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Vocational Education and Training in Southern Africa

A Comparative Study

Edited by
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JET EDUCATION SERVICES

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Dr Simon McGrath
Director: Research Programme on Human Resources Development,
Human Sciences Research Council
Pretoria
August 2004

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Abbreviations

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training (South Africa)
AGOA	African Growth and Opportunity Act
ANC	African National Congress (South Africa)
BDC	Botswana Development Corporation
BDP	Botswana Democratic Party
BNQF	Botswana National Qualifications Framework
BNVQ	Botswana National Vocational Qualification
BOTA	Botswana Training Authority
BTEP	Botswana Technical Education Programme
CBET	Competency Based Education and Training (Namibia)
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CHSC	Cambridge Higher School Certificate
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
COSC	Cambridge Overseas School Certificate
COSDEC	Community Skills Development Centre (Namibia)
CPE	Certificate of Primary Education (Mauritius)
Danida	Danish International Development Agency
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DINET	National Directorate for Technical Education (Mozambique)
DIVT	Directorate of Industrial and Vocational Training (Swaziland)
DoE	Department of Education (South Africa)
DoL	Department of Labour (South Africa)
DVET	Department of Vocational Education and Training (Botswana)
E	Emalingeni (Swaziland)
ECOL	Examination Council of Lesotho
EPZ	Export Processing Zone
ESD	Employment Services Division (Mauritius)
ESSP	Education Sector Strategic Plan (Mozambique)
EU	European Union
FE	Further Education (United Kingdom)
FET	Further Education and Training (South Africa)

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FINNIDA	Finnish International Development Agency
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution (South Africa)
GET	General Education and Training (South Africa)
GNP	Gross National Product
HDI	Human Development Index
HET	Higher Education and Training (South Africa)
HR	Human Resources
HRDS	Human Resources Development Strategy (South Africa)
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council (South Africa)
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IDT	International Development Target
ILO	International Labour Office
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INEFP	National Institute for Work and Vocational Training Directorate (Mozambique)
IVTB	Industrial and Vocational Training Board (Mauritius, Swaziland)
M	Maloti (Lesotho)
MBESC	Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture (Namibia)
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MESR	Ministry of Education and Scientific Research (Mauritius)
MHETEC	Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Employment Creation (Namibia)
MINED	Ministry of Education (Mozambique)
MLHA	Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs (Botswana)
MMM	*Mouvement Militant Mauricien*
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoET	Ministry of Education and Training (Lesotho)
MQA	Mauritius Qualifications Authority
MSM	*Mouvement Socialist Militant* (Mauritius)
MTTC	Madirelo Training and Testing Centre (Botswana)
N$	Namibian dollar
NACA	National Aids Co-ordination Agency (Botswana)
NCC	Namibia Chamber of Craft
NCC	National Craft Certificate (Lesotho)
NDP	National Development Plan (Botswana)
NDS	National Development Strategy (Swaziland)
NEC	National Education Commission (Swaziland)

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NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NIED	National Institute for Educational Development (Namibia)
NIMT	Namibia Institute of Mining Technology
NNTO	Namibia National Training Organisation
NPCC	National Productivity and Competitiveness Council (Mauritius)
NPVET	National Policy on Vocational Education and Training (Botswana)
NQA	Namibia Qualifications Authority
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSA	National Skills Authority (South Africa)
NSDS	National Skills Development Strategy (South Africa)
NSF	National Skills Fund (South Africa)
NSSB	National Standards-Setting Bodies (Namibia)
NTA	National Training Authority (Namibia)
NTB	National Training Board (South Africa)
NTC	National Trade Certificate (Mauritius)
NTL	National Training Levy (Namibia)
NTTCC	National Trade Testing and Certification Centre (Namibia)
NVQF	National Vocational Qualifications Framework (Botswana)
NVTA	National Vocational Training Act (Namibia)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
P	Pula (Botswana)
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PTES	Professional Technical Education Strategy (Mozambique)
RNPE	Revised National Policy on Education (Botswana)
RQF	Regional Qualifications Framework
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SCOT	Swaziland College of Technology
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority (South Africa)
SMMEs	Small, medium and micro enterprises
TAC	Trade Advisory Committee (Namibia)
TAFE	Technical and Further Education (Australia)
TC	Technical College (Botswana)
TSMTF	Technical School Management Trust Fund (Mauritius)
TVD	Department of Technical and Vocational Training (Lesotho)
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
VET	Vocational Education and Training

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VOCTIM	Vocational and Commercial Training Institute (Swaziland)
VTA	Vocational Training Act (Botswana)
VTB	Vocational Training Board (Namibia)
VTC	Vocational Training Centre (Botswana, Namibia)
VTF	Vocational Training Fund (Namibia)
WVTC	Windhoek Vocational Training Centre (Namibia)

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CHAPTER 1

The multiple contexts of vocational education and training in southern Africa

Simon McGrath

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Introduction

This volume is intended to develop and share knowledge within the southern African region regarding the challenges faced by vocational education and training (VET) systems and the responses to these challenges. Some of these challenges arise out of the history of VET in the region, whilst others relate to current international discourses about VET.

The field of VET in southern Africa has been badly neglected. It is very difficult to find an article in the international journals on the topic, and it is even less likely that it will have been written by a national of the region, based at one of its research institutions. VET has also attracted little attention in the policy community for more than a decade, given the donor fascination with basic education since the World Conference on Education for All in 1990 (McGrath 2002).

However, VET can play an important role in supporting social and economic development goals, and major VET policy reforms and the creation of new institutions are either underway or planned in all seven countries under study in this book. Therefore, it is my intention in this introduction to illuminate the nature of some of these changes, their origins and their likelihood of success. In so doing, I will show how VET is an important policy nexus – located as it is between economic and educational policy, between the state and the market, and between concerns with poverty and growth.

Before this volume turns to examine this complexity through an exploration of the experiences of seven countries (Botswana, Lesotho, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland), it is important to locate these national and contemporary debates in the historical evolution of ideas about VET. In so doing, I will look at both internal trends within Africa and the impact of external ideas.

The historical legacy

The case study countries clearly have significantly different characteristics, such as size, level of economic activity and date of independence, that impact upon their VET systems. I shall return to this issue presently. What all of them have in common is that they inherited colonial systems of VET. In most cases, the inheritance was of a British model, but, whatever the origins, each colonial system was shaped powerfully by racialised notions of ability and 'appropriate' employment, as well as a strong reliance on white, expatriate skills. Even in South Africa, both the formal labour market for skills and formal provision of intermediate skills were relatively limited in size and there was no major problem regarding a mismatch between the two.

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The sector has been faced with a range of challenges in the 40 years since the first countries in the region gained their independence. Around the independence period there was a dramatic increase in school enrolments in most countries, often particularly at the secondary level. However, economic growth was generally not so rapid. Thus, within a few years of independence most countries experienced a serious problem of youth unemployment – a 'time bomb' as one Southern African Development Community (SADC) seminar put it (IFEP 1990).

This youth unemployment problem led to a growth of new programmes and institutions, such as the Botswana Brigades (see Van Rensburg 1978), that significantly expanded the supply of skills programmes in the region. However, these programmes also had the effect of weakening the relationship between training provision and the formal labour market. They were often targeted at a lower level of skills and knowledge than traditional artisanal programmes.

International influences

The role of development co-operation

By the early 1990s, VET systems across southern Africa were even further out of alignment with the labour market than in the 1970s and 1980s. However, they were finding themselves increasingly influenced and pressurised by external actors, with powerful views about the way in which these systems should reform. It can be argued that the two main suggestions for VET reform in the region during the 1990s came from two of the multilateral development agencies, epitomised by two influential documents from around the start of the decade.

The ILO and training for the informal economy

In 1989 the International Labour Office (ILO) published a volume arising out of a major international seminar it had hosted. The volume, *Training for work in the informal sector* (Fluitman 1989), built on the 'discovery' of the informal sector for the policy community by the ILO in Kenya in 1972 (ILO 1972). The contributors both charted the many interventions that had begun to be made in an attempt to increase articulation between formal training systems and the majority labour market (the so-called informal sector) and drew attention to the degree of training that took place away from the formal system in the informal sector itself. The policy impact of the book lay in raising the profile of training in and for the informal sector – areas that saw a significant increase in agency interest during the 1990s. However, this interest has been stronger in West and East Africa than in the region under study in this volume. This is likely to be because of the stronger traditions of artisanal informal sector production in those regions.

The second strand of this new agency interest was in taking formal, public VET providers and making them more responsive to preparation for (self) employment in the informal sector. At the most extreme (for instance, in the case of the Malawi Entrepreneurship Development Institute), technical colleges were transformed into entrepreneurship development institutes. However, it was far more common for additions to be made to college programmes. In some projects, this took the form of additional inputs after the conventional college programme. In others, it saw the addition of elements to the existing curriculum, such as the requirement to write a business plan as an extra examination subject (King & McGrath 2002). However, as a further ILO book acknowledged in the mid-1990s, success in these projects remained limited (Grierson & McKenzie 1996).

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The World Bank and VET liberalisation

At the time that the Fluitman book emerged, the World Bank began to embark on developing its own new strategy for support to the VET field. The Bank had historically been a strong supporter of vocational programmes and had invested heavily in building infrastructure internationally. However, in the late 1980s its educational work, like other elements of the Bank's operations, had become increasingly dominated by neoliberal economists. In 1991, the Bank's internal shift towards market solutions was reflected for the VET sector with the publication of a new policy paper on *Vocational and technical education and training* (World Bank 1991). The new strategy sought to make the case for a liberalisation of VET systems in the South that would accord more of a role to private providers. The policy assumed that private provision was always likely to be more efficient than public and that training should be left, as far as possible, to the market.

However, it was clear that public provision was unlikely simply to wither and die in the face of the logic of the neoliberal case. Therefore, there was also a strong emphasis within the policy on the reform of public providers, what Bennell et al. (1999) have described as the 'structural adjustment of training'. Colleges were enjoined to become more responsive to the labour market (which, in part, dovetailed with the ILO argument about orientation towards training for the informal sector). They were also encouraged to try to cover more of their own operating costs, by increasing fees, offering short courses at full cost, and selling products and services.

There was a strong call for more control over public training to be given to employers, with a resulting reduction in the control that educationalists and bureaucrats exerted. This was seen at the institutional level in a drive for more 'representative' college councils. At the national level, it was reflected in a donor drive to establish national training authorities with major employer representation (Johanson & Adams 2004).

The role of the global flow of ideas

These strategies and discourses were designed to be relevant to the situation of southern African public VET providers. However, by the late 1990s, it was clear that a range of other discourses that were current in developed Anglophone countries[1] were beginning to permeate the VET discourse in southern Africa, as much through the circulation of ideas as through donor interventions.

The World Bank's arguments about labour market responsiveness were reinforced by a powerful discourse and practice in the Australian technical and further education (TAFE) and British further education (FE) systems. This was coupled by a growing shift away from a focus on the employment of graduates in favour of the notion of employability.

At the level of curriculum and qualifications, ideas about competency-based modular training and national qualifications frameworks spread rapidly, in spite of the widespread contestation of these ideas in the Old Commonwealth. Combined with arguments about mass youth unemployment and rapid technological change, these trends towards competency and employability also brought forth a new narrative of generic skills.

1 From the 1960s to 1980s there seems to have been a growing predominance in Southern VET systems of an influence from the Germanic 'dual system'. However, during the 1990s, fashion shifted to the intellectual pre-eminence of Anglophone ideas, particularly from the UK and Australia. Ironically, the combination of a strong German aid presence in the region and the pre-eminence of Anglophone ideas has seen a major role evolve for German support to the spread of Anglophone ideas through the region from a base in South Africa.

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An account of rapid technological change was also combined with a growing faith in the argument of postindustrialisation, particularly in the UK where it was seen by the radically neoliberal Thatcher government as a way of crushing the trade union movement.

British (but also other Old Commonwealth) colleges increasingly found themselves forced to compete but also to take on a whole set of new imperatives. They were increasingly supposed to focus on youth who previously would have directly entered the labour market. Many of these new entrants lacked the skills and knowledge necessary for a meaningful skills training. As a result, colleges found themselves pushed into providing very low-level programmes for a set of almost meaningless new awards. At the same time, the flow of apprentices declined with the old heavy industries, and colleges had to respond through the development and teaching of a range of new courses. These were notionally at the same intermediate skills level of the old apprenticeship-related programmes but had very different forms of knowledge and skills embedded in them (Gamble 2004). In these courses, as in the low-level programmes, generic skills were given considerable prominence. As many of the new jobs were service-oriented, it appeared that service attitudes rather than craft skills became the most important element of college provision. The discourse of technological change also led to an increasing language of the need to regularly upskill workers (ILO 1998). Here, Australian colleges moved the furthest, significantly changing their age profiles.

At a more abstract level, VET systems began to shed some of their historical second-class status during this period.[2] The growing acceptance of the spread of globalisation has seen skills development move up the political agenda, both North and South, and from neoliberal and social democratic sources (Ashton 2004). Skill has increasingly come to be seen as an important element of competitive advantage and, for social democrats, a key means of addressing inequality (Crouch, Finegold & Sako 1999; Brown, Green & Lauder 2001).

The increased importance of skills in international debates suggests four main reasons why governments should pay more attention to VET.

First, VET is seen as a crucial tool of economic development (Godfrey 1991; Crouch et al. 1999; King & McGrath 2002). Although not without controversy (see especially Wolf 2002), policy-makers internationally have seen the development of better technical skills as a key element of improving economic performance. As we shall see below, the economic imperative for skills development is accelerated by a number of international discourses.

Second, a lack of skills at the individual level is widely seen as a major element in poverty. Without skills to sell on the labour market, or to make a viable living in subsistence or self-employment activities, individuals are far more likely to be in poverty (King & McGrath 2002; McGrath 2002).

Third, as we noted above, VET has been very powerfully linked over at least 35 years with the growing problem of youth unemployment. In Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, the expectation that VET systems could

2 However, some of the subsequent chapters suggest that such a status may be even more strongly felt in southern Africa than in the Old Commonwealth, given the conjunction of class and race dimensions to perceptions of intermediate skill and the massive impact of colonialism on attitudes towards the academic and the vocational.

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solve mounting youth unemployment developed strongly in the 1970s as the advanced economies went into a period of economic weakness that ended the full employment era of the 1950s and 1960s. By the late 1970s and early 1980s, VET systems were being revolutionised in these countries, most spectacularly in the Anglophone countries (Crouch et al. 1999; Wolf 2002).

Fourth, and most recently, VET systems have also become linked to debates about responding to the HIV/AIDS pandemic in southern Africa (McGrath 2002). The massive death, illness and sero-positivity rates have huge implications for skills across the region.

International agencies have suggested that prevalence rates are particularly serious amongst skilled workers (UNECA 1999; ILO 2001a).[3] UNESCO has found particularly serious impacts within teaching (IIEP 2000). An estimate from Namibia put the overall loss in GNP at 8 per cent in 1996 (UNECA 1999) and it is likely that this figure would be higher now in a number of SADC countries, although all HIV/AIDS statistics are subject to serious contestation.

The attempt to make good the skills loss through HIV/AIDS will put a huge financial burden on both states and employers for the foreseeable future, whilst at the same time the pandemic is likely to depress household expenditures on education and training (Bennell 2000). Increasingly, it is argued that the position of public VET providers as important social institutions places on them a particular responsibility to seek to address the issues of AIDS education and prevention (Danida 2002).

The shifting sands of aid policy

Aid policy has gone through radical changes in the past decade, with serious implications for VET provision (McGrath 1998a, 2002; King & McGrath 2004). Since 1996, a series of International Development Targets, now metamorphosed into the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and an emphasis on reformed aid relationships have become intertwined in a new phase of aid discourse.

The MDGs primarily have an indirect, but nonetheless profound, influence on VET and skills development. Skills development was one of the many important commitments of the Copenhagen Social Development Summit of 1996 that did not get to become an MDG (King & McGrath 2002). This, coupled with the already powerful effects of the Jomtien Conference on Education for All, has meant that VET has slipped down the donor agenda, at the very same time as it has been moving up the domestic agendas of the major donor countries (McGrath 2002). This apparently perverse policy contrast is justified by the view that poor countries need to focus primarily on basic education. However, it offers nothing in the way of a plausible explanation of how poor countries are supposed to benefit from globalisation. Whilst clearly the conflicting priorities of basic education and VET need to be managed, it appears that there has been an inadequate emphasis on VET in most countries in the SADC region.

Over time, the initial notion of International Development Targets (IDTs) has led to a new architecture for development co-operation (for example, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers [PRSPs], and the Highly Indebted Poor Countries initiative) that serves to reinforce

3 All estimates of sero-positivity, morbidity and mortality are currently subject to considerable contestation but estimates do highlight consistently that there is a serious problem.

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the donor orthodoxy of a focus on basic needs rather than engines of balanced development. Moreover, beneath the overarching poverty focus lies a series of other cross-cutting aid objectives – good governance, gender equality, environmental sustainability, HIV/AIDS, youth, and so on. Countries such as Denmark, Germany, Japan and Switzerland are increasingly expecting their sectoral projects and programmes to address these issues as well as the traditional concerns of the particular sector. At the same time, aid policy has increasingly also mirrored the language of globalisation and privatisation that is so pervasive in the donor countries.

Beneath the overarching structure of the PRSPs, there is an increasing push by some donors for sectoral programmes. Under this approach, the government and participating donors are expected to agree on a macro-policy and funding model for a whole sector. In theory, but rarely in practice, this is then supposed to lead to budgetary support, whereby these donors give funds directly to the government to support the agreed programme, rather than to specific projects.

All of these trends in aid policy and practice have important implications for VET. I have already argued that the absence of skills from the language of the MDGs has undermined international support for VET, as it was traditionally understood. Moreover, sector programmes are leading a number of donor countries (Denmark and Germany, for example) to concentrate on a few sectors (between three and five) in a few countries (approximately 20). This furthers the likelihood of skills development receiving reduced attention. Moreover, skills development is by its nature cross-sectoral. This makes it harder to organise into sectoral programmes than education or health. It also implies the need for a skills development perspective to be included within all sectoral programmes (McGrath 2002).

This study

It is in these multiple contexts that this study is located. Through a mixture of documentary analysis and interviews with key informants (backed up by a small number of institutional visits), we seek to explore the evolution of VET systems in seven countries of southern Africa with a threefold agenda. First, the study seeks to build the knowledge base for both policy and research on the neglected topic of African VET systems. Second, it seeks to promote dialogue within the southern African region on VET issues with a view to stimulating better co-operation and knowledge sharing amongst countries that are often faced with similar problems or are engaged in parallel reforms. Third, it seeks to build research capacity in this area that will support policy-oriented research in both single country and comparative settings in the region.

Brief methodological notes

The study is located intellectually in the tradition of sociological or political economy accounts of skills development systems. Although there is little explicit historical focus in this volume, there is a concern in the analysis in understanding that VET systems have evolved and continue to develop in ways that reflect national compromises and contestations. As such, it can be located in the same broad tradition as several other comparative studies of VET in the past decade (see, for example, Ashton & Green 1996; Crouch et al. 1999; Brown et al. 2001; King & McGrath 2002).

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At one level, the study understands VET as pertaining to the institutions that deliver it, primarily at the intermediate skills level (artisanal and semi-skilled levels). This means that there is little focus on technician level training. The institutional focus is also primarily on public providers, reflecting the limited information and focus on private provision in the region to date. However, the book is also focused on issues of policy and here it concentrates on the activities of Education and Labour ministries in the area of skills development, as well as those of other relevant policy actors.

In six countries (see below for comments on the approach in South Africa), a South African researcher visited the country to interview policy-makers, donor officials and other stakeholders. In most of the countries, provider institutions were also visited. Interviewees were identified through the existing contacts of the project director and the British Council, and through snowballing from these individuals. Existing contacts, as well as new ones, proved invaluable in getting access to legislation and to policy documents, many of which still exist as grey literature even in the Internet era (see King & McGrath 2004; McGrath 2004a).

In the case of South Africa, dedicated fieldwork was unnecessary due to the wealth of existing analysis already available, including nearly a decade's worth of policy interviews and analysis by team members. However, it was decided to test the analysis through consultations with a small number of senior policy figures.

The country studies were developed in an iterative process by the research team with advice from a steering committee from the British Council, the HSRC and JET Education Services, the three project funders. After a brief introductory presentation summarising the international debates on VET, the researcher in charge of each country study conducted a review of the available literature and datasets, which was then presented to the team. From these presentations and their discussion, an outline country report was developed as well as a set of broad questions for the fieldwork phase. However, it was stressed that these were guidelines and that country variations needed to be explored. Draft country chapters were subsequently presented to a further workshop, discussed and detailed comments provided to the authors to guide their redrafting of their chapters. A draft synthesis chapter was developed and was presented to a further workshop for discussion, which guided its revision. The approach throughout the study was to follow a model of 'deep comparativism' in which there was a concern to avoid forcing national experiences into a preconceived comparative structure (King & McGrath 2002, 2004; McGrath 2004a), whilst at the same time acknowledging the need for relatively inexperienced researchers to receive guidance in how best to succeed in 'high impact fieldwork' (McGrath 2004a).

Each draft country chapter was sent to a small number of commentators from the relevant country for comment. After the next round of revisions, each was then presented to senior government officials for commentary before final editing and printing. This process was intended to allow for stakeholders to highlight factual inaccuracies and to challenge elements of the analysis. Whilst the team carefully considered any suggested changes to the analysis, these were only adopted when they were judged to be more plausible than the initial analysis. In all such cases, the country report writer discussed such analytical changes with other members of the team and steering committee.

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Finally, in July 2004, the British Council convened a policy-maker and researcher seminar in Mauritius at which the issues raised by the project were aired. Although the focus was primarily on countries identifying their policy and implementation challenges, this seminar also provided the backdrop for a final revision of papers for this book.

Key themes

Through this process of research, a series of key themes emerged that will be evident to different extents in each of the subsequent country chapters. These themes reflect broader international debates about VET and will be considered in more detail in the concluding chapter. Here I will just introduce these key themes.

The study explores the extent to which there is system coherence in VET in the region. Indeed, through several of the country studies there is a description of how VET systems have evolved in a piecemeal and unsystematic way. The result is a model of VET that reflects historical accretions of institutions far better than a clear vision of what VET is and what its mandate(s) should be.

There are clear attempts to resolve some of this confusion through the development of new structures and mechanisms. Most prominent amongst these are national training authorities and national qualifications frameworks. However, the country chapters show the complex and uneven nature of these developments in the region.

The core function of VET in promoting employment chances remains evident across the region and has resulted in a growing focus on the need for radical curricular overhaul and better relationships with the world of work. The role of the informal economy, however, is not well-addressed in most countries.

The relationship between the state and the market is reflected in debates about funding mechanisms and the role of national training authorities. However, it is also seen in trends towards the greater marketisation of public providers and a growing acceptance of private providers as an integral part of VET systems.

Across the region there are concerns about equity and access in VET provision. Many of the national VET systems are tiny, whilst even the largest is underdeveloped in comparison with the academic route. Expanding participation whilst balancing equity and cost recovery considerations looms large in several national policy discussions. Addressing issues of discrimination in terms of gender, disability or HIV status is also beginning to emerge as a priority in a number of countries.

This study was completed in a year and is not intended to be an authoritative account of the evolution of VET systems in southern Africa. It lacks a detailed analysis of the longer-term history of VET in the region. It is a story told from South Africa rather than by researchers from all the countries involved. Nonetheless, we believe that it has served its intended purpose of highlighting the importance of analysing VET and provides a useful foundation on which more detailed research and policy-making can build.

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CHAPTER 2

Botswana: united in purpose, diverse in practice

Salim Akoojee

Introduction

Botswana is widely seen as one of the economic success stories of Africa. However, behind the very real successes lie challenges both of reducing inequality, poverty and unemployment and of diversifying away from a continued dependence on mining. These challenges point to the importance of expanding and refocusing the national skills development system. The focus of this chapter is on progress in this regard to date, and on some of the unresolved challenges that remain.

The socio-political, economic and development context

The discovery of diamonds a year after independence and especially in the 1970s transformed Botswana's future and secured its strategic economic importance. Botswana has been described as 'one of the few success stories of economic development in Sub-Saharan Africa' (Siphambe 2000: 106). Economic success, however, has had to be balanced by an uneven social context. Botswana still ranks 125th on the Human Development Index, in the medium human development category, below Mauritius (62), South Africa (111) and Namibia (124), but above Swaziland (133), Lesotho (137) and Mozambique (170) (UNDP 2003). Its position is negatively affected by, inter alia, the extremely high HIV/AIDS prevalence, the highest in the world, the wide income disparity and consequent inequality, and the rampant poverty and steadily rising unemployment.

Geographic and political context

Botswana has a population of 1.7 million, which is small relative to its size of 581 730 square kilometres.[1] Its most populous city is the capital, Gaborone, with a population of 186 007, followed by Francistown with 83 023 and Selebi-Phikwe with 49 849 (EIU 2003).

Although a multi-party democracy, Botswana is dominated by the ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP), which has been in power since the country gained independence from Britain in 1966. The BDP currently occupies 33 of 44 parliamentary seats.

Economic aspects

Macroeconomic fundamentals

Botswana's growth rate since independence surpasses that of most countries in Africa (African Development Bank 1998). GDP per capita growth averaged 8.4 per cent in the period 1965–1990, although lower growth rates were experienced in the 1990s. However, even in the period 1990–1996, growth averaged 5.1 per cent (EIU 2003). Recently, there have been strong fluctuations in growth rates, as Table 2.1 illustrates.

1 This also represents the approximate size of Kenya and France.

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Table 2.1: Key economic indicators

Forecast summary (Percentage unless otherwise indicated)	Year 2001	2002	2003	2004
Real GDP growth	2.3	4.2	7.4	3.5
Industrial production growth	-1.6	4.2	10.6	1.8
Consumer price inflation (year-end)	5.8	11.2	7.5	6.7
Government balance (% of GDP)	-3.0	-4.1	0.2	0.5
Current-account balance (US$ million)	817.0	629.0	710.0	777.0
Current-account balance (% of GDP)	14.9	11.1	9.0	10.6

Source: Adapted from EIU (2003)

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The above-average growth has largely resulted from diamond mining and has enabled the Botswana economy to move from a situation of severe poverty to being one of the richest in sub-Saharan Africa.

This wealth has allowed Botswana to avoid 'the large and crippling external debt burden common to most developing countries' (African Development Bank 1998: 68). Debt servicing has not been a problem and currently represents only between 2 per cent and 4 per cent of export earnings (EIU 2003).

Exports have traditionally outpaced imports. Again, this situation is in no small measure due to diamonds. The UK is Botswana's largest export market, accounting for more than P12.2 billion as compared to the Southern African Customs Union (P929 million) and the rest of Europe (P452 million). The steady depreciation of the pula in recent years has caused inflationary pressure, resulting in an increase in the cost of imports. There has been much criticism of the softer pula from manufacturers, but the main exporters, including mining and beef farmers, benefit from a declining pula.

The country's economic strength has enabled the development of infrastructural features important for continued, robust economic activity. These include the building of the Trans-Kalahari Highway from Walvis Bay to Lobatse (completed in 1998) and the upgrading of game park facilities in the Okavango region.

Major private sector economic activity

Diamond mining is the 'engine of growth'. It contributed 36 per cent of GDP in the 2001/2 national accounts year (July–June), although its contribution has declined in recent years because of the expansion of the services sector. The industry still forms the basis of the economy and is dominated by Debswana, jointly owned by De Beers (South Africa) and the Botswana government. Diamond mining accounted for 75 per cent of export revenues in 2000 in an export-led economy, providing for 30 per cent of GDP and 50 per cent of government revenues (*Financial Mail* 2000: 107). Table 2.2 reflects the pre-eminence of diamond exports in the economy.

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Table 2.2: Botswana exports (P million), selected years and sectors

	1997	1999	2001
Diamonds	7 670	9 700	12 086
Vehicles	1 180	667	299
Copper/Nickel	480	558	597
Meat products	231	223	366
Textiles	248	249	193
Soda-ash	110	107	128
Total (including others)	**10 390**	**12 228**	**14 306**

Source: Selected from IMF International Financial Statistics (EIU 2003)

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Agriculture's contribution to GDP was only 2.6 per cent in 1999/2000, largely through the beef sub-sector, whilst meat products contributed 3 per cent of total export earnings in 2001. Although Botswana is currently one of the few countries to be declared free from Bovine Sporgiform Encephalopathy (BSE), it has been affected by a range of other cattle diseases in recent years. Cattle farmers receive generous financial support and tax treatment, but they are accused of not having become commercial enough to ensure the industry's longer-term sustainability.

Manufacturing maintained a fairly stable contribution to GDP (of about 5 per cent) during the 1990s, but has exhibited slow growth since 2000, following the high-profile closure of the Hyundai vehicle-assembly plant. Indeed, its share in the economy has declined, and the emphasis on manufacturing as the main source of future growth has been questioned. The decline of vehicle exports is associated with the closure of the Hyundai plant, built for the South African market, which had more to do with the 'dubious activities of the company's owners than state interference' (EIU 2003). In spite of the *African Growth and Opportunity Act* (AGOA),[2] which allows duty-free access to the US market, there has been little sense of an expanding textile sector. Reasons cited for this include a shortage of serviced land, high rents, utility and transport costs and relatively low labour skills levels.

In its drive for economic diversification, the government has tried to promote private-sector manufacturing companies and, more recently, international financial services and tourism. The services sector recorded expansion of above 4 per cent per annum in the period 1994–1998. Financial and business services accounted for around 10 per cent of GDP in the 1990s, and a modest increase in the contribution from this sector is likely during the current decade. The development of tourism has been held back by the crisis in neighbouring Zimbabwe.

Future economic strategy

The government identifies its economic proposals in a series of National Development Plans (NDPs). These are subject to detailed consultation and parliamentary debate and

2 The AGOA was passed in May 2000. It established preferential duty- and quota-free status on selected imports to the United States for a period of eight years. It also provides support for US investors who intend setting up in sub-Saharan Africa.

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identify emerging key social and economic priorities and challenges for the prescribed period. The Ninth National Development Plan (NDP9) runs from 2003/4 to 2008/9 and is linked for the first time to Vision 2016, a statement of intent identifying key policy thrusts in anticipation of Botswana's 50 years of independence. Economic diversification, employment creation and poverty alleviation are identified as the key challenges in Botswana by NDP9. As regards economic diversification, NDP9 anticipates that 'construction, manufacturing and the trade, hotels and restaurants sectors will be the fastest growing sectors with expected growth rates ranging from 7 to 10.5 percent in real terms' (Republic of Botswana 2003: 49). This has important implications for skills development.

Developmental indicators

There has been considerable improvement in many areas in the lives of the ordinary Motswana since independence in, for instance, the extensive provision of health care and education, as well as access to water and decent transport facilities. However, there has been much written about the domination of the political context by a ruling elite (see, for example, Picard 1987; Taylor 2003). Nonetheless, critics generally admit that the political and bureaucratic elite has formulated policies that have largely benefited national development (Taylor 2003: 72).

One of the most striking indicators of development problems in Botswana comes from the Human Development Index (HDI). Here, the country has shown a decline in its values in recent years. The country's current HDI of 0.572 ranks it at only 125th, a 29-place fall from Botswana's 1998 ranking (UNDP 2003). Strikingly, Botswana's GDP-HDI rank of –62 is the second worst in the world, behind Equatorial Guinea at –73 (Budlender 2003b). Whereas earlier HDI figures reflected Botswana's improvements in life expectancy and infant mortality since independence, the latest figures show the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Development priorities

HIV/AIDS is given priority in NDP9 as the primary developmental challenge facing the country after its first 30 years of independence. Other challenges include the lowering of unemployment, reducing poverty, economic diversification and private sector economic empowerment (Republic of Botswana 2003). Each of these is discussed below.

HIV/AIDS

A UNAIDS report in 2002 estimated the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Botswana at 39 per cent of those aged 15–49 years – the highest rate in the world, and up from 36 per cent in 2000 (cited in EIU 2003). The spread of HIV/AIDS thus threatens to wipe out Botswana's achievements in economic and social development. Although national statistics indicate sharp falls in teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases since the mid-1990s, the prevalence of the pandemic is still extremely serious. The rate among pregnant girls aged 15–19 remains very high – 25.3 per cent in 2000 (Bennell et al. 2001).

HIV/AIDS is likely to have significant direct and indirect impacts on education. Besides the social cost of the large number of orphans as a result of the death rate, demographic projections show that the school-age population will be 30 per cent smaller in 2010 than it would have been without AIDS (Bennell et al. 2001). The implications of the HIV/AIDS epidemic for skills development cannot be underestimated. In addition to the enormous

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direct costs of care and treatment, indirect costs to the economy include the severe drain on skilled human resources in the country and the impact on skills training.

Efforts to combat the disease include its identification by the National Aids Co-ordination Agency (NACA) as a cross-cutting issue in all sectors and programmes. Botswana is a significant recipient of international aid as a result of the high HIV infection rate. The Bill and Melinda Gates Trust is one such high-profile donor.

Reducing poverty

There is considerable disparity in incomes and serious poverty in Botswana. A poverty study suggested that 47 per cent of the population live below the poverty datum line, with 30 per cent classified as very poor (BIDPA 1997, cited in McEvoy, Cleary, Lisindi & Walsh 2001).[3] The problem was considered particularly serious in rural areas, with 62 per cent of the poor or very poor living in rural areas. The survey also reported wide income disparities, with the wealthiest 20 per cent of the population having 59 per cent of the national income.

Vision 2016 (Presidential Task Group 1997) makes specific reference to poverty alleviation and commits government to reducing the proportion of those living in poverty to 23 per cent by 2007. This is also one of the policy thrusts of NDP9.

Unemployment

According to the Minister for Commerce and Industry, Daniel Kwelagobe, 'unemployment is a serious problem' (*Financial Mail* 2000: 110). NDP9 reports unemployment as having fallen to 15.8 per cent in 2000 from 21.5 per cent in 1996 (Republic of Botswana 2003: 32). However, this reflects a narrow definition. Siphambe (2000) notes that the figure for 1996 increased to 35 per cent if the so-called 'discouraged members' of the labour force were counted.

Youth unemployment is a significant problem, as in other parts of sub-Saharan Africa. There is also evidence that the economy is unable to cater for the increasing numbers that have emerged from the expansion of primary schools (IFEP 1990). Unemployment in the 20 to 34-year-old cohort comprises 55 per cent of total unemployment. The problem is also gendered in that female unemployment comprised 55 per cent (58 per cent in this age cohort) of total unemployment in the mid-1990s. There is no reason to expect that this differential has shifted significantly.

NDP9 anticipates an average annual employment growth of 8 per cent. However, this is primarily due to increased employment opportunities in the informal sector.

Economic diversification and employment

The principal employment creation vehicle envisaged by the state is privatisation. It is significant that the role of government is seen as facilitative in dealing with the problem of unemployment. The Chief Executive of the Botswana Development Corporation (BDC), the national authority responsible for attracting capital, expresses this view: 'All government can do is create the environment necessary for the private sector to create new businesses and jobs' (*Financial Mail* 2000: 107).

3 BIDPA is the Botswana Institute for Development Policy Analysis. The average poverty datum line used in Botswana in 1993/4 was US$1.23 per day at the 1994 exchange rate. This is higher than the US$1 used by multilateral organisations. A Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) was undertaken in 2002/3 but the results are yet to be released.

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In the private sector, it is significant that although diamond mining is the main contributor to wealth in the country, its employment capacity is limited. It accounted for less than 5 per cent of total private sector employment and 3 per cent of total employment, as compared to wholesale and retail (14 per cent), manufacturing (11 per cent) and construction (10 per cent), in September 2000 (Republic of Botswana 2003). NDP9 also noted that employment in mining was expected to decline by 0.1 per cent in the forecast period (2003/4–2008/9).

There is clearly a need to expand the private sector to enable job creation. Promising opportunities might still exist in agriculture; tourism, which comprised 4 per cent of employment; finance, which made up 2 per cent; and the existing high employment sectors. This has important implications for skills development planning.

Due to low incomes, the number of people engaged in traditional agriculture has fallen rapidly, further contributing to the unemployment problem. Recent poor weather has also forced some farmers to leave the sector. Indeed, Taylor (2003: 82) reports that 'four out of five rural households survive on the income of a family member in town or abroad'.

Employment of Batswana in South African mines has shown a gradual decline; there were 5 867 persons during the fourth quarter of 2000, as opposed to 17 000 in 1990 (World Bank 2003).

The nature of the labour market and the extent of skills shortages

As a result of colonial neglect there were few schools at independence. There were only 40 university graduates, mostly of South African universities, and 100 Batswana with Senior Secondary certificates. The impact of this skills legacy was significant. For instance, just two years prior to independence, only 24 of the 184 administrative posts and only 275 of the 623 posts in the technical, executive and secretarial grades were held by Batswana (Colclough & McCarthy 1980). This resulted in Botswana always having to rely on imported skills, even in construction (Weeks 1995).

More recently, however, this situation has changed considerably. There is now a stated over-supply of skilled personnel and a consequent 'filtering down' of educated workers into less skilled jobs. However, there are some references made to a skills shortage in NDP9. Local Authorities, for instance, are not able to deliver services because the 'manpower shortage…inhibits them from adequately meeting the demand for the services they are expected to deliver' (Republic of Botswana 2003: 393).

The labour market is also marked by differentials according to gender and whether workers are employed in the public or the private sector. The average wage for similar educational qualifications was found to be higher in the public than in the private sector. As regards gender, government employment is gender balanced in aggregate terms but the private sector is male dominated, with 63 per cent of the workforce being men (Republic of Botswana 2003: 108). Women earn much less than their male counterparts despite being better educated. It is not surprising, therefore, that only one third of professional jobs are occupied by women, who only form a significant component in education (43 per cent), local and central government (33 per cent) and the services sector (29 per cent). Women are also predominantly involved in domestic service and informal sector jobs (67 per cent) (Datta 2004).

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PRIVATE SECTOR ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Government made up approximately 43% of the total overall employment in 2000 (EIU 2003). However, it is nudged, in NDP9 to reduce its employment capacity and pursue policies in favour of 'privatisation and right-sizing of the public sector' (Republic of Botswana 2003: 50). A White Paper on privatisation has been issued and the Public Enterprises and Privatisation Agency (PEPA) has been established to implement its recommendations.

There appears to be a significant thrust to make the country both internationally competitive and efficient – significant elements of globalisation discourse (Went 2000). There is also emphasis on trying to attract capital with the allure of joint ventures with Botswanan citizens. The Botswana Development Corporation (BDC) has been established to enable the realisation of this initiative.

The educational context

The evolution of national education policy

Current Botswana education policy is based on principles provided in *The revised national policy on education* (RNPE) (Republic of Botswana 1994). The RNPE instituted a system of automatic promotion, and provided for a National Examinations Council, which signalled a move away from the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC). Pre-school education was left as a local option. Secondary schooling was to be strengthened by the introduction of practical subjects, including computer studies, and design and technology was to be introduced into junior secondary schools. More details about its proposals as regards technical and vocational education and training (TVET) are discussed in the next section.

