

INTERVENTION BRIEF | SKILLS SYSTEM

SUSTAINABLE TVET GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME (STGEP)

THE PROBLEM

Studies have shown that employers in Addis Ababa experience difficulties finding TVET graduates with the soft skills they require in addition to technical skills. This includes skills in teamwork, problem solving, communication, time management, and work ethic and commitment.



TVETs are often unable to meet employer needs because the TVET system emphasises technical skills and there is a lack of competencies to develop and deliver soft skills training.

OUR INTERVENTION

In order to address these constraints, LIWAY partnered with Kepler Ethiopia and two TVETs, Addis Ababa Tegbareid Polytechnic College and Nefas Silk Polytechnic College, to develop and implement the Sustainable TVET Graduate Employment Programme (STGEP) intervention. The intervention aims to ensure soft skills training is integrated in the TVET curriculum and employability of graduates is increased. It involves the customisation of training materials and training of trainers (ToT), as well as development of an employer network and internship/job placement of TVET graduates.

The intervention is based on the Kepler programme and job readiness curriculum in Rwanda, which has a proven track record of success with students from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds and academic levels. The competency-based curriculum allows trainees to demonstrate mastery of learning objectives (competencies) and capacitates TVET trainers to support trainees towards competence mastery. Kepler refined the curriculum based on labour market needs and understanding of the target population in Ethiopia. Kepler also provides the ToT for TVET trainers and engages with employers, both for contextualisation of the curriculum and facilitation of internships/job placements for graduates.

Additional support in developing partnerships with employers is provided by the Ministry of Labour and Skills and the American Chamber of Commerce.

LIWAY co-created the business model, facilitated partner engagement, provided technical assistance (e.g., capacity building, problem solving, experience sharing), and shared costs (e.g., for curriculum customisation, ToT training, learning workshops) to pilot the model.

The intervention aimed to benefit 780 TVET graduates in the pilot phase.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

- 7 TVET trainers were trained for the initial pilot and are fully engaged in delivering the training to target groups.
- 45 TVET trainers have now been trained in trainee engagement teaching strategies, competence-based curriculum, and using a learning management system to facilitate teaching and learning.
- 835 students (46% women) received soft skills training, of which 616 graduates secured employment (44% female).
- Feedback from employers highlights that GEP graduates demonstrate more soft skills than their peers such as communication, time management, ability to learn new skills, teamwork, and using feedback for improvement.
- There are indications of business model sustainability and scale:
 - Kepler has expanded the business model to three additional colleges (Kirkos Manufacturing, Lideta Manufacturing, Gofa Industrial College) and has planned further expansion to include five youth centres and three higher institutions.
 - Addis Ababa Tegbareid Polytechnic College and Nefas Silk Polytechnic College are establishing soft skills training centres without LIWAY’s support.
 - Kepler, in coordination with Addis Ababa Tegbareid Polytechnic College, Nefas Silk Polytechnic College, and Gofa Industrial College delivered training to an additional 526 target group members without ongoing support from LIWAY.



KEY LEARNINGS TO DATE

- **Need for and value of soft skills:** Employers are demanding graduates with soft skills, and both employers and graduates recognise that soft skills impact performance at work.
- **Teaching methods:** The ‘learning by doing’ model is the foundation for success. This includes classroom engagement, practical assessments, feedback exchange, and ensuring trainees practice the skills in class, referring to what they would face at work.
- **Guest speaker sessions:** Feedback from employers highlighted the need for graduates to have a better understanding about the realities of the labour market. This helps them have the right expectations and better prepare for career success. Kepler committed to have at least two employer guest speaker sessions, whereby employers visit trainees at their training sites to discuss the realities of the job market and to share tips for career success.
- **Instruction language:** Trainees prefer to receive the training in Amharic as opposed to English.
- **Employer engagement:** It is key for curriculum suitability and programme success to engage employers by regularly communicating with them and collecting feedback on the performance of employed graduates. This also helps in building relations with employers, which increases employment opportunities for graduates.

The Livelihoods Improvement for Women and Youth (LIWAY) programme aims to increase incomes of poor women and youth in Addis Ababa through improved wage and self-employment opportunities. We work in four interrelated market systems to create sustainable change: labour, micro and small enterprise (MSE), medium and large enterprise (MLE), and skills. LIWAY is funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (EKN). The programme is implemented by a consortium of partners composed of SNV Netherlands Development Organisation, Mercy Corps, TechnoServe, and Save the Children International.

For more information, visit: www.liway.org