

**Reporting Agency:** United Nations Development Programme

**Country:** Armenia

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

**No. and title of Project:** 00064041, Vocational Education and Training (VET)

**Reporting period:** January-Dec 2011

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

**Mission of the VET Project** - Improving employability of graduates of vocational colleges. The focus is on educational programmes relevant to economic sectors with a potential for economic growth and job creation in rural areas. The focus is on promoting practical, professional training in 12 VET colleges-regional multifunctional educational centers.

**VET Project activities** are well aligned with the VET policy in Armenia. The Project contributes to the wider socio-economic development of the country by helping the state authorities: i) to implement pro-poor policies and programmes in the VET sector ii) to increase employment opportunities in remote marzes.

**VET component and its activities are strongly perceived to be relevant by the direct beneficiaries.** Both teachers and students in the pilot 12 colleges were extremely positive about the new modular curricula, equipment and the training being received, as compared with the traditional approach in Armenia.

**The student enrolment rate in 12 pilot VET Colleges increased from 5%-20% in 2010 as a result of the VET component interventions.**

**Wider effect of the VET component than were originally planned is observed.** The short term VET training for unemployed appears to have been highly successful. As a result of this initiative, a wider effect of the component was that Armenian active labour market policy has been influenced. The Law on Employment was amended in December 2010 and came into force on 5 February 2011, allowing the National Employment Agency to provide training for young land-owning unemployed, who previously were not eligible for state-run employment programs. Other wider effects of the VET component include introduction of a number of VET policy papers, which are far exceeding (8 against planned 3) the anticipated by the Project Documents number of policy-level papers and expected to influence Armenian Educational and Employment policy: Life Long Learning (LLL) Strategy and Action Plan will be introduced in 2011, while 7 Policy level papers have been already introduced during the course of the Project implementation.

**They are promising results in terms of socio-economic development attained by the VET**

**Component.** For example, the new modular courses have been introduced, teaching has become very practical in nature, teachers have been trained and are responding well to the new approach, there is a much stronger link between VET courses and labour market needs, the private sector is recruiting directly from colleges, the college directors are increasingly looking to exploit income generating potential (e.g. arising from the installed equipment, scope for new adult evening classes, etc.). These are considered to be very promising results by the RA MOE&S, which is looking to mainstream pilot reforms in the other VET colleges, which will contribute to the socio-economic development of the country, especially the rural areas.

**The UNDP VET Project profile made it possible to quickly address one of the basic challenges of the global economic crises-unemployment.** UNDP Armenia together with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of Armenia has signed a Letter of Agreement on organization and conduct of large-scale vocational short-term re-trainings in agro-specialties demanded by the local labor markets with further job placement for registered unemployed focusing on youth unemployment in the regions.

**The assistance channeled through UNDP Armenia is aimed at the promotion of education-industry linkages applying ALMP instruments,** which means combination of training and work experience. The re-training program considers the state of the economy; its sectors that have the potential for development; and clearly defines target groups. This joint programme aimed at the certain vocational skills training is carefully geared to the existence of effective market opportunities.

## **I. PURPOSE**

- The main purpose of the VET Project is to achieve significant change with sustainable results by modernizing Vocational Education and Training System in Armenia. Main objectives of the VET Project are to raise youth employability by modernizing vocational education and training (VET) system in Armenia as a proven way to reduce poverty and generate income. Modernization include whole chain of pilot steps aimed at development of normative and legislative environment in the VET sector, enhancement of the vocational education and training system content; provision with trainings on various topics for VET faculty and students, upgrading facilities of the acting VET establishments and conducting PR campaign for VET system in Armenia to match demand and supply sides of the dynamically changing domestic labor market.
- The Project is contributing to socially-oriented economic growth by helping government authorities to implement pro-poor policies and programmes in Vocational Education and Training sector; to increase employment and business opportunities for the country's remote marzes by helping them to create an enabling environment for acquiring modern knowledge and occupational skills for learners to promote their labor market access and to create possibility for establishment of their own businesses.
- The Project is strengthening the capacity of the poor and socially disadvantaged to contribute to the country's growth by raising youth employability, broadening awareness on different opportunities to obtain vocational education in colleges and craftsmanship colleges; developing strategic partnership between private business and vocational institutions, and

increasing participatory approach in the development and implementation of vocational education and training system policy.