The most recent policy proposal that encompasses broad education goals is contained in Vision 2016, developed by a Presidential Task Group in 1997. The principle of establishing an 'educated' and 'informed' nation is at the heart of this vision (Presidential Task Group 1997).

Schooling and adult education

This subsection examines basic education indicators from the Human Development Index (UNDP 2003) in three broad areas: literacy rates (adult and youth), government spending on education, and enrolments.

Literacy rates

Table 2.3 suggests significant improvement since 1985.

Table 2.3: Literacy rates

Period	Adult literacy rate (percentage)	Youth literacy rate (percentage, age 15–24yrs)
1985–7	63.3	78.2
1995–7	77.2	88.3

Source: Adapted from UNDP (2003: 184)

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Expenditure

Again, the picture is a positive one. Currently, spending is significantly higher than most countries in sub-Saharan Africa. By 2001 the pupil-teacher ratio had reached 26:1 in primary schools and, according to 1999 data, 18:1 in government senior schools, despite an annual increase of more than 6 per cent in the number of pupils since 1981 (EIU 2003).

Table 2.4: Public education expenditure

Period	As a percentage of GNP	As a percentage of total government expenditure	Pre and primary expenditure as a percentage of total education expenditure	Secondary expenditure as a percentage of total education expenditure	Tertiary expenditure as a percentage of total education expenditure
1985–7	7.3	15.9	36	41	17
1995–7	8.6	20.6	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

Source: Adapted from UNDP (2003: 80)

Enrolment

Enrolment indicators (Table 2.5), however, suggest a decline in primary enrolments. This was possibly a result of the 1994 legislation identified by Weeks (1995), which did not expand pre-primary provision. In contrast, the expenditure at secondary level of 41 per cent of total education expenditure reflects significant attention to this sector. The result of this thrust has translated into a higher secondary enrolment from 24 per cent to 57 per cent.[4] This increase is all the more remarkable when compared with the figure of 7 per cent in 1970 and with an average of 25 per cent for sub-Saharan Africa.

School fees were abolished for primary schools in 1978 and for junior secondary education in 1989. Thus, free access is ensured for the first ten years. The additional two years of senior secondary are expected to cater for 50 per cent of those who have a Junior Certificate, the exit qualification from compulsory schooling.

Table 2.5: School enrolment ratios

Period	Primary enrolment ratio	Net Secondary enrolment ratio
1985–7	92	24
1998	81	57

Source: Adapted from UNDP (2003)

Higher education

Enrolment of full-time students at the University of Botswana (UB) was about 10 000 for 2002. Enrolment is skewed towards social sciences and humanities, which comprise 40 per cent of enrolments. Education has 20 per cent; science, engineering technology

4 According to the MoE, the figure is 51 per cent.

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and health sciences, 27 per cent; and business, information and communications technology (ICT), 10 per cent of enrolments (Republic of Botswana 2003: 292). There is a plan to increase business and ICT to roughly double the current output by the end of the NDP9 period, 2008/9, with slight increases in other fields.

The University has absorbed the Botswana Polytechnic as the Faculty of Engineering and Technology. This provides programmes of one to three years' duration, some of which have been certified by City and Guilds in London.

The TVET system

This section explores the way in which the TVET system is evolving, and identifies challenges for its future development. It is argued that the system is unified in terms of purpose but needs to develop clearly defined programmes, which need to be systemically implemented. It identifies some barriers in establishing the coherence between policy and practice.

Background

TVET in Botswana is relatively young. The first formal government training initiatives started around independence. Just before independence, the Botswana Training Centre was set up with the support of the special Commonwealth Assistance Programme to train artisans and administrative staff for the new civil service. The Botswana Polytechnic and the Botswana Institute for Administration and Commerce grew out of this initiative. It was around this time that the Botswana Brigades were established (Van Rensburg 2002). The Botswana Agricultural College (now College of Agriculture) opened in 1970 with 100 students. The first government technical colleges (TCs), then known as vocational training centres (VTCs), were opened in 1987.

The structure of the TVET system

The TVET system has a range of providers, as Table 2.6 describes.

Table 2.6: TVET provision in Botswana

Institutional type	TVET programmes offered	Number	Other details
University of Botswana, previously Botswana Polytechnic (1994)	Certificates and diplomas in the following areas of engineering: building, civil, electrical, electronic and mechanical	1	Established in 1982 Engineering degrees, diplomas and certificates
Roads Training Centre for Technicians	Road construction	1	Diplomas and certificates Duration of courses: 2–3 years Certification by Directorate of Public Service Management (DPSM)

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Institutional type	TVET programmes offered	Number	Other details
Technical Colleges (TCs), formerly Vocational Training Centres (VTCs)	Artisan training in a variety of trades	6	National Craft Certificates (skilled craftspeople) BTEP Foundation Certificates and BTEP Certificates Includes industry-sponsored apprentices who attend 3 months' theory for 3–4 years of training.
Auto Trades Training School (ATTS) or Roads Training Centre	Artisan training in auto mechanics	1	Currently a Technical College
Botswana Brigades	Variety of trades	41	Trade test certificates (semi-skilled craftspeople)
National Health Institute	Health personnel	1	Diplomas and certificates
Private Training Institutions	Largely computing and bookkeeping	53	Certificates and diplomas
Botswana College of Agriculture		1	Certificates, diplomas and degrees in agriculture
Construction Industry Trust Fund (CITF)	Building, construction and related trades for craftspeople	1	Modelled on BIFSA (Building Federation of South Africa), this training facility focuses on training for both employed (industry-based) and unemployed/ aspiring construction workers. It is funded by the imposition of a training fund (0.25%) for the industry.

Sources: Republic of Botswana (1997: 17); Atchoarena & Delluc (2002); Obok-Opok, O'Mara, Chipeta & Molwane (1997); McEvoy et al. (2001)

Students enter after either ten or 12 years of academic education. Those joining after ten years normally enter an artisan programme, while those entering after 12 years join a technician programme. Brigades also take in some students after 12 years, in particular for mechanics and business training, but are primarily now taking those with ten years of schooling.

TVET policy and legislation

The national policy context is underpinned by Vision 2016 (Presidential Task Group 1997). With regard to education, it sets out the need to improve the relevance, quality and accessibility of education and highlights the need to 'empower citizens to become the best producers of goods and services' and to 'produce entrepreneurs who will create employment through establishment of new enterprises' (Presidential Task Group 1997: 5). The Vision also provides specific direction as regards the role of TVET as a means for access: 'All Batswana will have the opportunity for continued and universal education, with options during and after secondary level to take up vocational or technical training as an alternative to purely academic study' (Presidential Task Group 1997: 5).

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In addition, the Vision supports earlier TVET policy as reflected in the *Revised national policy on education* (Republic of Botswana 1994); the *National policy on vocational education and training* (Republic of Botswana 1997); and the *Vocational Training Act, No. 22 of 1998* (Republic of Botswana 1998), which replaced the *Apprenticeship and Industrial Training Act* (Republic of Botswana 1983). Each of these key policies is explored below.

The Revised national policy on education (RNPE)

The RNPE provides the context for TVET. For the first time, government policy recognised TVET as something that should be 'distinct from general education and training'. It saw TVET as a sub-field that 'provides skills for specific occupations'. However, TVET was considered 'fragmented' and 'of uneven quality'. Co-ordination between different training institutions was judged to not be effective, and qualifications, curricula and quality of teaching staff were not standardised. The RNPE, therefore, proposed the development of an 'integrated national training system whose goals, content and organisation are uniform' (Republic of Botswana 1994: 9). In support of this vision, it proposed the expansion of the system and suggested the establishment of the Botswana Training Authority (BOTA) as the executive and co-ordinating authority. This body was expected to 'develop a more comprehensive system of vocational qualifications in consultation with employers and labour unions' (Republic of Botswana 1994: 9). It also proposed that the BOTA should 'monitor the skill needs of the economy' (Republic of Botswana 1994: 9).

Recommendation 52 of the RNPE proposed that the government, in conjunction with employers and unions, formulate a national training policy. This resulted in the *National policy on vocational education and training* (NPVET), accepted in December 1997 (Republic of Botswana 1997).

The National policy on vocational education and training (NPVET)

The NPVET was developed by a reference group that was co-chaired by both Deputy Permanent Secretaries from the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs (MLHA) and the Ministry of Education (MoE). The reference group also comprised employer and employee representatives and other interested parties, and reportedly culminated in a meeting of more than 200 people who discussed the draft policy. The ostensible focus of the NPVET was to 'integrate the different types of vocational education and training into one comprehensive system' (Republic of Botswana 1997: Foreword). It was expected to 'accord vocational education and training sufficient status as an alternative education route and place it on the same level as academic education in providing opportunities for further education' (Republic of Botswana 1997: Foreword).

The NPVET identified the following scope and objectives for Botswana's national TVET system:

- to plan, promote and deliver skills and technical training to school leavers and workforce entrants to meet the specific requirements of the formal sector to the standards and quality defined by commerce and industry, and to contribute to the productive development of the informal sector;
- to provide for the continuing education and training of the existing workforce, for their skills upgrading and re-training in the light of rapid technological change;
- to provide opportunities for school leavers who have completed basic school education to learn skills that will improve opportunities for employment and self-employment; and

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- to increase national productivity to promote total training (i.e. the development of knowledge, skills, positive work attitudes, quality consciousness, and the belief in training as a way of life) and the aspiration for training amongst school leavers and the workforce.

The Vocational Training Act (VTA)

The *Vocational Training Act*, No. 22 of 1998 (Republic of Botswana 1998) was designed specifically to establish the Botswana Training Authority as the statutory body 'to co-ordinate and promote vocational training in Botswana'. This terminology implicitly excludes vocational *education* and training, suggesting that the BOTA does not cover areas of Department of Vocational Education and Training (DVET) responsibility, an issue that continues to be contentious (see below). In terms of the Act, the BOTA is expected to 'accredit, register and monitor both public and private training institutions to ensure adherence to the required standard and quality of training and to minimise variability between training institutions' (Republic of Botswana 1998: A187). Under the responsibility of the Minister of Labour and Home Affairs, the board of the BOTA comprises representatives of government, employer and employee organisations and private training institutions. This signals considerable partnership with the private sector.

The VTA stipulates the following functions for the BOTA:

- registration and accreditation of training institutions and trainers;
- support for and promotion of training institutions;
- development and review of programmes and curricula;
- national standards and national awards schemes;
- assessment and certification;
- staff training and development;
- research;
- monitoring and evaluation of training institutions; and
- development and maintenance of a database on the training system.

TVET challenges in Botswana

A series of key challenges were identified in the policy phase of the mid-1990s. These fall under the following categories:

- access and equity;
- quality, relevance and focus;
- parity of esteem;
- articulation, mobility and integration; and
- finance.

Access and equity

In 1997, it was estimated that only 10 per cent of all secondary school leavers had access to some form of vocational education and training. The NPVET committed the system to provide for 20 per cent of Junior Certificate leavers having access to TVET by 2003. However, this figure has not yet been met.

The NPVET identified the need to increase the representivity of women and disabled people. The policy allows for geographical inclusion by suggesting that boarding facilities be established for those not living in major centres.

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Quality, relevance and focus

A background report for the NPVET (Obok-Opok et al. 1997) found relative employer satisfaction with TVET graduates. Sixty per cent of the employers who participated in the study expressed satisfaction with the quality produced.

However, there remains a clear sense that TVET needs to respond to unemployment, particularly amongst the youth. While ten years of free education is expected to delay entry into the labour market for the majority of the youth, and while the RNPE makes provision for one half of them progressing to senior secondary schooling, for the remainder, there is a choice of either skills training or joining the labour market.

The Obok-Opok report also found that all stakeholders, employers, the community and trainers, agreed that training should be for 'social' purposes as well as the demands of the labour market. The social need ensures that skills go beyond the direct and real requirements of labour so that there is a skilled pool from which to draw for future needs.

In addition to areas already offered, the Obok-Opok report expressed a need to introduce hairdressing, purchasing and stores, art, design and printing and leather work (Obok-Opok et al. 1997). There is also a growing emphasis on shifting from training for the current needs of the economy to training for potential need, as underpinned by the view that 'training is justified on the grounds that a well-trained human resource capacity is a necessary pre-requisite for economic development' (Republic of Botswana 1997: 8).

Parity of esteem

The Obok-Opok report found that the reputation of TVET was poor. There was a perceived poor quality of students, staff, curricula and resources. There was also evidence of unequal treatment between technical colleges and brigades. The report concluded that 'the community regards TVET as a second rate educational option' and that it is considered a 'dumping ground for failures'. It recommended that this attitude problem could be resolved by widening the 'scope of the curriculum by including more vocational courses (which) might also be acceptable by their parents' (Obok-Opok et al. 1997: 69). The report suggested a degree of monitoring by curriculum specialists, inspectors and evaluators.

The NPVET stressed that teacher training and clear teacher career-pathing needs to be developed for the TVET system (Botswana Republic 1997: 4). The policy also saw the need to co-ordinate the training activities of the various bodies to identify clear delineation of function to improve effectiveness.

Articulation, mobility and integration

The RNPE suggested that there was a need to respond to the issue of mobility between various TVET institutions. Vocational training qualifications were (and still are) not recognised as minimum qualifications for higher education. People emerging from either brigades or technical colleges still need to achieve senior secondary certificates.

As regards integration, the Obok-Opok report expressed the view that there was a need to have a 'clear progression route' to enable articulation. The NPVET reinforced this by recommending that TVET needed to be integrated with the overall human resources development (HRD) system and should provide learners with horizontal and vertical

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mobility. It suggested that, 'training standards should be expressed in terms of a nationally agreed framework and internationally accepted learning outcomes and competencies' (Republic of Botswana 1997: 8).

Integration of different training delivery systems into a unified system to deal with the issue of uneven quality was stressed as an important ideal. There is no clear system of determining equivalence between qualifications achieved inside and those achieved outside the country.

Finance

The RNPE makes the point that TVET policy has been under-resourced, and proposed broadening the basis for funding to generate increased resources to enable expansion. The Obok-Opok report reiterated the need to encourage and provide incentives for employers to undertake training. It was recommended that tax rebates, cost sharing and subsidies should be used to encourage employer-based training. The following are the current means used to encourage employer training:

- *Tax deduction scheme*: Section 44 of the *Income Tax Act* provides for the deduction of 200 per cent of expenses incurred by an employer on approved training of citizen employees, covering training costs, salaries of trainees, and the cost of equipment and other facilities utilised in training;
- *The Financial Assistance Plan*: a training grant, as part of the Financial Assistance Plan, is provided to eligible companies for training of unskilled citizen employees below artisan level; and
- *Training with production*: this involves the production of goods during training, with the proceeds ploughed back into training. It was initially adopted by brigades and is now used by technical colleges.

Recent developments

This section explores specific attempts to grapple with the above challenges. It is structured according to the broad delineations of functional control of institutions under the MoE and MLHA respectively.

The Ministry of Education component

This section explores the role of the MoE, with the DVET as the implementing government agency.

Technical colleges

There are six technical colleges (TCs), formerly called vocational training centres (VTCs). Total enrolment was 3 994 in 1993 (with a 35 per cent female complement), decreasing to 3 699 (and a 29 per cent female component) in 1998. At present, demand exceeds supply. They provide both full- and part-time second level training, leading to a National Craft Certificate (NCC), with practical certification/apprenticeship provided by the MTTC (see below). Plans for expansion of this sector include a master plan to develop four TCs outside of Gaborone and two colleges of applied arts and technology.

THE GABORONE TECHNICAL COLLEGE

The Gaborone Technical College (GTC), considered a 'flagship' project, was jointly built by the European Union (EU) and the Botswana government at a cost of P60 million, and has recently opened. It provides training in business studies, hospitality and tourism,

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hairdressing and beauty therapy, electrical and mechanical engineering, building construction engineering, information and communications technology and clothing design and textiles. Expecting to accommodate more than 1 000 learners, in 'state of the art' facilities, it is designed to respond to 'world standards' (Nganunu 2001). It is attempting to provide a new curriculum, the Botswana Technical Education Programme (BTEP), designed to 'provide the very skills that employers need for their new millennium workforce' (DVET 2003). Nganunu, the former director of the DVET, makes it clear that the GTC and BTEP are seen as key elements of a Botswanan response to globalisation:

> Our goods and services are now competing on the same world market as everyone else's. Therefore our graduates from the education and training system must be able to deliver to world standards. Our education and training systems can no longer apply local standards but must be delivered to world standard. In my country we decided to establish a partnership with an external organisation of repute (Scottish Qualification Authority) to assist us in developing Quality Assurance procedures and regulations and to train our staff to implement these. (Nganunu 2001: 2)

All BTEP programmes are expected to be quality assured by the Quality Assessment and Assurance Unit (QAA), with the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) co-certifying these qualifications. In keeping with the Scottish system, all students have to demonstrate competency in the 'key skills' of communication, personal and interpersonal skills, ICT and numeracy, as part of the course.

According to Nganunu's successor as the director of the DVET, 'it is an accepted belief that for true development to take place, Vocational Education and Training should be made more accessible to reach even the most disadvantaged members of society' (Kewagamang & Kabecha 1997: 33). However, there is still much to be done in realising this vision, although evening and weekend delivery has begun.

The BTEP is expected to make the curriculum more relevant. Whilst the DVET clearly sees 'world class provision' as a necessary response to globalisation, the appropriateness of such a response is far from certain. In addition, the limited student numbers that can be accommodated in the GTC, which cost so much, highlights issues of efficiency and sustainability and raises concerns about replicability. Some of the equipment in use (for instance, for health and beauty, a state-of-the-art massage chair is used for training) suggests that this type of training is obviously targeted at a first world economy, the relevance of which for Botswana still needs to be explored. The European standards employed in the construction of the college add to question marks about the relevance of such impressive infrastructure for wider replication in the country. It is unclear whether the other colleges can or should be equipped to similar standards.

Concerns can also be related to the linking of the curriculum to the SQA. Although employers are supposed to be central to the development of the BTEP, concerns have been raised about the extent to which the process is driven by international expertise rather than local consensus. Strong employer involvement in structures such as the Programme Advisory Committees (PACs), one for each vocational area, the Work Experience Unit and the QAA will be important for the embeddedness of the emerging curriculum.

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The Botswana Brigades

The brigades movement, started in 1963 by Patrick van Rensburg, Principal of Serowe Builders' Brigades,[5] is an important component of the vocational training system. The brigades were started as an integrated community initiative designed to respond to the unemployment of school leavers without any opportunities for education, training or work. It was a concerted, socialist response that sought to involve communities in education, training and productive work (Van Rensburg 2002). Training has always been a mixture of theoretical, practical and on-the-job training, with the latter used to pay for training (Van Rensburg 1978).

A vital component of the brigades is their focus on community development, both from a perspective of providing skills-training opportunities for youth, and through the supply of cheaper goods and services to the community. A recent DVET brochure refers to this in the following manner: 'They are probably among the very few rural industries in the village providing manufactured goods, commercial services and formal sector employment opportunities to local communities' (DVET n.d: 4). The services provided in the heyday of the brigades movement in the 1970s and early 1980s included auto mechanics, electrical, forestry, welding, construction, horticulture, sewing and livestock rearing.

Brigades are institutions that seek to encourage small-scale entrepreneurs by allowing them to rent workshops and equipment and by providing them with business advisory and accounting services. Projects aimed at women include gardening, horticulture, sewing and knitting projects. In addition, brigades are expected to provide literacy, non-formal education services, and craft and business skills to the community.

Brigades offer three levels of training: trade certificate training, skills certificate training and informal training. Each is described below:

- *Trade certificate training programmes*: These lead to a C, B or National Craft Certificate issued by the Madirelo Training and Testing Centre (MTTC). There is certification in 17 trades including auto mechanics, bricklaying, plastering, carpentry, electrical, forestry, general agriculture, plumbing and textiles/dressmaking.
- *Skills certificate training programmes*: These are designed for school leavers 'who prefer a vocational career or desire to embark on entrepreneurship', and include Pitmans certificates and BIAC certificates in accounting and in secretarial studies. The minimum entry requirement is a Junior Certificate, or for forestry, a Standard 7 pass.
- *Informal training programmes*: These are short-duration courses ostensibly to provide self-reliance. Programmes include bookkeeping, sewing, horticulture, computer skills, farming, gardening, non-formal education, bricklaying, business skills, knitting and textiles. The programmes do not lead to certification and appear to be almost defunct.

Table 2.7: The cost of TVET (per student per year)

	Pula	Dollar*
Technical college	11 000	2 200
Brigade	6 000	1 200

Source: Republic of Botswana (1997: 20)
*Note: * based on the value of P7.50/US$ (August 2003)*

5 Now the Serowe Swaneng Hill School.

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Table 2.7 depicts the relative cost of brigades as compared to provision in TCs. It shows that the cost of producing a learner per year in the brigades (US$1 200) is almost half that of the formal TCs (US$2 200).

A 'comprehensive review' of the brigades was commissioned by the DVET, and the resulting report (McEvoy et al. 2001) provided a wide-ranging indictment of practice in the brigades. Amongst issues referred to in the report were:

- the low quality of facilities, with no evidence of any attempt to repair, maintain or, in most cases, clean facilities, and, in some cases, 'old and obsolete' machinery;
- a narrow range of course offerings and traditional 'teacher centred' methodologies;
- rapid staff turnover and poor staff morale; and
- relatively young staff who required 'upskilling', which represents, according to the report, an important and urgent requirement for TVET reform.

The report also pointed to the fact that brigades were considered a 'last resort' rather an institution of choice, suggesting that the brigades were less than adequate in the face of better resourced technical colleges. According to the report, 'brigades' energies are being depleted by low esteem and a collective resentment at being the "poor relation", as they become eclipsed by the better resourced Technical Colleges' (McEvoy et al. 2001: 16).

The primary recommendations of the report included:

- the 'institutional separation of production units from training delivery'; and
- that the training aspect of the brigades be subsumed under 'government assisted Community Technical Colleges (CTCs)', which should be registered as schools under the portfolio responsibility of the DVET. (McEvoy et al. 2001: 66)

These recommendations effectively signal the end of the brigade concept as it has been known.

The report has been strongly critiqued for its very particular take on the issues.[6] The report and responses to it from the brigades and their supporters cannot be seen simply in terms of the report's preferred terrain of quality and efficiency. Rather, there is a long history of ideological tension between the MoE and the brigade movement, including Van Rensburg's International Foundation for Education with Production, which sought (with some success) to spread the message of the brigades internationally.

The report argues that:

> The original Brigades concept was developed to meet the skills training needs of a less developed community than now exists. As skills training institutions, they have not evolved or kept pace with the changing training and education needs of the young people of Botswana. (McEvoy et al. 2001: 21)

However, it can be countered that the youth unemployment issue, which the brigades were established to address, is very much still with Botswana.

Moreover, the feasibility of getting all brigades under DVET control is the subject of intense disagreement in Botswana society, and represents a long-standing ideological disagreement about the brigade model and its wider relevance for education and training

6 The report has been criticised by a number of commentators for its alleged biases. Indeed, Van Rensburg (2002) alleges in an article entitled 'The dismemberment of the Brigades' that the findings of the report had been planned in advance from within the DVET.

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in Botswana. The current structure of the brigades suggests a considerable degree of community control and ownership, with significant state funding for teacher salaries. State control is expected not only to reduce community ownership, but also to considerably curtail their decision-making capacity. The strong community participation (and ownership) is deeply felt, and any erosion of community control is likely to be strongly resisted.

In the light of the lower costs of the brigades versus colleges (see Table 2.7), it is probable that the lack of adequate resources is an important reason for the problems experienced by the brigades. However, the McEvoy report did not do justice to the issue of whether brigades should be better funded. Nor does the report address adequately the dual role of production units as locations of training as well as sources of income. The possibility of reforming the brigades rather than abandoning them was not reasonably considered.

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The Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs (MLHA) component

The MLHA is responsible for the Botswana Training Authority (BOTA) and the Madirelo Training and Testing Centre (MTTC).

This section will explore the role of the MLHA in work-based and post-school TVET provision. It explores the existing model of apprenticeship training under the MTTC and then looks at the recent establishment of the BOTA and the Botswana National Qualifications Framework (BNQF).

The MTTC and employer-based training and apprenticeships

The MTTC, built with GTZ (the German development agency) assistance in 1988, was established under the *Apprenticeship and Industrial Training Act* (Republic of Botswana 1983). It was placed within the Directorate of Apprenticeship and Industrial Training under the MLHA. In the words of one brochure, it was developed to 'increase the incomes of citizens of Botswana by getting a more sophisticated skills ability' and 'to increase manpower for the fastest possible rate of economic growth' (MTTC 1990: 5). It was ostensibly modelled on the German dual system of apprenticeship training, which provides for alternating periods of on-the-job and institutional training. The period of apprenticeship in terms of current policy is four years[7] (Republic of Botswana 1983: Sections 16 and 17) – on the job for nine months with a 13-week institutional training period, each year. As initially envisaged, training was to be provided by the Automotive Trades Training School (ATTS) and the then Botswana Polytechnic (subsequently absorbed into the University of Botswana). Each institutional training block concludes with an assessment test (Republic of Botswana 1983: Section 5. 6).

There are three levels of certification offered presently by the MTTC: Trade Test C (foundation), Trade Test B (intermediate) and the National Craft Certificate (NCC). The holder of the NCC is certified a fully qualified artisan. However, this is currently in the process of being reviewed (see below).

Although the *Apprenticeship and Industrial Training Act* has been replaced by the *Vocational Training Act* of 1998, the Director of the MTTC sees the new legislation as a

7 A few trades take less time.

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continuation of the old system, pointing out that 'the repeal of the Act does not affect the apprenticeship scheme' (Ahmad 2003).

As a testing centre, MTTC is used by the brigades as well as the TCs to certify their practical components. In addition, it has been providing training for short courses, which it certifies. The current staff complement is over 100 and approximately half the staff are training and testing professionals. The MTTC also has hostel facilities for 120 students.

Employers are expected to sign a contract for each trainee, and accept that institutional training is necessary. Employers obtain a 200 per cent rebate for training. All apprentices must have at least completed the Junior Certificate and have to be at least 15 years old.

There is a long list of approved apprenticeship trades. However, in practice, the MTTC currently offers the following: brickwork, carpentry, painting, plumbing, welding and fabrication, machining and fitting, electrical, automotive textile, electronics, heavy plant, hairdressing, and hotel and catering. The current offerings have been driven by demand.

In terms of gender representation, women are generally under-represented in TVET programmes, especially in heavy-plant courses. The gender ratio is 70:30 in favour of males, with females dominating only in fields traditionally occupied by females, such as hairdressing.

The effectiveness of the MTTC has been questioned. The centre has issued fewer NCCs than the government anticipated. Moreover, it has been considered to 'lack expertise and capacity' to develop occupation-based qualifications in the competency-mode of curriculum development (Raleru & Modungwa 2003).

BOTA and the BNQF

BOTA has been specifically tasked to provide a degree of harmonisation of skills training as envisaged in the NPVET. It is influenced heavily by experiences of National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) and has drawn upon consultants from several countries with experience in this area, most notably South Africa. BOTA is currently attempting to develop competencies together with business/industry, in keeping with NQFs internationally.

The NPVET made concrete suggestions about the development of a National Vocational Qualifications Framework (NVQF) in anticipation of the development of a comprehensive NQF. In this regard, it proposed the development of national training standards and the categorisation of training programmes.

BOTA has identified three levels of competence, leading to Botswana National Vocational Qualifications (BNVQs):

- BNVQ 1 (*foundation level*): Broad-based training to enable learners to undertake a 'limited range of work activities under supervision'. This effectively would replace the Trade Test C under the apprenticeship system.
- BNVQ 2 (*intermediate level*): Allows learners to perform 'predictable tasks in routine (and some non-routine) jobs under minimum guidance and supervision'. This effectively would replace the Trade Test B under the apprenticeship system.
- BNVQ 3 (*certificate level*): Requires learners to display competencies to perform tasks associated with skilled jobs of non-routine and complex nature and to show potential for supervisory functions. This certification will replace the NCC.

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The relationship between the BOTA and DVET

There is contention about whether the BOTA's brief includes the formal TVET institutions under the DVET and MoE. It has been argued that the exclusion of the term 'education' in the Act suggests that apprenticeship and industrial/work-based training remain a MLHA competence, whilst the DVET still controls the formal pre-work training. However, the NPVET recognises the overlapping authority of the two Ministries:

> since the two training systems are under different authorities clear mechanisms will need to be developed to facilitate efficient coordination of the two systems through establishment of joint structures to ensure synchronisation and smooth transfer from one training level to another. (Republic of Botswana 1997: Section 6.8)

To further complicate matters, the NPVET makes reference to the need for 'the formulation of policies and strategic plans' to be centralised under the National Employment and Manpower and Incomes Council (NEMIC) (Republic of Botswana 1997: 30). This suggests a policy role for the secretariat of NEMIC's Manpower and Training Sub-Committee and the theoretical involvement of its parent department, the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning.

The policy ambiguity is complicated by the uncertainty about the relationship between the BTEP programme and the BNVQF, although the BOTA and DVET have signalled their commitment to aligning the two processes.

Private TVET

A report was commissioned in October 1996 to examine the state of the private TVET sector. This report concluded that the sector was 'very dynamic, full of uncertainties and fragile due to the vagaries of the market.' (Mudariki, Malikongwa, Kgosi & Weeks 1997: 15). It was presumably encouraged by the government's White Paper on The Revised National Policy on Incomes, Employment, Prices and Profit (1991) and was further given impetus in the report of the second National Commission on Education, which stipulated that:

> High priority should be accorded to enlarging and deepening the availability of training places for business within the private training institutions. Although no target figures can be given, the expansion of private sector training should be an explicit policy objective. (Republic of Botswana 1993: 220)

In general, the sector is considered 'fragile' in an ever-changing landscape with a significant number of institutions closing down. Of the 121 institutions identified by the task team, 85 were registered with the Ministry and 53 of these were known to be operating. Of the 53, 24 were located in Gaborone. Despite the closures, there was evidence of a significant increase since 1993, when government records reflected 54 private institutions. The task team report also noted a remarkable absence of institutions in the larger villages of Molepolole, Serowe and Mahalapye.

In the private TVET sector, there are various organisational categories including commercial enterprises (profit-driven institutions), non-profit church agencies and non-profit NGOs. The majority of private for-profit institutions are run by individual entrepreneurs. Significantly, only 40 per cent of those owning private institutions were citizens of Botswana, with an equal number having no teaching qualifications. Many have closed as a result of poor financial assistance, with a large number reportedly closing because of high rentals.

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The majority of institutions concentrate on business and commercial courses and computing. Only a few are involved in technical courses like construction, woodwork and auto mechanics. None is involved in agriculture. Not all providers offer certificated courses. The task team on private provision noted that very little innovation was possible or likely because of their 'reliance on foreign courses and certification' (Pitman qualifications, for example).

Courses offered typically are suitable for those who have had nine or ten years of schooling (those with a Junior Secondary Certificate). It was also reported that there were very few students who had completed senior secondary study at these institutions. There was a notable demand for academic courses (Forms 4 and 5). Thus, some private vocational training institutions have reverted to being only formal secondary schools.[8]

The report noted that there was no awareness on the part of principals/owners 'of the requirements of the world of work and the need to develop a work ethic (even though some trainees had job placements in catering and auto mechanics)' (Mudariki et al. 1997: 3). Even amongst registered institutions, the task team noted that there was a general lack of commitment to submit annual returns to the MoE. There were no quality control mechanisms in place, although these have now been developed by BOTA, which has become the body responsible for registration.

Conclusion

This chapter has depicted a TVET system in process of serious reflection and reform. Policies are being put in place to make the system cohere. It is a 'young' and evolving system, which according to recent policy thrust is trying to respond to changing circumstances.

In spite of the validity of the general picture of Botswana's economic success, there is a clear set of challenges facing the country that motivate TVET reform. The economic performance of the country is constrained and undermined by high levels of inequality. This is further exacerbated in economic and social terms by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Moreover, the basing of economic success almost solely on the diamond industry has led to growing concerns about economic diversification.

These social and economic concerns have led to Botswanan skills development being pulled in the two directions typical in many countries. The diversification and competitiveness agenda has encouraged an emphasis on 'upskilling' the population through both higher education and the TVET system.

In the TVET sector, the MoE has made an effort to upgrade the quality of provision through the twin thrust of the new state-of-the-art facilities at the GTC and the new curriculum of the BTEP. However, there remain real concerns about how grounded these initiatives are in Botswanan reality and the feasibility of extending them beyond Gaborone.

For 40 years Botswana has been home to one of the most famous international efforts to address issues related to youth unemployment – the Botswana Brigades. Although the issues that the brigades have been addressing appear to be as pertinent as ever to the

8 An association representing these private vocational schools, the Botswana Association of Private Vocational Schools (BAPVOS), was formed in 2003.

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Botswanan context, the brigades have been threatened with having their mandate radically transformed following the McEvoy report of 2001. However justified the critique of the brigades may be, the DVET does not appear to have developed a clear new vision of how the system will address the youth unemployment challenge. Moreover, it is apparent that the community orientation of the brigades and the continuation of widespread community support for them leave the government with a real challenge in how to act upon the report's recommendations.

At the systemic level, Botswana reflects a number of key elements of the recent international TVET policy reform debate. The establishment of the new autonomous training agency, BOTA, appears to be progressing well. However, as in many other countries, the establishment of such an agency is not in itself a solution to the tensions caused by the division of responsibilities between two Ministries. BOTA is clearly an agency of the MLHA and its ability to influence or direct change within the institutions controlled by the MoE seems limited.

Botswana has also committed itself to an NQF. It is seeking to introduce this in a phased way, beginning with vocational qualifications. There is considerable merit in such a careful strategy and in Botswana's commitment to learning from the mistakes of other countries in this area. Nevertheless, the issue of articulation between the MoE and MLHA also raises concerns here. Although aligned to the Scottish Qualifications Framework, it is not entirely clear that the qualifications being developed under the BTEP are wholly in line with the developments planned for BNVQs by the BOTA.

Whilst the new qualifications (whether under the BTEP or BNVQ routes – if these are, indeed, somewhat different) are expressly designed to be better than previous awards through being more flexible and relevant, it is important to note that these are not automatic consequences of a modular or NQF approach. The new system is intended also to deliver parity of esteem, but international experiences make it clear that this is far from being a simple matter of building better VET qualifications or even an NQF. A greater employer role through the BOTA likewise is to be welcomed but needs to be turned in practice to an involvement that moves training, employment and the economy forward. The success of skills development in Botswana, therefore, is intimately connected to other developments such as privatisation and economic diversification.

From the perspective of both individual progression and 'upskilling', the intention to build a full NQF offers promise in so far as it can deliver on better articulation between the existing TVET system and higher education. At present, TVET awards have no currency at the University of Botswana.

Notwithstanding recent attempts to expand the sector, access and equity issues also remain problematic within TVET institutions. There is little sense, for instance, of how the access of rural and female learners is to be radically improved. Given the extent of HIV/AIDS prevalence, it may also be argued that Botswana needs to give more attention to the access of sero-positive learners and to HIV/AIDS education within TVET institutions. The recent inclusion of HIV/AIDS programmes for all trainees might well serve as an important starting point in this regard.

The new system is likely to be costly to maintain and even costlier to expand if greater access and impact are to be achieved. However, there is no certainty that the new 'shared funding' vision for Botswana TVET will enable increased access and equity. Indeed, it is

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likely that it will mirror debates in many other African countries. The position of private providers with respect to the public system and the achievement of national skills development goals also remains under-conceptualised.

In terms of the role of donor organisations, the declining German influence is evident with the funding to the MTTC brought to a close. There is an increasing British presence, especially with the award recently of a European Development Fund contract to support the BNVQF process. There is also a strong foreign consultancy presence. On the one hand, it is likely that their role in providing advice on the strength of a different context is appropriate; on the other hand, it raises the real possibility of advice that is not contextualised.

There is a sense that the system is evolving and that important breakthroughs have been made to refine it. There are exciting developments, which are responsive to different demands. In the full-time post-school system, the establishment of the GTC and the development of the BTEP as a curricular alternative represent an exciting, yet untested, possibility for system review. In the work-based training system, the establishment of the BOTA to co-ordinate the TVET system and provide quality assurance is a necessary means to achieve some degree of articulation within the system. However, the problem remains that greater co-ordination is needed in the system as a whole.

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CHAPTER 3

Lesotho: the uphill journey to development

Thomas Magau

Contextual realities

Lesotho is the second smallest country in southern Africa after Swaziland, landlocked and surrounded by South Africa. The country, with its population of 2.1 million people, is one of the least developed in the world. Mountains make up almost three-quarters of the country. The lowlands, where the capital city, Maseru, is situated, constitute about one-quarter of the land. About 80 per cent of the populace live in the lowlands and foothills that contain most of Lesotho's scarce productive arable land. Land in the highlands and the Senqu River Valley, which is rapidly eroding, is suitable only for grazing and for low population densities. All over the country, rainfall is sporadic and unreliable, and drought and hailstorms often wipe out entire crops. Winters are severe, with cold winds and snow flurries in the lowlands and heavy snowstorms in the mountains.

The resulting problems of land shortage, soil erosion and falling productivity have been compounded by recurrent drought. Lesotho used to produce a wide variety of food crops, being once self-sufficient in food and even exporting high value agricultural produce such as asparagus to South Africa during the 1980s. However, it has now become a net importer of food as land available for agriculture has been shrinking.

Lesotho has some other natural resources, including diamonds. However, it is the water sector in which it is showing the most progress. The Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP), one of the largest infrastructure projects in the world, provides for the storing of the waters of the Orange-Senqu River in a series of dams. Water is then delivered to South Africa through an extensive network of tunnels. There is also provision for the generation of electricity for Lesotho. The governments of South Africa and Lesotho fund the project jointly with support from the World Bank.

The political context

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Lesotho, which took effect at independence in October 1966, was suspended in January 1970. A new Constitution was promulgated following the March 1993 general election. Its main provisions, with subsequent amendments, are summarised below.

Lesotho is a hereditary monarchy. The King, who is Head of State, has no executive or legislative powers. Executive authority is vested in the Cabinet, which is headed by the Prime Minister, while legislative power is exercised by the 120-member National Assembly, which includes 80 members elected, at intervals of no more than five years, by universal adult suffrage in the context of a multi-party political system. There is also a Senate, comprising traditional chiefs and nominated members. The Prime Minister is the official head of the armed forces.

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The economy

Lesotho is among the 50 poorest countries in the world, with a per capita income of just over US$540 in 2000. Lesotho's economy is based on limited agricultural and pastoral production and light manufacturing (textile, clothing and leather) supplemented by large, although declining, remittances from Basotho miners in South Africa. Recently there have also been royalties from exporting water to South Africa through the LHWP (Hassan 2002).

