



## Effects of the deficit in school, university and professional guidance on the external effectiveness of the educational system in Togo

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**Abstract:** Although educational and vocational guidance services are integral part of the school's mission to direct young students according to their individual vocations and capacities on one hand, and national needs on the other, it has been observed that in context of the new, more unstable and competitive labour market, young graduates are not always sufficiently prepared to meet the needs of the labour market. In higher education institutions, this reality seems more obvious, as young graduates are unable to establish a link between the training they received and the jobs on offer on the labour market. Economic difficulties and endemic poverty are well above the alert threshold in Togo. Gross domestic product per capita remains lower than in neighbouring countries. Togo is lagging behind in all production sectors, either primary, secondary or tertiary. The main purpose of the present research is to analyse the impact of the lack of school, university and vocational guidance on the informalisation and the disruption of the labour market in Togo. The primary and secondary data collected, using quantitative and qualitative methods, work together to show that the country is still lagging behind in its socio-economic take-off due to the underestimation of the school, university and professional guidance public service. Due to a lack of competent structures and human resources, school, university and vocational guidance is absent from the pathway guiding users of the education system towards training courses in line with national development needs.

**Keywords:** Lack, school and university guidance, priority areas, external effectiveness, Togo.

## Effets du déficit d'orientation scolaire, universitaire et professionnelle sur l'efficacité externe du système éducatif du Togo

**Résumé :** Au Togo, le service public d'orientation scolaire, universitaire et professionnelle s'intègre à la mission de l'école pour orienter les jeunes apprenants selon leurs vocations et aptitudes individuelles d'une part, les besoins nationaux d'autre part. Toutefois, on constate que face au nouveau marché du travail, plus instable et plus compétitif, les jeunes diplômés ne sont pas toujours assez préparés pour répondre aux besoins du marché du travail. Dans les institutions d'enseignement supérieur, cette réalité semble être plus évidente, puisque les jeunes diplômés ne parviennent pas à établir un lien entre la formation reçue et l'offre sur le marché de l'emploi. Ainsi, les difficultés économiques et la pauvreté endémique ont largement dépassé le seuil d'alerte au Togo. Le produit intérieur brut par habitant reste, d'ailleurs, inférieur à celui des pays limitrophes. Le pays connaît du retard dans tous les secteurs de production, à savoir primaire, secondaire et tertiaire. Ainsi, en se donnant comme objectif principal d'analyser l'impact de la carence d'orientation scolaire, universitaire et professionnelle sur

l'informalité et le dérèglement du marché du travail au Togo, les données primaire et secondaire collectées, grâce aux méthodes quantitative et qualitative, s'unissent pour découvrir que le pays reste à la traîne de son décollage socio-économique du fait de la sous-estimation du service public d'orientation scolaire, universitaire et professionnelle. Par la faiblesse en structure et ressources humaines compétentes, l'orientation scolaire, universitaire et professionnelle répond absente sur la voie de guidage des usagers du système éducatif vers des parcours de formation en adéquation avec les besoins du développement national.

**Mots clés :** Carence, orientation scolaire et universitaire, domaines prioritaires, efficacité externe, Togo.

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## 1 Introduction

Nowadays, the Togolese education system, like those of other African countries, often face difficulties related to the management of flows and individual career plans. These difficulties are partly due to the current “massification” of secondary and higher education. How can such large numbers of pupils and students be managed in such a way to ensure a match between each individual's choices, ambitions, vocation, skills and the realities of the job market? This raises the issue of school, university and vocational guidance.

At the forum on educational and vocational guidance held in Luxembourg in 2004, it was agreed that :

Guidance refers to a series of activities that enable citizens, at any time during their lives, to identify their abilities, skills and interests, and to make decisions relating to choosing their studies, training and professional activities, with the joint aim of serving their personal fulfilment and the development of society (Conclusion of FORUM Orientation, 2004 : 6).

In Togo, school, vocational and university guidance seems to be lacking in the education system, and this causes dysfunctions in human resources training in line with the labour market. In the 1975 education reform in Togo, the government made the OSPU part of the school's mission. Despite the OSPU being included in the schools' remit, it has been observed that education is still not the key to regulating social mobility in Togo. The country ranks low in almost every sector of activity. The general employment situation remains very critical. In spite of efforts made, entrepreneurship remains an exceptional social phenomenon among young people (Starter-Mag, 2015). Famine, poverty, malnutrition, unemployment, underemployment and insecurity are part of the daily lives of the people in Togo. The present research, carried out in Togo, consists of identifying the impact of the lack of school, university and vocational guidance on the Togolese government's priority projects and programmes. To this effect, we adopted a rational approach involving a problem and a research methodology. The results achieved require decision-makers to make school, university and vocational guidance a compass of national education in order to massively orientate pupils and students towards the nation's development needs.

