

Report of the Conference

“Education and Employment: Turning the Tide for African Youth”

Held on February 26, 2013 in Copenhagen



April 2013

Summary: Report of the conference:

Education and Employment: Turning the Tide for African Youth

This report provides a summary of the presentations and themes discussed at the conference “*Education and Employment for Youth: Turning the Tide for African Youth*” held February 26th 2013 at Vartov in Copenhagen. The conference was organised by the two NGO organisations: Education Network and the Children and Youth Network.

Background

In Africa the part of the population which is between 15 and 24 years old has grown faster than in any other part of the world. According to the World Bank 200 million people fall within this age category corresponding to 40% of the continent’s total labour force. 60% of these are without any formal employment. According to African Economic Outlook (2012) a major quoted reason given by North African youth for not getting employment is lack of relevant education and training. There is therefore need for quality youth education and training that both match the needs of society and increase their job opportunities and thereby preparing the youth for the economic and social life in a world undergoing rapid changes.

The Technical & Vocational Skills Development (TVSD) has shown to be more suitable to fulfil the demand for job relevance than the ordinary formal education system, e.g. in urban areas in West Africa. (Kuépié *et al.*, 2010). Nevertheless, the current TVSD system in Africa also has problems and weaknesses, including weak linkages to the labour market and lack of qualified teachers (Global Monitoring Report 2012). At the 2012 Triennale of the Association for Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) held in Ougadougou, one of the conclusions was that there is need to develop new partnerships, e.g. between schools and private companies, and that education in Africa must focus more on knowledge, technology, communication and ICT. A recent Danish study of the programmes of Danish NGOs shows that some NGOs have been successful in developing new ways of establishing new types of employment-relevant partnerships.

Purpose

The overall purpose of the conference was to put focus on the large youth population in Sub-Saharan Africa, where millions of young Africans will be leaving school over the next decades. The specific objectives were to discuss and identify strategies and approaches addressing the issue of youth unemployment and social exclusion; and to highlight the challenges as well as the opportunities for creating access to decent employment through relevant education, training and civic participation for vulnerable African youth.

Presentations

Marianne Bo Palludan from the Children and Youth Network welcomed the participants and the keynote speakers and made a brief introduction to the background and the main theme of the conference. This was followed by seven presentations by researchers and practitioners with expertise and experience from working with youth, education and employment. The presentations were divided according to the following sub-themes and sessions: 1) Setting the Scene; 2) Policies and Instruments; 3) Policies and Practices. Key points, challenges and opportunities highlighted in the presentations are summarized below.

Session 1: Setting the Scene

Kenneth King professor emeritus, University of Edinburgh: 'Skills Training for Youth in Africa - rethinking the kind of development we want'. KK gave an overview of how TVSD, TVET and skills are understood and defined in recent reports of international organizations. Key messages included.

- Concepts: There is a danger of replacing TVSD with 'skills' as the latter is a slippery term.
- Linkages: There is a need to start looking at the supply side of education – employment and how to make work from skills. Most people believe that supply skills equal jobs. But how do you explain the absence of policy?
- Measuring: one needs to acknowledge that some things cannot be measured, e.g. why do Chinese students work twice as hard as African students? There is little data/statistics on TVET – foundation skills are the only easy thing to measure.
- Best practices: = often MY practice, but there is need to look at the evidence base behind. Initiatives may be totally externally funded. We need to shift from learning *for* Africa to learning *from* Africa, e.g. West Africa has millions of self-funded initiatives.
- "Education for global Citizenship": What does it mean? We (from the North) have the privilege to go where ever we want. The Majority people in the South cannot go where they want. We do not have a global citizenship, except for the North.

Download Kenneth King's full presentation here: ["Review of Key Reports on TVET, Skills Development, Work and Jobs: Lessons for Africa?"](#).

Session 2: Policies and Instruments

Jesper Andersen, senior advisor, Development Policy Department, Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs: 'The Current Danish Development Cooperation Framework for working with youth, education and employment in Africa'. Key messages included:

- Danida uses a comprehensive approach in skills development and TVET is integrated in the Growth Programme.
- There is a modality change away from traditional projects towards more comprehensive programmes and budget support.
- Youth, education and employment is an area where Denmark will do more in the coming years.

