

Five years of VET Toolbox

European collaboration
to strengthen skills
systems globally



In partnership with



In 2017, the British Council joined a consortium of leading European development agencies on a new collaborative project to develop high-quality skills systems globally, by promoting demand-driven and inclusive vocational education and training (VET).

Five years later, the VET Toolbox has helped us achieve significant impact around the world by working with local partners to ensure skills development better meets the needs of individuals, labour markets and the economy through high-quality, relevant and innovative provision. We have provided short, targeted technical assistance across a range of key areas, including quality assurance, private sector engagement, curriculum development, apprenticeships, labour market analysis and inclusive VET provision. We have also shared knowledge and good practice and enhanced skills systems by encouraging closer links between education, employers and policymakers.

As the first programme of VET Toolbox project draws to a close in December 2022, this report celebrates our key achievements and learning across five years.

In terms of reach and scale, our initiatives have had significant impact, by working with nearly 2,000 stakeholders from over 900 organisations across South and East Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America on 20 interventions. We have connected seven UK colleges with nearly 40 partners in other countries through mentoring partnerships, and have reached hundreds more VET stakeholders and employers through our knowledge-sharing events.

But that is only half the story. Core to the success of the VET Toolbox is its collaborative approach. Collaboration within the consortium to deliver joint solutions. Collaboration with local partners to co-develop interventions addressing their specific needs and matching their local context. Collaboration between colleges and training institutions through international partnerships. And, finally, regional and global collaboration through the sharing of knowledge, tools and approaches developed through VET Toolbox interventions.

We have learned so much from delivering VET Toolbox as one team with our European partners. From addressing skills challenges with GIZ in Ghana and Tanzania, to working with Enabel in Uganda and comparing approaches to VET college partnerships with LuxDev, we have truly valued the opportunity to learn from different perspectives. And, in turn, this has enabled us to become even more innovative in the solutions we offer.

Linked to this, and another indicator of the success of VET Toolbox, are the repeated requests for support from local partners across different areas of VET provision in Malawi, Pakistan and Viet Nam. This not only proves that local stakeholders value and are committed to the interventions we deliver, but the opportunity to keep engaging local stakeholders in the design and delivery helps to ensure the sustainability and scalability of these interventions, as they continue to be driven forward by local partners long after our projects have finished.

For the British Council, being part of the VET Toolbox has supported our commitment to working in partnership to develop high-quality skills systems that help both individuals and economies to prosper and promote stable societies. It has helped us support system-level change in each country we have worked in. It has helped us strengthen connections between colleges in the UK and training organisations around the world. And it has helped us amplify our impact through face-to-face and online events.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our consortium partners – Enabel, Expertise France, GIZ, LuxDev and AFD and our funders the European Union and the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Even though the first programme of VET Toolbox is drawing to a close, we will continue our work together to promote sustainable development and building peaceful and inclusive societies through the development of high-quality skills systems.

Chris Cooper,
Global Lead, VET British Council

Foreword

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What is VET Toolbox?

VET Toolbox is a partnership of leading European development agencies that provided eligible countries with targeted expertise, grant funding, tools and advice to improve the effectiveness of their national vocational education and training (VET) systems, by supporting planned VET reforms, boosting private sector engagement to respond to labour market needs, promoting inclusive education and enhancing employability for all. Initiated in 2017, the first programme of the project closed in December 2022, with five years of significant impact across VET systems in Sub-Saharan Africa, South and East Asia, and Latin America.

Who delivered VET Toolbox?

VET Toolbox is managed by a consortium of development agencies across Europe, led by Enabel (Belgium) and including the British Council (UK), Expertise France (France), GIZ (Germany), LuxDev (Luxembourg) and AFD (France). It is co-funded by the European Union and the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

How it works

VET Toolbox is a demand-driven project, responding to requests from public authorities, social partners and private institutions in eligible countries to address specific VET challenges through collaborative interventions in the form of technical assistance projects. VET Toolbox interventions prioritised several key features, including a focus on knowledge sharing, systemic change, capacity building, tool development, strategic planning advice and joint solutions – both across the consortium of delivery partners and together with local stakeholders.

VET Toolbox interventions focused on three core areas.

- Using VET system and labour-market analysis to strengthen evidence-based policymaking and programming, by providing expertise on the use of labour market information systems, rapid labour market assessments, gap analysis tools and employment labour market assessments.
- Encouraging private sector involvement in VET and labour market activities, by providing expertise on how to involve the private sector in sustainable mechanisms of consultation and cooperation, financing, governance, training delivery, career guidance, public-private partnerships, participation in advisory councils, curriculum development, defining assessment standards and training centre management.
- Strengthening the inclusion of vulnerable groups in VET and formal and informal labour market activities, by providing expertise on recognising prior learning, mechanisms of social dialogue in VET systems, improving VET for vulnerable groups, perception of VET opportunities for disadvantaged groups including for women, upgrading skills across the (in)formal sector, job placement for vulnerable groups, affirmative action initiatives for young women and promoting methodologies for special needs.

About VET Toolbox: relevant skills for all

The first programme of VET Toolbox was delivered in EU partner countries, excluding those countries that receive support from the European Training Foundation. Particular attention was given to support requests from countries benefitting from the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa.

Mentoring partnerships

Alongside targeted technical assistance projects, the British Council managed a series of VET Toolbox mentoring partnerships, connecting colleges in the UK and other countries on the theme of employer engagement.

Each partnership saw one UK college work with a cluster of local institutions to enhance private sector engagement and boost the relevance of their offer for learners and employers. Many of these partnerships also incorporated additional themes, specific to the needs of the cluster, such as improving leadership and management, developing quality assurance procedures in line with international standards, and improving pedagogy.

