

REECHOING THE IMPLICATIONS OF NEGLIGENCE IN FUNDING TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Abstract: *Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is veritable mechanism for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) because of efficacy in reducing youth redundancy and creation of job opportunities. Over the years United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and International Labour Organization (UNESCO and ILO) continue to emphasize the need for funding of TVET effectively. It is important that Member States focus on youths' acquisition of employable skills so as to divert their attention from social vices that have bedeviled the developing nation. But sad to note that, developing Member States do not give out the desire funding attention TVET required, hence difficult to alleviate unemployment, poverty, social and economic instability, insecurity, corruption, insurgents, banditry, underdevelopment amongst others. The paper posits that for developing Member States to join the League of Nations to enjoy the dividends of TVET including not limited to achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) must totally overhaul the funding strategies and commitments because of its negative implications on youth empowerment in the 21st century for economic development.*

Keywords: *Reechoing, Implications, Negligence, Funding, Technical Vocational Education and Training, Sustainable Development Goals*

Introduction

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) plays a key role in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is a powerful tool to provide access to decent work for all, provides lifelong learning opportunities, and supports Member States' transitions towards the sustainable societies and economies. Sustainable Development Goal 4 calls on Members States to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” and sets a number of targets related to TVET.

The TVET according to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and International Labour Organization (UNESCO and ILO (2002) is encompassing term referring to those aspects of the educational process comprising:- general education, the study of technologies and related sciences, the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life. Thus, TVET prepare human resources for the ever changing world of work. This system of education has been adopted and positioned as a panacea to meets current and future labour market demands. Similarly, TVET could be strategically position to tackle poverty alleviation, weak economic growth and low productivity, social inequality, instability and insecurity, the menace of environmental decadence and poor knowledge of green practices (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO (2019). Hence, TVET tackle skills development of a member state.

Skills development must be considered as a priority by all states and the international community alike, stakeholders may still find it difficult framework for financing systems to develop and transform their TVET systems to cater to today's demands. But the significance of TVET and the world of work also include the provision of effective skills development opportunities for low-skilled people who are under-employed or unemployed, out-of- school

youth and individuals not in education, employment and training (NEETs) (UNESCO, 2016). These must be faced with all seriousness by creating initiative to ensure inclusive funding to give the desire mind the opportunity to have the training.

Founding Technical and Vocational Education and Training

Sustainable Development Goals 4 emphasized that Member States on education should “ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning”. It notably targets “an equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university” (SDG 4.3) and a “substantial increase in the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship” (SDG 4.4).

It notable that some TVET policies in Member States provide dual system of TVET delivery in which funding is a joint responsibility of government and private enterprise. The government takes care of the school costs while the participating enterprise caters for the practical aspect of the training (UNESCO-IIEP, 1996). Quality TVET is the solid rock of all social and economic development, and adequate funding is the foundation on which it relies. The level of adequate funding available for TVET determines the level to which adequate qualified staff, teaching and learning materials will be provided. TVET relies significantly on teaching and learning equipment which are often very expensive. The lack of funding for the purchase of up-to-date teaching and learning equipment is a major constraint inhibiting the training of skilled and employable graduates due (Kingombe, 2012; Oketch, 2014).

Evidences in various literatures uphold that China is leading in the manufacturing hub of the world through her commitment in TVET system. China has equally been acknowledged as the second world largest economy (World Bank, 2017). Although the White House Office Trade and Manufacturing Policy (2018) described the developmental path taken by China as economic aggression, there were still commendable acknowledgements of enterprise proliferations in China where over 300 entrepreneurial parks housing about 24,000 enterprises exist. Likewise, Xinyu (2019) reported that the unemployment rate in China urban areas was at 3.8% in 2018, yet 980 Million Yuan were spent on giving vocational training to the jobless. TVET undoubtedly plays commendable roles in the labour market of China.