Download Jesper Andersen's presentation about youth, education and employment here: ["Youth, Education and Employment in Africa"](#).

James Windell, senior specialist in the Skills and Employability Department, ILO: 'Training for Rural Empowerment (TREE)'. Key messages included:

- Access to credit one of the main obstacles in TREE programmes.
- Government taking over a TREE programme is a proof of success.

- High costs per person justified by capacity-building.
Download James Windels presentation about TREE here: ["Training for Rural Economic Empowerment \(TREE\): Skills for Youth Employment and Rural Development"](#)



Panel discussion (From left): Kenneth King, Moses Chibwana, Jesper Andersen and James Windell.

Question 1: What would be your key recommendations in the Post-2015 Development Agenda for making a lasting and transformative impact in relation to adequate work-related skills development for young people, women and men?

- Starting point for skills development should be an understanding of the skills system in the country. We should not bring in our version of what might be needed. Next step should be asking how you as a NGO want to relate to that.
- For a skill system to operate you need three things: A national training policy (which most African countries and fragile states do not have); a training council and finance.
- Ensure that young people who leave primary school have something useful to do
- Need to link formal and informal systems.

Question 2: What actions and initiatives could be taken by different stakeholders, including governments, civil society, teachers, youth, private sector, media, donor agencies, UN and international development organizations to bring about lasting improvements to education for global citizenship especially in light of improving skills development, both for jobs and for life?

- Incentives to develop/have a national vocational sector education plan must be in place. We should be looking for partnerships and some kind of common platform for all interested parties, and it should not be for finance alone. Transition from sector to budget support is meaningless if there is no policy to link up to.
- There is need for a combination of budget support and technical assistance.
- The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) model is conducive and inspiring, but not *the* model.
- The informal sector skills should be acknowledged when designing national qualification frameworks. There is also need to base it on the job incentive growth sectors in the specific country.
- Long-term perspective is needed.
- Need to acknowledge that in Africa the private sector *is* to a large degree the informal sector.
- Important to identify and build on ongoing small initiatives/where something is already happening.
- Encourage youth who leave vocational schools to become independent entrepreneurs and create their own jobs.
- Important to analyze the skills market.

Session 3: Policies and Practices

Jørgen Billetoft, sociologist and partner in PEM Consult: 'Mozambique. Political realities versus Best Practice':

- Access pressure leads to anarchistic expansion and overload of government structure.
- The costs of running new system not taken into account.
- Massive over-designing in programme development.
- Need for scaling down – not up.
- Political realities not taken into account in TVET reform process.

Download Jørgen Billetoft's presentation here: ["TVET Reform in Sub-Saharan Africa"](#)

Bo Tovby-Jørgensen, coordinator of programs on Education for Youth Empowerment (EYE) in Save the Children Denmark (SCD):

- The vision of EYE is to empower vulnerable children and youth in rural and urban areas to improve their living conditions, strengthening their skills to access safe and protective employment opportunities and have influence on decisions regarding their own lives.
- It is important to build up the self-esteem of youth so that they learn to stand up for their rights.
- NGOs train but access to activities is also important.
- Youth training and market needs are two parallel worlds. There is need for linking and integration of the two.

Download Bo Tovby-Jørgensen's presentation about youth empowerment here: ["Education for Youth Empowerment"](#)

Martin Østergård, Programme Development Director in Bornefonden: 'Rethinking skills training for Youth'.

- Focus areas of Bornefonden includes 'income-generating activities' aiming at improving the living conditions of the youth and their families and improving their options for sustaining themselves.
- Important to examine why youth leave the formal education system without completing their education. Rapid change and travelling to other part of the country among the reasons.

Download Martin Østergård's presentation about skills training here: ["Turning the Tide for African Youth: Rethinking Skills Training for Youth"](#)

Moses Chibwana, Deputy Head of DAPP Malawi's Project Office: 'School-based vocational training for youth'.

- 30 percent do not find employment in what they are trained for.
- Challenges include need for more schools; outdated technology and equipment.
- Short courses are good for specific skills, but youth also need general education.

