



Scaling Youth Work Readiness Skills and Transition to Work in Senegal's Schools

A Strategy and Cost Analysis



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Context

Senegal's youth are ready for the opportunity to compete in today's economy, but many of them lack the skills they need to succeed in the workforce. Many young people struggle to find jobs, or they remain underemployed for extended periods.

Since 2016, Education Development Center (EDC), with the support of the Mastercard Foundation and in collaboration with the Government of Senegal's Ministry of Education and Ministry of Employment, Vocational Training, Apprenticeship and Placement (MEFPAI), has been implementing the *Projet de l'amélioration des performances de travail et d'entreprenariat* or APTE-Senegal, which focuses on building work readiness skills and transition to work opportunities to prepare youth for employment and self-employment in a way that is sustainable at national scale. APTE-Senegal was designed as a five-year intervention implemented in 7 of Senegal's 14 regions, reaching 210 lower secondary schools and 58 technical vocational education and training (TVET) institutions. This initial scale represents approximately 10% of total lower secondary schools and approximately 15% of total TVETs, both public and private,¹ or about 50% of public TVET only. As part of overall project design, EDC's Work Ready Now (WRN) approach was adapted to the country context and built to be fully scalable so that ultimately the government would take on ownership and sustainability.

APTE-Senegal focuses on improving young people's workforce skills through the following activities:

- **Building capacity of key local stakeholders**—public, private, and civil society institutions—to offer and support sustainable and market-driven employability and school-to-work transition programming, including through learner-centered classroom methodologies, assessment tools, and teacher training certification
- **Incorporating a customizable, standards-based employment and entrepreneurship curriculum** within Senegal's secondary schools that combines key soft skills and competencies needed to succeed in earning a living,² technical skills needed in today's workplace, and work-based learning opportunities
- **Implementing a work readiness curriculum** and school-to-work transition program in TVET schools
- **Creating linkages between youth, schools, and the private sector** through school-to-work transition support, including job placement and internships
- **Developing teacher-training certification and classroom assessment tools**

¹ Sene, S., Diop, D., Wade, K., Cisse, A.C., Cissokko, A., Travare, N.L., Tamboura, A., Sy, F., Camara, T., Manel, S., Wade, K., Diop, C.I., Sarr, M., Diouf, B., Dieme, N.B., Cisse, K., Seye, N.K.L., Diouf, M.B., Diagne, J.P., Ly, B.D., ...Keita, W.D. (2019). *Situation économique et sociale du Senegal en 2016*. Agence Nationale de la Statistique et de la Demographie.

² Education Development Center (2019). *EDC's Work Readiness Program*.

After the first three years of APTE-Senegal, EDC started a cost analysis to help the Government of Senegal (GoS) answer important strategic and budget-related questions in preparation for assuming institutionalization of WRN at national scale. The analysis is based on two key principles:

- 1 strategy should define budget, and**
- 2 when strategy and costs are well defined and understood up front, planning for adequate financing becomes possible.**

It also encourages national stakeholders to:

- **Choose relevant models** for both secondary and TVET schools to effectively scale up WRN interventions
- **Develop a realistic budget** that ensures continuity and quality of WRN interventions, as well as recommendations for prioritizing and reducing costs as needed.

Learning Approach

From its inception, APTE-Senegal was designed and implemented in collaboration with the GoS's Ministry of Employment, Vocational Training, Apprenticeship and Placement (MEFPAI). As such, project interventions were adapted to the Senegalese context and implemented through capacity strengthening of education system actors, such as inspectors, directors, master trainers, secondary school teachers, and TVET instructors. Further, monitoring, evaluation, and learning were prioritized to inform programmatic effectiveness and cost-efficiencies and discussed at both the ministry and district levels, engaging key education system actors as well as community stakeholders and private sector champions. The design of this systems approach is based on EDC's experience in Rwanda implementing the same range of programs at national scale.

