

Namibian TVET System Response

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19 July 2004
Le Victoria Hotel
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The first part of this response (Section A) examines briefly the economic and educational context. This is followed by the skills development policy and practice (Section B). The last section (Section C) identifies challenges that the system faces.

Section A: Country Context

Economic Indicators

- ❑ Unemployment at 34% (broad definition)...Although employment increased by 7.6% between 1997 and 2000. Unemployment associated with
 - Gender(ised) unemployment
 - More prominent in rural (40%) areas than urban (30%)
 - Youth 41% (Females 24%)
- ❑ Inflation 11.3% (2002)
- ❑ 1990-2001 – 35% of pop. Live below poverty line (\$1 dollar/day)
- ❑ GDP-HDI 59th place – group of worst performing countries - similar to Botswana & RSA in this regard
- ❑ Poor life expectancy
- ❑ Access to water a major challenge

Education Indicators

- ❑ Since independence (1990) underpinned by access, equity, quality and democracy.
- ❑ Adult education – good 17% (18% for women)
- ❑ Increased educational development since independence. In 1990, 1204 schools – 382 000 learners - 1:29 Teacher-Pupil ratio increasing to almost 530 000 learners in 1550 schools, an average growth rate of 1.9%.
- ❑ Significant female component 51% in school

Akoojee, S. 2004
Presentation to the Connecting policy to
practice: Vocational Education and training
in the SADC Region (International) Regional
Seminar. MAURITIUS, Le Victoria Hotel
18-22 July

Section B: Skills Development (TVET /College System and Context

□ *Legislative context*

- Early work on Vocational Training came under the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour with the **Vocational Training Act (1991)**. Led the way for the promulgation of **National Vocational and Training Act (1994)**
- Act amended in 1996 to incorporate apprentices, community, and industry-based training. Also established **National Vocational Training Boards (called VTBs)** with responsibility to establish **Trade Advisory Committees (TACs)** in certain industries (at present 5). VTB not really taken seriously – no secretariat by 2002 despite having been established in 1996. Also established the **National Trade Testing and Certification Centre (NTTCC)** with responsibility of conducting, training and evaluating qualifications from outside the country
- 1996 also saw the promulgation of the Namibian Qualifications Authority Act (Act 29 of 1996) which established the **Namibian Qualifications Authority (NQA)**
- NQTA also established the **National Training Levy (NTL)** and the **Vocational Training Fund (VTF)**. Both structures not operative yet - mix between political hesitancy and administrative incapacity of the VTB.

□ *Governance*

- Before 1990 under Education Department (**Ministry of Basic Education**)...with some industries running their own training
- After independence became the responsibility of the **Ministry of Labour and Manpower Development**
- In 1995 transferred to **Ministry of Higher Education, Vocational Training, Science and Technology (MHEVTST)**, which became the **Ministry of Education, Training and Employment (MHETEC)**

□ *Shape and Size*

- **Community Skills Development Centres (COSDECS)**. Attempt to circumvent admission requirements of the VTCs (see below). In response to the high dropout rates and especially to deal with the needs of the out-of-school youth with significant Ministerial support. Various fields of training and co-ordinated by the COSDEC Foundation nationally, chaired by the Minister. Fashioned in terms of the Botswana Brigades. Production component quite significant. Significant NGO and Donor (EU) support. Increased access by women (49%) a significant achievement. Only 30% of graduates earned regular income after completion (instead of targeted 50%). Insertion of a self-employment module as an attempt to deal with this
- **Vocational Training Centres (VTCs)**. Five VTCs accountable to central government - Directorate of Vocational Education and Training. Another two by other organizations. Total learner headcount 1648 (in 2000). Intake problematic – in 2002 only 614 entered the system. Four year training to be reduced to three. ‘No quality assurance mechanisms’,

according to the report of one consultancy, yet average pass rates between 60-70%? This must suggest that some sort of quality control is, in fact, in place. Problem also of teacher training with one report citing extensive under-qualification of personnel. Need for closer articulation with labour market to enable graduate take-up.

- **System Capacity:** Over 10 000 young people exit the school system...only 1500 places available in Vocational Training Colleges, elsewhere, reported that in 2002, 12 500 students eligible to enter the VET system, which has capacity to place for less than 2000 learners Skills Shortages
- **Skills Shortage:** The 2000 Labour Force Survey (LFS) indicates skills shortages -reinforced by World-Bank study (2003). The fact that salaries are high for (some) artisans is further indication of these shortages in certain skills

Section C: Issues that need to be addressed

- **Synergy of various legislative bodies:** Overlapping responsibility between Vocational Training Board (VTC) and Namibian Qualification Authority (NQA). To further complicate the matter the establishment of the Namibian Training Authority (NTA) without clear lines of responsibility might lead to over-bureaucratisation. Will memoranda of agreement (between NTA and NQA for instance) solve the problem of lack of articulation? Need to ensure that there are structural mechanisms to deal with this to enable the system to develop rather than be trapped in administrative incoherence.
- **National Development Imperatives:** Need to identify strategies for ensuring unemployment and role of the informal sector. Need to focus on the gender streamlining and deficits. Encouraging that at least one VTC is used for visually impaired with the possibility of extending this provision.
- **Size of the sector:** Still far below what is acceptable (see Kenneth King's presentation). Might need to clearly provide more resources and attention to the VET sector. Since the norm should be 3%-4% of the population, the extent of the Namibian system should be about 50 000, rather than the 2000 current enrolment
- **Industry Responsiveness:** Need to ensure that industry participation will not compromise national development issues. In addition the challenge of Limited employer involvement expected to be engaged with. Key role of VET expected to "promote greater industry involvement and a market oriented approach to VET" (Need to explore the notion of responsiveness to not only reflect market needs! Need to also ensure national development and community and learner needs. In this regard, the establishment of the NTA expected to:
 - Increase industry involvement in standards, curriculum, assessment and certification
 - Develop VET programmes that reflect industry needs
 - Develop a modular and accessible VET courses and materials
- **Parity of esteem** needs to be given attention.
- **Progression:** From COSDECS and VTCs still need to be achieved.
- **COSDECS-** amalgamation of training and production like the Botswana Brigades. Sustainability still an issue?
- **Curriculum transformation** still to be achieved. Establishment of **Vocational Training Boards (VTBs)** and the move to **Competency-Based Training (CBT)** is expected to result in increased participation. Need to interrogate how this is to be achieved, or whether it can? Perhaps the move to flexible modes without the restriction of time has potential to be especially valuable in this regard.
- Finally the '**Dual Challenge**' of both **poverty and growth** still needs considerable analysis.