



Internship Placement in the Agri-Food Sector

Knowledge Product



Internship Placement is a crucial step for youth looking to enter various career fields. However, there are many actors needed to properly set-up an internship, and ensure it is beneficial for the company as well as the trainee. This paper will illustrate the steps necessary for creating and implementing an internship, along with country examples of how internship placement was carried out.

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Introduction



The context of this Knowledge Product

This How-to-Guide is part of a series of knowledge products of the Global Project Employment in Rural Areas with Focus on Youth by GIZ. It is the result of the collaboration between the project's four country teams and draws from their experiences and lessons learnt.

The GIZ Global Project Employment in Rural Areas with Focus on Youth supports income generation and employment creation for youth and women in Burkina Faso, Kenya, Malawi and Mozambique. One of the interventions of the project is to strengthen the supply side of the labour market by offering quality technical skills development in the agri-food sector in cooperation with public and private training institutions. Training materials and curricula have been revised and newly developed – in cooperation with multiple stakeholders, including the private sector to make the trainings as needs-oriented and practical as possible. Making the trainings as needs-oriented as possible includes the incorporation of an internship for exposure to the work environment in a company and gain practical experience.

This How-to-Guide is designed to help preparing internship placements by engaging and cooperating with private enterprises. The purpose of developing and publishing this How-to-Guide is to make relevant knowledge and good practices available for up-scaling and replication of efforts to offer internship placements as a crucial part of capacity and skills development of youth in the agri-food sector. It is designed to help to incorporate and engage with private enterprises to create quality internship programmes. The steps described are directed at

achieving a more efficient integration of enterprises in the provision of internships. It is intended for use by key players involved in organising internship placements in agricultural and agri-food businesses.

After three years of programme implementation, it was time to analyse 'Lessons Learnt' and to identify 'Good Practices' to share with partners and other projects working in similar fields.

This guide serves as a document for **preparing, organising, supporting and assessing internship placements**. It provides information on:

1. General considerations, important elements, actors and how to engage and formalize collaboration with the private sector for internship placement.
2. Key steps for setting up internship placement.
3. Practical experience from implementation in three countries.
4. Lessons learnt and recommendations.



This document focuses on internship placement, within the private sector for youth and women who take or took trainings and short-term courses at Agricultural Training Centres (ATC) and begins by highlighting that aspect. Following, there is an interactive step-by-step guide that can be clicked on to go more in depth on the various steps of preparing an internship. There are also country specific examples of how internship placements were conducted in four partner countries. This document concludes with presenting lessons learnt and recommendations.

The How-to-Guide is divided into four main parts:

- (1) The first part presents the importance of including the private sector throughout the development of an internship programme. This includes identifying the important actors necessary in the development process.
- (2) The second and largest part of the document focuses on outlining the specific steps needed to be taken to create a successful internship placement with Agricultural Training Centres (ATC).
- (3) The last section focuses on country examples of how internship placements were conducted in four country packages, and how the steps were adapted to fit their contextual needs.
- (4) This is followed by lessons learnt and recommendations collected from the various experiences in each country.

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An internship constitutes an important part of vocational training and complements the student's practical training in an ATC. An internship with a private enterprise provides students a professional learning and mentoring experience where they gain skills and new knowledge. Further it consolidates and adds to the knowledge acquired during theoretical training.

The practical knowledge obtained during an internship is of great benefit not only for future wage-employment, but also for self-employment. This is especially important in the agri-food sector where self-employment as smallholder farmer is very common.

Internship placements enable students to prove themselves in a practical environment and improve their interpersonal relations to work as part of a team and to respect standards applying to their field of activity.

Within the ecosystem, the private sector can offer their premises for practical and hands-on training. In situations where ATC do not have this infrastructure, the private sector becomes an ideal partner to provide facilities and training.

Besides the facilities, technical experts within the workplace support training of the students. The private sector as partner ATC trainings and host for internships is crucial since companies have in-depth understanding of market trends, growth patterns, and what skills the labour market requires. To keep interns motivated and learning, they need clear and defined roles, being closely linked to their own and the enterprises' objectives and expectations where they are interning. With the experience gained, students are also better prepared for the possibility of starting their own businesses or improve their employability in the labour market.

Therefore, an internship placement should be an integral part of skills training. In the context of Agricultural Technical and Vocational Education Training (ATVET), the placement follows the technical training received by the student. The length of internship placements can vary according to the specifics of the respective training programme and needs in various sectors.

Young people who have benefited from work placements describe some of the advantages:

“The work placement enabled me to familiarize myself with the work equipment and gain practical experience.