## 2 Problem

School, university and vocational guidance programme is an integral part of the adequate running of an education system. The 1975 education reform, which laid the foundations for the country's education system, gave school, university and vocational guidance structures one of their main functions. This is to allocate pupils and students to the different types of training according to a twofold objective: their own aptitudes and the needs of national development. Nevertheless, after more than four decades, the conditions for entering the labour market and exercising a profession remain particularly worrying, perpetuating existing social inequalities. Underemployment, informal urban activities, the downgrading of the working population and the massive unemployment of young graduates from technical and vocational training centres and higher education institutions make up the country's socio-economic landscape. Despite the rhetoric and declarations on the professional integration of graduates, many face difficulty finding their first job (Senayah et al., 2017). Whether graduates or not, whether in rural or urban areas, or whether they attend school or not, young people of 18 years old and over find it difficult to adapt to the

conditions of socio-economic integration. In a legitimate state of enthusiasm, ambition and hope for the future, it is dismaying that they belatedly realise that the secondary and university education they underwent does not fit with the economic and even social conditions in which they can develop and achieve their full potential.

Despite the constant growth in secondary school enrolment, the human, structural and infrastructural resources of school, university and vocational guidance are not increasing in line with the growth of the number of pupils and students in need of educational guidance. In Togo, there is a lack of guidance for users of the education system towards training pathways in line with the labour market. Many young people with entrepreneurial training certificates fail to set up economic projects and initiatives (Pari, 2023). Unemployment and precarious employment dominate the labour market. The local labour market is characterised by very few and indecent job opportunities, in particular motorbike taxi driving and the illegal sale of petroleum products. This situation increases the risk of young people emigrating to the western countries. And for those who remain in their own country, dependence on parents who are already subject to economic insecurity complicates the general household situation (A. Ouedraogo et al, 2023). Many young people leave university without knowing how to make use of their qualifications (Atiahla et al, 2013).

As soon as it was introduced, school, university and vocational guidance fell into decline and disappeared. As a result, huge educational crises are taking hold of the education system and then in the country at large, particularly inequalities in access to educational guidance information. Pupils and students are continually experiencing difficulties in acquiring “a sense of identity, imagining themselves in the future and formulating school and career plans<sup>1</sup>”. The school, university and professional guidance seems to be a symbolic service regarding career problems facing young working people in the country. The majority of urban and rural populations do not trust their future any longer. There is a lack of moral and confidence among the population, especially among the productive forces, even though they are qualified. Economic difficulties and endemic poverty<sup>2</sup> have far exceeded the alert threshold in Togo. Gross domestic product per capita remains lower than in the neighbouring countries. The country ranks last in the sub-region and 44<sup>th</sup> in Africa<sup>3</sup>, far behind Ghana and Benin, which respectively rank 23<sup>rd</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup>. “Many higher education graduates face professional vulnerability. As a result, they very often choose to work in the segments of the labour market that give the least value to their many years of study” (N. Ndjobo et al, quoted by Bomda, 2023 : 134).

Despite the huge resources devoted to educational institutions, the expected results are slow to materialise. “The 2015 World Happiness Report<sup>4</sup> declared our nation to be the unhappiest in the world. The country thus closes the bottom of the ranking at 158<sup>th</sup> in the world as far as happiness is concerned”. Although school, university and vocational guidance is an integral part of the education system, pupils and students in Togo seem to be unaware of the priority professions. The country is lagging behind in all production sectors, whether primary, secondary and tertiary. The National Centre for Educational and Vocational Information and Guidance (CNIOSP)<sup>5</sup>, set up in 2010, stands out in the education system for its huge organisational, structural and material shortcomings, which are affecting the effectiveness of national education's contribution to growth. What impact does the lack of school, university and vocational guidance have on the Togo government's priority public policies?

