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Association for the Development of Education in Africa

How Training Funds are Changing Further to the Recommendations of the Study on the Financing of Vocational Training

This paper analyses the answers to the in-depth questionnaire. Unlike the preliminary questionnaire, which was sent to all of the 17 funds invited to participate in the Abidjan seminar, the in-depth questionnaire was only sent the nine funds specifically selected for the reason that they are all members of RAFPRO and are representative of one of the three types of funds identified in the study conducted by ADEA on the half of the AFD. The nine funds are FAFPA (Burkina Faso), FAFPA (Mali), the FAFPCA (Niger), the ONFPP (Guinea), the FNAFPP (Togo), the FDFP (Côte d'Ivoire), the FFFTP (Senegal), the FNAFPP (Togo), FODEFCA (Benin) and FONAP (Chad).

This analysis does not seek to prove any causal relationship between the publication of the recommendations of the above-mentioned study and changes underway within the seven funds. As the Executive Secretary of FODEFCA says, it is too early to observe the study's impact on the funds' future development. However, analysis of all of the documents received suggests it is important to consider the changes underway from the point of view of the recommendations made.

Positioning of the funds with regard to the study's recommendations

The main recommendations outlined in the questionnaire concerned following four points: need for stable and long-term allocation of resources; the need for greater institutional autonomy; better targeting of continuing training and pre-employment missions; and the need for the funds to play a structured role in the framework of national vocational training policies. The replies provided by the nine funds make it possible to make three observations suggesting that the changes underway are in line with the recommendations of the study.

First observation: the funds converge in calling for contributions from the private sector to be transferred directly
Whereas FONAP and the FDFP already receive all of the taxes levied for continuing training and/or apprenticeship, almost all of the funds have recently taken measures aimed at obtaining the direct allocation of these taxes, with the exception of Mali. Two funds have already been assured that they will obtain them in the near future: FAFPCA in 2016 and the FFFPT in 2018.

Second observation: the funds' structural role at international level should be strengthened
Several funds have emphasised that they are currently strengthening their role with regard to national vocational training policies. For example, Burkina Faso's FAFPA is doing its utmost become a key national stakeholder in the field of continuing training and apprenticeship. Côte d'Ivoire's FDFP has agreed to finance several sectoral studies with a view to identifying new

training specialisations and to provide full support to the Ministry for Employment and Vocational Training in the delivery of its reforms. Niger's FAFPCA is emerging as a key player in the national vocational training system, bearing in mind the very high number of adults and young people it trains. Chad's FONAP is implementing the AFPACET/AFD project, which is making it a key stakeholder with regard to training centres and professional organisations. Senegal's FFFPT, which very recently replaced FONDEF, aims not just to train employees and young people, but also to implement a national quality assurance procedure concerning the actions, schemes and outputs of public and private training establishments.

Third observation: there is stronger awareness about the importance of analysis, monitoring, evaluation and pooling of efforts

The replies provided by the funds indicate that the study has made them more aware of their organisational weaknesses. For example, FODEFCA said that the study showed them a wide range of good practices which have led it to conduct an organisational and institutional audit. Burkina Faso's FAFPA stressed that it wants to support the development of forecasting, analysis and monitoring of actions financed and that it wants to encourage the sharing of experiences and pooling between funds regarding information, design and development and implementation and evaluation. The FDFP said that the recommendations made by the study are part of its daily activity. FAFPA in Mali agreed on the importance of sharing resources fairly between the modern sector, which pays, and the informal urban and rural sectors. It stressed that, to evolve successfully, the funds must benchmark with other funds. FONAP has just created an internal monitoring and evaluation department and it has stressed the importance of exchanging experience with other RAFPRO members. The FNAFPP spoke of the monitoring and evaluation role it has entrusted to its training advisors. Niger's FAFPCA emphasised its interest in introducing an automated system for managing the financing of training courses, which would make it possible to have reliable statistics and ensure the efficient monitoring of activities. The FFFPT, referred to the recommendation in the study concerning optimisation of financing for continuing training and pre-employment, which it believes will entail a reduction in management costs to a maximum of 15% and it called on the other funds to do a financial audit concerning their use of budget allocations.

These three major observations, which follow on from the recommendations sent out by the ADEA/AFD study, make it possible to say that the changes underway within the funds concern three priority areas:

- **How can the funds cooperate better to help each one act effectively with a view to obtaining the direct transfer of contributions from the private sector?**
- **Which type of strategies, measures and actions facilitate the structuring role of the funds with regard to national policies?**
- **Which analytical, monitoring and evaluation tools would already be useful for the funds to develop jointly?**

Prospects, tools and means for developing the funds

The questions raised in this area focus on short, medium and long-term changes to the development of the funds and the support and resources required for this development. While all of the funds agree about their three core missions (development of continuing training, pre-employment training and the equity requirement), they are not the same level as far as the collection of funds, support received and methodological tools are concerned.