“With the internship, I got a better understanding of the technical roots of production or processing and how to better sell products.

“The work experience has enabled me to better know the environment of a future occupation and to build connections with other professionals.

2.1. General considerations for an internship placement

The internship placement of students requires a relationship in which the training institute and a private sector enterprise agree to a partnership to achieve mutually defined objectives, including the further development of skills, aptitudes and practical knowledge of the young students. The partnership should be formalized and clarify the terms and conditions of the internship programme.



Some considerations should be observed when planning an internship programme:

- Identifying and setting up partnership agreements with potential agricultural and agrifood enterprises for an internship placement: It is important to choose companies whose activities are in line with the student's learning needs. Enterprises that have the required equipment and qualified staff are ideal partners.
- Defining objectives of an internship programme: Setting up the objectives of the internship placement regarding the training courses and the respective learning objectives.
- Defining the duration of the internship.
- Appointing a focal point for internships at the ATC to ensure the organization and follow-up of student's internship. The ATC should designate a person within the centre who will be responsible for the internship.
- Students' availability and commitment: it is also important to ensure the success of the internship and avoid dropouts.

2.2. Who needs to be involved and how to engage with private enterprises?

All internships present common features regardless of the type of internship, at least three parties (students themselves, training operator and host company) are involved.

The complete cooperation landscape may include the following actors:

- **Training operators (ATC, public and private)**
- **Private sector companies hosting students**
- **The students themselves**
- **A facilitating party (development project, professional organisations, youth networks, etc.) supporting the placement programme**

The main actors involved in internship placements for students at the ATC and the private sector host company are the internship coordinator at the training center and a tutor or work placement supervisor at the host company. Each actor as well as the students have certain roles and responsibilities that can vary according to the phases in the internship programme process. All actors must establish a solid relationship with a clear joint understanding of the internship programme.



What are the benefits of an internship with a private enterprise?



Main actors with main responsibilities

Facilitating party / Project

The facilitating party, often a development cooperation project, is initially involved in developing trainings, the training of trainers and enterprise tutors/mentors. During implementation, the project is involved in the internship follow-up and monitoring of the internship quality.

The facilitating party/project:

- Supports the ATC in preparing the content of the partnership agreement to be signed between the ATC and the company.
- Trains company tutors and ATC trainers in their agreed roles and responsibilities, and in the content of the internships.

- Assists the ATC and company tutors in the preparation, implementation/technical management and follow-up of placements.

Student / Intern

Students, trainees and interns are considered the target group for internship placement. Throughout the training, placement, and internship these students should maintain careful and full attention by showing commitment at the internship and workplace.

This can be achieved through various ways:

- Careful attention to instructions and following safety requirements.
- Raising questions and being an active participant looking to expand their knowledge.

- Being proactive in taking up various tasks and careful collaboration with their tutor in the host company.

ATC

The training centres are where the future interns are enrolled as student. Therefore, they are crucial in imparting skills and knowledge on the students that are relevant for them to join the work force.

Internship supervisor: Facilitator from the students' ATC who supports them in defining their professional goals and in acquiring the necessary skills accordingly. These should be specific professionals,

instructors or other experts in the field the internship is carried out, who can therefore impart practical knowledge for the students to harness the internship to the best of their ability.

Host Company

The host company oversees providing a suitable internship for a student to join. This means giving the opportunity for quality work experiences and being patient in imparting knowledge on the students. The company should clearly outline their expectations beforehand and is actively involved in planning an

internship programme. This can be done through a designated tutor at the company.

The **tutor** is the person who is mainly responsible for organising the student's activity within the host company. The tutor organises, monitors, and finally

evaluates the student/internship programme. The relationship between the intern and the tutor is a close one, where both the tutor and intern are comfortable sharing both the positive and negative experiences during the internship.

Setting up internship placement step-by-step

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This chapter describes the general steps for an internship placement. There are four main phases to the internship placement process that will be described in the following chapter.

Phase 1 Planning and engaging with enterprises

Phase 2 Formalizing the collaboration

Phase 3 During the internship placement

Phase 4 Consolidation after internship placement



Step by step

1

Phase 1
Planning and engaging with enterprises

1. Planning and setting objectives
2. Prospecting and assessing potential host enterprises
3. Reaching out to potential host enterprises

2

Phase 2
Formalizing the collaboration

1. Drawing up Partnership agreement / Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)
2. Drawing up internship contract

3

Phase 3
During the internship placement

1. Preparing & accompanying the placement
2. Monitoring progress

4

Phase 4
Consolidation after internship placement

1. Evaluation of internship programme

Each phase consists of several steps that involve various actors. The four phases and their steps will be described in the next chapter, always followed by an overview of respective roles and responsibilities.

