

TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING AS A TOOL FOR OF SUTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT

THEME: DISTANCE EDUCATION TO ACHIEVE EDUCATION AND TRAINING
FOR ALL

PAPER PRESENTED BY

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ACRONYMS

TEVET	Technical Education and Vocational Training
MGDs	Millennium Development Goals
ODL	Open and Distance learning
GCE	General Certificate of Education
NAIS	National Agricultural Information Service

ABSTRACT

TEVET AS A TOOL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In any given country skills development is very valuable to any organisation, Production of goods and services is done by individuals or groups of individuals. To do this the individual or groups will need skills to perform competently. With skills the individual can be employable, the individual can determine their own destiny. Generally skills are quite important to society in general.

Because of the importance of skills to the individual, it is important that every individual accesses training so that he or she is able to determine his destiny. Currently particularly in Southern African Countries, not everybody is able to access training. With the rise in population grown and with economy of these countries going down, governments are unable to offer social amenities. Schools and Colleges cannot match the rising population. As a result fewer and fewer people are accessing training. The levels of poverty in the region has also put pressure on these governments to find to find solutions to the problem. However one apparent solution is the provision of skills to allow people participate in the production of goods and services as individuals or as members of grouped. Acquisition of skills enhances an individual's performance. Skills result in increased productivity and competitiveness.

Focus of the Paper

The paper is an attempt to show the importance of skills development to sustainable development. Although the theme of the forum is **Access to education and Training through Open and Distance learning**, the approach taken by the author of this paper is to attempt to show that education and training improves livelihoods and therefore every one must have skills in order to determine their livelihoods. The answer to access is through ODL.

STRUCTURE OF THE PAPER

The paper has made an attempt to explain what TEVET is all about rather than attempt to define the term. The paper goes on explain how tevet can contribute to sustainable development. The author has used simple examples of degradation of forests through cutting of trees by people who in turn sell the charcoal they make out of the wood. Poor management will result in waste of natural resources. And since this activity is happening throughout the country, the need to train these people that are engaged in this act becomes very paramount. But the issue is how do governments through these training programmes reach every person; since every person is privy to training as long as that training is intended to better his or her well being

Lastly the author attempts to provide the kind of ODL that can de used in most rural parts of Zambia. The suggestions are as a result of the author having toured some of the rural districts of Zambia and therefore felt that use of simple **ITC tools such as video** tapes and DVDs would go a long way in providing basic skills to some areas of Zambia.

INTRODUCTION

Vocational education and training is very cardinal to any economic development of the country. Training in general has potential benefits which accrue to the individual, to an organization and to the country as a whole. To an individual, training enhances their future earning potential, career progression and employability. To the unemployed, training offers them capacities to find ways of earning a livelihood. This can be through self-employment or setting up of businesses.

At organizational level, training results in company productivity, profitability and competitiveness. This in turn enhances its existence. With productivity and high profits, the company will contribute to the wealth of the country through taxes.

In Africa and in Zambia in particular not every child that leaves general education has access to Vocational Education and Training. This is mainly because of the very few training centres in the Country. Since every body has a right to a better living, there is need to make training accessible to all.

In Zambia for instance, there are 400 training institutions whose uptake of students of say 5 000 during the 1st year and three universities whose uptake is 2 000. Some are absorbed by teacher training colleges. But in all, one can say that out of 30 000 that get full certificates at grade twelve only 10 000 get to college or university. The situation gives a very dismal picture. However for University education open and distance learning is being used to increase access. The School of Education for instance has been offering open and distance learning for a long time now. To facilitate this process resident tutors have been stationed in provincial centres for ease of management of the programme. The method used in reaching out is through the use of print to provide the learning materials. Further the university in schools like School of Humanities offers residential school for those studying by distance learning when full time students are on recess. Further more an Open University has been established. This to a certain extent eases the demand for university education. The problem is with college education where a good number of programmes are hands on skills. It has been difficult to employ open and distance learning methods. For those colleges offering theoretical programmes, distance learning has been used to increase access.

The situation described above makes reference to learners that leave school after the twelfth grade. Zambia on the other hand has three levels at which learners leave school. At the seventh grade, a Zambian child will sit for national examination which will determine his or her continuation in school. Quite a proportionate number of those that leave school in the seventh grade do not continue schooling because places in the eighth grade are not enough. In the ninth grade students sit for yet another national examination. This for entry into senior secondary school. The next national examination is at the end of the twelfth grade. This signifies completion of general education. Not all as already stated are able to access college education. The situation is worsened by the fact that those that leave after the seventh and ninth grade leave the school system at a very tender age. While this scenario may be peculiar to urban centres, the rural set up is different. Some of the children do not go to school due to lack of schools in the vicinity.