Similarly, the considerable impact to the labour market potentials of TVET is the German-style method of vocational education called Dual TVET where there is two-fold education in which schools and firms share responsibility for providing TVET through apprenticeship training (Remington, 2017). The major strides of German dual system are in the supply of highly skilled labour in accordance with the demand of the highly technologically driven economy, making certain the quickest transition from school to work thereby ensuring that the youth unemployment remains low (Remington, 2017; 2018). According to Trade Economics (2019), the unemployment rate of Germany stood at 3.1% in August 2019. TVET automatically helps to improve the economic and the labour- market in Germany. In order for TVET systems in developing Member States to change and adapt to developments and contribute to the achievement of the global sustainable development agenda, the financing of TVET systems requires passionate commitment by all stakeholders

Passionate TVET Funding for Achieving Sustainable Development Goals

TVET assumes central place in the educational aspirations for the 21st century globally. The objective of the SDGs was to generate a set of global goals that meet the urgent environmental, political and economic challenges facing our world. Furthermore, the SDGs seek to realize inclusive and equitable economic, social and environmental sustainable development. The SDGs can be realized with strong global partnerships and cooperation as the world is more interconnected than ever. Improving access to technology and knowledge is an important way to share ideas and foster innovation for sustainable growth and development (United Nations Development Programme, 2019). Achieving the SDGs thus

requires the partnership of governments, private sector, civil society and citizens alike. Increasing international cooperation is seen as vital to achieving each of the SDGs while developing multi-stakeholder partnerships to share knowledge, expertise, technology, and financial support is seen as critical to overall success of the SDGs. The International Labour Organization (ILO) recommendation of 2000 and the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on TVET for the 21st century to achieve SDGs outlined the following:

- (iv) Means to facilitate the alleviation of poverty;
- (v) Mechanism to promote the environment for sustaining development;
- (vi) Part of long time learning and preparing;
- (vii) Way to prepare for world of work and occupational fields and
- (viii) An integral part of general education (Umunadi & Uwameiye, 2015).

The 2030 Agenda in Goal 1 is on poverty reduction which is also related to sustained economic growth, the central sustainability economic growth has been recognized in the 2030 Agenda in Goal 8, while Goal 9 on industrialization. To achieve these there must be accelerated sustainable commitment with investing in greater value added through a greater concentration of TVET across all economic sectors (Nagesh, *et al.* 2016). The creation of more productive jobs in the formal sector for the youth population in Member states is linked with the nature of structural transformation in the sub-region through effective funding. For example, structural transformation from agriculture activities to manufacturing and processing will require far greater funding.

Many nations have already integrated TVET in their technological quest for education by providing conducive environment, human and material resources, for it. Providing adequate fund means that there is enough money for the purchase and installation of huge technological and technical equipment required, funding means that teachers are trained and re-trained to be current with new trends in TVET, it means that teachers are paid adequate salary as professionals in their field as when due, that there is money for infrastructure, that environment is student friendly and that they have classrooms well equipped for technological teaching-learning, it means that government has put in place laboratories, work-shops, factories, and industries for student Industrial Training (IT) and for employment after graduation, it means that there is provisional assistance for those who want to be self employed for initial take off (Okoli, *et al.* 2016).

Furthermore, Vijay (2017) states that, Technical Education is instrumental in making the noteworthy commitment to financial development of the Developing Countries by method for reasonable labor generation as indicated by the necessities of the Industry, Society and the Global World all in all

Demerits of Inadequate Funding of TVET in Achieving Sustainable Development Goals

TVET has not been given adequate attention as an essential aspect of 21st century education in developing country like Nigeria. By contrast, developing countries have not been proactive in promoting technical and vocational training due to limited funding being allocated to that area of education, hence they tend to be characterized by high unemployment rates (Kanyenze *et al.* 2011). Jones (2016) argues that one of the reasons that has contributed to high youth unemployment across the world - especially in developing countries - is that of the gap between the supply and demand for skills. The call to action for developing countries is to minimize the skills gaps by placing greater emphasis on funding technical and vocational training (Green, 2018). This is based on the premise that technical and vocational training tends to result into a faster transition into the work place (Jones, 2016). Countries that have taken an active role in the promotion of technical and vocational training - including Germany, Switzerland, Austria, the Netherlands and South Korea - have been successful in maintaining low youth unemployment rates (Jones, 2016).

