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## Working Paper

A conceptual approach to vocational training in fragile contexts  
- bridging education and economic development: Inspired by a  
scoping mission to Somalia

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## **A conceptual approach to vocational training in fragile contexts – bridging education and economic development.**

Inspired by a scoping mission to Somalia.

Vienna, May 2021

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## List of Abbreviations

ABE	Adult Basic Education
ANE	Adult Non-Formal Education
CEFE	Competency based Economies through Formation of Entrepreneurs
DIE	Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IT	Information Technology
(I)NGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
MENA	Middle East & North Africa
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SEED	Social Entrepreneurship and Economic Development
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNESCO- UNEVOC	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization – International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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## Abstract

The aim of the scientific concept study was to determine whether vocational education and training can contribute to supporting social and economic rehabilitation in fragile, particularly dysfunctional, contexts. And if so, by what means could this be achieved in a favourable way?

Our theoretical and methodological approach follows an interdisciplinary perspective that combines both comparative vocational education research and international development research, with particular emphasis on fragility and conflict. The selected design for the case study on Somalia follows a mixed-method approach of combining desk research, field studies with interviews and observations, validation workshops of the different parts of the findings. An extended, multi-level qualitative study was conducted.

We have developed a conceptual proposal on how vocational training and economic development can be linked in the context of fragility and dysfunctional statehood in Somalia and implemented for the positive development of the country. We have been able to make a concise contribution to the nexus between education in emergencies and the specific role of vocational education with its limits and extensions with conflicts and fragility.

We propose a new concept to cope with the situation of education and economic development under conditions of state fragility, crisis and conflict. We have named it TVET+ Service Hub, which combines the still separate fields of TVET with economic development and societal well-being in one institution. While for the time being our proposition refers to one specific institution to be set up in Somalia with funds from an international donor organisation, its future progress will show the possibilities of generalising this approach.

**Keywords:** TVET and Fragility; Education in Emergency; Conflict and Crisis Prevention; Economic Development and TVET; Somalia;

# 1. Introduction

This publication is the result of a research which was embedded in a consultancy assignment for a large German development organisation on the possibility to implement vocational training in fragile contexts. It was conducted as a kind of "sideline research" meaning that it was primarily not a funded research but that we used the possibilities of the consultancy work as an occasion to conduct the research as an inherent piece of the consultancy. The differentiation between both is generally difficult. We use the mode of operation as a main criterion for distinction. Consultancy work is done mostly through a practical impetus to fulfil assignment and terms of reference to work guided by experience and to meet what is presumed as the aspiration of the contractor. The standards of scientific work are often the background of such consultancy, but the transparency of conclusion, thoughts and their grounding in theoretical thinking are rare.

Based on this consultancy work and the data collection we will propose a more theoretically grounded conceptual approach of how to better bridge the existing vocational education and training system on the one hand and economic development on the other.

Our theoretical and methodological approach follows an interdisciplinary perspective that combines both international and comparative educational and development sciences, with particular emphasis on fragility and conflict policy (Paulson/Rappleye 2007).

State fragility and violent conflict are key constraints to development in many areas and correlate closely with poverty. By 2030, the World Bank estimates that half of all people living in poverty will be exposed to fragile environments. In such contexts, TVET can make an important contribution to stabilisation and economic development. So far, the international community has responded to trouble spots in countries of the Global South with security policy including military or para-military interventions and/or emergency aid. Experience to date has shown that short-term oriented interventions without structure-building measures are not sufficient. For stabilisation and conflict prevention, economic development, including a solid qualification of people for their working lives, is essential, in addition to the re-establishment of appropriate statehood with public service offering and a reliable framework for action under public law (Rudner/Wolf 2018).

What this could look like under the conditions of crisis intervention, fragile contexts, education in emergencies and development policy is explored here in a case study. Suggestions are presented as to how the hitherto separate areas of economic promotion and vocational training can be brought together with respect to the special conditions of Somalia.

Existing research focuses in most cases on framework conditions and on short-term measures in the context of crisis interventions. General educational activities predominate, but short-term, income-generating work and training measures are also referred to. The majority of these are conceptual studies and theoretical reflections on framework conditions. Studies advocating a holistic approach are existent. However, none of them makes a conceptual proposal on how the link between social and individual rehabilitation, education and training for acquisition and promotion of economic development could be achieved in practice in a training and education institution.

## 2. Methodical Procedure

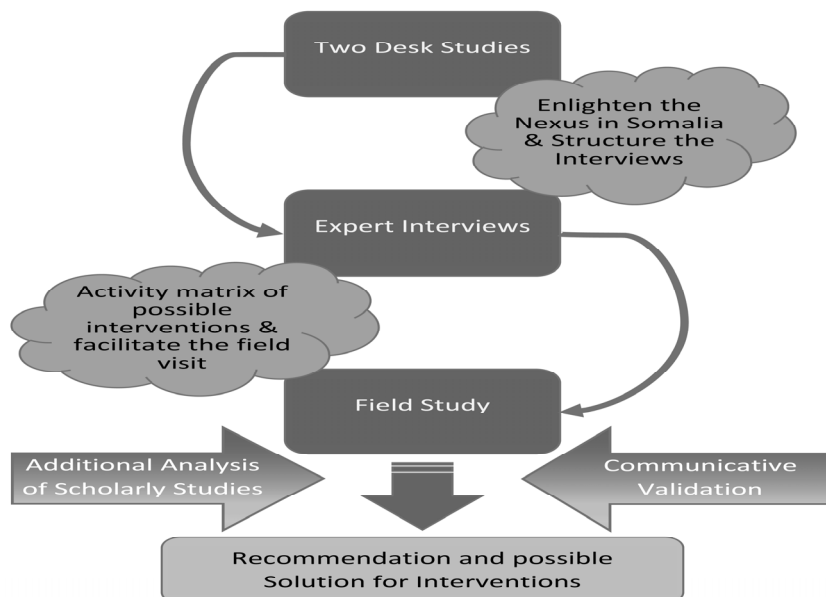
### 2.1. Research Design

We followed a classical approach of qualitative research with a triangulation of the data and its interpretation.

