

## Employability and Lifelong Learning in Technical and Vocational Professions A Joint Partnership Research Project in Austria and Ethiopia

This joint research project is aimed at examining the following areas in consideration of goal 4 of the SDGs *Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all* by focussing two major issues:

- On the one hand, we deal with **qualification research** related to outcomes of formal education systems, and employability (**Employability Study**).
- On the other hand, we deal with country-specific **development and implementation of National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs)** and their relation to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), continuing education/workplace learning, and the labour market (**NQF Study**).



Our **research group** (from left to right): Yekunoamlak Alemu Woldeyohanis, Befekadu Zeleke Kidane, Demoze Degefa Alemu, Monika Kastner, and Peter Schlögl.

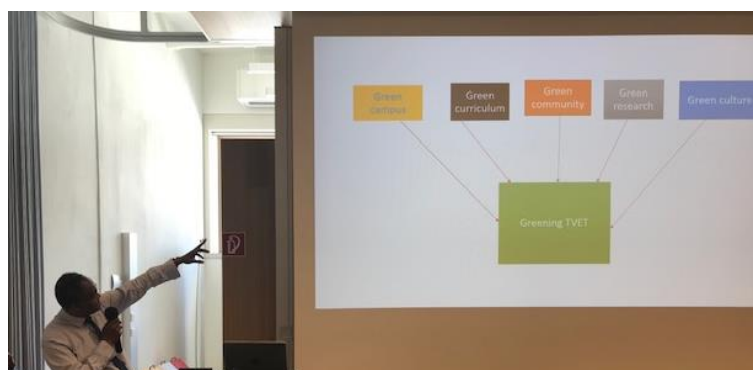
The photo was taken in July 2022 when the Ethiopian partners came to Vienna and Klagenfurt for their **first study visit**.

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### Collaborative approach within the *Cooperation Development Research* project

The responsibility for the *Employability Study* lies with the Ethiopian partners and the responsibility for the *NQF Study* lies with the Austrian partners. However, both sub-projects are driven by a **comparative approach** toward fact-finding and for facilitating **mutual understanding and learning of country-specific circumstances**. In addition, we establish common ground for further research collaboration and cooperation in Higher Education.

Employability Study	NQF Study
<p>The research aim is to contribute to TVET development in Ethiopia against the backdrop that youth unemployment is one of the serious problems facing Ethiopia.</p> <p>The research questions relate to TVET outcomes in terms of employability and readiness for Lifelong Learning, skill development with regard to TVET-school-to-work-transition, curricula development, qualification of TVET teachers and trainers, and competence-oriented training structures.</p>	<p>The research aim is to draw lessons from Ethiopian expertise with regard to development and implantation of Ethiopian NQF (ENQF) and by comparison of country-specific conditions.</p> <p>The research questions relate to validation and certification of non-formal and informal learning within the ENQF based on an “Occupational Assessment” procedure, and on experts for validating learning outcomes, as well as on permeability of TVET with regard to access to Higher Education.</p>



This photo was taken during a public lecture held by the three Ethiopian partners at Universität Klagenfurt in July 2022. The topic of the lecture was “Greening Skills in TVET Colleges of Ethiopia”.  
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### Several milestones already achieved (selection, as of August 2022):

The **pilot study** for the **Employability Study** was successfully completed in an Ethiopian TVET college. The quantitative-empirical survey instruments were successfully deployed and lessons were learnt from the piloting. One of them is to conduct a qualitative-empirical study in addition to the survey in order to gain deeper insights into the learning experiences of TVET students.

The **two-week study visit of the Ethiopian partners** in June/July 2022 included amongst others: a workshop on the results of the pilot study; two workshops at OeAD with APPEAR programme managers, and the ARQA-VET team; a workshop with VET researchers from the Austrian Institute for Research on Vocational Education, and 3s – Research & Consulting; a workshop with a researcher from the Austrian Foundation for Development Research; and study visits to several VET institutions in Klagenfurt (e.g., Vocational College (HTL) for mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, mechatronics; IT-L@b – Apprenticeship Training).

In July 2022, we gave a presentation entitled «Spotlight on Qualifications Frameworks in Ethiopia and Austria: QFs as a Global Resource» at the **12<sup>th</sup> International Researching Work & Learning Conference (Online, Toronto)**. In our panel we were supported by Amarech Kebede Mekonnen, Ethiopian Ministry of Education. She is an expert on the Ethiopian QF. Stephanie Allais, professor at the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa, and renowned expert on QFs who has contributed immensely to the analysis of QFs on a comparative level, provided us as respondent in our panel with valuable insights for our ongoing activities related with the **NQF Study**. The next step is the design of our data collection in Ethiopia (study visit in February 2023).

### Partnership & Contact

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