

EMPOWERING CITIZENRY FOR SELF-EMPLOYMENT IN KENYA THROUGH TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING.

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ABSTRACT

The Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Authority is in a quest to make Kenya an industrialized country and in line with the big four agenda of Affordable housing, enhancing manufacturing, universal health care and food security & nutrition. Education and training is a basic human right and a contributor to human capital development. Education is not about providing information to the learner from the trainer. It goes beyond this to an extend of ensuring the learner has gained the necessary practical skills. Moreover, the learner eventually should come out of the education system fully equipped to cope with the challenges of everyday life. To be specific, the situation of unemployment and poverty among other challenges for developing countries. The aim of this research is to instill self-employment emphasis efforts in TVET education delivery as a strategy to realizing the big four agenda, the MDGs and the SDGs at large.

KEYWORDS: Empowering, Education, Skills, Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET), Self-employment,

INTRODUCTION

Verifiable evidence is present to depict a close relationship between self-employment, socio-economic growth & development and TVET. TVET orients the trainees towards the real working environment and its main emphasis is usually on employable skills (Kitui, 2015). Undoubtedly, TVET is well-placed to train a skilled and entrepreneurial workforce which developing countries need to reduce poverty and unemployment as the knowledge and skills acquired are engines of social and economic growth and development. As a result, many TTIs have sprouted geared by the government's initiative to promote TVET education. According to Kitui (2015), developed countries like Japan, Italy Sweden among others have given recognition to TVET education through adequate funding. In Europe for example, at least 50% of the students in post secondary euaction have undergone TVET education while in Africa only 20% (Kitui, 2015). While TVET enrolment in North Africa was around 24%, that in sub-saharan Africa was 5% and with a falling trend.

Several factors according to research have hindered pursuant of TVET education among them Career opportunities, Parental level oof income, human resource and physical facilities (Kitui, 2015). Research conducted by Mursoi on factors that influence secondary school perception towards TVET institutions was dependent on parents, teachers / counselors and peer's views. Another research by Edwards and Quinter on factors influencing students career choices among secondary school students in Kisumu Municipality included opportunities for advancement and the availability of employment.

Empowering

Anaele, Adelakun, Olumoko and Kanu define empowering as equipping or supplying an individual with the ability for some tasks in a program like technology among others (Anaele et al., 2014). It is increasing the educational, economic, gender, spiritual or political attitude of individuals or communities. Empowering refers to increasing the capacity of individuals or communities to make choices and transform their choices into desired actions and outcomes accoring to World Bank (2011). Contextually, to empower is develop skills in individuals which are able to support their livelihood and eventual wealth creation. Ogbe has outlined that economic empowering involves motivating individuals or communities to be productive, self-

dependent and self-reliant by instilling technical, vocational and entrepreneurial skills (Ogbe, 1996). Thus, if individuals, youth for that matter are given the chance to acquire relevant skills for self-employment and sustenance, their charisma is promoted in any working environment greatly.

Technical, Vocational and Educational Training (TVET)

TVET according to Anaele et al. (2014) is a type of education providing trainees with knowledge, skills and attitudes for effective employment in a specific occupation. It is education involving learning of practical technologies for economic and social life. Those skills are related to Information and Communication Technology, Building Technology, Electrical / Electronics, Clothing and Textile, Business Studies, Equipment servicing, Metal work, Automobile, Motor Vehicle mechanic work among others (Anaele et al., 2014). Going by this, TVET as outlined by Anaele et al. can be described as:

- a) A means to prepare for occupational fields in the real working environment.
- b) Lifelong learning and preparation for responsible citizenship.
- c) An essential part of general education.
- d) A method of poverty alleviation.
- e) An instrument to promote environmental and sustainable development.

For our Kenyan situation, TVET is a powerful tool as far as realizing vision 2030, the Big Four Agenda, the SDGs and the MDGs at large is concerned.

Currently, the aims of TVET include:

- a) Transferring technology continuously through collaborative approach between TVET institutions and the relevant industries.
- b) Providing adequate and appropriate skilled Artisans, Craftsmen, Technicians and Technologists through practical training and work experience.
- c) Promoting dignity and decency of labor, particularly manual work;
- d) Providing increased training opportunities for the increasing school leavers and other trainees to increase employability;

- e) Providing continuous upgrading of skills and knowledge at the pace and ability of the trainees.
- f) Providing a dynamic curriculum responsive to the manpower needs of a dynamic economy.
- g) Imparting marketable skills, technical know-how and attitudes that respond to contemporary labor market demands by the industry, informal sector and for self-employment.

Self-employment

Self-employment is a situation in which an individual is able to create and take control of the business he/ she has created rather than working for another person / organization (employer) (Anaele et al., 2014). Abdelkarim has describes self-employment as the act of working for oneself (Abdelkarim, 1997). It is the ability to generate your own income as opposed to being an employee. Evedently, it is impossible for the government to provide employment for everyone. Therefore, various strategies should be devised to empower individuals and the community for self-employment. Thase strategies according to just road maps or methods for achieving certain objectives (Anaele et al., 2014).