Sharing knowledge, tools and approaches

In the spirit of the VET Toolbox's collaborative approach, we also amplified our impact by sharing the knowledge, tools and approaches developed through our interventions to help support more VET systems regionally and globally. These activities included a regional seminar in South Asia, a global online seminar and the sharing of guides and toolkits that can be adapted to a range of local contexts.

“We learned a lot about management and leadership, and how to use our College Board to solve policy issues and engage key stakeholders such as employers and Ministry of Labour. Thanks to the training we have signed MoUs with Speed Fitment and CPI Industries Ltd which have helped us increase the number of students we send on industry attachments. We have seen more employers actively engaging with the college looking for apprentices to work in their organisations. The mentoring partnership with Edinburgh College has benefited us Principals, the College and the students.”

Julius Phiri, Principal of Mzuzu Technical College

The British Council's VET Toolbox reach



1907 beneficiaries




15 countries
in East and South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America



9 mentoring partnerships
connecting seven VET colleges in the UK with nearly 40 partner organisations in seven other countries



2 international knowledge sharing seminars
bringing together 60 delegates across 10 countries during our event in Nepal and more than 300 participants and 40 speakers from over 15 countries during our online seminar



8 adaptable tools for enhancing skills systems globally

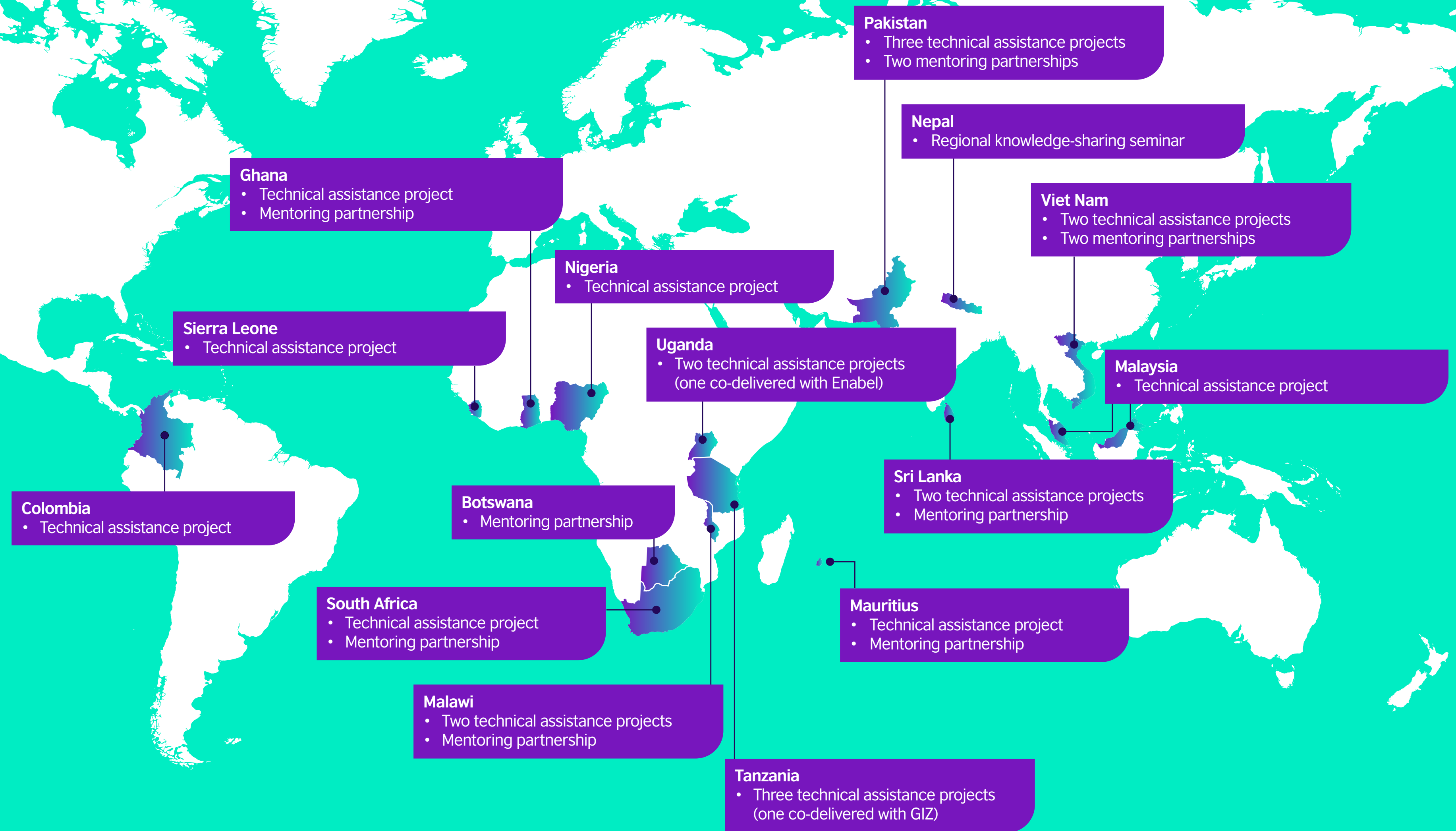


20 interventions



506 public sector organisations
481 private sector organisations

Reach and impact



Effective quality assurance mechanisms are key for the development of VET institutions and wider systems. Our VET Toolbox interventions in this area have supported local partners to implement new quality assurance processes, in line with international standards and practices, to raise the quality of teaching and learning, support institutional development and boost recognition of qualifications.

Quality assurance

Viet Nam

Internationalising the VET sector

Case study



Aim: to improve the relevance and quality of VET in Viet Nam by strengthening college evaluation and self-assessment, in line with international standards and good practice

Partner: Directorate of Vocational Education and Training

Results:

- An in-depth evaluation of four VET colleges
- Improved systems and processes for self-evaluation and continuous improvement in participating colleges
- New self-assessment tools and guidance for VET colleges

Viet Nam

Context

Viet Nam's government has a long-term strategy to raise the quality of VET, by bringing it in line with international standards, including an ambitious goal for ten of the country's colleges to meet these standards by 2030.