In 2001 the government was installing infrastructure and utilities in the Thetsane Industrial Area with a view to attracting textile factories and creating new jobs. It was forecast that 4 500 new jobs would be created initially, subsequently rising to 5 500 and eventually to 10 000. The sector with the best prospects is textiles. Lesotho is the third largest African exporter of textiles to the USA, after South Africa and Mauritius. Lesotho's textile producers are expected to benefit greatly from the provisions of the US *African Growth and Opportunities Act* (AGOA), for which Lesotho was declared eligible in April 2001. Under its terms, textiles and clothing made in Lesotho have unlimited access to the US market, and by early 2002 exports of these products to the US had increased by nearly 40 per cent.

In response, the government has been offering incentives to South African and East Asian industrialists to set up textile and other labour intensive industries for the US market. However, it is unclear whether this industry can be sustained after AGOA ends.

Lesotho's labour force is growing at 25 000 new entrants a year, while the employment absorptive capacity is limited to about 9 000 a year. Employment problems are exacerbated by the substantial reduction of opportunities for migrant miners in South Africa, once the principal source of formal sector employment for Basotho. About 180 000 subsistence farmers and about 31 000 small-scale entrepreneurs dominate Lesotho's current workforce. According to Hassan (2002), of those working in the informal sector, 10 per cent are working on their own, 26 per cent are paid employees, 3 per cent are unpaid employees, and the remaining 61 per cent are subsistence farmers.

Socio-economic indicators

Lesotho is a poor country: its gross national product (GNP) per capita in 2000 of $540 is comparable with the average for sub-Saharan Africa ($500) but is well below neighbouring South Africa ($3 020). The United Nations Development Programme Human Development Index for 2003 ranked Lesotho 137th (UNDP 2003).

Lesotho's workforce, like those of its neighbours, is seriously affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Almost one-third of all Basotho adults were estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS at the end of 2001. The International Labour Office (ILO) estimates that male labour force participation fell by 16 percentage points between 1995 and 1997 as a result of sero-positivity (ILO 2003). The persistently high infant mortality rate in Lesotho is partly a result of the prevalence of HIV. The loss of five to six years in life expectancy between 1990 and 1999 is also attributed to HIV/AIDS (see Table 3.2 on social indicators).

According to Hassan (2002), half of Lesotho's two million people live below the poverty line and income inequality is among the highest in the world. Poverty in Lesotho remains at high levels in all rural areas and is particularly high in the mountainous regions. The incidence and depth of poverty are as high as any region in sub-Saharan Africa. Early 2004 also saw serious problems of hunger.

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Table 3.1: Macroeconomic plan indicators, selected years

	1990	1995	2000
GDP at market prices (M million)	1 609.5	3 219.2	6 238.8
Percentage change from previous year	20.3	18.5	5.0
GNP per capita (maloti)	1 520.0	2 206.0	2 620.0
Inflation rate (percentage)	9.1	8.5	8.6
Population (million)	1.7	1.9	2.1

Source: UNDP (1996)

Table 3.2: Some social indicators

Indicators	1990	1999
Total fertility rate (women)	5.0	4.5
Crude birth rate	36.4	34.2
Crude death rate	11.8	13.6
Infant mortality rate	98.0	89.0
Life expectancy at birth (years)	57 (M)	52 (M)
	60 (F)	52 (F)

Source: African Development Bank (2001)
Note: M = male; F = female

The educational context

The size and shape of the education system

Lesotho has a 7+3+2 system of primary and secondary education. Primary schooling starts at the age of six years and lasts seven years, followed by three years of Junior Secondary schooling, leading to the Junior Certificate Examination (JCE), and two years of Senior Secondary schooling, leading to the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC) examinations. In addition, a small proportion of children also attend pre-schools and some students proceed to university and other tertiary institutions.

Of children in the relevant age groups in 1998, 60 per cent (males 56 per cent; females 64 per cent) were enrolled at primary schools but only 14 per cent (males 10 per cent; females 19 per cent) were enrolled at secondary schools. Some 4 046 students were enrolled at tertiary-level institutions in 1998. (See Table 3.3)

The budget for 2000/01 allocated M600.6 million to education and community services (representing 21 per cent of total government expenditure).

The organisation and management of both the primary school examinations and the JCE, as well as the co-ordination of other international examinations, are the responsibility of the Examination Council of Lesotho (ECOL), an autonomous body authorised by the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET), previously the Ministry of Education, to

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Table 3.3: Number of teachers and students by level in Lesotho's education system, 1998

	Institutions	Teachers	Students		
			Male	Female	Total
Pre-primary	n.a.	1 970	17 016*	19 063*	36 079
Primary	1 264	14 555	178 131	191 384	369 515
Secondary					
General	n.a.	3 126*†	29 570	41 692	71 262
Technical and vocational	n.a.	n.a.	494	479	973
Tertiary	n.a.	n.a.	1 822*	2 760*	4 582*

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics <www.uis.unesco.org>
*Note: * estimate; † includes figure for technical and vocational teachers*

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oversee the development and monitoring of examinations. While ECOL receives subventions from the government, it also collects examinations fees from the candidates.

A highly centralised system

The overall management of the education system is still centrally operated, with almost all major decisions made at headquarters. The payment of teachers' salaries, the choice of schools to receive new buildings, and so on are all determined at the central level. Because of this situation, the established district offices of the MoET and local management bodies have very limited impact on the schools.

Free primary education

The implementation of the Free Primary Education (FPE) programme in Lesotho began in January 2000. Initially FPE is for those entering Standard 1, but it is planned to increase this year on year so that all primary schooling will be free from the beginning of 2006.

The programme's policy objectives are as follows:

- making basic education accessible to all pupils and relevant to their needs;
- making education equitable in order to eliminate disparities and inequalities;
- providing basic and necessary resources to enable every Mosotho child to enter and complete the primary cycle of education;
- ensuring that education is affordable to the majority of the Basotho;
- providing and maintaining quality education as a basis for promoting human resources development, economic development and societal advancement, thus fulfilling the government's broad policy of eradicating poverty and illiteracy; and
- equipping every Mosotho with basic skills and knowledge to live a meaningful life and cope with his/her environment.

Non-formal education

Non-formal education is regarded as a complement and supplement to formal education. It is meant for those who drop out of the formal system. Their number is quite significant, amounting to 30 per cent of the population of the rural mountainous regions. In Maseru alone, they number approximately 13 per cent. The main providers are non-

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governmental organisations (NGOs), the community, private individuals and some church organisations. The MoET also offers non-formal education through the Lesotho Distance Teaching Centre and the Institute of Extra-Mural Studies, which is part of the University of Lesotho.

The VET system

Historical context

Vocational education and training (VET) has a long history in Lesotho. Even long before the Basotho nation was founded, the youth learned skills from the elders in the communities and, in a more organised manner, in initiation schools. These were skills needed in tool, spear and shield making, hunting, hide and skin tanning, building and other skills relevant to agriculture.

The arrival of missionaries around 1833 brought with it a need for a different set of skills relevant to the building of churches and houses and the making of their furnishings employing European styles. This need led to the establishment of an industrial school under the auspices of the Lesotho Evangelical Church in the Quthing district in 1862. A training centre that was established by the government in the Maseru district in 1905 followed this. The purpose in establishing the centre was to train young Basotho males in the skills needed at the time, which included masonry, carpentry, blacksmithing and tailoring.

After Lesotho regained independence from Britain in 1966, the education system was overhauled. Technical/vocational subjects were introduced into the general education curriculum in secondary schools. A number of training centres were established and old ones expanded.

The MoE presently owns two technical institutions, the Lerotholi Polytechnic and the Thaba-Tseka Technical Institute, and pays the salaries of staff at six dedicated vocational and technical schools.

Alongside these, the government has made other significant efforts geared to reshaping the education and training system in order to satisfy the requirements of development. These efforts led to the National Education Dialogue of 1978, which recommended the formation of a multi-disciplinary task force to carry out a thorough analysis of the education and training provision and to propose policy guidelines with a clear set of objectives and their implications to the government. This task force, the Education Sector Survey Task Force, was subsequently appointed in December 1980. Its recommendations resulted in the enactment of the *Lesotho Technical and Vocational Training Act* of 1984, which superseded the *Industrial and Vocational Training Act* of 1975.

The focus of VET policy

The 1984 Act is still the official statement of policy, although new legislation is anticipated in the draft policies of 2000 and 2003. In this section, the key themes of the current policy framework will be explored.

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Governance and administration of the system
The 1984 Act established the Technical and Vocational Training Advisory Board (TVTAB) to carry out certain specific functions related to VET. This reports to the Director of Technical and Vocational Training in the MoET.

In terms of the Act, the TVTAB was to be composed of stakeholders with informed perspectives on business and industry and the relevant expertise in vocational and technical education. However, there is concern amongst stakeholders that this has not been achieved in practice.

The Department of Technical and Vocational Training (known as the TVD) is the policy-implementing arm and the nerve-centre of the VET system. The department operates under the Director of Technical and Vocational Training and is divided into four functional sections as follows:

1. *Secondary Technical Studies*: Responsible for technical education and pre-vocational education and training.
2. *Post-secondary Technical and Vocational Training*: Responsible for quality assurance in the delivery of curriculum in the VET institutions through inspections.
3. *Curriculum and Assessment*: Responsible for standards, curriculum and assessment.
4. *Industrial Training*: Responsible for all industrial training programmes and accreditation of VET Institutions.

Finance
The system is largely financed out of state revenues. Inevitably, in the context of the prestige of higher education, and the importance placed on basic education, VET gets a smaller share. Of the total budget allocation for the MoET for 2003/04 of M748 million, only M21 million was allocated to the VET system, with Lerotholi receiving more than two-thirds of this.

There is limited industry involvement in technical and vocational education and training (TVET). The curricula for the different courses are designed in isolation, with not much involvement of the industries. There are three Industrial Advisory Committees, representative of selected industries, reporting to the Curriculum Advisory Council, responsible for advising on the particular needs of industry and the linking of TVET in Lesotho to the place of work. Industry participation is very weak in respect of TVET training. Many domestic stakeholders speak about the importance of strengthening industry participation in TVET. There is limited participation by industry in the affairs of the TVD. Training programmes are identified and designed by TVET institutions on their own. Recently, many companies have started providing their workers with in-house training programmes tailor-made to their needs.

Public and semi-public providers
TVET is undertaken at post-junior secondary levels of schooling in the eight technical training institutions, six of which are Church-owned, but state subsidised. Some of these have been accredited to offer training in traditional skills such as automotive mechanics, bricklaying and plastering, and electrical installations, and others in home science, all at certificate level. Some have been accredited to offer secretarial studies, pattern design and drafting, and business studies, at diploma level. The Lerotholi Polytechnic offers diploma courses at technician level in mechanical, electrical and civil engineering and architecture.

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In the *Lesotho public expenditure review of the education sector* (MoET 2001), the overall enrolment in the state-supported institutions in 1999 amounted to 1 795. Enrolments for 1997 were around the same figure. However, there was an increase in enrolment in 2001 caused mainly by increased enrolment in automotive mechanics and electrical installation.

Industry training

Industrial training in Lesotho takes place in three different forms: 25-weeks of industrial attachment following two years of institutionalised training in technical and vocational institutions; industrial attachment of varying duration in the context of other forms of institutionalised technical training; and informal training on the job, which nevertheless enables workers to apply for access to the trade test system.

Industry-based training in Lesotho is mostly of the on-the-job type. Only a few companies appear to have their own training centres, whilst some outsource staff training to outside institutions and may sometimes send staff members overseas for training. Industrial attachment appears not to be well organised, and graduates of vocational and technical institutions are supposed to find attachments for themselves after two years of training.

Pre-vocational education and skills training

The importance of integrating education and training to meet the needs of pre-employed, employed and unemployed people is incorporated in the *Technical and Vocational Training* Act. The TVD has responsibility for developing a pre-vocational programme, which should be designed for allowing access for disadvantaged learners such as youth, drop-outs from primary and secondary schools, adult learners, and students who choose vocational training rather than an academic education. Pre-vocational education and skills training is undertaken in community-based skills training centres for early school leavers with a Primary School Leaving (PSLE) Certificate, other disadvantaged groups, as identified from time to time, and retrenched mineworkers. It involves short courses designed to meet specific needs of the community and the individuals in a particular location.

Private providers

The number of private providers in Lesotho is unknown. The TVD argues that there was a rapid growth of for-profit provision in the 1980s, drawing on a wide range of international qualifications and providing training of highly variable quality. Without a system of registration or much in the way of organisation, the dynamics of the for-profit sector remain poorly understood. However, the TVD has begun a registration process and about 40 of the private centres have voluntarily submitted their applications for accreditation.

There is also a segment of not-for-profit provision, primarily through NGOs. This appears to be mainly oriented towards income generation and tends not to be formally certificated. Again, little is known about its dynamics and performance. Informal training in the form of traditional, unrecognised apprenticeship also exists.

An additional aim of TVET is to train for self-employment. However, it appears that the TVET system largely disregards the training needs of people employed in informal activities and people who could become self-employed, provided they are given the necessary technical and entrepreneurial skills. To date, policy has not really sought to

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address this challenge adequately, although interviews with officials did reveal a sense that TVET policy should be amended to re-orient programmes towards self-employment.

Technical subjects in secondary education

Lesotho has demonstrated a high commitment to curriculum diversification in general education. Currently, there are about 60 secondary/high schools offering technical subjects throughout the country. However, it is important to note that this runs against the general international policy and research consensus regarding the poor rates of return of such education. Given that the World Bank has been the most trenchant critic of such diversification (see Psacharopoulos & Loxley 1985) and is currently supporting the TVET reform process, future support for such subjects may be reduced.

Curriculum and assessment

Since its inception, the TVD has brought about a number of revisions to subject curricula in the TVET sector. Moreover, in anticipation of a new policy position, the government, with GTZ and World Bank support, is moving towards a competency-based modularised approach and greater industry relevance. Committees have been established where officials meet with employers and providers and there is a general thrust towards greater flexibility and relevance.

It is apparent that this process needs to go further and that a stronger relationship between stakeholders and the MoET is needed with regard to curriculum development. The existing need for capacity building around curriculum development, delivery and assessment will only increase with any move towards a more modularised and competency-driven approach.

A further concern within the context of examinations is the national award system. National examination certificates are being issued by the TVD. However, in some cases institutions are also issuing competing certificates, some of which are institutional and some international. In such circumstances, it becomes difficult for employers to judge the relative worth of awards.

The eight institutions combined are currently offering courses in 23 different subjects. These courses are offered at one of three levels. Level I courses require the PSLE Certificate as a minimum for entry: two subjects are offered here. Level II courses set the Junior Certificate (JC) as the minimum entry requirement: 10 subjects are offered here. Level III courses require the COSC as a minimum for entry: 11 subjects are offered at this level.

All courses are oversubscribed, at times to the extent of ten applicants to one available place. Consequently, because of competition, many of the candidates selected for Level I and II courses hold qualifications above PSLE and JC respectively.

The MoET is very keen to equalise and raise the standards in all the state-supported institutions. This is partly being attempted through curriculum improvement and nationally held examinations, for example the National Craft Certificate (NCC). Courses are offered mostly at certificate, diploma and advanced diploma levels and are examined by the TVD. The courses examined at NCC level are in: bricklaying, carpentry/joinery, automotive skills, electrical installation and home science (intermediate and advanced). The three courses examined at National Diploma Examinations (NDP) level are in: pattern designing and dressmaking, secretarial and business studies.

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Practically all of the institutions hold their own internal examinations as well for the same courses. Failure rates tend to be much higher for the NCC examinations than for the internally held ones.

Every NCC course has a practical component comprising of in-house training and attachment to industry for one semester. In the event that industrial attachment is not possible due to limited industries in the region, then industrial attachment is compensated for by extended in-house practice in the institution.

Trade tests

The TVTAB is responsible for trade testing, which is co-ordinated and administered on its behalf by the TVD. These tests are open to those already in work but who lack formal training.

Trade tests are conducted for the following trades: audiovisual aids preparation, automotive mechanics, bricklaying, carpentry and joinery, dressmaking, electrical installation, fitting and turning, panel-beating and spray-painting, plastering, plumbing and welding.

Four institutions are used for trade testing in general, while for audiovisual preparation and electrical installation the Lesotho Distance Teaching Centre and Lesotho Electricity Corporation facilities are used. No information is presently available on the number of people taking trade tests, as no formal records are kept for trade tests taken and passed.

TVET and the social agenda

HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS is a global problem that cannot be treated in isolation. HIV/AIDS has a consequential impact on the economy as well as the labour force in Lesotho that could result in the reduction of the available labour force. There is a perception that if the government does not deal with this problem rapidly, it might undermine education and hinder the potential to expand skills as quickly as they are needed.

Although HIV/AIDS is a major issue it is not clearly articulated in government policy. While the TVD, in collaboration with GTZ, has run a campaign dealing with strategies to address HIV/AIDS, there does not seem to be a plan to incorporate HIV/AIDS education in its training programmes.

The campaign ran in eight institutions and one high school and managed to produce a booklet, which has been submitted to printers for publication. The TVD has also produced charts and has participated in 'AIDS days' where they distributed pamphlets in order to promote awareness.

GENDER

Enrolment statistics reveal that there is almost equal participation by both genders in the eight accredited TVET institutions, with 893 female enrolments out of a total of 1 859 students (Ramaphiri 2003). Ramaphiri's figures, based on the internal data of the TVD, reflect a significant increase in enrolments since 1998. However, Hassan's (2002) study shows that gender stereotyping and segmentation are still common in Lesotho. In VET, female students continue to dominate home economics (660:21), secretarial (57:0) and

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business/commercial studies, whereas males are predominant in the building and construction, electrical and mechanical fields. For example, in bricklaying the ratio of males to females was 261:1. The ratio for welding averaged 62:12. Carpentry and joinery had 89 males and 9 females, whereas motor mechanics had 145 males and 9 females. Panel-beating averaged 32 males and no females, while the ratio for electrical installation was 44:7.

However, there is a perception by the MoET and domestic stakeholders that the gap is gradually narrowing. There does appear to be a strong concern within the MoET and amongst stakeholders that gender barriers should be reduced further. This was seen as an important issue to be tackled in any curricular reform process.

An overall assessment of the performance of the VET system

The Lesotho VET system has shown a clear drive towards addressing national and international concerns regarding the performance of training. This is evidenced by the widespread debate that has been engendered about the future shape of the system. It is further evident in the attempts by the TVD to improve curricula and to involve providers and potential employers in the curriculum development process. Recent attempts to engage with private providers may also be seen as positive.

The public system has the merit of being relatively small and straightforward with few institutional types. Governance structures are clearly laid out and Lesotho lacks the strong inter-ministerial tensions that characterise many African VET systems.

However, it is clear from the national debates about the need to reform the VET system that much is not functioning well or is insufficiently suited to its purpose. Although, the governance system avoids some of the problems of other countries, it is apparent that there are concerns about the representivity and autonomy of the TVTAB. Moreover, during fieldwork, some respondents questioned the competence of some of those appointed, arguing that they lacked the necessary background for the work. The state lacks a clear, co-ordinated strategy on skills development that brings together the efforts of the MoET with other government departments and agencies.

The capacity of the TVD is also subject to debate. It receives a small portion of the education budget and suffers from the overall poor status of VET. This makes recruitment and retention of high-quality staff a major challenge.

Concerns about the TVD's capacity are particularly significant due to the highly centralised nature of the VET system in Lesotho. The lack of capacity in the TVD and the tendency for bureaucracy to act slowly are seen by many commentators as providing a drag on responsiveness and innovation within the VET system. The case for greater decentralisation and institutional autonomy is strong.

Any decentralisation would need to be predicated upon a major institutional development programme designed to improve the rather fragile capacities of providers at the present time. The quality of staff and facilities are generally in need of considerable improvement.

Although there has been some curricular reform, there remain concerns about the relevance of curricula and their assessment. Attachments of learners during programmes and their placement in employment after completion remain poor. There is an urgent

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need to address pass rates. Whilst there has been employer and provider involvement in the curricular process, this needs further strengthening.

In all of these areas, employer participation in the system will be vital. Yet, at present, employer involvement is perceived to be weak. Moreover, given the size of the formal sector, there is a need for caution about the capacity for significantly greater employer involvement in the operation of VET.

Finance is a major problem for the system. The financing of VET institutions is too centrally driven and is inadequate in scale for building a quality system. All purchases have to go through the MoET and this causes considerable delay in the supply of equipment and materials. Too little effort appears to have been expended in improving employer contributions to training.

Although there is the beginning of an attempt to engage with the private sector, there is still nothing in the way of a robust system of accreditation and regulation of private provision that strikes an appropriate balance between the interests of providers, learners and the nation.

In spite of the large scale of informal activities in the country, the MoET has done very little to address the skills needs of the informal economy. Whilst skills are only part of the necessary support to the informal sector, there is a need for a more comprehensive VET strategy in this regard.

Finally, VET in Lesotho continues to struggle as a result of powerfully negative attitudes towards it. The societal consensus still suggests that academic education is of far higher status and worth. It will be difficult to address many of the other weaknesses in the system if such attitudes persist. However, changing such attitudes is far from easy.

New policy trends

Whilst it remains unclear at the time of writing as to how much of the 2000 (MoET 2000) and 2003 (MoET 2003) draft policies will eventually be promulgated and implemented, they appear to represent a clear shift of policy thinking in Lesotho to move in line with the main tenets of international thinking about VET reform.

At the heart of these proposals is a commitment to making VET in Lesotho more demand-driven and flexible. This includes concerns about reforming the governance and finance of the system, reforming the curricula and qualifications systems, becoming more responsive to industry needs, and exploring the scope for greater preparation for self-employment and the informal sector.

A National Qualifications Framework

A National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is proposed in a draft national policy document (MoET 2003) The NQF is perceived as a means by which qualifications can be recognised and accepted by employers. Furthermore, it is viewed as a means by which education and training could be linked to qualifications. It is also seen as the basis for accreditation.

The NQF is perceived not only as a tool through which the VET providers, including private training institutions, could structure certification in Lesotho on a competency-

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based and modularised system, but also as a vital instrument for the accreditation of standards and curricula.

Presently, a nationally accredited system of standards and qualifications is being drafted, which addresses the issues of registration, curriculum, standard maintenance and accreditation. However, there appears to be a degree of concern, shared by both officials and donors, that an NQF will be a major challenge given the limited resources available. There is particular concern that an NQF should not take up resources that could be utilised better in other ways. The role of employer contributions in the new system is also likely to be particularly important.

Governance

The TVD, as presently managed and organised, is not able to meet the needs of industry and the economy. The MoET and domestic stakeholders speak about a governance and management approach that will increase TVET responsiveness to workplace skills needs and improve the overall performance of the TVET system in Lesotho. Both domestic stakeholders and the MoET recommended the creation of a more representative tripartite management structure for TVET in Lesotho.

Finance

The amount recovered as fees covers only a very small proportion of the total costs of providing training, and greatly increased funding through the MoET looks unlikely. There appears to be a general agreement among domestic stakeholders that TVET is expensive but essential for the development of the workforce and the economy. Most of the domestic stakeholders are in agreement that a sustainable training levy system should be established in order to assist in the financing of TVET programmes.

Decentralisation

International policy trends stress the desirability of greater decentralisation of TVET systems and greater institutional autonomy. However, this must be understood in the context of Lesotho's historical partnership between church and state in educational provision.

On the one hand, it has been a stated objective for the government to exercise greater control over the policies and development of the education system. On the other hand, it has also been a stated policy that the government will not 'take over' the church schools. The improvement of the partnership between the government and the churches in the operation of the schools has thus remained the basis for all government policies on education. How this will inform the position of a new TVET policy regarding the appropriate degrees of decentralisation and institutional autonomy remains unclear.

The informal economy

The informal economy, as the name implies, is made up of a large number of small businesses started generally through necessity. It is almost impossible for anybody in the informal economy to be released to follow long training programmes and to acquire skills and abilities that are not going to be of immediate use.

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There is concern among domestic stakeholders that existing TVET institutions in Lesotho are still heavily oriented towards meeting the needs of the formal economy. The TVET system does not seem to do enough to address the training needs of people employed in informal economy activities. The importance of promoting non-government provision with particular reference to the informal economy has been emphasised by these stakeholders.

Explaining the policy process in Lesotho

It is striking that Lesotho has had much discussion of policy review but has so little to show for it till now. Domestic stakeholders speak strongly of the need for reform. Experienced international consultants (including from South Africa) have been employed. International agencies, such as GTZ and the World Bank, have provided support.

However, Lesotho is not a simple case of policy being driven by outsiders. There have been two large consultative forums in the past five years, with widespread stakeholder participation.

There seems to be a concern within the MoET and among domestic stakeholders that the new national policy on TVET has not been officially adopted nor has legislation been drafted for its implementation. Lack of interest from the MoET is seen as a barrier to its implementation. As the legal body responsible for the promotion of TVET, the TVD does not possess the proper structure nor does it have the proper legal set-up to carry out its duties effectively and efficiently. It is sitting inside the MoET and is therefore governed by all its rules and regulations pertaining to education. There is a concern among domestic stakeholders that if this situation is allowed to continue, it could result in other education priorities taking undue precedence over TVET issues.

Nevertheless, there appears to be a growing sense within Lesotho that VET reform will be a major instrument for alleviating poverty, reducing unemployment and providing appropriate skills.

Conclusion

It is difficult to know how to conclude an account of Lesotho's VET system. It appears that 2004 may be the year when a new policy is actually generated. However, after several years of debates and apparent breakthroughs, this cannot be said with any great certainty as we go to print. Moreover, international experience warns us that there is often a very large gap between promulgation and implementation. The first thing that can be said about VET in Lesotho, therefore, is about the slowness of the policy reform process.

In the slow evolution of a new policy, it is apparent that many stakeholders in Lesotho have become increasingly familiar with international discourses about good practices in VET. They increasingly appear to profess belief in these, although the proof will be largely in the extent to which they put their statements into practice. In the absence of policy reform, there has been some piecemeal adoption of such practices in areas like curriculum development.

In moving towards international good practice, Lesotho is faced with a range of challenges. Internationally, governance reform often has proved problematic, as the

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rhetoric of greater autonomy and employer leadership has clashed with severe capacity deficits at the institutional level and deep-seated views about the centrality of the state to development.

A new VET system will require a new financial footing. However, in a very poor and very small country, the ability to generate the necessary finances from any combination of sources is problematic. An ambition to follow international trends will need to be carefully tempered by a focus on what can be afforded and sustained.

Curriculum, assessment and qualifications will need further improvement. Here again, it will be vital to balance what could be done with what is viable and sensible in the context of Lesotho. Developing an NQF that meets Lesotho's needs rather than mimicking those of larger and richer countries will be a particular challenge.

The relationship between public and private provision will continue to require attention, as will the balance between preparation for the formal economy, for migrant work and for the informal economy.

Finally, Lesotho faces a tension between the low status of VET and the growing sense in policy circles that VET is crucial to the meeting of many of the country's social and economic needs. Building a VET system that can deliver the right skills and promote the right employment will be vital to changing mindsets, but requires far stronger championing from the outset if it is to be achieved.

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CHAPTER 4

Mauritius: 'the Singapore of Africa'? Skills for a global island

Anthony Gewer

The country context

A brief historical contextualisation

Mauritius first acquired its name from a Dutch squadron in 1598, in honour of Prince Maurice Van Nassau, '*Stathouder*' of Holland. During the French occupation of the island in the 18th century, the sugar industry gained prominence, using slave labour from Africa. With the capture of the island by the British in 1810, slavery was abolished and the sugar planters brought in large numbers of labourers from India. The descendants of these Indian workers now make up 60 per cent of the population. The rest of the population includes black Africans, Creoles, Chinese and Europeans. The two periods of colonial rule have resulted in a mix of English (official), French, Creole, Hindi, Bhojpuri and Tamil languages.

Mauritius gained independence in 1968 and became a republic in 1992. Despite high levels of poverty at independence and tensions between the different ethnic groups, the government of Mauritius is characterised by coalition politics and strong dialogue between the public and private sector. It has evolved from reliance on sugar, to a diversified economic base incorporating agriculture, tourism, financial services and manufacturing. Information and communications technology (ICT) is also emerging as a key pillar of the Mauritian economy.

Mauritius is now considered to be an upper-middle-income country, with significant rises in living standards and socio-economic conditions since independence. According to the World Bank (2002), the key ingredients of this success have been the stability of the democratic order, ethnic tolerance, macroeconomic stability and a focused strategy aimed at being globally competitive for labour-intensive activities.

The current political context

Mauritius is a republic with a multi-party parliamentary democratic system. Since independence, three political parties have dominated, usually in a coalition of two. Since 2000, the government has been run by a coalition of the *Mouvement Militant Mauricien* (MMM) and the *Mouvement Socialist Militant* (MSM).

The national assembly comprises elected representatives from 23 three-member districts and one two-member district on Rodrigues. In addition, places are reserved for the 'best losers', two each for Hindus, Muslims, Chinese and the general population. The national assembly elects the prime minister who then appoints a Cabinet.

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Economic overview

Mauritius is classified by the World Bank as an 'upper-middle-income country'. From 1990 to 2001, it has had an average GDP growth of 5.6 per cent and GDP per capita growth of 4.4 per cent annually.

As of the end of 2001, the Mauritian population was estimated at 1 205 665, with annual growth of 1 per cent. The total estimated labour force of the island in 2002 was 541 100, comprising 353 700 males and 187 400 females. Employment in 2002 stood at 490 000 (90 per cent), with 10 per cent unemployment. The unemployment rate is up significantly from a marginal percentage in 1991.

Probably the most important source for international comparison is the Human Development Index (HDI), which provides rankings for all seven countries in this study. In the case of Mauritius, the 2003 index shows a generally favourable performance.

Table 4.1: Mauritius and the 2003 Human Development Index

HDI rank		Life expectancy at birth (years) 2001	Adult literacy rate (% age 15+) 2001	Gross enrolment ratio (%) 2000/1	GDP per capita (PPP US$) 2001	Life expectancy index	Education index	GDP index	HDI	GDP-HDI rank
62	Mauritius	72.6	84.8	69	9 860	0.78	0.80	0.77	0.779	-12
	Sub-Saharan Africa	46.5	62.4	44	1 831	0.36	0.56	0.49	0.468	
	Medium human development	67.0	78.1	64	4 053	0.70	0.74	0.62	0.684	
	Middle income	69.8	86.6	70	5 519	0.75	0.82	0.67	0.744	

Source: UNDP (2003)

Mauritius outperforms other sub-Saharan African countries on all indicators. The country seems to be generally improving in HDI terms, as Table 4.2 illustrates.

Table 4.2: Human Development Index trends, 1975–2001

	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2001
Mauritius		0.654	0.683	0.720	0.744	0.779

Source: UNDP (2003)

Mauritius ranks 17th on the UNDP Human Poverty Index, which places it substantially higher than other sub-Saharan African countries. In addition, Mauritius was ranked second after Tunisia in the 2000 Africa Competitiveness Report, after being first in the 1998 report.

The Mauritian economy has undergone significant changes since independence. Emerging from a monocrop system reliant on sugar exports, the Mauritian government established

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an Export Processing Zone (EPZ) in the 1970s to stimulate foreign investment and enhance labour-intensive production. The EPZ was characterised by a range of tax incentives and cheap labour. By the mid-1980s, the EPZ was the major employer in the country, particularly focusing on the textiles and clothing sectors.

Together with the rising tourist trade and favourable international sugar prices, the country experienced an economic boom during the period 1971 to 1977. Despite this initial boom, the economy experienced a decline at the end of the 1970s, due to rising oil prices and decreased sugar prices, forcing the government to tighten spending. From 1979, the country underwent a prolonged programme of structural adjustment, through World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) support for fiscal stability. The government focused its energies around boosting exports, restructuring the sugar industry, diversifying agriculture and enhancing the tourism industry. International support continued into the 1980s but began to decline in the 1990s due to increased access to capital markets.

The manufacturing sector has been a key driving force behind economic growth. In 2000 it contributed 25 per cent of GDP, half of which was accounted for by the EPZ. The EPZ also began diversifying from a strong reliance on clothing and textiles to more sophisticated industries, such as information technology and light engineering. The clothing and textile industries still accounted for more than half the industries in the EPZ in 2000. However, significant challenges emerged in the textile industry in the 1990s, due to heightened labour costs and increased competition.

The underlying attraction of cheap labour and a high export base, which have driven the success of the EPZ, has been placed under pressure by international competition (Baguant 2003). Increases in labour costs in traditional export industries over the last decade have outweighed productivity growth. The slowdown in exports in the EPZ has been identified as the key contributor to heightened unemployment.

In addition, Mauritius faces rising pockets of poverty, linked to poor educational levels and low employment status amongst its more marginalised communities, particularly the Creoles (Bunawaree 2001). This highlights growing concerns over inequality, which threatens the capacity of the country to respond to these emerging global threats.

The current priority: ICT and the Cyber Island

The current government has prioritised ICT as a key pillar of economic growth, and seeks to position the island as a knowledge hub. This is captured in the notion of a 'Cyber Island'. The goal is to make full use of Mauritius' strategic geographic position, combined with its combination of an English and French-speaking population to introduce a range of ICT-related business process outsourcing services, such as software development, IT training, electronic archiving and back-up centres. In addition, the government claims it can offer contact centre operations at more competitive rates than other French-speaking African countries. The framework is being put in place to lure foreign investors. The government has built the Cyber City, which houses intelligent buildings, business parks, telecentres and teleports, and office facilities for those wishing to operate IT services in the country. It has put in place legislation aimed at providing a range of incentives to potential investors, and is drawing on its historical relationship with India to gain insights into their experience in the ICT field.

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Linked to the development of the Cyber Island, is a range of training and development activities, geared towards building a strong base of basic IT skills, as well as more specific skills in call centre operations and e-business, amongst school leavers.

In support of the Cyber Island project, the Ministry of Training, Skills Development, Productivity and External Communications undertook a scheme to generate a pool of skilled IT workers. During the period August 2001 to February 2002, the Ministry trained around 1 000 Cambridge Higher School Certificate (CHSC) school leavers in software programmes. This scheme is not recurring, as the focus has shifted to e-business and call centre operations, in line with the emerging needs of the Cyber Island project. Responsibility for training in this regard has shifted to the Industrial and Vocational Training Board (IVTB), which has begun to introduce such programmes into its training centres.

The educational context

Introduction

The education system is vested in the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research (MESR). Education is free at primary level, and at secondary level until the age of 20 years. Since 1991, education has been compulsory from the age of five to 12 years.

All scholars who successfully complete six years of primary schooling receive the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE). These scholars can then go on to do the Cambridge School Certificate (CSC), which ends at Form V. Those who pass Form V and wish to follow the formal academic route can continue to the High School Certificate (HSC), which requires the completion of 'A levels'. Those who fail the CPE twice are able to access pre-vocational courses.

At the post-secondary level, there are three polytechnics, offering advanced skills in management and technical trades, and five higher education institutions, including one distance education institution.

Schooling

The schooling system is still heavily influenced by the colonial system. It comprises a 6+5+2 system (six years of primary, five years of lower secondary and secondary, and two years of upper secondary schooling), represented in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 depicts the general attrition in enrolments at higher levels of the education system, which contributes to a perpetuation of a low skills base. This is partly attributable to the high premium placed on the CPE as a gatekeeper to further formal education, while the overall performance of the primary schools is of significant concern to policy-makers.

The government has recently adopted a grading system at the CPE level to replace the previous ranking system, which had a strong influence on the choices of young learners in the secondary schooling system. For those learners who performed well on the CPE, there was significant competition for places in 'star' secondary schools. This bottleneck was linked to increased demand amongst parents for quality education due to the realisation that this is key to the success of their children.

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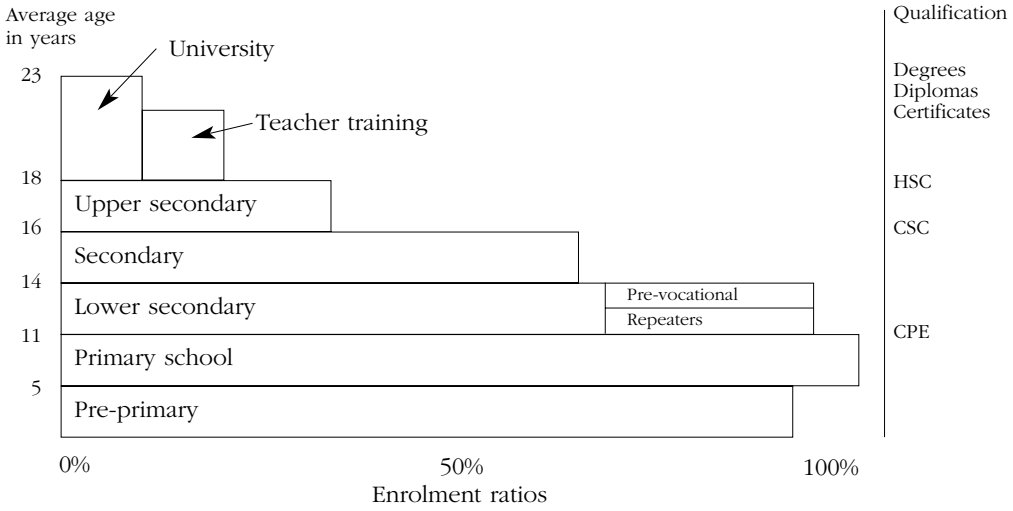
Figure 4.1: The structure of education in Mauritius



Source: Munbodh (1999)
Note: When schooling becomes compulsory to the age of 16 years as of 2005, the pre-vocational and repeaters block will fall away

Since January 2003, the MESR has begun to transform these 'star' schools into Form VI colleges, while the remainder of schools will offer Forms I–V. As of January 2004, there are 16 such colleges operating. It is hoped that this approach will assist to break the bottleneck of competition to access certain schools, and achieve more parity amongst schools. For those who successfully complete Form V, only learners who are academically inclined will continue to Form VI, while others will be placed into the TVET system. Entry to the TVET system is available from Form III, although with the increase in the mandatory age for enrolment in schooling (see below), it is likely that the TVET system will be predominately post-schooling.

In addition to the changes to the secondary system, the MESR is currently undertaking a renewal of the primary school curriculum, in order to broaden the skills base of the learners in line with the needs of a globalising economy. The focus of the curriculum renewal is on greater integration of subject-matter, with some level of specialisation in the last three years of primary schooling.

The biggest challenge facing the schooling system is the high level of drop out at each step of educational progression. Only 65 per cent of learners are successful in the CPE. The MESR is seeking to extend the mandatory number of schooling years to 11, rather than seven. As of 2005, schooling will be compulsory to the age of 16 years. This would assist in raising the level of general education and better preparing learners to enter the TVET system or to continue with the academic stream.