**The objectives** of the Project are to upgrade facilities and furnish with new equipment the selected country's 12 pilot VET schools; and provide labor market with skilful workforce to be trained based on updated qualification standards, modular programs and textbooks according to modern and innovative educational technologies. The Project is designed to address issues of 12 multifunctional regional VET colleges across the country as well as to contribute to the VET policy formulation and implementation through development of a number of VET policy fundamental papers.

- **Main implementing partners:** RA Ministry of Territorial Administration.

**Other partners:** RA Ministry of Education and Science (Responsible Party), National Institute of Education, National Center for VET development, VET schools; RA Ministry of Social Affairs; State Employment Services Agency, Youth Career Centers, Social Partners (private sector representatives); Donor Organizations (EU Delegation, WB, USAID, Eurasia Foundation, British Council, etc.), private educational funds, NGOs and Adult Educational Association; 12 multifunctional regional VET colleges- direct beneficiaries of the VET project; other VET establishments and training centers.

## II. RESOURCES:

Main Donor	Approved Budget, USD, 2010	Revised Approved Budget, USD
Government of Denmark	1,359,979.00	709,371.00
UNDP Armenia	61,000.00	61,000
OSIAF	0.00	214.000
Government of Armenia	0.00	3,450.00
<b>TOTAL:</b>		<b>774,035.00</b>

## III. RESULTS:

### 1. Progress Assessment towards Outcomes and Outputs

Project outputs have been drawn in line with its objectives and outcomes and demonstrate the level and influence of achievements by VET System in general; VET schools in particular, VET policy makers, teachers, students and adults.

The Project has identified and implemented several extra sub-project activities through various

funding mechanisms such as cost sharing and co-funding. Each sub-project has aimed at one or several MDGs: eradicating extreme poverty and developing an overall “global partnership for development”.

The implementation of the sub-projects builds on the mutually reinforcing mechanisms that allow enhancing the project impact and ensuring lasting results of the initiated activities.

The Project is designed to cover 12 multifunctional regional VET colleges by upgrading their educational laboratories as well as by modernizing whole chain of educational process starting from development of State Competency-Based Qualification Standards (CBQSS) and ending up with new training materials/guidelines and training programs for trainees on new curricula and text books.

Main focus of the VET Project is derived from the current trends of the labor market and reflects results of recently made research works and analytical papers on labor market and on Vocational Education System in Armenia. The following four-five groups of specialties having highest demand in current labor market (May 2006 up to the beginning of 2010) in comparison with other specialties have been identified: 1. Construction specialties; 2. Craftsmanship technical specialties; 3. Agricultural industry and food processing; 4. Tourism and service include business hospitality and public catering, and 5. IT sector.

## **2. Main activities implemented and achievements**

All initially planned activities for 2011 have been arranged. All activities are either completed or in the final stage of the implementation. Detailed information related to the actually implemented activities, achieved results and planned activities for the period covering January-Dec 2011 is shown below.

### **Component 1: Development of labor market oriented content and context of vocational education and training system**

#### **Activity 1:**

#### **Development and Publication of Manuals**

1. Technical and Financial Evaluation of the Proposals for development and publication of 12 Manuals is completed, the contracts are awarded
2. 12 Manuals with Teachers Guides are developed and about to be submitted to the RA Ministry of Education and Science for the technical expertise.

#### **Results:**

Development of 12 Armenian Language Manuals reflecting current demand of the labor market will supplement current poor libraries of the VET schools. The content of the Manuals is aligned to the extent possible to the nature of technical laboratories procured within the framework of the same Project.

