

## Summary of the Mali report on the E/T continuum

### Introduction

Numerous field studies as well as the outcomes of the National Education Conference in 1989 and the Education Forum of 2011 have concluded that the education system is inadequate. This is particularly the case for the TVET sub-sector. The unemployment rate (ILO definition) currently stands at 9.6% and the average period of unemployment is five years. Unemployment is much higher among young people aged 15 to 39 (with rates ranging from 7.6 to 15.4%). The situation is not getting any better, as the unemployment rate is on the increase and the poverty rate rose from 43.6% in 2010 to 46% at the end of 2012. There were thus 7.2 million people in poverty.

### Part 1: Basic data on education levels among the population

The gross enrolment rate (GER) has fallen over the past three years in Mali, particularly in the north of the country. According to the NGO Plan International Mali, the GER fell from 81.5% in 2011 to 70.1% in 2014, with the enrolment rate for girls falling from 74.0% to 64.0% over the same period, and the enrolment rate for boys falling from 89.1% to 76.4%. At upper primary level ("*fondamental 2*"), the GER fell from 54.8% in 2011 to 50.9% in 2014. The rate for girls fell from 46.0% in 2011 to 44.3% in 2014, and the rate for boys fell from 63.9% to 57.7% in 2014. These trends are due to disparities between regions, which are affected by the security crisis, and as a consequence the massive displacement of populations and destruction of schools. Nearly 6 out of 10 Malians fail to reach the end of primary school, either because they never went, or because they dropped out after starting: the drop-out rate for a cohort having started 6 years previously is nearly 44.30%.

At upper primary level, almost 23% of those starting year 7 fail to reach year 9. The transition rate from primary education and secondary education is 40.10%. For general secondary education, the completion rate in year 12 is only 5.7% for a cohort of young people starting 12 years earlier.

In 2014, there were 2,730,941 children between the ages of 9 to 14, of whom 47% were outside the system (i.e., they had never been to school or had dropped out early).

### Part 2: Basic data on vocational training and technical and vocational skills development (TVSD)

Technical and vocational education has too little infrastructure. There are few students (only 41,776 in 2006-2007). Two-thirds of these students are enrolled in private colleges (76% compared to 24% in the public sector in 2008).

Vocational training includes various schemes whose purpose is to transform the fruits of growth into jobs and reduce poverty effectively and comprehensively. These schemes include:

- Traditional apprenticeship: this is basically on-the-job training with an employer, with no fixed or regulated duration or content.
- Reformed traditional apprenticeship / tutored apprenticeship;

- Modular (or dual) training, which combines classroom learning with work placements and is designed to meet the training needs of youngsters outside school and those completing courses at CED development education centres.
- Training at mobile units, which offer skills training locally for young people in rural areas who are on forestry and agro-pastoral courses.

26,000 young people were trained on these various training schemes from 2013 to 2015.

### **Part 3: How to reduce the lack of continuity between education and training for the benefit of young people**

Young people in Mali face employability challenges that are deeply rooted in the crisis and aggravated by it. Over 70% of young people between 15 and 24 were outside education in 2010 and they had very limited skills and qualifications, thus limiting their employment opportunities. This situation is not improving due to the deteriorating economic situation since 2012.

Various prevention and remediation measures do however exist.

#### ***“Les clos d’enfants”***

These kindergartens are alternative places of learning for children aged 3 to 6 years old. Volunteers and paid staff look after the children and organise games, songs and stories, drawing on local cultural heritage. They are supported by Unesco and Unicef, and were incorporated into the Education Ministry’s early childhood development programme in 2001.

#### **Development education centres (DECs)**

DECs are for children aged 9 to 15 who are outside school. They enable them to do a 4-year course of general education (maths and reading and writing in their local language at first, then in French from the second year onwards) and vocational training. These courses are tailored to local needs. The centres are run by partnerships involving village communities, the government and the NGOs which fund them.

#### **Literacy centres**

These are also an alternative to education and training. Schemes are run in national languages in order to increase their use and facilitate learning.

#### **Women’s learning centres**

These are for young girls and women. They offer them an opportunity to learn an occupation and develop income-generating activities.

There are not yet any formal pathways from general education to traditional or reformed apprenticeships, or vice versa. However, measures introduced further to the new law on vocational training will address this issue.

### **Part 4: How to develop the continuum by providing access to lifelong education and training for all**

The Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training has launched two projects: one on youth employment and skills development which is funded by the World Bank, and another on the training and integration of young rural entrepreneurs, which aims to cater to local

skills needs. They entail decentralised, non-formal vocational training for young people to prepare them for successful integration into the local labour market in agriculture, livestock farming, construction and other activities. They are targeted at vulnerable young people in rural and peri-urban areas who have received little or no education, including in post-conflict zones, to help bring them back into the system. Rural “family houses” are another scheme which needs to be supported and further developed in order to train workers for the rural economy.

### **Part 5: How to develop the continuum by recognising all forms of knowledge and skills acquisition**

In accordance with the strategies identified by the Forum on Education, it will be necessary to:

- effectively coordinate education, vocational training, technical education, higher education and other forms of skills development (traditional apprenticeships and reformed traditional apprenticeships), both in the formal sector and in the larger informal sector;
- facilitate access to training and the acquisition of vocational qualifications tailored to the needs of the economy and for as many people as possible, through the diversification of vocational training systems and courses;
- develop apprenticeship in order to offer a credible alternative way to access professional qualifications for a wide range of youngsters who are outside education, have dropped out early, or who are unemployed etc.
- develop the accreditation of prior learning and experience for professionals in the labour market as an alternative way for people to develop their skills. The National Directorate of Vocational Training has trained and validated the prior experience of 505 master trainers in the region of Segou and circle Yorosso.

### **Conclusion**

Success stories include:

- The Development Education Centres (DECs) launched in the early 1990s, which have been a major driver of change and have helped to double the enrolment rate.
- A general vocational education and training programme has been set up, to enable people to acquire reading, writing and maths skills in their village language, and in French from the second year; modular pre-vocational training in the fourth year tailored to the needs of villages’ economic activities. A recent study shows that over 90% of these students completed their studies. Leavers from these centres then have to learn a trade to facilitate their integration into the local economy. The young people trained thus become economic stakeholders in their areas.