The challenge of technical and vocational training in developing countries is further worsened by stereotypes surrounding the value of technical and vocational training (Tabbron and Yang, 2012). Jones (2017) argues that young people and their guardians look down upon technical and vocational training and regard it as a second choice education alternative. According to Kanyenze et al (2011), the low status regard for technical and vocational training programmes is rooted in the developing countries' colonial past that associated technical and vocational training with skills being given to the inferior group with the superior groups going for the white collar jobs. It is against this background that a limited number of young people are motivated to enroll for technical and vocational training programmes.

Monda (2017) posits that the challenge that exists in schools is that school authorities are failing to implement technical and vocational training in their schools effectively due to funding. This challenge is further exacerbated by the culture in schools that shuns technical and vocational learning. It is critical to understand that the culture of looking down upon vocational training is rooted from the way in which students have been socialized (Samanyanga et al, 2016). Kazmi (2007) is of the view that parents and guardians of students look down upon vocational training and this has been witnessed through the way in which academic merit is celebrated as opposed to the skills that students can acquire when they adopt technical and vocational skills.

Although the TVET is clearly penned in the UNESCO policy document on education to equip those who go through it with basic scientific knowledge, practical and applied skills in readiness for self reliance, self employment and employers of labour, yet it has not been allocated adequate fund and human and material resources necessary for efficient and effective running in some Member States. The economics of TVET - This concerns the three major factors in TVET systems which include i) the source of finance and methods of funding; ii) matters of costs, efficiency and effectiveness and socioeconomic return on investment and iii) evaluation and assessment of the relevant systems and programmes.

The sources of finance and methods of funding TVET programmes in most countries include tax payers through central or local budgets, and employers in the industry and business, who are the main beneficiaries of the output of TVET systems. And learners and trainees themselves and their families, in the case of fee-paying programmes; income generating activities; grants and donations, especially for such programmes as those directed to special groups, including the handicapped and the underprivileged. In most developing countries like Nigeria, public sources of finance for TVET usually predominate. Public funding is in general utilized to finance school systems, and suffers from being inadequate, especially in countries with limited resources, where vocational education is not considered a priority in national budgets. Matters related to cost, efficiency and effectiveness of vocational education schemes; pose a big challenge in most developing countries. The relevant issues here include, on the planning or macro level, system

Behind the Expectations of TVET in Achieving Sustainable Development Goals

Despite the priority displayed by the UNESCO and ILO on skills development, TVET remains largely underfinanced. First, because it is expensive compared to general education (given the high costs of material, equipment, facilities), but also considering the low share of public budget dedicated to TVET compared to other levels of training. It is against this backdrop the expectation falls in a nation where it cannot develop economically and will be bedeviled with youth social vices.

Moreover, some studies validate and continually applaud the labour market potentials of TVET – as education for work (Park, 2005; Bakar, 2011). However, the issue of the mismatch in funding TVET remains persistence (Remington, 2018; Capelli, 2014; Deloitte and Manufacturing Institute, (2015); McGowan and Andrews, (2015); Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), (2016); Wright, (2013); Hoffman and Schwartz, 2017). The bigger challenges lie on TVET institutions trainees that could not fit

into the supposed careers due to poor practical skills resulting from half-bake training conducted using obsolete equipment due underfunding, thereby requiring the need for retraining by the industries after graduation.