### 3 Methodology

To embark on a scientific adventure such as this, it is necessary to specify the research tools needed to identify the role of school, university and vocational guidance in the external effectiveness of the education system. In addition to the documentary approach, quantitative and qualitative methods are combined to gather relevant existing data

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Education of Quebec, 2000, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Republic of Togo (2016): Togo, Poverty Profile 2006-2011-2015, Lomé, Republic of Togo

<sup>3</sup> [www.journaldunet.com](http://www.journaldunet.com)

<sup>4</sup> United Nations World Happiness Report 2015, quoted by S. Aleza, course material for second-year sociology students at the University of Lomé, 2020-2021, p.43.

<sup>5</sup> CNIOSP is a public institution set up in 2010 to provide guidance to secondary school pupils in Togo.

on the failings of educational guidance systems in relation to priority areas, in order to analyse and interpret them in relation to the research questions. The research is based on a non-probabilistic purposive sampling. The aim is to make easier an in-depth examination of a relatively unknown situation, that is to show how the lack of school, university and vocational guidance is holding back the country's socio-economic take-off. The quantitative method is based on a non-probabilistic sample of 133 graduates. The sample is made up of graduates of higher education and technical and vocational training schools who graduated at least five (5) years old. The second inclusion criterion requires that these graduates be unemployed or employed in the informal sector. In other words, the questionnaire is administered to all young people who have obtained their university diploma which dates back at least five (5) years and who until then have the status of unemployed or carrying out indecent activities in the informal sector, in particular the illegal sale of petroleum products, driving motorcycle taxis, security, selling second-hand clothes, street selling of SIM cards, management of bars and money transaction kiosks (Flooz, Mixx by yas).

To reach and collect the opinions of a large number of graduates meeting the inclusion criteria, the questionnaire was programmed on KoboCollect software, and relayed on WhatsApp platforms of former graduates from public, private universities and technical and vocational training schools. A clear message was joint to the questionnaire specifying inclusion criteria to avoid data bias. Regarding the qualitative method measured perceptions and convictions on social issues through individual interviews conducted with school guidance counsellors. To analyse the collected data, the SPSS<sup>6</sup> software processed the quantitative data. The figures were exported to Excel build tables and graphs for descriptive analysis. The qualitative data collected were processed by the technique of content analysis. The answers to the questions are analysed to detect shortcomings in the public service of school, university and professional guidance on priority areas for the Togolese state.

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#### **4 Results: Dysfunctions inherent in the CNIOSP and disconnection of human resources from growth sectors.**

In the light of the quantitative and qualitative data collected, it appears that Togo remains behind its socio-economic take-off due to the lack of public service of school, university and professional guidance. Integrated since 1975 into the mission of schools to respond to a double challenge: that of directing students in different types of training according to their own abilities and the needs of national development, the guidance system at the various levels of education, particularly secondary and university, is still in its infancy. Due to the lack of structures and competent human resources, educational, university and vocational guidance is absent from guiding users of the education system towards training courses in line with national development needs. As a result, the priority public policies for Togo, namely youth entrepreneurship, development of agriculture and involvement of young people in the mobilization of domestic financial resources, remain far from being achieved.

##### **4.1 Underestimation of school, university and professional guidance in national education and difficulties of access to public guidance services**

According to D. Esbia and his colleagues (2020), the main purpose of the educational and vocational guidance system is to achieve the matching between the education sector and economic and social systems, by aligning the demands of individuals (students and their families) to the needs of societal development. In Togo, the lack of guidance counsellors, the low budget devoted to CNIOSP, the lack of rolling stock and the predominance of mass activities at the expense of individualized accompaniments confirm the lack of school guidance, university and professional in Togo.

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<sup>6</sup> SPSS stands for Statistical package for social science.

#### 4.1.1 Limited number of school guidance counsellors in the Togolese education system

Since 1975, the activity of the school, university and professional guidance public service is based on a very limited number of guidance counsellors who have to meet the challenges in terms of information and guidance. As result, the services provided by the guidance counsellors do not reach learners throughout the country.

**Table 1. Total number of recruited guidance counsellors (GC) from 1976 to 2024**

Total number of recruited guidance counsellors (GC)								
Years	1976-1977	1977-2000	2001- 2003	2004- 2011	2012-2015	2016-2020	2021-2022	2023 up-to-date date
Number of GC	90	15	4	1	3	7	37	26

Source: Field data collected, September-October 2024.