Phase 1 Planning and engaging with enterprises

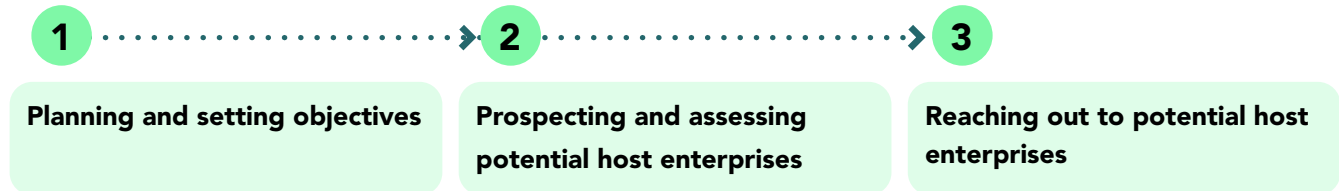
In this first phase of preparing for an internship programme with the private sector a concept and objectives for the internship placement need to be developed and potential private enterprises identified, screened and approached. Steps in the initial phase include:

1. Planning and setting objectives

The internship placement is an integral part of skills training. In the context of ATVET, the placement follows the technical training received by the student. As a first step the objectives of a planned internship programme need to be established. This is a process that usually requires a close collaboration between an ATC and a facilitating party.

Considerations for setting the framework for the internship objective include:

- For what training programme(s) is the internship programme planned and in which value chain(s)?
- What are the (practical) learning needs in the associated training programme that should be covered by the internship?
- What duration of the internship is necessary and feasible?
- What is the students' profile, e.g. graduates aim for employment, to become entrepreneurs, etc.?



1 Planning and setting objectives

Usually, there are three types of internships: a short discovery or orientation internship for an occupation, an internship to complement theoretical training, and an advanced internship to learn about technical developments within an occupation.

Especially when planning for the duration of an internship programme it should be considered that this can vary significantly according to the specifics of the programme and value chain or product. For example, placements in the chicken production programme in Burkina Faso last between 45 and 60 days, depending on each farm's production cycle. For orchard maintenance, the internship phase lasts a total of at least four weeks and for the tropical fruits processing programme 30 days.

2. Prospecting and assessing potential host enterprises

Once the objectives for the planned internship programme are clear, it is time to identify private sector host companies that can potentially provide the practical learning experience in line with the relevant learning objectives. There are several criteria that might guide the search for suitable companies, e.g. the engagement in selected value chains, company size, location, etc.

2 Prospecting and assessing potential host enterprises

After a company profile has been defined there are several ways to identify potential companies. This includes contacting business associations, consulting government business records, ATCs and other partner networks, alumni networks, and potentially any other information already gathered through a baseline study or value chain analysis.

All potential companies identified should be screened for suitability as collaboration partners including the company's capacity to take on students for an internship. The decision should then also be based on the determined learning needs and students' profile.

During this analysis, the following points should be considered:

- The relevance of the company's activities to the young people's learning needs (field of activity, position in the value chain, etc.).
- The capacity for receiving interns, which might include the number of employees and availability of (qualified) staff capable of training and supervising the intern during the internship.
- The availability of equipment in line with the learning needs.
- Employment standards, adherence to workplace safety standards and requirements.

Phase 1 Planning and engaging with enterprises

3. Reaching out to potential host enterprises

After a shortlist of potential enterprises has been established, it is time to contact these companies to crosscheck that set criteria are fulfilled and to explore if the company is interested in a collaboration.

When reaching out to initiate a dialogue with the private sector, it is important to speak its language. Technical terms and acronyms that the private sector may not be familiar with should be avoided. This helps that the private sector is more likely to understand the objective of the intended cooperation and becomes interested when discussing respective expectations, roles, necessary resources, incentives, etc.

It is important to prepare convincing reasons on the benefits for the private sector company. Any concerns that a company may have should be taken seriously and be actively addressed, especially since there appears to be a gap of awareness and understanding between public and private sector institutions.

This can have several reasons:

- Lack of awareness of the role the private sector can play in ATVET curriculum development and delivery.
- Mistrust between public and private sector and the perception that public sector bureaucratic processes are cumbersome, lengthy and not attractive to the private sector.
- Lack of clearly documented incentives for the private sector to engage in ATVET and with ATCs.