- (1) We conducted two extended desk studies of grey papers and scholarly studies on the nexus of education, conflict and reconstruction. This resulted in a conceptual notion of TVET in fragile contexts (Rudner/Wolf 2018). The second study was done for getting a deeper insight into the nexus, in our case of Somalia, by analysing grey papers from donor agencies and policy papers from different Somali governments.
- (2) We conducted a lot of semi-structured expert interviews with representatives from donor and aid agencies to get an insight about the proposed activities to cope with the disastrous and complex regional situation by means of skills development and educational intervention.
- (3) We continued our research with a field visit including interviews and observations at a local area in Somaliland. Structured by the dialogical Work Culture approach, these activities gave us a deeper insight on the ground, opened up multi-voiced perspectives and brought the audience of the ground to speak.
- (4) In order to satisfy our basic approach, which follows a grounded theory concept, we wove in two additional analytical steps that were intended to complement the previous interpretations and at the same time put them to the test. The few scientific publications on Somalia after the end of the civil war, its economy and education were evaluated in depth for the follow-up of the field visit. Additionally, we conducted a debriefing workshop with the experts of the consulting company Joyn Coop who is specialised on fragile contexts, which was used for reflection as well as for communicative validation of the field stay (on communicative validation see Kvale 1995).

Finally, we follow a mixed method approach to shed light upon the high complex situation in Somalia and also to disentangle the nexus between education, conflict and fragility. And we got support from experienced colleagues for the interpretation of the data specifically on the field we got advice from a Danish consultancy company under the head of Ms. Rima das Pradhan-Blach.

**Figure 1: Research Design of the Consultancy Study**





## **2.2. Methodological problems of field research in fragile contexts**

At the beginning of the consultancy study on Somalia, a central problem situation arose that clearly defined the framework. On the one hand, we had to work with qualitative research methods, but on the other hand, we could not carry out qualitative research in the proper sense, since we had to do a commissioned scoping mission and give recommendations for intervention in vocational training in Somalia as already described above. The research activity was therefore conceived and methodically implemented as "sideline-research" as already noted.

The research activity was made even more difficult by the very challenging security situation and field access in the region. Due to different external conditions, it was only possible to be on site for observations and discussions in the northern part of the country, in the Somaliland region, which had itself declared independent. All other talks had to be conducted with experts in Nairobi (operational headquarters of all (International) NGOs and donor organisations active in Somalia). In addition, the impressions of the "situation on the ground" and the relevant data had to be mainly derived from the interpretation of documents.

We therefore decided to do a bi-partite expert interview with the representatives of the (I)NGO in Nairobi e.g. Save the children Somalia, CARE Somalia, UNICEF Somalia, UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa, Somalia Stability Fund, GIZ for Somalia and some others. We started with a semi-structured interview to ask about their activities in the country – as the scoping mission required – but also to question them in the second – more narrative – part for a description (and interpretation) of the situation in Somalia and for a possible contribution of vocational training to improve the situation outlined. Similar we have done during the stay in Somaliland. During the field visits, both in Nairobi and in Somaliland, each research day was jointly evaluated and the most important results of the noted conversations or any observations were compiled and interpreted reflexively. From the expert talks, we got a better impression of the situation in Somalia, which we could then check on the spot in Somaliland. In this part of the country a special situation, with more daily security issues exists, due to the successful reconstruction of the state and the civil society after the end of the civil war with a halfway functioning administration, peaceful elections and democratic conditions and relative economic stability (Huliaras 2002; Mackie et al. 2017; Balthasar 2019). We were able to do few visits in training centres and private workshops, too.

The observations in Somaliland are not easy to transfer to the other parts of the country. A generalisation of the results of this study is only possible to a limited extent. Essentially, the results of the desk study part can be generalised into the conceptual framework of vocational training in fragile contexts.

## **3. Epistemic background and an interdisciplinary backing for the theoretical ground**

We have worked on the concept to bridge education and economic development in fragile contexts drawing on an innovative theoretical framework. Our framework consists of three pillars, which are composed of concepts from comparative and international (vocational) education research. In particular, the post-colonial theoretical approach is at the basis of the epistemic outline of the research.

- (1) The first pillar is postcolonial critical research (see Watson 1994; Rizvi 2007; Tikly/Bond 2013; Takayama/Sriprakash/Connell 2016). Reference to this body of literature allows us to avoid epistemological traps, i.e. to start from the universality of Western concepts of development and to use European models of vocational education and training (on the European models, see Greinert 2017) as master foils for the concepts of vocational

education and training in developing countries, particularly in vocational education and training cooperation with developing countries (Watson 1994).

With regard to postcolonial theory we must abdicate our position of 'better knowledge' and the 'superiority of the West' (Hall 1994), both in exchange with experts from developing and emerging countries and during field visits to explore foreign vocational education and training. We must engage in a dialogical and respectful attitude and conduct a mutual exchange of experience about the different vocational training regulations and their peculiarities. However, this is not always easy to achieve (especially due to some epistemological and methodological problems), but in our view it is the only way to be successful in the long term. This postcolonial perspective prevents us from excluding perspectives other than the "established" Western perspectives. A dialogical view of research ethics goes to the heart of the view of postcolonial research ethics presented here:

'(...) the classification and naturalisation of differences that are used to legitimise hierarchies; universalising assumptions of Western knowledge and ethics that exclude local contexts and realities; and a 'logic of productivity' in which economic growth becomes the sole criterion through which development and progress are evaluated.'

(Tikly/Bond 2013: 425)

The postcolonial perspective facilitates epistemic change, since it allows to take a third position of knowledge and understanding (Grosfoguel 2009) to overcome the dichotomies between Eurocentrism and Third World fundamentalism. It thus enables emancipatory approaches and implements reflexively localised research practice that considers the 'postcolonial framework' in research design and practice (Tikly/Bond 2013: 435f.).

The core of this framework is a dialogical research ethic which opens enough space for a bridge between different worldviews (the so-called 'diatopic hermeneutics' according to R. Panikkar, in Hall 2002), e.g. about the connection between vocational training and economic well-being. It also makes possible the connection between perspectives of the knowledge of Western development organisations and local conditions and needs (Tikly/Bond 2013), expressed in other voices of indigenous knowledge.

This background opens the doors and liberates the perception to specific post-colonial implementations of aid and international development cooperation beyond the universalistic point of view towards modernisation, which is specifically influential in TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) support by dominant donor agencies. It can open the mind for different voices to articulate in the field and brings other needs beyond "travelling reforms" of international politics (Steiner-Khamsi 2012) into the agenda.

- (2) The second pillar is the combination of two approaches, firstly the influential concept of "Policy Borrowing in Education" by D. Phillips et al. from the 2000s, who formulated the so-called "Oxford models" of comparative educational science, and secondly the considerations of "Education in Emergencies" from the mid-2000s onwards. These first named concepts highlight the importance of education concepts and its attraction coming from other countries or influential agencies. It also stresses the high importance of actors to agree with or to refuse new modes of educational provision.