## **Expected Impacts:**

- Labor market content of the VET system is introduced laying sound grounds for update of the teaching curricula
- Facilitating the development of the corresponding Manuals in Armenian language

## **Activity 2:**

### **Upgrade of Facilities for 12 Regional VET Colleges**

- **Armavir and Yeghegnadzor** State Regional Colleges are supplied by 2 *Wine-Testing Labs*
- **Vanadzor State Agricultural College (Lori Marz) and Shirak State Agricultural College (Shirak Marz)** are supplied with the *Agro-Mechanization* labs
- Procurement of 3 *Sewing* laboratories for 1. **Dilijan State College**; 2. **Ashtarak Artisan School** and 3. **Kajaran Artisan School** is initiated, the contact is awarded and is expected to be finalized by the end of 2011
- Procurement of 1 *Auto Driving Lab* for **Spitak State College** (Shirak marz) is initiated, and the contact is awarded and expected to be finalized by the end of 2011
- Procurement of 3 *Wood Processing Labs* for 1. **Alaverdy State College**; 2. **Goris State College**; and 3. **Gegharquniq State College** is initiated, the contact is awarded and expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2012

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- Construction works aimed at the establishment of *sewing workshop* at the premises of **Artashat State College** is completed.

## **Results:**

Upgrade of educational premises of 3 Multifunctional Regional Schools located in Armavir, Artasht, and Yeghegnadzor regions with the special focus on **agriculture; food processing, and crafts** as well facilities upgrade of **nine (9) additional regional VET schools with the focus on tourism, services, and technical artisan**. Having considerable savings against budget line for the development of Manuals, VET Project has allocated the released funds for the procurement of laboratory equipment for extra regional VET colleges based on the Letter – Request from the RA Minister Agriculture, which was consequently conveyed to the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs for granting “no objection”. The approval of funding extra labs for extra colleges was issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark in August, 2011. The Ministry of Education and Science (MOE&S) in its turn has also requested the UNDP to extend the assistance beyond 12 regional multifunctional VET colleges targeting other regional VET colleges which have extremely poor facilities and premises. As a result, the UNDP VET Project having available funds has decided to meet the requirement of the RA MOE&S and initiated the procurement of the above-mentioned laboratory equipment.

### **Expected Impacts:**

- Stronger emphases are put on upgrade of agro-colleges' educational facilities
- Broader coverage of the direct beneficiaries of the VET component
- Enhancement of the practical skills of labor force
- Extra income generating activities for VET schools through short-term training courses at the newly renovated and equipped educational workshops
- Visualization in a broader scope of Danish assistance than it was initially planned

### **Activity 3:**

#### **Project Implementation and Monitoring**

1. Project Second Steering Committee Meeting was successfully held on May, 2011
2. VET Project PR campaign is completed through 2 TV programs (10-minute program fully dedicated to the UNDP VET Component, is also available in YouTube:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hs6l6xTd-lc>)
3. VET Project was broadly introduced at the Educational Expo-2011 held on November 15-17, 2011.
4. Upgrade of the VET Project's website: [www.vet.am](http://www.vet.am) to visualize the Project activities
5. 6-Online UNDP training programs on IPSAS system to be newly introduced (operations, HR, finance, assets management) in UNDP globally have been successfully passed by the VET Project staff

### **Results:**

Daily management of the Project activities; better visualization of Danish assistance and UNDP presence in the VET sector

### **Expected Impacts:**

As a result of the Third Steering Committee Meeting and based on the official written requests of the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Education and Science, "no objection" was given to the extension of the number of VET colleges-direct beneficiaries of the VET component, especially in the field of agriculture.

### **Activity 4:**

#### **Capacity Building for VET Sector**

1. Four-day (24-hour) training program with attraction of international expert (Mrs. Belen Cano from Spain) for 70 VET methodologists is successfully completed
2. Study Tour entitled "Strengthening of Social Partnership in the VET Sector" for 12 participants representing different Social Partners at the high managerial level including Armenian and Regional Chambers of Commerce and Industry, relevant staff from the National Center for VET Development as well as National Institute of Education,

representatives of State Employment Services Agencies, Ministry of Education and Science as well as a number of VET regional Colleges Directors has been successfully conducted in Austria starting from October 2 until October 8, 2011.

3. 2-day Workshop on public discussion for Career Orientation Model was held for 25 participants representing different concerned agencies and organizations
4. Four-day (24-hour) training program with attraction of international expert (Mrs. Nicole Vardanian from the USA) for 80 VET administrators is successfully completed
5. Life-Long-Learning Strategy with the corresponding Action Plan developed by the international expert (Mr. Christopher Casaubon from France) has submitted to the Ministry of Education Science for the further actions.