Download Moses Chibwana's presentation about how education is a basic human right here: ["Humana People to People Vocational Schools"](#)



Final discussion and wrap-up

The facilitator wrapped up the day by outlining the levels from where further action is required and discussions can be continued, namely 1) Individual NGOs
NGOs and platforms/networks of NGOs; 2) National governments and donors; and 3)

the post-2015 process. The facilitator encouraged the participants to direct and relate their messages to the actors at these levels. This turned out to be difficult among other things because these levels are inter-related. Several of the inputs and recommendations below are therefore not restricted to one level only.

Messages directed towards individual NGOs and platforms/networks of NGOs:

- Advocacy for financing quality education.
- Advice on models and encourage creativity and innovation.
- Be specific with regard to target group. To work with youth on the edge of society requires a different approach, plan and programme than working with youth from less vulnerable groups. Youth is not a homogeneous group.
- Be country and context specific. Do contextual studies, e.g. on what the youth do and what their social networks and linkages are.
- Use open source materials.
- NGO has an important role in making the youth see the value of vocational training.

Messages to national governments and donors:

- The youth are the future tax payers so politicians should invest in and prioritize youth.
- Need to prioritize to make best use of limited money.
- Stop looking at youth as a problem and see the potential instead.

Messages to post-2015 process/meetings on goal setting:

- Reducing poverty and other goals are related to the youth.
- Include both formal and informal skills development.
- Basic education is not sufficient to get a job.
- Need to apply a holistic approach and view of education. Need to focus but at the same time relate to education as a system.
- Need to be context and country specific.

Turning the Tide for African Youth

Venue: Vartov, Farvergade 27 1463 København K

26 February 2013, 9.00 – 16.00

Organised by the NGO Education Network and the Child and Youth Network

Facilitator: Knud Vilby

9.00 – 9.30	<i>Registration and coffee</i>	
9.30 – 9.40	<i>Welcome and introduction</i>	<i>The Danish NGO-Education Network & the Children and Youth Network</i>
	<i>Session 1: Setting the Scene</i>	
9.40 – 10.15	Skills Training for Youth in Africa – Global & Local Proposals	Kenneth King, University of Edinburgh, UK
	<i>Session 2: Policies and Instruments</i>	
10.15 – 10.30	The current Danish Development Cooperation Framework for working with 'Youth, education and employment' in Africa	Birgitte Markussen, Head of the Africa Office, the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs
10.30 – 11.00	<i>Coffee</i>	
11.00 – 11.30	Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE) in Africa	James Windell, Skills and Employability Department, ILO
11.30 – 12.15	Panel discussion	w/Kenneth King, Birgitte Marcussen, James Windell, Moses Chibwana
12.15 – 13.00	<i>Lunch</i>	
	<i>Session 3: Policies and Practices</i>	
13.00 – 13.30	Mozambique: Political realities vs. Best	Jørgen Billetoft, PEM Consult

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	Practice	
13.30 – 14.00	Education for Youth Empowerment	Bo Tovby-Jørgensen, Save the Children Denmark
14.00 – 14.30	<i>Coffee</i>	
14.30 – 15.00	Rethinking skills training for Youth	Martin Østergård, Bornefonden
15.00 – 15.30	School-based vocational training of youth	Moses Chibwana, DAPP Mikolongwe Vocational School, Malawi
15.30 – 16:00	Final discussion and wrap-up	

About the speakers

Kenneth King is professor emeritus, University of Edinburgh, where he was Director of the Centre of African Studies for 20 years. In 2006-7 he was Distinguished Visiting Professor, University of Hong Kong. Kenneth's research interests over the years have focused on the history and politics of education, skills development in both the formal and informal sectors of the economy and on aid policy towards all sub-sectors of education. His current research is on China-Africa cooperation in human resource development, especially in Kenya, Ethiopia and South Africa. He is also coordinating research on skills-and-poverty reduction in Ghana, India and Pakistan. He has edited for over 20 years an aid policy bulletin, called NORRAG NEWS (free on line at www.norrag.org), which looks critically at education and training issues in the developing country and donor agency worlds.