The table above shows a gradual decrease in the number of guidance counsellors recruited after the reform before the 2021 recruitment, and then just after recruitment, the number of guidance counsellors decrease from 2023 to date. Thus, the Togolese education system has difficulties in implementing individualized assistance for learners as planned in the reform. Data from the table above clearly show that only 26 guidance professional currently carry out the mission of academic and vocational guidance in secondary education in Togo despite the growing number of secondary-level learners.

**Table 2. Distribution of the number of guidance counsellors (GC) per educational region in Togo**

Educational Regions	Number of pupils in senior secondary school per academic year		Number of GC per educational region and GC/pupil ratio	
	Academic year	Number of pupils	GC/ educational regions	Ratio GC/pupils in senior secondary school
Great-Lomé	2021-2022	61 361	8	8 926
	2022-2023	71 389		
Maritim region	2021-2022	34 804	4	10 079
	2022-2023	40 317		
East Plateaux	2021-2022	21 587	3	7 591
	2022-2023	22 773		
West Plateaux	2021-2022	13 125	2	7 262
	2022-2023	14 524		
Central region	2021-2022	16 480	3	6 191
	2022-2023	18 573		
Kara	2021-2022	24 485	3	8 458
	2022-2023	25 374		
Dapaong	2021-2022	16 637	3	5 691
	2022-2023	17 074		

Source: Field data collected, September-October 2024.

In the 2022-2023 academic year, a total of 210.024 students are assigned to 26 guidance counsellors. The insufficiency of human resources for the guidance service is materially demonstrated by the very high rate of support in secondary education in Togo. In the Maritim region, a total of 10,079 students are under the burden of one guidance counsellor alone, resulting in lack of individualized support and unequal access to information. The management of a large number of pupils in order to ensure that each learner's choice, ambition, vocation and skills are in tune with the realities of the labour market is always a problem for the local education system. While the education system in several other African countries has a high number of secondary school and vocational guidance counsellors, Togo has 26 permanent counsellors for 210.024 students in the 2022-2023 academic year, a deficit of 674 guidance counsellors, with regard to the rate of one per 300 students as recommended by UNESCO.

As in secondary education, the deficit of the public educational and vocational guidance service is also noticed in higher education in Togo. While higher education is the decisive step towards access to employment, the guidance system set up in the universities in Togo has a shortage guidance counsellor as shown in the table below.

**Table 3. Changes in the number of students in UL and the number of guidance counsellors**

Academic year	Number of students	Number of GC
2019-2020	67 476	1
2020-2021	70 901	1
2021-2022	71 163	1
2022-2023	76 783	1

Source: Data collected at DAAS-UL.

Despite the steadily increasing global student population (for instance, UL hosts 76,783 students in the 2022-2023 academic year, the number of guidance counsellors is not sufficient to handle the massification of the student body at this higher education institution. Due to the lack of assistance practices for academic and university guidance, the flow of students shows that the massive enrolment of young people in Togolese universities remains much more related to a sociological problem than to a professional project because “young people think they are enrolling merely because they have no other choice. Thus, university is no more considered as a study and professional project, but it is thought in terms of the logical continuation of secondary studies” (Djagnikpo, 2020 : 9).

In addition to the glaring shortage of guidance counsellors, the annual budget for the CNIOSP remains low from the perspective of the institution’s managers.

#### 4.1.2 Low budget allocated to CNIOSP

The budget for the service remains very low. The bulk of the budget is for administrative operations rather than field activities. From 2016 to 2018, research conducted by Banla (2021) showed that the budget of CNIOSP is decreasing every year.

**Table 4. Budget allocated to CNIOSP during 3 consecutive years**

Year	Budget
2016	18 683 000 F CFA
2017	16 683 000 F CFA
2018	7 543 000 F CFA

Source: Banla, 2021, p.27

The table shows a decreasing budget, with the 2018 budget not even half of the 2017 budget and even less than the 2016 budget. This indicates financial difficulties that do not augur well for a better performance. The annual reduction in the CNIOSP budget reflects the underestimation of the public educational and vocational guidance service in Togo. According to the counsellors interviewed, the lack of financial resources does not provide the OSC with an opportunity to address several problems that it faces.

#### 4.1.3 Lack of rolling stock at GC and unequal access to guidance

As a reminder, Togo is subdivided into seven educational regions: Greater Lomé, Maritime, Plateau-Est, Plateau-Ouest, Centrale, Kara and Dapaong. All the colleges and high schools in the education regions are divided into the 26 GC of the local education system. However, because of the lack of rolling stock, educational guidance specialists are unable to cover all schools for them. The following table shows the rolling stock allocated to educational and vocational guidance services.

