



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



International Institute  
for Educational Planning

*Pôle de Dakar*  
EDUCATION SECTOR ANALYSIS

IIEP PÔLE DE DAKAR PAPERS

# Approach to the identification of obstacles to the implementation of vocational education and training policies



---

# # 2

Tools and methods

---



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



International Institute  
for Educational Planning

*Pôle de Dakar*  
EDUCATION SECTOR ANALYSIS

IIEP PÔLE DE DAKAR PAPERS

# Approach to the identification of obstacles to the implementation of vocational education and training policies



---

# # 2

Tools and methods

---

**Published in 2018 by**

**IIEP Pôle de Dakar – UNESCO**

Almadies – Route de la plage de Ngor

BP 3311 – Senegal

Tel. + 221 33 859 77 30

[www.poledakar.iiep.unesco.org](http://www.poledakar.iiep.unesco.org)

**Attribution :** Approach to the identification of obstacles to the implementation of vocational education and training policies, IIEP Pôle de Dakar - Unesco, 2018

ISBN : 978-92-803-1416-8

Conception graphique : Polykrome

Impression : Polykrome

Unesco 2018



*This publication is available in open access under the non commercial Attribution - NoDerivs 3.0 IGO (200 IGO-BY-NC-ND 3.0) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/igo/>). In using the content of this publication, users accept to be bound by the UNESCO Open Access Repository terms of use (<http://en.unesco.org/open-access/terms-use-ccbyncnd-en>). This license applies exclusively to the publication text's content.*

*The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on behalf of UNESCO or IIEP concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The ideas and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors; they are not necessarily those of UNESCO or IIEP.*

# Table of Contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| Introduction .....  | 4         |
| <b>The genesis of Pefop within the IIEP-Pôle de Dakar .....</b>                       | <b>5</b>  |
| Principle of the approach: involvement of all actors .....                            | 5         |
| The choice of the five priority axes .....  | 5         |
| The notion of "obstacle" .....  | 7         |
| <b>The procedure for identifying obstacles .....</b>                                  | <b>8</b>  |
| First phase: deciphering the terrain to explore the obstacles .....                   | 8         |
| Stage 1: document collection and analysis.....  | 8         |
| Stage 2: targeted interviews.....   | 9         |
| Results of the first phase: development of a directory of preliminary obstacles ..... | 7         |
| Second phase: deepening of obstacle identification .....                              | 11        |
| Synopsis of focus group data .....  | 12        |
| Third phase: analysis and validation .....  | 14        |
| Treatment of focus group data .....   | 14        |
| <b>Summary and perspectives .....</b>   | <b>17</b> |

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| AFD    | Agence française de développement                                    |
| TVET   | Technical and Vocational Education and Training                      |
| VET    | Vocational Education and Training                                    |
| IIEP   | International Institute for Educational Planning                     |
| PASET  | Territorialized Sector Action Plans                                  |
| Pefop  | Platform of Expertise in Vocational Training                         |
| PPP    | Public-Private Partnerships  |
| PROCOR | Programme Contributing to the Operationalization of Reforms          |
| UNESCO | The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |

## List of graphs, tables and boxes

|               |   |    |
|---------------|---|----|
| Graphic 1     | : Five strategic axes .....   | 6  |
| Graphic 2     | : Global approach of the five strategic axes.....   | 6  |
| Graphic 3     | : Three-steps analysis .....  | 13 |
| Graphic 4     | : Causal analysis.....  | 15 |
| Table 1       | : Example of the preliminary identification of obstacles in Senegal – Axis 1 ...  | 11 |
| Table 2       | : Summary table for the PPP axis of the report identifying and analysing the obstacles to the operationalization of renewed VET policy in Burkina Faso... | 14 |
| Table 3       | : Table of causal analysis of Mauritania – Axis 2 .....   | 16 |
| Box 1         | : Guidelines for the semi-directive interview .....   | 10 |
| Photography 1 | : <i>Focus group, Metaplan technique, Thiès (Senegal), from May 30<sup>th</sup> to June 3rd, 2016</i> .....   | 13 |

# Approach to the identification of obstacles to the implementation of vocational education and training policies

To identify obstacles in the implementation of renewed vocational education and training policies, the authors have chosen an empirical method as the activities of the Platform of Expertise in Vocational Training (Pefop) of the Pôle de Dakar UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP-Pôle de Dakar) and partner countries evolve. Thus, this approach is bound to improve with experience on the ground and as the activities progress.