Problem

Kenya just like most African countries has very high levels of poverty, unemployment among other challenges (UNESCO, 2006). Improving access to labour markets, agriculture and strengthening social networks have been suggested as powerful tools for poverty reduction. Another proposition has been learning of vocational skills which has been argued to ensure food security. However, enough vocational skills only will be handicapped as far as achieving our targets as a nation are concerned. If self-employment becomes the talk of trainers and other stakeholders until the mindsets of the trainees are revolutionized into this, then the efforts would be minimal in terms of steering the achievement of our goals are concerned. This is because the world at large is facing a serious unemployment crisis.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- a) What are some of the empowerment strategies in place for self-employment?
- b) What training facilities are available for empowering the citizenry for self-employment through TVET?
- c) What are some of the challenges TVET is facing in empowering individuals for self-employment in Kenya?

METHODOLOGY

The research adopted the use of secondary data from a nearly similar research done in Nigeria another developing country by Anaele et al. (2014). Questionnaires were used to do the survey among a population of 127 individuals: 54 Technical trainers and 73 Technical instructors.

Anaele et al. (2014) used a structured questionnaire to collect data. The questionnaire based on TVET and self-employment.

Results

The data presented showed that the respondents agreed on all items presented as empowerment strategies. They include the following:

- a) Establishment of more formal and non-formal skill acquisition centres
- b) Establishment of TVET commission at Federal level
- c) Establishment of TVET commission liaison offices in each local government
- d) Trades and training relevant to the needs of the community
- e) Designing of curriculum for non-formal Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET)
- f) Training based on innovations in technology
- g) Arrangement of the contents sequentially based on their difficulties
- h) Provision of loan facilities to encourage students
- i) Career seminar/talks for students on the benefits of TVET
- j) Provision of starter packs for products of TVET centres/schools
- k) Collaborative efforts with practicing artisans to rub minds on new skills based on

technological development

- l) Organizing students industrial attachment Training for the trainees
- m) Sensitization of people on radio/television on the benefits of TVET
- n) Using electronic/print media to enhance public awareness of TVET
- o) Collaboration with state governments to train the unemployed
- p) Collaboration with local governments to train the unemployed
- q) Capacity building for TVET teachers on entrepreneurship skills
- r) Organizing exhibition to display TVET products and designs

The respondents agreed that all the items below are facilities for empowerment.

- a) Well equipped workshops/laboratories
- b) Drawing/drafting equipment
- c) Machine tools
- d) Portable power tools
- e) Hand tools
- f) Training materials/consumables
- g) ICT facilities
- h) Computers
- i) Storage facilities
- j) Smart boards and projectors
- k) Electricity supply/Generators
- l) Fire extinguishers
- m) Communication facilities
- n) Spraying facilities
- o) Safety gadgets
- p) Workshop clothing
- q) Lavatories
- r) Tool kits

Also, majority agreed that the following challenges affected empowerment of trainers for self-employment:

- a) Inadequate funding of TVET programmes
- b) Poor image and status of TVET
- c) Inadequate machine, tools and materials
- d) High teacher student ratio
- e) Unavailability of consumable materials for practicals
- f) Poor maintenance culture
- g) Poor condition of service for TVET teachers
- h) Lack of relevant and up-to-date text books
- i) Lack of electrical power supply
- j) Inadequate workshops/laboratories
- k) Inadequate number of TVET schools/skills acquisition centres
- l) Constant power outages
- m) Poor teachers' skills in ICT
- n) No starter packs for graduates of TVET
- o) No loan facilities for TVET graduates to establish
- p) Derogatory remarks about TVET students/graduates
- q) Inadequate teachers for entrepreneurship education
- r) Inadequate TVET teachers/trainers
- s) Performance of TVET graduates not measurable to industrial requirements

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

From the results, it is evident that individuals and communities need be empowered to go into self-employment. That is in agreement with Abdelkarim that it is essential to empower especially the youth for self-employment through capacity building and entrepreneurship education (Abdelkarim, 1997). Little can be achieved without the proper facilities.

IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this research have great implications for TVET and should be developed to reduce unemployment and associated issues among them ritual killing, robbery, raping and kidnapping. This can be realized by empowering individuals within TVET for self-employment through imparting vocational, technical and entrepreneurial skills.

CONCLUSION

Attainment of the big four agenda, the national goals of education, the SDGs and MDGs at large can only be realized if TVET is granted its rightful place for advancement. TVET should empower individuals for both self and paid employment. Once empowered, social vices will be on the decrease.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As TVET pushes for Vocational skills as a center of focus, it is important to redefine our aims and objectives putting in mind a number of issues. Methodology is essential for delivery of any educational system. It is complex to deliver on the other hand without methodology while at the same time it is impractical to deliver skills you don't have. An already skilled person can however undergo training for effective delivery. Even then, we are not there yet as the government plus existing organizations cannot provide enough employment for the already trained manpower.

Clearly from the research, the TVET agenda and strategy to achieve our national and global should be reviewed and redefined and appropriate strategies put in place to help us achieve these goals within the expected time. **Self-employment** should be the point of focus to minimize on the risk of having a pool of skilled but jobless individuals.

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