As the situation stands, job opportunities are scarce. Jobs have been lost resulting in loss of income. Governments are grappling with finding best ways of improving livelihoods. The answer to this problem is the provision of appropriate skills; and this can be done through Vocational Education and Training. With skills at their disposals the nationals of any country can take charge of their destiny. The paper therefore focuses on the issue of access and attempts to show how open and

distance learning can be used to provide skilled training to those that are not within the vicinity of skills training centres. Since the theme under which this paper is discussed is livelihoods, the paper will also discuss issues of curriculum to ensure that innovation and entrepreneurship is developed among the people that receive the training. To ensure that the training is beneficial to the recipients, there will be need for appropriate assessment methods. This will require involvement of other stakeholders such as employers in the implementation and design of the methods.

2.0 TEVET REFORMS

As an answer to the dismal situation already described above, Zambia embarked on a major reform programme of Technical Education in 1994. The system that was designed to service the formal sector, particularly the mines and other organisations that serviced the mines; was at the time of the start of the reforms non functional. None functional in the sense that by 1994, the mines had become less productive and the products of our training institutions could not find jobs. Besides the shift in terms of skills demand had changed. A lot of service areas such as accounting, procurement etc had taken prominence and skill demand in these areas was quite high. With training providers that were skewed to providing training in skill areas that were demanded by the mines or industries servicing the mines, a shift in skills provision needed a major change in the policy direction.

With a formal sector that had become less productive, government revenue went down. This therefore meant that there was no not enough revenue for government to spend on say equipping the colleges and also rehabilitating the exiting infrastructure. With very few people accessing training and few people getting jobs, government saw the need to develop a training policy that makes training accessible to all. It also saw need to come with a policy that provided training that was responsive to the needs of the individual, the organization and the country as whole. It was realized that Zambia had abundant natural resources and that there was need for training that would help the nationals exploit these opportunities. The main focus was to help in the improvement of the livelihoods of the majority who were in abject poverty. At the start of the reforms, poverty was pegged at 70%. The figures now stand at 68%. Specifically, the TEVET reforms were aimed at achieving the following:

1. increasing skill levels in areas where they are low
2. providing skills in areas where they are not available
3. providing skills to all target groups. While previous policies focused on school leavers who were preparing for employment, this policy focuses on every person provided they have the stamina to learn.
4. It emphasizes life long learning as a way assisting people upgrade their skills so as to improve their income levels
5. providing skills in entrepreneurship to allow people of Zambia exploited the abundant natural resources
6. designing curriculum that meets individual, organizational and international needs. The curriculum is designed in such a way that entrepreneurial characteristics are developed as the trainees undergo their training

Despite initiatives that have been done not everybody still has access to skills training. A lot of youth and women are failing to have meaningful livelihoods because of lack of skills. Nevertheless, initiatives have been done to address the issue of access which is cardinal to the improvement of livelihood; and this is in the following areas: In the area of skills in farming, extension officers that provide technical support are deployed throughout the country to ensure that farmers employ the right methods in order for them to increase their yield. Besides, radio programmes are aired

throughout the country in various languages. Where there are no radio frequencies, pre-recorded tapes are used.

3.0 What is TEVET

Technical education and Vocational training is the provision of skills, knowledge, attitude and values needed for the place of work. TEVET as a system prepares people for the world of work. In contrast to general education, learning in TEVET is centred on 'applied' as opposed to 'academic'; practical as opposed to theory, and skills as opposed to knowledge. However, it should be noted that during this learning process. The underpinning knowledge, attitudes and values are imparted to the learners. Generally we can say that Tevet prepares people for the world of work and that

- Through TEVET people acquire skills knowledge, attitudes and values.
- Skills, knowledge, attitudes and values help people participate in production of goods and services.

