



Vocational Education and Training

Evaluation results, findings and conclusions



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In 2010/2011, GIZ's Monitoring and Evaluation Unit focused its activities on the subject area of vocational education and training on behalf of BMZ. To determine the effectiveness of programmes in partner countries, the findings of 12 independent, individual evaluations were compiled in an evaluation synthesis in 2012. In accordance with international standards, the synthesis rates four evaluation criteria on a scale of 1 to 6, and sustainability on a scale of 1-4:

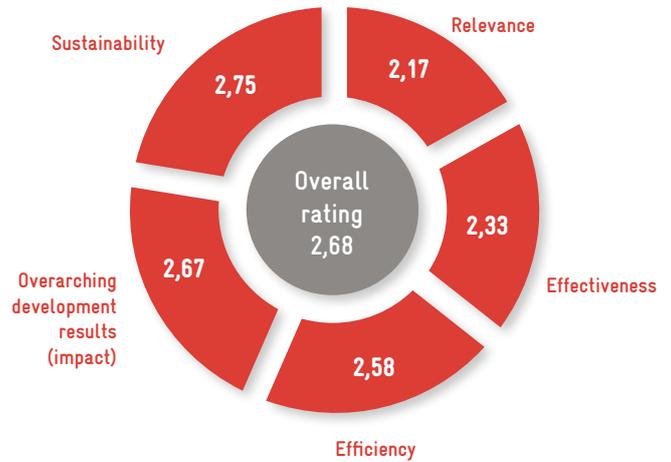
- 1. Relevance – Are we doing the right thing?**
Do the objectives of the development measure match the needs of the target group, the country's requirements, global priorities and the policies of partners and donors?
- 2. Effectiveness**
Have the objectives of the development measure been achieved; has the target group derived specific benefits?
- 3. Efficiency**
What is the measure's cost/benefit ratio? Were the results of the development measure achieved through cost-effective use of funding, expertise and time?
- 4. Overarching development results (impact)**
Does the development measure help to achieve the overarching development objectives (e.g. poverty reduction, stable political conditions)?
- 5. Sustainability**
Are the partners in a position to continue the programme activities independently with positive results once the financial, organisational or technical support has ended?

In addition to the evaluation synthesis, a meta-evaluation analysed 13 other evaluation reports from GIZ's predecessor organisations. The aim was to place the evaluation findings from 2010/11 within a larger framework and to identify recurring strengths, weaknesses and success factors.

A management response table was then drawn up, in which GIZ set out the conclusions it draws from the evaluation, i.e. what it intends to change based on the recommendations.

High relevance and good results, but only partial sustainability

A cross section: key findings of the evaluation synthesis



Objectives and target groups of the programmes

Most of the evaluated projects and programmes focused on modernising initial and continuing vocational training in the partner countries and adjusting it to the needs of industry and the labour market. Some projects and programmes focused on selected branches of industry such as IT, crafts, printing and the media, solely on the requirements of small and medium-sized enterprises, or on promoting a single institution. A further aim was to improve the infrastructure and organisation of training institutions with German support. Teaching and management staff received specific further training to promote organisational development.

Focus on training institutions and trainees

The projects and programmes were therefore primarily directed towards trainees, job seekers and employees in the private and public sector who were to receive training in line with private sector requirements in order to safeguard or improve their employability. The main cooperation partners were training institutions and the higher authorities, regional administrations and companies, which were to benefit from the improved qualifications of graduates from the supported training institutions.

Overarching objective: poverty reduction

Although almost all the development measures focused on the overarching development-policy level of poverty reduction, only half of the projects and programmes had stated the equal participation of women in vocational training as a specific objective.

Relevance: closely tailored to the needs of target groups and the labour market

As the evaluation synthesis shows, the projects and programmes were found to have high overall relevance (2.17). This was particularly due to the fact that the training offered was geared to labour market requirements and was in

demand. The more a project or programme was geared to the technical training requirements of the target group – e.g. through the selected professions, teaching content or technical level – the higher its relevance rating. This was also the case when the channels used to convey this training, such as curricula, teaching methods, and the length and structure of the courses, were tailored to the trainees' experience. This strong practical relevance, the modular course system and the balanced selection of participants according to age, gender and regional origin received an especially positive rating at most of the programmes.

Success factor: flexible adjustment

Course participants, training institutions and companies alike praised the flexible adjustment of the programmes to their needs. At the training institutions, the main requirement was to build skills and know-how in order to improve teaching standards and organisational management. At companies, the main focus was on teaching content that was designed on the one hand to boost the companies' productivity and competitiveness, but also correspond to the technical level in the region.