We mainly refer to the essays of J. Rappleye and J. Paulson (see Paulson/Rappleye 2007; Rappleye/Paulson 2007; Paulson/Shields 2015). This second pillar underlines the special importance of differentiated but holistic educational measures in wide areas for a successful reconstruction after a conflict-induced collapse of social structures (Johnson/Phillips/Maclean 2007; Burde/Kapit/Wahl/Guven/Skarpeteig 2017). At the same time, it sensitises us to the complex relations in the introduction of (vocational) training measures and in this context to the great importance attached to the actors and their interests (Rappleye/Paulson 2007).

- (3) The third pillar is a combination of approaches which are all based on the socio-historic and cultural-scientific perspective of German comparative vocational training research (e.g. Greinert 2005). This pillar consists of a critical reflection of the historical German concept of the connection between vocational education and training and the promotion of trades (especially Wolf 2018; see also Bonz 1994; Meskill 2010), and of the theoretical concept of work culture (see Barabasch/Wolf 2011; Wolf 2011; Wolf 2017). Such reflections are particularly helpful as analytical foundations of the field study in Somaliland – to sharpen our glasses to see.

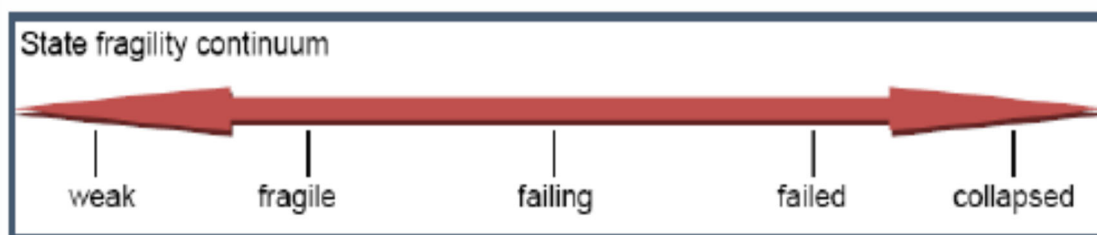
## 4. Education, vocational training and fragile contexts

As a starting point, based on the evaluation of secondary documents and policy papers, the relationship between fragile contexts and education, especially vocational training, was explored. The result was an operationalisation of fragile contexts and their characteristics in relation to possible interventions through vocational education and training. The existing practice of such interventions is dominated by short-term training measures or by a combination of humanitarian aid and training (e.g. Food for Work Program). On the other hand, the evaluation of the literature (e.g. Mackie et al. 2017; Gross/Davies 2015; Johnson et al. 2007) shows that longer-term and holistic approaches of vocational training measures, i.e. the combination of skill training with psycho-social rehabilitation measures, basic education and economic activities are advisable.

### 4.1. Fragile contexts – what is meant by that?

The notion of fragility in development policy is politically contested and controversial. In academia it is characterised by a lack of clarity that significantly limits its scientific utility. However, a quasi-official definition exists since 2008 when the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) published a study describing state fragility with the lack of opportunities or political will to provide basic public services to the population (OECD, 2008). In the progress of the debate, the concept of the fragile state was increasingly abandoned, as this concept invites a schematic stigmatisation and, especially after the increasing military interventions against fragile states since 2011, facilitates a simplistic view of a complex context (François/Sud 2006; Haggmann/Hoehne 2009). Meanwhile, reference is made to fragile contexts characterised by instability – political, economic and social – often coupled with violent clashes or a high risk of conflict. Factors that can characterise fragile contexts include i.e. poor governance, repression, corruption, inequality and exclusion of sections of the population, and low social cohesion. The lack of legitimacy of contracts and social norms are resulting socio-economic factors that have an impact on the economy and also on vocational education and training. Additional environmental factors must also be considered, such as poor preparedness for environmental disasters or major environmental devastation (UNESCO-IIEP 2011).

**Figure 2: The continuum of fragility**



Source: Barakat/Karpinska/Paulson 2008: 3

In the concept of fragility, nonetheless, the state still remains a central factor, but it is no longer the only point of reference. Depending on the scope of the fragile context, which often corresponds to the level of state fragility (on a conceptual continuum, see Figure 2), only limited but different developmental interventions are possible.

In a fragile context on the far right of the scale (collapsed context of fragility), it is likely that only emergency and humanitarian aid interventions such as food supplies are possible. The more the spectrum moves to the left, the more longer-term measures of reconstruction (e.g. through vocational training) can be implemented. However, in the transition stage from emergency aid to reconstruction various forms of aid overlap which often creates a rather non-transparent situation of activities and actors. The impacts can be positive or negative (Brock 2011).

For handling of the high complexity – we have evaluated the various conceptual considerations of the links between education and crisis intervention (e.g. Rose/Greeley 2006; Paulson/Rapple 2007; Johnson et al. 2007; Barakat et al. 2008; UNESCO-IIEP 2011; UNESCO-UNEVOC 2012; Lange/Reich/Rithaa/Giebeler 2012; Binder/Weinhardt 2013; Pompa 2014; Petersen 2013; Paulson/Shields 2015; in particular Gross/Davies 2015; Grävingsholt/Ziaja/Kreibaum 2015; Burde et al. 2017) which gave us a first perception of the high complex field and of possible useful and harmless interventions. We saw a trap to fall into disorientation of what, how and where to operate. Therefore, we decided to organise a peer-validation workshop together with colleagues from the international consulting company "Joyn Coop", which is experienced in crisis interventions. This allowed to define a basis on which vocational education and training can be implemented in a practicable manner in fragile contexts.

The result of the process – consisting of a literature review and peer-validation – is the chart below. It is derived from a systematic comparison of fragile contexts developed by Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE), the public research and consulting agency for development politics and policies of the German government. It allows to operationalise fragile contexts with regard to vocational education and training. The chart also makes it easier to look at appropriate vocational training measures. Each of the categories is characterised by a specific relationship between the state, the economy and society/community. As a result, the framework conditions for interventions in vocational education and training differ considerably from one area to the next, and must be analysed and taken into account.

Indeed, with the interim results we were able to proceed and used the overview of the conceptual considerations for to lighten the nexus between education in emergencies and TVET in dysfunctional contexts, but we don't produce here any detailed description of each concept but we offer a summarizing view in the following chapter.

This operationalisation makes it clear that there can be no blueprint or any vocational training concept that fits all fragility categories. Indeed, there is a correlation between the degree and type of fragility and the necessary complexity of TVET interventions. But what additionally becomes also clear is the fact that the concept of "fragile context" is not focused only on statehood fragility but could also coexist with an existing state indeed in an area with specific characteristics as described in the figure 3.