Birgitte Markussen, Ambassador, is Head of Department for Africa in the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. From 2008 – 2010, she was Danish Ambassador based in Burkina Faso and accredited in Niger and covering Chad and the Central African Republic. In 2008 – 2010 she was Deputy Head of the Department for Environment, Energy and Climate Change in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the COP 15 International UN Conference on Climate Change held in Copenhagen. She has served as Deputy Head of the embassy in Kampala. She has had a number of special assignments including Member of the Review Panel of the OECD/DAC first guidelines on Managing for Development Results.

James Windell works as a senior specialist in the Skills and Employability Department, ILO. His department is involved in research, policy guidelines and technical assistance aiming to help constituents integrate skills development into national and sector development strategies in order to better meet current labor market needs and to prepare for the jobs of the future; and to expand access to employment-related training so that youth and other vulnerable groups are better able to acquire skills and secure decent and productive work. He has among other things been involved in the development of generic manual on Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE) and in writing a policy brief on gender and rural employment: Investing in skills for socio-economic empowerment of rural women (ILO 2011).

Jørgen Billetoft is a sociologist with more than 20 years of working experience with international development assistance from all phases of the project/programme cycle. In recent years, assignments have particularly focused on the interface between economic growth, private sector development, employment creation and skills training. Jørgen Billetoft has extensive experience from formulation and assessment of sector programmes for Danida and other development partners. His specific areas of expertise include skills development, training and labor market analysis in Africa and Asia.

Bo Tovby-Jørgensen is coordinator of programs on Education for Youth Empowerment (EYE) in Save the Children Denmark (SCD). The vision of EYE is to empower vulnerable children and youth in rural and urban areas to improve their living conditions, strengthening their skills to access safe and protective employment opportunities and have influence on decisions regarding their own lives.

Martin Østergård is Programme Development Director in Bornefonden where he among other things works with programme development within Education, which is one of the four focus areas of Bornefonden. Another focus area is 'income-generating activities' aiming at improving the living conditions of the youth and their families and improving their options for sustaining themselves.

Moses Chibwana worked has worked for DAPP Malawi (the Malawian member organization of the Humana People to People network) since 1997. After studies in business Administration and Management, with a specialization on College Management, he was the DAPP Mikolongwe Vocational school's Principal and took part in its establishment and development. He is responsible for leading the school's cooperation with different partners including the government of Malawi and TEVETA (Technical, Entrepreneurial, Vocational Education and Training Authority). He is currently the Deputy Head of DAPP Malawi's Project Office, and is in charge of monitoring and evaluation and staff management.

RESULTS OF EVALUATION IN BRIEF

Conference: "Turning the Tide for African Youth" Copenhagen. February 26, 2013

General information: 24 evaluation forms were returned corresponding to a little more than half of the participants (excluding presenters and organisers). As illustrated by the numbers for each of the questions some did not answer all the questions.

Where / how did you learn about the seminar?

The majority of the respondents got to know about the seminar through the organising networks' home pages and emails services. However, 6 respondents mentioned U-Lands Nyt as their source of information. This shows that it pays to use broader channels, especially in order to attract non-members and students (see below).

Are you a member of any of the organising networks?	Yes 9		No 15		
How did you like (the content of):	1 ☹	2	3	4	5 ☺
Session 1 - Setting the scene: Skills Training for Youth in Africa – Global & Local Proposals/Kenneth King		2	1	11	10
Session 2 - Policies and instruments					
A. The current Danish Development Cooperation Framework for working with 'Youth, education and employment' in Africa/Birgitte Markussen	3	11	8	2	
B. Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE)/James Windell		3	10	9	2
Panel discussion		1	3	3	7
Session 3 - Policies and practices					
C. Mozambique: Political realities vs. best Practice/Jørgen Billetoft			14	8	2
D. Education Education for Youth Empowerment /Bo Tovby-Jørgensen			3	11	7