A further complication is the high levels of inequality in the education system (Bunwaree 2001). The CPE discriminates significantly on the basis of social class and ethnicity. Therefore, pass rates are lowest amongst poorer communities and particularly amongst marginalised groups. The CPE, therefore, is a key indicator of the challenges facing the Mauritian government in achieving social cohesion.

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Table 4.3: Schooling statistics for 2002

Schooling level	Number of schools	Number of enrolments	Male enrolments	Female enrolments	Gross enrolment ratio	Average teacher-pupil ratio
Pre-primary	1 071	36 982	18 739	18 243	95%	15
Primary	290	132 432	67 039	65 393	103%	34
Secondary	143	99 687	47 989	51 698	64%	18
Pre-vocational	70	5 966	3 926	2 040		16

Source: Central Statistics Office, Republic of Mauritius (2003a)

As demonstrated in Table 4.3, the enrolment figures, while high for primary school, drop sharply at the secondary level. Pre-vocational education makes up a relatively small percentage of the total enrolment.

Primary schooling

In 2002, there were 290 primary schools, 277 in Mauritius and 13 on Rodrigues. The majority (222) were state schools, 51 were run by the Roman Catholic Education Authority (RCEA) and two by the Hindu Education Authority. Fifteen were private non-aided schools.

The primary school sector had a population of 126 442 in 2004 with the largest concentration of learners at Standard VI. Thirty per cent of these learners at Standard VI level were repeaters. In 2003, 28 097 candidates took the CPE examination, and the success rate was 63 per cent. The MESR attributes the low pass rate to the fact that there is no continuous assessment at the lower level, and therefore no performance indicators against which learner progress can be measured. This is viewed as an important element of emphasis for curriculum reform.

The MESR is concerned about the high premium being placed on the CPE examination. Those learners who do not succeed in this examination are branded as failures, and ultimately fall out of the system. The introduction of the pre-vocational stream has not provided a solution, as this is largely viewed as a route for failures, and the ministry has not been able to produce a shift in perceptions amongst parents regarding the CPE, thus placing pressure on learners. Through introducing 11 years of compulsory schooling, combined with a renewal of the curriculum at primary level in line with global trends, the MESR is hoping to alleviate some of this pressure.

Secondary schooling

There were 99 687 enrolments in secondary schools in 2002, 27 per cent of which were in the 40 state schools, and the remainder were in the 103 non-state secondary schools.

There is currently 64 per cent enrolment in secondary schools, which indicates a significant drop from the primary level. 14 247 candidates took the Cambridge Senior Certificate (Form V equivalent) in 2001, with a 77 per cent success rate. 6 796 candidates sat for the CHSC examination in 2001, with a 73 per cent success rate.

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The MESR is concerned that there is a large drop out of learners at Form IV level, with some learners entering the IVTB training centres. While the EPZ previously offered opportunities for these learners to enter the working world, the downscaling of the textile industries has meant that these opportunities for entry-level labour no longer exist and higher levels of education are required. In addition, young people are no longer keen to enter the labour market at the lower levels, and this has contributed to higher unemployment.

The ministry is seeking to make schooling compulsory to Form V level. This exit point will allow learners the option of going on to a Form VI college (formerly a 'star' secondary school) or entering the TVET system.

Pre-vocational schooling

Pre-vocational training was previously overseen by the IVTB, but now falls under the MESR. There are 70 schools offering pre-vocational education, 21 of which are state schools. Pre-vocational education is offered to those students who have two unsuccessful attempts at the CPE. These students enter a three-year programme, which provides a more streamlined general education, and is aimed at preparing the learners to enter vocational education or the world of work.

The pre-vocational stream is geared to failures of the mainstream education system. However, there is overriding agreement that the pre-vocational system is not adding much value to the lives of these youth. According to ministry officials, these learners are ill-equipped to access further learning. These officials from the ministry refer to a survey they conducted on the state of pre-vocational learners, which found that after six years of formal schooling, and two years of pre-vocational schooling, 60 per cent were only functioning at a Grade IV level.

The MESR plans to restructure the pre-vocational system to provide a more generic base of academic skills combined with vocational skills. The intention is that the pre-vocational stream should prepare learners for the National Trade Certificate Level 3 (NTC3) (see below for details), and should therefore provide a bridge between the CPE and the NTC3. Through the curriculum reform process, there will be a more concerted focus on building foundation skills (literacy and numeracy) in the pre-vocational schools than was done previously and to ensure that learners are adequately equipped to enter the TVET system. Already a one-year foundation NTC is being run by the IVTB to prepare learners to join the first level of vocational programme (NTC3) at the IVTB.

Post-school provision

The TSMTF (polytechnics)

In a bid to expand technical and further education in Mauritius, the MESR established the Technical School Management Trust Fund (TSMTF) to manage institutions of technical and further education in Mauritius. These institutions were established in response to the need for intermediate skilling for middle managers. They operate for students who come out of secondary schools, and create a potential bridge to university. They also provide part-time programmes for middle managers in formal employment to upgrade skills. The focus is on para-professional training for technical and professional support staff. The TSMTF overlaps with the IVTB, particularly in the provision of post-Form V diplomas. Unlike the IVTB, however, the TSMTF has limited private sector involvement.

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The TSMTF courses are free and are linked to the Australian Technical and Further Education (TAFE) International for quality assurance, guidance and advice purposes, which raises the costs that have to be covered by the government. It is anticipated that the centres will need to introduce fees in the future, as this is viewed as critical for their sustainability.

Table 4.4: Post-secondary (polytechnic) statistics for 2002

Institution	Total student population	Male student population	Female student population
Swami Dayanand Institute of Management	583	231	352
Lycee Polytechnique Sir Guy Forget	350	347	3
Institut Superieur de Technologie	114	111	3

Source: Central Statistics Office, Republic of Mauritius (2003a)

The Swami Dayanand Institute of Management offers diplomas in business administration, business informatics and information systems for school leavers with two A levels. The Institut Superieur de Technologie and the Lycee Polytechnique Sir Guy Forget offer technical training in the fields of mechanics and electronics.

The polytechnics represent a relatively small number of enrolments relative to other institutions, and their capacity for expansion is limited. These institutions potentially play an important role in intermediate skilling, considering their intended target market. However, their small enrolments combined with high costs suggest that they face significant sustainability challenges. In addition, in offering courses that lead to limited work placements, they face the common challenge of supplying students to the labour market without sufficient practical work experience.

Higher education institutions

Although many of the enrolments in the Mauritius Institute of Education, the Mahatma Gandhi Institute and the Mauritius College of the Air are in certificate courses, these courses are considered to be vocational in nature and therefore are not defined as tertiary enrolments. As expected, certificate courses in early childhood education appear to be most popular with females, with Indian music and dance being popular in the cultural sphere. When the certificate-level enrolments are removed from the equation, the majority of students in these three institutions are in diploma-level programmes.

The University of Mauritius provides the large majority of enrolment in degree qualifications, with these being primarily in the Faculties of Engineering, and Law and Management. In 2001/2, the university produced 766 degree-level graduates, but only three graduates from postgraduate programmes.

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Table 4.5: Post-secondary (higher education) statistics for 2002

Institution	Total student population	Non-formal	Certificate/ Advanced Certificate	Diploma/ Advanced Diploma	Degree	Post-graduate	Male student population	Female student population
University of Mauritius	5 310		46	254	4 359	526	2 849	2 461
Mauritius Institute of Education	5 212		3 397	1 297	257	261	1 830	3 382
Mahatma Gandhi Institute	2 527		2 038	248	199	32	786	1 741
University of Technology	733			151	515	67	412	321
Mauritius College of the Air	1 935	247	1 156	25	9	14	484	1 451
Total	**15 717**	**247**	**6 637**	**1 975**	**5 339**	**900**	**6 361**	**9 356**

Source: Central Statistics Office, Republic of Mauritius (2003a)

The VET system

Overview

The VET system is overseen by the Ministry of Training, Skills Development, Productivity and External Communications. This ministry was introduced by the present government on coming to power in 2000, and reflects the emphasis of the government on the development of human capital to drive productivity and economic growth. Immediately on coming into being the ministry initiated a range of reforms aimed at consolidating the education and training system.

This ministry incorporates:

- the Industrial and Vocational Training Board (IVTB);
- the Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA – formed in May 2002);
- the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council (NPCC); and
- the Employment Services Division.

The *Human Resource Development Council Act* was passed in July 2003, and has resulted in the establishment of an HRD Council.

While these bodies all fall within the ministry, the first three institutions were established by acts of parliament and are governed by their own boards that have decision-making powers. This allows them relative autonomy, with representation from the ministry. The HRD Council is supposed to play an advisory role to the minister, helping guide policy at the highest level. The aim of the other arms of the ministry will be to implement such policy by aligning their activities to policy objectives, and to inform the further development of policy.

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The development of a new, integrated strategy for VET

The present government commissioned the International Labour Office (ILO) to develop an integrated training strategy for the country. The rationale for reviewing the training system hinged on the vision of the government of shifting the labour force to higher value-added forms of production, focusing on the strategic sectors of ICT, financial services and tourism (ILO 2001b). The government stressed the need to revise the VET system in order to support this shift in economic policy. The ILO report highlighted the short-term nature of the current VET system, which is geared to meeting the immediate needs of employers, and lacks a long-term strategic vision of how to combat rising unemployment.

The historical role of the IVTB over the past 15 years has been a key vehicle for this scope of VET delivery. This institution has provided an all-encompassing role of policy implementation and policy regulation. In being a partnership between the government and the private sector, the role of the IVTB has been strongly geared to delivery that entails high capital costs, which the private sector cannot afford. This resulted in specific areas of specialised technical training to support industrial expansion.

One key challenge facing the Mauritius VET system in the new century is increasing unemployment, which has begun to cause concern. At the time of the ILO report the unemployment rate stood at around 8 per cent. As of 2002, the unemployment rate stood at 10 per cent. There was an anticipation that the restructuring of the sugar industry and some companies in the EPZ would result in large-scale redundancies in the short to medium term.

There was a concern that the country did not have a sufficient skills base to support the strategic growth areas of the economy. It was identified that the ministry should provide the necessary training to develop the human resource pool required for economic growth. This linked into the need for an integrated national training strategy that would support the strategic development of skilled and qualified personnel for the new economy. The implication of this is the need for a restructuring of the training system to ensure the necessary institutional capacity to identify and develop the skills required.

The integrated training strategy is underpinned by three key objectives:
- balancing economic demand and human resource supply;
- maximising employability and human resource mobilisation; and
- co-ordinating linkages between public and private education and training.

Key to this strategy was the establishment of the high-level HRD Council to guide policy development and implementation. The council's other functions include the development of mechanisms to:
- monitor performance in workplaces;
- measure the impact of training;
- ensure greater linkages between education and training; and
- create linkages within clusters of enterprises.

Institutional structures

The HRD Council

Amongst other recommendations, the ILO paper highlighted the need for a 'top level mechanism…to translate economic development strategies and policies into guidelines

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and criteria for the development of the training system' (ILO 2001b: 5). This recommendation was based on similar approaches adopted in East Asian countries in linking macroeconomic strategies to skills development strategies in an integrated manner. This top-level structure should have active participation from key government and industry leaders, as well as sector experts, unions and academics.

The task of this mechanism, the HRD Council, is to translate the other pillars of the strategy into action programmes and ensure the implementation thereof.

The HRD Act of 2003 sets out the specific functions of the HRD Council to include:

- advising the minister on HRD policies and strategies;
- establishing linkages between the education and training system and the workplace;
- providing a forum for debate and consensus building around HRD;
- taking measures to reduce the mismatch between supply and demand;
- commissioning research in the field of HRD;
- encouraging employers to invest in the training of their workforce;
- initiating and monitoring studies on the impact of training on socio-economic development;
- promoting benchmarking and knowledge management at enterprise and national levels;
- identifying and monitoring the implementation of appropriate skills development and apprenticeship schemes;
- monitoring participation of employers, employees and job-seekers in training schemes;
- developing schemes for retraining and multi-skilling;
- providing incentives for training institutions to acquire and upgrade their equipment and facilities;
- managing the National Training Fund; and
- performing other necessary functions.

The HRD Council was launched on 19 November 2003, and has been established with broad representation from the government, private sector and trade unions. It will provide a high-level co-ordinating mechanism for guiding and putting into action national HRD policies. These high-level functions allow the council to integrate policies with ongoing knowledge production, and to provide the necessary mechanisms to stimulate training accordingly. Being a public-private sector collaboration, it provides an ideal site for social collaboration to guide HRD.

The HRD Council will be supported by a Research and Planning Unit, which will comprise high-calibre professionals with the capability to undertake strategic research on the labour market and thereby ensure that the HRD Council is able to effectively guide appropriate skills development policy and practice.

Apart from having an executive committee, the council has set up eight sectoral committees to advise it on training strategies to be adopted in each of the following sectors: agriculture, financial services, ICT, manufacturing, public service, tourism, knowledge hub, and other emerging sectors.

The terms of reference of the sectoral committees have been worked out and each committee meets to address the human resource needs and issues in their respective areas, and subsequently makes recommendations to the HRD Council. The council will

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develop the appropriate training strategies sector-wise with the aim of developing the human resource of the country to ensure employability, lifelong learning, increasing productivity and the elimination of skills mismatch.

The formation of the Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA)

The MQA was established in 2002 to take over the regulatory function of the IVTB, within a National Qualifications Framework (NQF). However, the MQA has struggled to create its identity as distinct from the IVTB, and to introduce the focus on accreditation. The Employer Federation is concerned about the slow movement of the MQA, and the lack of tangible results.

Despite this, the MQA expands the regulatory function previously held by the IVTB, by focusing on higher-level linkages between education and training. The NQF itself was finalised by the MQA in November 2003.

The HRD Unit within the Training and Skills Development Division

The HRD Unit within the Training and Skills Development Division of the ministry has responsibility for five areas.

DRIVING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL INTEGRATED TRAINING STRATEGY (NITS)

Following on the ILO report on the development of the NITS, a task force was set up within the ministry to formulate an action plan around six themes. The operationalisation of this action plan sits within the HRD Unit.

THE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (SDP)

The SDP was first introduced in 1998, and is aimed at breaking the 'no job – no experience; no experience – no job' cycle amongst youth. The Ministry of Training, Skills Development and Productivity took over the management of this programme from the Ministry of Finance in 2000. The programme involves a one-year placement of unemployed graduates into a workplace for on-the-job training. The SDP successfully placed 113 candidates in 2001/2 and 195 candidates in 2002/3. During the time of placement in 2002/3, 77 graduates left the scheme. In the large majority of cases, these graduates had found employment elsewhere, or in some cases had gone on to study further.

The ministry contributes 8 000 rupees for a graduate who has a degree and 5 000 rupees for a graduate who has a diploma. In the private sector and parastatals, the employer pays half the trainees salary.

The HRD Unit received around 400 applications for this programme, and places candidates on a first come, first served basis, according to the demand of employers. Applicants must have a High School Certificate, and the workplace placements are linked to the qualifications obtained. A supervisor/mentor must be in place in the workplace, and this person reports regularly to the senior human resource analyst in the HRD Unit.

The unit has found that employers are generally receptive to the programme, largely because it provides them with a source of cheap labour. This scheme is therefore largely viewed as a significant success.

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TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS

As of October 2002, the HRD Unit has begun conducting surveys of different sectors in Mauritius to establish training needs. To date the ICT, tourism, printing and jewellery sectors have been completed, and the unit is now focusing on the textiles sector. The survey covers a sample of 30 to 40 industries in each sector, and the fieldwork aims to identify core competencies and conduct gap analyses. The goal is to present the findings to stakeholders to be workshopped and debated.

The anticipated outcome of this needs analysis is to design appropriate programmes, which bridge the qualifications gap arising from key occupations. The needs analysis will identify priorities, and aims to plan and deliver appropriate training strategies to ensure delivery on economic objectives. At this stage, the unit has not put in place monitoring mechanisms to track changing needs over time.

LABOUR FORCE ANALYSIS

The HRD Unit analyses the labour force surveys conducted by the Employment Division. This is done yearly towards the end of the year and 17 sectoral reports are produced.

It is anticipated that the HRD Unit will provide the knowledge base for the newly formed HRD Council, and that this will in fact become its core focus.

The Employment Services Division (ESD)

The ESD has three key functions: providing work permits to expatriates to work in Mauritius, registration and placement of job-seekers, and the provision of labour market information. The ESD also collects and publishes labour market statistics. The statistical review of the labour market takes place three times per year.

The ESD operates a database of job-seekers, via a network of Employment Information Centres. These 14 centres (one on Rodrigues) provide employment counselling and provide a referral base for the IVTB and business support agencies.

The ESD has well-established linkages with employers and keeps abreast of job vacancies that arise. In its strategic plan, the ESD sets itself a target of increasing placement by 5 per cent annually.

With the recent downsizing and restructuring of enterprises in certain sectors, the ESD has also become involved in redeployment of retrenched workers. This role implies establishing close co-ordination with other organisations, namely training institutions, entrepreneurship development agencies, organisations funding micro credit loans, and small and medium enterprise development bodies in order to direct workers to alternative job opportunities.

The ESD is also focusing on counselling and vocational guidance as a means to channel job-seekers towards employment and training and to ensure job-skills matching.

The ESD has been reorganised into a Registration and Placement Unit, an Enforcement and Monitoring Unit, a Labour Market Information Unit, and an Information, Communication and Counselling Unit. It is reviewing the labour market information system in order to provide more comprehensive information.

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The ESD is particularly concerned about the lack of skilled workers for particular sectors in the country, which invariably results in having to look for imported labour. The Cyber Island project is expected to create 20 000 jobs, but there are insufficient skills in the country to support the project. This means that the government will have to import expatriates in the short term, but it will be a condition of their work permits that they transfer skills to local people. The IVTB and private training institutions have already begun training in this regard. The country is still heavily reliant on imported professionals and manager. This is exacerbated by the preference of foreign investors to use their own workers at these levels.

The government requires companies to recruit locally first, and work permits are issued when there is a shortage of local skills. At the same time, employers are also required to provide adequate working conditions for foreign workers and there must be equal treatment of foreign and local workers in the workplace.

A final challenge that the ESD faces is matching supply and demand. There is a concern that there is an oversupply of graduates in certain traditional fields, who then go into teaching or an occupation unrelated to their qualifications and wait for the perfect job. Through the generation of statistical information, employee counselling and regular networking with employers, the ESD seeks to match supply and demand, and link into a broader attempt to encourage providers to be more strategic in their programme delivery.

The National Productivity and Competitiveness Council (NPCC)

The NPCC was established in May 2000 with a national mandate to enhance productivity across all sectors and at all levels. Its focus is to advocate the importance of productivity. The NPCC is governed by a council of 20 members drawn from the private sector, government and unions.

The NPCC has adopted a set of tools aimed at awareness raising and empowerment. The NPCC uses the notion of civic responsibility as a key driver for creating cohesion in society towards a productive culture and overcoming differences between groups. The NPCC has focused its energies on building the competence amongst groups to develop solutions to problems and implement these, through the formation of quality circles in the form of Civic Action Teams (CATs). The NPCC assists these CATs to develop appropriate strategies for working together in a productive manner.

Another primary mechanism is the Japanese concept of *Gemba Kaizen*, which provides a set of tools aimed at reducing non value-adding behaviour or muda. Linked to this has been a national campaign to make Mauritius *muda*-free. Initially the campaign was targeted at the education sector, and aimed to get rid of *muda* in the school environment. The second phase is aimed at the corporate sector and seeks to increase efficiency. The council has also established a benchmarking unit, which will put in place mechanisms to assess effective practices.

VET provision

The Industrial and Vocational Training Board (IVTB)

In line with international trends, Mauritius has had a long history of steering vocational education to the lower classes and school drop-outs (Munbodh 1999). Despite attempts by the government to intervene, parents chose to keep children at home rather than send

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them to acquire trade skills. The IVTB was established in 1988 as an attempt to overcome the poor training legacy, and to establish a more co-ordinated and responsive approach to training.

The IVTB was established through the IVTB Act of 1988, originally under direct responsibility of the prime minister, to:

- advise the prime minister on matters related to training;
- monitor the needs for training in consultation with relevant authorities;
- administer, control and operate training schemes; and
- provide for, promote, assist in and regulate the training or apprenticeship of persons who are or will be employed in commercial, technical or vocational fields.

In practice, the IVTB was charged with three responsibilities:

- registering training providers (all private training providers are required to register with the IVTB);
- implementing the levy-grant system (all employers are required to pay a levy of 1 per cent of their salary bill); and
- managing the National Trade Certification System, through technical and vocational training centres, thereby acting as a provider of training.

The rationale underlying the establishment of the IVTB was linked to the broad partnership agenda adopted by the Mauritian government, the private sector and the unions since independence in 1968. The council of the IVTB was set up to broadly and equally represent both the government and employers from key sectors. The underlying rationale of this was to ensure the relevance of training to the labour market. The council was provided with a high level of autonomy

In addition to the council, there are 19 industry Training Advisory Committees (TACs), comprising professionals from different fields. These committees provide guidance on training needs and curriculum design. These TACs, as well as other smaller sub-committees, allow for consultation at different levels, and for faster decision-making on the part of the council.

The council of the IVTB was essentially mandated as the policy-making body for training, allowing an extensive process of consultation and dialogue towards consensus building. Representatives from the Mauritius Employer Federation were particularly active in the decision-making processes on behalf of their members, and were able to disseminate decisions widely.

The new role of the IVTB

Particular focus was given in the ILO report to reviewing the role and function of the IVTB, due to growing concerns over its dual role as a training provider and a training regulator/facilitator. There was also concern about the administration of the levy-grant system, particularly in terms of the bureaucratic requirements. The paper also alluded to the possibility of greater autonomy amongst the IVTB training centres to avoid excessive central control by the IVTB.

In line with the ILO recommendation, the IVTB has undergone significant restructuring over the last two years. As a result of growing concerns over the IVTB being both a provider and a regulator, the functions of the IVTB have been reconfigured to be that of

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an 'enhanced training provider'. The functions of regulation have been transferred to the newly formed MQA. The facilitation function is in the process of being transferred to the HRD Council.

The IVTB is in the process of developing a new corporate plan, which will focus on, *inter alia*, enhancing access to TVET and providing more autonomy at the level of training centres.

The IVTB will continue to play a critical role in providing training that requires high levels of capital investment, which the private sector cannot afford. In line with the strategic economic focus on high, value-added production and ICT, the IVTB is positioned to ensuring the skills base is in place. In addition, the IVTB sits at the centre of the reskilling process that is emerging as a result of retrenchments in the textile industries.

The view of the Employer Federation is that the IVTB should be expanding vertically rather than horizontally. This requires the IVTB to provide more up-market courses, and to specialise in areas not being covered by private providers.

With the prospective changes in the education system, which will see compulsory education to the age of 16, the IVTB will need to shift its focus to catering for higher-level skills.

Incentives for training

The levy-grant system was introduced in 1989, and requires employers to pay 1 per cent of their payroll to the National Pension Fund, from whence it is transferred to the IVTB. Employers could recover up to 75 per cent of their investment in training, through a combination of an IVTB grant and a tax rebate.

The formula for grant refunds was linked to the corporate tax bracket of the respective company. Large employers were eligible for tax rebates of up to double their investment in training, while smaller companies could claim up to ten times their levy contribution. Adjustments to the income tax legislation in the mid 1990s reduced the incentives provided to employers in the form of tax rebates. In anticipation of the adverse effect of this on the investment in training, the IVTB Council took steps to revise the grant formulas in 1995, particularly in favour of the higher tax paying companies. Further revisions were effected in 1997 to offset the general decline in enterprise training. In addition, in order to stimulate training investment, the IVTB removed the ceiling for grant refunds during the 1997/98 and 1998/99 financial years. At that stage only 22 per cent of levies were being claimed. By 1999/2000 this figure had risen to 82 per cent, after which the ceiling was reintroduced. The figure had dropped to 58 per cent by 2001/02. The number of in-service employees benefiting annually from the grant scheme rose from 2 744 in 1989/90 to 22 403 in 2002/03 (provisional statistics provided by the IVTB).

In addition, a training voucher system was introduced in 1996 to stimulate training in the formal SMME sector due to their relatively low levy rate. SMMEs were entitled to a maximum of four vouchers, which could be used to pay for course fees. This training voucher was discontinued in 2001, due to low demand. Only 30 of the 900 companies responded, and the system became too labour intensive. The IVTB has engaged in a needs survey of SMMEs to find ways of stimulating training. Only 2.6 per cent of SMMEs were reported to be investing in training.

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Individuals who pay for their own training can deduct 15 000 rupees from their taxable income if the course is followed in an IVTB institution.

With the role of the IVTB shifting away from that of facilitator of training, the government has moved to establish the National Training Fund to administer the levy, under the guidance of the HRD Council. In addition, the training levy will be extended to parastatals and state-owned enterprises.

The scope of public provision

The IVTB operates 11 training centres in different parts of the island, and offers training in a wide range of vocational fields. The IVTB has established the National Trade Certification System, together with the Mauritius Examination Syndicate, to certify tradespeople at three levels:

- National Trade Certificate Level 3 (NTC3), which can be accessed after nine years of schooling;
- National Trade Certificate Level 2 (NTC2), requiring 11 years of schooling; and
- Diplomas and Higher National Diplomas (HNDs), which require 'A' levels.

As of 2002, the IVTB had trained around 45 000 people through the training centres. In 2002, there were 8 000 people enrolled in IVTB centres, 1 726 full-time, 4 806 part-time and 1 461 in apprenticeships. Only 25 per cent of these enrolments are females, and there were only 60 females in apprenticeships. Fifty-four per cent of enrolments are in the NTC3 courses, with the remaining learners split equally between NTC2 and the Diploma/HND.

The IVTB also manages the National Apprenticeship System, which was launched in 1996. Under this scheme, apprentices spend four days in an enterprise and one day in an IVTB training centre per week. These apprentices, after successful completion of two to three years of training, qualify for the NTC3. The IVTB contributes to insurance cover for employers of apprentices. Employers pay the apprentice 40 per cent of the minimum wage during the first year and 60 per cent of the minimum wage in the second year. As of 2003 there were 38 apprenticeable trades.

At the Diploma/HND level, accreditation relationships have been established with the Scottish Qualifications Authority and Edexcel (England), and there are different affiliations with Australian TAFE-awarding bodies and a Singapore hotel training body.

Programmes being offered in IVTB training centres are clustered around the following areas: design, printing, jewellery and artwork, building and engineering, hospitality, tourism and customer care, driving, clothing technology, and industrial maintenance and automation.

The Mauritius Employer Federation has recommended that these clusters form the basis for IVTB delivery to allow for greater utilisation of resources. In addition, the ILO report recommended greater autonomy for the IVTB centres, so that they can become cost centres and generate their own revenues.

The consolidation of the IVTB centres would provide the basis for separating out the policy implementation from the training provision, as outlined in the ILO report. The IVTB itself is expected to play a higher-level facilitation role to service strategic areas of the economy with skills, as required by the government.

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Regulation of private training providers
In 1990, the IVTB started its function of registration and programme approval for the purposes of refunding employers for training from the levy fund. As of May 2002 the IVTB had 208 institutions and 2 049 trainers registered with it.

A survey conducted by the IVTB in 2000 revealed that 13 of the 148 respondents were providing 23 per cent of the total amount of training, and these were in-house providers. Half of the training was happening in the services sector, 16 per cent in manufacturing and only 4 per cent in agriculture. The main fields of study were in ICT and management. The majority of the courses were at certificate level and half of the learners were aged between 15 and 25 years.

The regulation of training providers will be enhanced by the formation of the MQA. Whereas the IVTB focused on the registration of training providers, the MQA has placed emphasis on accreditation. The key challenge has been to implement quality assurance or approval processes for the range of non-award programmes being offered by private providers.

The MQA has begun to put in place criteria for the registration of training providers and trainers, and the approval of courses. New regulations governing training institutions were gazetted in September 2003; these will ensure that private providers become more integrated into the emerging qualifications system and thereby ensure greater quality of delivery and recognition of learning achievements.

Summary and conclusions

Mauritius has faced two key challenges in the new millennium: rising unemployment and a restrictive skills base.

The Ministry of Training, Skills Development, Productivity and External Communications, established by the present government on coming to power in 2000, has been leading the way in creating the foundations for realigning the education and training system with future economic realities.

The skills crisis faced by the country is located in its historical labour market context where the skills base was oriented around the production needs of the economy, which have now shifted. This situation is exacerbated by a poorly performing education system with low success rates at higher levels. In line with global economic shifts, the economic base of Mauritius is now located within the financial services and tourism sectors, and the emerging industries linked to ICT.

At present, the Mauritius education and training system continues to be geared towards supporting trade and technical skills for key economic sectors. There is a shortage of skilled professionals at management and supervisory levels, and the country is still reliant on imported labour for high-level management positions in certain sectors.

The Mauritian government, in collaboration with the private sector, has placed a high premium on the provision of technical and vocational skills. The establishment of various public-private sector bodies to guide policy development and implementation has ensured social dialogue and thereby enhanced cohesion within society around key decision-making activities. This has been highly successful in guiding the role of the IVTB

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and will most likely play an important role in the HRD Council. In addition, the ministry has placed significant emphasis on research at various levels to support these policy-making bodies.

The key challenge is that despite high levels of social dialogue, the TVET system has not provided the skills required for the shifting economy. The IVTB provided a skills base for specific sectors, and previously had the guarantee of job opportunities due to a thriving manufacturing sector. The move towards capital-intensive practices and global competitiveness has raised new challenges and shifted the focus to more strategic arenas of training.

It is hoped that the HRD Council and the associated institutions currently being established and/or refined (MQA, NPCC, IVTB, and so on) will help to overcome some of the shortcomings of TVET provision and support more effective skills diffusion across the different sectors and occupational levels. The primary indicator of success in this regard will be the extent to which the strategies developed are longer-term in focus, and do not restrict themselves to the immediate needs of the labour market. This could ensure that there is not a perpetuation of the low-skills phenomenon associated with traditional TVET provision.

Along with its ambitious economic goals, the country has committed itself to developing a strong skills base, and has constructed a new system that it believes will achieve this. As with other countries, this will not solve the ills of the education system, and a high skills base will only be built on the foundation of a solid formal education. Therefore, the operation of these various structures within the Ministry of Training, Skills Development, Productivity and External Communications, separate from the MESR, is an obvious area of concern. A higher level of co-operation and co-ordination between the two ministries is needed if the system is to be optimally successful in the long term.

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CHAPTER 5

Mozambique: towards rehabilitation and transformation

Nimrod Mbele

Introduction

This chapter looks at a country that shows striking differences from the others in this volume in important ways. It is the one former Portuguese colony considered in this collection and its technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system evolved in ways that mark it apart from other countries in the region. Its social and economic challenges also are perhaps starker than anywhere else in the study. Today Mozambique is still rebuilding after a triple legacy of particularly acute colonial neglect, a failed Socialist economic experiment, and a long civil war promoted by its South African neighbour. All these factors have shaped Mozambique's attention to TVET, and it is perhaps the member of this group of countries in which the influence of the dominant international discourse of skills development is least profound. Nonetheless, as this chapter will show, that influence is beginning to be apparent and is likely to grow over time as Mozambique gives more attention to the rehabilitation and then transformation of its TVET system.

The country context

Brief historical context

Almost five centuries as a Portuguese colony came to a close with independence in 1975. Large-scale emigration by whites, economic dependence on South Africa, severe drought and prolonged civil war hindered the country's subsequent development. The ruling party abandoned Marxism in 1989 and a new constitution was born the following year. The 1990 constitution replaced the Marxist-Leninist constitution of 1978 and was the first step towards the 1992 peace accord that ended the civil war. The constitution provided for multi-party elections and a free market economy.

Mozambique, with an area of 799 380 km^2, is located on the south-eastern coast of Africa. It borders on Tanzania to the north, Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe to the west and South Africa and Swaziland to the south. Mozambique's major ethnic groups encompass numerous sub-groups with diverse languages, dialects, cultures and histories. The north-central provinces of Zambezia and Nampula are the most populous, with about 45 per cent of the population.

Brief economic overview

Under Portuguese rule, Mozambique was a major exporter of sugar, copra, cotton, rice, tea and cashews. Mozambique also exported labour in enormous quantities, as the colonial government received compensation for the hundreds of thousands of Mozambicans who travelled to work in the mines of South Africa and Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). Railways, ports and tourism also provided significant income and made services an important part of the country's economy before independence.

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In 1975 the first government of independent Mozambique established a Marxist state, in which the government controlled most economic production. Plantations and businesses that had been owned by Portuguese firms were collectivised, and the government made large investments to boost productivity. These and other changes antagonised Western investors, especially the Portuguese, and vital foreign investment in the young republic dried up. Output soon stagnated and with the onset of the South African-incited civil war in 1980, the economy quickly collapsed. For a decade, all economic life effectively came to a standstill. Railways and industrial installations were destroyed, export trade stopped and more than one million people died. Infusions of foreign aid staved off complete economic collapse.

In the late 1980s the government loosened its controls on what was left of the economy. It dismantled collective farms, encouraged foreign investment and cut government subsidies. After a peace accord ended the civil war in 1992, the United Nations co-ordinated a large programme to restore the economy. The programme's priorities were the resettling of refugees and reopening of ports and communications facilities. Reconstruction efforts, fuelled by foreign aid, continued throughout the 1990s. Since the end of the civil war almost all aspects of the economy have been liberalised to some extent. More than 900 state enterprises have been privatised.

In 2001 Mozambique's gross domestic product (GDP) was US$3.61 billion. Mozambique's per capita income was estimated to be about US$200 per year, making Mozambique one of the world's poorest countries. Agriculture accounted for 22 per cent of the economy. Industry, including mining, manufacturing and construction generated 26 per cent of the GDP. The broad services category, which includes trade, produced 52 per cent of the GDP.

Albeit from a small base, Mozambique's economy grew at an annual rate of 10 per cent in the period 1997–1999, one of the highest growth rates in the world. Growth slowed and inflation rose in 2000 due to devastating floods in the early part of that year.

Notwithstanding economic progress, the country still depends on foreign assistance to balance the budget and to pay for a trade imbalance in which imports greatly outnumber exports. The overall balance of trade should improve in the medium term as trade and links with South Africa and the rest of the region have improved and sizeable foreign direct investments are beginning to materialise. Among these investments are metal production (aluminium and steel), natural gas drilling, power generation, agriculture, fishing, timber and transportation services. Mozambique has received a formal cancellation of a large portion of its external debt through the Highly Indebted Poor Country initiative and is scheduled to receive additional relief.

Despite recent progress, Mozambique remains one of the poorest countries in the world, and the country faces severe structural, social and economic problems. The central goal of the government's long-term development strategy is poverty reduction through labour-intensive economic growth, in an environment of peace, stability, and national unity. The highest priority is assigned to reducing poverty in rural areas, where 90 per cent of poor Mozambicans live, but urban poverty is also a target.

Education features high on the government's agenda. According to the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) (Ministry of Education 1998), the government has assigned the highest priority to renewing general education systems, since more than 50 per cent of schools were destroyed during the civil war. Other strategy documents, such as the

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Professional Technical Education Strategy (PTES) (Ministry of Education 2001), suggest that technical and vocational education is also considered as one of the priorities.

Demographics and development

Mozambique has a total population of 18 million people, 69 per cent of whom live in absolute poverty, and the majority of these (71 per cent) live in rural areas. Population growth is slightly under 3 per cent per annum, and about 44 per cent of the population are below 15 years of age (GFA Management 2003: 3).

The illiteracy rate amongst adults is estimated at 60 per cent, with a significantly higher rate (77 per cent) among women. Moreover, because of the steady decline in the rate of primary school enrolment in the years 1981–1994, the number of young people who never attended schools is large. It has also been indicated that nearly half of all children of primary school age are not enrolled in schools, which implies that the number of illiterate and uneducated Mozambicans will continue to increase for some time to come (Ministry of Education 1998). In terms of the Human Development Index (HDI) indicators, Mozambique is ranked 170th in the world. However, it should be noted that its HDI of 0.356 represents an improvement from a figure of 0.295 in 1985 (UNDP 2003).

Life expectancy is very low (43.5 years) and the HIV infection rate is estimated as being between 13 per cent and 15 per cent. In addition to the high HIV infection rate, Mozambique also experiences other health related problems such as malaria, cholera, typhoid and tuberculosis.

The government's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper envisages a growth rate of 8 per cent per annum over the period 2001–2010, with the aim of reducing the poverty rate from 70 per cent to 50 per cent of the population (Republic of Mozambique 2001). It has been acknowledged that sustained growth will require a substantially higher level of broad-based investment by the state and the private sector and expanded access to regional and global markets (GFA Management 2003).

Labour market issues

The total labour force is estimated to be 8.5 million people, 80 per cent of whom are unemployed or engaged in subsistence agriculture (GFA Management 2003). Only about 16 per cent of the total labour force is engaged in formal sector employment.

It is projected that 3.7 million new workers will enter the labour market in the period 2003–2010. These figures suggest that the education sector, especially technical and vocational education, will experience serious challenges. Moreover, the country has been experiencing a decline in employment, particularly in the manufacturing sector, which is suffering on account of increasing imports.

The capacity of Mozambique to produce value-added commodities is directly linked to the availability of skills. As the GFA report and the World Bank (2004) labour market study have pointed out, Mozambique faces a critical shortage of skilled labour. This situation is mainly due to lack of financial and technical capacity. As a consequence, companies are often forced to recruit foreign employees in an attempt to close the skills gap.

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Many companies employ the services of semi-qualified employees having only basic or elementary training and often no qualifications at all. The World Bank study also indicated that employees with high-level qualifications tend to be concentrated in large companies, mostly located in bigger cities such as Maputo and Beira. Table 5.1 illustrates this point.

Table 5.1 shows that Maputo and Beira are the cities that present the largest concentration of trained professionals with higher-level and intermediate-level qualifications among managers, other professionals, technicians, office employees and qualified workers (World Bank 2004: 17).

The table also suggests that in as far as semi-qualified labour is concerned, Nampula is the province presenting the largest number of workers, followed by Maputo Province. Chimoio and Beira are the regions presenting the largest incidence of non-qualified labour due to the fact that these areas have more agriculture-related activities.

At this point, Mozambique does not have adequate skills and competencies to produce value-added goods. Hence, there is a reliance on foreign labour to fill skills gaps. Against this backdrop, the country will have to review the role of the TVET system in order to become more competitive.

Challenges faced by companies in providing training

The labour market study by the World Bank has shed some light on why most companies in Mozambique are not training sufficiently. As might be expected, lack of financial resources was rated as the most pertinent reason, followed by insufficient government incentives to foster the culture of training. The report also highlighted the lack of training centres within the areas where most companies are located. In an attempt to remedy the situation, the Ministry of Education (MINED) held talks with national company representatives, social partners and interested public and private parties. The talks were aimed at defining a strategy for technical education in Mozambique. On the other hand, the Ministry of Labour is also in the process of formulating a national skills strategy aimed at addressing some of the skills shortages in the country.