**Figure 3: Operationalisation of fragile contexts, compiled by authors with support of Joyn Coop**

Category	Definition	Countries	Characteristics related to TVET
<b>Dysfunctional</b>	Combination of all three below categories	(South)Sudan, Eastern Kongo, Afghanistan, Libya, Yemen, Syria, Iraq, <b>Southern Somalia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Highly informal economy</li> <li>- No organised economic bodies</li> <li>- Informal external trade relations</li> <li>- No legal certainty</li> <li>- Economic crisis</li> <li>- High unemployment rates</li> <li>- High degree of violence</li> <li>- No public services</li> <li>- Broken social fabric (distrust)</li> <li>- Often: supply of the population via UN and aid organisations</li> </ul>
<b>Low legitimacy</b>	States with low to mediocre scores of legitimacy, but usually decent authority over the use of physical violence and the capacity to provide some basic public services.	MENA (with exception of kingdoms like Morocco and Jordan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Publicly dominated economy</li> <li>- Big informal sector shying away from public dominance</li> <li>- Restrictive labour law (strong protection of work force)</li> <li>- Middle-income trap</li> <li>- High rates of unemployed university graduates</li> <li>- Nepotism (importance of relationships)</li> <li>- Good trade relations with EU</li> <li>- Potential for enterprise cooperation</li> <li>- High population growth</li> </ul>
<b>Low authority</b>	States with very limited authority over the use of physical violence, but with the capacity to provide some basic public services and medium scores of legitimacy.	Latin America, South Africa (typically slum areas and townships)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Formal private sector with constitutional bodies</li> <li>- Little enforcement of existing regulation</li> <li>- Heavy income and social inequalities</li> <li>- Reduced investments (due to near absence of legal certainty)</li> <li>- High transaction cost for enterprises (corruption etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Low capacity</b>	States with little capacity to provide basic public services, but with decent authority over the use of physical violence and usually mediocre scores of legitimacy.	Non-failed Sub Sahara Africa, <b>Somaliland, Puntland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Highly informal economy</li> <li>- No organised economic bodies</li> <li>- Weak financial services systems</li> <li>- Little legal certainty</li> <li>- Dominance of primary sector (agriculture and natural resources extraction)</li> <li>- Low educational and skill levels</li> <li>- High youth unemployment rates</li> <li>- High population growth</li> </ul>
<b>Permanent refugee camps</b>	Permanent camps provided by UNHCR and International NGOs	Zataari, (Jordan) Dadaab, Kakuma (Kenia), some camps for Somali in Ethiopia etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- refugee camps in the region, mostly close to the border and often isolated</li> <li>- cut off from the economy of the host country, no work permit for refugees</li> <li>- Operation by UNHCR and INGOs – humanitarian operations</li> <li>- Care to the population mostly from outside via relief supplies, partly informal trade in the camp</li> </ul>



## 4.2. Education in Emergencies and TVET in fragile contexts

In the following section, we focus on the dysfunctional contexts that are typically dominated by humanitarian aid. Vocational training in these contexts is usually reduced to short-term skills training with major disadvantages in effectiveness and sustainability. On the other hand, the classic, longer-term technical and vocational training programmes, which are usually carried out on the basis of a bureaucratic school-based approach under the responsibility of the "developing state" (with a more or less reduced complexity level), do not work here.

According to our literature analysis, vocational training measures can nevertheless play a very important role in stabilising crisis situations, but especially in rebuilding and rehabilitation (Johnson et al. 2007; UNESCO-UNEVOC 2012; Matsumoto 2018; Karareba/Baillie 2018). Vocational education and training activities go beyond the positive effect of education, which is regarded as the fourth pillar of emergency aid and crisis intervention – alongside “the pillars of nourishment, shelter and health services” (Sinclair 2001: 2) – and see themselves as part of a broader strategy of stabilisation (“recovery”), peace building and resilience. Participation in vocational training not only contributes to the acquisition of technical skills, but also restores peaceful “normality”. This positive impact refers strongly to the education dimension of TVET in the sense of the German concept of “Bildung”. The necessary combination with employment promotion and economic development creates individual and collective perspectives for a better future.

It became apparent during the interviews with the actors from NGOs and development agencies in Nairobi that vocational training was predominantly carried out in short training courses, which are mostly conducted by local NGOs in youth centres or vocational training centres. These centres are in operation as long as there is funding from international donors. When the money is spent, they are closed down and have to be restarted with the next, mostly random, allocation of funds. Long-term capacity building in vocational education and training is not possible in this way, so that the contribution of vocational education and training to longer-term stabilisation is missing. Also, the risk of vocational education and training activities having a negative effect is increased.

Isolated training can, however, trigger negative effects by spreading frustration when there is no improvement in living conditions. In the light of the persistence of crises and fragile conditions, it is important to overcome the dichotomy between humanitarian aid and development and the observed gap between vocational training and promotion of the economy. Particularly in fragile/dysfunctional contexts that have lasted over years or even decades, it is necessary to overcome short-term humanitarian approaches and operate with long-term structure-building approaches of innovative vocational education and training.

Some actors reported in the interviews that they combined the short training interventions with activities that increased employability skills. For example, Save-the-Children promoted direct training in companies as a kind of placement training to create a retention effect. Other NGOs such as World Vision or the Danish Refugee Council combined vocational training with business development training and gave graduates starter kits for employment in the local, mostly informal economy.

Dysfunctional fragility is characterised by a non-existent or very weak state, so that the challenges must be addressed through cooperation with international NGOs to cope with the issues of difficult accessibility. In parallel, the reorganisation of the state can be supported. However, it was made clear by the stakeholders interviewed, due to Somalia's particular situation with hybrid statehood (Hagmann/Hoehne 2009; Herring et al. 2021), that it is important to have appropriate institutions for good organisation and quality in TVET, but these do not necessarily have to be state institutions.

It is also clear from the literature review that stabilising the personalities of the traumatised target groups is also necessary to strengthen the resilience of individuals and communities. Key players such as teachers need to be trained through international cooperation, and training institutions could be funded through degressive operating cost support.

It is advantageous here if these funded institutions see themselves as part of local economic development, especially for the informal economy. Involving the diaspora, especially as investors, can have a positive effect.

It emerges both from the literature review and from the interviews that one common need in all types of fragility is the demand for holistic concepts. This means in particular the combination of qualification, education (resilience and reduction of vulnerability) and reconstruction, both of state infrastructure and state capacities and of economic activity. The measures must be carefully examined in their respective contexts. It is essential to carry out a field analysis, which examines the social environment, the target groups, the gender perspective, the communities, and the economic framework, in the form of market and skill needs analyses. In addition, an institutional analysis, i.e. of existing regulations and regulatory bodies, is necessary.