E. Re-thinking skills training for Youth/Martin Østergård		1	4	11	6
F. School-based vocational training of youth/Moses Chibwana			4	8	6
Comments on the above sessions: The key note by Kenneth King received the highest score followed by the presentation of cases. More than half of the respondents rated these 4 or 5. The lowest scores were given to the presentation from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.					
The overall composition of the conference	1		6	12	4
Logistics (venue and food)	1			5	18
Information prior to the conference	1	2	5	7	8
How useful was the conference to your future work		2	6	10	6
Comments on overall impression, logistics and others: The majority of the respondents found the conference useful to their future work and were generally satisfied with the conference. Venue and food generally scored high.					
How do you intend to ensure that what you have learnt today is shared with colleagues in your organisation or work place?					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Share in own organisational meetings and disseminate information within organisation - Disseminate report and oral summary in own organisational setting - Bring it to next board meeting in own organisation - Include new knowledge in own position to youth and TVSD - Input to own organisational work - Publish information on own organisation's website - Website links forwarded to and shared with colleagues - Encourage peers to join network after reading sessions online - Input to own study or report writing - Share within own network - Share slides and material - Share material and presentations - Motivated to look for more information(King) and share it with colleagues - Too general to apply in own work - Not sure - Informal conversations 					
Comment: As indicated in the above list of inputs the participants have plans to use what they have learnt at the seminar, both in their individual and organisational work.					

What did you appreciate the most?

- *That students were included and got the opportunity to learn*
- *Relevant people and enough time to get in depth*
- *Diversity of participants*
- *The holding on to the TVSD line*
- *The opportunity to speak as an outsider*
- *Long coffee breaks*
- *The duration/length of the presentations of 30 minutes each*
- *The concrete examples presented by NGOs (2 respondents)*
- *Kenneth King's refreshing critique/presentation (4 respondents)*
- *The challenges & questions brought up, putting emphasis on how to do your own work*
- *The discussions and reflections*

Anything that was lacking (contents)?

- *Leadership/management representation from Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs*
- *Examples of youth experiences*
- *Experiences from South*
- *Focus more on youth empowerment*
- *Discussion of Youth & NGOs & informal employment*
- *Group work*
- *Group work with active involvement/participation of the participants*
- *A specific theme*
- *½ - 1 hour to network*
- *Sometimes the speaker-audience connection was lacking*
- *More practical examples and less theoretical talk*
- *Participatory methods, group work and group discussion (2 respondents)*
- *Too little time to get into depth*

Any additional comments?

- *Useful and new knowledge acquired for future organisational work*
- *Very nice and relevant conference*
- *Well-organised day*
- *Very good experience*
- *The experience present in the audience could have been used*
- *Very traditional conference, only presentations and only men*
- *Experiences from small NGOs lacking*
- *Last part of the program most interesting*
- *No confirmation on email registration received*
- *The general agenda was one-sided – praising GCE and the formal education system, but what is it we want?*
- *NEW idea/proposal for topic at next event: Identifying employment needs prior to training. How?*

Name	Organisation	Email	Website
1. Anne Sørensen	Education Network	as@ibis.dk	http://uddannelsesnetvaerket.ngoforum.dk/
2. Angelika Marning	Afrika Kontakt	angelika_marning@yahoo.dk	
3. Alice Benquet	Humana Spain	alice.benquet@humana-spain.org	http://www.humana-spain.org/?&lang=en
4. Annemette Danielsen	Next Generation Advice	annemette@nextgenerationadvice.org	http://www.nextgenerationadvice.org/
5. Anne Møller-Andersen	Children In Africa	anne@moeller-andersen.dk	http://www.borniafrika.dk/in-english/the-pencil-project/
6. Birgitte Lind Petersen	Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS)	blp@diis.dk	http://www.diis.dk/sw152.aspx
7. Bo Tovby-Jørgensen	Save The Children	btj@redbarnet.dk	http://www.savethechildren.dk/
8. Cecilia Gregersen	Copenhagen Business School	celiagregersen@hotmail.com	
9. Camilla Torp Olsen	SOS Børnebyerne	cto@boernebyerne.dk	http://www.sosbornebyerne.dk/
10. Catherine Kärnbo	Sustainable Culture Africa (SCAFRICA)	cnk.joy@gmail.com	http://www.scafrica.co.za/
11. Camilla Randrup	Børne og Ungdomsnetværket	bu@redbarnet.dk	http://bu-net.dk