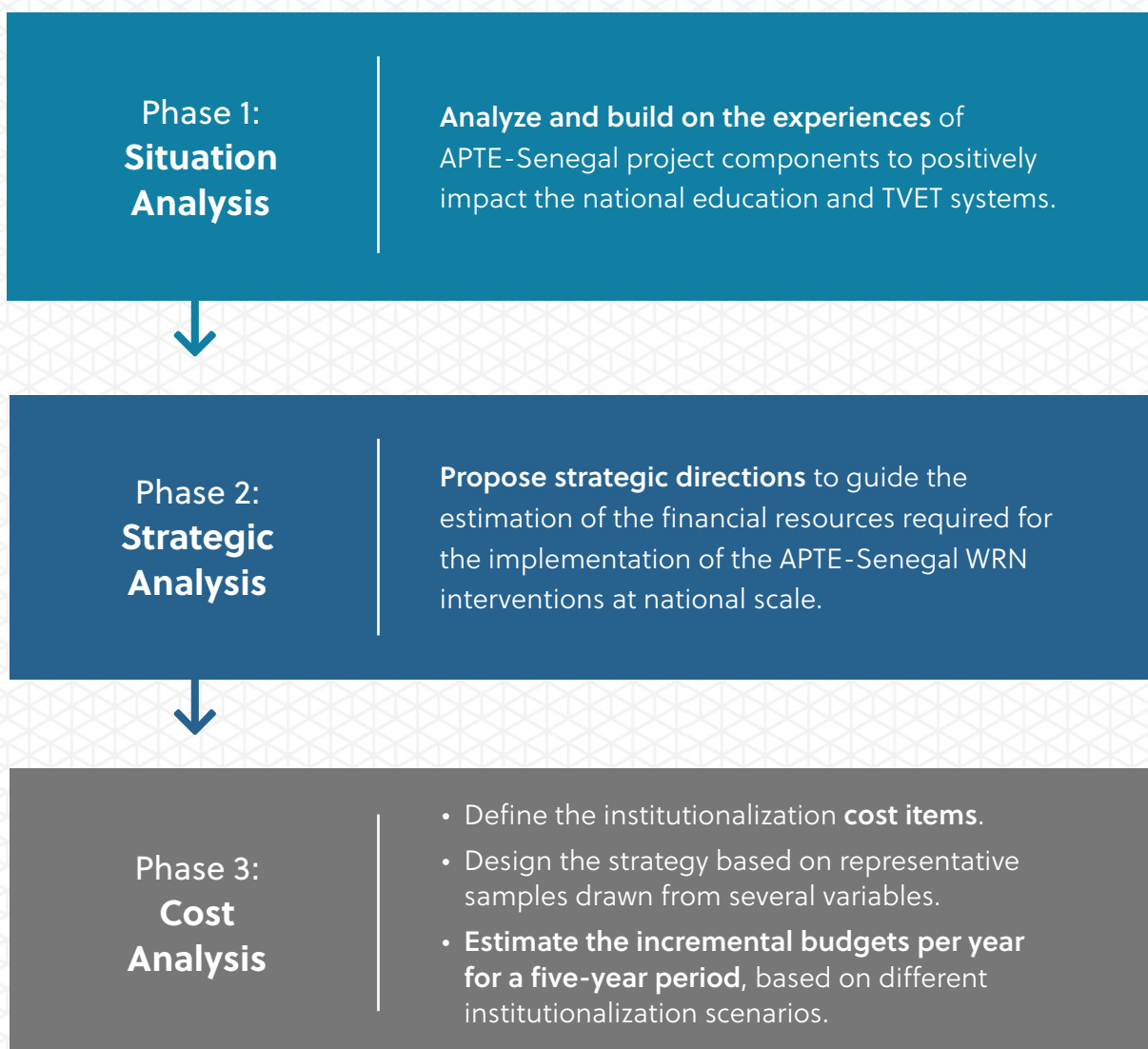
For the interventions to be scaled, APTE-Senegal engaged in a consultative and participatory process that included three phases of analysis:

- 1 a situation analysis,**
- 2 a strategic analysis to make informed decisions on what and how best to scale up, and**
- 3 a cost analysis to inform financial planning.**

One hundred seventy-five key informants were interviewed, including, but not limited to teachers, instructors, master trainers, school directors, inspectors, students, NGO staff, community leaders, and private sector actors.