The educational context

Brief historical context

According to the National Human Development Report (Republic of Mozambique 2000), the Catholic Church dominated the Mozambican education system, particularly in so-called 'rudimentary education'. In this context, rudimentary education included arts and crafts schools as well as the elementary level of technical education. This type of education was intended for the 'natives', mainly the children of chiefs (Republic of Mozambique 2000).

The colonial education system was characterised by sharp regional imbalances. In terms of schools, the south of the country was always better served than the north. According to the National Human Development Report, in 1973, Lourenço Marques district had 10 per cent of the country's population and its school network covered 50 per cent of the district's population of school age. However, in Zambezia and Nampula, in the centre and the north of the country, which accounted for 20 per cent of the population, the coverage rate was only 26 per cent and 31 per cent respectively (Republic of Mozambique 2000).

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Table 5.1: Qualifications of the labour force by location

	Maputo	%	Beira	%	Chimoio	%	Nampula	%	Total	%
Managers										
Higher-level qualifications	507	3	26	1	8	1	2	0	543	2
Intermediate qualifications	144	1	19	1	23	2	9	1	195	1
Basic qualifications	12	0	17	1	3	0	7	1	39	0
Elementary qualifications	35	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	37	0
	698	4	63	2	34	2	19	2	814	3
Professionals (with a university degree)	217	1	39	1	3	0	5	0	264	1
Technicians										
Intermediate	2 057	12	195	6	36	2	17	1	2 305	10
Basic	744	4	15	0	38	3	33	3	830	3
Elementary	41	0	0	0	15	1	4	0	60	0
	2 842	16	210	6	89	6	54	5	3 195	13
Office employees and salespersons										
Intermediate	778	4	82	2	7	0	0	0	867	4
Basic	489	3	274	8	85	6	124	11	972	4
Elementary	312	2	16	0	18	1	21	2	367	2
	1 579	9	372	11	110	7	145	12	2 206	9
Qualified employees										
Intermediate	1 413	8	30	1	16	1	53	5	1 512	6
Basic	1 609	9	310	9	26	2	32	3	1 977	8
Elementary	438	2	23	1	7	0	0	0	468	2
	3 460	19	363	11	49	3	85	7	3 957	17
Semi-qualified employees										
Intermediate	156	1	3	0	8	1	0	0	167	1
Basic	3 217	18	104	3	318	22	69	6	3 708	16
Elementary	1 391	8	477	14	64	4	627	54	2 559	11
	4 764	27	584	18	390	26	696	60	6 434	28
Unqualified employees										
Intermediate	320	2	27	1	0	0	6	1	353	1
Basic	3 699	21	276	8	368	25	151	13	4 494	19
No qualifications	284	2	1 372	42	431	29	0	0	2 087	9
	4 303	24	1 675	51	799	54	157	14	6 934	29
	17 863	**100**	**3 306**	**100**	**1 474**	**100**	**1 161**	**100**	**23 804**	**100**

Source: World Bank (2004: 17)

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In 1962, there were six official high schools and 26 private ones. Eleven years later in 1973 there were 74 schools for the first and second year of high school education, 51 of which taught up to Grade 5 and a few as far as Grade 7. Schools at the highest level of education were intended for the settlers and a few blacks, especially children of chiefs. At this point there were two technical schools but these were reserved for whites.

Current situation

Formal education includes pre-school, primary, secondary, technical and professional, special, higher, and adult education, and teacher training.

Pre-school education takes place in nursery schools and kindergartens for children under six years of age and complements the educational activity of the family, with which it co-operates closely. It is the task of MINED, together with the Ministries of Health and Social Welfare, to define the overall aims of pre-school education, to support and monitor its implementation, and to define criteria and norms for the opening, running and closure of pre-schools. Pre-school education is optional.

Primary education comprises seven grades and is divided into two levels: First level primary education (EP1) is from Grade 1 to 5, whilst second level primary education (EP2) comprises Grades 6 and 7. Although for many years the official age for school entry was seven, since 1993 it has been six.

Secondary education is structured in two cycles. The first cycle of secondary education (ES1) is from Grade 8 to 10 and the second cycle of secondary education (ES2) comprises Grades 11 and 12. Technical and professional education includes elementary, basic and middle levels.

Higher education has recently experienced a significant expansion with the contribution of the private sector. In addition to the four public institutions of higher education there are now five private universities. In an attempt to rehabilitate higher education, the government has put together a ten-year National Strategy Plan for Higher Education involving extensive national consultations throughout the country. The plan was endorsed by the Council of Ministers and its implementation was set out in a five-year Operationalisation Plan in a joint effort with the World Bank and other donors (World Bank 2000).

Informal education comprises literacy, development, cultural and scientific updating activities and takes place outside the regular system of education. According to the MINED (1996), the main objectives of informal education are:

> to eradicate literal and functional illiteracy, contribute effectively to equal educational and employment opportunities for early school drop outs and for those who have not been able to attend the regular system of education, through literacy classes and basic education for children and adults.

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Table 5.2: The public school population of Mozambique, 1998

1998	Level of education							
	Primary		Secondary		Technical			Higher
	1st level (Grades 1–5)	2nd level (Grades 6 and 7)	1st cycle (Grades 8–10)	2nd cycle (Grades 11 and 12)	Elementary	Basic	Medium	
Male	1 088 105	100 547	32 077	4 498	349	9 979	2 085	6 208
Female	788 049	68 230	21 616	2 854	49	4 191	534	2 329
Total	1 876 154	168 777	53 693	7 352	398	14 170	2 619	8 537

Source: Mário et al. (2003)

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Table 5.2 depicts poor enrolment figures for both males and females throughout the education system. It shows that the enrolment figures dwindle as students proceed to technical and higher education. The table suggests that technical education is poorly represented at the medium level. In 1998 technical education represented less than 1 per cent of the entire student population. According to a MINED official, there are various factors that could explain the situation. Amongst other hindrances, reference was made to lack of space and teaching facilities. Mozambique is experiencing a huge backlog in terms of buildings and equipment due to the effects of the civil war.

The TVET system

A profile of the TVET sector in Mozambique

The majority of technical and vocational schools are government institutions managed by the MINED or the Ministry of Labour, although there are other government departments and parastatals that maintain their own training facilities. According to the GFA Management report (2003), a growing number of profit making and non-profit making privately owned providers offering courses at the basic and medium level have entered the market in recent years.

The MINED

Within the MINED, technical education is vested in the authority of the National Directorate for Technical Education (DINET). DINET's responsibilities include policy, materials development and curriculum design and revision. DINET is also responsible for managing the 41 technical and vocational schools under the authority of the MINED. In 1998 there were approximately 17 000 learners at the various levels. Since these schools are located in major cities, the historical patterns in terms of regional disparities continue to exist.

As noted above, technical and vocational education under the MINED takes place at three levels, namely the elementary, basic and medium levels. Details of each level are given below.

THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL

The elementary level was originally designed by the colonial administration in the 1950s in order to provide limited vocational training for Mozambicans. These schools were

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aimed at consolidating the class structure as envisaged by the colonial order. Access to elementary schools was mostly limited to the children of chiefs. A few years after independence, most of these schools were phased out and some transformed into primary schools. Others were destroyed during the civil war. Nevertheless, six institutions still remain open, providing places to less than 400 learners in 2001. There are plans to expand this segment.

The schools have an entry requirement of Grade 5 and their programmes take two to three years to complete. The course programme provides for a combination of general education subjects with some elementary level of training and practice in a limited field of trades (carpentry, bricklaying and welding). They are essentially providers of a pre-vocational curriculum.

THE BASIC LEVEL

These institutions came into existence after independence. This level of technical education was seen as an important instrument to fast track previously disadvantaged Mozambicans. However, the basic level is currently experiencing problems in meeting the expectations of the labour market.

The schools provide a three-year technical vocational education within four main areas: accountancy, agriculture, construction, and industrial trades.

The entry-level requirement is Grade 7. The programme also provides a combination of general education subjects with theoretical and practical courses. Upon completion learners receive certificates equivalent to Grade 10 in the academic route.

There are 24 *Escolas Tecnicas Basicas* (ETBs), nine of which are agricultural schools. These schools account for 79 per cent of the total DINET student population.

THE MEDIUM/INSTITUTE LEVEL

This level is known as *Institutos Tecnicos Medios* (ITMs). These institutes provide technical professional education in various areas. The requirement for entry is Grade 10 and upon successful completion the graduate holds a certificate equivalent to Grade 12.

Students graduating at this level are intended to be technicians. Again, the programme includes general education subjects.

There are eight ITMs in Mozambique. Two are agricultural institutes and one is for mining. These institutes account for 17 per cent of the total TVET student population. Of the eight institutes, four are located in Maputo Province.

However, concerns have been raised that the curriculum has not been reviewed for at least ten years and is biased in favour of academic subjects, with trade subjects representing only approximately 30 per cent of the syllabus (GFA Management 2003).

The ESSP has acknowledged the importance of technical education, and suggests that the MINED's priority for this sector is increasing access to elementary technical schools, with particular emphasis on reopening and revitalising agricultural and arts schools in rural areas in support of expanded rural employment and income generation. However, it must be remembered that this is a very elementary level of technical provision indeed.

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The Ministry of Labour

Through its National Institute for Work and Vocational Training Directorate (INEFP), the Ministry of Labour is responsible for ten training centres, known as *Centros de Formacao Profissional* (CFPs), which offer short-term courses, usually lasting four to six months (GFA Management 2003). The difference between the courses provided by the MINED and INEFP is that the latter's are predominantly practical. There are no general subjects offered as part of the programme and, as a consequence, they are not formally recognised by the MINED (GFA Management 2003). The Ministry of Labour mainly targets unemployed individuals.

There are only approximately 2 000 learners enrolled in the CFPs. The low enrolment figures are attributed to insufficient funds and a lack of management capacity to market and promote training centres.

A recent report (GFA Management 2003) articulated the following problems:

- a centre in Manica had been sitting idle since 2001 when donor funding was withdrawn;
- a centre in Maputo Province had eight instructors and no students; and
- a centre in Inhambane had 12 instructors but only 12 students, and they were enrolled in only one of the eight programmes.

In response to some of the problems, the INEFP decided to lease the training centre in Maputo to MOZAL, an aluminium company that has, in turn, subcontracted the training of its maintenance workers to a South African company. The same model is being proposed for two other training centres, one in Machava, adjacent to Maputo, and the other in Beira, in Sofala Province.

Other government departments

Other government departments also play an important role in providing vocational training. According to GFA Management (2003), there are 22 other training facilities managed by departments, ten of which belong to the Ministry of Health. In total, these departments account for about 10 per cent of the TVET student population. In addition, the large parastatals responsible for telecommunications, electricity and water resources all maintain their own training facilities (GFA Management 2003).

Private training providers

As in other countries, the role of private providers in Mozambique is critical in addressing some of the market failures. It is clear that the government of Mozambique is not in a position to provide for all aspects of education, in view of the fiscal constraints. At this point, the government's main priority is to provide basic education to all citizens. This position is reflected by the investments made in relation to primary and secondary education, as well as by the shortage of technical schools throughout the country.

Private technical vocational education in Mozambique appears to be small but growing. According to the Professional Education Strategy, adopted in 2001, there are about ten private technical schools in Mozambique. According to the labour market study by the World Bank (2004), private companies from different parts of the country also provide technical training internally or via external providers. The study has also revealed that 29 per cent of the companies use the services of private training centres whilst 20 per cent use public providers.

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Key issues in Mozambican TVET

Introduction

In an attempt to bridge the skills gap, the MINED held discussions with national company representatives and interested public and private entities. The discussions culminated in the approval of the Professional Technical Education Strategy (PTES), which was adopted by the Council of Ministers in 2001 (Ministry of Education 2001). The strategy argues that 'technical education has as a mission to provide citizens with a guaranteed access to a highly qualified technical-scientific training, to respond to the economic and social developments needs'. The strategic objectives of the PTES are to address challenges with regards to access, quality of technical education, sustainability and institutional development.

Access and equity

The right to education for all Mozambicans is inscribed in the Constitution. Despite this commitment, access to education, especially at higher levels, remains limited. For example, access to institute level provision is restricted to six out of ten provinces and is overwhelmingly biased towards urban areas. This is highly problematic in a situation where the vast majority of citizens are concentrated in rural areas. According to the PTES, in 2001 only three schools remained opened at the elementary level, which together enrolled fewer than 400 students (Ministry of Education 2001).

In an attempt to improve access to technical and higher institutions, the government of Mozambique has embarked on a strategy for distance learning. This strategy is regarded as an important means of expanding access to higher education in the country. According to the government strategic plan, distance learning will be introduced gradually (Mário, Fry, Levey & Chilundo 2003).

The World Bank argues that girls are under-represented in Mozambique's TVET system (Johanson & Adams 2004). This is borne out by national data. In 1998, 12 per cent of elementary level enrolments were of girls, whilst the figure rose only to 30 per cent at the basic level, before falling to 20 per cent at the institute level. The World Bank (2004) suggests that gender inequality in access reflects a gender-based division of labour as well as mirroring the status that societies attribute to women. The division of labour between men and women is based on a complex system of long-standing traditions and attitudes. Girls in TVET choose specialties leading to the jobs typically occupied by females such as hairdressing, secretarial work, health care, hotel work, garment manufacture and home economics. Specialties that are geared towards the industrial sector, such as mechanics, electricity and civil engineering, are traditionally reserved for boys.

Quality of TVET

Quality of teaching and learning in technical schools or institutions hinges on a number of variables. These include infrastructure and equipment, relevance, content, teacher qualifications and relationships with the world of work. These variables tend to have a symbiotic relationship – that is, if one of them malfunctions, the rest become affected. Issues discussed below have implications on the quality of TVET systems.

The Word Bank has recently conducted a study on the Mozambican labour market. As part of the study, 149 companies across different fields were interviewed. The study raised a range of questions associated with the quality of technical and vocational

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training. For example, companies were asked whether or not the training that is available meets their needs – only 45 per cent responded positively (World Bank 2004: 26).

The study also raised questions regarding the content of training programmes and the balance between practical and theoretical aspects. Fifty-eight per cent of respondents said that there was too little practical content to programmes (World Bank 2004: 26).

Over and above poor teacher qualifications, the majority of the technical schools lack basic equipment. The World Bank report suggests that the lack of practice is a result, in part, of the obsolescence of a large part of existing equipment in the schools (World Bank 2004: 32). Quality issues are also exacerbated by lack of financial resources, which limits the acquisition of accessories for regular maintenance of equipment or the purchase of new equipment. As a consequence, most technical schools operate at approximately 40 per cent of their original capacity. Against this backdrop, it is not surprising to note that there is a relatively high failure rate within the TVET system. According to the PTES, the failure rate is estimated to be between 20 per cent and 30 per cent, with drop-out estimated at 20 per cent.

Some of the quality-related issues could be explained by looking at institutions responsible for the capacity building of trade teachers. Until 1992, trade teachers were trained at the *Instituto Pedagogico Industrial* (IPI) in Nampula Province, while agriculture teachers were trained at the *Instituto Pedagogico* and business teachers were recruited from business (Danida 2003). At present there is no institution designated to develop educators in the field of technical education and training. This has had enormous implications for the quality of teaching and learning in technical schools. Table 5.3 illustrates, for three provinces, the number of teachers in relation to those who are qualified.

This table suggests that the quality of teaching and learning in technical schools is likely to be poor. According to the ESSP, the working conditions within the TVET system are not conducive to the recruitment and retention of qualified teachers. Most of the qualified teachers prefer to work for the private sector where salaries and working conditions are generally better.

This chapter wishes to draw a link between quality of training and the needs of the market. If technical education is aimed at addressing unemployment and poverty, it must be in harmony with labour market needs. If the outputs (graduates) of technical education are not in harmony with market needs it is unlikely that economic growth will be achieved.

The quality of teaching in most technical schools is poor due to the fact that the majority of teachers lack relevant qualifications. This situation is further undermined by the fact that teacher salaries are below those of industry. As a consequence, enlisting instructors with work experience becomes a daunting task.

The impact of HIV/AIDS on education

Linked to teacher supply is the issue of HIV/AIDS. Over the period 2000–2010, the AIDS epidemic is projected to result in the education sector losing some 17 per cent of its personnel. Across all levels, it is predicted that some 9 200 teachers will die and an estimated 123 senior managers, planners and administrators will be lost. For each of these educators, months of productive work time will be lost before they die (Republic of Mozambique 2000).

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Table 5.3: Qualification background of teachers in selected TVET institutions

School	Total number of teachers	Teachers educated as technical vocational teachers		Teachers with trade-related professional background
		Number	Percentage	
EIC de Pemba	42	14	33	5
EA de Bilibiza	12	3	25	2
EAO & EI de Montepuez	22	4	18	0
EC Mártires de Wyriamu	43	24	56	12
EA de Fonte Boa de B	12	3	25	0
EAO Dom Bosco	20	5	25	10
EAO de Songo	11	2	18	3
EI de Matundo	46	15	33	2
EIC 1° de Maio	48	12	25	2
EAO de Morrumbala	7	1	14	1
EA de Mocuba	21	7	33	1
EI de Gurué	21	5	24	2
Total	**303**	**95**	**31**	**40**

Source: Danida (2003)
Note: The 'total number of teachers' column adds up to 305. The error is in the original source, and it was not possible to identify which of the individual figures is incorrect.

Curriculum issues

Curriculum forms the cornerstone of quality of education. Against this backdrop, it is imperative to look at the nature and the relevance of the curriculum offered in technical schools.

The curriculum offered in technical schools was conceived in the late 1980s in an attempt to meet the needs of a centrally planned economy, more specifically in the context of a Prospective Indicative Plan through which the Mozambican government believed it could profoundly change the backwardness of the Mozambican economy within a time span of just ten years.

It is now generally accepted that the current curriculum is outdated, since it has not been reviewed in more than two decades. Moreover, the bulk of the curriculum is a duplication of what is taught in general education. The outcome of this arrangement has negatively affected the manner in which technical education responds to labour market demands.

In response, the MINED has set in motion a process of reviewing the curriculum. For instance, in the agriculture technical schools the bulk of the curriculum is already seen as being responsive to the needs of the rural community. According to the Basic Education Curriculum Plan (BECP), the new curriculum is part of the continuity of the national education system, with the aim of making education more relevant, and with a view to preserving national unity, strengthening democracy, increasing the respect for human

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rights and preserving Mozambican culture. However, there is, as yet, little progress towards a detailed new curriculum model in other technical areas (International Bureau of Education 2003).

As with other countries in the SADC region, Mozambique has indicated its intention to develop a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) that will then align with a Regional Qualifications Framework (RQF). While the development of an NQF and RQF may be seen as an attractive proposition, it is a complex process that requires a rigorous feasibility study, especially in a country such as Mozambique, which has recently emerged from the devastating effects of civil war and has serious capacity and resourcing constraints.

Costs and sustainability

The ESSP pointed out that the Mozambican government has made it clear that it takes its commitment to enhanced educational opportunities seriously by rapidly increasing the share of public expenditure that goes to education, from less than 10 per cent in 1994 to 18 per cent in 1997 and 19 per cent in 2001. Education is now the single largest category of recurrent expenditure, and the second largest category of investment expenditure, after roads.

However, according to the National Human Development Report of 2000, the growth in the volume of resources made available for education hides a major weakness: more than half of all educational expenditure is financed from foreign funds.

The lack of financial resources is one of the biggest challenges facing Mozambique. Approximately 5 per cent of the education budget goes to TVET. The bulk (70 per cent) of this allocation pays for teacher salaries while most of the difference pays for municipal services. This means there is little left to invest in equipment and infrastructure.

Expenditures on education undoubtedly touch on issues of efficiency, especially when such expenditures consume substantial financial resources. As in most African states, Mozambique is forced to make difficult choices to control spending on education, which absorbs a large share of the overall government budget.

Johanson and Adams (2004) point to the high cost of technical education in sub-Saharan Africa and argue that this is due to small class sizes and the need for expensive equipment, facilities and teaching material. Ziderman (1997) agues that in Maputo, for example, the recurrent unit cost for industrial schools may be 50 per cent higher than for commercial schools.

In Mozambique the infrastructure and equipment of TVET institutions is either obsolete or unable to adapt to private sector expectations and technological change. The challenge for the Mozambican TVET system is to catch up with technology while at the same time addressing the concerns of the labour market. If these issues are not addressed, training provided by TVET systems will continue to be irrelevant and, as a direct consequence, graduates will find it difficult to find jobs. However, the rehabilitation of the system is likely to be very expensive.

Institutional development

Much of the above points to the conclusion that institutional development is crucial at all levels of the Mozambican TVET system. A picture has been painted of providers that are

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in urgent need of infrastructural development, curricular overhaul and staff development. However, behind this lurks the challenge of building relevant and responsive TVET institutions. Considerable attention will need to be paid to the development of greater competency at the institutional level in order that autonomy can be built over time. At the same time, a new institutional arrangement is essential for TVET teacher training.

Institutional development is also needed at the national level. If new ideas such as an NQF are adopted then it will be essential that Mozambique develops robust institutions that can deliver on their new mandates. Moreover, given the inevitable changes in the TVET sector in the next few years, it will be important that the institutional development needs of both DINET and INEFP are identified and addressed.

This chapter agues that lack of synergy between the Ministries of Labour and Education compromises the ability of the government to combat poverty through a skills revolution. In a context of financial constraints, as in the case of Mozambique, it is crucial for departments to pool their resources and work towards a common goal. The division of labour between the two ministries seems to promote two models of skills development that are almost exclusive of each other. The lack of a common policy strategy reiterates this point.

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Financing the system

Although, as mentioned above, there has been a significant increase in the amount of the overall budget allocated to education, it has been acknowledged by the government that the financing of training by companies must be considered. At present there is no mechanism for them to cover part of training costs. However, discussions are currently underway to promote a culture of cost sharing between the government and companies.

Due to the limited capacity of the state to meet all education costs, donors are still covering a considerable part of the capital and recurrent costs of the sector (Atchoarena 1996). The section below expands on the role of donor agencies in respect of recurring and capital costs associated with education.

The role of donors

Mozambique is one of the most heavily aided countries in the world in the education sector and was one of the first in which a sector-wide approach was adopted (Buchert 2002). The focal areas of support for most agencies have been textbook provision for primary schools, pre- and in-service training of teachers, vocational education, and development of planning and management capacity.

The outcome of interviews with government officials as well as donor agencies suggested that a new language is now being used to define the relationship between donors and the government. Donors are now referred to as 'collaborating partners'. This could be seen as an attempt to harmonise the aid provided by different donor agencies. The strategy to harmonise donor funding has culminated in a number of donor agencies, such as CIDA, DANIDA, FINNIDA, DFID and the World Bank, expressing their willingness to shift their assistance towards programme support for the implementation of the strategic plan in education contained in the national education plan. Although a number of agencies have expressed a commitment in principle to shift their focus in favour of programme support, it is worth noting that not all donor agencies were eager to shift focus. This chapter argues that the fact that some of the major donor agencies have

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agreed to move away from project funding in favour of the national strategic plan is a clear indication that the notion of partnerships has assumed a different meaning.

The German agency, GTZ is probably the most influential player in supporting technical education in Mozambique – although the financial support may not appear on a balance sheet, resources from GTZ are being used to support different activities in the technical education strategy. GTZ also envisages a vigorous role in the provisioning of technical education. Amongst other things, this role will take the form of training staff in the implementation of an electronic management system, and the development of a curriculum framework, curriculum, teacher guidelines, manuals and learning materials.

Conclusion

Mozambique is recovering from 16 years of turmoil caused by war, economic crisis and social disruptions. The government of Mozambique is now faced with the daunting task of rehabilitating the economy. Although the economy performed impressively throughout most of the 1990s, Mozambique is still considered one of the poorest countries in the world.

The problems of TVET in Mozambique have deep roots and a long history. Although these problems cannot be resolved overnight, the current political climate presents favourable conditions for a concerted effort to bring about drastic changes.

As a first step towards a holistic development of society, the government of Mozambique adopted a Programme of National Reconstruction, which spanned from 1991 to 1994. The main objectives of this programme were the resettlement of refugees and displaced people as well as the rehabilitation of infrastructure such as schools and roads (Takala & Marope 2002). This national programme formed the basis for the reconstruction and development of all sectors of the economy including education. A series of educational policies have followed and much has been done to rehabilitate the system.

Crucially for the TVET system, the Professional Technical Education Strategy 2002–2011 was approved by the Council of Ministers in December 2001. This strategy aims at improving access to, capacity within, and the efficiency of the TVET system.

In Mozambique there is a wide recognition that the state alone cannot afford to assume the financial burden of vocational education and training. This recognition implies that the government must develop different modes of intervention such as cost sharing, whilst remaining mindful of the high levels of poverty and unemployment within the country. It also seems likely that the private sector will come to occupy a greater place in the provision of training. This will require new regulatory mechanisms.

This chapter has outlined key challenges that face the TVET system in Mozambique. As indicated earlier, these challenges centre around access and equity, quality, costs and sustainability. Since these challenges are interlinked, it is important to adopt a holistic approach.

In the context of a country that has emerged from a protracted civil war, it is not surprising to note that TVET is given less priority in comparison to general education, considering that more than 50 per cent of the schooling system was reduced to ashes. Nonetheless, the current institutional landscape of TVET caters for a tiny minority and the

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provision of technical education continues to mirror historical regional inequities. The system is also characterised by major gender disparities in enrolments and a strong retention of traditional gender stereotyping in terms of programme enrolments.

The Mozambican education system is faced with an enormous challenge as regards the quality of education within the technical and vocational field. This particular challenge is multifaceted as it touches on issues such as the institutional framework, quality assurance systems, teacher qualifications, infrastructure rehabilitation and curriculum reform. This chapter argues that a holistic approach is required to address these critical issues. The ESSP and the PTES provide the framework to address these issues and the MINED is beginning to move forward in this area.

Sustainability of TVET systems requires a substantial investment in terms of both financial and non-financial resources.

Over and above resources, the success of TVET depends on the ability of administrators to promote institutions. Evidence suggests that technical and vocational institutions operate far below their capacity. This problem is also linked to lack of institutional capacity (national and provincial) to develop policies aimed at changing public attitudes and perceptions about technical schools. Again, this is an area that the MINED has identified for attention, and progress can be expected in the near future.

It seems unlikely that either the public sector or the private sector in Mozambique is strong enough to finance the TVET system alone. What is needed is a new compact between the two on how the system can be financed. This may lead into areas such as levies, as in many neighbouring countries, but this cannot simply be assumed. With reforms to finance, it is inevitable that the government will also need to address the issue of governance. Many of Mozambique's neighbours are adopting national training authorities and are exploring the appropriate degree of autonomy for public providers. It is likely that Mozambique will follow the same route in time.

Mozambique shares many of the same problems and challenges as other countries in this study. However, its unique history of colonisation by Portugal, its radical socialist experiment and protracted civil war mark it out as unique in important ways. The high levels of poverty and the need to rehabilitate educational facilities mean that TVET is a relatively minor item on Mozambique's development agenda. Nonetheless, rapid economic growth and high unemployment point to the likelihood of the issue becoming more pressing over time.

Given the above, it is not surprising that Mozambique appears to have been less influenced by the international discourse of skills development than the more developed countries in this study. Although issues such as curricular reform and access are on the agenda, thinking seems to be at a relatively early stage. Issues of governance and finance do not appear to have attracted as much attention as in some neighbouring countries. Strikingly, one notable absence from the discussion of this chapter has been skills development for the informal economy. It seems inconceivable that this will remain a silence for long.

It is perhaps inevitable that all these issues will come to the fore in the near future as Mozambique begins to grapple more concertedly with the challenges facing its TVET sector. There is much to learn from the experience of neighbouring countries, but Mozambique's unique history means that simple borrowing will be dangerous.

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CHAPTER 6

Namibia: repositioning vocational education and training

Mahlubi Mabizela

Introduction

The second decade of Namibian independence has seen an increasing return to debates about the national development strategy. There is an apparently growing consensus that Namibia must diversify from its economic dependence on resource-based strategies. This has led to a growing focus on manufacturing, on international competitiveness; and even on developing elements of a 'knowledge-based economy' (Bonelli & Odada 2003; Johanson & Kukler 2003). It is evident that vocational education and training (VET) reform will be part of any such repositioning. Indeed, since 2000 there have been a number of reviews and reports recommending a radical reshaping of VET (see, for example, EU-MHETEC 2001; Brewster & Burke 2002; Resolve SkillsWorks 2002; Johanson & Kukler 2003), and elements of a new policy are in development. It is these attempts at repositioning Namibian VET that this chapter will seek to analyse.

Locating Namibia

Namibia is situated on the south-western part of the sub-Saharan region of Africa and has a territory of 824 268 km^2. It was annexed by Germany in 1884 and in 1890 it was formally declared its colony. Soon afterwards, in 1893, resistance arose leading to a full-scale anti-colonial war between 1904 and 1907. A peace treaty was reached in 1907. However, in 1915, South Africa attacked the territory and annexed it as an enemy property. With occupation by South Africa, Namibia (then known as South West Africa) virtually became what South Africa was at the time, with the privileging of whites over black people, the imposition of white languages, the incarceration of black political leaders for lengthy periods of time; clandestine state operations intent on destroying dissent, mass killings of members of the resistance movement by the state machinery, forced relocation of indigenous people, often to make way for whites, and a protracted struggle by mass movement and armed guerrilla warfare. Eventually, Namibia attained its freedom from South African occupation on 21 March 1990.

The population of Namibia was estimated at 1.8 million in 2003, meaning that it has a population density of about 1.7 people per km^2, one of the lowest in the world. The country has a relatively youthful population, with 43 per cent of the total population under 15 years of age and only 4 per cent over 65 years old (UNDP 2003: 252). Despite rapid urbanisation, Namibia is still mainly a rural society with 31 per cent of the population living in urban areas.

The economy in brief

The economy of Namibia is heavily dependent on its natural resources, which are diamonds, copper, uranium, gold, lead, tin, silver, lithium, cadmium, zinc, salt, vanadium,

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natural gas, hydropower and fish. Together with agriculture, forestry and quarrying, they form the primary industries and account for nearly 21 per cent of the GDP (see Table 6.1). Mining and quarrying are the main contributors to the primary industries' GDP share and are the main attractors of foreign direct investment. Only 1 per cent of the country is arable land, and by 1998 only 70 km^2 of land was irrigated. Nonetheless, about half of the population depends on agriculture (largely subsistence).

Table 6.1: Percentage contribution of different sectors to the country's GDP and employment

Sector	Percentage contribution to GDP (1996–2001)	Percentage contribution to employment in 2000
Primary industries	**20.6**	**32.0**
Agriculture and forestry	5.3	29.3
Fishing	4.5	1.8
Mining and quarrying	10.8	0.9
Secondary industries	**14.9**	**11.3**
Manufacturing	9.9	5.3
Electricity and water	2.4	1.0
Construction	2.6	5.0
Tertiary industries	**53.6**	**50.8**
Wholesale, retail trade and repairs	9.9	9.0
Hotels and restaurants	1.8	1.8
Transport and communication	5.9	3.3
Financial intermediation	3.6	1.1
Real estate and business services	9.7	9.1
Community, social and personal services	0.9	10.7
Producers of government (state) services	21.8	15.8
Other producers	**1.9**	**5.8**

Sources: Bank of Namibia (2002); Ministry of Labour (2002)
Note: The column on percentage contribution to GDP adds up to 91 per cent. The sources of the statistics presented do not provide any explanation for the missing 9 per cent.

Manufacturing is the main contributor of the secondary industries. It includes meat packing, fish processing, dairy products and mining beneficiation and, as such, its economic performance is reliant on the performance of the primary industries. Indeed, it is part of current national strategy to build manufacturing initially through the processing of primary products (Bonelli & Odada 2003).

Employment, unemployment and poverty

According to the Namibia Labour Force Survey 2000 (Ministry of Labour 2002: 7), the country has a labour force of about 541 447 of which 80 per cent (about 433 158) are

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employed (of these 53 per cent are males and 47 per cent are females). Of the employed, 32 per cent are in primary industries, 11 per cent in secondary industries and 51 per cent in tertiary industries (see Table 6.1). The agricultural sector is the largest employer and almost all its jobs are in the rural areas, providing for 39 per cent of rural employment.

According to the Namibia Labour Force Survey (Ministry of Labour 2002: 7), about 109 598 people (20 per cent) were jobless in 2000. However, if the broad definition of unemployment is used (which includes jobless people who are available for work but may or may not be actively searching for it), unemployment rises to about 220 634 people (or 34 per cent). In other words, about 111 036 people are unemployed and are not taking active steps to look for employment. The rate of unemployment is higher for females than it is for males and higher in rural (40 per cent) than in urban (30 per cent) areas when using the broad measure. Youth unemployment is estimated at 41 per cent, with females comprising 24 per cent and males 17 per cent of the total unemployment rate.

There is a mixed picture on economic indicators. Total employment increased by 7.6 per cent between 1997 and 2000 (Bank of Namibia 2002: 31). In 2001, growth stood at 4 per cent. However, inflation has been increasing and reached double digits (11.3 per cent) in 2002 due to the combined effect of domestic and imported inflationary pressure, and the rise in prices for food and household goods (Bank of Namibia 2002: 31).

The Bank observes that there has not been a substantial shift in the production structure of the Namibian economy since independence. Indeed, the share of the manufactured products in total GDP has shown a marginal decline since independence.

Although per capita GDP is five times that of Africa's poorest countries, the majority of Namibians live in pronounced poverty because of the large-scale unemployment, the great inequality of income distribution, and the large amount of wealth going to foreigners. Between 1990 and 2001, 35 per cent of the population lived below the income poverty line of $1 a day. During the same period, those living below $2 a day amounted to 56 per cent of the total population (UNDP 2003: 246). In 2000, 23 per cent of the total population had no sustainable access 'to an improved water source' (UNDP 2003: 246). The GDP-HDI rank gap of 59 places puts Namibia in the group of worst-performing countries, along with Botswana and South Africa.

In terms of the UNDP Human Development Index (HDI), Namibia was ranked 124 in 2002. This low ranking was strongly influenced by a poor life expectancy at birth of 47 years. However, the adult illiteracy rate was relatively good at 17 per cent (18 per cent for women) (UNDP 2003: 272).

Skills requirements

The 2000 Labour Force Survey (Ministry of Labour 2002) highlights a major problem of skills shortages. Unemployment of those with post-secondary qualifications is only a tenth of the overall figure and there is evidence of vocational training centre (VTC) learners dropping out of their studies to enter relevant employment (Johanson & Kukler 2003). Salaries are relatively high for artisans, another indicator of skills shortages.

If the government's strategy of diversification and knowledge intensification is successful, then clearly such skills needs are likely to become more acute. Moreover, there is a real danger that a shortage of such skills will undermine the overall development strategy.

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Indeed, the World Bank has concluded that skills shortages may be the greatest threat to such a strategy (Bonelli & Odada 2003: section 3.5.2)

At the same time, there is a clear need to balance this focus on intermediate to high skills with a strategy for meeting the skills and employment needs of those who are poorly educated, rurally located and outside the formal economy (Bank of Namibia 2002; Johanson & Kukler 2003).

The education system

A brief historical context

The introduction of formal education in the country dates back to 1805 when the London Missionary Society established a school at Warmbad, a small town located about 700 km south of Windhoek (Cohen 1993: 117). Various missionary societies, including Finnish, Catholics and Rhenish, vied for provision of formal education throughout the country. The provision of colonial education, though, followed the attitudes of colonists as expressed by Carl Schlettwein, a farmer of 'high standing in the colonial community', who in 1908 stated:

> The land at present available in our colony is suitable for European settlement. We cannot carry out this settlement, however, without additional labour. This must be provided by the natives and we shall train them for it. Our policies will therefore be those of masters of the country. We shall make people realise that we Germans are the masters of the country, and the natives the servants whose welfare depends on the advantage of their masters. (Cited in Cohen 1993: 118)

This statement also shows how central education was in the effort to change 'natives' in order that they followed the teachings of colonial settlers and served their economic needs.

By the end of German rule in 1919, there were 115 mission schools with a total of 5 490 pupils (Cohen 1993: 123). Education for whites was offered separately, as was that of coloureds and Africans. This segregation, and unequal resourcing, was reinforced under South African rule. Thus, the Turner Report (1993: 61) observed that the government of liberation inherited a skewed education system, which was distorted by the colonial and apartheid systems. For example, in 1986–8 the average expenditure per student in white schools (with 17 000 enrolments) was R3 213; in Owambo schools (181 000 enrolments) it was R329; and in the rest of the country (312 523 enrolments) it was R797. In 1989, white students accounted for 36 per cent of the 31 883 subject entries for the final secondary school examination, yet whites constituted only 5 per cent of the total population. In the same year, 47 per cent of all mathematics and physical science candidates were white.

Education post-independence

When the new government took over in 1990, it set itself new goals for education in Namibia of access, equity, quality and democracy (Ministry of Education and Culture 1993: 32). It sought to achieve these goals through strengthening senior secondary education, developing a comprehensive VET system, enhancing human resources capacity, co-ordinating the development of higher education and promoting national research and development capacity.

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In 1990, there were 382 445 learners in 1 204 schools. The average teacher-student ratio was 1:29. By 2001, the number of student enrolments had increased to 528 958 learners, of whom 51 per cent were female, in 1 545 schools. For both learners and schools, these figures represent an average annual growth rate of 1.9 per cent.

According to Francis and Burger (2003: 18), approximately 12 500 students are eligible to enter the VET system in Namibia annually. However, less than 2 000 students are able to enter VTCs each year. This means that more than 10 000 Grade 10 school leavers cannot be accounted for, annually, because the other half (about 12 500) are said to be proceeding to Grade 11. Indeed, the figures are likely to be more serious as Johanson and Kukler (2003) report that there are now a majority of post-Grade 12 entrants in some VTCs.

The VET system

Development and the current structure of the VET system

Prior to 1990, the VET system in Namibia was decentralised. Industries had their own training institutions according to their needs, for example, fishing, mining and agriculture. There were some technical institutes run by the government under the Ministry of Basic Education. Their status, however, was not lifted up to the further education and training level.