This methodology was developed by the IIEP-Pôle de Dakar team under the supervision of Mr. Guillaume Husson (head) and Mr. Beifith Kouak Tiyaab (deputy head). The editing was assured by Mr. Naceur Chraïti (Pefop manager) and Ms. Léonie Marin (communications expert). This project has especially benefited from the experiences of Mr. Khalil Balhoul (expert in agricultural training and informal sector) and Mr. Ibrahima Diallo (expert in integration-employment). Mr. Jérôme Gérard (network facilitator) also lent his support to this project.

This approach was conceived following some fruitful exchanges with Mr. Christian Fusillier (project team leader, Education, Training and Employment Division of the Agence française de développement).



## Introduction

The Pôle de Dakar International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) of the United Nations educational, scientific and cultural organization (UNESCO) has initiated, with the financial assistance of the Agence française de développement (AFD), the platform of expertise in vocational training (Pefop) in June 2015 whose activities were launched on November 2nd and 3rd, 2015. This platform is particularly interested in aspects of implementation and operationalization of vocational education and training (VET) policies by focusing on exchanges and sharing. Its pragmatic dimension has prompted the experts to choose innovative methodological tools to make it possible to identify practical experiences, the individual and actions to be implemented. Thus, the Pôle de Dakar of the IIEP focuses more on the experience of the VET actors.

The approach is chosen based on causal analysis and uses qualitative methods such as documentary analysis, semi-structured individual interviews and focus groups. These applicable and experimental tools make it possible to develop an operational approach in connection with VET in different African countries. This approach not only represents the development of know-how at the technical level but also reflects on the understanding of the actors' discourses and experiences to identify and analyse the relevant obstacles and to participate in the current and inherent discussions of VET.

The development of this approach has made it possible to identify and overcome obstacles. It has been a rich source of reflections and actions aimed at conceptualizing a useful and sustainable methodology to identify the obstacles to the implementation of strategic orientations and development projects of VET. Following the identification of these obstacles, an analysis of the capacity gaps of the public and private actors concerned makes it possible to think about the actions to be implemented with the help of the Programme Contributing to the Operationalization of Reforms (PROCOR), elaborated in a country with the active participation of these actors. Subsequently, the PROCOR is operationalized by a set of territorialized sector action plans (PASET).

Thus, the challenge of the development of this approach is nomothetic, in the sense that it proposes to explore the appropriation of methods directly related to the experience of the targeted actors in order to arrive at a global understanding of the situation in connection with VET. This will then help to produce a framework of reference and measurement that defines the main obstacles to be identified.

The approach to the identification of obstacles aims to:

- propose a framework of methodological references that can become a common tool for identifying obstacles to the implementation and operationalization of VET policies;
- to help develop knowledge-based tools that can adapt to different situations.

This approach has certain advantages. For example, the repetition of the experiments observed under the same experimental conditions makes it possible to establish the areas of validity of the approach in order to adapt it to different contexts. The challenge remains to formalize the gains from the first experiments to develop a generalized reference framework in support of the operationalization of VET policies in Africa. The approach advocated is that of participation; that is to say that the different actors involved, at different levels, take part in the discourse. The participatory approach goes hand in hand with consultation, which multiplies the expertise and develops transversal approaches. This helps to share and compare knowledge to better understand the current VET issues. Through this approach, a position of vigilance and rigor is recommended so as to not forget the complexity of the various situations and fields explored.

## The genesis of Pefop within the IIEP-Pôle de Dakar

Policy, strategy and action plan documents are often very general, without any real clarification of the role of the different actors and the concrete procedures for their interventions. The structures in charge of VET, split into many technical ministries, are in principle regulated by interministerial structures with multiple mandates. Most often, these do not work properly for budgetary reasons, but also because of a lack of a clear definition of areas of competence between public and private actors at the central points of the reform process.

Using this framework and in order to reflect on the issues of VET, it was considered necessary to create a technical assistance system that focuses its efforts on supporting the implementation of VET policies and their insertion into the job market.

It is in this context that Pefop was created within the Pôle de Dakar of the IIEP-UNESCO. In addition, the countries benefiting from this new mechanism also have the support of the Pôle de Dakar in the analysis and planning sectors of education.

The AFD, the main donor of the Pôle de Dakar, financed the entire first phase of Pefop. The AFD is already intervening through a projects and programmes angle to support VET and the integration of employment in the four-targeted countries who benefit from direct support of the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) reforms, namely: Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritania and Senegal.