■ FIGURE 1:

Methodology: A consultative and participatory approach in 3 phases



Limitations of the Methodology

The number of individuals interviewed as part of the consultation process was a representative sample. The original sample size had to be reduced due to the constraints of the global COVID-19 pandemic that closed all schools in Senegal from March to November 2020. Consequently, one region of the initial implementation phase, Kedougou, was not included in consultations. In other regions, some email questionnaires sent to select stakeholders went unanswered, perhaps due to connectivity challenges. As a result, findings from the data collection were compared to existing project data and interpreted through discussions with key stakeholders familiar with project parameters, expectations, and results.

Results

Situational Analysis

The situational analysis highlighted key lessons learned from the initial implementation phase as described in Figure 2.

■ FIGURE 2:

Lessons learned from the project implementation



Curriculum and classes bring about **qualitative changes in student behavior** and **improve the relationship between students and teachers**.



The **financial literacy module** and its practical application through **savings and internal lending communities (SILCs)** is a motivating factor for students and learners.



The **leadership of head teachers, the commitment of teachers, and the criteria for selecting teachers** are key to successful implementation.



Entrepreneurship clubs provide a mechanism for youth **citizenship education**, and a low-stakes space to **practice entrepreneurship skills**.

Once implemented, WRN not only improved students' behavior and motivation to learn, but it also improved their relationships with their teachers, whose careful selection was identified as key to overall project effectiveness. WRN interventions, such as the entrepreneurship clubs, the savings and internal lending communities (SILCs³), and the financial literacy module, were identified as driving factors in developing employment and entrepreneurship skills. In addition, income-generating activities (IGAs) were cited by several key informants as a means to develop practical entrepreneurship skills. Indeed, IGAs helped youth think about the financing and sustainability of entrepreneurial ventures.

³ APTE-Senegal's SILC approach was implemented by Catholic Relief Services and adapted for lower secondary schools and TVETs. In lower secondary schools, entrepreneurship clubs implemented saving groups without the loan component.

Strategic Analysis

APTE-Senegal developed two separate implementation strategies: one for lower secondary schools and one for TVET schools, in order to integrate WRN modules and activities into the national curriculum.

In the case of lower secondary schools, students on average engage in four years of schooling. Multiple respondents (e.g., teachers, inspectors, and directors) noted that the WRN modules spread over three years as done during the project added too much of a workload for both the youngest and oldest grades of lower secondary students. Thus, it is recommended to spread the WRN modules over all four years of lower secondary school education (Table 1). The reasoning for this is that by spreading the ten WRN modules and accompanying activities over the four lower secondary grades, students will have the time to mature and develop the basic education and soft skills necessary to better retain the information in the more advanced curriculum modules. Additionally, this strategy advocates that all teachers be trained on the WRN modules, which was strongly requested by multiple school directors.

■ TABLE 1:

Secondary schools' implementation model

Module Number	WRN Modules	Hosting Grade
1	Personal Development	Year 1: 11-year-olds, equivalent to 6th grade
2	Interpersonal Communication	
3	Attitudes and Behaviors at work	Year 2: 12-year-olds, equivalent to 7th grade
4	Leadership and Collaboration	
5	Hygiene, Health, and Safety	
6	Rights and Obligations of Employers/Employees	Year 3: 13-year-olds, equivalent of 8th grade
7	Financial Skills	
8	Digital Literacy	
9	Market Concepts	Year 4: 14-year-olds, equivalent to 9th grade
10	School and Professional Pathways	

In TVET schools, the Ministry of Employment, Vocational Training, Apprenticeship and Placement (MEFPAI) had to decide whether to create a stand-alone discipline to teach the WRN modules and activities or to integrate these within existing disciplines. By consulting and experimenting with both strategies, the MEFPAI decided that hosting the WRN modules in existing TVET disciplines was more effective. The nine WRN modules have therefore been integrated into the curriculum of the existing disciplines across the three years of education and training in TVET schools (Table 2).