Intervention

We provided support through a VET Toolbox intervention to strengthen a crucial part of the quality improvement and quality assurance process – evaluation – helping to lay the groundwork for the future internationalisation of the VET sector.

Initial evaluations were conducted by an international expert in four identified colleges, to assess existing quality assurance mechanisms and propose areas for improvements. Highly participatory in nature, the evaluations involved deans, heads of faculty, teaching staff and students, and incorporated learning observations.

Participating colleges received feedback in key areas, including preparing for formal inspections, self-assessment, peer reviews and observations, with which they could take forward to bring new improvements. To support the change process, they were also equipped with a new comprehensive self-assessment tool featuring approaches and guidance.

A workshop in Da Lat, attended by the European Union, the Ministry of Labour, the Directorate of Vocational Education and Training and GIZ, gave the four participating colleges the chance to present the improvements they have made as a result of the intervention.

Da Lat Vocational College, for example, has established a new quality assurance system and action plan for quality improvement, as well as a new information and data system to reflect on quality improvement. They are holding more meetings with staff to help improve the quality of teaching, backed by stronger capacity building. The college is also using new approaches to attract students, including experiential lessons and alumni talks for school students, and have developed an orientation process for new students. As a result of these changes, Da Lat has achieved higher staff retention, an improved enrolment rate and a lower dropout rate.

On the success of the intervention, Dr Do Nang Khanh, Deputy Director General of Department of Vocational Education and Training, said:

“The inspection helped the colleges benchmark their quality to UK standards and improve their self-assessment process in order to raise their quality standards. Recommendations from the UK experts steer the colleges to develop strategies to overcome identified limitations and improve the quality of training, employer engagement and employability opportunities for students after graduation.”

Viet Nam

Benchmarking qualifications

Aim: to raise the quality and recognition of Viet Nam's VET offer, by benchmarking qualifications against international standards

Partner: Directorate of Vocational Education and Training (DVET)

Results:

- Benchmarking of five qualifications in five VET colleges
- A toolkit for VET providers to design and review internationally benchmarked qualifications
- Policy recommendations to internationalise VET in Viet Nam



Viet Nam

Context

Through a second VET Toolbox intervention in Viet Nam, we continued to support the internationalisation of the sector by providing a framework for benchmarking qualifications against international standards.

Intervention

After working with five VET colleges to assess five qualifications, a new toolkit was developed to support colleges carry out their own qualification benchmarking process, using international standards and quality assurance principles.

This has been a significant step in helping Viet Nam's VET sector align its qualifications and quality assurance system with high-quality education systems internationally.

Speaking at the closing event, Dr Nguyen Quang Viet, Director of the Vocational Education & Training Accreditation Agency (VETA) said:

“After project completion, VETA and DVET will continue to implement outreach activities in the national VET system, combining with relevant strategies and national priorities to enhance project outcomes, bringing positive and long-term impacts in VET development in Viet Nam.”



South Africa

Creating clear growth pathways for VET colleges



South Africa: creating clear growth pathways for VET colleges

Aim: to support the development of a quality assurance framework for continuous improvement of VET colleges in South Africa to enable them to better serve their students and communities

Partner: Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET)

Result: a new institutional maturity model and associated assessment tool

South Africa

Context

The performance of VET institutions across South Africa varies greatly, from colleges requiring developmental support, to high-performing colleges. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) found it challenging to take this disparity into account when it came to providing developmental support, resulting in many colleges receiving support that wasn't fully meeting their needs.

Intervention

To address this, we delivered a VET Toolbox intervention to develop an institutional maturity model that could support growth across all colleges. Based on the inspection and regulation services of Ofsted (the UK Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills), the model was adapted to the South African context by closely aligning to frameworks, practices and processes used by local VET colleges. As a student-centred model, it focuses on unlocking student potential and providing relevant skills.

Through the intervention, DHET connected with South Eastern Regional College, in Northern Ireland, to learn from their quality assurance process and better understand how to implement quality assessment in their own colleges.

Since the project, DHET has successfully launched the model to all 50 VET institutions in South Africa with the aim of providing each with a clear growth pathway.



Apprenticeships are a key ingredient of effective VET systems as they provide smoother transitions for students into the workplace, reduce skills mismatch and help institutions strengthen their engagement and relationships with employers. Our VET Toolbox interventions in this area supported local partners at both the policy and implementation levels to design, implement and deliver effective apprenticeship schemes.

Apprenticeships

Pakistan

Embedding new reforms to promote apprenticeships

Case study



Aim: to support training providers and employers implementing Pakistan's new Apprenticeships Act

Partners: National Vocational and Technical Training Commission

Results:

- A dedicated handbook for employers for implementing the new Apprenticeship Act
- Workshops and seminars on effective use of the handbook
- Step-by-step support for training providers to implement the new Act in Punjab

Pakistan

Context

As part of its long-term strategy to boost work-based learning, Pakistan passed the Apprenticeships Act 2018 to enhance training and improve employability by establishing improved apprenticeship schemes in VET.

Interventions

To support the successful uptake of the new Act, we delivered two VET Toolbox interventions, first to raise awareness and provide practical support to institutions and businesses, and next to provide direct capacity-building support to officials implementing the law.

A comprehensive handbook was developed to provide practical advice and guidance to VET institutions and employers on how to implement the new Act. This guide aimed to engage the private sector, by highlighting the opportunities apprenticeships can offer and providing detailed guidance on how to design and implement new apprenticeship schemes.

Next, targeted workshops and seminars were delivered to over 250 employers and leaders of training institutions in nine cities across Pakistan on how to apply the handbook to their own contexts, helping to raise awareness of the importance of apprenticeships across the wider sector.

