



New Qualifications and
Competencies in TVET

FOCI Skills Academy

Innovation and Learning Practice

Bridging Innovation and Learning in TVET (BILT) Project

Submitted by the Federation of Construction Industry, Nigeria

The Nigerian Federation of Construction Industry (FOCI) established the FOCI Skills Academy (FSA) in 2020 to provide hands-on training in construction skills to young people. FSA offers competency-based dual vocational and technical training to strengthen the construction industry, promote social equity, and empower youth.

FSA's objectives include training and certification of apprentices; upskilling of artisans and craftsmen; short-term training of construction industry staff; re-skilling of interested persons; and holiday training for university students.

Start date: 5 July 2021 (commencement of training)

Type of implementing institution: Not for profit/NGO

Funding programme: GIZ/Sequa SYKE

Target group: young people aged 18-35

Federation of Construction Industry (FOCI)



FOCI is a not-for-profit umbrella body for the construction sector and allied companies in Nigeria. It provides representation, advocacy and standards for its members. FOCI hosts the Construction and Civil Engineering Employers Association of Nigeria. Founded in 1954, FOCI have a membership of over eighty companies and is the mouthpiece of construction companies.

Description of activities

The FOCI Skills Academy (FSA) took the responsibility of reviewing occupational profiles for the Nigerian construction sector. It develops training curricula and agrees appropriate assessment methods for both apprenticeships and for training of trainers. In these tasks, there is a focus to ensure courses and curricula are driven by the needs expressed by the construction companies. Of particular focus of FSA is:

- Promoting in-company apprenticeships
- Focusing on skills in demand: masonry, carpentry, plumbing and electrical installation

FSA also organizes skills competitions and advocates for training young people in construction occupations.

Relevance

What challenge or issue was FSA designed to fix?

FSA was established to address a shortage of skilled labour across occupations in the construction sector. There was an aligned interest between the labour market stakeholders and the government to cooperate in skills development. Employers often feel that skills obtained through training do not match their needs especially due to a lack of practical skills. At the same time, many young people (including graduates, unskilled young people and women) do not find jobs. FOCI provide a place for labour market partners in the construction sector to discuss and express their skills needs in quantitative and qualitative terms.

What strategies has FSA employed to overcome these challenges and improve the quality and relevance of its training programmes?

The FSA programme is based on **strong partnerships**. There are three dimensions to this. The first is an agreement between FOCI and the Deutsche Gesellschaft

für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH to support the **training of trainers** in the sector and to fund training materials. The second is FOCI's **engagement with local industry** partners and FOCI Member Companies to provide on-site training places, workshops and donated equipment as well as mentorship for learners. Thirdly, FOCI also **engages with Nigerian government agencies** and associations such as the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), Sector Skills Council on Construction, Council of Registered Builders of Nigeria (CORBON), Nigeria Institute of Building (NIOB) to develop National Occupational Standards (NOS) in construction-related occupations and Occupational Profiles (OPs). FSA trainers participate in the review of NOS and OPs, and use these to develop training curricula, assessment techniques, training materials and occupational profiles for their masonry, carpentry, and plumbing programmes.

FSA also advocates for skills development in the sector and has held workshops for key stakeholders – for example, hosting visits with ministers, government officials and ministry staff; holding meetings with Human Resource managers of FOCI member companies; and running workshops for trade observers (e.g. project managers and foremen of FOCI member companies). Efforts have also been made to publicise FSA at every event where FOCI is represented and on social media platforms, radio, television, and in print media.

Added value

How does FSA's approach to training differ from previous practices or similar initiatives in Nigeria?

FOCI recognized the need for a paradigm shift in the approach to TVET delivery in Nigeria. This shift requires a recognition that **employers are key stakeholders** in training delivery: curricula must be tailored to deliver the practical skills employers seek. Learning outcomes should be measured according to assessed competence (knowledge, skills and attitudes) rather than knowledge alone. Employers must be involved to define these learning standards and competencies and to support the equipment needs of TVET schools and the training of staff to ensure training provision is relevant. This model is more suited to enterprise needs and thereby to the learner who is more prepared for the workplace. This renewed focus on (i) **practical training** with a workplace component, (ii) **relevant curricula** with enterprise involvement in their definition, and (iii) **competence-based assessment** ensures a better match between labour market skills needs and skills provision, which makes TVET a more attractive pathway for young people since they have a better chance of finding a job.