Changes in the funds in the short, medium and long-term

The survey aimed to identify the strategies being implemented by each fund. The replies provided show that these strategies differ mainly in the way resources are collected. They can be resumed as follows:

- The funds whose resources are dependent upon partial payment of the taxes received by the national finance office (the FODEFCA, FAFPA Burkina Faso and Mali, the ONFPP and the FNAFPP) all identify direct receipt of the tax as a priority in the short term. They react as if the lack of visibility concerning their current and future resources hinder their capacity to identify necessary changes, even though most of them are committed to establishing a short, medium or long-term strategic development plan. These funds also insist upon the need to have appropriate management and analysis tools in order to be able to act effectively once the problems regarding the allocation of resources have been resolved.
- The funds that have the guarantee of stability and long-term financing such as the FDFP, FONAP, the FAFPCA and the FFFPT are focused on more operational objectives. For example, the FDFP seeks to achieve functional optimisation, popularise apprenticeship, strengthen and facilitate beneficiaries' access to financing and develop training services and products. FONAP has planned to strengthen apprenticeship training and job training schemes which are not very developed at present. The FAFPCA, which will directly receive the tax in 2016, is planning to extend its missions over three years to the monitoring of beneficiaries, support to help people into work and measures to strengthen the national training system by designing and developing of training courses and materials. The FFFPT, which will receive all of the tax in 2018, and which is currently in the process of setting itself up, has tasked a consultant to draw up a strategic and operational plan to secure long-term funding and identify results to be achieved in 2020 in the area of continuing training, employment training and equity.
- All of the funds want to be able to work all over their countries in future and they intend to do this by creating local and regional branches, in particular in agricultural and rural areas, in order to work as closely as possible with the various categories of beneficiaries.

The necessary support for lasting and effective development of the funds

The funds expect support from three sources: the public authorities, the technical and financial partners and RAFPRO. The wide range of replies make it difficult to comment in a very structured way. It is only possible to remark upon the most significant elements.

<u>The support expected from the public authorities</u>
The funds agree that it is necessary to ask the public authorities to respect their organisational autonomy. Some funds have financial autonomy and they ask for it to be respected (this is the case for the FDSP). Others have received a promise that they will be financially autonomous and they want the government to respect this promise and pay the apprenticeship and vocational training tax in its entirety (this is the case for FAFPCA). In other cases, funds have no financial autonomy and they want the responsible authorities to pay over the money they require in order to carry out their missions (this is the case for FAFPA in Burkina Faso, the FNAFPP and the ONFPP) or at least to respect the autonomous organisation of their managing board (FAFPA in Mali).

Aside from the request to strengthen the autonomy of the funds, there is also strong demand for public authorities to support their action in the framework of national vocational training policies. They must in particular help to give the funds institutional visibility, recognise the specific role they play with regard to companies' competitiveness and the development of young peoples' skills, and consequently provide the necessary financial resources. The best solution would be to fully transfer to the funds the sums collected from the private sector.

<u>The support expected from the technical and financial partners</u>
The funds are unanimous on this point: they need the financial and technical support of the TFPs in order to carry out their missions. Four funds have specific requirements:

- FODEFCA wants the technical and financial support to be planned and provided jointly and flexibly, to help ensure that the TFPs goals and actions are more closely aligned with those of the funds;
- FAFPA in Burkina Faso wants the TFPs to provide long-term aid and gradually decreasing support for financing needs that are not yet covered at national level (additional staff, regional offices and logistics costs);
- The FDFP wants the TFPs to give additional funds which would primarily be used for non-contributing companies;
- The FAFPA in Mali wants the TFPs to align their support more closely with regional and local economic development as well as the priorities of the managing boards.

<u>The support expected from RAFPRO</u>
The last section of this summary will set out in detail the role the funds want RAFPRO to play. The replies can be summarised in three points:

- Sharing of experience and good practice between funds;
- Advice, technical assistance and support for capacity building;
- Support for the production of skills sets and training manuals.