**Results:** Institutional and human capacity building (more than 250 people representing all concerned stakeholders) starting from high-level VET policy makers and ending up with VET students is increased.

#### **Expected Impacts:**

- Proper and timely implementation of the VET sector reforms
- Improving legal environment of the educational sectors, and VET sector in particular
- Assuring qualitative education in the VET sector

#### **Activity 5:**

##### **Establishment of Labor Market Linkages with the VET Sector**

1. Implementation of the third phase of the joint program with the special focus on agricultural specialties for rural youth jointly executed with the MOL&SA and aimed at vocational re-training for registered unemployed with further job placement is completed
2. Monitoring site visits to 8 regions to supervise ongoing retraining programs for 150 registered unemployed is completed
3. Implementation of joint project with FRED A Component in Armavir marz: 20 VET students from Armavir State College are placed at Armavir Cannery-direct beneficiary of FRED A Component for 4-month paid internship.

#### **Results:**

More than 150 registered unemployed with the special focus on agriculture have upgraded their skills, withstand social exclusion of the economic crises, and, which is the most important, the majority of them (more than 50%) is job placed. With this activity the Project addresses issues of not only formal education, but also the training side of vocational education proving one more time basic principles of life-long learning.

A synergy between two components of Danish assistance has been already established and resulted in job placement for 20 students from Armavir State College, direct beneficiary of the VET component, at the premises of Armavir Cannery- food processing plant, direct beneficiary of the FREDA component.

#### **Expected Impacts:**

- Mitigation of social tension occurred as a result of agricultural sector downturn
- Employability increase and poverty reduction
- Implementation of PPP type of projects
- Introduction of Active Labor Market policy instruments

#### ***Gender mainstreaming indication in the VET Project***

All Project activities directly involve women's participation. The Project is keen to keep gender balance among direct beneficiaries. Policy level papers also address issues of gender equality.

#### **4. Implementation Constrains**

The Project does not observe implementation constraints.

#### **IV. FINANCIAL IMPLEMENTATION**

Delivery rate as of end of November 2011 is 93%.

#### **V. FUTURE PLANS: (2012-2013)**

##### **Component 1: Development of labor market oriented content and context of vocational education and training system**

##### **Activity 1:**

##### **Development and Publication of Manuals**

- Approval of the Manuals content
- Publication of 12 Manuals with 12 Teachers Guide
- Introduction of 3 E-learning professional courses to reach the Project target: 15 newly introduced Manuals (12 Manuals + 3 E-learning courses)

##### **Activity 2:**

##### **Upgrade of Facilities for VET Colleges**

- Procurement of Equipment for the extended number of the VET schools might be considered

- Set up of educational workshops

### **Activity 3:**

#### **Project Implementation and Monitoring**

1. Project forth Steering Committee Meeting to be held in 2012
2. UNDP VET Project Outcome Board chaired by the Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration to be held in 2012
3. Ongoing VET Project PR campaign
4. Shift to implementation of UNDP IPSAS management system including operations, HR, finance, and assets management.

### **Activity 4:**

#### **Capacity Building for VET Sector**

1. Provision with English language training programme for the relevant staff of the NCVETD
2. Short-term training programmes for the VET faculty on professional subjects supported by the newly introduced 12 Manuals aligned to the newly procured laboratory equipment
3. International know-how transfer for VET policy makers and implementers
4. International Policy Advise: 1. Development of Job Tracing Model; 2. Development of Continues Teachers Training Model (to be discussed one more time, since until know the Ministry of Education and Science has officially rejected the idea); 3. Establishment of Revolving Fund for the published Manuals (to be discussed one more time, since until know the Ministry of Education and Science has officially rejected the idea).

### **Activity 5:**

#### **Establishment of Labor Market Linkages with the VET Sector:**

1. Exercising PPP in the VET through implementation of the forth phase of the joint program with the special focus on agricultural specialties for rural youth jointly executed with the MOL&SA and aimed at vocational re-training for registered unemployed with further job placement
2. Seeking implementation of the joint projects with FRED A Component, to mainstream available funds under the components of Danish assistance: VET & FRED A components.