After independence in 1990, VET in Namibia was a responsibility of the then Ministry of Labour and Manpower Development (now named the Ministry of Labour). The ministry was tasked with:

- the country's protection, development and utilisation of its human resources to their fullest potential; and
- the promotion and provision of comprehensive and systematic manpower development programmes to provide work-related training in accordance with the needs of the economy as a whole and of the individual. (Ministry of Labour and Manpower Development 1991: 1)

At the time, some of the national vocational training policy objectives were outlined as follows:

- to promote or provide vocational training, including the establishment of Skills Development Centres as an integral part of the system of national manpower planning;
- to contribute to the solving of employment-related problems, through a flexible vocational training system;
- to optimise the utilisation of the country's human resources and ensure that the skilled labour demand is met;
- to utilise a VET system which, among other things, incorporates training programmes based on approved national standards, provision for lifelong learning and arrangements for trainees to re-enter the main educational system for higher-level education, provides adequate flexibility in order that outputs may be readily adjusted to meet the changing needs of the economy, provides for effective monitoring, evaluation and follow-up of trainees, adopts a modular approach and appropriate up-to-date teaching/training principles and methodologies and fosters entrepreneurial values and skills;
- to ensure that the financing of VET is a joint venture between the government, parastatals, private enterprise and others; and

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- to establish a National Vocational Training Board, on the basis of tripartism (government, labour and private enterprise). (Ministry of Labour and Manpower Development 1991: 2,3)

Indeed, these objectives set the tone for the structure of the system, its curriculum focus, aims and the challenges it needed to address. Thus, the Ministry of Labour and Manpower Development was responsible for the development of the *Vocational Training Act* of 1991.

In 1994, the *National Vocational Training Act* (NVTA) was promulgated. The implementation of the new system was piloted at the Windhoek Vocational Training Centre (WVTC). With the assistance of the International Labour Office (ILO), training standards for technical subjects were drafted. The technical institutes were required to change their statuses into VTCs. Their minimum entry requirements were set at Grade 10. VET was then removed in 1995 from the Ministry of Labour and Manpower Development and incorporated under the Ministry of Higher Education, Vocational Training, Science and Technology, which has since changed to the Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Employment Creation (MHETEC).

The NVTA was amended in 1996 not only to accommodate apprenticeships, but also to cater for institutional, community and industry-based training. Apprenticeship training was no longer the only one in the country; there was much other vocational and technical training and hence the NVTA had to be amended to accommodate such training.

Among other things, the NVTA established the National Vocational Training Board (NVTB, but largely referred to as VTB) in 1996, with powers to establish Trade Advisory Committees (TACs) in such industries, trades and/or occupations as it would specify. Currently, there are five TACs (see Figure 6.1), supposedly with no more than seven members each. Until at least 2002, the VTB did not have a secretariat, despite provision for one in the *Vocational Training Act* of 1991 and further endorsement by the NVTA.

The VTB comprises seventeen members, being representative of the state (three representatives), employees (three), employers (three), institutions (three), persons deemed to be experts in the field (three) and two officials (a chairperson and a vice-chairperson). At least one of the representatives of state, employers and employees should be a woman. The Minister of Higher Education, Training and Employment Creation appoints all the members. The powers of the VTB include:

- advising the minister on issues relating to the NVTA and VET;
- establishing minimum standards of vocational training with a view to regulating and promoting the efficiency of such training, including the development of vocational standards, trade testing procedures and certification arrangements;
- co-ordinating, encouraging, facilitating and promoting vocational training activities and assessing vocational training needs through research; and
- consulting with any body or organisation involved in VET.

The Act does not grant autonomy to the VTB. The NVTA also gives powers to the minister to establish the National Trade Testing and Certification Centre (NTTCC). Some of the functions of the NTTCC include the establishment of a system for the governing and control of trade testing, conducting trade tests, evaluating trade qualifications obtained outside Namibia and making available training in the principles and techniques of evaluation of trade testing officers and other relevant persons.

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In 1996, the *Namibia Qualifications Authority Act* was promulgated. The Act established the Namibia Qualifications Authority (NQA).

Figure 6.1 shows the structure of the VET system in Namibia and how the individual bodies relate to one another in the system. The figure has been constructed based on information gathered in literature and interviews.

There are still many issues that need to be clarified in the governance structure of the VET system of Namibia and the above figure attempts to show some of these. Without attempting to enumerate all, some are unclear links or relationships between the VTB, NTA and NQA. Also, the relationship between TACs and the NQA (or its NSSBs) is unclear. Some of these relationships are discussed below under relevant subsections.

The governance structure

The VET system is the overall responsibility of the MHETEC. The ministry was established in 1995 in the belief that national technical and technological competence to a large extent depends upon a strong, diversified and high quality VET system. The purpose of establishing the ministry was threefold. First, it sought to give focus to the development of higher education. Second, it aimed at stimulating vocational training as a vehicle for socio-economic development. Third, it was intended to enhance science and technology for community empowerment, wealth creation and poverty reduction.

Thus, the ministry was tasked with targeting human resources capacity building; community development and improvement of the quality of life at a household level through the introduction of appropriate technology; comprehensive skills development that was aimed at curbing youth unemployment; and innovative teacher training. In fact, the whole idea of establishing the ministry was based on the realisation that higher education, VET, research, science and technology needed prominence.

As a result, the MHETEC has four directorates namely: the Directorate of Higher Education and Human Resources Development; the Directorate of Vocational Education and Training; the Directorate of Science and Technology, Research and Development; and the Directorate of Student Financial Support and Namibian Qualifications Authority. While the functions of all these directorates are interlinked, the Directorate of Vocational Education and Training is directly responsible for VET.

The institutional make-up of the VET system

The VET system in Namibia comprises of institutions within MHETEC structures and those under other government departments. For instance, there are three agricultural colleges in the country, which are a responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture. There is also the Namibia Institute for Marine Resources under the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources. The focus of this study, though, is limited to institutions falling within the MHETEC.

The MHETEC is embarking on mass vocational skills development and education with production through Community Skills Development Centres (COSDECs) and technical training and technological education through VTCs. Below is further discussion of the two VET subsystems.

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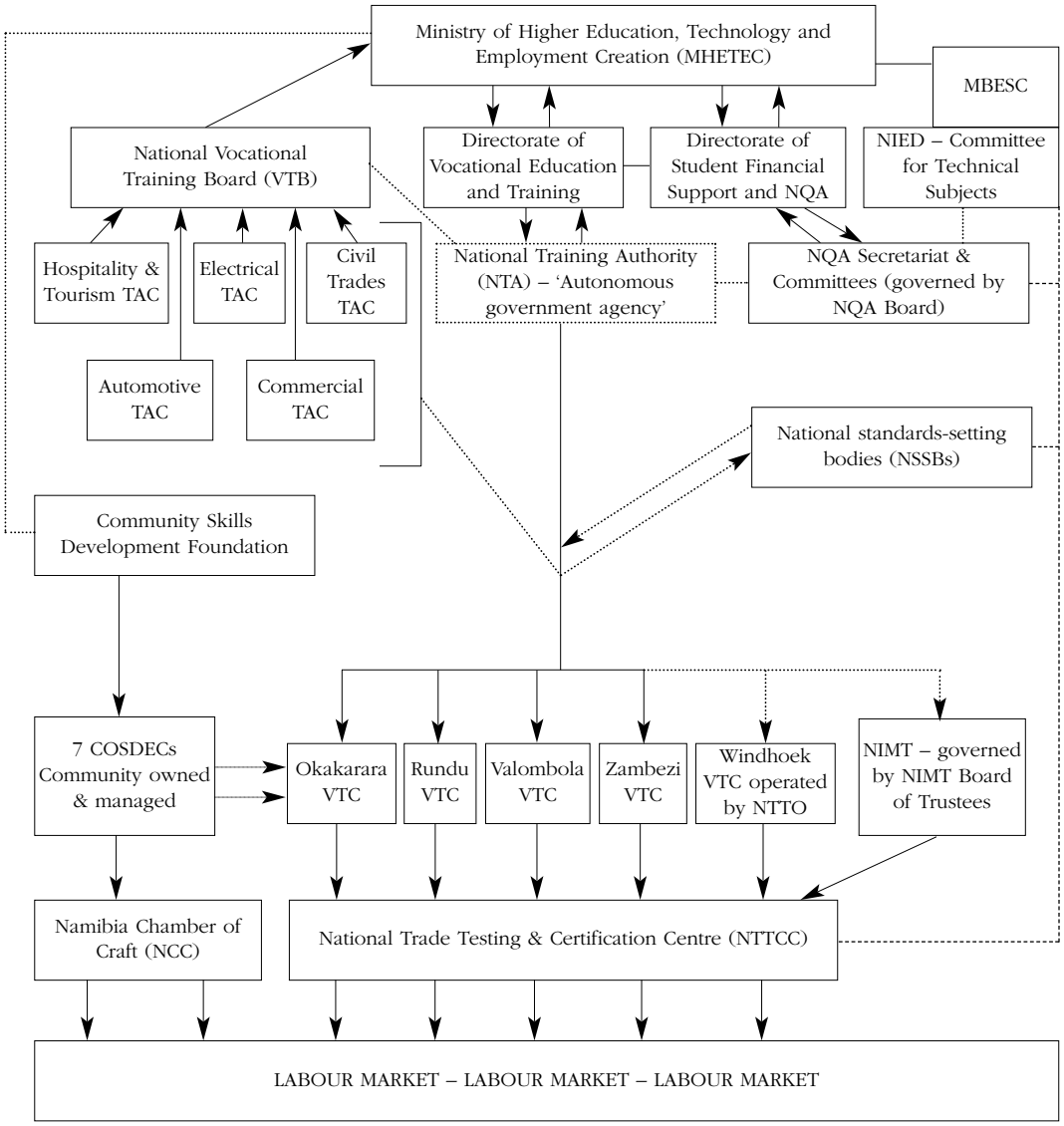
Figure 6.1: The structure of the VET system in Namibia



Note: (a) The arrows in the figure show the direction of information flow through advisory services, supply of technical support services or governance, and the movement of trainees in the case of COSDECs, VTCs and the NTTCC.

(b) The two-way link between VTCs and the Standards-setting bodies is that of accreditation of learning programmes and not governance.

(c) The WVTC and NIMT are regarded as autonomous institutions because they have their own boards of directors/trustees.

(d) The involvement of the minister in the COSDEC Foundation is as chairperson of the board.

(e) Articulation from COSDECs and VTCs is almost non-existent even though theoretically it is supposed to be happening.

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Community Skills Development Centres (COSDECs)
The idea of establishing COSDECs is the brainchild of the Minister of Higher Education, Training and Employment Creation. It was born out of an observation of high drop-out rates of high school learners and the inability of learners to acquire the VTC entry requirement of Grade 10 with mathematics and science. Thus, COSDECs were set up to capture these youths who were leaving the schooling system with weak skills.

Although not strictly under direct control of the MHETEC and not part of the formal structure of the VET system, COSDECs complement the formal VET system in Namibia. COSDECs are there to advance the vision of the ministry of addressing, on a large scale, the skills and skills training needs of out-of-school youth. There are seven operational COSDECs located in Keetmanshoop, Omaruru, Ondangwa, Opuwo, Otjiwarongo, Rundu and Tsumeb. They are tasked with identifying the training needs of their communities according to the economic potential of that particular community. They are aimed at promoting entrepreneurship and increasing the number of skilled people in the country. Provision of relevant skills at the COSDECs is through training and is competency based. Quality control is done by guilds or industry, thus the Namibia Chamber of Craft (NCC) and Community Skills Development Foundation jointly certificate qualifying apprentices.

Training at COSDECs is offered in a range of fields as determined by local circumstances. Programmes include bricklaying, business entrepreneurship, carpentry, computer literacy, needlework, plumbing and welding. The duration of training differs from one field to the other. The longest last up to six months. A need for entrepreneurial skills training has recently been identified through tracer studies, which found a high percentage of unemployment among those who have completed their studies. Through entrepreneurial skills training, trainees can be trained in starting up and maintaining their own entrepreneurial practices. However, it is important to note the international evidence that suggests that training for self-employment is far from easy to achieve (King & McGrath 2002).

All COSDECs are affiliated to the COSDEC Foundation, which was set up in 2000. The Foundation provides advisory services, technical support and other resources and co-ordinates their activities. It also assists communities to set up COSDECs as community trusts and facilitates the election of boards of trustees and the appointment of executive officers. All these structures are comprised of the respective community members. The Foundation also enables communities to source financial, material and technical resources from the government, the donor community and other national sources.

The board of the COSDEC Foundation is chaired by the Minister of the MHETEC. The board is made up of representatives from communities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and ministerial appointees. It has a support unit that executes the functions of the Foundation and has a manager, training manager and a business and financial Advisor.

FUNDING
Financially, COSDECs receive seed funding from the Foundation (from an annual grant from the MHETEC budget). There is also a government subsidy that covers running costs, which amounted to N$520 000 in 1998 (Thomas 2000: 91). Additionally, the Foundation sources funds from donor organisations, the private sector and individual benefactors. Currently, the European Union is the only significant donor.

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COSDECs are expected to sell their produce and services in order to generate income and have a right to charge affordable fees to trainees. However, officials are aware that some students cannot enter the VET system because of lack of funds. Therefore, fees have to be kept as low as possible. According to Francis and Burger (2003: 20), the income generating activities and training fees contribute an average of 10 per cent of operating budget per COSDEC. From their inception, the original idea was to have COSDECs self-sustainable and owned and managed by their respective communities. This has not yet been achieved.

The success rate of COSDECs

A number of studies have been conducted to determine the success rate of COSDECs (see, for example, Francis & Burger 2003; MHETEC & MBESC 2003a and b). Indications are that the new institutions had a slow start but now are operational. The success of the COSDECs largely depends on their locality. It is particularly crucial that they have sufficient support from local community in terms of management, administration and presence of learners to attend the actual training. There is clear variability in these regards across the COSDECs.

The evaluation by Francis and Burger (2003: 18) reports that only 30 per cent of COSDEC graduates earned a regular income for at least six months after completion of training instead of the 50 per cent targeted. Women comprise 49 per cent of COSDEC trainees, which far exceeds the original target of 25 per cent. However, women are over-represented in the 'traditionally female courses', such as dressmaking, cooking and computer skills while they are under-represented in trades such as building, welding, motor mechanics and carpentry.

Tracer studies conducted on graduates of COSDECs have provided the COSDEC Foundation with knowledge on successful and non-successful courses. The Foundation has since managed to take decisions on which courses to discontinue and which ones to implement. Examinations and evaluations conducted have also provided an indication as to which programmes seem to be problematic with respect to training materials, trainers or communication between the structures involved.

Challenges

COSDECs are faced with meeting set targets (outlined above) and other demands that arise in the process of their operations. The biggest challenge is the ability to generate income to support their activities. That is, they require sustainable funding so that they too become sustainable.

Moreover, one of the ideas behind the concept of COSDECs was to promote entrepreneurship. The implementation of the idea, though, seems to have departed from the original plan because most students do not consider self-employment as an option. That is, so far, COSDECs have failed to create entrepreneurs. In response, attempts are being made to redirect training at COSDECs so that it fulfils the goal of entrepreneurship and self-employment of graduates. The MHETEC and MBESC tracer study (2003b: 1–3) suggests that 'there is a need to re-orient the entrepreneurial training so that it is a much more integrated component of each of the core courses'. As a way of reconfiguring the implementation plan and reorienting training, business trainers have been employed to train the trainees.

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Francis and Burger (2003: 21) suggest further consideration of the idea of incubation centres, where a COSDEC would support potential new ventures by trainees and graduates. The concept of an 'incubation unit' implies that trainees will be assisted in setting up a business and later left to run their businesses by themselves. Again, it will be important that any such experiment should take cognisance of other international experiences such as the South African 'technopreneur' project (McGrath 1998b).

The role of the community in providing the training in COSDECs has also proved problematic. The concept of COSDECs involved identifying people in the communities who already possessed skills to train the youth. However, despite some success in this regard, it has been found necessary to recruit outsiders with the right technical, practical and theoretical skills.

Access is also an issue. Although COSDECs were set up for those with a Grade 10 education, there is an understandable desire to open them up to all in the community with skills needs. However, this has led to problems. The programmes are built on the assumption of English proficiency, yet many members of the society who would like to enrol are illiterate and/or struggle with English, which is the language of examination.

There is still a degree of uncertainty about the articulation between COSDECs and labour market realities. Francis and Burger (2003: 19) observed that the 'original needs analyses focussed on the expressed needs/demands of the target group without proper consideration of opportunities available in the local, regional and wider community'. Another study found that 'COSDECs that have undertaken market studies and applied the findings have generally fared better in terms of trainees finding work' (MHETEC & MBESC 2003b: 4). However, there is a need to better manage the relationship between expressed demand for training and labour market realities.

Vocational Training Centres (VTCs)

There are five VTCs, namely Okakarara, Rundu, Valombola, Windhoek and Zambezi. The individual VTCs are accountable to the Directorate of Vocational Education and Training. However, Windhoek VTC (WVTC), is governed by an autonomous board of directors called the Namibia National Training Organisation (NNTO). A sixth VTC, the Namibia Institute of Mining Technology (NIMT) is operated independently and is generally regarded as private because it was established privately and is also governed by a board of governors. There are also a number of small private VET providers, often supported with specific grants from donors and churches (EU-MHETEC 2001: 6).

Governance of VTCs

With the exception of the WVTC and NIMT, all VTCs report directly to the Directorate of Vocational Education and Training in the MHETEC. This means that decision-making and procurement are dependent on the approval of the Directorate and budget and expenditure are also dependent on sanctioning by the Directorate, as are staff appointments. Their employees are public servants and, therefore, their working conditions are the same as those of other government employees. Whatever income government VTCs generate has to go to the state treasury and not to the respective institutions. Some feel that this undermines innovation at the VTCs as new ideas need to wait for central approval and must be consistent with existing and planned budgets.

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Both the WVTC and NIMT are autonomous in as far as their governance is concerned, although they still rely on the government for most of their funding, but with a very large degree of difference between them. The two institutions control their funds according to their own defined needs and also rely on their marketing skills for more money. One way of achieving this goal is through designing and providing courses that are in demand by the labour market, even outside their traditional focus. Consultation with the MHETEC is not necessary in this regard, whereas with public VTCs approval of the MHETEC is essential. Also, the two institutions are able to hire and fire personnel as they deem necessary without getting government approval because their employees are not public servants unlike those in the other VTCs. As much as they are autonomous in terms of governance, they are not yet run as business entities and are not yet financially self-sustaining.

Funding of VTCs

According to Thomas (2000: 86), the government of Namibia spent N$1.23 billion on VET between 1997 and 2000. The average annual unit cost (the amount it costs to train a full-time trainee in a year) in 1995 was estimated at N$23 000 (NEPRU 1995: 3), while Thomas (2000: 88) calculated the cost to be about N$27 450 in 1999. This cost varies from one institution to the other depending on items included such as training fees, stationery/books, transport, examination fees, accommodation and meals, trainee's compensation and other factors. The government also provides a large bursary support to the majority of trainees. A bursary would cover unit costs.

The NVTA provides for the establishment of a National Training Levy (NTL) and Vocational Training Fund (VTF). However, the VTF is controlled by the VTB and up till 2002 it was dormant because the NTL was not yet introduced for employers to be able to make their contributions. In addition, the VTB, which is supposed to control the fund, had not yet appointed the head of its secretariat. The view of the industry, though, is that there will not be strong support for the introduction and implementation of the NTL if it is used to support 'more of the same' rather than improving the overall quality of VET (EU-MHETEC 2001: 27). Another broad-based consultation is suggested by the EU-MHETEC study in this regard.

Student enrolments and participation rates in the VTC system

Since 1992, student enrolments at VTCs show a steady increase but one that is far too small compared to those of higher education. Table 6.2 shows very few students enter the VET system annually. For example, only 614 students entered the system in 2002.

This means that participation rates in the VET system are extremely poor (Westergaard-Nielsen, Hansohm & Motinga 2003). A study conducted on behalf of the MHETEC and EU (EU-MHETEC 2001: vi) suggests that this may be a consequence of the limited provider capacity, the narrow focus of VET and the low esteem with which VET is regarded generally.

Training at VTCs takes four years and incorporates theory and practical training with work placements. The proposed introduction of competency-based education and training (CBET) will cut down the duration to three years. Practitioners in the system, though, complain about the difficulties encountered with placements because there are few industries prepared to take on apprentices. Consequently, there is consideration of establishing 'production units' by VTCs in order to provide experiential training. It is not clear, however, whether this idea is also driven by a cost-recovery motivation.

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Table 6.2: Student headcount enrolments at VTCs

Institution	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002
Zambezi VTC	35	32	45	129	n.a.	138
Rundu VTC	35	29	56	157	n.a.	317
Valombola VTC	50	154	127	260	400	471
Okakarara VTC	32	36	32	144	239	112
Windhoek VTC	n.a.	100	113	333	n.a.	426
Arandis VTC & NIMT	22 & 11	32 & 13	41 & 55	41 & 97	95	184
Total		**396**	**469**	**1 161**		**1 648**

Sources: www.op.gov.na/Decade_peace/h_edu.htm, accessed 19 November 2003; MHETEC (2001: 41); MHETEC (2002: 57) and information gathered during fieldwork
Note: In 2000 Arandis VTC became the second campus of NIMT. It will be noted that while some data could not be found, there is a clear indication of student enrolment growth from 1992 to 2002.

The average pass rates vary between 60 per cent and 70 per cent for internal assessments, but are only between 28 per cent and 32 per cent in the external trade tests. This indicates serious quality problems. Indeed, a report by Resolve SkillsWorks (2002) observes that there are currently no quality assurance mechanisms in the public VTCs. This has resulted in the production of poor trainees and maintenance of poor trainers within the system. The process of setting up quality assurance bodies is currently unfolding but also requires some clarity with regard to functions and co-ordination.

Johanson and Kukler (2003: 17) cite a 2001 survey that found that half of employers surveyed were dissatisfied with the quality of VTC graduates from the WVTC, arguably one of the better institutions. Employers are concerned about the slowness of curricular change and the outdated nature of much of the equipment used in training.

In 2001, MHETEC (2001: 20) reported that 100 (out of a total of 155) vocational instructors were 'professionally unqualified to teach at VTCs'. A vocational Instructor Training Programme (ITP) was started at the Polytechnic of Namibia in the same year. The programme caters for both new and existing trainers and is sponsored by the EU. Training leads to the awarding of a certificate at the end of one year and a higher certificate at the end of two years. The polytechnic maintains constant contact with the trainers, even after the duration of the training, through dedicated mentors at five VTCs. Already, 40 new VTC instructors and 30 existing instructors have been trained through the project. A diploma-level course (of three years), more focused on managing VTCs, began in 2003.

There are also concerns about the articulation between the supply of graduates and demand for them when disaggregated by trade. Johanson and Kukler (2003) argue that some trades appear to face an over-supply of graduates, whilst there is under-supply in other areas. Even in the autonomous VTCs, there is a tendency towards the provision of conventional trade offerings and little sign of market-led innovation.

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The Namibia Qualifications Authority (NQA)

The Namibia Qualifications Authority (NQA) was established by the NQA Act of 1996. The NQA Council comprises of 37 members representing the government, research institutes, VTCs, schools, various professional bodies from agriculture, industry and the service sector and employee representatives. Currently, the NQA covers the VET system but is meant to expand later to cover the whole education system, which includes general and higher education.

The NQA is responsible for setting up and administering a National Qualifications Framework (NQF), establishing occupational standards for any occupation, job, post or position in any career structure, accreditation of VET providers to deliver national qualifications that meet national standards, accreditation of VET courses as meeting the national standards and accreditation of persons to carry out certain activities in relation to national standards (or certification procedures). However, the NQA has no certifying responsibilities (NQA 2001: 1). It would appear that the establishment of the NQA was spurred by an influx of foreign qualifications into Namibia, which came via institutions that set up within the country and through students who study in foreign countries.

The National Standards-Setting Bodies (NSSBs), to be set up by the NQA, will facilitate the process of formulating standards and training requirements. The NQA Council (established in 1998) has approved the establishment of NSSBs in 12 fields of study. The NSSBs will consist of representatives of employers, providers, trade unions, the government and the NQA.

Although the NQA has been in existence for eight years, even in the VET area it has developed few new standards to date (Johanson & Kukler 2003). A major problem here is understaffing, with less than half of its posts filled in mid-2003 (Johanson & Kukler 2003: 19).

Trade Advisory Committees (TACs)

Besides being advisory bodies to the VTB, the function of TACs is to establish trade standards and develop curricula in specific trades. There are currently 16 occupational standards and 25 training standards that were developed and are being implemented by VTCs on the recommendation of the VTB.

Each TAC comprises of state representatives, training institutes and industry. TACs are regarded as 'the only formal and practical interface' between the VET system and the industry, but industry representation is almost entirely comprised of representatives from parastatals (EU-MHETEC 2001: 27). Nevertheless, the chairpersons of the TACs and their members are regarded by the government as members of the industry. Members of the MHETEC provide secretarial duties for TACs. Currently, there are five TACs – in the hospitality and tourism, electrical, civil trades, automotive and commercial fields. The relationship between TACs and NSSBs has not been clarified yet, nor is it certain whether TACs are going to be disbanded as the NSSBs come into operation.

The National Trade Testing and Certification Centre (NTTCC)

The NTTCC is an independent authority whose members are appointed by the Minister of the MHETEC. Its duty is to organise annual trade tests for each trade, prepare examination papers and award certificates to successful candidates. The NTTCC tests trades at Levels 2 and 4. Successful completion of Level 2 leads to a National Trade

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Certificate (NTC) while Level 4 leads to a National Trade Diploma (NTD). The latter is the highest national vocational certificate and accords the holder the status of being a qualified artisan. Trade testing involves tests in both theory and practicals.

Current vision and changes in the VET system

In its Vision 2030, the MHETEC sees its goal as being to 'provide hope and instil faith in the future to the youth and citizens of Namibia' through, among other things, developing an integrated and comprehensive vocational, training and career-education system, and co-ordinating the planning and development of a higher education system relevant to the needs of Namibia and individual students.

To achieve this vision by 2030, the VET system should have short-term and medium-term achievable goals. To this end, Ndjoze-Siririka (2002: 1) points out that the VET system 'aims to enhance national technical capacity through productive skills development that would give Namibia the competitive edge both regionally and globally'. Hence, the VET system has embarked upon a reform process that includes setting up the NTA while aiming at improving access, competitiveness and responsiveness, meeting industry's skills needs, quality assurance, management and leadership structures and financial provision and funding system (Ndjoze-Siririka 2002). These challenges are largely informed by the legacy of racial inequality, which was enforced by decades of colonial rule and apartheid. Moreover, it would appear that the MHETEC is beginning to grapple with the issues raised by a number of evaluations made by studies on its VET system.

The current changes being implemented in the VET system of Namibia are, therefore, targeted at achieving the above vision. These innovations include the new VET policy, improving access and equity, an NTA, CBET and making VTCs autonomous. This section examines each of these issues.

Introduction of the new VET policy

The MHETEC is in a process of introducing a new VET policy. According to the draft policy document (MHETEC 2000), the objectives of such a policy are to:

- promote an integrated, demand-driven competency-based modularised VET system;
- establish an open and flexible training structure that facilitates mobility within the education and training system;
- promote community-based training programmes for school leavers to acquire skills for both employment and self-employment;
- establish mechanism for the effective co-ordination of the VET system through the development of an autonomous governance and management structure;
- develop the national quality management system for VET; and
- facilitate the development of a financially sustainable funding system.

The underlying objective of this policy is to have a VET system whose policy is managed at government level, whilst implementation and day-to-day management of policy takes place through an autonomous body. This is expected to improve the system so that it is flexible and responsive to individual, community and national socio-economic needs. However, according to the EU-MHETEC study (2001: 12) the policy does not contain enough detail about the vision.

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Improving access and equity

Studies repeatedly show that the current VET system in Namibia is very restricted and limited. Very few students are able to gain entry into the VET system and very few who are currently employed are able to upgrade their qualifications. According to the EU-MHETEC study (2001: 9) only the NIMT and WVTC offer 'what might best be described as informal vocational skill upgrading programmes'. These are delivered to employees (usually sponsored by employers) and individuals who are prepared to pay for the short-term training. The reason for instituting such training could be driven by the fact that both the WVTC and NIMT have to generate funding as they are operating autonomously.

Thus, one of the main objectives of the government of Namibia is to increase access and make the VET system equitable. This will be achieved by increasing the current student enrolment population in the system 'by ten-fold' to about 12 000 student enrolments by 2007, according to Ndjoze-Siririka (2002: 1). Brewster and Burke (2002) however, suggest that a feasible target would be a full-time intake of 5 000 students by 2010, while adults should be catered for part time. There is, however, not yet a clearly outlined plan for such expansion.

According to the EU-MHETEC study (2001: 24), the VET system of Namibia could access additional large numbers of individuals if it realised the enormous training potential that existed in all economic sectors outside traditional trade training. It argues that many developing countries have attained participation rates of 3 per cent to 4 per cent of the population, and Namibia, with its population of approximately 1.8 million people, should have about 50 000 participants in the VET system rather than its approximately 2 000 enrolments in recent years.

Most importantly, such expansion should take cognisance of the number of female enrolments. Francis and Burger (2003: 25) claim that 'in most VTCs females now make up approximately half of the trainee population'. They observe that 'the increase in female enrolment is largely due to the introduction of tailoring and computing courses rather than larger numbers enrolling in traditional courses [for example, building, welding, motor mechanics and carpentry]'. However, Johanson and Kukler (2003: 15) counter even this partially positive picture by stating that their analysis of official statistics shows that female enrolments are only about 20 per cent of the total and are declining.

A positive development in the area of equity is that visually impaired students will be allowed to register with the Valombola VTC from 2004 (MHETEC 2002: 34). It is intended that this initiative will soon be spread to other VTCs.

There are also issues of progression. There is next to no progression of learners from COSDECs to VTCs and from VTCs to the polytechnic.Expansion of provision is a central challenge of the Namibian VET system. Some expansion will come from the existing set of state and quasi-state institutions (including COSDECs and the two state-aided VTCs). However, it will be important also to build other public and private (both for-profit and not-for-profit) sources of provision in a strategic manner. Crucially, this expansion of provision needs to be closely linked to mechanisms for improving quality

The establishment of the National Training Authority (NTA)

The idea of introducing the NTA seemingly has wide support in the VET fraternity in Namibia, especially if it is granted 'strong executive authority for managing the national training system' (Resolve SkillsWork 2002: 26). The policy implementation duty of the

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NTA is intended to include strategic planning and co-ordination, standard setting, accreditation, quality assurance and registration of training providers. The establishment of the NTA will take place concurrently with that of the National Training Levy (NTL).

It is essential that the levy be developed in such a way that it is easy to manage, yet brings about an increase in focused funding to the VTC system. The access of private providers to the system also needs to addressed clearly (Johanson & Kukler 2003).

The relationship of the NTA with the NQA with regard to quality assurance duties is not yet defined. Whilst it seems inevitable that the VTB and its structures will fall away with the operationalisation of the NTA, this is not the view of some actors.

Presently, a temporary co-ordinator of the NTA has been appointed, assisted by legal and curriculum advisors. At a later stage, representatives from the unions, civil society, employers, non-governmental organisations and the government will participate in the NTA Board. The board, in consultation with the minister, will appoint an executive eirector (or CEO), who will head the NTA Secretariat.

The expected outcomes of establishing the NTA are an improvement of efficiency in the system, bringing the government closer to industry or employers, an increase in participation of industry in determining skills requirements, and the improvement of management skills in the system; however, it is apparent that there is disagreement over the exact nature of the NTA's structure and role (Brewster & Burke 2002; Resolve SkillsWorks 2002; Johanson & Kukler 2003). In particular, MHETEC appears reluctant to devolve as much authority to the NTA as these reports advocate.

The introduction of CBET

Competency-based education and training (CBET) is being introduced in the VET system of Namibia. According to the proposed VET policy, the new system of CBET should be consistent with the general objectives of the VET system, which are a competency-based modular system, meeting the needs of the formal and informal sector economy, promoting entrepreneurial skills and recognising the need for lifelong learning and continuing education (MHETEC 2000).

Currently, the system is being introduced by the WVTC and NIMT. The WVTC has established a CBET Implementation Unit (CIU) whose duty is to work on the transfer of its subjects to CBET. It has already made presentations on its implementation to the Okakarara, Rundu and Valombola VTCs. Currently, GTZ supports the CIU financially, but it also charges fees for its products and services born out of its experience with CBET.

The autonomisation of VTCs

There is a drive to make VTCs autonomous, especially with the envisaged introduction of an equally autonomous structure, the NTA, to which the VTCs will be accountable. VTCs will be resourced through the NTA and there will be agreements and memoranda of understanding with the NTA on how they will independently acquire their resources. VTCs will be autonomous in terms of their day-to-day operations and will have the autonomy to decide on what they teach and on necessary changes required in their curricula. The government, though, would still want to see VTCs taking up social responsibilities as well.

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It would appear that the government is proceeding cautiously on the implementation process of autonomisation of VTCs. Some feel that the government does not want to let go of the control of VTCs. One of the areas pointed out by the government as being a challenge to the process is VTC location, which could lead to unfair competition among them because those located closer to industries have a relatively good chance to prosper. Ndjoze-Siririka (2003: 6) also warns that VTCs should take into account that they remain part of a national system and 'must take account of their pivotal role in the national economic development process'.

There is also concern that there is currently a serious lack of management capacity in most VTCs. Granting autonomy needs to be seen as a process in which the capacity of institutions, their managers and their boards is systematically developed.

Conclusion

Namibia appears to be embarked on a quite radical reform of its VET system. This reflects a growing acceptance of the weaknesses of the system as it has evolved to date, and a concern to better focus the system on meeting the needs of socio-economic development.

The weaknesses of the system have been well documented in a series of reports. There is limited employer involvement in training. There has been insufficient relevance to both the needs of the formal and informal economies and to economic and social development. Curriculum has been slow to change and the quality of delivery has been uneven. The system has remained small and costly; yet centralisation has been very strong.

There appears to be a skills shortage already and plans for future economic development are likely to exacerbate this. The system is faced with a dual challenge of better supporting both growth and poverty reduction strategies.

In the reform process, Namibia shows a great deal of congruence with international trends. An NQA is already in place and an NTA is under development. Public providers are poised to become more autonomous. Curriculum reform is under way. However, some of these reforms have proved slow to effect (the levy was addressed in the 1994 Act, for instance). Moreover, there remain areas of poor clarity regarding the details of the new system, especially where this is concerned with the management of relationships of power and authority between existing and new structures, and between the ministry and its agencies and institutions.

Whilst the reforms do suggest that a higher quality system may emerge, they are not so clear on how a series of more difficult challenges will be met. It is not apparent how greater employer involvement in the system will be developed and how training can become more relevant to current and future skills needs. It is not immediately clear how the system will easily expand from its tiny current size in order to have a significant impact. Without major expansion, moreover, the system appears to be very top-heavy with bureaucratic structures. Indeed, there may be more people involved in the new governance structures than there are instructors in the short run. Perhaps most seriously, it is far from clear how the VET system can be both an enabler for economic development, including diversification, and a contributor to attempts to address problems of rural poverty and unemployment.

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CHAPTER 7

South Africa: skills development as a tool for social and economic development

Salim Akoojee, Anthony Gewer and Simon McGrath

Introduction

After a decade of democracy, South Africa has achieved much in the way of transformation. However, as the government itself has acknowledged, the pace of change is scarcely fast enough to keep up with accelerating social and economic challenges (Republic of South Africa 2003). In seeking to meet both social and economic aspirations, the government has increasingly identified skills development as a crucial issue. In President Mbeki's recent statements on a national development vision, skills are seen as both a constraint on socio-economic delivery and a means of simultaneously addressing the need for international competitiveness and the upliftment of those in poverty and those who lack decent work (Mbeki 2004a and b). In his vision, skills development thus becomes a bridge for crossing the chasm between the 'two nations' that characterise South Africa's uneven historical development: a nation that is part of the global knowledge and consumerist First World and part of the poor and marginalised Third World (Mbeki 2004a).

In this chapter, we explore the efforts that have been made to overcome the legacy of educational and economic segregation and failure. We consider the extent to which new policies, institutions and delivery mechanisms are succeeding in building a new, inclusive and high-quality skills development system, and highlight some of the key weaknesses that still remain.

Setting the scene: economic and development contexts

The historical legacy of apartheid and colonialism

South Africa's vocational education and training (VET) system and its performance are profoundly shaped by the history of South Africa's colonisation by the British and the subsequent enshrinement of racism at the centre of social and economic policies under apartheid. South Africa's social, economic and political development pathways have been perversely shaped by policies that built divisions within the country and which advantaged whites both educationally and economically at the expense of other population groups. The attempt to build and maintain white power seriously distorted the economy, bringing about an excessive capital intensiveness in high-skill white enclaves alongside low-skill African labour, although the deliberate underskilling of Africans proved untenable over time. Education and training resources were heavily biased towards furthering white progress, and the logic of apartheid required the wasteful multiplication of educational administrations and institutions that were racially segmented. The result has been a polarised and unbalanced educational and economic legacy with which the new government has been grappling for the past decade.

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An overview of the South African economy

Notwithstanding attempts in the 1970s and 1980s to reform elements of apartheid, and significant upskilling of the African working class and growth in educational access since 1994, the segmented labour market remains relatively intact (Kraak 2003a).

Moreover, South Africa struggles to escape from the development path imposed under apartheid. The country's economic growth during that era was based on its role as a resource-rich, minerals-extraction economy, supported by import-substitution policies. Whilst the new government has sought to encourage a more export-oriented industrial sector in the post-1994 period, and although some success has been achieved in this regard in the manufacturing and services sectors (particularly automobiles), the tendency towards ever-increasing capital- and skills-intensity has not yet been reversed. This has the effect of causing a tendency towards skills shortages at the highest skills levels and increasing unemployment and reliance on survivalist activities at low skills levels (Kraak 2003a).

The macroeconomic policy response to this situation was set out in the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) document introduced in 1996 (Department of Finance 1996). GEAR used a typical adjustment approach in an attempt to contain spending and inflation while at the same time refocusing the budget to redress the spending inequities of the apartheid era (McCord 2003). It was believed that adjustment was vital to policy credibility and, hence, to foreign direct investment and long-term economic success.

The impact of GEAR has been uneven. Growth, employment and redistribution have all progressed less well than was envisaged. However, the reduction in inflation and the strengthening of a series of other economic fundamentals have allowed a progressive expansion of the social democratic ambitions of the state in areas such as labour-intensive infrastructural development. Exports have expanded significantly since 1994. The 480 per cent increase in exports to the rest of Africa between 1992 and 2001 (Altman & Meyer 2003: 72) points to the need to focus on intermediate skills for mass-produced manufacturing.

The identification of skills as a constraint on delivery, equity and competitiveness has led to a public debate about skills shortages in South Africa. However, current skills shortages appear to be relatively small in aggregate terms (Kraak 2003b) and to be more related to replacement demand factors (including net emigration, retirement and the effect of HIV/AIDS) than any likely growth in demand as a result of economic expansion. This is tied to the argument that scarce skills act as a constraint on growth, but are also kept relatively small by the lack of new demand coming from an economy in which employment is not growing fast enough.