Success factors for relevance

- › Adjusting teaching content to:
 - the actual market requirements
 - the initial qualifications/skills level of target groups
 - the teaching skills of training institutions
- › Adapting measures to the capacity building requirement of partners
- › Selecting the sectors of economic relevance
- › Alignment with the partner country's sector policy and its poverty reduction strategy
- › High priority of the project/programme for the strategic partners
- › Central position of the promoted institutions in the national vocational training context
- › Growing relevance of practical vocational training in the partner country's education and training system



Detrimental: failure to take framework conditions into account

If a development measure received a negative relevance rating, this was mainly because the performance capacity of the participating training institutions and companies had been overestimated, whether in terms of their human and financial resources, their qualifications or their management and decision-making skills. Another reason for not achieving good relevance ratings was that measures were restricted to a small geographic area and the results they generated had little supraregional or national importance. That also applied when framework conditions such as legislation, social norms and traditions, or special political and economic factors, had not been sufficiently considered.

Effectiveness: great benefit for direct beneficiaries

The programmes received a good average effectiveness rating of 2.33. The evaluation synthesis thus confirms that the programmes achieved their objectives and provided major benefits to the persons and institutions concerned. Key success factors in this context, as for the relevance rating, included the measures' good adaptation to the needs and experience of trainees and partners. A healthy degree of flexibility, which made it possible for project officers to react to changing requirements or deviations from project design, and highly fruitful cooperation with German companies and training institutions, which fostered the transfer of expertise, were very conducive to the effectiveness of the evaluated projects and programmes.

Involvement of the private sector proved conducive

The fact that private sector partner companies and business associations were involved in designing the measures, and particularly in devising the teaching content, did a great deal to ensure that the projects/programmes were able to achieve their direct objectives. As the evaluation findings confirm, this also made companies more willing to take on graduates from the supported training institutions.

Success factors for effectiveness

- › Involvement of private sector actors in planning the measures
- › Involvement of target groups in designing the measures
- › Commitment and strong self-interest of partners in the measure
- › Motivation, staff continuity and sufficient scope for action on the part of the programme team
- › Sufficient flexibility in programme design
- › Cooperation with German institutions

Detrimental: lack of willingness to cooperate on the part of companies

The external factors that made it more difficult to achieve objectives were found to be companies' unwillingness to cooperate with the training institutions, as well as the lack of training placements and jobs. Effectiveness was also reduced if target groups were not mobile enough or cooperation partners were too dominant.

Efficiency: good to satisfactory use of resources thanks to synergies

As regards efficiency, i.e. whether the invested resources are appropriate in relation to the achieved outputs and results, the programmes received a good to satisfactory rating, with an average of 2.58. The major factor that enhanced or reduced efficiency proved to be whether a project or programme was coordinated with the inputs of other actors. Cooperation with KfW and the use of existing contacts and expertise, the systematic transfer of knowledge from other projects/programmes, and linkages to existing projects/programmes with follow-on measures, were all positively highlighted in the evaluation synthesis



Effective: ensuring financial viability at the design stage

A key factor in achieving greater efficiency was whether the supported institutions also received external cofinancing, be it from the government or from other donors. If the measures were designed to be self-reliant or to generate a surplus (for example, to maintain technical equipment), this not only enhanced their efficiency, it also promoted the sustainability of their results. This only held true, though, if the partner institutions were closely involved in designing measures and had received management training.

Problem area: lack of systematic monitoring

One difficulty when it came to rating efficiency was that no systematic monitoring system was anchored in many projects and programmes, which meant that hardly any reliable information, and not enough detailed information, was available on the use of resources. A second problem was the lack of comparable data from similar projects/programmes of other donors.

Success factors for efficiency

- › Coordination with the inputs of other donors in the field of vocational training, and in the labour market and education sector in general
- › Harnessing synergy potentials, especially in cooperation with KfW
- › Creating spill-over effects (non-target groups benefit from measures)
- › Additional external funds, or if projects/programmes earned sufficient income themselves to carry on the measures without support
- › Involvement of partners in safeguarding financial viability and the teaching of skills to earn their own income

**Overarching development results (impact):
Only if the private sector benefits**

Do the improved vocational qualifications provide economic benefit? The answer to this question is one of the key factors of success – or failure – when it comes to achieving overarching development results in vocational education and training measures. The employment rate and income of the target groups were only increased when companies were able to substantially boost their performance capacity and competitiveness by providing their employees with further training or by recruiting new, qualified staff. Another positive factor identified by the evaluations was for companies to recognise the acquired qualifications. However, since the general economic and labour market situation also determines whether or not a graduate can earn a higher income, flanking measures are needed to support labour market and private sector development, in order to achieve such overarching development objectives.