### Principle of the approach: involvement of all actors

The very diverse perspectives of the actors enrich the discussions on the main issues targeted for the identification of obstacles and lead to a better implementation of the renewed VET policies in Africa. This diversity also allows for a better representation of the VET sector at the national level. The actors come from different spheres: ministries, agencies, regional structures, VET centres, professional organizations, companies, technical and financial partners, etc. In addition, the decision-making position of each actor varies from one organization to another. This cross look is also useful for all partners; for example, results can support technical and financial partners in their programme directions. In essence, the meeting and the involvement of the actors in the identification of the obstacles contribute to the harmonization of the interventions of the VET partners.

### The choice of the five priority axes

The platform aims to contribute, in African countries, to the implementation of renewed VET policies.

"Renewed policies" is defined as policy based on a partnership between public and "private" actors while:

- assuring that training is driven by economic demand;
- directing procedures for the validation of skills toward employment and integration;
- ensuring equity and access to training through the recognition of diversified career paths and the decentralization of supply;
- contributing to the establishment of lasting and sustainable financing;



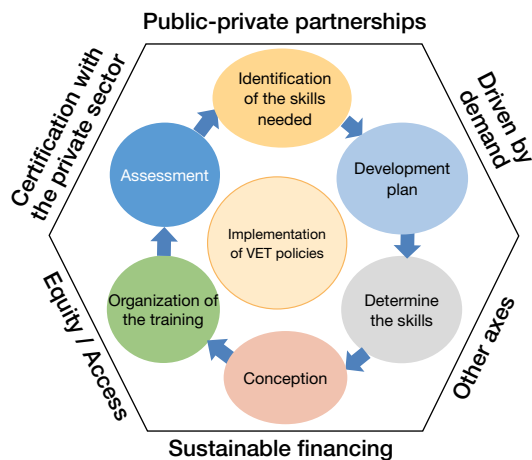
These axes have been considered in the light of current needs in VET. Indeed, the types of public action are transforming and require taking into account the development of private sectors. These axes thus make it possible to better understand the functioning of the VET systems and actors in the countries concerned. As a result, the renewed policies rely in particular on the identification of obstacles in relation to the five strategic axes.

**Graphic 1: Five strategic axes**



It is important to note here that the strategic goals are not an objective in themselves. In practice, they are treated as principles/approaches to be integrated throughout the VET process, as illustrated by the following graph.

**Graphic 2: Global approach of the five strategic axes**



## The notion of "obstacle"

The approach relies on the identification of obstacles to the operationalization of VET policy.

This manner of doing things makes it possible to question the causes (obstacles) of malfunctions and to look for ways to remedy them. The concept of an obstacle thus makes it possible to identify the difficulties and the weaknesses in order to develop and implement solutions that are political and appropriate. In addition, understanding the obstacles produces a deepening of knowledge of the operation of its own structure.

The general question would be: What are the operational obstacles to the deployment and development of VET policy favouring the implementation of sustainable solutions?

In this context, the obstacle is a factor that slows down or hampers the implementation of an initiated (or decided) process of operationalizing VET policies. The target obstacle is not the equivalent of a risk and does not take into account the exogenous factors of the process. The obstacle is surmountable and solutions are conceivable and can be implemented to overcome it.

The obstacle represents a knowledge base stemming from the common experience of the various actors involved in the identification process.

The elaboration of the identification and analysis report puts the reflection on the obstacles at the heart of the process. In fact, the reasoned use of the analysis of the obstacles contributes to the participation of the actors in VET development approaches.

Beyond the learning of the reasoning for the obstacles, new knowledge is produced by the actors themselves, on the solution or removal possibilities of the obstacles. The perspectives in the adaptation of these reasonings within the framework of a participative approach allow for a real and concrete grounding based on experience.

## The procedure for identifying obstacles

A report of the findings is necessary, since it required a great effort to investigate and understand the many types of exchanges related to VET issues in the country concerned. In writing the identification and analysis report, the goal is to conserve the input and to highlight the information that is less accessible, especially the relations between the actors and the organizational actions. The obstacle identification report allows for a classification of knowledge and helps to create an instrument for planning actions. In short, it instructs, accompanies and seeks to steer the obstacles.