What achievements demonstrate the impact that FSA's programmes have had on its learners?

Evidence of programme benefits include:

- All masonry trainees (2021-2022) gained employment and are in high demand.

- FSA's training programme has become more attractive with increasing applications, including the Nigerian government purchasing training places for young people.
- More women are applying to participate.

What is the broader impact of your initiative on aspects such as employment, social development, or environmental protection?

The broader impacts of FSA include a better matching of skills supply with skills demand and the associated benefits of more young programme graduates finding a job. This, in turn, makes the programme more attractive, including for women. As a result, there is increasing interest to invest in this sector-based model and to consider expanding the model into other sectors. The trainees take courses in contract arbitration and entrepreneurship which enables self-employment. There is high acceptability of female artisans in communities which discourage male artisans from working in family homes. Artisans are trained on use of materials to minimize waste and recycling materials for their use.

Transferability

To what extent is the FSA model transferrable and adaptable to other contexts?

The FSA model is easy to adapt, since its approach is well documented. It is also a model which exists in other countries. Specifically, within Nigeria, it is hoped to expand the model into other sectors based on what has been achieved locally for the construction sector. It is a model which requires the commitment of government, private sector enterprises and TVET providers. In Nigeria, it has been supported by international donors.

What challenges could arise if FSA was replicated in another setting, and how could these challenges be overcome?

FSA's programmes depend on access to sponsorship/funding, since the target group does not have the financial means to enrol, as they are mostly unemployed young people. Furthermore, TVET programmes are expensive because of their reliance on hands-on practical training. The challenge of funding can be overcome through partnerships with industry and international organizations, but the sustainability of the funding model must be discussed in such a partnership.

What resources has FSA developed that could be made available to other TVET stakeholders?

For the Nigerian context, the model of sector-based cooperation in skills development should be considered for expansion. Specifically in the construction sector, FSA has its own competency-based training curricula and teaching methods which could be transferred into other contexts, including **Plumbing and Pipefitting curriculum, Construction Carpentry curriculum, Masonry curriculum**, and **Masonry training materials**.

FOCI Skills Academy is one of the BILT project's Innovation and Learning Practices that address systemic challenges within the five work streams of the project.

Specifically, the FOCI Skills Academy initiative addresses new qualifications and competencies in TVET:



New Qualifications and Competencies in TVET

- *Identifying new qualifications and competencies in a timely manner;*
- *Integrating them into appealing and flexible curricula and training regulations; and*
- *Implementing them in innovative training approaches*

Additional Innovation and Learning Practices cover the following areas:



Digitalization in TVET



Entrepreneurship in TVET



Greening TVET



Migration and TVET

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Cover photo: FOCI Skills Academy, Nigeria

About the BILT Project

UNESCO-UNEVOC's Bridging Innovation and Learning in TVET (BILT) project is a reference point for innovation and learning in TVET. It utilizes the international UNEVOC Network to create opportunities for collaboration and a platform for bridging innovation and learning between Europe, Africa and the AsiaPacific region. BILT complements developments at the national level in supporting innovative, marketoriented and attractive modes of learning and cooperation in TVET.

The BILT project explores the process of identifying, integrating and implementing new qualifications and competencies in TVET. This is known as the 'three I's process'. In addition to the broad focus on new qualifications and competencies, BILT addresses four complementary themes: Digitalization and TVET, Greening TVET, Entrepreneurship in TVET, and Migration and TVET.

For more information, please visit
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New Qualifications and Competencies in TVET

- **Identification** new qualifications and competencies in a timely manner;
- **Integrating** them into appealing and flexible curricula and training regulations; and
- **Implementing** them in innovative training approaches

Entrepreneurship in TVET

Unlocking the entrepreneurial potential of learners through innovative activities and nurturing entrepreneurial culture

Greening TVET

Fostering the culture of sustainable practices in TVET and facilitating the transition to green economies and societies

Digitalization in TVET

Providing a response to new skills demands, as technology has permeated the world of work and is changing the profile of jobs

Migration and TVET

Accelerating the integration of migrants into their host communities, and allowing them to become productive members of the workforce

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