

Pressemitteilung**Universität Bayreuth****Anja-Maria Meister**

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<http://idw-online.de/de/news845212>Forschungsprojekte
Gesellschaft, Kulturwissenschaften, Pädagogik / Bildung, Wirtschaft
überregional**Bayreuth African Studies examines forms of vocational training in West Africa**

Researchers from the Africa Focus in Bayreuth will investigate the specific characteristics of vocational training in selected African countries. Together with colleagues from the UK and Canada, as well as partners from Ghana, Benin, and Côte d'Ivoire, Erdmute Alber, former Vice Dean of research in the Cluster Africa Multiple, will from 2025-2028 explore the pathways young people in Benin, Ghana, and Côte d'Ivoire take to acquire vocational training and the role traditional "apprenticeships" or schooling play in this process.

What for?

Education in vocational and technical skills has been important in West Africa, across colonial and postcolonial eras, and it is considered a pillar in the development of the nation. Since the 1990s reforms have aimed at channelling technical and vocational education and training (TVET) through the formal school system or at least standardising and including some schooling in the training provided by master craftspersons in the informal sector. Despite the reforms, more traditional forms of apprenticeships under master craftspeople continue to dominate technical learning in West Africa, especially among those from families of modest means and those living outside the large urban conglomerates. This study aims to examine why, and by following young people across the socio-economic spectrum in small cities in Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, and Ghana, the project aims to gain a fine-grained understanding of how young women and men acquire technical and vocational skills.

Young people's perspectives are mostly ignored in policy processes, and to remedy this bias, the study has adopted a youth-based and feminist relational approach, which puts young people at the centre of the inquiry, without losing sight of the importance of the social fabric of their societies. This approach allows us to expand beyond a narrow focus on technical schools, to examine the value ascribed to apprenticeships under master craftspersons, how different forms of TVET are part of a complex, multifaceted landscape in which young women and men navigate expected and hoped-for pathways in coordination with other people.

The research is collaborative and based on qualitative, ethnographic, and participatory approaches. Over the next three years, nine researchers (from doctoral students to senior researchers) in total will collaborate to generate three case studies and a large corpus of data that will be pooled for comparative analysis. Three researchers will work in each country; one doing a year-long explorative fieldwork, while the two others conduct smaller and more focused research. Additionally, twelve youths will create content about their everyday experiences of TVET and the reflections they have on building a good future.

The research is led by Dr. Dorte Thorsen (Institute of Development Studies) and Dr. Philomène Affoué Koffi (Université Félix Houphouët Boigny) who will conduct the study in Côte d'Ivoire; Dr. Erdmute Alber (University of Bayreuth) and Dr. Clarisse Tama-Imorou (Université de Parakou) in Benin; and Dr. Cati Coe (Carleton University) and Dr. Akosua Keseboa

Darkwah (University of Ghana) in Ghana.

About the funding

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wissenschaftliche Ansprechpartner:

Prof. Dr. Erdmute Alber
Chair of Social Anthropology
University of Bayreuth
Phone: +49 (0) 921 554121
Email: erdmute.alber@uni-bayreuth.de
Website: <https://www.sozialanthropologie.uni-bayreuth.de>

URL zur Pressemitteilung:

<https://www.uni-bayreuth.de/en/press-releases/african-studies-examine-vocational-training>