### First phase: deciphering the terrain to explore the obstacles

This first phase, which consists of two steps, consists of studying the functioning of the VET system and its evolution, to identify the relationship between structures and their functioning to obtain a better understanding of the context and the dynamics of VET in the country. This phase is a kind of a pilot study to structure the identification and analysis report as a whole and to clarify the variables involved; it allows the pre-identification of the obstacles.

#### **Stage 1: document collection and analysis**

This stage begins with a document review. Through various retrieved and targeted documents, a review focusing on questions relative to VET is carried out. The goal is to understand the organizational culture, policies, practices, representations and procedures of VET in the country. In reality, this stage is complementary to stage 2: the semi-directive interview. At the end of this stage, a synopsis is produced and becomes a factual reference linked to the written documents studied for the continuation of the procedure of the diagnostic approach.

The documents reviewed are mainly: (i) legal texts, including laws, decrees, ordinances and orders; ii) strategic or policy documents; (iii) study reports or project/programme review aide-memoirs of the donors; and iv) the state of affairs of different situations, allowing to capture and analyse the evolution of some key indicators such as economic, demographic, academic, etc. indicators. The data retrieval of these documents is done according to the five priority axes. The elements that emerge from this corpus are intended to be used to build the necessary material in order to have the contextual background of the VET before carrying out the targeted interviews. During this stage, the recovered material is interpreted by describing the peculiarities of the different issues identified by the VET in order to better establish the questions for the semi-directive interview. Sometimes, because of the difficulty of accessing documents, it is not uncommon to move more quickly to the interview stage.

In addition, these documents are often characterized from a generalized approach and do not specifically target the obstacles identified within the framework of the Pefop. In fact, the state of affairs and assessments are often linked to external returns that are used to identify global guidelines. However, the latter do not carry out an in-depth questioning between the different partners and do not involve their participation in the definition of needs and the diffusion of innovations. However, we look first at the obstacles to identify the individual in the common and provide a direction of reflection for action.

**Stage 2: targeted interviews**

Semi-directive interviews are conducted with the key actors of VET in a country concerned. They must be made in an individual and collective manner. The facilitator tries to be as active as possible and gives maximum latitude to the interviewees. In this case, the semi-directive interview begins with an open question that is related to the five priority areas. This type of interview can be a generic model of interaction because its flexible structure allows the interviewee to appropriate the discussion. The purpose of these interviews is to learn about the existing issues that are hindering the implementation of VET in the country.

The interview guide (see Box 1) was established to identify specific problems and to allow rich and nuanced responses. It revolves around discussion points in a more general way in order to lead to themes that are more specific. The logical sequence of the questions structures the interview.

The actors interviewed come from the government, voluntary, union, public and private sectors. Depending on their availability, the interviews take place with people directly concerned by the issues of VET. The statements collected are transcribed. Subsequently, the results of the interviews are summarized in a report (aide-memoire), transferred to all the interviewees. This approach reveals the iterative process from the very first step, a method that advocates transparency in order to facilitate explanations and results.

## **Box 1: Guidelines for the semi-directive interview**

### **Initial contact**

Presentation of the structure of the interviewer and his/her missions.

Presentation of the structure of the interviewee.

### **The themes addressed**

#### **1. Obstacles to the operationalization of the public-private partnership (PPP) in VET**

What are the obstacles to the operationalization of VET within the framework of a PPP?

What were the past wishes and what will be the future wills at the policy level to develop the PPP?

#### **2. Features of the TVET and skills of the economic sectors**

To what extent is the VET supply driven by economic demand?

What obstacles have you identified in connection with your structure that could hinder the direction of the VET supply by the demand of the economic sectors? What solutions are or have been considered in this regard?

What are the obstacles that prevent professional organizations from taking an active role in the development and regular update of the sectoral labour market and training management tools, specifically the job-trade and job-skills repositories? What resources do they need to assume their role alongside the state on this strategic axis?

#### **3. Certification and validation**

Are professional organizations actively involved in the skills validation and certification process? What are the problems encountered in setting up a system for the validation and certification of skills involving all actors, particularly professional actors?

From your point of view and in relation to your field of intervention in VET, what are the causes that would hinder the involvement of private partners in the process of validation and certification of skills?

Is there a mechanism for recognizing multiple ways of acquiring skills?

Are the non-formal and informal sectors, particularly the agricultural sector, positively affected by these opportunities for the recognition of skills? What is missing to develop this strategic axis? What are the problems encountered to further develop the equity in the VET supply?