Direct capacity-building support was then delivered to VET officials, training providers and employers in Punjab – the first province to implement the new Act – to establish and strengthen apprenticeship schemes and ensure the new law could achieve the desired change. This support covered the step-by-step process of planning and delivering apprenticeships and supported delivery staff to overcome challenges associated with implementation.

Punjab's Technical Educational and Vocational Teaching Authority is now planning to build on this intervention through more events to further private sector capacity and engagement.



Sri Lanka

Boosting the relevance of apprenticeships

Case study



Aim: to enable Sri Lanka's apprenticeships system to better meet labour market needs and improve youth employability

Partner: National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority (NAITA)

Results:

- a diagnostic review of the Sri Lankan apprenticeships system
- a capacity-building workshop to agree priorities for policy development
- a high-level event to present findings and future recommendations

Sri Lanka

Context

Sri Lanka's National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority (NAITA) requested support to improve the quality of the country's apprenticeship system to better meet labour market needs and improve youth employability, with a particular focus on providing flexible learning pathways and increasing private sector engagement.

Intervention

Through a VET Toolbox intervention, we worked with NAITA to complete a diagnostic review of the current apprenticeship provision in Sri Lanka. Using our Apprenticeship Benchmarking Tool, the research explored strengths and weaknesses and suggested areas for improvement.

This was complemented by a capacity building workshop bringing together representatives from various government departments, employers and VET practitioners to review gaps in apprenticeship delivery and discuss future priorities. Participants identified the elements of successful apprenticeship systems, drawing from international good practice, including the UK, and agreed immediate recommendations for further policy development.

The findings and recommendations developed through the intervention were launched at a high-level event for employers, industrialists, chambers of commerce representatives, training providers and donor organisations, helping to raise awareness across the sector and encourage social partners to work together on addressing the recommendations and identifying further areas for improvement.

In 2019, the British Council developed the Apprenticeship Benchmarking Tool which allows policy makers to compare their apprenticeship systems against a global standard and their peers around the world. Since its launch, the tool has been used in Ghana, India, Malaysia, Pakistan, South Africa, Switzerland, the four nations of the UK and now Sri Lanka.



Effective curriculum development can boost the relevance of VET, by aligning skills and competencies with industry requirements. Our VET Toolbox interventions have equipped both curricula designers and institutions with targeted training and tools to develop high-quality, relevant training courses in priority areas.

Curriculum development

Malawi

Boosting productivity in the informal sector



Aim: to build the capacity of artisans in the informal sector through more relevant, targeted training

Partners: Ministry of Labour, TEVET Authority, Employers' Consultative Association of Malawi, various artisan associations in Malawi

Result: a toolkit for curricula redesign workshop that can be applied across various informal economy sectors and countries to improve training for established artisans

Malawi

Context

Malawi's informal sector accounts for a large proportion of the country's employment, but there are varying levels of skills among artisans, and enterprises often lack the skills to maximise their profit and grow their business.

Intervention

Through a VET Toolbox initiative, we worked to address identified skills gaps among artisans, and improve their productivity, by supporting the redesign of more targeted training for the informal workforce.

An initial training needs analysis was carried out, to better understand the skill levels among established artisans in the informal sector, involving wide-scale consultation with government officials, employers and training providers.

This led to the development of a new toolkit, aimed at supporting curriculum writers and informal sector specialists to develop short, modular, competency-based learning materials targeting artisans and enterprises in the construction and renewable-energy industry.

A range of VET stakeholders received training on the new toolkit in Lilongwe, and thanks to the adaptability of the model, there is now the possibility to scale and apply it to other sectors and regions in Malawi.

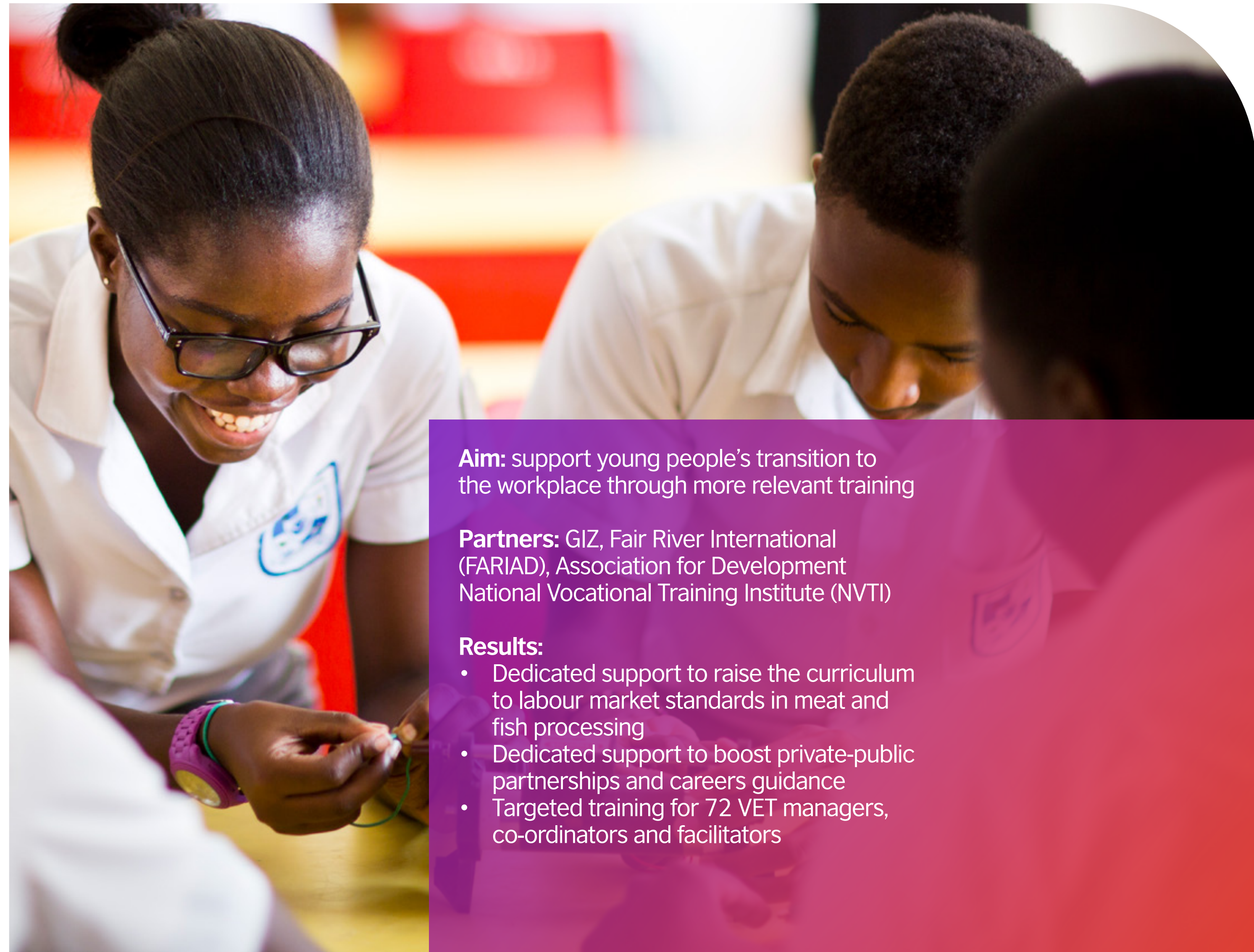
On the success of the intervention, Aubrey Matemba, Director of Technical and Vocational Training in the Ministry of Labour, said:

“As a Ministry, we appreciate the support of VET Toolbox, the British Council and all partners involved. The Government of Malawi, through Vision Malawi 2063 (a blueprint for Government Agenda), has prioritised Human Capital Development as an essential enabler for realising Malawi's development goals. Moving forward, the Ministry will attempt to build on the achievements of VET Toolbox by spreading lessons learned to all institutions in the sector. Through these initiatives, we will continue to build a strong TEVET sector which provides a competitive and skilled workforce for the nation.”



Ghana

Supporting young people to enter the workplace



Aim: support young people's transition to the workplace through more relevant training

Partners: GIZ, Fair River International (FARIAD), Association for Development National Vocational Training Institute (NVTI)

Results:

- Dedicated support to raise the curriculum to labour market standards in meat and fish processing
- Dedicated support to boost private-public partnerships and careers guidance
- Targeted training for 72 VET managers, co-ordinators and facilitators

Ghana

Context

Fair River International Association for Development (FARIAD) is an accredited private VET provider, focusing on agriculture, business and value chain development for rural women and young people. As well as a training facility in Kpassa, it also works through partners to reach young people in rural communities and provide them with skills to improve their economic opportunities and contribute to their communities. FARIAD requested curriculum development support to boost the relevance of their training offer and give young people a smoother transition into employment.

Intervention

Through a VET Toolbox initiative, we worked with GIZ and FARIAD to identify potential areas of focus, including food and beverage processing, dairy, entrepreneurship ('agripreneurship'), life skills and ICT. Taking forward the areas of meat and fish processing, we next provided targeted training and advice in curriculum development to help adapt the curriculum to meet the relevant labour standards.

To complement our curriculum development support, and better align FARIAD's training programmes to employer needs, we also provided targeted training to strengthen capacity in establishing private sector links in order to increase placements and create more effective private-public partnerships.

Lastly, we provided capacity building support to FARIAD's careers guidance and counselling services, to strengthen their offer to prospective students, thereby better supporting the transition of young people to the workplace.

All training and support delivered through the intervention was received highly positively, and 100 per cent of participants said they improved their knowledge.



Fruitful private-public partnerships are core to the success of any effective VET system, by helping to make training more relevant to employer needs and creating clearer pathways for students into the workplace. Our VET Toolbox interventions have supported institutions to better engage employers and create stronger relationships to benefit learners.

Engaging employers

Malaysia

Boosting employer engagement to make more demand-driven VET



Aim: to build capacity across the public and private sectors in establishing public-private VET partnerships, with a focus on low-paid jobs and digital technology in jobs and training

Partner: the Manpower Department at the Ministry of Human Resources

Results:

- A trained cohort of skills advisors to support private sector engagement in VET
- A guide for employers on working with VET institutions and developing training programmes
- A ministry roadmap for future development in the area of private sector engagement

Malaysia

Context

The rapid digital transformation of the last ten years has drastically changed labour market demands on training providers. Malaysia, as many other countries around the world, faces the challenge of employers not being effectively engaged in VET development and implementation, leading to a gap in skilled workers, specifically in relation to the use of digital technology in low-skills and low-income occupations.

Intervention

Through a VET Toolbox intervention, we worked with the Manpower Department at the Ministry of Human Resources to engage employers and develop four key recommendations to address the situation:

- create more collaborative partnerships and engagement processes to address the fragmented engagement between the private and VET sectors in order to deliver demand-led solutions such as real work experience as well as CPD for trainers
- develop an accessible, relevant, flexible and inclusive framework for digital technologies, based on national occupational standards
- enable more effective technical skills development training to re-skill and upskill existing workers, which recognises prior learning as well as future skills to open up progression pathways
- raise awareness on the role of industry in creating a positive skills eco-system, based on collaboration between employers, VET providers, trade unions and other stakeholders.

Given the need for practical advice and guidance for employers to support these recommendations in the immediate term, we delivered a series of capacity building workshops for skills advisors within the Manpower Department, so they could support employers to identify skills gaps, develop training plans, find suitable training providers, access funding and monitor progress and record achievements.