Nonetheless, there do appear to be serious skills needs in some parts of the public sector, such as teaching (Crouch & Perry 2003) and nursing (Hall & Erasmus 2003). Smaller but often 'mission critical' shortages appear to be common across government departments, particularly at management levels, with high numbers of unfilled posts common (Department of Public Sector Administration 2002).

In the private sector, there does not appear to be a serious shortage problem in a quantitative sense in areas such as engineering or management. However, there clearly are concerns about quality and the need to shift from a pattern of employment with a

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heavy bias towards white males in senior posts. Although the government has stressed the need to increase the supply of biotechnology skills and their application, it appears that the sector is not showing signs of take-off at present and skills demand is stagnant. In information and communications technology (ICT), however, there does appear to be a major shortage of skilled professionals and technicians (Moleke, Paterson & Roodt 2003).

Several sectors show that there is a particular problem at the higher skills end of relevant occupations. However, there is a case for seeing the overall problem as potentially more serious at intermediate skills levels (Kraak 2003a). Whereas demand has been stagnant or even declining in some of the areas outlined above, it is striking that the fastest growing employment between 1995 and 1999 was in the craft/artisanal area (Kraak 2003a).

There are long-standing complaints that the South African economy has tended towards an underdevelopment of crucial intermediate level skills. Whilst there has been a radical shift towards black employment at these levels in the past 25 years, it appears that the South African economy may face serious constraints in successfully expanding production for domestic and international markets in areas such as manufacturing due to the weak skills base. The problem in the formal economy is also mirrored in the informal economy where South Africa is far weaker in terms of technical and craft skills than the majority of other African countries (McGrath 2003a and 2004b).

South Africa is widely seen as having an insignificant informal economy. There has been considerable disagreement about the size of the informal economy but current estimates of those in informal enterprises (including subsistence agriculture and domestic work) seem to be converging at approximately two million out of total employment of around 12 million (see ILO 2002; Devey, Skinner & Valodia 2003). However, the International Labour Office (ILO) argues that a more meaningful measure would include all those who are working informally (casually, at home, and so on) for both formal and informal enterprises. They estimate that this makes the total number of informal workers approximately four million, or one-third of total employment (ILO 2002: 40).

Comparative development indicators

All international comparative indicators are fraught with methodological problems. Nonetheless, they do provide some indicative insights into certain areas of relative strength and weakness in national development trajectories.

Probably the most important source for international comparison is the Human Development Index (HDI), which provides rankings for all seven countries in this study. The 2003 index shows that South Africa has fallen to 111th place, its rating of 0.684 being down from 0.741 in 1995 (UNDP 2003).

South Africa is a strong performer in relative terms in the area of education, although its better relative performance on current enrolments as compared to literacy is indicative of the apartheid legacy. However, the HIV/AIDS pandemic is clearly having a major deleterious effect on life expectancy. Crucially, the HDI indicates that South Africa is doing less well than it should for a country of its income level. The GDP-HDI rank of –64 is amongst the worst in the report. More seriously, South Africa appears to be regressing in HDI terms.

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In terms of the Gini coefficient, South Africa appears to have improved from being the most unequal country in the world. However, there was almost no change in the coefficient between 1995 and 2000 and it remains high at 0.57 (Gelb 2003: 5). Current estimates for the proportion of the population in poverty are in the order of 30 per cent to 40 per cent (Gelb 2003; Landman 2003).

Another oft-cited international benchmarking exercise is the World Competitiveness Report. In the 2001 Report (IIMD 2001), South Africa was the only African country covered and was ranked at 42 out of 49 countries surveyed. Disaggregating by the four elements of the survey, South Africa's rankings were:

- economic performance (a macroeconomic evaluation of the economy) – 47;
- government efficiency (the extent to which government policies are conducive to competitiveness) – 38;
- business efficiency (the extent to which enterprises perform in an innovative, profitable and responsible manner) – 35; and
- infrastructure (the extent to which basic, technological, scientific and human resources meet the needs of business) – 46.

However, as Budlender (2003a) argues at length, the Report has both a clear ideological orientation and a tendency to use perceptions rather than harder data. Moreover, it must be remembered that South Africa is being compared in this survey with more developed countries. Indeed, Budlender plausibly suggests that South Africa's very inclusion in the survey is indicative of it being of interest to international investors, unlike the rest of the region.

In 1996 the World Economic Forum initiated an African competitiveness report. In the 2001 report, South Africa ranked seventh, behind Tunisia, Mauritius, Botswana, Namibia, Morocco and Egypt (WEF 2001). Interestingly, Budlender notes that the country was generally above the trend line on the opinions provided by business, and below the trend line on quantitative data. Given South Africa's overall economic domination of the sub-Saharan economy, it is striking that three sub-Saharan countries were ranked ahead of it, problematic though the survey may be.

When these various surveys are considered together it appears clear that South Africa is not performing as well as it should be as in development terms on both social and economic indicators. It serves to reinforce the notion that South Africa is hampered by its past development path. Notwithstanding major new government initiatives in a wide range of social and economic spheres, South Africa is still seriously under-performing for a country with its wealth and resources.

The challenge of HIV/AIDS

The shift to prevalence surveys based on samples representative of the general population rather than extrapolation from maternity records has seen a significant fall in estimated sero-positivity rates in South Africa. Nonetheless, the estimated prevalence rate is still approximately 10 per cent, with highest rates being found amongst those aged between 25 and 34 (Shisana & Simbayi 2002). HIV prevalence is higher amongst women than men, and is spatially worst for people living in informal settlements.

The disease is expected to have a massive effect on future national development. The nature of the disease, with around ten years between infection and death, means that if

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the infection rate peaked in 1998, as is estimated (Budlender 2003b), the impact of an increased death rate is likely to be felt by about 2010. The loss of skills of those who die from AIDS, and, more importantly, the increase in the number of orphans left in its wake, suggest elements of a disaster waiting to happen. The overall social impact is likely to be extensive and is expected to negatively affect national development in various ways that can only be imagined at this stage.

Optimistically, there appears to be an increased awareness amongst youth about HIV/AIDS and, crucially, the beginnings of resultant behavioural change. Shisana and Simbayi (2002), for instance, report a noticeable increase in condom use and abstinence amongst youth.

The national development vision to 2014

The occasion of the third democratic election in April 2004 provided an opportunity for the ANC and President Mbeki to re-craft the party's national development vision. Through the manifesto and his speech to the opening of Parliament, the President outlined a vision of four key areas of delivery in the next decade:

- halving unemployment;
- halving poverty;
- improving employment equity; and
- accelerating broad-based black economic empowerment (Mbeki 2004b).

In setting out this vision, a clear role for VET is envisaged. Further education and training (FET) colleges and learnership programmes are highlighted as particularly crucial in reducing youth unemployment and in upskilling the nation. There are promises to re-capitalise colleges and make their curricula more responsive, and to strengthen Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) (Mbeki 2004b). Before turning to consider the state of and prospects for VET, however, we shall turn to a brief overview of the education sector.

The educational context

Key challenges after 1994 in educational reform

In 1994, the incoming ANC-led government was faced with a wide range of educational challenges arising from past inequities, the need to face a new global environment and aspirations for the future. It was essential that educational access be transformed, that new institutions be created and that a system of widespread quality be introduced, including new curricula and new modalities of teaching and learning. However, the GEAR policy meant that the education system was faced with the even greater task of addressing these major challenges in an environment of fiscal conservatism.

Governance

Education is administered both nationally and provincially. The country's schooling is administered and funded provincially, while all post-school provision is centrally co-ordinated by the national Department of Education (DoE), which also co-ordinates the allocation of provincial schooling budgets.

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The NQF and the architecture of the new education and training system

In the run-up to the first democratic election it was planned that there would be a single Ministry of Education and Training. However, this was finally abandoned. Instead, there was to continue to be a split in functions between the newly named Department of Education and Department of Labour (DoL). To make the situation more complex, on the education side there was also a division of responsibilities between the national department and nine new provincial departments. Competency for the educational element of the VET sector was to be shared between the two levels.

Notwithstanding these divisions of authority, the South African government remained powerfully politically committed to integration of education and training. This led in 1995 to the *South African Qualifications Authority* (SAQA) *Act* (RSA 1995), which proposed the development and establishment of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) designed to integrate education and training provision through a common set of qualifications.

Table 7.1: The National Qualifications Framework

NQF Level	Band	Qualification type
8	Higher Education and Training (HET)	Post-doctoral research degrees
7		Doctorates
6		Masters degrees
5		Professional qualifications Honours degrees National first degrees Higher diplomas National diplomas National certificates
Further Education and Training Certificate (FETC)		
4 3 2	Further Education and Training (FET)	National certificates
General Education and Training Certificate (GETC)		
1	General Education and Training (GET)	Grade 9/ABET Level 4 National certificates

SAQA is a body appointed by the Ministers of Education and Labour. The functions of the Authority are essentially twofold:

- promoting the development of the NQF through facilitation of the establishment of bodies responsible for establishing education and training standards or qualifications and for monitoring and auditing achievements in terms of such standards and qualifications; and
- ensuring that these bodies and structures work in keeping with the principles of the NQF and international best practices.

In 1998, SAQA published the National Standards Bodies (NSBs) regulations whereby provision was made for the registration of NSBs and Standards Generating Bodies. These bodies are responsible for the generation and recommendation of qualifications and standards for registration on the NQF. The Education and Training Quality Assurance

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(ETQA) regulations were also published in 1998 and provided for the accreditation of ETQA bodies. These bodies are responsible for accrediting providers of education and training standards and qualifications registered on the NQF, monitoring provision, evaluating assessment and facilitating moderation across providers, and registering assessors. There are two such umbrella bodies for the education system: the Council for Higher Education and Umalusi, which covers general and further education. There are 32 other ETQAs, including SETAs and statutory professional councils.

The state of education in 2004

Table 7.2 synthesises recent educational statistics for enrolments at all levels of education.

Table 7.2: Total headcount enrolments in education and training sectors, 1970s–2000

	Total headcount in previous years	Total headcount, 2000	Percentage black learners, 2000	Percentage black learners in previous years
Public provision				
Public higher education	340 000 (1988)	611 000	72%	42% (1988)
Public FET colleges	76 435 (1991)	350 465	84%	32.3% (1990)
Public schooling	5 379 665 (1975)	11 374 848	92%	87% (1985) 83% (1975)
Private provision				
Private higher education*	-	85 657	66%	-
Private FET colleges**	-	706 884	90%	-
Private schooling	103 854 (1990)	382 239	71%	49% (1990)

Source: Kraak (2003b), derived from Perry & Arends (2003); Fisher, Jaff, Powell & Hall (2003); Subotzky (2003a and b); Du Toit (2003); Akoojee (2003)
*Note: * 85 657 learners were audited in only 86 of the 97 registered private higher institutions*
*** These 706 884 learners were students in short-course study, not full-time equivalent enrolments*

Enrolments in early childhood development grew from 150 000 to 280 000 between 1999 and 2002, suggesting that full enrolment will be reached by 2015 (RSA 2003: 19). The gross enrolment ratio (GER) for primary schooling fell from 121 per cent in 1985 to 99 per cent in 2000, largely as a result of a tightening of the age regulations for admissions in 2000 (the GER had been 125 per cent in 1997). The GER for secondary schooling increased from 21 per cent in 1975 to 58 per cent in 1985 to 90 per cent in 1997 (Perry & Arends 2003), before declining slightly to 85 per cent by 2001, again as a result of the tightening of age-grade regulations (RSA 2003: 19). Whilst only 8 378 African candidates sat for the matriculation exams in 1975, by 1993 this had expanded to 337 821. This amounted to an annual increase in enrolments of 23 per cent (Perry & Arends 2003).

There has been an increase in literacy rates from 83 per cent in 1996 to 89 per cent in 2001 for the general population, while the literacy rate for 15 to 24-year-olds has increased from 83 per cent to 96 per cent (RSA 2003: 20).

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The FET college sector has also seen rapid growth, although this was concentrated in the 1990s rather than the 1980s. In 1991, 76 435 students were enrolled in colleges. By 2000, this had increased to 350 465. Whereas two-thirds of students were white in 1991, three-quarters were African by 2000 (Fisher et al. 2003). There was also an explosion in private FET provision, with total headcounts estimated at 706 884 by 2000 (Akoojee 2003).

Although the system has been massified in terms of gross enrolments, Kraak (2003) outlines the high levels of inefficiency that lurk behind these statistics and argues that these are an artifact of the inadequate planning for expansion that took place in the late apartheid period (1976–90). This is reflected in the Net Enrolment Ratios (NERs) for primary and secondary education. The GER for secondary education of 90 per cent contrasts with an NER of 57 per cent, whilst the figure for primary education falls to 92 (Perry & Arends 2003).

Drop-out and repetition rates continue to be high, and there appears to be a growing tendency for weaker students to be discouraged from writing the matriculation exams. Whilst the pass rate rose from 54 per cent to 62 per cent between 1996 and 2001, the numbers writing the exams fell from 5.2 to 4.5 million. Whilst total passes have fluctuated without showing any trend upwards or downwards, those qualifying for higher education have fallen from 79 768 to 67 707 over this period (Perry & Arends 2003).

The unfinished business of building a new integrated VET system

Building the new FET colleges

The South African technical college sector before 1994

Chisholm (1992) and Badroodien (2004) outline how formal provision for indigenous whites developed in the early part of the twentieth century alongside the importation of skilled labour from Europe, as South Africa sought to manage a growing problem of white poverty and unemployment as urbanisation accelerated in the wake of industrialisation.

Particularly after the *Apprenticeship Act* of 1922, the technical college sector developed rapidly to provide theoretical training for those already engaged in practical, on-the-job learning in apprenticeships. The college sector thus became tightly aligned with the needs of industry in a racially defined model (McGrath 2004c). By the 1960s, a significant shift of white labour into management and service employment led to growing pressure on the colour bar in the workplace, and on the technical college sector (Chisholm 1992). Chisholm shows how a set of leading metropolitan colleges were allowed to begin to move into the tertiary sector in the late 1960s through the *Advanced Technical Education Act* of 1967, resulting in the emergence of technikons. By the early 1970s, the moving upwards of the colour bar and the 'white flight' from craft work led to a growing corporate investment in technical training for blacks. However, prior to the *Manpower Training Act* of 1981, Africans were excluded from apprenticeship. Moreover, numbers of black apprentices never became large and colleges remained racially segregated. At the same time, there was a growth in non-college provision in the homelands in manpower centres and other institutions that were not part of the national certification system of the college sector (McGrath 2004c).

The de-linking of colleges from apprenticeships was highly significant. The older white colleges' historical articulation with employers declined, whilst many of the newer black colleges never had such links, a situation that was exacerbated by the location of a number

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of colleges in homelands and far from industry. This situation worsened as the numbers of indentured apprentices began to fall in the second half of the 1980s (McGrath 2004c).

By 1994 the college sector remained racially fragmented. Colleges were weakly linked to the labour market. Many students had no access to practical training. As a result, South African colleges increasingly resembled their counterparts across Africa, with a major problem of graduate unemployment. Of course, this problem was not primarily of their making, being reflected in the broader global crisis of youth unemployment (King & McGrath 2002).

Policy developments since 1994

The pivotal point in the transformation of the FET sector in the post-apartheid era was the release of *A new institutional landscape for public further education and training colleges* in August 2001 (DoE 2001). This report was preceded by an intensive process of policy formulation, which began in 1996 with the appointment of the National Commission for Further Education to investigate options for consolidating a fragmented FET sector (DoE 1997). On the basis of this report, the Green Paper for Further Education and Training (DoE 1998) was published and was immediately followed by the White Paper on FET (RSA 1998a). Concurrently, the *Further Education and Training Act* (RSA 1998b) was drafted and promulgated in November of that year.

The result of the *New institutional landscape* was that in a relatively short space of time, the 152 technical colleges in the country were reduced to 50 FET colleges, through a process of merger. The new multi-site 'mega' colleges comprise campuses within a relatively close geographic locality, depending on the geographic profile of the province. Therefore, instead of an average of 808 full-time equivalent learners in each college in 1998, there was an average of 2 774 full-time equivalents in 50 colleges, based on 2000 figures (Powell & Hall 2002). In each merged college, previously disadvantaged colleges were integrated with previously advantaged colleges, and a process began for better utilisation of resources.

The South African FET policy debate clearly mirrors international debates in a number of key ways (King & McGrath 2002; McGrath 2003b; McGrath 2004c). Essentially, the debate shows a broader South African educational policy tension between a neoliberal discourse and a continuing espousal of broader educational values. In this case, the tension is encapsulated between accounts of college transformation into autonomous, efficient and market-led institutions serving the needs of industry and of an emphasis on learning, personal development and citizenship (McGrath 2004c).

The language of South African FET policy draws heavily, though almost always implicitly, from the dominant neoliberal discourse about college transformation. The result is that the broad transformational challenge for colleges is based on an assumption of a need to respond primarily to the pressures of globalisation through greater national competitiveness. This is held to depend on better skills development. The international argument that public providers are not delivering against these goals is taken for granted. This leads policy to propose ways of making providers more efficient and more responsive to the needs of industry (McGrath 2004c).

However, this borrowing from neoliberal discourse as the only apparently possible and available language for talking about college transformation clashes profoundly with what

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appear to be the deeply felt views of the DoE and its leading officials about the purpose of education. Crucially, the DoE remains a firm believer in the merits of public education over private. Although private FET is accepted as part of the landscape, it is clear that the DoE is primarily interested in reworking the public providers. The greater autonomy given to the new merged colleges, with their own CEOs, is constrained by their continued accountability to both national and provincial FET officials and is not seen as leading to their eventual privatisation (McGrath 2004c).

Equally, the economism of the policy process is essentially superficial (McGrath 2000 and 2004c). The DoE has yet to go beyond general statements about the importance of competitiveness and the development of scarce skills to construct a clear picture or strategy for what it needs to do in response, including in the area of a new curriculum for intermediate skills development for a 21st-century context.

The role that colleges can play in community development also remains underdeveloped. The failure of the community college notion to attract policy support, the continued weakness of the adult basic education and training (ABET) sector, and the limitations of DoE-DoL relations (see below), have all constrained the emergence of a worked-out vision of colleges as key providers of skills development at all levels, particularly in more rural locations (McGrath 1998b, 2000 and 2004c).

There is also considerable uncertainty about the extent to which colleges should be encouraged to be a second-chance route to higher education. This is already happening in practice as a number of college graduates move on to technikons, in particular (Cosser 2003). Equally, it is happening in the sense that college programmes at N4–N6 are officially classified as higher education. However, there has been a lack of detailed consideration of the benefits and problems likely to accrue from such progression and how it can best be managed and nurtured (McGrath 2004c).

Whilst the merger process has taken place, the college curriculum has remained largely unchanged for the past decade. Delivery remains largely limited to national programmes, examined by the DoE, which are theory-based and examination-focused. Although some programmes, such as in hair care, have seen the conversion of previous curricula into NQF-aligned programmes, this has not happened for the bulk of learning. According to aggregated data, programmes in technical colleges fall into two fields of learning – business studies and engineering studies – with utility industries representing a growing but not yet comparable field (Powell & Hall 2002). The vast majority (93 per cent) of learners are enrolled in these formal, theory-dominated programmes. A growing number of colleges have introduced some practical, non-formal programmes, such as those registered by SETAs but this only accounted for 7 per cent of learners in 2000 (Powell & Hall 2002), and possibly double that by 2004. The current programme range indicates a clear predominance in colleges of theory to the exclusion of practical, work-based application. Despite the specific role of FET colleges in providing vocationally oriented education and training, there is currently no requirement for colleges to expose learners to practical experience in a workplace or work-related environment.

The DoL's new learnership programmes (see below for more detail) provide a ready-made vehicle for combining theory, practice and work experience. However, there is presently low participation in their delivery by colleges for two reasons. First, there is a financial problem with public colleges receiving funding from both the DoE and DoL in ways that could potentially mean that they were getting money for the same provision

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twice – a problem known as 'double-dipping'. Second, there is a problem with accreditation by SETAs, who are responsible for registration and funding of learnerships. Private providers need to be accredited individually by the relevant SETA in order to be able to deliver a specific learnership. However, the public FET colleges are not subject to the same process. Rather, each provincial education department is 'deemed to be accredited' by Umalusi as the relevant body for quality assurance, without the need for any accreditation process having taken place. This means that a college can also be 'deemed to be accredited' with a SETA if the particular province enters into an agreement with the relevant SETA. However, this system is not well understood by key parties and is clearly disliked by others who see it as lacking rigour and fairness. As a result, there is confusion and few registered learnerships being delivered in the public colleges. This is particularly ironic as many SETAs identify a lack of providers as the main reason for their poor delivery against the DoL's targets for them. Some provinces are seeking to solve this problem but more progress is required.

Although there are signs of progress, there is too little provision of in-service training for employees, or other initiatives such as sharing of facilities and staff. However, it is clear that colleges are not the only actors in building such quality relationships, and employers also need to be more proactive (Maja & McGrath 2003).

Colleges are also struggling to address other issues about quality. The nature and quality of staff and their teaching are important factors in quality learning. Whilst qualifications levels of staff are rising, new pedagogical and curricular requirements are placing major new demands on lecturers. There is a clear need to improve learner support systems in colleges. They need to address the reality that the vast majority of learners are learning in a second language, and have poor mathematics and science attainment (McGrath 2004c). The DoE has been at the forefront of South Africa's official response to HIV/AIDS and it is relevant to consider what colleges are doing both in terms of supporting learners who are HIV-positive and in the way of HIV/AIDS prevention programmes. Evidence to date suggests that there is only the beginning of a college-level response (Gamble 2003; McGrath 2004c).

All of the above necessitate that colleges are adequately resourced and maintained. The question about the adequacy of practical training, noted above, relates intimately to that of the adequacy of equipment. Many colleges have been undersupplied with laboratories and workshops, but this is not a universal situation (Badroodien 2003; Gamble 2003). The intended shift towards a more active model of learning implies that colleges need to develop new facilities such as computer laboratories, libraries and resource centres. The President's restatement of the national development vision acknowledges these challenges and commits the government to recapitalisation of the FET college sector.

The newly merged colleges face a crucial challenge in becoming new, merged institutions in reality as well as on paper. The leadership of the new CEOs will be central to this, as will be the development of management teams around them and councils to oversee and support them. These processes are still at a very early stage and will have an important bearing on the future performance of public VET.

The World Bank argues that greater college autonomy is a measure of quality (see, for example, Johanson & Adams 2004). However, it is important to balance autonomy against the legitimate concerns of provincial and national departments that colleges should contribute to overall strategies for education, skills and development. Where college

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autonomy takes them into undesirable levels of competition and short-termism, and away from national priorities, then it would be perverse to see it as a sign of quality (McGrath 2004c).

FET policy clearly aims at building responsive public institutions that should address education and skills development goals for both individuals and industry. This marks an important step forward in the development of the FET sector. The new policy has spawned 50 new institutions that are charged with delivering on these goals. Even though these institutions lack as clear a policy vision as would be desirable, it is evident that the sector is attempting to move forward in its delivery of quality and relevant education and training.

The prominent place that colleges have taken in key policy speeches since the 2004 elections and the promise of recapitalisation suggest that colleges are going to receive much more attention in the next five to ten years. It is to be hoped that the challenges of capacity and policy that constrain the system will be addressed as early as possible in that period.

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Building an inclusive and effective skills system

The state of skills in 1994

The 1960s and 1970s saw significant shifts in the labour market, as the corporate sector began pressurising the state to enhance the skills base of black workers in the urban areas to meet their changing needs. Thus, technical education for blacks began to receive more attention. However, additional pressures on the system came from the rising militancy amongst Africans, first through the Durban strikes of 1973 and spreading to the schooling system in 1976, manifesting through the Soweto riots. South Africa's military campaigns in neighbouring countries also forced big business to be more reliant on black workers as increasing numbers of whites were being conscripted for military duty (McGrath 1996).

In the aftermath of the emerging political activity of the decade, two commissions were set up. The Wiehahn Commission investigated labour and training legislation and the Riekert Commission investigated black urbanisation. Both commissions recommended the streamlining and rationalising of labour and training legislation, which culminated in the enactment of the *Manpower Training Act* of 1981. They also recommended the establishment of the National Manpower Commission (NMC) and the National Training Board (NTB). Both bodies were set up to give advice to the Minister of Manpower on labour and training matters (Kraak 1993; McGrath 1996).

One of the first major tasks assigned to the NTB was to undertake research with the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) into artisan training in South Africa. The result was the 1985 *Investigation into the training of artisans* (NTB/HSRC 1985) report. It questioned the ability of the old apprenticeship system to meet current technological skills requirements. Apprenticeship entailed serving a fixed period of three, four or five years depending on the specific trade. It also involved some form of 'on-the-job' practical experience, which was often unsupervised and unstructured. Theoretical study up to the level of N1 or N2 was undertaken on a block-release basis at neighbouring technical colleges. The *Investigation* provided a devastating critique of the apprenticeship model. It highlighted the low quality of such training and the lack of theoretical input. It noted that many were achieving artisan status by 'effluxion of time': a system whereby workers acquired artisan status after five years, irrespective of passing the trade test (NTB/HSRC 1985: 108–9).

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It argued that as a result of technological changes and accelerated production processes, the traditional time-based artisan training system was becoming less well defined and that there should be a greater orientation towards institutionally based apprenticeships (NTB/HSRC 1985). This report was followed in 1991 by proposals for a National Training Strategy (NTS) (NTB/HSRC 1991). This began to put in place a process of raising the profile of vocational training, but was highly voluntarist and largely silent on equity and redress (Kraak 1993; McGrath 1996). The NTS was rejected by the ANC and Cosatu and replaced by a new National Training Strategy Initiative (NTSI) as the 1994 elections approached (NTB 1994).

The emergence of post-apartheid skills policies

The NTSI provided much of the basis on which the 1997 Green Paper on a Skills Development Strategy (DoL 1997) was built and, from it, the subsequent National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS).

The Green Paper called for a levy-grant system aimed at increasing the investment and involvement of employers in the training of their workforce, new SETAs, and the introduction of learnerships (the model to succeed and extend the apprenticeship system). These recommendations led to the *Skills Development Act* (RSA 1998c) and the *Skills Development Levies Act* (RSA 1999).

The DoL has created a new institutional framework for skills development in which there is intended to be a high level of co-ordination at the national level, via the National Skills Authority (NSA), and at a sectoral level, via the 25 SETAs (Kraak 2003b). The new SETAs' role includes the evaluation of workplace skills plans (a requirement for enterprises to claim back grants against the levy) and the development of sector skills plans, developing and registering learnerships, quality-assuring training provision, and managing and administering the grants received through the training levy. At the national level, the NSA is responsible for advising the Minister of Labour on the NSDS at periodic intervals. Twenty per cent of the total levy income is set aside for strategic and developmental interventions, including a specific focus on skills development for small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) (see below). These moneys are managed by the National Skills Fund (NSF), located within the DoL.

At the programme core of the new system is the notion of learnership. Learnerships are legislated by the *Skills Development Act* to include a complex contractual agreement for a fixed period between the learner, the provider and the employer. The contractual agreement provides a framework for formalising the relationship between these three parties in realising the qualification. Beyond the formality of the agreement, this relationship requires high levels of co-operation to ensure the smooth planning and operation of the learnership. Learnerships are located at the core of the DoL's macro-strategy for skills development. The challenges facing the achievement of holistic skills development through learnerships are three-fold. First, learnerships must be in response to an identified need. Second, and following on from the first, the strength of the learnership concept is that they should offer learners who may not have had exposure to meaningful educational opportunities as a result of apartheid the opportunity to access education and training programmes that will lead to relevant knowledge, skills and work experience for entry into the labour market. Third, since many learnerships will be offered in areas of the country where there is limited absorption potential in the formal sector, many learnerships will need to equip the learner to be able to create and sustain

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employment. This implies that learnerships must move beyond the narrow confines of traditional apprenticeships and seek to build learners, from disparate levels of prior learning, to a situation of competence necessary for meaningful social and economic participation. This requires high levels of investment of resources to provide sufficient support to learners, both within the college and within the workplace.

Learnerships are not just for those who are already employed. There is also a strong commitment to learnerships for the pre-employed or unemployed. In this model, the employer commits to a period of employment during the time of the learnership, but not to subsequent employment.

In addition to establishing the legal framework for learnerships, the *Skills Development Act* also makes provision for the development of skills programmes, which would comprise an occupationally directed learning programme that leads to a credit towards a qualification rather than a full qualification. The purpose of the skills programmes is to allow learners access to short programmes that could be combined towards a qualification, thus allowing more flexibility and mobility.

In the NSDS of 2001, the DoL set 12 targets for the skills development system, with three cross-cutting equity targets, to be met by March 2005 (DoL 2001). The department has been able to report achievement of five of these targets in half the predicted time and is progressing well towards four others. There has been improvement against other indicators too, and it is clear that the department has achieved much in its attempted skills revolution. However, there were three particular areas of poor performance reported for the period up to March 2003. First, the achievement of new NQF Level 1 awards by workers was only 13 per cent of the target. Second, only 33 per cent of the target for learnerships/apprenticeships for the unemployed had been met (although this should be met when the data to March 2004 is released). Third, performance on equity against a range of indicators was very poor (DoL 2003). Together, these weaknesses suggest that there are grounds for concern about the equity performance of the NSDS.

The second NSDS (DoL 2005) makes clear the concerns of the DoL and other stakeholders about the areas of weakness in the first strategy. In the context of this study, perhaps the most striking element of the second strategy is the clear attempt to build bridges to the system overseen by the DoE.

The next section of this chapter considers the bigger picture of strengths and weakness of articulation between the DoE and DoL components of the VET system.

Attempts to strengthen the integration of education and training

Although functionally separate, the two parts of the VET system are supposed to be held together through the NQF. Shortly we shall turn to an analysis of the extent to which this has worked in practice, illuminated through a reading of how the government itself has shown concerns about the weakness of integration. However, before turning to that exploration, it is important to acknowledge some of the efforts during the first term of the Mbeki presidency to address policy coherence, and how these have impacted on the education and training sector.

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The President established a 'cluster' system through which departments in key areas such as social or economic policy are grouped together at both the ministerial and director-general level and are required to plan short- to medium-term strategies, which are then reviewed and adopted by the Cabinet at six-monthly *lekgotlas* (SeTswana for 'strategy meetings') in January and July of each year. A Policy Co-ordination and Advisory Services Unit in the Office of the Presidency helps to administer and co-ordinate these activities (Kraak 2003b).

The human resources development strategy

The most relevant output from this process for VET has been the *Human resources development strategy* (HRDS) (DoE & DoL 2001), a joint policy paper of the two departments. The HRDS sought to provide a baseline on supply and demand issues in human resources development, and developed a key set of indicators in relation to each sphere of education and training to be realised by 2005/6. It also established a national HRD Co-ordinating Committee (HRDCC) in which both departments meet regularly along with other government structures.

However, it is striking that there is little coherence between this strategy and either the *New institutional landscape* of the same year or the following year's *Tirisano strategic plan for the Department of Education*, 2002–2004 (DoE 2002c).

The NQF review

Also in 2001, the DoE and DoL decided to initiate a study team to investigate the NQF. This was in response to the widespread criticism of the operation of the system. However, the terms of reference of the investigation were narrowly prescribed so that the subsequent report could not raise fundamental questions about the overall rationale of the NQF and the way in which this was being delivered upon.

The report of the study team on the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework (DoE & DoL 2002) was published in April 2002. Whilst it was positive about the goals of the NQF and the importance of further work towards these, it made it clear that the expected bridge building between education and training had not progressed nearly as far as assumed. In this light, it found that there was still considerable tension and disagreement about the respective roles of the main institutional actors, including SAQA itself. The report painted a picture in which both departments feared that the system would privilege the interests of the other. Moreover, the report highlighted the poor performance of the system in terms of equity and efficiency. It reflected on widespread stakeholder concerns about complexity and bureaucracy, which were judged as constraining rather than enabling the achievement of the system's stated goals.

The NQF response

It took until July 2003 for the two departments to develop an agreed response to the study team's report. Their response, *An interdependent qualification framework system* (DoE & DoL 2003), is a carefully crafted piece that sought to revise the NQF model in ways that balance the two departments' particular interests. As with the study team report, it did not address the more fundamental questions about the suitability of the NQF approach as tried in South Africa.

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The NQF response acknowledged that there had been weaknesses in the overall project of integrating education and training. It proposed that a set of new meso-level structures be introduced beneath SAQA that would allow SAQA to stress integration whilst these structures addressed the sectional interests of education and training beneath the SAQA umbrella. Hence, for the VET system, Umalusi would continue to oversee academic and 'general vocational' programmes, whilst a new Trades, Occupations and Professions Qualifications Council would oversee vocational awards.

The departments are currently in advanced negotiations about revising the response (July 2004) but this has not yet led to any public statements. As they stand, these recommendations appear to have serious implications for the future of VET. There is a real danger that they reinforce the bifurcation between education and training rather than overcome it. Moreover, there appears to be a danger in the document that it sees colleges as only having a role in the delivery of 'general vocational' programmes. This would be potentially disastrous for their future, exacerbating their theoretical bias and further splitting them off from employers.

Young (2003a) highlights several of the questionable assumptions of the response. Amongst these, he points to the continued overemphasis on qualifications and to the need for the NQF to solve a range of problems that are far more complex and which reflect the unequal spread of economic, social and political power within South Africa. He also notes the likely continuation of overlapping and conflicting responsibilities, both in the FET and HE bands. However, it may be that the departments will find a new compromise that overcomes all or some of these problems.

Falling through the cracks? Skills for SMMEs

There is some mention in both DoE and DoL documents of the importance of supporting skills development for enterprise development. This was reinforced by the HRDS, which made skills development for the SMME sector (DoE & DoL 2001: 17) one of the 22 proposed objectives and one of the seven priorities for the first year of the strategy (DoE & DoL 2001: 19). In the context of skills development for enterprise development, the most striking point made by the HRDS concerned the work of the colleges:

> These colleges need to become more responsive to the employment opportunities in the SMME sector. This is the only sector where the prospects for employment growth at an intermediate level are strong. (DoE & DoL 2001: 32)

However, this issue has not really been taken up by either department in such a way that it has become central to their agendas, and there is little to show for the 'prioritisation' of the issue apart from a series of NSF projects (McGrath 2003a, 2004b). Both departments still seem to lack a good understanding of the realities of the smallest and most informal enterprises. Moreover, there is still a lack of a credible account of how skills development for such enterprises can be delivered under the NQF. International evidence suggests that the bulk of training in micro and informal enterprises is informal and that there is limited scope for making it more formal. The level of formality at present in the NQF seems a world away from the needs of the vast majority of such enterprises. This seems a prime example of an area where an effective bridge between the 'two nations' is still not being constructed.

Here too there are tentative signs of hope. The national development vision to 2014 will necessitate a far sharper focus on such issues and a response to this can already be seen

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in the draft second NSDS and plans to reform the small enterprise support system of the Department of Trade and Industry. Nonetheless, the extent and complexity of the challenge of micro enterprise development remain daunting.

Building bridges or reinforcing silos?

The two departments can point to the presidential cluster system, the HRDS, and its co-ordinating committee, and the joint NQF response as evidence of an increased co-ordination of activities in education and training. Equally, the draft second NSDS does show evidence of an attempt to make a practical bridge between the NSDS and the system of public provision. However, it is also apparent that the degree of co-ordination is less than ideal. Inevitably both departments continue to have their own interests and continue to promote and defend these. Moreover, several of the structures for integration, such as SAQA and the HRDCC, are not yet strong enough to cut across sectional interests.

A decade on: assessing and explaining successes and failures

The production of a balance sheet of the performance of VET in South Africa after ten years of democracy is highly challenging. Two problems are particularly worth noting. First, the legacy of the past is so profound that it both continues to haunt progress and can be used to claim that progress is more problematic than is really the case. Second, whilst ten years is a long time in the lives of those who most acutely need support from the VET system, it is a short time in attempting to transform systems, institutions and attitudes. As a result it becomes difficult to judge whether certain elements of the new system are fundamentally flawed or simply young and fragile. Nonetheless, we will briefly outline our analysis of some of the success and failures of the past decade before pointing to some reasons for these.

The enshrinement of racial discrimination in VET legislation is a thing of the past. Instead, there is a new language of equity and redress. The fragmentation of 17 separate educational departments and racially separate provider institutions has given way to one national education department and deracialised providers. The merging of public providers into 50 new FET colleges has been a crucial element of developing a new system. Moreover, between the national and local level lie new sets of meso-level institutions – provincial education departments on the one hand and SETAs on the other. There has also been the creation of the NSA to bind all stakeholders more closely to the NSDS, and SAQA as a structure to encourage better articulation between education and training.

The integration of education and training is also reinforced in a clear new policy vision and by the joint production by the two departments of the HRDS. The whole VET system is geared towards balancing economic and social objectives and towards combining the academic and the vocational, the theoretical and the practical. There is a clear drive also to build both the quality and quantity of VET. Enrolments and pass rates in public colleges are improving and there are signs of better relationships with employers. There has been dramatic progress on many of the NSDS indicators.

In spite of the clear policy commitment to equity and redress, delivery shows major weaknesses on these grounds. The NSDS is at its weakest on its equity targets, especially for the disabled, and is far from meeting its target on workers with NQF Level 1. The strong commitment to recognition of prior learning by both departments and SAQA is

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reflected only in very limited and patchy delivery. There is still little in the way of a national system for ABET and the numbers of learners progressing through the ABET levels to achieve the final certificate are tiny. The education and training needs of very small and micro enterprises continue to be neglected in practice. Access to structured education and training is far greater for urban than rural populations. Too little of the system reflects the needs and interests of the most disadvantaged members of South African society.

Although the NQF and SAQA are supposed to bring integration at the level of qualifications, it is apparent that the different institutional logics of the DoE and DoL continue to threaten the integrative logic. Indeed, the long delays in constructing a joint response between the two departments to the recommendations of the NQF review team, and the tensions that are apparent in the NQF response, highlight the level of conflict between the two over a common vision for the NQF and for education and training more generally.

Moreover, the rather careful criticism of the NQF in these two documents appears to significantly underplay the real performance of the new framework. The model has proved costly, complex and excessively bureaucratic. It has focused too narrowly on qualifications, apparently believing that these alone can bring about revolutionary change. As noted above, there simply have not been the promised impacts in terms of equity and progression. Moreover, SAQA clearly lacks the resources to match its ambitions. A radical review or replacement of the NQF appears to be unlikely for the foreseeable future. However, this does not diminish the clear failings of the present model and the probable limited impact of the proposed revisions.

The FET college merger process leaves unanswered a crucial set of questions about the focus of these institutions and about their coherence with other elements of the education and training landscape. We have highlighted two central areas of coherence problems. First, colleges, in spite of DoE policy, have struggled to access the NSF and are under-represented as providers of learnership programmes. Perversely, this is occurring whilst SETAs are publicly bemoaning the lack of providers to deliver on such programmes. This is related to a potentially serious problem of articulation about the college-oriented version of the forthcoming FET Certificate and the awards that are already in place from SETAs. Second, there are issues of articulation with the rest of the education system. Whilst the DoE seems to want its version of the FET Certificate to be more educational than the SETA offerings, there remains a challenge of making it be perceived to be of similar educational quality to school-based versions. This has particular implications for the question of progression from college to higher education.