Often, even with a limited number of generally suitable companies, it is possible to mobilise enterprises, as some of them are members of professional organisations. Therefore, holding preliminary meetings with training centres and companies likely to take on interns is key. During these meetings, the merits of the placements should already be explained.

Convincing reasons include:

- Many companies have difficulties in finding suitable employees. Offering internships and working with interns can help to ease hiring interns who have already received training.
- Offering internships can help with the promotion for a company by making it more widely known and boosting its reputation.
- Partnerships with ATCs, public institutions and other ecosystem actors can help positioning and growing the company.
- Companies can benefit from the knowledge and ideas (new techniques or innovations) that an intern introduces and can be taken up by the enterprise.

After having identified a suitable company, a technical workshop should be organised, bringing together representatives from the ATC and the host company. During this workshop, the previously defined internship framework, objectives, criteria and preconditions are presented and discussed. Likely some information for the company assessment (step 2) was not readily available and needs to be jointly elaborated. During the workshop, the formal requirements (i.e. the need for a partnership agreement between the training centre and the host company) are presented and discussed. The identified host companies are also asked to contribute to the further refinement of the internship programme itself by stating the needs of the companies. After the workshop, the company and the ATC then prepare a detailed internship and training implementation plan.

Phase 2 Formalising the collaboration

After a first consensus for a collaboration is reached, it is time to discuss details of the internship programme. The second phase is therefore about formalizing the collaboration by drawing up and signing of a partnership agreement between the ATC and the identified enterprise as well as an internship contract. Therefore, steps in this phase included:

1. Drawing up a Partnership Agreement / MoU

To ensure the success of the internship, it is essential to formalize the collaboration by concluding a partnership agreement or Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). It is important that all parties know what is expected as their contribution as well as what they can expect in return and have the same understanding of the terms in the collaboration.

The partnership agreement is therefore a core product that states all important aspects of the partnership between the company and an ATC. The document provides clarity and security to all parties involved. The agreement defines the terms and conditions of the partnership between the training centre and the host company in terms of the organisation, learning content and objectives, technical monitoring, and assessment of the internship placement.

1

Drawing up partnership agreement / MoU

The partnership agreement between the ATC and the host company should therefore include:

- A brief presentation of the training centre and the host company.
- General provisions:
 - The purpose and objective of the agreement.
 - Roles and responsibilities defining obligations of the training centre and the company.
 - Duration of the placement and learning objectives.
 - Number of students that will be placed in the company.
 - Measures to ensure the wellbeing of students (workplace safety, sexual harassment, etc.)
 - Financial and material contributions.
 - Liability arrangements, e.g. in case of damages incurred by interns.
 - Dispute resolution and termination of the agreement.

2. Drawing up an Internship Contract

The internship contract defines the specifics of the individual placement. It is concluded between the student and the host company with the goal to engage the student in a formal framework and relationship with the company.

2

Drawing up internship contract

The internship contract should include:

- General goals of the internship placement.
- Specific skills development goals to be acquired through the internship.
- Strategies and means available to meet the goals.
- Schedule and practical arrangements for the internship.
- Evaluation criteria to measure learning and student improvements.
- Concrete provisions of the host enterprise for the student (remuneration, accommodation, food, etc.)
- Duties and responsibilities of the student.

The internship contract should also address relevant regulations for ensuring the safety and well-being of the intern. It should consider that the internships might be away from the student's home requiring transport or accommodation. Power imbalance between student and superior should be considered as well, in particular young women might be at risk of (sexual) harassment.

Further documents are recommended during the placement and are described later under Phase 3: during the internship placement.

Phase 3 During the internship placement

During the internship placement, it is important to ensure a smooth implementation as well as to monitor the progress of the placement in relation to the agreed learning objectives. This phase can be broken down in the following steps:

1. Preparing and accompanying the placement

Internship placements require the availability of mentors/tutors capable of teaching, guiding and supervising students at the host company and the ATC.

To draw up the internship agreement described before and facilitate quality and productive conversations, it is first important to ensure the student is well informed and motivated. Through the experience, the intern should remain open about any possible expectations or difficulties that need to be addressed, while being clear of the company's expectations. This can be done for instance through the company handing out information material on the provided equipment and providing information on its proper use.

The company provides necessary machinery and equipment and fully integrates the intern in the company during the specific time outlined by the internship agreement. This inclusion can be in activities throughout the time and giving practical instruction to aid the intern throughout (this information is often disseminated by the interns' tutor). The company can ensure a beneficial internship for themselves and the intern through careful preparation beforehand, clear communication of tasks and activities.

