



**SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA  
SKILLS AND APPRENTICESHIP  
STAKEHOLDERS NETWORK  
[SASASNET]**

*c/o NATIONAL BOARD FOR TECHNICAL EDUCATION,  
KADUNA, NIGERIA.*

**Concept**  
*Note*

# FORMAL LAUNCH OF SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA SKILLS AND APPRENTICESHIP STAKEHOLDERS NETWORK (SASASNET)

*Theme:*

SKILLS AGENDA AND APPRENTICESHIP  
SYSTEM IN THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

**DATE:** 24 – 25 July, 2023

**VENUE:** Continental Hotel and the  
Presidential Villa, Abuja, Nigeria



# CONCEPT NOTE

## INTRODUCTION:

The African Union's Continental Education Strategy for Africa (AU CESA 2016-2025); the Continental Strategy for TVET to Foster Youth Employment (African Union 2018); the ECOWAS and SADC Protocols on Education and Training; the Abidjan Declaration adopted at the ILO 14<sup>th</sup> African Regional Meeting; the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the respective national strategies, are all concerned about the need to promote Africa's informal economy especially the Informal Apprenticeship Training System. A recent World Bank organised regional workshop on the theme 'Strengthening Apprenticeship Systems in the Informal Economy in Africa to Promote Quality, Innovation and Transitions to Formality', held in February 22 – 24, 2023 in Cotonou, Benin, deliberated on these informal apprenticeships across Sub-Saharan Africa and concluded that Governments and Organised Private Sector (OPS) must join hands to upgrade and formalise all informal apprenticeships in the region. Taking cue from this Regional convergence and the existence of a similar Network for the French-speaking African and Maghreb countries, the participants from the English-speaking countries resolved to establish the Sub-Saharan Africa Skills and Apprenticeship Stakeholders Network (SASASNET), to promote, coordinate and support the skills and apprenticeship agenda in Africa.

Having established this continental organisation with membership drawn from all the English-speaking countries in sub-Saharan Africa, a formal launch ceremony of the Network and workshop, under the auspices of the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) of Nigeria, will be held in Abuja, on 24 – 25 July 2023. The Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria will officially launch the Network and its Logo at the event to be attended by Member Country delegations headed by Cabinet Ministers and comprising senior government officials and stakeholders in the skills and apprenticeship development/system.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO AFRICA'S CURRENT SKILLS SHORTAGE

It is no secret that the African continent has been experiencing a shortage of skills in the most important sectors related to development and growth, such as science and technology, engineering, mathematics, advanced technologies, automation, artificial Intelligence, robotics, nanotechnology, 3D printing, and

autonomous vehicles. This reality has been delaying the continent's progress towards sustainable, inclusive growth and development.

Today there is even a greater challenge facing Sub-Saharan Africa. It is either Africa skills up its youths or Africa shall continue to become the poverty capital of the world. Many of its youths, largely unskilled and uncertified, are escaping the continent through dangerous means. Others left behind have chosen to go into informal apprenticeship training in order to survive.

These African entrepreneurship and apprenticeships efforts in the informal sector have not been brought to the limelight and especially to the attention of the respective African governments for them to make appropriate interventions and investments in upgrading and integration of the informal into formal training with certification.

In addition, Africa's business partners took advantage of the situation that stemmed from the lack of skilled labour and a pattern was put in place whereby experts and highly skilled individuals were imported when needs arise, which is an expensive practice. Employers had no choice but to employ 'outsiders' to specific assignments where the skill could not be sourced locally. The recently completed world's largest single train refinery in Lagos by the Dangote Group imported over 11,000 skilled labour largely from India.

Sustainable skills development and vocational training is an important tool for any country's social and economic growth. To raise employment among youths, a skill-based training is needed to enable young people to make a smooth transition to work. This alternative educational path gives a chance to young people to grow professionally. It helps the young generation to make them self-reliant, which will in turn reduce the issues of unemployment and dependency.

## **CASE STUDIES OF INFORMAL APPRENTICESHIPS IN AFRICA**

Formal training is not easily accessible to the majority of young people for many reasons; the high cost attached to the entry requirements into the workforce being one. In some countries, only 5% of youth acquire skills through formal training, particularly in countries that have a large informal economy. Another major challenge with formal apprenticeship training is that it requires significant prior formal education (secondary education), including literacy and numeracy, thus marginalizing access for a large number of school leavers and the poor.

Formal apprenticeship focuses more on meeting the demands of the formal economy, whereas jobs in the formal economy are not sufficient to cater for the increasing numbers of new entrants into the labour market.