Equipped with new skills and approaches, the skills advisors now play a central role in helping to transform private sector engagement as part of a new Employer Skills Guidance Service, where they help employers identify and implement skills development training.

Meanwhile, a new guide for employers helps to understand the benefits of working with VET providers and includes case studies from employers in different countries focusing on how to manage and deliver successful training programmes.

As part of the intervention, a roadmap was also developed for the Manpower Department to build upon progress made in strengthening the public-private collaboration and transforming the skills of the current and future workforce.

Colombia

Enhancing the outcomes
of private-public
engagement opportunities



Partner: National Training Service
(Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje – SENA)

Result: dedicated guidance and methodology
for delivering sectoral roundtables and enhancing
their outcomes in relation to private sector engagement

Colombia

Context

Colombia's National Training Service (SENA) requested support to maximise the impact and outcomes of the country's sectoral roundtables. This intervention became the first British Council co-ordinated VET Toolbox project to be conducted entirely remotely due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Intervention

In consultation with SENA, three sectors were identified for the focus of the intervention: agriculture, creative economy and industry 4.0. Next, an action plan and guidance documents were developed in conjunction with key stakeholders, to enhance the methodologies used to build employer engagement in VET through the roundtables.

The project engaged SENA representatives in 16 online workshops and three online focus group discussions, involving 66 organisations from the government, private sector and academia. Critical to the success of the project was the effective use of video conferencing technology – with live English-Spanish translation – which helped to overcome the challenges of remote delivery.

Post-implementation interviews with stakeholders conducted six months after the intervention, showed that the capacity-building support and the co-development of tools and methodologies to facilitate roundtables had impacted on VET reforms in Colombia. Since the intervention, SENA has also actively applied the same methodology to deliver more roundtables in other sectors.

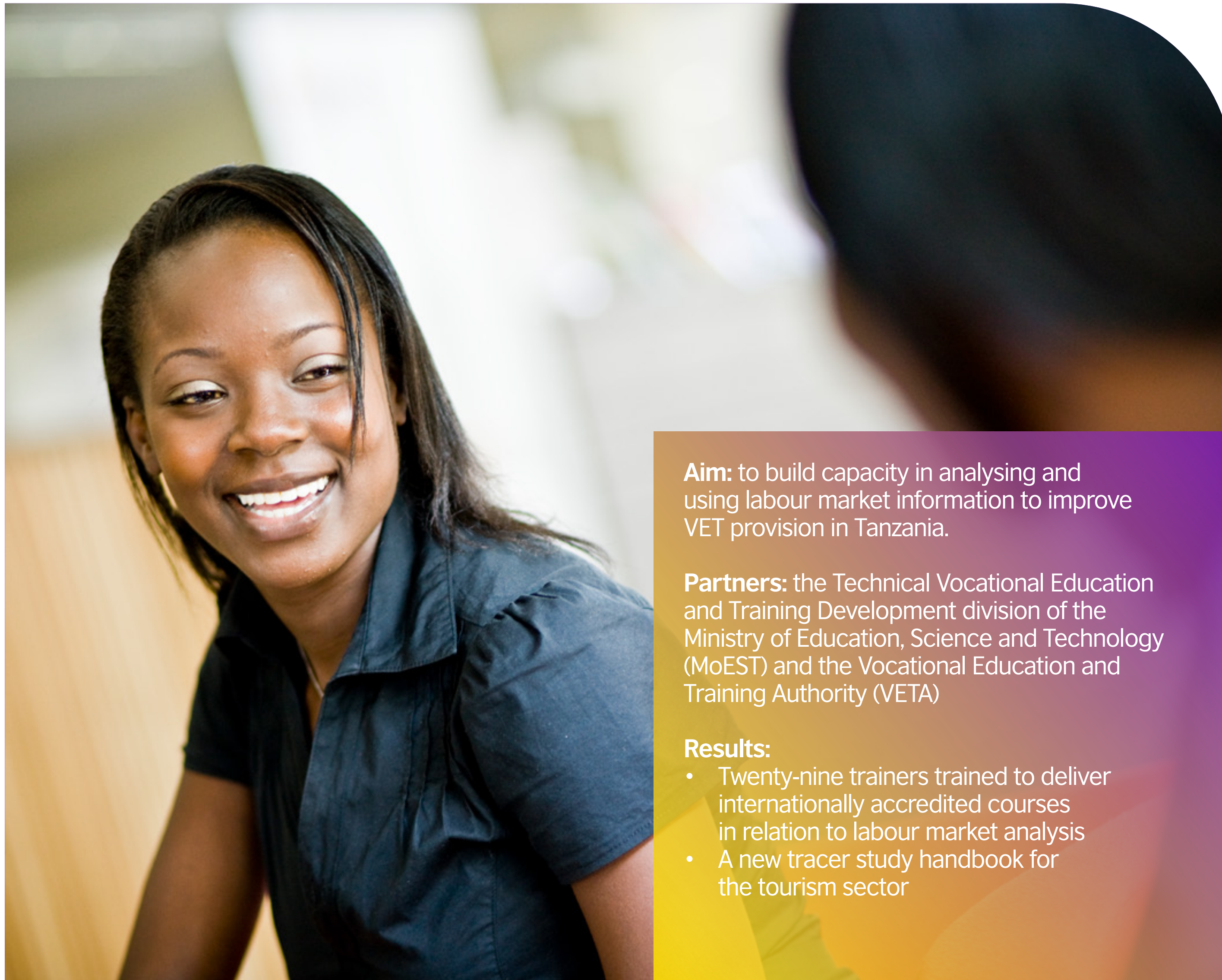


Labour market analysis is a core tool for improving VET provision. Our VET Toolbox interventions built the capacity of local stakeholders to effectively gather and use labour market information to enhance the delivery of VET.