## **5. Observation and findings of the field study in Somalia**

The following chapters are based on the observations and analyses made during the field study in Somalia / Somaliland. They were conducted integrated in the design already mentioned above with a focus on vocational education and training.

### **5.1. Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Somalia**

TVET in Somalia (all territories) is currently heavily NGO/UN driven. Although approaches vary between these organisations, skills training is very much focused on vocational short-term trainings (three – nine months), as mentioned above. The funding phases from international donor agencies to the locals are usually short-term of one to three years and as most donors are keen on producing high numbers of graduates at low cost, the courses are at lower skill levels that do not need expensive equipment. Instructors of these centres are frequently sent to Nairobi for technical upgrading. The short-term nature of these projects and the discontinuity in financing mostly spoils more sustainable effects and system building. As a consequence, there is a considerable number of trainings ongoing, but they are mostly piecemeal, sporadic and at low quality levels. Sometimes there is an involvement of the private sector, mostly as a one-month internship at the end of school-based training or through enterprise-based-TVET approaches. However, the quality of these in-company trainings remains very low as there are no qualified in-company trainers. The main effect of these in-company trainings is placement. A company with several interns can choose the best ones for permanent employment. One of the main constraints is the lack of coordination between the NGOs providing skills training and to harmonise the standards of training provision.

In addition, for less equipment centered trades like business and applied ICT there are also private sector TVET activities mainly in the big cities for trades, but also health training for nurses and midwives. While their quality seems questionable, it was impossible to verify this on the ground since we could not visit these private training centres. When it comes to the governance of TVET, there is a tendency in all three territories to see it as part of education, hence under the leadership of the Ministry of Education, although the Ministry of Labour/Employment and the Ministries of Youth also are important stakeholders. In addition, there are other line ministries with own aspirations like the Ministry of Water in Somaliland, who had recently established the Water Technology Institute with donor support. As TVET is a rising topic in development cooperation with more funds expected– at least from the EU and its member countries, power struggles between Somali ministries on where to place TVET have just begun and can be expected to continue for quite some time. Thus, the governance of TVET is far from being resolved.

By our deeper insight into Somaliland, we found that vocational training activities take place in a highly contested political field where diverse state administrations and public structures

become active. Vocational education and training is always the responsibility of at least two ministries, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs or the Ministry of Education, in contrast, for example, to investments in the health sector, where only the Ministry of Health is responsible, and thus inter-ministerial conflicts are considerably smaller. The discussions on the ground with representatives of the Ministry of Education and other ministries made it clear to us that each ministry is very much fighting for the award of a vocational training project without paying special attention to the permanent operation – as in the above example of the Water Technology Institute, which had secured its operating costs for 6 months, hoping for some further donor funding in the future. In high likelihood they would then have to reduce their operation very significantly. Vocational training projects are symbolic goods that are publicly communicated as "trophies" for the capacity to act and efficiency of the respective ministries; the more fragile the context, the stronger this mechanism appears.

It also became clear in the discussions with government representatives in Somaliland that although the state administrations have only a limited reach, they advocated the establishment of a coherent technical education system with higher vocational schools and polytechnic institutes as a preliminary stage of the university. These concepts can be found in all policy papers on technical and vocational education. And they look similar over the borders of Somalia's federal states.

In Somaliland the Ministry of Education highlighted the "good old times" of the higher technical school in the city of Burao, which was set up and operated by GTZ, now GIZ, before the civil war (in the 1980ies). This is how the new schools should be. This highly praised concept of "Technical education" is in stark contrast to the much less appreciated concept of "vocational training", which is seen more as training for young people who have not made it to higher technical school and who should best take place as short courses.

Questions of the long-term financing of these concepts of state technical education and vocational training were answered only inadequately. The management of a complex vocational training model also seemed to be real a challenge in Somaliland, and even more so in other parts of the federal country. The desire to establish a prestigious technical school system is in stark contrast to the capacity to operate and maintain such a system at a reasonable quality level, as well as to the needs of the youth labour market and the level of education (i.e. illiteracy) of the majority of the war-torn (youth) population.

At the same time, the talks with representatives of the business community and individual entrepreneurs, who were met rather by random chance, showed that there is a great need for professional qualification. The private educational institutions we saw in Somaliland also speak for it. On the construction sites, skilled workers from the Indian subcontinent are employed as foremen. Random observations in various metal workshops have shown the need for better qualified labour, e.g. in welding.

NGOs and local organisations offer a variety of training courses for a shorter period of time, especially for disadvantaged groups. However, cooking and sewing courses are also offered for women to generate income, while there has been little advice or training for women to develop their businesses in the informal economy and beyond. On the other hand, various unsystematic measures to promote the economy, such as starter kits for graduates of the short courses or management consultancy services as well as entrepreneurship training, were occasionally interwoven with the short skill trainings.

## **5.2. Economic Background**

The economic structure is fairly similar in the three Somali regions as are the economic trends and growth prospects and needs in terms of employment and qualification. Having said so, there are also localised specifics that provide particular chances or risks. The impact of the civil war has been profound, resulting in the destruction of social and economic infrastructure, the collapse of technical and vocational institutions, and also created massive internal and



external migration. Migration was exacerbated by the repeated severe droughts in 2011-12 and 2016-17.

The economy is still very much shaped by the primary sector with slight differences due to geography and climate. It constitutes about 60-80 % of the GDP and dominates the export as well as state income. In the North, pastoralism is by far the most important sector, with agriculture playing a minor role (10 %). Puntland has the strongest fishing industry while Southern Somalia has more agricultural potential due to the two rivers. Reviving the agriculture and building on agricultural value chains is a major chance for economic growth and employment creation. Beside water, renewable energy and the finance sector have been identified as major needs and bottlenecks. But lack of regulation due to the notoriously weak state is also a constraint for economic development in the medium-term.

Over the last two decades, rural-urban migration has been high particularly in the federal and state capitals due to insecurity, livelihood failure, climate-induced shocks, and the absence of basic services. Rates of urbanisation within Somalia rank amongst the highest in the world. The combination of rural-urban migration and forced internal displacement has increased pressure on the already limited basic services and urban livelihood opportunities. However, the infrastructure sector is slowly picking up, as can be seen from the ongoing construction works mainly in the main cities like Hargeisa (Somaliland), Mogadishu (Southern Somalia) and Garowe (Puntland), although the recent drought and economic slow-down can also be noted. Diaspora remittances play a major role in economic recovery.