1

Preparing & accompanying the placement

The activities in this step consist of:

- Draw up a work placement project/plan for the intern and/or supporting the learners to do this.
- Hold discussion meetings between the training centre and the host interns (between the internship supervisor of the ATC and the mentor/company tutor appointed).
- Address expectations of both the company, and the interns, to ensure a clear picture is established of how the internship placement will occur.
- Develop ideas to facilitate an active internship for both the intern and the company.
- Agree on an evaluation of the intern and company at the end of the internship.

All actors involved in the internship programme have responsibilities to make sure that expectations and objectives are achieved. The main aim should be to support students in their internship by discussing the progress of the placement with the intern on a regular basis and reminding them of the learning objectives set out in the placement agreement. Regular discussions should be held between the company tutor and the ATC on the progress of the learning objectives and the intern's progress. Any difficulties or conflicts during the placement should be addressed immediately.

2

Monitoring progress

In the company, the tutor has the most critical role maintaining relationships with both the intern as well as the ATC to create a beneficial internship. The tutor oversees sharing information on the company and giving tasks to the intern. They then can be the bridge from the intern's daily tasks, to understanding the importance of these tasks in the overall picture. The connection to the company, and the importance of proper workplace etiquette and responsibility in properly completing the various tasks, can help the intern receive a more realistic overview of what it is like to work in a company. This goes further as they continue to monitor the intern throughout the internship, identifying strengths and weaknesses where encouragement and support remains necessary. This can be achieved through constructive feedback when an intern fails, praise when they correctly achieve their tasks and even adjusting them when needed.

Phase 3 During the internship placement

The training centre and internship supervisor must oversee the exchange between the company and the intern to ensure a quality internship is held for all parties. This is critical from the beginning, as the training centre facilitates what internships with which companies are available – all while preparing the students with the soft skills necessary to work in the respective companies.

The **facilitating party/project** can assist to facilitate the exchange to ensure the internship is going as planned in the agreement. It can also serve as a safeguard to identify which companies are the best fit for interns in accordance with the training objective and students' aspirations. Further (though not always needed) the project may also offer a lump sum to companies who take on interns, to offset costs, as well as offering funds for mentors.

2. Monitoring progress of the internship

Accompanying the intern and monitoring of the learning progress and evaluation are important to ensure that the acquisition of technical skills is effective and carried out according to the agreed framework. It enables the partnership actors involved (company tutor, training centre instructor and intern) to ensure that the student acquires the identified learning objectives.

Consequently, a monitoring mechanism needs to be developed to ensure that placements run smoothly, through compliance with the timetable of activities during the placement, supervision of the intern and the use of intern monitoring tools.

The intern must be monitored for attendance, diligence and compliance with the placement programme as well as the learning progress. The assessment is carried out jointly by a supervisory team (usually the tutors of the company and at the ATC) and the student him/herself. It is designed to provide information on the student's strengths and weaknesses, and the conditions under which the internship placement took place within the enterprise. The student's observation and assessment relate to what the student has learnt, the highlights and the difficulties encountered. The tutor needs to check that the intern is carrying out the tasks properly and gives him/her advice. The tutor assesses the intern's behaviour and motivation, including the intern's professional aptitude (efficiency, sense of organization, teamwork,

etc.) and professional conscience (punctuality, motivation, etc.). The results of the monitoring and intern assessment are used to issue a certificate of competence after the completion of the internship.

A student monitoring sheet and a training evaluation sheet may be used for tracking the progress of the placement.

The following aspects should be covered:

- Main activities carried out in relation to the placement schedule.
- Progress of the theoretical and practical knowledge acquired.
- Difficulties during the internship.
- General assessment of the placement.
- Suggestions for improvement.

Monitoring the internship progress enables the internship programme to be adjusted if necessary. The internship programme should be adjusted if the student has not been able to carry out the key operations of the placement for various reasons (intrinsic to the student him/herself or linked to the company). To remedy this, a revised placement programme can be drawn up to allow the student to resume the internship. If this is not possible at the current host company, an alternative company to place the student might be considered.

Phase 4 Consolidation after internship placement

In the last phase of Internship placement, it is crucial to hold interviews and receive feedback from both the company and the trainees. The results from these evaluations can help improve internship experiences for future trainees.

1. Evaluation of internship programme

After the internship programme, an evaluation of the cooperation takes place, reviewing whether all objectives and the criteria set for the implementation were met by all actors. It is important to identify the lessons learnt and success factors to adjust for the improvement of any future internship programmes.