#### **4. Lasting and sustainable financing of VET**

Are the cross-financing mechanisms defined by VET bringing together various sources (state budgets, training funds, local authorities, participation of private individuals)? Are they operational? What hinders the development of new VET funding mechanisms, particularly the association of the informal sector?

Is there a study that analyses the efficiency of the VET mechanism (all costs related to VET / occupational integration of the outgoing)? If so, what are the results and how are they exploited? If not, what is preventing VET development?

### **To conclude**

Explanation of the next stage: *focus groups*.

## Results of the first phase: development of a directory of preliminary obstacles

The data from the interviews is then processed through a table that summarizes the themes of the five priority axes. As a result of this content analysis, a first classification is performed based on the grouping of responses, their similarities and recurrences. The information is collected and organized in a table that highlights the pre-established obstacle groups.

The goal is to have a first look to better understand the situation and the problems. The organization of this phase allows the establishment of the necessary mechanism to structure the information that will be presented during the focus groups.

Thus, this phase gives birth to a summary table of the preliminary obstacles whose obstacle groups illustrate in some way the main problems. These will influence the guidelines, the problems envisaged for future discussions within the focus groups.

**Table 1: Example of the preliminary identification of obstacles in Senegal – Axis 1**

| Axis    | Preliminary raw obstacles<br>(collected during the interviews and extracts from documentation)  | Global axis problem and Groups of disconnected obstacles  |
|---------|---|---|
| 1 – PPP | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The PPP is weak due to a lack of content and a national consultation framework (the CNCFPPT) that does not work.</li> <li>• Private actors play a figurative role in the PPP, especially at the grassroots level.</li> <li>• The state remains possessive of its prerogatives and does not want to delegate the functions to direct training structures.</li> <li>• Private actors do not engage in partnership with the state because they do not find it is in their interests.</li> <li>• Decisions are made, but there is no follow-up to realise their implementation.</li> <li>• Lack of political will.</li> <li>• Lack of mutual trust between the public and private sectors.</li> <li>• The PPP framework and procedures are not adapted to the concerns of the private actors.</li> <li>• Private actors do not adopt the PPP consultation frameworks.</li> <li>• There are no tools to motivate companies to truly engage in PPP.</li> <li>• Lack of understanding of PPP issues by the actors.</li> <li>• Informal sector actors do not yet believe in partnerships.</li> <li>• Lack of common understanding of initiated reforms, partnership, issues and roles for all actors.</li> <li>• Public and private actors do not know each other well.</li> <li>• Lack of resources for the functioning of the partnership bodies, which hinders the implementation of their respective functions.</li> <li>• The low representation of informal production units in the professional sectors means that the PPP with the professional branches are unbalanced and do not cover the informal sector which represents a very important part of the country's economic strength.</li> <li>• The PPP is not framed by legal, financial and pedagogical texts.</li> </ul> | <p><u>General problem of axis 1:</u></p> <p><b><i>The PPP is not operational.</i></b></p> <p><u>Obstacle group</u></p> <p>1 The current PPP framework is not appropriate.</p> <p>2 The PPP is not sufficiently generalised in the mechanism of VET.</p> <p>3 There is no real commitment from the actors for the PPP.</p> |

## Second phase: deepening of obstacle identification

The focus group approach, in this context, is similar to that of the discussion groups. In fact, the technique is based on group dynamics and makes it possible to explore and stimulate debate around each of the five priority axes. The exchanges favour the emergence of knowledge and the sharing of experiences. The direct expression by the participants facilitates the highlighting of the "real" problems related to the VET context. The focus group assesses participants' needs, expectations, and representations of VET in their country. The goal is to adopt a resolutely practical perspective.

The sessions take place in a neutral and friendly place. Each of the five priority axes is the subject of a one-day focus group. In the framework of each discussion, the participants are divided into sub-groups, whose number is equal to that of the main problems retained for the priority axis concerned.