Labour market analysis

Tanzania

Using labour market analysis to boost VET provision



Aim: to build capacity in analysing and using labour market information to improve VET provision in Tanzania.

Partners: the Technical Vocational Education and Training Development division of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) and the Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA)

Results:

- Twenty-nine trainers trained to deliver internationally accredited courses in relation to labour market analysis
- A new tracer study handbook for the tourism sector

Tanzania

Context

As part of a wider series of actions being carried out across Tanzania's VET sector, the Technical Vocational Education and Training Development of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) requested support in the area of labour market analysis to better align VET provision with employer needs.

Intervention

To support this, we delivered a VET Toolbox intervention to strengthen the strategic development of evidence-based planning in VET in Tanzania, with two specific objectives:

- to build the capacity of staff at the Ministry and the Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA), to improve the way they interpret labour market information and effectively use this analysis
- to design and pilot a sector planning tool, in a priority sector, to support a range of improvements in meeting sector and employer needs.

Based on these objectives, we delivered targeted training and developed a new tracer study handbook, to equip key stakeholders across the Tanzanian VET sector with knowledge, skills and guidance to utilise labour market intelligence more effectively when it comes to shaping training provision in the tourism sector.

As a result, they have increased their capacity to use labour market analysis to develop VET programmes that can improve the quality of labour productivity, grow Tanzania industry, build the capacity of VET graduates to develop their own businesses, and help to build an enabling and inclusive environment for all Tanzanians.



More inclusive education systems are a key goal for governments globally. Our VET Toolbox initiatives supported local partners to bring new approaches to teaching learners with disabilities, through awareness raising, inclusive pedagogies and more effective mainstreaming.

Inclusion

Malawi

Implementing inclusive pedagogies

Case study



Aim: to equip VET instructors in Malawi with the skills to meet the needs of learners with disabilities

Partners: National Youth Council of Malawi, Ministry of Labour in Malawi, TEVET Authority in Malawi, Federation of Disability Organisations in Malawi

Results:

- A new professional training programme on inclusive approaches in VET
- A cohort of VET instructors trained in inclusive pedagogy

Malawi

Context

Structuring learning systems to cater for students of all disabilities can be challenging due to varying needs when it comes to entering and completing training courses. In Malawi's VET sector, the challenge has been compounded by limited funding and resources at the institutional level, as well as a lack of teacher training approaches and tools that meet the needs of people with disabilities at the system level.

Intervention

Through a VET Toolbox intervention, we supported Malawi on its journey towards more inclusive VET, by developing a new professional training programme to develop inclusive pedagogies among training providers.

An initial scoping workshop gave stakeholders from across all levels of the VET sector the opportunity to discuss challenges with making VET more inclusive, identify existing training needs, and help shape the focus of the new training programme.

As a result, a new training programme and accompanying resources were developed, to equip VET instructors with inclusive pedagogies, to better cater for learners with special needs. A phased pilot across three regions provided valuable feedback during development. Involving those trained during the first phase as trainers in the later phases helped to build a cohort of teachers trained in inclusive pedagogy.

Since the training, the National Youth Council of Malawi has seen a change in the way instructors are approaching inclusive education. The training has raised awareness of the complexity of disabilities and helped to change mindsets in relation to working with people with disabilities. Instructors are also sharing their learning with peers, using the training material to adapt their teaching approaches, and discussing ways to make their institutions more inclusive.



Pakistan

Improving disability mainstreaming in VET

Aim: to increase participation of people with disabilities in the workplace by making VET more inclusive

Partners: Special Talent Exchange Program (STEP), National Accreditation Council for Technical and Vocational Stream (NAC-TVS)

Results:

- New guidelines to increase inclusive participation
- New assessment methodology to evaluate inclusivity in VET institutions



Pakistan

Context

Building on our previous VET Toolbox initiatives to enhance accreditation of VET institutions in Pakistan, we provided additional support aiming to increase the participation of people with disabilities in the workforce, by improving disability mainstreaming in VET.

Intervention

After a review of VET sector policies and practices, new guidelines were developed to bring about inclusive change, by supporting more people with disabilities to enrol and achieve at VET colleges. In conjunction, working with NAC-TVS, an assessment methodology was created to evaluate inclusivity in VET institutions, which can be integrated in the revised accreditation process. The guidelines were launched at a high-level stakeholder event organised in cooperation with Ministry of Planning Development and Special Initiatives and STEP in Islamabad. Next steps include piloting of the guidelines in VET colleges across the country and further work with NAC-TVS on integrating inclusion aspects into the wider quality assurance accreditation process of VET colleges in Pakistan.



Between 2019 and 2022, we helped to connect UK colleges with VET institutions in other countries through partnerships aimed at enhancing private sector engagement and boosting the relevance of their offer for both learners and employers.

Mentoring partnerships

How they worked

Each UK college provided 12 months of dedicated support to a cluster of four colleges in a focus country, selected through an application process overseen by local ministries and the British Council. Each cluster developed an action plan to agree the focus and activities of the partnership, and completed a self-evaluation at the end of the partnership. UK colleges oversaw the operations of the partnerships, with any necessary support provided by the British Council.

Who was involved

Nine mentoring partnerships took place between UK and overseas colleges throughout the lifetime of the VET Toolbox.