Towards the end of the internship programme, the intern is required to write an internship report that describes all activities and tasks accomplished, difficulties and challenges encountered as well as coping strategies.

1

Evaluation of internship programme

The company tutor and the internship supervisor from the ATC should also hold an exit interview with the intern to give direct feedback and discuss inputs on how future internships can be improved. The results of this interview should be incorporated into the evaluation.

It is recommended to organize a stakeholder dialogue in which the cooperation parties share their experiences. An open and transparent communication and feedback is crucial.

The aim of the dialogue is to:

- Provide an overall evaluation of the internship programme cooperation.
- Suggest aspects of improvements to the internship programme.
- Explore extending the cooperation into other fields / with other suitable companies.
- Add inputs for issues that should be set out and added in the cooperation agreement / MoU.

The results of the evaluation and stakeholder dialogue should be captured in an evaluation report that is shared with all stakeholders.

In addition, it is important to keep a well-maintained database in which all relevant stakeholder contacts are saved. This includes the information on companies as well as the students which allows for tracer studies on the alumni who enter the job market after completion of their training.

Practical experience: Country highlights

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Country Example: Burkina Faso

In Burkina Faso, three technical training programmes have been implemented. For the implementation of the three programmes (i) chicken production, (ii) maintenance of mango and cashew orchards and (iii) processing of tropical fruits, internship placements were arranged.

Four main considerations guided the internship programme setup:

- 1 The fact that the internship placement was introduced as a compulsory and integral part of short-term vocational training courses in ATVET institutes.
- 2 The fact that an internship placement is required for last at least 75% of the ATVET's training course duration (internships are sometime also done before starting an ATVET training as a career orientation).
- 3 The need for companies in the agricultural sector to match skills of students acquired in training centers and their skilled labour requirements.
- 4 The need to develop a strong link between the ATVET institutions and the private sector.



In the preparation phase the training centres were required to actively mobilise potential host companies. During a technical workshop organised by the project, each partner ATVET institutions was therefore asked to identify host companies for internships. The ATVET institutions also played a strong part in defining the learning objectives of the internship programmes. Each ATVET institution submitted a plan to the project for implementing the training sessions, including the list of host companies. Each ATVET institution achieved to mobilise at least five host companies and identified a staff member to act as internship supervisor. In addition, each company was then asked to mobilise mentors/tutors for supervising the students.

Only then the collaboration was formalized by signing a partnership agreement between the ATVET institution and the host company. In addition to the students' individual internship contract, a monitoring mechanism has been developed jointly to ensure that the placements run smoothly, including detailed timetables of activities during the placement and other tools used to monitor the students.

Prior to the internship, meetings were organised between the training centres and the host companies. The project also provided training in the preparation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of internship placements for the training centre instructors as well as the mentors at the company. Since these monitoring tools are complex at times and to ensure the proper use, a training workshop for the mentors/tutors from the company and the ATVET institution trainers was organised. These workshops also provided an opportunity to discuss again the details of internship placement and to review the roles and responsibilities of all actors involved.

Depending on the specific nature of the programme, the length of the placements varied. The end of the student's placement period was marked by a formative assessment involving the trainers and placement tutors as well as representatives from the supporting GIZ project.

At the end of the course, the project put in place support mechanisms to enter employment at a company as well as for the support of self-employment linked to the training received. This included the participation of selected students in an entrepreneurship training and the linking with possible funding opportunities.



Country Example: Kenya

In Kenya, internship programmes are not common and are still under development. This has been occasioned by the fact that previously private sector players were not involved in the development or implementation of any training programme, and they are not aware of the training content at ATVET institutions. Therefore, they could not properly train students during the industrial attachment (as internships are officially referred to in Kenya). As a result, students undertaking an industrial attachment resulted in being allocated mostly simple routine tasks, which were not necessarily in line with their training and learning objectives at the ATVET institution and in most cases, students were not allowed to actively participate in productive activities.

With the recent reforms in the education sector, emphasis has been put on industrial (practical) training and more involvement of the private sector in curriculum development and industrial attachments. This has largely contributed to the improvement of industrial attachments – which are now being rebranded as industrial mentorship (IM).

Since the project in Kenya is cooperating with ATVET institutions in implementing short term trainings of between one to three months it was necessary for the project to develop a high quality customised industrial mentorship programme for students undertaking these courses. By attending IM in relevant industry enterprises/organisations, students are expected to gain a *real-world-of-work* experience through a collaborative arrangement amongst actors.