Success factors for overarching development results (impact)

- › Possibility of deriving economic benefit from the higher qualifications, i.e. if the companies involved recognised the economic potential of better qualified staff, were able to tap this potential, and participants thus achieved appropriate income
- › Role model function of the training institutions involved, i.e. if these were recognised and efficiently networked
- › Flexibility and adequate duration
- › Appropriate follow-up, i.e. if suitable follow-on measures were in place
- › Involvement of women in the entire value creation process, from production to sales



Detrimental: limited scope of projects/programmes

To have broad impact, projects/programmes must have the requisite scope to achieve change at the supraregional level. If too few institutions receive support or these are not sufficiently networked – at institutional or geographic level – this is detrimental to the achievement of overarching development results. A further impediment may be the failure to reach binding agreements with strategic partners and lead executing agencies on how the new concepts can be mainstreamed and the relevant legal and political frameworks created.

Sustainability: Heavily dependent on voluntary commitment by partners

Sustainability received the poorest average rating (2.75). It must be borne in mind, though, that sustainability is rated on a scale of 1 (best rating) to 4 (poorest rating). Two programmes in Brazil and China were the exception: their durable positive results beyond the end of assistance were rated 'very good'. The ex-post evaluation of the Brazilian vocational training project [TecnoTrans], six years after its completion, noted its 'remarkably high sustainability'.

The aim of the project was to support the National Service for Industrial Apprenticeship (SENAI) in setting up a range of technical services to help medium-sized industrial enterprises modernise their operations and make them more competitive. The result: Not only had these services become firmly embedded at the SENAI centres after support drew to a close, SENAI also succeeded in picking up almost all of the proposals made by TecnoTrans and developing them on its own initiative. Through extensive exchange with various Fraunhofer Institutes in Germany, it was possible to set up a self-supporting system of applied research, in order to solve specific problems faced by companies. This serves as a model across the country.

As the cross-section of the 12 reviewed evaluations showed, the crucial factor for the sustainability rating was the level of commitment and motivation of key actors, as well as their ability to continue with the innovations that had been introduced, to develop them further and embed them in the teaching curriculum across organisations. High levels of staff turnover among partners, unstable cooperation arrangements with the private sector and the fact that the supported institutions at supraregional level were too weak, all had a negative effect on sustainability. Conclusion: Partner ownership at all the levels involved is a key factor, and should be a fundamental criterion for decision-making when preparing projects and programmes.

A necessity in terms of design: exit strategies and follow-on measures

The sustainability of a project's or programme's results also depends on whether suitable follow-on measures and a fully developed exit strategy were envisaged at the design stage, and whether the sectors and professions selected were truly relevant.

Convincing policy-makers is essential

The evaluation synthesis pointed out that it was essential to certify new initial and continuing training programmes, and to 'sell' training concepts to policy-makers, in order to achieve structural changes at the system level. It goes without saying that unstable political, social and economic conditions and conflicts between lead executing agencies and their implementing organisations were found to be extremely detrimental to the sustainability of projects/programmes. That was also the case when the approach of the measure was not compatible with the partner country's vocational training system. Although this led to effective solutions in isolated cases, these had no broad impact and could not be replicated because they did not meet national regulations and conditions.

Success factors for sustainability

- > High priority of the supported institution in the supra-regional/national context
- > Stable cooperation arrangements with the private sector/selection of economically relevant sectors
- > Cross-organisational embedding of training courses in the teaching curriculum
- > Accreditation and certification of newly introduced initial and continuing training programmes
- > Recognisable economic benefit on the partner side, leading to strong partner interest and commitment to continue and develop the innovations introduced
- > Marketing of training concepts at the political level through clear illustration of programme success
- > Exit strategies in place



Reflecting on our own actions – honing our positions

Key findings and conclusions drawn from the meta-evaluation

In an additional meta-evaluation, the findings of the evaluation synthesis and of other evaluations of vocational education and training were used for overarching analysis. Even if GIZ does not agree with all the assessments of the meta-evaluation, in future it will bear in mind some of the recommendations when planning and implementing vocational training programmes. The evaluations led to in-depth examination of conceptual issues and to a learning process in which we reflected on our own actions and identified our positions more clearly.

Modest ambitions led to greater results

As the meta-evaluation shows, the conceptual requirements to be met by vocational training projects have risen sharply as compared with evaluation findings from the 1990s. Vocational training is expected on the one hand to reduce poverty, and on the other to modernise and reform the economy, while also giving consideration to gender aspects. The meta-evaluation questions these ambitious demands to be met by vocational training projects and programmes. Vocational training projects that were designed purely to promote institutions that restricted themselves to the core area of vocational training – cooperation between the state and industry, learning on the job, training of vocational trainers – generally achieved greater sustainability than projects/programmes that were broad-based and designed to achieve systemic change. One recommendation of the meta-evaluation was: 'The projects/programmes are overloaded with all kinds of strategies. They should refocus their efforts on the core area of vocational training'.