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12. Helle Gudmandsen	IBIS	heg@ibis.dk	http://ibis.dk/
13. Iben Nielsen	IBIS	ini@ibis.dk	http://ibis.dk/
14. Inger Millard	Ghana Venskabsgrupperne	inger.millard@gmail.com	
15. Jesper Andersen	Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Africa Office		http://um.dk
16. Jette Luna	IBIS	jlu@ibis.dk	http://ibis.dk/
17. Jesper Marius Als	Børnefonden	jma@bornefonden.dk	
18. Jesper Wohler	Humana Spain	jdw@humana-spain.org	http://www.humana-spain.org/?&lang=en
19. Jessica Martin	Kono	jessica.martin@gmx.de	
20. Jeannie Morgen	Save The Children Youth	Jeannie@redbarnetungdom.dk	http://www.redbarnetungdom.dk/RBU_English/About_us.aspx
21. Jørgen Billetoft	PEM	jbi@pem.dk	http://www.pem.dk/page/en/Home
22. James Windell	Skills and Employability Department, ILO	windell@ilo.org	www.ilo.org/
23. Katja Christensen	IBIS	katja_hc@earthling.net	

24. Kenneth King	NORRAG and University of Edinburgh	kenneth.king@ed.ac.uk	http://www.norrag.org/ http://www.ed.ac.uk/home
25. Kristine Zeuthen Jeppesen	Save The Children	kzj@redbarnet.dk	http://www.savethechildren.dk/
26. Knud Vilby		knud@vilby.dk	
27. Kaj Pihl	UFF/Humana People To People	kaj@uff.dk	http://www.uff.dk/ http://www.humana.org/
28. Lene	IBIS		
29. Lene	Ghana Venskabsgrupper / Ghana Friendshipgroups	Lene@ghanavenskabsgrupperne.dk	http://www.ghanavenskabsgrupperne.dk/index.php?id=1892
30. Lisbeth Madsen	UCC/IBIS	madsen_lisbeth@hotmail.com	
31. Line Maria Sønderkov		line@sonderskov.net	
32. Louise Østerlund	Roskilde Universitet / Ghana Venskabsgrupperne	looe@ruc.dk	http://www.ruc.dk/en/
33. Lau Toft-Jørgensen		davlav@hotmail.com	
34. Maj Forum	Caritas	mfo@caritas.dk	

35. Mille Shalini Pjedsted	African	mshalini22@gmail.com	http://afri-can.dk
36. Margit Andersen	Gam3	margit@gam3.dk	
37. Moses Chibwana	DAPP Malawi (Humana People)	dappnhq@broadbandmw.com	http://www.dapp-malawi.org/
38. Martin Østergård	Børnefonden	moe@boernefonden.dk	http://bornefonden.dk/da/english
39. Marie Bjerre	Education Network	mbj@ibis.dk	http://uddannelsesnetvaerket.ngoforum.dk/
40. Nicolas Mollel	Cand.stud.anthropology.	nicolasmollel@hotmail.com	
41. Simon Teglskov Nielsen		nomis99@gmail.com	
42. Sara Camilla Neumann Hansen	Kono Business	sara@konobusiness.com	http://konobusiness.com
43. Sanne Müller	IBIS	sm@ibis.dk	http://ibis.dk/
44. Sanne Stephansen	Mellemfolkelig Samvirke	sannestep@gmail.com	
45. Signe Roelsgaard Nielsen	Save The Children Youth / Child Rights Ambassadors	signe.roelsgaard@redbarnetungdom.dk	http://www.redbarnetungdom.dk/RBU_English/About_us.aspx
46. Stine Olsen	BESTSELLER FUND	stine.olsen@bestseller.com	http://www.bestsellerfund.com/
47. Tanja Holst Jensen	Folkekirkenes Nødhjælp	tahj@dca.dk	
48. Thomas Fjendbo		thomas@fjendbo.dk	

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49.	Nina Cheesman	FIC	nina.cheesman@fic.dk	http://www.fic.dk/eng
50.	Marianne Bo Paludan	Save the Children	mbp@redbarnet.dk	http://www.savethechildren.dk/
51.	Mogens Jensen	Omega Consulting	info@omega-consulting.dk	
52.	Erik Cramer	AXIS	ecramer@mail.dk	www.axisngo.dk