

Case Study: Update on improving apprenticeship in the informal economy in Benin¹

Context of apprenticeship in the crafts sector

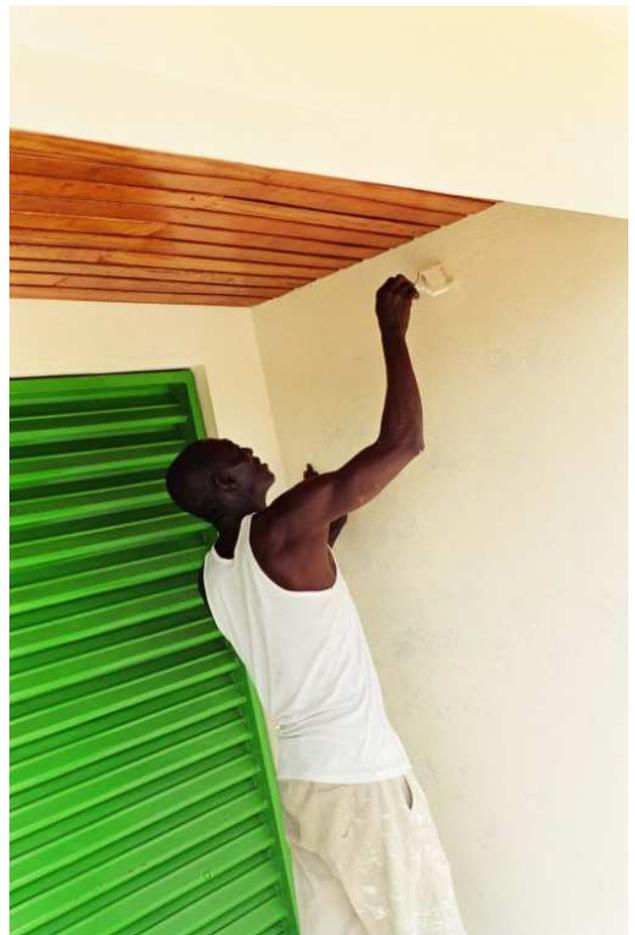
In Benin, access to formal technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is conditional on finishing the second year of secondary school, equivalent to completing nine years of education. However, among 5- to 17-year-olds, the median years in education is four. As a result, only 5 per cent of secondary age youth are in TVET, totalling around 50,000 young people.

However, net enrolment among 12- to 19-year-olds is only around 35 per cent. All the other young people have no other choice but to turn to the informal economy to acquire skills through informal apprenticeship, which allows them to enter the labour market. It is estimated that these young people in apprenticeships account for more than 300,000.²

Craftspersons in Benin are represented at national level by the National Confederation of Artisans in Benin (CNAB), which has divisions (groups) at the level of department and municipality. In addition, there is the Benin Union of Interdepartmental Chambers of Trade (UCIM-B) at national level, and the departmental chambers of trade at departmental level.

Regulation of qualifications within the apprenticeship system

Recognizing the important role played by apprenticeship in the informal economy in providing qualifications for young people, in 2001, the Government of Benin adopted a policy and guidance document on technical and



vocational education and training,³ in which the modernization of traditional/informal apprenticeship features as a priority area for action. As part of this, two types of qualifications⁴ were introduced to recognize the

¹ This case study was drafted by Boubakar Savadogo. Photos are under ILO copyright.

² Support Programme for Vocational Training in the Craft and Agricultural Sectors (PAFPAA), *Rapport sur l'artisanat* [Report on the craft sector], February 2017.

³ National policy on technical and vocational education and training, March 2001.

⁴ Decree No. 2005-117 of 17 March 2005 on the State recognition of professional, technical and general skills acquired through apprenticeship or the practice of a qualifying professional activity or trade.

Update on improving apprenticeship in the informal economy in Benin

skills acquired through informal apprenticeship, as a replacement for the release ceremonies that used to be held in the country. These are the trade qualification certificate (CQM) and vocational training certificate (CQP).

The CQM is awarded to apprentices who have completed their apprenticeship in an enterprise (without any obligation to go to a formal training centre) and passed the examination organized by the ministry in charge of technical and vocational training. Candidates for the CQM are not obliged to take courses in addition to their apprenticeship in the enterprise. Apprentices must be registered for the certificate by their employer. There are practical and oral tests.

The CQP is awarded to apprentices who have finished primary education, completed a three-year dual apprenticeship in an enterprise and at a training centre, and passed the examination organized by the ministry in charge of technical and vocational training. In the dual system, apprentices preparing for the CQP must take additional theoretical and practical courses at a vocational training centre. Apprentices must be registered for the certificate by the training centre. There are practical and written tests.

