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
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.
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:

- 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

### New Qualifications and Competencies in TVET

- Plumbing and Pipefitting curriculum
- Construction Carpentry curriculum
- Masonry curriculum
- Masonry training materials

### Contact person:

Ms Egena Victoria, Training Centre Manager, FOCI  
victoria.egena@skillsacademy.foci.org.ng  
fociskillsacademy@gmail.com

For more information about this practice:

FOCI website: https://foci.org.ng
The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNESCO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

The ideas and opinions expressed in this document are those of the authors; they are not necessarily those of UNESCO and do not commit the Organization.

© UNESCO, 2023

This document is available in Open Access under the Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 IGO (CC-BY-SA 3.0 IGO) license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/igo/).

By using the content of this publication, the users accept to be bound by the terms of use of the UNESCO Open Access Repository (https://en.unesco.org/open-access/terms-use-ccby-sa-en).

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 Asia-Pacific region. BILT complements developments at the national level in supporting innovative, market-oriented 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 www.unevoc.unesco.org/bilt
or contact us at unevoc.bilt@unesco.org

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

IMPLEMENTED BY

WITH SUPPORT OF

SPONSORED BY THE