In addition, there is a great gap between the two providers of TVET (public and private) in Nigeria for instance. The private sector provides trainings that are directly profitable to its sustainability, often inconsistent with the public sector (Akoojee, 2016). The public sector on the other hand faces great challenges of meeting with demands, management and funding of TVET alone without following the stipulated guideline on exploring the private sectors. There is a need for the government to strictly adopt and monitor UNESCO's recommendation of transforming its role to a regulator and not the sole provider of TVET for advancement and development of a nation (UNESCO, 2012).

The Neglect of TVET funding and its Implication on Achieving Sustainable Development Goals

The neglect of effective funding technical and vocational education over the years may have contributed to the high unemployment and rising poverty among the youth, because many of them lack the basic job skills. For this, majority of developing nation were today categorized under the list of poor nations. It is no longer news that such nation's youth unemployment rate has been shooting up the sky. Take example of Nigeria as a developing nation where it recently acknowledged that about 80 per cent of Nigeria's youths are unemployed and 10 per cent underemployed (Daily Trust, 2018). And the poor quality of graduates is worrisome (Egwu. 2009). In spite of its abundant natural and human resources, Nigeria still faces an enormous challenge in its effort to reduce poverty. Thus, one way of reducing poverty according to Adegbenjo (2008) is to ensure sustainable job creation through TVET. Many, both in the developed and developing worlds, are increasing the emphasis they place on improving the capacity of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) systems, in recognition of the important role TVET plays in equipping individuals with relevant skills and knowledge for the job market. TVET can also better enable individuals to participate in social, economic and technological processes (Rupert, 2006). In the interest of sustainable job creation, achievement, and the competitive ability of young people, the whole TVET system has to be oriented towards the labour market and the employment system (Eberhard, 2006). From the foregoing, it can be concluded that Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is such an aspect that its neglect poses a great threat to the economic well being of a nation.

TVET had been neglected for a long time because of the negative perception of those who should project it and nurture it to maturity. This is obvious from their action in words as well as their inaction. For example in Nigeria, a few months ago one government education agency published the distribution of some fund to the education sector- universities, polytechnics, Colleges of Education, Secondary and Technical Colleges. Predictably, the Technical Colleges were rated much less than Secondary Schools. Also in the university setting, in the allocation of funds to faculties and departments, TVETs programmes are usually treated least in this allocation even by those in the highest level of academic attainment. This is because of their low perception about these programmes. At times it would be seen that the perpetrators of these acts do so out of ignorance, but it is difficult to explain it always in that simplistic manner because it is these same people who when it suits their fancy nature, talks glowingly about the importance of vocational and technical education. Then question is, who is fooling who? The negative perception held by society that TVETs programmes is for "drop out" or those who cannot think, this must change if the country is to benefit from the constant development in youths in TVETs for the 21st century for SDGs achievement.

Conclusion

It was concluded that TVET languishes through neglect and inadequate funding in most of the developing Member States. TVET does not only has the potential for transforming lives but it is capable of transforming lives of individuals and promoting healthy economies, societies, and tackling the challenges of youth unemployment and social vices in various countries of the world. It is sad that despite TVET relevance in this 21st century is undergoing negligence and underfunded. Whatever input the government has made is grossly inadequate as it is now, in order to see the light of the day of TVET hence effort must change to address it requisite input requirement for effective transformation in the needed nation.

Recommendation

1. A new motivation approach funding should be worked out through a share venture of government, non-governmental agencies and concerned elites for TVET in all level of training for SDGs achievement.
2. Government and authorities in Member States should show full commitment in financially encouragement, support and sponsor TVET for all youths' professionalism development through regular workshops, seminars and conferences.
3. Government should introduce a sustainable financial scheme especially for TVET training that concern those in the field of technical education such as grants, and scholarships to the trainees and trainers that will encourage more participation of both male and female gender.
4. Increased financial support for TVET should be encouraged through public-private partnerships stemming from the government's request to the private sector to support the establishment and running of TVET centre.

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