**Table 5. Allocated rolling stock to educational and vocational guidance services in Togo**

Educational Regions	Number of GC	Types de rolling stock	Number of rolling stock per educational region	Fuel supply
Great-Lomé	8	Motorcycles	0	No fuel supply



Maritime region	4		3	No fuel supply
East Plateaux	3		2	No fuel supply
West Plateaux	2		2	No fuel supply
Centrale region	3		1	No fuel supply
Kara	3		1	No fuel supply
Dapaong	3		1	No fuel supply

Source: Data collected at directorate of academic Affairs and Schooling of University of Lomé.

Analysis of the table shows that CNIOSP is dealing with the rolling stock issue. The number of two-wheeled machines available to GC is not proportional to their size. The eight (08) GC of Grand-Lomé are not equipped with rolling stock. As for the GC of the other educational regions, they share the same gear while a certain number of schools to be covered is allocated to each of them, which is not without consequences. According to a CNIOSP official:

the lack of rolling stock limits GC in their performance. Each school year, they are unable to go through all the schools assigned to them. Most of their services are limited to schools located in the prefecture capitals. Due to the lack of transportation, the GC only take care of students in the major cities of Togo. To date, all learners in schools located in remote areas are sacrificed (Comments collected during an individual interview).

Whereas guidance practices “promote the mastery of sectors that are obsolete or anachronistic and those that are promising for the future” (Bamba, 2023 : 150), the lack of staff and rolling stock deprives most learners of guidance in education.

#### 4.1.4 Predominance of the collective orientation and lack of knowledge of the key occupations

According to a study by CNIOSP in 2022, agriculture, new and renewable energies, mines, buildings and public works, transport and logistics, Information and communication technologies and tourism are the most promising occupations on the labour market. However, the activities of the GC based mainly on information about the educational paths do not offer the learners the possibility to have an overview of the leading occupations. During the individual interviews, the GC recognize that the activities most often carried out for the benefit of students are only related to information about the courses and their outlets. Activities on the key occupations, professional project and vocational development and counselling are rarely done. The comments of a CNIOSP manager confirm the lack of individualized accompaniment during the GC’s services:

During our field trips during the celebration of Information and Orientation Day, we find that many students need individual accompaniment and support. Unfortunately, we can not satisfy them because not only are they often numerous, but also the time is lacking because we often have only an hour or two at most to do in each school.

Like secondary education, students in the country’s higher education institutions face a glaring lack of guidance. The few orientation sessions conducted at public universities are collective rather than individual. These activities, bringing together the new baccalaureate holders, are usually held close to the academic year. The counsellors interviewed described them as simple information sessions on the various training offers and contact between university leaders and new students. These sporadic information sessions do not provide students with the skills to focus on priority areas. If the majority of Togolese learners are oriented towards occupations that give priority to a social status (civil service) instead of those leading to concrete and visible achievements (agriculture, masonry), this is because many students base their representations on information provided by their family or entourage who do not have a reliable source of information about the education and trades.

The failures of educational, academic and vocational guidance practice that have been demonstrated exclude pupils and students from employment-creating areas and local development needs.

#### 4.2 The underestimation of the school, university and professional guidance and slippage in the training of human resources linked to the priority axes of the Togolese economy

For Aléza (2021), if the quality of primary and secondary education products passes through national exams, standardized tests that assess the knowledge and skills acquired by students, the complex quality of universities and higher education centres is only addressed through their outputs absorbed by the labour market, the assessment of the actual skills and competences of graduate students, the quality of services provided to the State, public and private enterprises, households and the contribution of academic products to socio-economic development. In Togo, the effectiveness of the education system is very limited. Several development plans developed by the public authorities for decades are not materialized because the educational, university and professional orientation that can guide students towards the needs of national development, is outside the country's education priorities.

##### 4.2.1 Entrepreneurship in Togo: an appropriate field for foreign nationalities

As education is a driver of economic, human and social development, its effectiveness depends on the models it disseminates, the programs it offers, the motivations it generates and the values it transmits. For more than a decade, the Togolese state has placed particular emphasis on promoting entrepreneurship especially as the country's positioning is known as a first-rate commercial business center in the subregion where the business environment is improving for the satisfaction of economic operators in the country. In March 2023, at the webinar "Doing Business with Togo" organized in partnership with the Moroccan association of exporters, it is stated that "Togo is full of investment opportunities in the sectors of agriculture, construction, health, extractive industries, services, logistics and telecommunications"<sup>7</sup>. The same source indicates that Togo remains one of the countries that offer and facilitate business opportunities, but young graduates do not know this favorable environment for entrepreneurship as indicated by the data in the chart below.