The focus group facilitators have mainly three functions:

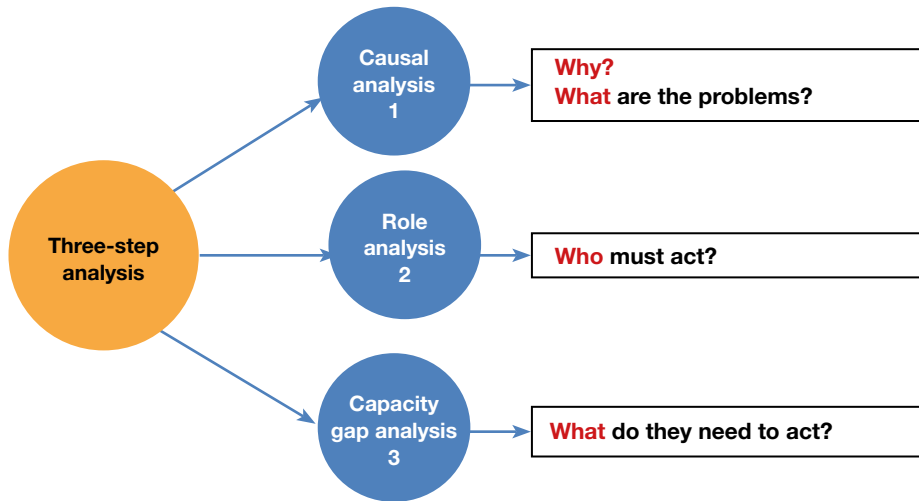
- 1) Involvement: engage the participants, make sure each has a fair turn to speak and ask for clarification.
- 2) Confirmation: confront certain ideas and, when necessary, help reformulate ideas.
- 3) Orientation: make inferences, draw comparisons, and focus exchanges according to the chosen themes.

Before starting the focus groups, during the start-up session, the facilitators of the focus groups validate the main issues that were elaborated following the interviews. This step makes it possible to reformulate, to adjust the problems developed around the targeted obstacles, because the objective of the focus groups is to look for the causes of the pre-identified preliminary obstacle groups.

The technique used to structure the focus groups is that of "Metaplan". This allows all opinions to be taken into account and to make group discussions visible. Facilitators use physical boxes of different colours (10 cm x 20 cm) and write one idea per box. The colours respect a precise display code that ensures a more direct communication. A dedicated colour is used for priority axes, for obstacle groups and for obstacles. The ideas written on the boxes are subsequently displayed on a wall using a sticker. By group and as the discussions progress, a "Metaplan cloud" is created, providing a visualization so that participants can better follow the course of discussions. The group has a president whose role is to manage the group and equitably distribute the dialogue; a recorder writes the ideas and presents the results of the obstacle groups related to each of the axes to all the participants in order to validate, reformulate and/or dispel them.

In this framework, the aim is to identify each time a "problem" and to apply a three-step analysis to it as follows:

**Graphic 3: Three-step analysis**



A first appropriation of the analysis of the causes (developed more in the section Treatment of focus group data) is carried out at this stage, always with a participative approach. For each identified cause (obstacle), the public and private actors having or who will have a role to play in the management of this cause must be identified, as well as the role of each actor in the cancellation of the obstacle in question. Subsequently, for each actor identified and who will take part in the cancellation of the obstacle in question, the subgroup is called upon to analyse/identify the obstacles (capacity gaps) at various levels that prevent an actor from insuring and assuming his/her role.

During the first experiments, analyses of roles and the capacity gap were not systematically conducted to the end. In the framework of the implementation of PROCOR, the different actors are called to return to these two analyses, especially as the priority obstacles are defined and the actors concerned are targeted.

**Photograph 1: Focus group, Metaplan technique, Thiès (Senegal), from May 30th to June 3rd, 2016**





### Synopsis of focus group data

The focus groups have thus made it possible to study the variety of opinions of the different actors and have highlighted perspectives in order to objectify the factors/causes associated with the obstacles. At the end of each day, the experts record the data from the discussions. This record gives rise to a table that illustrates the "raw" results of the focus groups according to each of the priority axes. This synopsis, at this stage, is more descriptive.

**Table 2: Summary table for the PPP axis of the report identifying and analysing the obstacles to the operationalization of renewed VET policy in Burkina Faso**

| A 1 : The PPP is not sufficiently developed |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| A 1 : The PPP is not sufficiently developed | LIMITED CAPACITY OF ACTORS                               | LIMITED RECOGNITION OF RECIPROCAL INTERESTS OF ACTORS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PPP           |
| Attributions not clearly defined            | Insufficient funding to build competency                 | Reciprocal interests weakly defined, clarified and taken into account in consultation frameworks |
| Consultation frameworks not adapted         | Weakness of the PPP/VET driving mechanism                | Limited awareness of mutual interests  |
| Lack of outreach/awareness of actors        | Insufficient skills to meet the requirements of the PPP  | Reluctance of some actors in the private sector because they do not see it in their interests    |
| Legal and regulatory framework not adapted  | Weakness in the collection and processing of information | Contents of texts on non-consensual reciprocal interests   |
| Insufficient financial resources            |  |  |

### Third phase: analysis and validation

The obstacle validation parameters are consistency, completeness, verifiability and recurrence. Verifying with the actors themselves clarifies a number of ambiguities about choices, as well as finding overlaps between categories. In addition, the ambiguity of some proposals makes it necessary to clarify their strict meaning and to avoid inferring objectives.