Nevertheless: continued focus on systemic change

GIZ takes a different position in this respect. GIZ does not draw the conclusion from the meta-evaluation that it should redirect its focus back to the micro or organisational level, even if it does appear easier at a superficial level to build the institutional capacities of just one institution by working with one partner. Rather, GIZ upholds its ambitious objective of achieving systemic change. However, the task to be tackled when formulating objectives for future projects/programmes is to reduce the gap between expectations and actual opportunities for putting them into practice. In future vocational training projects/programmes, GIZ therefore sees its task as intentionally addressing the complexity of vocational training. This includes planning an appropriate overall term and adequate financial resources to achieve the intended systemic changes.

Training in the informal sector will be stepped up

With regard to poverty reduction and the creation of employment opportunities, the meta-evaluation detected a 'gap between development objectives and realities' in most of the vocational training projects reviewed. Very rarely were the projects really directed towards the poorest sections of the population, in part due to a lack of interest among partners. They also rarely addressed the informal sector. Since 2011/2012, the meta-evaluation's recommendation to involve the informal training and labour market to a greater extent and to include target groups who have so far been excluded from the formal training market, has been implemented at a larger number of projects and programmes, for example in Afghanistan, Ghana, South Africa and Togo. Some components of these projects and programmes have placed more direct emphasis on basic skills in the informal sector, e.g. for manufacturing and selling products on local markets or providing simple services in the informal sector. That also means the measures should not only be directed mainly at training institutions, but also at organisations and institutions that work with these target groups.



Giving greater consideration to the gender aspect when performing needs analyses

The projects/programmes reviewed in 2010/2011 also did little to address the employment concerns of women. Women were the explicit target group of only one quarter of these projects and programmes. In all the other programmes, no systematic efforts were made to ensure equal opportunities for both genders in vocational training. This was either because the strategic partners did not consider this theme to be relevant, or because it was considered either unnecessary due to the sociocultural conditions (say, in societies shaped by socialism or communism, which perceive women as equals) or not promising (in very traditional or religion-oriented rural development regions with a more rigid understanding of gender roles). Most vocational training projects therefore focused on classical male occupations in the manufacturing industry.

Only the findings of the Bulgarian project to promote adult vocational training and employment do not follow this trend. Here, more women than men now take part in the measures and the poor population also has verifiably better access to adult vocational training. Thus, in 2009 and 2010, the proportion of unemployed people among the participants of such training measures rose to over 50%. At least 60% of people who were previously unemployed also found a job within six months of completing the measure.

The findings show that the general aim of training and placing women in professional fields that are traditionally reserved for men has not been met. However, ensuring equal access to vocational training courses and the labour market for men and women continues to be a mandatory requirement for GIZ in the field of vocational education and training. Needs analyses must therefore give greater consideration to gender aspects. Here too, success can only be achieved step by step, for example by initially selecting professions that are not traditionally a male preserve. In China, for instance, good experience has been gained in the construction industry with interior design courses for women. But it is important that projects and programmes do not lose sight of the employment opportunities offered by traditional women's occupations.

Lack of funding jeopardises sustainability

Vocational training is generally underfunded in partner countries. It is usually considered of secondary importance when compared with general and academic education and training. Adequate funding must therefore be given greater emphasis as a key criterion when appraising projects and programmes right at the start of the planning phase. Sustainability could not be ensured if no viable funding models for vocational training were found that were shared to an appropriate degree by the state, industry and trainees. As a result, GIZ has therefore developed the theme of 'funding vocational education and training' and has anchored it firmly in projects and

programmes. In addition, to achieve better long-term results, better arrangements must be made before the end of a project or programme for the transition from joint responsibility to the partner institution taking on sole responsibility.

Better donor coordination in vocational training

To better harmonise the activities and approaches of international cooperation and thus to reduce costs for partners, GIZ's vocational training projects/programmes must be more strongly embedded in the local donor community. This is already being done in Vietnam, Kosovo and Namibia, and efforts have also been stepped up in other partner countries.

Systematically record the baseline before the start of a project/programme

The meta-evaluation also criticised the fact that many projects and programmes do not carry out detailed analyses of partner structures and systems. This finding is based on evaluated projects/programmes that were planned a good 10 years previously, but since then much has been done in this area. For example, GIZ has introduced new instruments that make it possible to collect basic information on a future project/programme together with the cooperation partner. Meanwhile, researching precise data on the labour market and vocational training, performing gender analyses and analysing the socioeconomic setting and the donor landscape are now some of the standard appraisal procedures carried out before the start of a project or programme, and are firmly established as a basis for designing the relevant measures.

Impressum

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