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PRIVATE SECTOR-LED DUAL TRAINING CURRICULUM UNVEILED IN KENYA

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NAIROBI KENYA

Kenya has launched a ground breaking private sector - led dual Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) curriculum package that allocates 75% of training in the workplace and 25% in the classroom, a move widely described as a potential game changer in addressing youth unemployment. The curriculum was developed by more than 60 local companies in collaboration with the National Industrial Training Authority (NITA) and other industry partners, embedding employers directly into the training process to ensure young people graduate with practical, job-ready skills aligned with labour market demand.

The launch was officiated in Nairobi by Shadrack Mwadime, Principal Secretary for the State Department for Labour and Skills Development, and Dr Esther Muoria, Principal Secretary for the State Department for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

The announcement was made during Day One of the Inaugural Youth Skills Development Forum (YSDF) held in Nairobi from 5–6 March 2026, which brought together government leaders, private sector actors, development partners, training institutions and youth representatives to accelerate private sector–led workforce development in Kenya.

Speaking during the launch, Principal Secretary Shadrack Mwadime said the new dual system would strengthen Kenya’s attractiveness to investors by ensuring the availability of industry-relevant skills.

“Now that we have the private sector-led dual system, I believe that when we market Kenya to the world, investors will come. The kind of skills they are looking for will be provided by our institutions, and Kenya will therefore be a conducive environment for investment.”

Dr Esther Muoria, Principal Secretary for the State Department for Technical and Vocational Education and Training, said the reform places industry at the centre of workforce development.

“The TVET sector has deliberately positioned the private sector at the centre of shaping the future of skills development. Government can set policies and expand institutions, but sustainable employment is ultimately created in enterprises.”

Development partners also highlighted the urgency of reforming Kenya’s workforce training systems.

Mirko Giulietti, Ambassador of Switzerland to Kenya, Eritrea, Rwanda, Somalia and Burundi, said:

“The case for action is not abstract. Kenya's youth unemployment is estimated at 37-40%. For dual TVET to work at scale, the private sector must move from the margins to the centre, not as a beneficiary, not as a consultant, but as a co-owner. Policy sets the direction. But it is the private sector that builds the road.”

The Swiss dual training model, which inspired the new curriculum package, has been localised for Kenya through collaboration with Swisscontact. The nationally recognised industry driven curricula is designed to align training with key technical trades critical to Kenya’s infrastructure and industrial growth, including: Electrical Wireman (NSC IV / MCP III / KNQF Level 5); Plumber Pipe Fitter (NSC IV / MCP III / KNQF Level 5); Electrical Wireman (KNQF Level 6 – Diploma equivalent) and Plumber Pipe Fitter (KNQF Level 6 – Diploma equivalent).

Swisscontact Country Director, Sharon Mosin, said the programme is designed to close the long-standing gap between education and employment.

“Our education and training systems have expanded access significantly, but expansion has not always translated into relevance. Employers consistently report difficulty finding job-ready candidates, while graduates struggle to find work. This is not because young people lack potential; it is because the skills demanded by a rapidly evolving economy are not always aligned with what is being taught.”

Industry leaders have also welcomed the initiative, emphasising the importance of employer involvement in shaping training systems that respond to real labour market needs. Joyce Njogu, Head of Consulting and Sustainability at the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM), said industry participation has been central to the development of employer-driven training programmes.

“KAM has supported the development and rollout of several employer-informed dual training curricula that are currently in use within the manufacturing sector. In addition, KAM contributes to national skills coordination structures, including the National Dual Training Committee and the Sector Skills Committees under the Ministry of Labour. These platforms allow industry perspectives to inform national skills policies and standards.”

PropelA: From Pilot to National Rollout

The newly launched dual training curriculum package builds on lessons from PropelA, a youth skills development initiative implemented by Swisscontact in partnership with the private sector, TVET institutions and NITA. Since 2022, PropelA has served as a pilot platform to localise and adapt the Swiss dual vocational training model to Kenya’s labour market realities.

Through partnerships with institutions such as Don Bosco Boys Town Technical Institute, apprentices in trades such as electrical installation and plumbing combined structured workplace learning with classroom instruction, supported by private sector companies that provided training placements and stipends.



“Swisscontact facilitated and convened a meeting of Kenyan private sector, over 60 leading companies in the construction space alongside NITA to understand the painpoint within the Kenyan construction sector and to design a curriculum that is contextualised for Kenya and speaks to Kenyan needs, and out of this convening a dual apprenticeship curriculum tackling plumbing and electrical trades in Kenya were put together and piloted.”

As Kenya undertakes large-scale infrastructure development across sectors such as transport, housing, and agriculture, youth unemployment continues to persist due to a shortage of critical technical skills. The construction sector alone is valued at over KES 2 trillion, yet Kenya has only 2,000 certified plumbers, masons, and painters compared to 5,000 engineers, a clear illustration of the skills gap. Across the wider economy, 55% of informal-sector firms report difficulty finding skilled workers (Ministry of Labour, 2020). The Swiss dual training system, adapted to the Kenyan context through Propela, is already delivering measurable results, with **employability rates reaching approximately 80% among graduates.**

About Swisscontact:

Swisscontact is a Swiss non-profit founded in 1959 by Switzerland's private sector and academia.

Our mission: to unleash the potential of private initiative for sustainable development and shared prosperity. In Kenya, we've been at it for 28 years, working across youth skills, digital transformation, climate action, public health, and SME development.

A media kit, including photos, video footage, and background materials, is available at:

www.swisscontact.org/ysdf

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