The CQM and CQP examinations are organized by the Examination and Competition Department (DEC) of the Ministry for Secondary and Technical Education, and Vocational Training (MESTFP). However, it is the professional trade bodies and craftsperson groups that enrol the apprentices in the training system. These professional trade bodies, groups or CNAB contribute to developing curricula, delivering training in enterprises and at training centres (as local trainers), and monitoring apprentices in enterprises and at training centres, and sit on examination boards. They are responsible for managing disputes between apprentices, their employers and the training centres.

The first apprentices to enrol in the dual system in 2003 obtained their CQP in 2005. Between 2005 and 2018, the CQP was offered for the following 13 trades: (1) motorcycle mechanics, (2) hairdressing and braiding, (3) cutting/sewing, (4) refrigeration and air conditioning, (5) electrics, (6) plumbing, (7) bricklaying, (8) joinery, (9) metal construction, (10) car mechanics, (11) weaving, (12) photography, (13) flooring (painting and tiling).

► The table below shows the trades and the number passing each year

Year	Trade	Registered for CQP	Passed CQP
2003	Motorcycle mechanics (1)	160	
2004	Motorcycle mechanics, hairdressing, cutting/sewing (3)	510	
2005	Motorcycle mechanics, hairdressing, cutting/sewing, refrigeration and air conditioning (4)	913	293
2006	Motorcycle mechanics, hairdressing, cutting/sewing, refrigeration and air conditioning, electrics, plumbing, bricklaying (7)	1 303	301
2007	Motorcycle mechanics, hairdressing, cutting/sewing, refrigeration and air conditioning, electrics, plumbing, bricklaying, joinery, metal construction (9)	2 618	303
2008	Motorcycle mechanics, hairdressing, cutting/sewing, refrigeration and air conditioning, electrics, plumbing, bricklaying, joinery, metal construction, car mechanics, weaving (11)	3 334	474
2009	Motorcycle mechanics, hairdressing, cutting/sewing, refrigeration and air conditioning, electrics, plumbing, bricklaying, joinery, metal construction, car mechanics, weaving (11)	3 882	994
2010	Motorcycle mechanics, hairdressing, cutting/sewing, refrigeration and air conditioning, electrics, plumbing, bricklaying, joinery, metal construction, car mechanics, weaving, photography (12)	3 496	734
2011	Motorcycle mechanics, hairdressing, cutting/sewing, refrigeration and air conditioning, electrics, plumbing, bricklaying, joinery, metal construction, car mechanics, weaving, photography (12)	2 041	853
2012	Motorcycle mechanics, hairdressing, cutting/sewing, refrigeration and air conditioning, electrics, plumbing, bricklaying, joinery, metal construction, car mechanics, weaving, photography (12)	4 419	682
2013			797
2014	Motorcycle mechanics, hairdressing, cutting/sewing, refrigeration and air conditioning, electrics, plumbing, bricklaying, joinery, metal construction, car mechanics, weaving, photography, flooring (13)	Unknown	853
2015			767
2016			Unknown

Update on improving apprenticeship in the informal economy in Benin

2017			
2018			1 402

Source: Department of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (DETFP) statistical data.

While the CQP was awarded to eligible apprentices (a small number), the other apprentices continued to receive recognition of their qualifications through the informal apprenticeship completion examinations (EFAT).

In 2010, Decree No. 2010-641 of 31 December 2010 made provision for the CQM to be awarded. It was only in

October 2013 that this examination was held for the first time, on a trial basis in 29 municipalities in departments with experience in organizing the EFAT. Between 2013 and 2018, the CQM was offered in around 60 trades out of the 311 listed in the Benin craft trades register. The CQM replaces the EFAT across the whole country.

► The following table summarizes the status of the CQM

Session (year)	Passed CQM	% women
April 2013	1 148	65% (751 women)
April 2014	2 594	71% (1 854 women)
October 2014	2 583	69% (1 773 women)
April 2015	3 600	70% (2 517 women)
October 2015	3 308	69% (2 295 women)
April 2016	3 795	74% (2 795 women)
2017	Unknown	Unknown
April 2018	9 135	69% (6 293 women)
2019		
2020		

Source: DETFP statistical data.

► The following trades are covered by the CQM:

Hairdressing, sewing, bricklaying, electrics, weaving, joinery, motorcycle mechanics, car mechanics, computer maintenance, decorating, welding, vulcanization, photography, knitting, upholstery, iron work, foundry work, plumbing, earth/wood construction, bicycle repair, car/motorcycle electrics, embroidery, diesel mechanics, glazing, house painting, repair, sheet metalwork, printing, fitting, electronics, refrigeration, car/motorcycle paintwork, mattress making, cooking, shoe repair, cake production, tiling, wood sawing, grinding, jewellery, boat building, weaving, drawing, mobile phone repair, formwork, machining, plastering, refrigeration and air conditioning, precious metalwork, soap making, cassava root production, garri and tapioca production, shea butter production, injection pump repair, equipment manufacture, baking, ornament manufacture, oil production, decorative calligraphy, beekeeping, screen printing, carpentry, improved cook stove manufacture, beauty, soap manufacture, dyeing, turning/grinding, painting/drawing, cheese production, mustard production, peanut oil production, soya bean production, box making, laundry services, sawing, plastering.