The project has therefore completed the following steps:

- 1 Developed an **industrial mentorship programme** that will guide future implementation of IM for the short-term course graduates.
- 2 Developed a **generic tripartite contract** to be adapted and to be signed between the ATVET institution, student and the industrial mentor at the beginning of the IM.
- 3 Developed **industrial mentorship tools** for each module/unit of learning in the eleven curricula implemented by the project. In total, 49 mentorship tools have been developed to guide industrial mentors on the day-to-day implementation of the industrial mentorship programme. The mentorship tools are derived from the curriculum, and they provide a guide on specific activities that are linked to the learning outcomes in the curriculum to be undertaken by the student during the internship.
- 4 Developed a **logbook** where students undertaking an internship record the activities undertaken each day to be reviewed against the internship schedule.
- 5 Trained Master Trainers on IM whereby twenty ATVET trainers and seven Industrial Liaison Officers were trained in preparation for a **training of the industrial/workplace mentors**.

- 6 Trained 59 industrial/workplace mentors to prepare them prior to **receiving graduates of the short-term courses** for the industrial mentorship. The training of the industrial/workplace mentors was done by the trained master trainers. The trained workplace mentors were identified in close collaboration between the project and ATVET institutions.

The project is now focusing on the placement of graduates of short-term courses for IM and monitoring of its implementation.



Country Example: Malawi

In Malawi, it has been understood by stakeholders involved in qualification and skills development that internships are essential in the process of skills development to ensure future employability of students. However, it was also realised that there is a lack of clear roles and responsibilities of stakeholders involved in internship placement. There were also several inconsistencies in the organisation of internship programmes across ATC and workplaces. Concretely, inconsistencies occurred regarding the internship procedures and requirements where companies conducted internship in the way they like. For example, determining the internship duration based simply on the company's interest or resources. Therefore, it was essential to agree beforehand on the objectives and learning content that should be completed.

It is with this understanding that from the very beginning of planning the internship programme details and tools that facilitate the internship were

jointly developed involving all concerned parties like the training institution, the companies and the students themselves.

As a result of this process, the following tools were developed:

1 Partnership agreement / MoU: This memorandum is a document that acts as the agreement between the training institution and the workplace to enable sending students to these private sector organisations for internships. It basically depends on the agreement for a specific internship programme with a company, but it was designed in a way that it sets the basis for a general cooperation and the agreement may be valid for up to five years. The benefit is that now every time an ATC has students completing their studies, it is clear with which companies the coordination for securing a place for an internship takes place.

2 Guiding tools: There are different guiding tools available, one for the training institution and one for the workplace aimed to ensuring consistency in the organisation of the internship. The tools provide a checklist of activities expected to be done before, during and after completing the internship.

3 Cost coverage: Many workplaces may still be hesitant to take students on board. The main issues are the financing of the costs occurring with the internship, both within the company as well as for the student (travel, meals, accommodation, etc.). Other reservations are based on previous negative experiences, when damages caused by interns were not financially covered.

To ease the financial burden, the project agreed to pay 1 Euro for a meal per intern. This amount is generally topped up by the company. In addition, a small amount was provided for the tutor's encouragement. Companies sometimes supplement the labour costs, especially in the processing of agri-food products.



Country Example: Mozambique

Sometimes an internship programme cannot be carried out for various reasons. However, there are other ways to involve trainees in more practical experiences for their career, as was done in Mozambique.

The rural context of **Mozambique** is challenging in terms of formal private sector presence, especially in the agribusiness sector. It was difficult in the project area to find private sector actors to partner with for internship. However, according to the national authority for technical and professional trainings (ANEP), students must have concluded an internship to receive a certification.

The strategies used by ATC to deal with the challenge are as follow:

- 1 ATC are **partnering** with other other training institutes and have MoUs for receiving students from each other for internship. This strategy is functioning and is allowing students to fulfil their certification but lacks in the ability for internship placement due to ATC functioning with deficiencies, with limited capacity in terms of number of trainers, quality of trainers and facilities. At the end, due to these limitations, they cannot ensure that the students who concluded an internship have improved their skills and that the internship puts them in a better position on the job market.
- 2 The ATC **provide letters of credentials** to each student to find a place for an internship on their own. However, there is no alignment of the objectives and planning causing a deficit in the overall experience in the internship.



From the project side, the following strategies were defined to deal with the challenge of internship placement.