**Table 6. Opinions of the graduates on the adaptability of Togo's environment to entrepreneurship**

Environment conducive to entrepreneurship in Togo	Number	%
Yes	26	19,0
No	98	73,0
Don't know	9	6,0
Sum	133	100,0

Source: Field data collected, September-October 2024.

According to the data recorded in the table, 73% of graduates say that the Togolese environment is not favorable for entrepreneurship against 19% who find Togo as a country conducive to self-enterprise.

The lack of awareness of business opportunities in Togo is partly explained by the lack of awareness, promotion and entrepreneurship education in schools and universities that falls within the remit of public educational guidance services, academic and vocational. The lack of guidance counsellors to break down information on existing business opportunities in Togo, leads young graduates to underestimate entrepreneurship. However, several countries in Europe, Asia, the Americas and Africa are continuously establishing companies in Togo. The Togolese environment, which is considered unfavorable to the emergence of entrepreneurship by graduates, remains one of the countries that attracts the attention of foreigners when it comes to business creation. According to a report by CFE (2019), more than sixty (60) different nationalities hold companies in Togo.

Despite efforts, entrepreneurial behaviour remains an exceptional social phenomenon among young Togolese, which explains underemployment, informal urban activities, the downgrading of the working population, combined with the massive unemployment of young people who have completed higher education and technical and vocational schools. Exhausted by unemployment, several young people are engaged in infamous practices that "coexist with the cybercrime economy whose main actors are city dwellers known under several national names: "Yahoo boys" in Nigeria, "Brouteurs" in Côte d'Ivoire, "Feyman" in Cameroon, "Sakawa" in Ghana and "Gayman" in Benin (Akindes, 2022 : 100). The lack of awareness on self-enterprise in colleges, high schools and universities

<sup>7</sup> [www.togofirst.com](http://www.togofirst.com).



induces the structural weakness of youth to undertake in the local economic space full of opportunities in the primary sectors, secondary, tertiary and unfortunately abandoned to foreigners who arrive more and more numerous to create businesses and hire nationals against poverty wages that accentuate poverty in the country (Aléza et al, 2024).

Like the entrepreneurial field, agriculture, a major sector of the Togolese economy occupying a prominent place in development policies, does not apparently attract the majority of the country's students.

#### 4.2.2 Agriculture: a priority sector for the Togolese state, but deserted by young people

Under strategic axis 2 of the 2020-2025 roadmap, the Togolese government aims to make agriculture a real engine for growth and job creation. However, the information gathered on the ground shows that young people show little interest in the sector because of the lack of educational, university and vocational guidance. The generalization of schooling inherited from colonization has led to a profound change in young people's attitudes towards traditional society and its realities, especially where agricultural manual work is still represented as the preserve of the despised peasant. Although the activities of the Youth Economic Initiatives Support Fund (JSIF) cover the sectors of agriculture, agro-food processing, cereal production, a pivotal opportunity for the higher school of agronomy of the University of Lomé and the national institute of agricultural training of Tové graduates to energize the agricultural sector in order to contribute to food security and self-sufficiency, the latter demonstrating an interest in administrative tasks. "The majority of learners have an erroneous representation of agricultural sector. The field does not attract interest from young people. Everyone wants to wear a white collar every day" (comments from an orientation counsellor). Several young graduates in the agricultural field are redirecting themselves to other sectors of activity. According to an OECD study, the public service attracts graduates from all sectors including technical and agricultural sectors:

The public sector attracts a large proportion of higher education graduates [...] The public sector therefore attracts graduates from all backgrounds, including science and technology. The case of graduates from agricultural sectors is instructive. Approximately three-quarters of the graduates from the higher school of agronomy work as public administrators (54%) or teach (20%). Thus, these motivations for public sector lead to a skills-alienation effect and create a vicious circle in which the private sector is not able to attract higher education graduates who remain in the public sector where they do not participate in development high value-added activities needed to generate well-paying jobs (OECD, 2016 : 29).