Despite the construction boom, unemployment is widespread, specifically for the youth, women, marginalised groups and the poor segment of the society. Youth is thought to comprise about 60 % of the population across the urban, rural and nomadic populations with 40 % being between ages of 15 – 29 years. As there are few jobs in the formal economy, most youth try to open their own informal business. However, their markets in many places are already oversupplied with similar kind of businesses in domains such as petty trade and hair dressing etc. There is a mismatch of educational outcomes and the type of knowledge and skills needed in competitive labour markets whether they are constituted as informal or formal markets. These challenges are echoed in the significant proportion of young people who are neither in employment nor following education or training.

During our talks with the experts in Nairobi, but especially during our observations and talks in Somaliland, we encountered a great propensity to engage in business. All people we met had, in addition to their paid public or private activities, a private company they were in charge of – e.g. the hotel's general manager had set up a consulting firm on the side to support start-ups. According to our impression in Somaliland, this went beyond the well-known diversity strategy of income generation in the informal economy or by the extended family, as it is described in a number of developing country studies (Andrikopoulos/Duyvendak 2020; Cox/Fafchamps 2007; Lindley 2013; Semsek 1986). It combined with a generalised development perspective and conveyed a strong will for improvement and burgeoning. According to our interpretation, this connects with a specific way of organising the economic activities, also under the exceptional conditions of the civil war and continuing political and economic instability, on the basis of mutual trust and cooperative structures. This is also described in the literature of Somali development process (Pieke/van Hear/Lindley 2007; Brown et al. 2017).

Another moment needs to be added, namely that through the experiences of the civil war and the subsequent reconstruction the cultural patterns and traditions, which had previously prevailed, were broken up (Aron 2003). Especially women could and at the same time had to assume a special responsibility also in economic terms. Independent economic action is a need for women in Somalia, and also a chance provided by war-torn cultural patterns.

In our conversations, we also experienced a clear rejection of the social category "clan" which, according to the statements of our interlocutors, indeed exists and the respective affiliation is very well known, but in dealing with each other no longer played a greater role, whereas meritocratic mechanisms are more important than community affiliation, e.g. in the hiring of

personnel or the admission to a training offer (on the social order and the concept of state – hybrid statehood – in Somalia, see Höhne 2012).

In addition to these internal economic factors there is the positive economic effect of the rather high commitment of the Somali diaspora (Gundel 2002; Lindley 2013). They are heavily involved in investment activities or development projects, and, after our discussions, also in the funding of vocational qualification.

### **5.3. Summarising Views from the field trip**

TVET provision in Somalia is characterised by the absence of institutions providing quality education and training; a lack of qualified instructors; a lack of facilities, equipment, curricula, teaching and learning materials and supportive supervision. It suffers from poor reputation. Systemic and structural problems at institutional and policy level are barriers to expanding and improving TVET provision. One of the critical challenges is the lack of coordination among these sectors which require a standards-based quality assurance and coordination.

Given the sketched out economic dynamics in the area, a new approach is needed to vocational education and training in the context of Somalia, which needs to go beyond the current boundaries of vocational education and training, humanitarian aid, reconstruction and revitalisation of the economy.

There is a need for a concept which successfully combines vocational training and economic development in a lasting and practical way. According to our respective study on Somalia (Rudner/Wolf 2018b), three elements can be identified as core challenges in vocational training and employment promotion in Somalia:

- How to build quality into TVET (schools and companies alike)?
- How to set-up TVET structures that are able to run sustainably?
- How to integrate or link TVET with the requirement of promoting economic growth and creating employment in the context of Somalia?

Accordingly, an organisational structure is needed which can successfully address these three elements. Not least because of the 'hybrid statehood' i.e. Governance without Government – in Somalia (Hagmann/Hoehne, 2009) it is recommended to rely on a likewise hybrid approach which can be realised from below to above (bottom-up). In order to answer these challenges and to find a structural solution, that combines the provision of skilled labour with employment promotion and economic development, we strongly recommend to strive for a bottom-up system building pathway that builds on all the available good approaches and lessons learned available in the country by starting with one or two pilots and extending them. There are already approaches from some NGOs to combine vocational training courses with business set-up training and to provide start-up assistance for self-employment. The first experiences have already been made by Save-the-Children to conduct business-based training and thus increase the employability of the graduates. At the same time, a high level of willingness to engage in entrepreneurial activities was observed. Willingness to abide by cooperative regulations appeared to be more common in economic activities. There are also lessons learned about the insufficient quality of vocational training, whether due to low training activities of company trainers or due to insufficiently trained instructors in the training centres. There is also experience with donor dominance, which wants to produce large numbers and place less emphasis on the quality of training or on interlinking with the socio-economic environment.

The starting activities should have a clear perspective on where to go but at the same time start with pilots and allow for trial and error along the way. Doing TVET in Somalia represents an enormous opportunity to build a system from scratch and bottom-up, together with all relevant stakeholders, thus allowing for an adapted system to be built on a solid societal basis.

## **6. A new approach to bridge TVET service provision and economic development**

### **6.1. Backing the concept with the three epistemic pillars of this study**

The first pillar, the postcolonial perspective, opens our perception away from the standard approaches used in development policy. Normally, the two big containers, the TVET container on one side and the economic development and financial cooperation container on the other, stand side by side, on the same ground, but with only very loose coupling and interlocking. Oriented by this first pillar, we were able to think of a new approach and to overcome the customary approaches. It is independent of the common concepts of a stronger labour market relevance of classical TVET cooperation projects, such as top-down approaches to improve capacities in ministries for demand-oriented management of TVET or bureaucratic-administrative involvement of the private sector in state TVET, and many more classical TVET approaches of isolated bridging TVET and economic development like entrepreneurial education etc. Instead the TVET+ approach brings the unheard voices from the ground in Somalia with its specific needs of holistic solutions into one organisational structure to the front stage.

At the same time, this pillar has warned us that our own experiences of TVET and its close links to employment and production, such as the German dual training model, should not be generalised. This also applies to the findings from policy transfer research in TVET, which is a component of the second pillar.

This second pillar, the evidence from international comparative education research in combination with the studies on education in emergencies, helped us to pay a lot of attention to the context in which the innovative measures are to be implemented in the target communities (Rapple/Paulson 2007) and not to propose standard offers from development cooperation. In particular, the inclusion in the socio-economic environment and the addressing of key actors from business and social leadership have played a major role in our reflection. The studies on education in emergencies (see the related chapter "Education in Emergencies and TVET in fragile context") have made it clear to us that more complex and holistic project approaches are needed (Burde et al. 2017; Johnson et al. 2007), which not only provide skills training, but also catch-up literacy and rehabilitation of the people and communities affected by the crisis situations.