The tools required for the preparation of development plans

The funds all refer to the tools they have for managing their financing activities and which they propose to make available to the other funds. For example, the FODEFCA has effective tools for identifying, analysing and monitoring training schemes. Burkina Faso's FAFPA is prepared to share the action plans, scoreboard and logframe matrix it is developing. The FDFP is proposing a whole range of existing instruments: the full diagnostic tool, the table for identifying providers' needs, the table for identifying beneficiaries' needs, tools for auditing training schemes, the monitoring and evaluation technical dossier, tool for analysing training needs, etc. Mali's FAFPA has tools for analysing the needs of the local economy, training design and development and participative planning models, while the FNAFPP has highlighted the interest of its impact measurement tools.

Each fund clearly has its instruments for anticipating, structuring, implementing and evaluating strategic and operational training development plans. However, as certain funds suggest, it is now appropriate to develop joint training information and management tools (FAFPCA), which would enable the funds to monitor activities effectively together with reliable statistics that are comparable and transferable both at national level and across borders. To do this it will be necessary to share existing tools (FFFPT), organise inter-fund roundtable discussions on the tools to be shared (FAFPA, Burkina Faso) and review them with a view to updating them (FODFCA) and if necessary to design new ones following the seminar (FNAFPP).

This cross-analysis of existing development plans and the tools required to implement them suggest that the seminar should further examine the following questions:

- **How can a common appeal or at least regulatory proposals be made in order to convince those public authorities that are reticent about transferring to the funds company contributions to do so as soon as possible?**
- **The funds are keen to share tools for planning, implementing and evaluating training schemes is desired by all, but how can these tools be harmonised while respecting the specific missions, measures and target groups of each fund?**
- **Which human and financial resources are required in order to bring about this harmonisation and pooling of efforts?**

Towards a redefinition and enlargement of RAFPRO's missions

The last questions in the in-depth questionnaire focused exclusively on joint work and pooling of efforts between funds. As the above analysis shows, this topic, which concerns the current and future role of RAFPRO, has already been broadly dealt with. It is not therefore the intention of this consideration of the future development of the inter-fund network to repeat things that have already been developed, but rather to focus on what should be at the heart of the missions to be accomplished by the network.

A request to coordinate and/or harmonise existing tools

The questionnaire asked each fund to list inter-fund activities to be promoted in order of priority. Given the wide range of replies, it is only possible at this stage to list the activities which met with consensus by ranking them by order of frequency. This list includes activities which exist in at least one or other of the funds and which should either be shared or harmonised so as to meet the expectations of the members of the network.

- Sharing of experience and dissemination of good practice;
- Setting up of an standardised information system;
- Creation of common monitoring and evaluation tools;
- Development of joint approaches to designing and developing training schemes;
- Drafting a common skills set for training advisers.

All of these activities have been approved by each fund according and in a similar order to that proposed. It is clear that there is demand for the inter-fund network to become a permanent forum for sharing, harmonising and developing tools and reference materials. It is clear that, in its current setup, RAFPRO is not such a forum and cannot carry out the task of rallying and coordinating the network.

A request for tools to be designed as a priority

The survey also highlighted the need for the funds to devise new approaches and new tools to improve their organisation and the quality and efficiency of the measures financed or to be financed. The following requests were made:

- To launch coordinated work on the economics of training (cost efficiency ratio);
- To develop common regulations applicable at inter-country level;
- To develop a comprehensive, automated system for managing training;
- To devise an appropriate methodology for measuring impact;
- To develop common quality assurance standards.

To respond to these requests, it will not just be necessary to change the network's objectives and the way it functions. It will also be necessary to carry out extensive expert work for which a restructured RAFPRO will need to mobilise human and financial resources.

A request to enlarge the network to other funds, including non-French-speaking funds

The question on the enlargement of the network to non-French-speaking funds, particularly English-speaking ones, met with the agreements of all, in particular because the funds surveyed are an integral part of sub-regional areas which, like ECOWAS, which brings together French-, English- and even Portuguese-speaking countries. As FONAP puts it, the only condition posed is that RAFPRO must first "reduce disparities between the member funds, in order to guarantee a standard approach. The enlargement could mean "involving English-speaking funds in occasional events (workshops, seminars, training sessions, etc.). Simultaneous translation could help everyone to understand and all documents should be translated into the two languages" (FDFP).

In conclusion: what should RAFPRO's redefined and broadened missions to be?

The replies to this question should be drawn up in the framework of the seminar. They should take into account the following questions:

- **Should existing disparities between current funds be reduced before opening up to other funds or should the two approaches go hand-in-hand?**

- **How can existing expertise be developed in the network, with regard to both inter-fund harmonisation of existing tools and the elaboration/development of tools that are lacking?**
- **In which areas should external expertise be used?**
- **How can the technical and financial partners be involved in an innovative project to restructure RAFPRO and promote the activities of the network's member funds.**