

## Access to decent work Educational and professional guidance, a solid gold footbridge

***The road to decent work is through educational and vocational guidance. A truth recognized and defended by global organizations and scientists working in the field of education and employment. But what about this decent work situation and educational as well as vocational guidance in West Africa, precisely in countries such as Burkina Faso and Togo? This is the subject of an international research project entitled «Adapting and strengthening educational and vocational guidance to promote decent work in two West African countries: Burkina Faso and Togo», in short (r4d), in which ISSP is a stakeholder.***

Why such a research project in Burkina Faso and Togo? The research team bases its conviction on several reasons. First, the work of the International Labor Conference in 1999 defined decent work as essential to the development of life and the well-being of all. Even more so, decent work has become an explicit objective of the United Nations Sustainable Development Program by 2030. Secondly, the researchers also want to test the psychology of labor theory (Duffy et al., 2016), which also suggests that appropriate educational and vocational guid-

ance can promote access to decent work and preserve the well-being of the individual.

The research team also found that while employment agencies and professional counselling services in most developed countries help individuals to cope with career and unemployment problems, this is not the case in low-income countries such as Burkina Faso and Togo, which are characterized by a very young population and a large population operating in the informal economy.

Indeed, sub-Saharan Africa has the youngest population in the world. According to United Nations estimates (2015), this will continue until 2050. Burkina Faso is one of the ten countries with the youngest population and more than 60% of Togo's population is under 25 years of age. These two countries are also experiencing rapid population growth (annual growth rates of 2.9% and 2.7% respectively), which exceeds job creation, resulting in high unemployment rates according to the United Nations and the OECD (2016). These institutions point out that problems related to youth employment have been underestimated and appropriate educational and vocational guidance interventions will be needed to overcome them. These interventions may also include entrepreneurship training.

Another reason for this research project is that to support the economic development of these countries, entrepreneurship education should be developed (Linan and Chen, 2009), in addition to vocational guidance. All these motivations have led researchers from several universities in Africa and Europe to initiate this r4d project by choosing Burkina Faso, Togo and Switzerland as the research area for a comparison.

Scheduled to last 48 months, the objectives of the r4d project are to describe education systems and assess how they consider the needs of users, the economy and the labor market; to describe existing resources for educational and vocational guidance and to assess their adequacy to the needs of the population.

The r4d project also aims at combining the psychology of labor theory and the model of entrepreneurial intentions and adapt them to the West African context; develop appropriate educational guidance, educational and vocational guidance interventions and entrepreneurship training; and raise awareness among policy makers of the



**Members of the r4d project teams of the Joseph Ki-Zerbo University of Ouagadougou, Norbert Zongo University of Koudougou, Lome and Lausanne during the November 2018 meeting**

importance of educational and vocational guidance and entrepreneurship training in order to promote access to decent work, and make these interventions accessible to all, including those in and out of education and working in the formal and informal economy.

Officially launched on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018 after the signing of the agreements (bilateral and multilateral), this research includes ISSP and the Department of Sociology of the University Joseph Ki-Zerbo (Burkina Faso); the Department of Psychology of the University Norbert Zongo of Koudougou (Burkina Faso); the Department of Psychology of the University de Lome (Togo); the Psychology Institute of Lausanne University (Switzerland); and the University of Laval, Quebec (Canada).

The launch of the r4d project made it possible to offer scholarships to four doctoral candidates (including three women) to prepare doctoral theses at the universities of Burkina Faso and Togo in collaboration with the universities of Lausanne and Laval. A survey of 1800 individuals will be carried out in the three countries (Burkina, Togo and Switzerland) using a questionnaire to evaluate work, career, personal resources, environment and satisfaction.

The project is supported by partners such as the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG, Poland); the UNESCO Chair on Guidance and Counselling throughout Life (Poland).

### Teams of researchers involved by university and country:

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ance (IAEVG, Poland); the UNESCO Chair on Guidance and Counselling throughout Life (Poland).

Funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), the r4d project is institutionally linked to the ISSP and UNZK.

During its first edition, the UNESCO Chair Shared Challenges of Development: Knowledge, Understanding, Action, awarded the South 2019 Prize for Innovative Research to the r4d project since 1 October 2019.



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## Beginning of the Academic 2019 - 2020 at ISSP Exchange meeting with newcomers

The academic year beginning of the 2019 - 2020 session was effective on October 14, 2019 at the ISSP. The 23 Professional Master students and 39 Research Master students had an exchange meeting with the administration and the teaching staff on information related to their studies.

All these students will benefit from the new ISSP master's training fees. Revised and implemented this year, training costs have been reduced. From now on, each student will pay the sum of 500,000 FCFA per year (for two years) instead of 1,250,000 FCFA (the 1st year) and 1,450,000 (the 2nd year) as initially planned. These new costs



As usual, the students come from Burkina Faso and several other countries

concern candidates who are self-supporting.

Welcome back to school, everyone!