During this phase, the intervention of the experts does not pertain to a systemic diagnosis of the VET mechanism. Indeed, the goal is not to make an analysis to identify the points of strength and the points to change. In fact, it acts to share and validate in plenary the results of works which were mainly done in groups by the causal analysis.

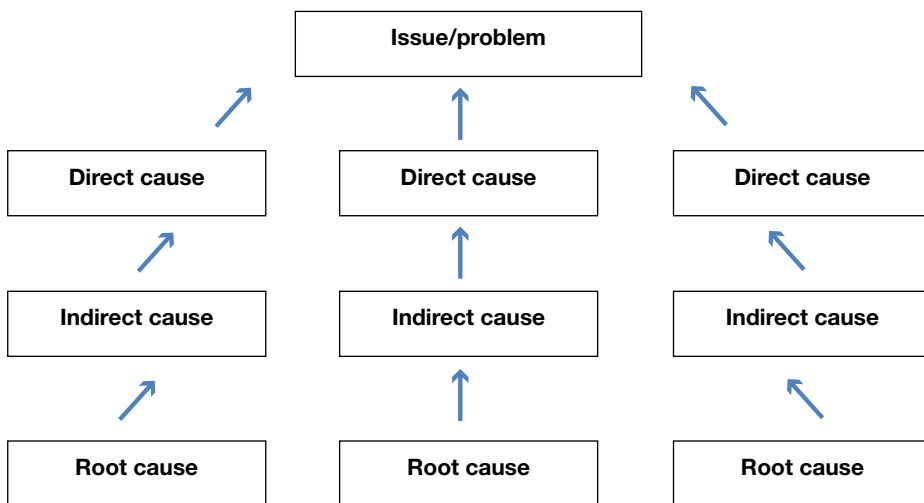
### Treatment of focus group data

After the synopsis of the raw data, it is necessary to carry out a work of reformulation whose objective is to model potential frameworks of actions. It is important to check the coherence of the issues and obstacles mentioned, then eliminate or merge the duplicates.

It is therefore while aiming towards a generalization and fusion of factors that a "final" classification of the obstacles takes place. The generalization consists in creating categories that group together the essential obstacles and concrete phenomena. The fusion, in turn, makes it possible to select within categories to get to the essential point.

At this stage, the approach is heuristic since there is a refinement of the work linking cause and effect (causal analysis). The goal is to organize the causes according to a three-level hierarchy (see graphic below): the root causes generate the indirect causes; the indirect causes generate the direct causes and the direct causes generate the problem.

**Graphic 4: Causal analysis**



The different causes return to the concept of obstacle, because each cause represents a type of obstacle. This kind of analysis enables a classification of the effects of the obstacles at three-levels of depth and to identify the actors and their responsibilities to find the best solutions.

This reflection with causal analysis gives birth to a table which will be created and validated by the participants during a validation workshop.

**Table 3: Table of causal analysis of Mauritania – Axis 2**

|                        | The skill needs of the market are not well defined   | The implementation of the APC is not controlled  | Training with the company remains limited  | The implementation monitoring mechanism is not developed   |
|------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| <b>Direct causes</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient resources allocated to identifying needs</li> <li>• Lack of skills in terms of identifying needs</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management and training staff do not control the APC</li> <li>• Limited budget resources for the implementation of the APC</li> </ul>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reluctance of the company to welcome apprentices/trainees</li> <li>• Absence of tools and support materials for company training</li> <li>• Limited capacity of public and private actors to supervise in-company training</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The tools for monitoring integration are not appropriate</li> <li>• Lack of coordination between the actors monitoring integration</li> <li>• Lack of qualified human resources to monitor integration</li> <li>• Lack of financial resources to monitor integration</li> </ul> |
| <b>Indirect causes</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absence of PPP framework for identifying needs</li> <li>• Absence of coordination in terms of identifying needs</li> <li>• Absence of an information system for the labor market</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update the trade nomenclature and skills repertoire</li> <li>• Absence of a validated operational strategy for generalisation of the APC</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absence of legal framework</li> <li>• Absence of incentives for the company</li> <li>• Lack of communication about training with the company</li> <li>• Limited financial resources for training with the company</li> </ul>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple structures involved in the monitoring of integration</li> <li>• Absence of a development strategy for an implementation monitoring mechanism</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Root causes</b>     | Persistence of school logic at the centre of the VET mechanism   |  |  |  |

More precisely, the table of causal analysis is then presented over a two-day period to all participants as a PowerPoint presentation. Each PowerPoint presentation becomes the topic of discussion in order to revise the table as best as possible.