- 1 **Organization of job fairs** where different actors (public institutions, NGOs and private sector) coming from different places with opportunities for an internship and employment joined to share their opportunities with youth and to establish partnerships.
- 2 **Support for ATC** to have conditions to provide practical trainings by establishing a business unit so that the youth could have strong practical components in the trainings and get involved in the marketing activities. ATC were supported with inputs and equipment to start own productions and get into the business. From that support, they could become strong enough to support youth internship.
- 3 **Provide start-up kits** to the youth after graduation to become micro-entrepreneurs and get self-employed. Youth were supported with inputs and equipment to start their own businesses.
- 4 **Engage with artisans** (individuals or associations) to host youth trainees and work with them to get practical experience and market insertion. The artisans are service providers and specialists in different knowledge areas. The project partnered with them to receive trainees and work with them. These artisans were supported with inputs and equipment and are paid a fee for hosting trainees.

Lessons learnt and recommendations

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Strengthening the links between training centres and host companies has overall positive effects on the employability of young people: Students gain hands on experiences in addition and have better chances to be recruited by companies at the end of their internship.

It is essential to **develop training and internship programmes that meet the expectations of all actors** involved, the ATCs and students as well as of the private sector companies as potential employers. The success of a training programme depends very much on selecting training centres and companies with the required potential and dedication. However, remember to always strive to strengthen the capacities of all actors involved in the process. Make sure the internship aligns with the intern's desires, and course work, and provides adequate networking opportunities. Also ensure the company is not overloaded by too many interns at once.



For an internship programme to be successfully implemented, some general considerations are important. One main lesson learnt, and recommendation is the importance to **work with professional organisations, training operators and host companies**. Involving all different actors right from the start of the process is essential for success.

Defining the roles and responsibilities of each type of actor (trainer, mentor/tutor, student, project) before, during and at the end of the placement is a vital condition for the success of the internship placement and helps to avoid potential conflicts.



In the beginning, it is a frequent **challenge to identify suitable host companies** that are committed, active and in permanent operation. Some companies may not be prepared to comply with the content of the internship and do not have the necessary supervisory skills (tutor/mentor) or a good technical platform and sufficient equipment.

Take the initial screening of companies seriously, develop clear criteria to identify serious enterprises that can aid the intern. This can be done by making a diagnostic assessing the capacities of the enterprise, from the knowledge to the equipment and even (future) employment prospects for students. ATC should be encouraged to take on an active role to identify and mobilise host companies. The fact that a host company is a member of a professional organisation can make it easier to take on interns.



Internship programmes require additional resources on top of the cost of training courses at the ATC or within the host company as well as for the students. Vocational training is already relatively expensive in most countries and financial concerns are therefore frequently encountered when trying to introduce an internship programme.

- › Consider what provisions can be made to ease the financial burdens of the ATC or company. Consider a (exit) strategy, where ATC are supported in developing partnerships with funding structures such as national funds in charge of financing technical and vocational training, subsidies from companies and employers, and support from other technical and financial partners.
- › Provide information on the benefits for companies to offer internship opportunities and that internship placements are beneficial both to the interns, who strengthen their skills and benefit from the company's experience, as well as to the host company.
- › Placing students with the nearest company avoids long and costly travel and the probability that interns drop-out.



Designated workplace **mentors at a company often lack familiarity with the training programmes provided by ATC**. As a result, they exhibit hesitancy in accepting students for internships, or they find themselves unable to effectively guide students participating in internship activities.

- › To overcome this challenge, the company mentors/tutors must first be trained, and the partnership agreement for the implementation of the placement and monitoring of the placement must be drawn up and signed.



Women need careful consideration within internship placement. Women can struggle in some workplace contexts, particularly in male dominated companies. Therefore, they need additional support to succeed.

- › Include women tutors in companies to partner with women interns to give advice in navigating the various career fields as a woman.
- › Explain to the companies and offer trainings on possible challenges faced by women that may occur throughout the internship. Through sensitisation women can feel more comfortable and companies can be more informed in how to incorporate gender aspects within their workforce and career.



Work safety needs to be taken seriously. For vocation and skills development, which is often hands on work, it needs to be ensured that students are provided with safety gear.

- › Companies cannot allow interns to work without safety gear unless the task is completely safe to be done without. This needs a case-by-case assessment.
- › There should be guidance between the host company and the student/ATC on liability issues, e.g. if there are accidents or damages incurred by students. Otherwise, the company may reject students because they assume losses through damage that may not be covered and they are liable for injuries. Ensuring that interns are motivated and considerate of the internship and host company is key, so that they will respect safety rules and the equipment that will be used.



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