Workshop Title: Closing the gap in secondary education, in polycrisis context

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Main issues, questions discussed:

Introduction:

- Numbers show that many children interrupt their education at young age before completing secondary school. Of course, worse in poly crisis / conflict and when need to earn money / survive. And worse for girls and vulnerable groups.
- We also acknowledge the fame of the Swiss TVET model (worldwide recognised and replicated).
- Also, obvious that this stage of education is very important in influencing what these children will become / jobs future employment opportunities etc.
- Issues that prevent children to attend secondary school is funding, early marriage, need to work / earn money, poverty, family pressure.

Questions:

- How do we deal with these challenges to (re) integrate adolescents or maintain them in secondary education?
- And ensure that what we are offering them to learn is relevant to their future? Regain interest and value in secondary education? *Éviter des voies de garage?*
- So many young people are jobless / NEETs. How to address this? How do you avoid unemployment?
- Is it really preparing them well? What can we improve?
- Many gender-unbalances (e.g. hairdressing for girls and carpentry for boys). Interesting to see that there are some countries eg in Asia that are more gender equitable than here (Switzerland). Because they choose what they think society will think of them later.
- How do you make such choices at that age, so young? How to ensure the children have all the information at hand to make the best choice and be sure what they want to do in life? And second, how can we ensure that they are given the option / possibility to change career later (if they change their preference)? Big challenge.
- <u>MAIN QUESTION</u>: how to close the gap from compulsory education to VET? and how to ensure that what is taught really prepares the students for the labour market and gives them "skills for a lifetime"?

Experience in Kenya: TVET was neglected, only concentration on basic education and white-collar jobs. And technical jobs were left aside, so lacking people with those skills in those jobs. People don't value those blue-collar jobs. It is a big issue, worldwide (including in Switzerland, even though maybe less than in other countries because the system encourages these jobs and results are that people can more easily find a job and better pay than university students). There is a lot of need for these technical jobs, but finding people with the right skill set is difficult.

Gender aspects: young men more often access the TVET trainings than girls. "female" jobs are often less paid and less well-recognised. But also, they are often jobs that allow them to work from home (eg hairdressing, tailoring, catering) so it can be the job they like but also because it is convenient to them.

Conclusions:

MAIN ISSUES: stigma around certain jobs, visibility (knowledge about the labour market), gender issues,

MAIN SOLUTIONS: To mitigate the devaluation of blue-collar jobs, doing awareness already in school that these careers are just as good as others.

It would be interesting to create more platforms for young people to be better oriented in where to find the jobs and the trainings to get the required skills.

Many NGOs seem to offer the same jobs (carpentry, mechanics, hairdressing, tailoring, a bit IT).

Offering just TVET is often not enough, also need employability skills, or entrepreneurship ("if you can't find a job, become your own employer" – on the other hand, not everyone is made to be or wants to be an entrepreneur).

Providing continued education to people who are already working or encourage them to "go back to school", for people who learned by doing for instance, so they can do what they are doing better.

One needs more funds, especially as the need for infrastructures to deliver these trainings are important.

One needs the involvement of the private sector (to offer the jobs, offer "paid?") internships, visiting a company).