apprenticeship systems
- Solutions and recommendations
- Apprenticeship legislative procedure
- UAE experience
- Oman experience and ILO support
- Developing appropriate guidelines for common GCC apprenticeship standards
- Training centers
- Certification
- Industry role in apprenticeship
- Solutions for unemployment in GCC
- Excellent practices in other developing countries
- Employers role in apprenticeship & solutions to enhance employers' involvement
- Country profiles and action plans
- SMEs and link to entrepreneurship
- How to promote and improve the involvement of the private sector
- Participation of apprentices to share their experience

- Political and governmental influence on developing apprenticeship systems
- Financing (creative solutions)
- Solutions to current problems
- Analysis of main weaknesses of the model

Participants' recommendations for improvement of the training

- Involve policy and decision makers
- More participants from each GCC country
- More good practices from other countries and organizations
- Increase the number of training days to have more time for discussions
- Field visit to an apprenticeship center
- Have the same participants from the countries for continuity and follow-up
- Longer preparation time in advance of the training
- The role of apprenticeship in increasing employability
- More representatives from other public sector institutions
- Involvement of vocational and career guidance institutions
- More participation from Ministries of Education
- Provision of model action plans from other countries in advance of the training
- Participation of private sector institutions that are implementing apprenticeships
- Give more details and analysis of the practical situation of the models
- Sharing more regional practices
- Bring apprenticeship practitioners

Participants' overall impression of the training

- Excellent
- Very professional in content, expertise and participation
- Very useful and valuable opportunity
- Need to replicate it more than once annually
- Should continue implementing it
- Excellent workshop programme and would like to participate in further training on the same topic
- Very good impression, should continue
- Excellent organization of the training
- Excellent cooperation of the facilitators

ANNEX I – Checklist on apprenticeship in International Labour Standards

Categories	Checklist	Does your national legal framework include the following provisions? YES / NO	Should it include the following provisions? YES / NO
Definition	A definition of apprenticeship that includes “system by which an employer undertakes by contract to employ a young person and to train her/him or have her/him trained systematically for a trade for a period the duration of which has been fixed in advance and in the course of which the apprentice is bound to work in the employer's service.”		
	Apprenticeable trades, i.e. trades for which apprenticeship system can apply.		
Governance	Tripartite supervision of national apprenticeship system, and coordination with training authorities.		
Number of apprentices	Minimum and maximum number of apprentices in companies.		
Entry requirements and processes	Requirements to enter apprenticeship include age above compulsory school attendance, education levels, medical tests, and registration of apprenticeship contract with relevant authority.		
	Provisions should be made for adequate recognition of prior learning		
Compulsory contract and registration	Standard rights and obligations of apprentices to be included in contracts to be signed by (a) the employer or several employers or a national institution in charge of apprenticeship, (b) the apprentice, or his/her parent / legal guardian if below adult age, (c) the training center. The contract should be registered at a specified institution.		
	Contracts should include (a) sectoral standards and regulations (collective agreements etc.), (b) responsibilities related to OSH, (c) mechanism for settlement of disputes.		
Contents of the apprenticeship	It should be designed to develop personality as well as increase employability, within a lifelong training process, free from discrimination, and as part of a coordinated tripartite set up.		
	Work given as part of apprenticeship should be restricted so that it remains mainly of an educative nature.		
	Minimum and maximum length of apprenticeship, taking into account sector requirements. The		

	minimum / maximum share of the time spent in school and in companies should also be defined.		
Remuneration	Remuneration levels in cash or kind and potential for increase (scale).		
Occupational Safety and Health	Apprentices are entitled to OSH protection, and to application of standard OSH rules.		
	Provisions on limitation of night work, protection from hazardous tasks, work with dangerous machinery, manual handling and transport of heavy loads, work in high latitudes, work for excessive periods of time and other occupational safety and health issues.		
	Working hours for apprentices below 18 years of age should not exceed eight hours a day, and overtime only when unavoidable for safety reasons.		
	Apprentices should have access to OSH instructions / equipment, and respect OSH rules and regulations. Safety, lifesaving and survival equipment should be appropriate for the size of apprentices.		
	Young persons – 16-18 years of age - working in mines should have proper training preparation, especially through apprenticeship, below and above ground with due caution exerted to their protection from occupational hazards.		
	Apprentices are involved painting tasks – with white lead paint – only after consultation with workers representatives.		
Social security	Apprentices are entitled to compensation for accidents		
	Apprentices are covered by sickness insurance, in industry and agriculture.		
	Apprentices are covered by pension schemes and exempt from contributions.		
	The invalidity insurance applies to apprentices that are also exempt from contributions. Apprentices with chronic illness or disabling impairment should be entitled to medical care and benefits.		
	Apprentices should have access to unemployment benefits.		
	Apprentices are entitled from life insurance and exempt from contributions.		
Leave	Apprentices are entitled to paid annual leave, in addition to weekly rest, public holidays and sick leave.		
	Apprentices should be given preferential treatment when granting number of days of paid holidays.		
Working hours	Apprentices and cadets at sea should not work more than 8 hours a day and 48 hours a week. Weekly day of rest shall be respected, and overtime for routine work during this day should be deducted from the 48 hours ceiling. Exceptions for safety reasons can be prescribed by national law or collective agreements.		

Migrant workers	Lawful immigrants should have access to apprenticeship programmes in conditions no less favourable than those of nationals, without discrimination based on nationality, race, religion or sex.		
Labour Inspection	Apprenticeship should be included in the scope of the Labour Inspection work.		
Vocational Guidance	Apprentices should have access to vocational guidance, including (a) user friendly info on sectors and occupations, (b) visits to workplaces, (c) individual and group based counselling to define abilities and preferences in relation to job opportunities and requirements, (d) medical and aptitude tests + advices on possible remedial action, in order to define an individual vocational plan and implement it.		
Masters	Standards of the technical qualifications of employers and masters who undertake apprenticeships are defined.		
Transfer	Rules for transfer of one apprentice from one employer to the next, based on mutual consent, to the advantage to the apprentice.		
Skills tracking and certification	Supervision processes over apprentices, skills tracking during apprenticeships, and testing / national certification at the end, based on agreed competencies.		
Minimum age of apprenticeship	Minimum age of apprenticeship should not be lower than age of compulsory education, or of the age specified as an entry requirement of the apprenticeship.		
Informal apprenticeship	Trainees in informal apprenticeship should be given sufficient time to be trained by training institutions.		
Data requirement for policy making	Sex disaggregated data on apprenticeship to help design strategies for its promotion, and promotion of gender equality.		
HIV status	There should be no discrimination against or stigmatization of apprentices, and applicants, on the grounds of real or perceived HIV status.		

ANNEX II – List of participants

كشف بأسماء

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