The rising trend in commodity prices<sup>8</sup> is causing undernourishment among low-income families, including graduates who engage in indecent activities for a very low wage. The majority of young graduates who are wandering around, languishing under the effects of unemployment could have embraced the agricultural sector if educational programs were aligned with the country's priority needs. Togo, a country whose population is predominantly young, has a food deficit. Because national education makes learners more likely to show interest in the tertiary sector (Akakpo, 2022). As a result, the country is facing food shortages. For more than three years, the price of basic agricultural products has been soaring because demand is far in excess of supply. However, the majority of young people in good health are found in large cities across the country looking for paid employment. Without an education system centred on the agricultural sector and accompanied by a policy of educational, academic and vocational guidance, agriculture will continue to be despised regardless of government efforts and available resources.

If the socio-economic precariousness of young graduates does not benefit their immediate environment, namely their parents and families, this situation also affects the public resources of the Togolese state.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://icilome.com/2024/09/togo-evolution-des-prix-des-cereales-et-autres-produits-alimentaires/>.

#### 4.2.3 Low youth participation in public resource mobilization

The increase in public resources has also been one of the flagship projects of the Togolese government for years. They enable governments to finance investment in infrastructure, including roads, schools, sanitation facilities, etc. This contribution requires the involvement of all people, including youth. Because if the Togolese state devotes a huge<sup>9</sup> amount of funding to public schools, colleges, high schools and universities every year for the training of qualified human capital, the expected effects of funding is that the new human resources reproduced first build specialized careers in the labour market then become producers of wealth, powerful taxpayers and consumers in the various local and global markets. So, the chart below describes the level of youth participation in public resources.

**Table 7. Level of graduates' contribution to public resources.**

<b>Contribution to socio-economic development of community</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	23	17.0
No	110	82.0
Sum	133	100.0

Source: Field data collected, September-October 2024.

The data in the graph indicates that a significant majority of young Togolese with a rate of 83% do not contribute to the increase in public resources through taxes. Only 17% of the respondents present themselves as tax contributors. Mainly absorbed by the informal sector, young people are unable to accompany public authorities to have sufficient public resources for investment in infrastructure. This position is supported by the results of the ERI-ESI survey, "because of their informal nature, the majority of informal production units (IUPs) do not contribute to the national development effort by paying their taxes" (INSEED, 2017 : 55). Despite the scientific, technological, technical, industrial, social and human progress made possible by massive investment in education, there is still a sense of doubt as to whether the real mission of education will be achieved in Togo: the contribution of the education system to the sustainable development of national society. Without an efficient education system supported by a school and university guidance policy to guide learners according to the real needs of the job market and offer graduates the opportunity to integrate productive circuits in order to contribute to the mobilization of financial resources through taxes, the country will lack the financial means to carry out its priority projects. Because the "development aid" often received by Africa from the international community is in danger of disappearing. Current geopolitical instability is leading to a redirection of financial resources. Europe, concerned by military tensions and the need to rearm, is reallocating a large portion of its budget to defense, thus limiting its commitment to development aid. The United States, for its part, has suspended USAID, which represented more than 40% of international aid. Faced with this new situation, it is becoming imperative for African universities to reinvent their approach to training and research in order to effectively respond to the challenges of the job market and anticipate future needs.

African countries, particularly Togo, are still characterized by socio-economic inequalities resulting in the forced departure of young people in economic exile.

<sup>9</sup> For the five consecutive years, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education remains the largest budget beneficiary, with an allocation of 183 billion FCFA. However, this amount is 8 billion FCFA lower than in the year 2024. Over the last five years, the budget for this ministry has increased by 20% compared to the 152 billion F CFA in 2021, <https://www.togofirst.com/fr/finances-publiques/0901-15500-togo-top-5-des-ministeres-aux-plus-gros-budgets-en-2025>.

#### 4.2.4 Low external effectiveness of national education and economic exile of young people

Despite the call of public authorities who «invite the Togolese to have faith in the future<sup>10</sup>», the departure into economic exile remains the manifest will of young graduates.

**Table 8. Opinion of respondents on migration towards developed countries**

Desire to travel abroad in case of non-fixed employment in Togo?	Number	%
Yes	129	96.0
No	4	3.0
<b>Sum</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field data collected, September-October 2024.