The quality and relevance of formal training does not adequately meet the dynamism of technology characterizing the formal economy. Informal apprenticeship is believed to be responsible for the majority of skills development, accounting, for example, for almost 90% of all training for apprenticeships in Ghana, Benin, Senegal and Cameroon.

This type of apprenticeship relies on market feedback tracer studies and market labour surveys on demand and supply, with participation of the employers, before taking in more apprentices.



**Nigeria:** Panteka Market in the City of Kaduna, Nigeria, is one of the largest informal apprenticeship training and production centres in Nigeria. It has been around for about 60 years and houses over 30,000 trainees and master craftsmen in 38 different trades. Its contribution to the economy has been well recognized especially its conversion of wastes to wealth (aluminium scraps to domestic utensils) and its capacity to replicate many technology gadgets and industrial spare-parts including refrigerators, deep freezers, washing machines, etc. Its products have reached many ECOWAS countries including Niger, Chad and Mali. The informal apprenticeship training in Panteka needs to be upgraded as the general practice globally, to streamline it, issue appropriate skills certification and facilitate upgrade of practice using modern technology. There are several other informal systems across the country in every city and town, such as the Araria Shoe Market, Aba, Computer Village, Lagos, Apo Mechanics Village, Abuja, etc.



**Ghana:** The informal apprenticeship system in Ghana has, over the years, equipped and empowered many creative intelligent Ghanaians who for some extenuating circumstances had to drop out of the formal educational system or never had the privilege of pursuing formal education. Although the system made enormous contribution to human resources development, throughout the colonial and early post-independence era, the systems was scorned and tagged "marginal" not until recently. With increasing interest in the field, different studies were conducted in this area. In 2002, the work of ILO, addressed the definitional problem and the related controversies that surrounded the concept through the scoping and disentangling of the many facets of the then "informal sector".



**Kenya:** Different forms of both formal and informal apprenticeship systems currently exist in Kenya. Formal apprenticeships typically taking place in the workplace and are complemented by classroom-based instruction. They include apprenticeships required for the completion of Technical, Vocational Education, Training (TVET), and Higher Education (HE) training. In informal apprenticeships, the apprentice typically acquires skills by working side by side with an experienced craftsperson in an informal enterprise. There might be an oral agreement between the craftsperson but mostly no written contract.



## **SUB THEMES**

1. Transition to Formality: The Sub-Sahara Africa Apprenticeship Practices
2. Innovation Solutions in TVET for Job Creation, Employability and Higher Productivity
3. Financing of Apprenticeships in Sub-Sahara Africa
4. Prospects and Challenges of Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) in the Apprenticeship System
5. Role of Artisan Associations and Organised Labour in growing Craftsmen/Master-craftsmen
6. Towards a Comprehensive Apprenticeship and Skills Development Agenda for Sub-Saharan Africa
7. Occupational Prospects of young people-The Role of Government

## **LAUNCH/WORKSHOP (OBJECTIVES);**

The key objectives of the formal Launch and workshop are to:

1. Gather the members of SASASNET for the formal launch of the continental organisation;
2. Bring together the Sub-Saharan African TVET policy makers, trainers, regulators, employers, artisan/skills associations, workers organisation or labour and development partners for a dialogue on how to promote the skills and apprenticeship system for the development of the continent;
3. Examine the role of skills and apprenticeship system in driving Africa's human development;
4. Make a case for increased support by governments and partners for the development of skills and apprenticeship system in sub-Saharan Africa;
5. Advocate for increases in the enrolment of youth, including women and persons living with disability, in technical and vocational skills development;
6. Stress the importance of conservation of the natural world by supporting the blue, green and the orange economy;

## **HIGHLIGHTS OF THE LAUNCH/WORKSHOP**

To ensure a very successful Formal Launch of the Sub-Saharan Africa Skills and Apprenticeship Network, a Local Organising Committee (LOC) is constituted and comprising members of the Secretariat of the Network, host institution i.e. the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and representatives from the various member countries.

The three days event is organised to include the following activities:

- i. first face-to-face General Assembly Meeting of the heads of SASASNET



- Membership institutions and experts
- ii. first Executive Committee Meeting
- iii. formal launch of the Network by the Vice President of the Republic of Nigeria
- iv. main workshop featuring keynote addresses, panel discussions and research paper presentations on main theme and other cross-cutting issues

**For more information:**

Please visit the website: [www.sasasnet.org](http://www.sasasnet.org) or contact The Secretary General, **SASASNET**, Email: [ndung104@gmail.com](mailto:ndung104@gmail.com)  
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