This process of causal analysis makes it possible to produce a complete Excel table that includes a significant number of obstacles prioritised according to causes and strategic axes. This may be the equivalent of the methodological process of the "problem tree" which aims to identify a fundamental problem, its effects and root causes. The identification, in this sense, makes it necessary to prioritise and to distinguish between the obstacles that are at the centre or that are secondary, real or apparent, etc.

## Summary and perspectives

The approach to the identification of obstacles to the operationalization of renewed VET policies is pragmatic: the resolution of the practical problems of the different VET actors. One of the objectives is to diagnose the obstacles and to determine the criteria of methodological rigor in order to propose effective solution paths while taking into account the five strategic axes.

Inevitably, by solving the practical problems with the identification of obstacles, this approach is on the side of the actors and therefore participative. This iterative and participatory approach requires back and forth communication between participants/partners to foster mutual understanding in exchanges and results. In this context, the focus groups really make it possible to grasp the structural and procedural elements to identify the obstacles to the operationalization of VET policies. Moreover, the iterative nature of the approach makes it possible to improve it continuously, according to the experiences of the different countries. At this stage, the IIEP Pôle de Dakar has embarked on a rationale of initiations and tests over a period of four and a half years, in four countries. Its goal is to continue this approach over a longer period of time and that countries can use this obstacle identification methodology themselves in order to genuinely implement their VET-related reforms.

At present, the field of VET is concerned with change and reform. The IIEP Pôle de Dakar is thus closely linked to the actors of change and helps to transform situations while also making them aware of their responsibilities so that they commit to the reform of VET in their country. The actors involved in this process have access to innovative diagnostic tools. In fact, this approach is an invitation to methodological innovation, linking expertise, experience and knowledge.

Following the development of this method for the elaboration of an identification and analysis report, the prospects are numerous. In light of the first results, the IIEP Pôle de Dakar wishes to develop a map of the obstacles and their solutions. The positioning actually makes it possible to determine, for each target, the ideal configuration of the essential attributes for the situation to change in a positive and effective manner. It can also be considered to study on and around this configuration, and then compare the different positionings according to the various actors of a country in the VET sector. A map of the possible solutions linked to the different obstacles can then be drawn. In this sense, a study was carried out on the various types of collaborations to be maintained by the actors to meet the needs of the labour market and to ensure a better socio-occupational integration. It proposes a typology of developed partnerships that allows for the determination of the level of responsibility of each of the actors within the functions of the VET procedures. This analysis shows that PPP is at the centre of the mechanism. It can be considered as a transversal axis in which the other axes are aligned: the driving of VET through economic demand, the involvement of the private sector in the certification process and lasting and sustainable financing. The existence of a partnership framework seems to be a prerequisite for achieving the results targeted by the countries. More generally, through the analysis of international partnership practices, it has been observed that countries do not necessarily have the same level of interaction between actors on the different axes. The IIEP Pôle de Dakar therefore wishes to make use of this study in order to adapt this approach for the identification of obstacles to the operationalization of the renewed VET policies. Indeed, this approach could identify more in the field of VET by using all the processes

aimed at generating the release of obstacles in VET. Thus, the approach follows and is the result of a dialogue established between the VET actors and specialists. Consistency of methodological choices opens the door to the adaptability and improvement of these methodologies according to the issues to be analysed in order to bring out transversal and sustainable solutions for the operationalization of VET policies in Africa.

The IIEP-Pôle de Dakar, via the Platform of Expertise in Vocational Training (Pefop) with its partner countries, has developed an approach to the identification of obstacles to the operationalisation of renewed vocational education and training policies through a participatory approach. Its objective is to propose a framework of methodological references that can become a common tool for the identification of obstacles to the implementation and operationalisation of vocational education and training policies that can be adapted to different contexts.