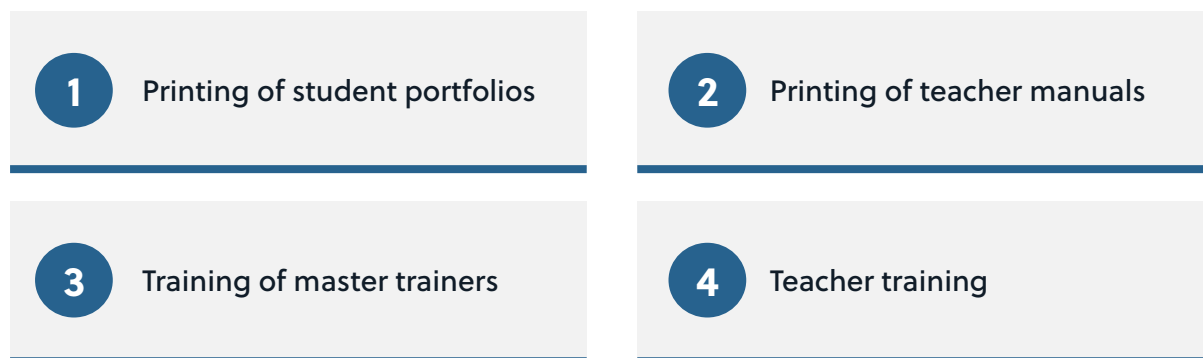
■ TABLE 2:
TVET schools' implementation model

Module Number	Modules	Hosting Disciplines
1	Personal Development	Communication
2	Interpersonal Communication	
3	Job Search and Retention Techniques	Administrative practices
4	Leadership and Collaboration	
6	Employers and Employees Rights & Responsibilities	
5	Hygiene, Health, and Safety at Work	Technical subjects
7	Financial Literacy	Management
9	Business Plan Development	
8	Digital Literacy	Computer Science

Cost Analysis

The cost analysis identified eight different cost items, representing the incremental cost of implementing WRN interventions in secondary schools and TVET schools, as shown in Figure 3.

■ FIGURE 3:
Cost categories



Cost items 1–4 cover the printing of teaching and learning materials and the training of teachers and master trainers.

5 Participatory community diagnostics

Cost item 5 covers the participatory community diagnostics, which ensure that each school has educational objectives aligned to community needs and resource realities.

6 Savings and internal lending communities (SILCs)

Cost item 6 covers the needed resources for SILCs, which complement and reinforce financial literacy among students.

7 Grants for IGAs in entrepreneurship clubs

Cost item 7 covers grants to kick-start IGAs as part of entrepreneurship clubs. As mentioned previously, IGAs have provided critical assistance in developing practical entrepreneurship skills, and should include a self-financing strategy to ensure sustainability.

8 Training for school directors and regional education authorities

Cost category 8 covers training for school directors and regional education authorities.

These eight cost categories reflect the costs that the GoS will need to pay for in addition to existing budgeted items. That is why, for example, teachers and other stakeholder salaries are not included as part of these eight cost items. Salaries are assumed to be included in standard education budgets for each relevant ministry. This assumption was made possible by designing the program based on existing personnel, not new hires.

The cost analysis is based on the initial years' results of APTE-Senegal project implementation, and it assumes an additional period of five years to integrate interventions at scale. Afterwards, these eight cost items will no longer be considered additional costs and should be incorporated into education budgets.

Over five years, the costs of institutionalizing WRN interventions into the national programming of the lower secondary education system are estimated at 6.09 billion XOF, or 10.5 million USD (Table 3).⁴

■ TABLE 3:
Institutionalization costs for 1,162 secondary schools over five years

Cost Item	Cost in XOF	Cost in USD	% of Total
Teacher training	1,952,108,000	3,363,963	32.1%
Printing of student portfolios	1,810,107,570	3,119,262	29.7%
Printing of teacher manuals	60,852,000	104,863	1.0%
Training of master trainers	36,751,900	63,333	0.6%
Training of school directors, regional and departmental education authorities	439,221,600	756,887	7.2%
Participatory community diagnostics workshops	332,299,080	572,633	5.5%
Savings groups	1,168,863,172	2,014,239	19.2%
Entrepreneurship clubs IGAs	286,520,000	493,745	4.7%
Total	6,086,723,322	10,488,925	100.0%

Table 3 shows that about 75% of the total costs incurred are related to training, printing, and participatory community diagnostic workshops. Suggestions on costs reduction have been discussed with both ministries and are included in the Recommendations section at the end of the report.