The third pillar, the German approaches of international comparative VET research from a social-historical and cultural-scientific perspective, inspired us to the effect that a connection between VET and trade promotion was also a concept used in German history (Bonz 1994; Wolf 2020; Meskil 2010). However, these experiences also show that central government activities to promote trades through vocational training cannot be intentionally controlled in the historical process, as historical contingency strongly shapes the latter. Thus, in the final consequence, we favour an approach that proceeds as a pilot measure with local and regional scope involving local actors, without formulating the ambition to have a universal design that can be realised nationwide.

This pillar also guides us to the view that the introduction of the innovation we propose must necessarily be socially embedded, since the common understanding of what constitutes good vocational education and training is a social and cultural agreement and does not represent a purposive business calculation (Greinert 2005; Wolf 2020). This also answers the question of the quality of the training measures, since social acceptance by the various social actors is easier to guarantee with high training quality and corresponding integration of the actors into the governance of the educational institution. Whereby the question of governance cannot be conclusively clarified, as it depends very much on the specific local and socio-economic framework conditions that should be reflected there. It can be said, however, that the various functions of the educational institution, as formulated below, each require representation in the organisational structure. This will certainly be tested in the implementation of the concept, so

that more precise experiences can then be reported. The starting point of the project is NGO driven but in close cooperation with the government structures at the ground. After success, it would be possible to transform it to a governmental approach but more experiences will be necessary.

## **6.2. The proposition of an innovative TVET approach – the TVET+-Service Hub**

The proposed approach is an “ideal” TVET model institution called “**TVET+ service hub**”. The TVET+ service hub is a holistic TVET centre that at the same time provides impetus for local economic development. The TVET+ service hub should provide qualified workers and technicians at different levels according to the immediate need of the private sector in promising economic sectors like agriculture and fishery, construction, renewable energies, water supply, logistics etc. Besides training, it is also designed to support graduates in starting their own enterprises and helping informal and small enterprises with business development and specific higher level courses required by them. It can start small with only part of its functions and become progressively integrated into a full-service unit.

Guided by our theoretical framework explained above, supported by the conclusions of the field visit to Somaliland and the qualitative data collection from the consultancy study, we have concluded our conceptual proposal.

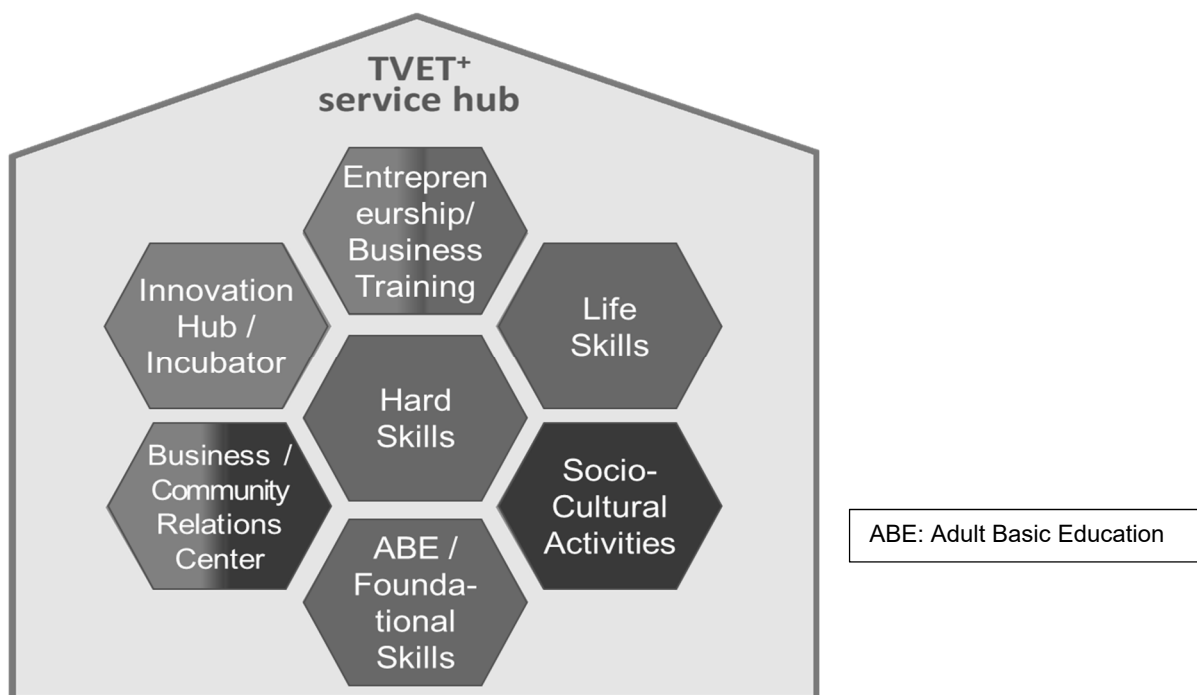
This novel organisational structure brings together three different core functions addressing the above-mentioned possibilities and problems:

- Education and training
- Business development and support
- Community development & TVET reputation improvement

Such a structure cannot emerge from nowhere, but must be built from the bottom up on the basis of experience acquired, adapted to the respective contexts. There are scarcely any examples of a close link between vocational training and economic development. In German development cooperation in the 1980s there were some programmes that combined the promotion of micro-enterprises in developing countries with qualification measures (Wolf 2009), but not in a such successful manner over time. One reason was the container thinking and separation between on one hand TVET development, mostly focussed on establishing school based vocational institutions, and on the other hand, the activities of economic development by financial aid, business development etc. However, historically the concept of vocational education and training and promotion of trades is known from the early phase of industrialisation in Germany, but it is only suitable as an inspiration for today's cooperation with developing and emerging countries and cannot be used as a blueprint (Wolf 2018).

For this ambitious concept to succeed, three decisive framework conditions are needed: (1) The agreement of the state administration to follow this bottom-up approach and use the experimental character as a stimulus for innovation. (2) Secondly, the donors must bind themselves to the concept for a longer period (5 to 10 years) with their funding commitments and carry out supplementary activities to support the project in parallel. Then there is a realistic chance of a permanent venture based on its own resources. (3) Third, a dedicated and experienced implementation partner needs to be identified.

