

Preliminary Findings



Skills Pathways Out of Poverty: Technical and vocational skills development?

Breaking the cycle of poverty for poor youth and young
adults in Ghana



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Structure of presentation

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- **Methodology and sampling**
- **Preliminary Key findings**
 - Mode of skills acquisition and accessibility
 - Utilization of skills and transition to work
 - Contrast among market outcomes
 - Education and its impact on skills
 - Role of enabling and disabling environment
- **Policy relevant finding and conclusions**

Introduction

- The research seeks to investigate the pathways young people use to escape poverty (via training and work) and the role of skills acquisition plays in this process...

Administrative Regions



- Study sites:

- Southern Ghana: La (urban) & Obeyeyie (rural)
- Northern Ghana: Savelugu (urban) & Nakpanzoo/Nabogu (rural)

Research Question:

(How) Do the poor acquire and utilize technical and vocational skills?

The research explores the following key issues:

- Modes of skills acquisition and their accessibility to the poor
- Utilization of skills among the poor and transition to work
- ✓ Impact of education on skills training and utilization
- ✓ Role of the enabling and disabling environment
- ✓ Gender and poverty dynamics of skills acquisition and utilization.

Methodology and sampling

1. In-depth interviews with 80 young people (20-35 yrs) who acquired skills (3 education categories)
2. Key informant interviews with training institutions (public & private), District assemblies, NGOs, experienced trade persons, etc.
3. Interviews with key government and development partners officials.
4. Institutional profiling of vocational training centers and the characteristics of their intake.

Sample size of all the four sites

In-depth Interviews for the 4 sites

	Poor educated	Poor uneducated	Non poor educated	Non-poor uneducated	Total
Male	12	12	8	8	40
Female	12	12	8	8	40
Total	24	24	16	16	80

Key informants and Policy interviews for the 4 sites

Total	Key informants and Policy interviews	60
Grand Total (4 sites)		140

Mode of skills acquisition and accessibility

1. Non formal apprenticeship is the most preferred option of skills acquisition
2. Formal Skills Training (mostly in the north)
3. NGO sponsored training programmes

Formal Skills Training Institutions

strengths

- Certificates- access to formal jobs, contracts, etc
- Theory and practical;

weaknesses

- Entry requirement- most of the regular programmes require at least basic education certificate
- Cost of training is high and no flexible payment scheme;
- Training institutions are mostly located in urban centers;
- Poor quality of practical training vrs apprent.

Non Formal Skills Training (apprenticeship)

strengths

weaknesses



Utilization of skills and transition to work

- Skills for males are more diverse than females
- Apprentices who do not utilize their skills – lack of resources, level of earning, etc
- Employment after training
 - Most apprentices who acquire skills employ themselves in rural communities (flexible and adaptable)
 - Formal training has limited work experience
 - Lack of bursaries for the poor

Factors that effect utilization of skills and transition to work

- Low level of patronage and non willingness of people to pay for services.
- Access to certain facilities as such land for location of shop need the assistance of males.
- Access to capital is limited

Who ends up using skills training

- Youth who have not been able to achieve academically
- Those who stay in skills training have a genuine interest and aptitude in learning a skill;
- Those who do not have an interest in skills are unlikely to use skills after completion of training (despite parental interest or support).

Contrasts in Earnings among markets

- Earning from skills acquisition is seasonal and very limited particularly in rural areas;
- Successful artisans- high quality of skills, hard work, experience, level of investment;
- Secondary/part time businesses to support earnings;
- Many rural people see skills utilization as a part-time job.

Contrasts among markets outcomes

- Benefit of acquiring skills transcends economic remuneration (respect, confidence, family services, hope/vision for future)
- It is more expensive to start using skills (self-employment) in the urban than the rural areas (land, equipment, shop)
- Start requirements and costs differ from skill to skill
- Certificate to peruse higher education

Education and its impact on skills

- Low educational attainment in north compare to south
- Difficult to train those with very limited or no education;
- Some trades require the trainee to be able to read and write – computer repairs, hairdressing, etc.
- Education helps to facilitate skills acquisition and produces a more competent trades person (safety risks, contrast products, better business sense).