4.0 THE VALUE OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

4.1 The benefits of skills training to an individual.

Skills are essential to the development of any economy. It is through skills that products in the form of goods and services are produced to the requirements of customers. With the skills an individual will be employable and participate in the production of goods and services. The reward to this participation is income that will be earned. Now when one is skilled, the rewards in terms of whatever income will be greater that one who is not skilled. With skills, the individual is able to perform a task confidently and is able to sell himself or herself with less difficulty. With these capacities developed, one is able to earn a livelihood – regardless of whatever form it may come. A classic example is the benefits the youths in Chawama are getting from skills training. Chawama Youth Project was set up in 2004. The aim of this centre was to provide disadvantage youths with life skills to enable earn a living. Skills such as carpentry, bricklaying,, car mechanics and electrical engineering. However, these skills proved unpopular. It became apparent that youths of Chawama were interested in music. The project therefore decided to invest into a small recording studio. At this centre, the youths have their recording and production skills are developed. The youths are taught how to create CD-ROMs with their music. Besides, they are taught market their music. This as we can see is a clear example of TEVET that benefits the individual. Training is provided to allow the recipients of training receive a livelihood.

4.2 TEVET CONTRIBUTION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

4.2.1 What is sustainable development?

Brundtland report of 1987 defines sustainable development as ***development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future to generations to meet their own needs***

4.2.2 Contribution of TEVET to sustainable development and improved livelihoods

- Tevet prepares people for the world of work
- Through TEVET people acquire skills knowledge, attitudes and values.

- Skills, knowledge, attitudes and values help people participate in production of goods and services.
- Through TEVET people can acquire skills, knowledge, values and attitudes that can help them use natural resources optimally. For example, in Zambia there are people who cut trees in forests and make charcoal for sell. Since this is their livelihood, these people do not see anything wrong in the cutting of trees indiscriminately. Instead of stopping them from carrying out the activity from which they are earning a livelihood, the people are given business management courses to enhance their businesses. This kind of programme therefore require a component of environmental issues. Therefore there will need to redesign curriculum to take care of sustainable development issues. For example a business management course for this group of people would require to include would be say a business management course for charcoal burners.

The government still during the reform process introduced management boards in its institutions. What it meant was that boards would manage institutions on behalf of government. One of the mandate of management boards is to run the colleges as viable systems. One of the requirements is that training institutions make their own money, while government funding is reduced. What has emerged is a bid for to institutions to make money in order to survive. Training is therefore slowly becoming a preserve of those that can manage, while those that can't continue to wallow in poverty because they do not have skills to determine their destinies. The institutions that were envisaged to implement government policy by providing education and training to all are now offering training for survival of the training institutions.

5.0 CONCLUSION

Despite the reforms having started as far back as 1994, the system still has some challenges. Serious challenge which is the subject of discussion today is that of access. From the example that is given of the skills training centre in Chawama; one can see that if methods to make the train at the accessible to many youth, a number of them could be earning a living through the production of music

How do we make tevet accessible to all so as to improve the livelihoods of communities

The ministry of Agriculture in Zambia has made head ways in ensuring that practicing farmers access training in order to improve their yield resulting in improved livelihoods. This is done through distance Education. Through the Agriculture Information Services, a radio programme called the rural note book is aired at scheduled times in the seven official languages and in English. For effective management and monitoring of the programme, the ministry of Agriculture has organized listening groups, who at a given time will listen to the radio; answer any given questions and probably ask questions that are submitted later. The ministry has NAIS Officers in districts who monitor the implementation of the programme. It must be noted that not all districts can be reached by radio. To address this problem, the ministry provided through JICA Project pre-recorded tapes which the farmers use.

Is this effective? Yes it is though not to the extent that it was expected to reach out. The programme only attracts existing farmers and nothing for say the youths that might want to go into farming. Since the 50% of Zambia's population is youthful, there is need to capture a lot of these young people to get into farming. A tour of some of the provinces revealed that a lot of youths in the rural areas could only engage in farming as a business. However, discussions with district leadership revealed that youths did not have skills in farming .

In the final analysis, examples given show that with skills, knowledge and values, peoples livelihoods can improve

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to make training and education accessible to all, there is need to set up resource centres in districts where groups could be going to access training. These resource centres should be managed training coordinators whose function will be to make available training materials for the learners. The coordinator should also be responsible for facilitating assessment for the learners. The assessment can be conducted by instructors from training centres within the training centres.

Most rural,parts of the country are not electrified. So use of other modes of distance learning such as teleconferencing might be difficult. Even the use of other ICT modes such as delivery through internet might be difficult. However, one of the effective way as envisaged by the author is us of audio visual materials that are pr-recorded. The learners will be able to view demonstrations. However, where there is electricity and television is accessible, it will be important to use television as a means of taking skills to the adhere people. In fat these resource centres are needed not only in the rural district but sill in the urban areas where there is high population and where