- Hertford Regional College and Kien Giang Vocational College, Hue Tourism College and Korea Vocational Technology College of Bacgiang (VKTECH) in Viet Nam (2019-21)
- Dudley College and Karachi Tools, Dies and Moulds Centre, Construction Technology Training Institute, Shipyard Training School and Government College of Technology in Pakistan (2020-21)
- South West College and Polytechnics Mauritius Limited with Mauritius Qualifications Authority in Mauritius (2020-22)
- Belfast Metropolitan College and Nswazwi Brigade, Zwenshambe Brigade, Maun Technical College and Selebi Phikwe Technical College in Botswana (2020-22)
- South West College and Accra Technical Training Centre, Walewale Technical Institute and Kumasi Technical University in Ghana (2021-22)
- South Eastern Regional College and Government Advance Technical Training Centre, Aman Institute of Vocational Training, Step Institute of Art, Design and Management and Technical Training Centre, Quetta in Pakistan (2021-22)
- Edinburgh College and Mangochi community Technical College, Lilongwe Technical College, Mzuzu Technical College and Soche Technical College in Malawi (2021-22)
- Isle of Wight College and Taletso TVET College in South Africa (2021-22)
- Herford Regional College and National Apprentice and Industry Training Authority (NAITA), Head Office, NAITA, Colombo, NAITA, Matara and NAITA, Jaffna in Sri Lanka (2021-22)

What worked well

- Each UK college provided a wide range of experts to support partnership themes, whose input proved to be valuable and inspirational to the cluster colleges.
- All participants valued learning from the experience of their international partners facing similar challenges.
- Activities were carefully planned, and each cluster identified additional themes that were relevant to their needs. The high-quality training provided by UK colleges was valued by participants and helped to develop their confidence in engaging with employers.
- Participating colleges valued an opportunity to broaden their skills and incorporate different members of staff into international work. Cluster colleges benefited from access to a wide range of materials shared by the UK colleges, including teaching materials, policies and other documents, which were customised to improve practice in pedagogy, management and employer engagement

Impact

As a result of the supportive relationships formed, many partner colleges have noted increased knowledge and confidence to address challenges in their own institutions and increased motivation to implement change.

Early impact of the partnerships includes updated curricula, greater engagement with employers and improved management processes, resulting in higher rates of student satisfaction and retention. Many partners believe the partnerships have helped them make progress towards achieving international standards in key areas of their work. Others highlight the higher level of skills students are developing as they benefit from new internship opportunities.

“It gave us knowledge, energy and drive to forge ahead and build partnerships with industries.”

Lilongwe Technical College, Malawi

“It used to be difficult to place students in enterprises. Now we have good relationships with many businesses, who now choose to recruit our students. The number of internships has risen significantly and students can now put theory into practice.”

Partner college in Viet Nam



Building on the collaborative approach of VET Toolbox, we've amplified the reach and impact of the project by sharing the knowledge, practices and tools that have been gained and developed through our various interventions and partnerships, with the aim of benefitting even more colleges and systems regionally and globally.

**Sharing
knowledge,
tools and
approaches**

Tools for global use

Through the various interventions we've delivered through VET Toolbox globally, we've developed a comprehensive range of tools that can be adapted for global use to help build quality and capacity across VET, including:

- Self-Assessment Tool for Training Institutions on Quality Assurance
- Guide for Developing and Implementing Qualifications
- Self-Assessment Tool for Training Institutions on Inclusion of Refugees
- How to Establish a Sector Skills Council (co-produced with Enabel)
- Soft skills project design and delivery toolkit
- Tracer studies for VET: supporting their creation and implementation
- Supporting Inclusive Provision for Persons with Disabilities – a Toolkit for Training Institutions

Regional seminar

In 2019, we delivered the first VET Toolbox regional policy seminar, in Kathmandu, Nepal. Entitled 'Private Sector Engagement in Skills Development in South Asia', the event brought together 60 employers, policymakers, education leaders and representatives from sector skills organisations from South Asia, the UK and other European countries, to showcase good practice in employer engagement and foster international collaboration in this critical area.

Focusing on the importance of engaging the private sector in skills development, the event reflected and addressed core priorities of the South Asian region including:

- current and emerging megatrends impacting on skills
- effective mechanisms and ways of incentivising employer engagement

- institutional capacity building
- parity of esteem
- training for local export markets
- the relationship between skilling staff and business success
- modern apprenticeships
- career pathways and life skills
- the role of international collaboration and exchange in finding solutions to the common challenges.

The event delivered a range of positive outcomes, including enhanced understanding of challenges and approaches to private sector engagement in skills development in South Asia, boosted collaboration and shared learning between countries in the region and improved relationships between and with key stakeholders.

Global online seminar

In 2021, we delivered a global online event, combining expert panel sessions, interactive workshops and thought-provoking and sometimes provocative presentations under the theme of 'How can VET work effectively with the private sector in fast-changing economies?'. The event brought together more than 300 VET experts, policymakers, lead educators, employers, and representatives from non-governmental organisations and training agencies from around the world.

Taking international, as well as national and local perspectives, the seminar brought together expertise in theory and delivery from every corner of the globe and highlighted effective mechanisms and approaches to private sector engagement in VET across different contexts. The event reaffirmed VET as a powerful tool to catalyse local change, as delegates shared inspiring examples of partnerships with employers and provided insights on some of the most profound questions VET systems are responding to.

“The British Council’s convening power is considerable, and this seminar was an excellent example of that. It brought together the right people from across South Asia to address one of the most pressing challenges facing the region. It was an outstanding seminar in its design, content, delegates and organisation.”

**Syed Nasim Manzur, Managing Director,
Apex Footwear Ltd., Bangladesh**

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About VET Toolbox

VET Toolbox is a partnership of leading European development agencies, including British Council (UK), Enabel (Belgium), Expertise France (France), GIZ (Germany), LuxDev (Luxembourg) and AFD (France). The project is co-funded by the European Union and by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The consortium is led by Enabel.

VET Toolbox aims at supporting partner countries in the design of national Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Employment strategies, and at enhancing their VET service delivery systems.



About the British Council

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We support peace and prosperity by building connections. We work with partners across all four countries of the UK and in over 200 countries and territories. Founded in 1934, we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body.

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