Education and its impact on skills Cont'd

- The success of an artisan in self-employment depend mostly on the quality of skills and not necessarily the level of education.
- Formal education makes artisans better able to manage their business, attract more customers, etc
- Having certificates in addition to skills can help secure formal employment and contracts (GES, NGO's).

Enabling and disabling environment

Enabling environment

- Access to training: free training (NGOs & relatives), flexible payment systems, stipends, (apprent.), etc.
- No or flexible entry requirement and timing (apprenticeship & NGOs).
- Some (formal) job opportunities for those who are able to complete and pass NVTI.
- Support from parents, husbands and boyfriends

Disabling environment

- **Poverty is a barrier to skills acquisition and utilization**
 - Fees, transportation to training centers, food, materials for training, accommodation, etc
 - Lack of capital to start work after completing training;
 - Low patronage of the services due low income levels
- **Low level of education**
 - Cannot meet entry requirements (formal)
 - Cannot pass NVTI exams –therefore no certificate

Disabling environment cont'd

- **Limited employment opportunities**
 - Limited industries to absorb trainees (the structure of the economy)
 - Low return from skills due to low patronage, non payment for services, poverty, etc
 - Lack of capital to start on their own, buy raw materials, new equipment, etc

Disabling environment cont'd

- Inadequate and poorly resourced training centers (and Masters in Rural areas)
- Perception of skills -Talented students shun skills
- Inadequate support by District to training institutions
- “Quick money” – earning money from sand wining rather than skills

Conclusions

- Little change has been experienced in skills training environment (formal and informal)...type of skill, mode of acquisition, access to credit, the business environment, transition to work.
- The first option for school drop outs or JSS graduates who fail to attain SSS (due to poor results, inability to pay)... informal skills training (apprenticeship)

Quality of Skills Training: Formal vs Informal

- (Majority) Perceived poor quality of skills training by the formal vocational and technical institutions compared to apprenticeship training
- Heads of formal training institutions, DEO's, and artisans trained in the formal system lamented about the poorly resourced training institutes
- Apprenticeship training was viewed as the most effective method of acquiring quality (practical) skills due to hands on experiential training

Quality of Skills training: Formal vs Informal

- Many artisans interviewed opted for apprenticeship instead of formal training because of poor resourcing, high costs/fees, high opportunity costs in the formal training system (food, transport and stipends) and the possibility of securing some tools and savings during the training in apprenticeship, etc
- Success in becoming an artisan or master depended on the level of quality of the skill (“good skills”)
- The quality of formal education has a direct bearing on the quality of skills acquired; imagination, creativity, confidence, initiative and entrepreneurship...

Skills and the Poor

- The very poor are excluded from skills acquisition even in the informal sector (tools, fees, food, opportunity cost, etc)
- It take longer time for the poor to complete skills training (drop in& out, work to pay master, etc)
- The poor (youth) have difficulty negotiate the transition to working life (lack of economic and social capital)

Unemployed Youth in Ghana

- More relevant, marketable and progressive skills training should be offered in the formal training institutions in order to attract youth (limit competition with apprenticeship)
- Government should focus attention, resources and creating the essential “enabling environment’ (SME friendly banks, skills friendly banks and savings schemes are needed) to assist youth use their skills and create jobs.
- Programs which can assist apprentices set up small businesses and acquiring tools on credit are essential.

Education Sector Policy and Plans

- Focus on ensuring basic literacy attainment of primary school leavers;
- The apprenticeship sector is offering skills in certain areas of traditional training for the economy...MOESS main focus should be to incubate new types of skills training based on a demand driven approach from the formal industrial or formal SME sectors.
- The apprenticeship sector should be supported to deliver skills training in traditional skills areas and encourage them to explore new areas which are part of the informal economy; incentives for improving quality and effectiveness should be given to these SME's.



Thank You