⁴ Estimates are based on the West African CFA Franc (XOF) at 580,3 XOF for 1 U.S. Dollar. Currency exchange rates accessed on January 25, 2022 at <https://www.xe.com/fr/currencyconverter>.

The remaining 25% of costs are related to entrepreneurship skills development, a key component of APTÉ-Senegal that should be maintained. These costs cover savings groups and entrepreneurship activities that prepare youth for future opportunities while they are still young and practicing these skills in a safe learning environment.

Over five years, the costs of institutionalizing WRN interventions into the national programming of the TVET system are estimated at 1.03 billion XOF, or 1.08 million USD (Table 4).⁵

■ TABLE 4:

Institutionalization costs for 198 TVET schools over five years

Cost Item	Cost in XOF	Cost in USD	% of Total
Teacher training	254,400,000	438,394	24.8%
Printing of student portfolios	276,187,345	475,939	26.9%
Printing of teacher manuals	6,125,000	10,555	0.6%
Training of master trainers	34,421,400	59,317	3.4%
Training for school directors and career guidance officers	105,750,000	182,233	10.3%
Participatory community diagnostics (PCD) workshops	34,770,000	59,917	3.4%
Savings and internal lending communities (SILCs)	115,526,015	199,080	11.3%
Entrepreneurship club IGAs	198,900,000	342,754	19.4%
Total	1,026,079,760	1,768,188	100.0%

Similar to lower secondary schools, almost 70% of the costs for TVET schools are related to the training, printing, and participatory community diagnostic workshops needed for a successful implementation of the initial phase of the program. The other 30% of costs are related to entrepreneurship skills development, including the creation of SILCs as well as IGAs for youth to learn and practice in a safe and supportive environment where teachers and instructors can monitor savings and lending strategies.

⁵ Estimates are based on the West African CFA Franc (XOF) at 580,3 FCFA for 1 U.S. Dollar. Currency exchange rates accessed on January 25, 2022 at <https://www.xe.com/fr/currencyconverter>.

Conclusion

In conclusion, scaling APTE-Senegal's WRN approaches in both lower secondary and TVET schools could seem burdensome when looking at total costs. However, if one considers the *cost per student, per year, it actually costs less than \$4 per student*. This is a significant insight for both ministries, as much higher price tags were expected (Table 5).

■ TABLE 5:

Cost of scaling WRN best practice interventions in secondary and TVET schools

	Total Number of Students over 5 Years	Total Cost over 5 Years	Cost over 5 Years in XOF	Cost over 5 Years in USD	Cost per Year in USD
			Per Student		
Lower Secondary Schools	677,029	5,930,898,737	8,760	15.1	3
TVET Schools	88,766	1,026,079,760	11,559	19.9	4

Recommendations

Recommendation 1:

To reduce printing costs, which are currently more than 30% of the costs in the lower secondary school institutionalization model, GoS should consider the following:

- Use ministries' own printing services, which would result in a lower price
- Digitize student portfolios and teacher manuals
- Include the costs of student portfolios (estimated at \$3.50 per portfolio) in school requirements to be purchased by parents

To reduce accommodation and transportation costs for in-service teacher training workshops, the government should consider these options:

- Use existing facilities, such as schools or community centers
- Integrate WRN content in pre-service training for teachers

Recommendation 2:

Encourage the inclusion of WRN curriculum and activities in pre-service teacher training

as well as refresher training for in-service teacher professional development, which both reduces costs over time and ensures sustainability and scale. This will also eliminate the burden of training new staff in case of teacher turnover.

Recommendation 3:

Integrate WRN modules and activities within the national competency-based curriculum and include as part of assessment reviews and national examinations to align all disciplines and expected learning outcomes.

Recommendation 4:

Optimize impact and effectiveness to ensure policies and planning are in line with learning objectives through stronger coordination with The Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, the Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Employment, Vocational Training, Apprenticeship and Placement.

Recommendation 5:

Consider alternative sources of funding to secure sufficient financing to scale up WRN curriculum and activities in the secondary and TVET schools. Such alternatives include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Private sector contributions that could support the creation of income-generating activities, related to community or national level trade or economic activities, thereby exposing learners, especially in TVETs, to future workforce opportunities.
- Parent contributions to overall student school supplies' requirements.
- Education tax levy to subsidize secondary and TVET school interventions.





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