Source: DETFP statistical data.

The CQM is awarded to more women (70 per cent on average between 2013 and 2018) than men, which reflects the gender distribution in the craft sector in Benin.

The organization of the CQM examination is regulated by Interministerial Order No. 2012-0015 MESFTPRIJ/MCAAT/MTFP/DC/SGM/DIP/DEC/DAMA/DFQP/S

Update on improving apprenticeship in the informal economy in Benin

A. It is entrusted to a public professional committee, whose composition and mandate are set out in Interministerial Order No. 2012-0016 MESFTPRIJ/MCAAT/MTFP/DC/SGM/DIP/DEC/DAMA/DFQP/S A.

The professional committee operates at the level of the municipality and is composed of (i) representatives of the ministries responsible for vocational training (Chair), crafts, and rural development; (ii) the mayor of the municipality (Vice-Chair); and (iii) craftspeople representatives.

Professional trade bodies, namely CNAB and its divisions (groups) at the level of department and municipality, as well as UCIM-B, are heavily involved in running the CQP

and CQM, in collaboration with government bodies (the Department of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (DETFP), Craft Trade Support Department (DAMA), and Examination and Competition Department (DEC)). They contribute by raising awareness among stakeholders, resolving disputes, selecting enterprises, enrolling apprentices, developing curricula, delivering training in enterprises and at training centres, monitoring apprentices in enterprises and at training centres, and selecting examination subjects, among other things.

Despite the fact that the CQP and CQM are being organized and awarded, traditional leaving ceremonies for apprentices still take place at the end of the apprenticeship. However, the scope of employers' requirements has significantly decreased.

Financing of apprenticeships in the informal sector

A training fund known as the Development Fund for In-service Training and Apprenticeship (FODEFCA) was set up to finance in-service vocational training for workers. The FODEFCA, despite the existence of an apprenticeship tax paid by formal enterprises, is topped up by a subsidy from the public treasury. Part of this subsidy is allocated to financing training for those in the informal apprenticeship system, notably employers (advanced training) and apprentices (dual/CQP training). However, this funding is irregular and unsustainable. Indeed, the FODEFCA, which finances 90 per cent of the training costs at training centres (with the apprentice, their employer or guardian, or technical and financial partners providing the remaining 10 per cent), cannot always fund all the apprentices who pass the CQP entrance test due to a lack of funds.

The FODEFCA budget is a subsidy from the Government of Benin, rather than the income from the training levy paid by enterprises. There are no rules governing how this

subsidy is awarded to the FODEFCA, and it is not indexed to the income from the training levy. The size of the subsidy varies from year to year.

The FODEFCA does not contribute to financing the organization of the CQM examination. This is funded from the public budget allocated to the Examination and Competition Department (DEC) within the ministry responsible for vocational training, and from apprentices' contributions, namely the registration fees.

Since the two qualifications were first awarded, the CQP in 2005 and the CQM in 2013, no studies have been performed regarding their impact or the rate of transition to the labour market of those who successfully complete the training. Such a study is the only way of establishing whether the introduction of the two qualifications has improved quality, employability and services within the trades concerned.

Major challenges for upgrading apprenticeships in Benin

The apprenticeship system in Benin faces the following major challenges, among others:

- The number of trades in which the CQP and CQM are awarded must be increased. Indeed, while the Benin craft trades register lists 310 trades, the CQP only covers 13 and the CQM fewer than 100. It is essential to develop the design tools needed to organize the CQP and CQM. This requires the training of a sufficient number of methodology experts across all departments nationwide. In addition to these methodology experts, trainers in all crafts and trades need to be trained in sufficient numbers.
- There are no qualifications that recognize the learning done by employers. As a result, some employers still refuse to enter their apprentices for the CQP or the CQM, as they think that their apprentices will become better skilled than them. In order to maintain the system, it is essential to introduce a mechanism for validating and recognizing the skills of employers.
- Both the apprentices and their employers show more interest in the CQM than the CQP, as the conditions for the CQP – namely required educational level (completed primary education), attendance at a (dual) training centre, preparation for and successful completion of an admission test, and the irregular financing of the FODEFCA – constitute obstacles that they cannot overcome. If these conditions are not reviewed or improved, there is a risk that the CQP will lose its candidates.
- Internal and external financial resources must be mobilized to manage the increased number of trades and apprentices involved in the CQP and CQM.
- The DEC needs to allocate or obtain timely budgetary resources to organize the CQM examinations.
- UCIM-B demands responsibility for organizing the CQP and CQM examinations in accordance with the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) community code on crafts. Dialogue between this body and the ministry responsible for training should facilitate resolving the matter of the transfer of powers.



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