The data recorded in the graph reveal that the significant majority of young graduates surveyed with a workforce of 129 is a rate 96% wish to leave Togo for the northern countries. While each people has a programmed and intended beginning of sovereign ideology for self-sufficient creativity and productivity in every major civilizational environment, most young Togolese are eager to migrate to the countries of the North in search of the best living conditions: “With or without a degree, the future of young people is uncertain in Togo, which forces graduates to leave the country. If I also find an opportunity, I will migrate to developed countries without which one will grow old with his degrees in Togo” (comments of a student in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of Bachelor in Sociology).

The brain or labour force flight to the North is fuelled by the structural weakness of public higher education institutions. The country trains its citizens in public universities; then its graduates go to retrain in the host country and finally settle there and work for the benefit of foreign companies in an international competition not well understood by the home country. While the developed countries so coveted by Africans who have accomplished in the history of development known to humanity economic miracles do not have abundant natural resources.

### 5 Discussion: Role of educational, academic and vocational guidance in the contribution of the education system to the sustainable development of national society

In Togo, the failure of the public school, university and vocational guidance service negatively affects the external effectiveness of the education system. The gap between the way in which educational, university and vocational guidance services are organized and the objectives of public policy remains too wide. The public school, university and vocational guidance service has not taken off to fulfill its mission: that of massively orienting students towards more promising areas. As a result, unemployment, underemployment, poverty, socio-economic inequalities and famine characterize the Togolese labour market because the training of available human resources is disconnected from priority sectors. Other previous research corroborates the impact of the lack of school guidance on family life and national development. The results of Atitsogbé and his collaborator demonstrate that students remain victims of a complex system with sparse information requiring to develop precarious strategies based on many uncertainties about choices of guidance achieved. Thus,

the negative careers that students embrace give them a sense of social downgrading, degrade their self-esteem and generate frustrations that make youth an easy prey for various social ills: alcoholism, theft, rape, urban violence.

School without guidance is increasingly seen as a mess (Atitsogbé *et al*, 2013 : 7).

The underestimation of the public guidance service affects the external effectiveness of the education system. To this end, Y. A. Holu recommends that:

the Togolese state should strengthen the National centre for educational and vocational information and guidance by equipping it with staff (guidance and material counsellors, in order to guide young people according to their individual vocations and abilities on the one hand, and national needs on the other, as provided for by the 1975 education reform. It will then be necessary to define a policy of orientation while taking into account the current realities of the population, especially the increase in school enrolment, evolution in ICT... etc. (Holu, 2023 : 67).

In another scientific contribution, P. Pari and her team list the effects of lack of guidance in education. For the authors, the lack of a university orientation program tarnishes the influence of public universities in the country because “the absence of educational and vocational guidance leads to drop-out, dropping out of school and

<sup>10</sup> Appeal made to Togolese people on August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024 by Minister Gilbert BAWARA during an interview on New Word TV, <https://network.newworldtv.com>

repetition, increasing unemployment, hence poverty and inadequate training-employment ratio” (Pari et al, 2022: 4). In a study carried out in Togo, the OECD confirms that the absence of school guidance policy distances learners from the training supply needed on the market:

Togo does not have the appropriate observation and guidance tools to bring the training offer closer to the labour market. Improving the quality of the skills system depends to a large extent on consistency between the supply of skills and labour market needs. However, Togo lacks observation and guidance systems for students, both in their educational path but also with a view to better integration into the labour market (OECD, 2016: 35).

For their part, S. Aléza and his collaborator reveal “Without educational, university and vocational guidance services, the education system will remain without a compass to gradually lead pupils and students towards the most productive economic sectors of each other, Primary or secondary or even tertiary” (Aleza et al, 2024: 22).

## 6 Conclusion

The lack of a public educational, university and vocational guidance service has serious consequences on the external effectiveness of education. The investigations, based on quantitative and qualitative methods, discover that the lack of educational practices in orientation disconnects the training of human resources from the flagship projects and programs for the Togolese state. Although efforts are being made by the public authorities to encourage self-employment of graduates, Young people are continually lacking enthusiasm for entrepreneurship due to the lack of guidance and a generalist approach to the education system. Entrepreneurship is left to foreigners who arrive in increasing numbers to create businesses and hire nationals for poverty wages. Agriculture, the leading area of employment, is despised by learners because of misrepresentations. As a result, graduates are more interested in regular salaried employment while sectors offering such jobs are saturated, which explains the high unemployment and underemployment rates that characterize the local labour market. While every country in the world promotes nationalism, patriotism and develops strategies to protect its youth, a significant proportion of young Togolese graduates remain determined to leave the country despite the resources devoted to their training.

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