**Figure 4: Conceptual Proposal of TVET+ Service Hub**



### 6.3. TVET+ Service Hub – an innovative proposal in detail

Our innovative concept entails the establishment of a unit as a multi-functional service hub for inclusive development. The hub integrates seven functions that are interlinked and partly overlapping:

- **“Hard” skills:** TVET provision is offered on different skill levels, of high quality with public certificates and diplomas. Flexible short-term courses for tailor-made upgrading technical staff from companies. Trades should not be restricted to the typical male dominated fields like mechanics and electrics but should also open up to accounting, IT and administration, especially for women. Even when typical “female” trades are offered, e.g. cooking, this should be offered at a technical level aiming at employment in institutions instead of only domestic cooking. But also typical “male” trades like plumbing and plastering should be opened up to women. In general, trades to be offered should depend on the local business environment/need but also on projected needs, e.g. electricians/mechanics being able to install, operate and maintain renewable energy plants.
- **Foundational skills** (numeracy and literacy) in the Somali languages: ANE – Adult non-Formal Education / ABE – Adult Basic Education – combined with psycho-social rehab and reconciliation if necessary. This section is necessary for all trainees that have not completed primary education, that might have worked in the informal sector and should also have a chance to upgrade their skills and enter formalised education. In addition to this, English language classes including technical English should be mandatory. Nevertheless, particularly on lower level technical training, Somali language should be used in order to prioritise technical skills over language skills.
- **Life skills / soft skills:** important aspect for forming professionals instead of only skilled workers; especially in fragile contexts because they help trainees to cope with problems and conflicts and to find “healthy” solutions. It may comprise: (1) social skills like communication, self-confidence, negotiation, cooperation, conflict mitigation, (2) cognitive skills like problem solving, critical thinking, understanding of consequences, (3) emotional coping strategies like self-esteem, self-control, stress management.



- Social and cultural activities: sports (e.g. football, table tennis), music (e.g. guitar, keyboard), theatre classes, etc. to establish the school as secure and fun place and to offer opportunities for learning values and skills like conflict mitigation. Sports and culture can be considered as a form of practical application/laboratory for life skills. Sport facilities or halls should be opened up to the community in order to help community cohesion and bonding between the school, its students and the community. Especially in fragile, conflict prone contexts such activities are key for stabilisation and also protection of the facility itself.
- Business Development Services: IT, employment training, career counselling and guidance, accounting, marketing, business plan development, entrepreneurship training, market analysis, linking to microfinance opportunities or to investors and business facilitation programs. On the one side, IT should become part of the trainings, e.g. by using media like technical videos in class. They could become content of an administrative “trade” like office clerk. On the other side, business trainings can be used as top-up for technical trainees, in order to enable them to start a self-employed career. And they can be offered to external (small) enterprises for grading up their (employees’ skills), i.e. becoming part of the hub’s business model. For entrepreneurship trainings, there are several concepts around, e.g. “SEED” by World Vision, “CEFE” by GIZ<sup>1</sup> and there are also specialised international providers that could/should be linked into the hub.
- Business / community relations centre: (1) Linking the hub to the wider business community for reciprocal services. Involve businesses in the identification of immediate training needs and link trainees to enterprises for in-company training. (2) Organising job fares/ talent ventures etc. in order to give local entrepreneurs some exposure. (3) Creating income for the hub by offering services to the community and its businesses (using workshops, computer lab, paying for tailored courses), producing for the local market (without crowding out the private sector!), integrating small businesses like cafeteria etc. Ideally, if available the hub should identify one or two international companies as “champions”, i.e. as special partners of the hub, in order to carry in-company training to a higher level.
- Innovation hub/incubator: The incubator is closely linked to the business development services, but also to the business/community relation centre. It could become important at a more advanced stage of hub development, where the hub and its workshops are linked to a local university and an international university twinning partner. The exchange and cooperation with academic partners could improve the permeability of TVET to academia on the one hand and help to bring in and test innovations from abroad or use international expertise to kick-start local innovations as kind of an “applied research partnership”.

Our vision is that the TVET+ service hub should develop into an integrated part of the local economy, intensely interwoven with the business community and also socially embedded. Particularly at the beginning, the Somali diaspora would play a major role in contributing funds and know-how to the hub.

With our concept of the TVET+ Service Hub, it is particularly important to specify the idea of the “production school”, as there is often misunderstanding in the development context. Mostly, “production school” is understood as a department of the school that generates income by producing goods and services (e.g. furniture, buildings). By doing so, it enters into unfair (because subsidised) competition with the existing, mostly micro-enterprises and forces them out of the market. The term *Service Hub* does not mean this, but claims that the school’s revenues should come from services for the local and regional economy to develop them and

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<sup>1</sup> SEED means *Social Entrepreneurship and Economic Development*, it is an international program of world vision, <https://www.worldvision.com.au/get-involved/partner-with-us/seed>, 09.03.2021; CEFE means *Competency based Economies through Formation of Entrepreneurs*, it is an approach of GIZ to set up a comprehensive set of training instruments in business education, <https://cefe.net/>

thereby also create improved development opportunities for the deployment of the Service Hub.

The opportunities to set up such an innovative concept in Somalia are good, but the constraints linked to the security situation and the instability remain. However, the practical experience will show the prospect in the future.

## **7. Concluding discussion**

Based on a triangulated qualitative design, our case study of Somalia has allowed us to obtain an insight in the nexus between (vocational) education in emergencies, economic reconstruction and rehabilitation in fragile context exemplarily at the case of Somalia. Notwithstanding the described limitation of the study, we were able to successfully draft a conceptual approach of a new setting of a TVET+ Service Hub in order to achieve the recommended holistic concepts for (vocational) education and training in emergencies and reconstruction. Oriented on our three pillars of the theoretical concept we were able to interpret the numerous qualitative data gained from different sources and field research and could merge it to the sketched new conceptual approach of bridging TVET service provision, social and personal rehabilitation and local economic development.

The generalisation of the findings is limited, because of the very specific and exemplary situation in Somalia, so we cannot use the conceptual approach as a blueprint to cope with all different fragile contexts. However, we could use the concept of a TVET+ Service hub and the theoretical background as a source of inspiration and new thinking about TVET provision in development context. And also taking into account the bulk of lessons learnt from the different approaches of TVET provision in development policy since the last half century, specifically with account to the decision to overcome the project based approaches of the times from the mid-last century on. We don't want to rehabilitate the old approaches but we need a new thinking of TVET provision, specifically under high complex conditions of state fragility and emergency but also beyond. A clear need for strong reference to the context and the social-cultural condition on the ground is given. The proposed approach would not fit to every condition and it needs very special socio-cultural and economic environment for success.

But, to remain clear, the need for baseline studies of the institutional and organisational framework, the constellations of actors and interests, and the economic and social environment is very high. Only on this basis of a good understanding of the local and regional situation the concept of the TVET+ Service Hub could be transferred.

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