As well as the problems of coherence with the education system, the DoL has the challenge of building new core institutions and programmes without a rich history of education in both these areas. As a result, the new system remains very fragile and an easy target for criticism, regardless of its great potential. Capacity across the system is weak.

Given the likely centrality of SMME development to the future of South Africa, it is especially serious that policies and programmes of skills provision for enterprise development remain so weak and that coherence is particularly bad in this area.

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Many of these issues are likely to be tackled in the final version of the second NSDS, the proposals for a revised NQF and the nascent plans for the FET college sector. Senior officials in both departments are clearly aware of many of the issues raised here and of the messages sent by the new development vision.

However, the greatest problem for the new VET system is the hostile labour market and economic environment in which these reforms have taken place. Take-up of learnerships and the placement in employment of graduates of colleges or learnership programmes for the unemployed are heavily constrained by the lack of employer demand for young labour market entrants. Progress towards a South African skills revolution is an important move towards overall development goals but is itself constrained by the weakness and unevenness of that development. Managing this paradox is perhaps the greatest challenge for the emergent system.

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CHAPTER 8

The Kingdom of Swaziland: escaping the colonial legacy

Jennifer Roberts

Introduction

This chapter examines the evolution and provision of vocational education and training (VET) in the Kingdom of Swaziland. It begins with a general introduction, which outlines the historical, political and economic context within which skills development takes place. This is followed by a brief look at the education system as a whole, before focusing on VET. The chapter ends with a short discussion of some of the key issues that have policy relevance and impact on the current, and possible future, provision of VET in the country.

The social and economic context

Geographic context

The Kingdom of Swaziland is a small, landlocked country, bordered on three sides by South Africa and on one by Mozambique. The country is the second smallest in mainland Africa and covers only 17 363 km^2. Although only 10 per cent of the country's land is arable, agriculture is one of the mainstays of the economy, accounting for 16 per cent of GDP. Drought remains one of the country's most serious natural hazards, and is currently a pressing concern as the country faces food shortages in the short to medium term due to regional drought.

Political and legal system

Until 1968, Swaziland was a British protectorate: this is relevant to the extent that a number of legal, social and educational institutions have been influenced by British models. The country operates as a constitutional monarchy, with executive, legislative and limited judicial powers being vested in the king, currently King Mswati III. The king's decree still is of great significance with respect to the appointment of senior officials. The prime minister is appointed by the monarch, who is also responsible for confirming members of Cabinet (who are recommended by the prime minister). Parliamentary elections were held in 2003, which meant that during the period of the study there was a change in educational leadership.

Population statistics

The country's population is fairly small, standing at about one million people.[1]

During the 1980s and 1990s, Swaziland showed a rise in population growth. However, since 1995, there has been a decline in the population growth rate. This has been attributed to the prevalence of HIV/AIDS.

1 Population estimates vary. The Swaziland Population and Housing Census put the population in 1994 at 929 718.

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Table 8.1: Population statistics

Factor	
Age structure of the population	
0–14 years	45.5%
15–64 years	51.9%
65 years and older	2.6%
Population growth rate	1.63% (2.9% in 1997 census)
Crude birth rate	36.4 per 1 000 (1997 Census)
Infant mortality rate	109.43 deaths per 1 000 live births (2002 estimate)
Life expectancy at birth	34.4 years (UNDP HDI report)
People living with HIV/AIDS	
Adults	33.4% of population
Women	89 000
Children	14 000
Percentage of population deemed undernourished	12%

Source: UNDP (2003); Kingdom of Swaziland (2003)

Life expectancy in the country has been steadily declining (from 47 years in 1970–1975 to 34 years in 2000–2005), again attributed to the influence of HIV/AIDS. It is expected that the disease will have a significant impact on the country's development as it is estimated that between 35 per cent and 39 per cent of the population are infected with the virus. The effects of the pandemic are visible through the shortening of the average lifespan and increased adult and child mortality.

Human development

The 2003 Human Development Report ranked Swaziland as 133rd in the world, with respect to various human development indicators. Swaziland's Human Development Index (HDI) value increased steadily between 1975 and 1995 (reaching 0.606) and then declined sharply by 2001 (to 0.547), a ranking similar to that attained in 1980. Table 8.2 summarises key human development indicators.

A number of these indicators, particularly those relating to education, will be discussed in more detail below.

The economy

The country operates on a free market system, but is heavily dependent on South Africa for both imports and exports. Despite the country's size, the GNP per capita was US$1 350 in 2000, which meant that it is ranked as being a middle-income country.

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Table 8.2: Human development indicators

Indicator	
HDI rank	133
Life expectancy at birth	38.2
Adult literacy rate	80.3%
Combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment rates	77%
GDP per capita (PPP US$)	4 330
Life expectancy index	0.22
Education index	0.79
GDP index	0.63
HDI value	0.547
GDP per capita rank minus HDI rank	-34

Source: UNDP (2003)

Economic performance has deteriorated since the early 1990s, with the average real growth rate of the GDP falling from 7.75 per cent during the 1980s to 3.75 per cent in the late 1990s (IMF 2002: 6).

Macroeconomic strategy

Swaziland's macroeconomic strategy is articulated through the National Development Strategy – Vision 2022 (Kingdom of Swaziland 1999). Following Swaziland's attainment of independence, economic growth and development plans were explicated in successive five-year plans. In 1988, the government decided that economic planning needed to be more comprehensive and various stakeholder-based workshops were held to inform the National Development Strategy (NDS). This document, released in 1999, spells out the government's economic priorities for the following 25 years. The vision expressed in the NDS is that 'by the year 2022, the Kingdom of Swaziland will be in the top 10 per cent of the medium human development group of countries founded on sustainable economic development, social justice and political stability' (Kingdom of Swaziland 1999: 2). At the time that this vision was developed, Swaziland was in the bottom 26 per cent of the group. The NDS articulates development priorities for all economic sectors, including education. One of the key objectives of the document is the 'creation of an attractive macroeconomic environment to increase investor confidence' (Kingdom of Swaziland 1999: 3). The document recognises the importance of 'appropriate education and training' in achieving social development goals.

Sectoral contributions to the economy

The relative contributions of different economic sectors to the GDP are as follows: agriculture – 14 per cent; manufacturing – 46 per cent; government, wholesale and retail – 40 per cent (IMF 2002).

Sugar is Swaziland's main cash crop, with timber and forestry accounting for a significant contribution to the economy. Agricultural processing (fruit canning and the processing of

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sugar cane) also plays an important part in the economy. In recent years the agricultural sector has been contracting, yet it provides employment for 30 per cent of the labour force.

About 60 per cent of the country's land area is designated as Swazi Nation Land, which is held in trust by the king and then allocated to tribal chiefs. Much of this land is used for subsistence farming. In 1999, Parliament passed the Land Policy Act, which allowed for long-term leases to be granted for agricultural and peri-urban land. This opens up opportunities for larger tracts of land to be used for commercial agriculture and the building of industrial sites.

Although the country has mineral resources, mining has declined over the last 30 years as ore deposits have been depleted. A decline in the international demand for asbestos has led to the closing of the country's asbestos mine as it was no longer profitable. The Ministry of Employment and Enterprise reported that in 2000 only 8 308 Swazis were employed in South African mines.

Swaziland's macroeconomic trends are closely linked with South Africa's. South Africa accounts for almost 80 per cent of Swaziland's imports and more than 50 per cent of goods manufactured are exported to South Africa. This means that factors affecting the South African economy (both positive and negative) have a ripple effect on Swaziland. During the years of South Africa's economic isolation, foreign companies wishing to establish a presence in the region often located themselves within Swaziland. The emergence of South Africa from this period of isolation and the lifting of sanctions in the 1990s is attributed for Swaziland being seen as a less attractive investment option for foreign companies (IMF 2002: 6). Swaziland, however, has benefited from the *United States Africa Growth and Opportunity Act*, which has led to the establishment of more clothing manufacturing sites.

Employment trends

The IMF report on Swaziland records that 268 000 people are employed, with the formal sector employing 94 000 (35 per cent) and the informal sector accounting for 174 000 persons (IMF 2002: 10). Of those employed in the formal sector, one-third are employed in the public sector. Table 8.3 shows paid employment by sector.

Average earnings for males are slightly higher than for females; the average monthly wage was E1 791 for males and E1 681 for females.[2]

Table 8.4 summarises employment by skills level (combining figures for public and private sector employment).

Formal employment grew strongly over the five years to 1990; however, since then employment has stagnated, growing by only 0.7 per cent in 2000. It is estimated that the unemployment rate in 2001 stood at 31.3 per cent (IMF 2002: 1). This was largely due to the fact that employment did not keep pace with labour force growth – between 1995 and 2001 there was a 20 per cent increase in the labour force, while total employment grew by only 7 per cent.

2 One emalingeni (E) is equivalent to one rand. Figures supplied by the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, calculated using June wage bill.

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Table 8.3: Paid employment by sector

Sector	Private sector (%)	Public sector (%)
Agriculture	29.0	7.6
Mining	1.5	0.
Manufacturing	29.7	0
Electricity and water	0.0	4.9
Construction	5.5	6.3
Distribution	14.6	0.0
Transport	2.1	6.5
Finance and business services	10.2	3.2
Services	7.0	71.9
Total number of people employed	63 598	28 554

Source: Figures supplied by the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, Swaziland

Table 8.4: Employment by skills level

Skills level	Number employed
Professional and technical	1 538
Administrative and managerial	2 314
Clerical	7 300
Skilled	2 615
Semi-skilled	10 252
Unskilled	37 380
Total	61 399

Source: Figures supplied by the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, Swaziland.

The expected impact of HIV/AIDS on economic growth and productivity

Current estimates place the HIV/AIDS infection rate at about 34.4 per cent (UNDP 2003). The same report estimates that 89 000 women and 14 000 children are infected. These statistics mean that Swaziland is ranked as the third worst affected country in the world, and in southern Africa (IMF 2002: 35). In 2001, an estimated 12 000 deaths were attributed to the disease and 35 000 children were orphaned.[3]

Infection rates have grown steeply: in 1992 only 4 per cent of the working population were deemed to be infected, while in 2001 30 per cent were thought to be infected. The pandemic is expected to continue spreading – in 2010 it is expected that one-quarter of all children will have been orphaned and mortality rates will increase, possibly to account

3 The report uses the term orphaned to refer to children who have lost one or both parents.

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for 2 per cent of the population annually (IMF 2002: 37). In other words, if the population were one million, then it is projected that there would be 40 000 AIDS-related deaths per annum.

As in other countries, it is difficult to get accurate statistics on infection rates and those cited in the report are based on women visiting antenatal clinics and men visiting clinics for sexually transmitted diseases. Based on this data, infection rates differ regionally and vary from 27 per cent to 41 per cent. Current statistics show that a higher percentage of women are infected than men, and that the working-age population are most severely affected by the disease.

It is expected that HIV/AIDS will have a significant impact on Swaziland's economic growth and on the standard of living. It is expected that the national savings and investment rates will decline, while household poverty increases (IMF 2002: 39). This is attributed to constrained economic output, a reduction in the country's tax base, increased health care costs and greater pressure on the public pension fund. As most of the manufacturing industry is labour intensive it will also have to contend with declining labour supply.

In 1999, the king declared HIV/AIDS a national disaster and in 2001 the National Emergency Response Committee on HIV/AIDS was established. Donor funding has been received, which has been channelled to programmes aimed at prevention of the disease and care for sufferers. In spite of the seriousness of the crisis, it was not possible, during the course of the country visit, to gather information on how this is informing human resources (HR) planning.

International aid inflows

Swaziland has been the recipient of international aid from various sources. In 2001, aid stood at $29.3 million, which equated to $28 per capita. Direct foreign investment stood at 1.7 per cent of the GDP, while debt servicing stood at 2.2 per cent of the GDP. Specific forms of international aid to vocational and technical education are discussed below.

The Swaziland education system

The nature of the education system

The Ministry of Education centrally administers education. Given the size of the country, centralised administration is the most practical option. Key policy documents include the education manifestos of the National Education Commission (NEC) in 1971 and 1975 and subsequent statements of intent, also know as millennium education policies. The 1975 NEC manifesto states that 'education is an inalienable right of every child', and also indicates that 'content must be work orientated from primary to the highest level'.[4]

The education system is structured in the following way:

- early childhood education;
- basic education (seven years of primary schooling and the first three years of secondary schooling – also referred to as junior secondary);
- upper secondary schooling (two years);

4 The education system at the end of the twentieth century: an overview, available on http://ibe.unesco.org/International/ICE/natrap/Swaziland.pdf

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- post-secondary and tertiary education (where learners can choose to either attend university, teacher training or a technical or vocational institute); and
- non-formal education or adult education.

Education statistics

Table 8.5: Selected education statistics

Factor	
Gross primary enrolment rate	124.5%
Net primary enrolment rate	93% (2000/1)[5]
Gross secondary enrolment rate	59.8%
Net secondary enrolment rate	44% (2000/1)
Gross tertiary enrolment rate	5.1%
School life expectancy for females	11.3 years (1995)
School life expectancy for males	12 years (1995)
Literacy rate	78% (similar for males and females)

Source: Kingdom of Swaziland (2001)

Table 8.6 summarises actual participation in education by sector for 2001.

Table 8.6: Aggregate enrolments by sector

Sector	No. of institutions	Enrolment
Primary	541	212 064
Secondary	182	61 335
Skills training centres	3	348
Vocational and Commercial Training Institute (VOCTIM)	1	242
Swaziland College of Technology (SCOT)	1	404
University of Swaziland	1	2 954

Source: Kingdom of Swaziland (2001)

Primary education, although not compulsory, is widely available. Swaziland achieved universal primary education (UPE) in 1985; however, this is being eroded by prevailing socio-economic conditions and in 2001 enrolment in primary schools stood at 212 064 learners.

In 2001 there were 723 schools in Swaziland, of which 541 were primary and 182 were secondary. School leaving examinations are written at the end of both junior and senior

5 Education statistics vary. Figures provided by the World Bank indicate that net primary enrolment of girls stands at 77 per cent and at 76 per cent for boys. However HDI indicators and country census data report this as being higher.

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secondary phases. The country has a national university, which is the main institution operating in the tertiary sector. Teacher training and nursing colleges also operate at this level, along with several vocational and skills training institutes.

Financing of education

Education receives 24 per cent of the country's national budget, with VET receiving only about 2.9 percent (see Table 8.7).

Table 8.7: Budget allocations by educational sector, 2003

Sector	Allocation in emalingeni	Allocated funds (%)
Primary education	243 803 209	38.90
Secondary education	192 609 927	30.73
Technical and vocational education	18 170 991	2.90
Post-secondary grants (grants to students, allocations made to the University of Swaziland and the Uniswa examinations council)	157 661 065	25.16
Teacher training	14 473 776	2.31
Total	626 718 968	

Source: Kingdom of Swaziland (2003)

Parents also pay user fees to schools. The Swaziland Vulnerability Assessment Committee (VAC) reported in 2002 that 64 per cent of households were prepared to take learners out of school in order to pay for more basic needs. Acute malnutrition and rising fears of food shortages appear to be one of the greatest threats to learners staying in school.

Schools fall into three categories: government, aided and private schools. Levels of parental contribution to the maintenance of the school and for the provision of learning support materials varies between different types of institution. In recent years there has been a mushrooming of for-profit ('commercial') schools, which fall under the authority of the Ministry of Enterprise and Employment. These schools are not registered, nor are they inspected or monitored. This means that there is no external quality control within these institutions.

Schooling

The country has adopted the Southern African Development Community (SADC) protocol of a ten-year basic education system. Although participation in primary education is high, there is a large drop-off at the end of 'basic' education with relatively low numbers of learners entering the senior secondary phase. There are very few tools in the country to evaluate the effectiveness of the education system, either at primary or secondary levels.

HIV/AIDS has had a profound impact on the operation of the education system. Both teachers and learners are infected, which leads to regular absences from school. In addition, there has been an increase in the number of child-headed homes, and learners

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are under greater financial pressure to either leave school early and find work or enter cheaper educational institutions, including adult education centres. In particular, girls' participation in the education system has been negatively affected as they are under increasing pressure to stay at home and attend to ailing parents or siblings and to take on adult roles in subsistence agriculture, cooking and home-making.

In secondary education, there has been increased emphasis on pre-vocational education, following various statements of intent. Donor funding has promoted the introduction of business-related subjects in 16 pilot schools (referred to as the Education 1 project). This pre-vocational curriculum aims to give learners 'hands-on' skills and also aims to include women in technology. The intention of the programme is that it will also encourage entrepreneurship. Encouraging learner participation in agricultural subjects has been a priority and agriculture-relevant subjects are taught in 75 per cent of secondary schools and 40 per cent of high schools.

Tertiary education

Swaziland University is the country's only higher education institution that confers degrees. In addition to the university, there are several teacher training colleges (operating in partnership with the university), a nursing college and several institutes offering technical, commercial and vocational training.

VET in Swaziland

The historical emergence of VET

Prior to 1946 there was no vocational education in Swaziland. During the colonial period and particularly between 1920 and 1940 most Swazis received limited formal education, usually offered by mission schools. Most who had attended these institutions left with the equivalent of a Standard 6 (Grade 8) education.

During the Second World War a number of Swazis served within the allied forces. On returning to Swaziland, these young men needed to find employment and be reintegrated into society. King Sobuza II then decided that there was a need for technical and vocational education in the Kingdom. The institution, now known as the Swaziland College of Technology (SCOT), was established in 1946. The institution was originally intended to serve as a skills training centre that provided practical training in trades such as building and carpentry. As the economy of the country developed, so more diverse courses were offered, including automotive skills and electrical engineering.

In 1966, trades tests were introduced and were linked to a system of apprenticeship. Trades tests can be written by a person who has received formal training or who has acquired skills through exposure in the workplace.

In the 1970s, the government decided that the institution then referred to as the Swaziland Training Institute should expand. Industry was growing and required more skilled labourers. The Institute therefore increased enrolments and offered more courses, including cartography, librarianship, laboratory technician training and public prosecution. A number of these courses have been discontinued or are now offered by different institutions.

In the 1980s it was felt that the country's vocational output should increase further. The establishment of more vocational training institutions was planned, as it was the intention

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of the government that each district should have a vocational training institution. However, due to funding constraints, this was not possible. In 1987 a new training centre, called Gwamile Vocational and Commercial Training Institute (VOCTIM), was established in Matsapha near the industrial heartland of the country. A number of skills centres such as the Manzini Industrial Skills Training Centre (MITC) were also established, taking a clientele with lower educational qualifications (see below).

At present the country has a range of vocational institutions, including the SCOT, which offers diploma programmes; Skills Centres and the VOCTIM offering trades certificates and acting as a conduit to trades tests; non-governmental agencies and parastatals, including the national handicrafts centres; unregulated private providers, which comprise a range of institutions including companies offering courses accredited through South African institutions such as Damelin College and others that offer their own certificates in business skills and computer literacy. In addition, a number of private companies offer 'on-the-job' skills training for workers. This institutional complexity will be examined in more detail later in the chapter.

Policy statements on the mission, vision and operation of VET

The term 'policy' can be understood in a variety of ways – one of the most basic distinctions is between policy as 'pronouncement' (that is a written policy statement or policy as codified through legislation) and policy as 'practice'. In this study it was necessary to focus more heavily on the notion of 'policy as practice' since there is no single, clear pronouncement on VET, in spite of a recognition of the need for greater articulation between education and the world of work, as expressed in various policy documents, such as the *Industrial and Vocational Training Act* (1982), the National Education Review (1985), the National Development Strategy (1999), the National Policy Statement on Education (1999) and the draft *Human Resources Planning and Development Bill* (2001).

Following the granting of political independence, the Imbokodvo National Movement Manifesto (1972), spelt out the key principles informing education and training, one of which was 'that the country's manpower requirements for economic development will determine enrolments and courses at the higher levels'. This statement shows a recognition of the relationship between development goals and the provision of education that prepares learners for entry into economic activity. The National Education Review Commission noted that since 1972/3 the aim of the government had been to train school leavers for employment (Kingdom of Swaziland 1985: 41). Following the expansion of the education system to meet post-independence demands, there was also a 'diversification' of the curriculum to include 'practical arts subjects' including woodwork, metalwork, home economics and agriculture.

The *Industrial and Vocational Training Act* provides the legislative framework under which the apprenticeship contracts can be entered into and also provides for the establishment of the Industrial and Vocational Training Board (IVTB).

The relationship between education and the world of work was further recognised at one of the stakeholder workshops held to inform the National Development Strategy (1999). During the course of this workshop it was noted that 'our school system is delivering a product for which there is very little demand', and several stakeholders emphasised the need for:

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- greater collaboration between industry and education;
- a coherent human resources development strategy;
- improved cost-effectiveness of the education system;
- taking cognisance of regional institutions in order to avoid expensive duplication of courses; and
- increased relevance of school and vocational curricula.

Many of these recommendations were subsequently included in the National Development Strategy document (Kingdom of Swaziland 1999: 30–32).

The National Education Policy Statement (Ministry of Education 1999: 2) notes that 'the ultimate goal is that graduates of the education system must meaningfully contribute to the development of both the cultural and economic development of the country'. This echoes early policy statements. The document goes on to say that the system has not fully addressed the problems of relevance, quality and accessibility, that curricular choices are limited by the inadequate provision of physical infrastructure and that there is an imbalance between academic and practical subjects (Ministry of Education 1999: 2–3). Given this problem statement, the vision of the education system is then expressed to be that 'the Ministry of Education shall offer a wide range of practical subjects', with the intention that this would change learners' attitudes towards these subjects and that 'education and training programmes shall…foster the skills that are necessary to participate effectively in the development of the country' (Ministry of Education 1999: 3). The document goes on to note that the education system needs to be sufficiently flexible so as to permit learners to 'make a living through gainful employment in both the formal and informal sectors 'after completing basic education (Ministry of Education 1999: section 3).

Although the document includes a section on VET (Ministry of Education 1999: section 10), these provisions pertain mainly to apprenticeship, with little mention of the role of higher and further education institutions. It is likely that this is due to the limitations placed on the ministry's legal mandate.

The role of the state in VET provision

There has been substantial debate on the role of the state with respect to VET since the World Bank statements that the public provision should decrease and that the private sector should take more responsibility for ensuring a more market-responsive VET system (World Bank 1991). This approach limits the role of the state to one of reduced (or no) provision and the creation of regulatory and enabling policy environments.

In Swaziland, VET is provided by a number of different institutions, with the state playing a significant role in the provision of skills training. VET providers include:

- public (or state-run) institutions – schools offering a pre-vocational curriculum, training centres for those who have not completed formal schooling, and SCOT for those wishing to register for certificate and technician courses;
- private institutions (both non-profit and for-profit);
- employers (on-the-job training); and
- partnership arrangements (apprenticeships).

Based on the statistics presented earlier in this report, enrolments in VET institutions account for only 0.3 per cent of the public education system and 20 per cent of non-school-based enrolments.

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Participation data was collected using enrolment statistics gathered from different institutions (SCOT, VOCTIM, National Handicraft Centre), enrolments to sit for trades tests (Levels 1, 2 and 3) and registered apprenticeships.

Table 8.8: VET enrolments by institution[6]

Institution	Enrolment in 2003
SCOT	483
VOCTIM	230
Handicraft Centre	163
Apprenticeship	174
Trades tests	757
Total	1 807

Those graduating from or exiting early from the formal schooling system have a number of routes through which they can access VET, which are summarised in Table 8.9.

Table 8.9: Accessing and exiting the VET system

Intake level	Qualification offered	Institution type
Age 16	Apprenticeship	Apprenticeship contract between employer and the DIVT
Form 2 (Grade 9)	Skills certificate	Skills centres Non-governmental organisations (e.g. church-linked)
Form 3 (Grade 10)	Trades tests/City and Guilds certificate Trades tests	VOCTIM DIVT
Form 3 (Grade 10)	Pre-vocational programme offered in schools – school leaving certificate offered	Schools (at present the programme is offered in 16 pilot sites)
Form 5 (Grade 12)	City and Guilds Certificate Diploma Diploma/certificate	VOCTIM SCOT Private providers
Any of the above	None	On-the-job training offered by employers

The VET landscape in Swaziland is further complicated by the fact that the institutions listed in Table 8.9 fall under the authority of different government ministries. Table 8.10 shows VET provision by ministry.

6 Based on information made available during country visits. Some of the smaller institutions may have been omitted.

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Table 8.10: Ministerial responsibility for institutions

Ministry	Type of institution [7]
Education	• Schools offering technical subjects • Pre-vocational pilot project in secondary schools • Swaziland College of Technology (SCOT) • Skills centres (Manzini Industrial Training Centre, Siteki ITC, Mpaka Vocational) • Gwamile VOCTIM • Rural education centres
Enterprise and Employment (Direct state responsibility)	• Apprenticeship • Trades testing • National Handicrafts Centre
Agriculture	• Agricultural skills training centres (e.g. Nhlangano Farmers' Training Centre)
Home Affairs	• Rehabilitation centre for the handicapped
Enterprise and Employment (Ministry has a small oversight role)	• Private providers – some are registered as businesses and offer training programmes, but are unregulated.

As is noted by the World Bank:

> diverse management accountabilities make training delivery complex, lead to duplication of efforts, do not permit mutual recognition of credentials and generate segmentation of the training supply. (Johanson & Adams 2004: 74)

These observations have a direct bearing on VET provision in Swaziland and they echo much of what key stakeholders said when interviewed. The Bank goes on to say:

> The administrative bifurcation does not facilitate the emergence of policies regarding a joint approach to the relationship between training and employment. The coexistence of various ministries sharing supervision for TVET has undermined the coherence of the system.
>
> More important, the accountability of TVET to one or more government ministries often results in training provision that is largely isolated from market forces, is subject to centralised curriculum decisions and is circumscribed by limited institutional autonomy. (Johanson & Adams 2004: 74,5)

Non-state provision of VET and skills training

Very little information is available on the extent of private sector provision in Swaziland, as the sector is largely unregulated, with trainers not having to register or seek accreditation. For-profit provision includes South African providers operating in Swaziland, which are regulated and quality assured through South African structures, and other business providers, which are able to establish themselves as private companies and then begin offering training courses. There is official concern that students are not getting

7 This table is illustrative only and shows some of the major institutions. It does not purport to be a full description of all providers.

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value for money from the latter group of providers due to a lack of quality assurance. However, as no data exists on these providers, suspicion of low-quality provision remains unsubstantiated.

In addition to for-profit providers, some non-profit groups (including churches) have established skills training centres and are sometimes associated with state-sponsored institutions. The skills centres receive some funding from the church, which pays the salaries of some staff members. The Salesian order of the Catholic Church also operates a skills training centre.

Companies offer 'on-the-job' training to workers, which is conducted at in-house training centres. These training programmes develop workers' skills but do not result in the acquisition of a formal qualification. As a result, the portability of these qualifications is questionable. It is also perceived that some companies have to offer further on-the-job training to graduates of formal programmes, suggesting a duplication of effort and some wastefulness in the system.

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Regulation of VET in Swaziland

A strange 'schizophrenia' exists in Swaziland with a highly centralised and highly regulated public VET system and largely unregulated private sector provision. Private sector institutions offering training programmes, either for profit or as part of in-house skills development programmes, do not need to register these programmes with any state authority. This means that the awards made through these systems do not fit into any formal qualification framework nor are they necessarily recognised by all employers. The only private sector participation in VET that is at all regulated is the registration of apprenticeships with the Directorate of Industrial and Vocational Training (DIVT).

As noted above, the Swaziland government has made a range of policy pronouncements on VET. However, these remain at the level of fairly general statements of intent and do not provide sufficient guidance to institutions on the legal status of different institutions, institutional governance, industry partnerships or curriculum development.

The regulation of the provision of VET is further complicated by the fact that responsibility for overseeing the various institutions and providers is shared between a range of ministries, with the Ministries of Education and of Enterprise and Employment taking responsibility for the bulk of provision. The lack of a single 'champion' for VET is frequently cited as being one of the reasons for fragmentation of the system, poor co-ordination and slow progress towards setting up enabling policy frameworks.

The *Human Resource Development and Planning Bill* (Kingdom of Swaziland 2001) tries to create an enabling and regulating environment within which VET could take place. The Bill proposes the establishment of a National Qualifications Authority (NQA), which would in turn establish a National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The NQA would be responsible for standards setting, quality assurance, registering bodies for establishing education and training standards and qualifications and registering training and vocational institutions. In addition, the NQA would be responsible for setting up the National Qualifications Forum, which would be responsible for developing 'a coherent national set of qualifications' with the intention that this would foster access to qualifications and raise the standard of achievement.

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Stakeholders see the NQF as necessary for a number of reasons – a desire to conform to SADC protocols, regional mobility of the labour force, and the need to be able to assess qualifications from different countries, particularly from neighbouring states. The fact that the system is relatively small and the post-school qualification sector accounts for a small percentage of total participation in public education (in terms of enrolments it represents less than 5 000 people) is not seen as a limiting factor.

Although the decision to embark upon an NQF appears on the surface to be a case of Swaziland again following the lead of Britain and/or South Africa, in policy discourse it is presented as flowing out of a desire to 'localise' qualifications and certificates instead of relying on imported qualifications such as the Cambridge school-leaving certificate or the City and Guilds of London's trade qualifications.

The creation of an enabling policy environment

Swaziland is still lagging behind the international trend towards a new state role as an enabler of training, in which it concentrates on setting in place policy frameworks that provide clear direction and under which institutions are allowed greater freedom to manage their own affairs. Swazi VET institutions note the lack of autonomy that the central control of VET offers. Most of them fall under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, which is responsible for such things as setting tuition and boarding fees, curriculum approval, setting of staff establishments and approving budgets. Institutional heads are given the authority to see to the day-to-day management of their institutions, with an academic board overseeing the academic issues.

Public-private partnerships in VET

In Swaziland there are two formally constituted bodies that facilitate contact between those responsible for the provision of VET and industry – these are the IVTB and the DIVT.

The *Industrial and Vocational Training Act* makes provision for the establishment of the IVTB, which is a stakeholder-based body representing industry, trade unions and VET providers. The 11-person board is made up of representatives from the Federation of Swaziland Employers; the two largest labour federations; the Ministries of Education, Enterprise and Employment and Employment and Works; and the colleges. This is a statutory body, which makes recommendations to the Minister of Enterprise and Employment. However, it has no executive capacity. Moreover, its mandate is limited to trades testing and apprenticeship and although colleges are represented on the board, it has no mandate to direct VET provision in institutions falling under the auspices of the Ministry of Education. A combination of these factors has led to perceptions of the board as being a 'toothless' entity and as somewhat ineffectual. There appears to be some acceptance within the government that the board should have greater authority to take decisions on matters affecting training more broadly and to play the role of a governing, rather than advisory, body. It is unclear, however, whether this is likely to result in any significant changes in the near future.

The DIVT was established in 1988 to oversee trades testing and apprenticeship agreements. Trades tests were introduced in 1966, just prior to Swaziland obtaining independence. Three levels of trades testing exist:

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- Grade 3: Unskilled. Candidates must have been working for three years;
- Grade 2: Semi-skilled. Candidates must have completed the Grade 3 test and have worked for an additional 18 months; and
- Grade 1: Skilled. Candidates must have completed the Grade 2 test and have an additional two-and-a-half years work experience.

Test candidates are not exposed to any formal training and simply learn by observing and through action. Trades tests were initially introduced for carpenters, fitters and turners, bricklayers, automotive mechanics and spray-painters. Over time the number of trades in which tests were offered increased.

Candidates can also include those who have completed some training at skills centres and wish to obtain a formal grading that is linked to salary scales. However, there are no real feedback mechanisms to these institutions on candidates' performance so that they can review the focus, depth and appropriateness of training offered.

Apprenticeship is a more formal process of skills acquisition and takes about five years to complete. The usual path involves the completion of two years' college-based tuition and three years' work placement. The apprentice enters into a formal contract with his/her employer, which is registered with the DIVT. During the work placement, the apprentice's employer must maintain a logbook wherein all the skills acquired by the apprentice are noted. Logbooks are submitted to the DIVT for review, and at the end of the period the apprentice automatically receives a Grade 2 trade qualification.

Financing of VET

In Swaziland the state provides the bulk of funding for the main VET institutions (SCOT, VOCTIM and the National Handicraft Centre). As VOCTIM and the Handicraft Centre have long-standing relationships with donor agencies – with VOCTIM having been established through a GTZ initiative and the Handicraft Centre having been funded through a technical assistance programme of the Chinese government – these centres also receive some funding from donors. The skills centres receive state funding, which subsidises staff salaries, and they also receive funding from private and charitable donors. In the VET institutions the bulk of funding pays for staff salaries and the upkeep of premises.

In addition, user fees are also charged. The user fees for SCOT and VOCTIM are set by the central government and payments are channelled to the central treasury and are not held by the institution. Fees for 2004 were set at E5 850 (diploma) and E3 900 (craft) for boarding and E3 252 for tuition,[8] representing an almost 100 per cent increase on the fees that had been charged the previous year. Institutional heads expressed concern at the effect that this would have on student numbers, given that there is limited access to state grants for students.

Students who have completed formal schooling (Form V or Grade 12) have access to state subsidies if they wish to pursue studies at the university or technician-level courses at SCOT. About 80 per cent of students at SCOT are covered under this system, while the remaining 20 per cent are either self-funded or have mobilised funds from companies or charitable sources. However, many of those applying to VOCTIM and the skills centres have not completed formal schooling and there are no subsidies available to these students.

8 Information obtained from a ministerial circular to college principals, confirmed by the principal of SCOT.

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Institutions are also allowed to raise funds through the sale of services or goods manufactured on site. However, even this income must now be paid into the central treasury and is no longer held by the institution. In the past the utilisation of this money was at the discretion of the institution head and could be used to fund line items not covered by the state allocations. It is unclear whether this money is earmarked for use by the institution (on request) or whether more productive sites cross-subsidise less productive ones.

The funding of VET has clear implications for access to skills training, particularly in a country where poverty is on the increase and reports indicate that parents, particularly in rural areas that are hardest hit by drought, are prepared to take their children out of school in order to pay for more basic commodities.

Factors influencing or shaping VET provision

Youth unemployment

The problem of unemployment is serious and growing, especially amongst the youth: 54 per cent of jobless people are under the age of 25 years and a further 29 per cent are aged between 25 and 34 years. The problem of youth unemployment and the mismatch between the number of school leavers and employment opportunities has been recognised for at least 25 years. In 1978, a report on 'manpower planning' noted that the 'the secondary school output had been much greater than the annual increase in the number of jobs' and it was feared that 'the problem would become very much worse over the next few years' (Colcough & Digby 1978: xi). In a presentation made at one of the NDS stakeholder workshops, Senator Ward noted that each year the education system produces about 15 000 school leavers, who then seek employment, yet between 1988 and 1991 on average only 5 000 jobs were created (Kingdom of Swaziland/UNDP 1995: 2). Given the slowing in economic growth, it is likely that the number of jobs created annually will have shrunk, yet the number of school leavers is likely to be similar or to have risen further.

One of the strategies to address this problem was the introduction of a pre-vocational curriculum in 16 selected pilot schools. Observations made during a parliamentary debate in 1990 led to the establishment of a commission to investigate the matter. The commission recommended that a pre-vocational curriculum be developed, which would equip learners with skills that would help them to find employment on leaving school or which would direct them into further vocational training.

The programme is intended to teach practical skills at secondary school level, prepare learners for the world of work and increase women's participation in technical subjects. As is stands at present, the pre-vocational programme targets learners entering Form 4 (Grade 11). Learners take four core subjects (English, Siswati, mathematics and science) and two core pre-vocational subjects (entrepreneurship and information technology). Learners then chose one elective: business studies, agriculture, home economics or technical studies. In addition to the teaching received in the classroom, each learner must complete work experience programmes, which are included in their final assessment.

One of the challenges of the programme is to ensure articulation with existing technical subjects in schools, as several of the subjects overlap with what is already on offer. The project manager indicated that the pre-vocational curriculum tries to be more practical and less theoretical and to equip learners with the hands-on skills and the ability to apply

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knowledge to practical situations. One of the criticisms of the existing technical curriculum is that it encourages rote learning and is too theoretical. It is hoped that through the pre-vocational programme it will be possible to change or update the curriculum offered in non-pilot schools.

However, international research suggests disappointing results with respect to the 'vocationalisation' of general education (Johanson & Adams 2004; De Moura Castro 2003). Although the vocationalisation of the curriculum holds some common sense appeal, research has not borne out the labour market justifications for such subjects (Johanson & Adams 2004: 50). Tracer studies have failed to show a positive impact on actual access to work after students leave school. De Moura Castro (2003: 37) argues that the real purpose of vocationalisation should be to make the theory of learning more concrete, noting that 'the purpose is pedagogical and not direct job creation'.

In addition to the financial challenges posed by this strategy, there are often insufficient teachers who are suitably qualified to teach these subjects – this is supported by the fact that very few teachers or candidate teachers in Swaziland have enrolled for technical teaching qualifications. Furthermore, when Mndebele and Hlope (2001) examined technical teachers' computer literacy levels they found that these were extremely low, making access to additional materials, new knowledge and the possibility of distance teaching less feasible.

In addition to the pre-vocational programme, several institutions also include entrepreneurship training modules in their programmes. There has been relatively little formal assessment of the impact of these courses. Unsurprisingly, it appears that one of the factors that limit the success of these courses is the difficulty in accessing business start-up capital on graduating.

Responsiveness of VET provision to industry needs

One of the aims of vocational education is to ease the transition between the world of schooling and the world of work. One of the ways in which this is done effectively is to ensure programme responsiveness to industry and economic development needs. This can be achieved through a number of mechanisms, including:

- establishing formal structures that link business with VET (such as the IVTB);
- aligning curricula to industry specifications;
- utilising work placements as a means to ensure exposure to real-life work environments;
- conducting tracer studies to determine whether graduates are being absorbed into the economy; and
- utilising feedback from industries, which can be solicited through a variety of formal and informal means.

The alignment of curricula to industry needs means that there must be ongoing interaction between those who develop and accredit qualifications and those who must absorb graduates holding these qualifications. Efforts were made to ensure that the pre-vocational curriculum was endorsed by industry and that it was designed to meet local needs. Two of the benefits of a new initiative like this are that it does not have to fit into existing curriculum frameworks and that instructors will be trained afresh to implement it. It is sometimes more difficult to redraft or reshape existing curricula, particularly those that are linked to internationally certificated programmes. Some institutions indicated that

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they have tried to address this through the development of local programmes that are accredited locally. The standards on which trades tests are based are decided by industry-based assessors. When a trade test does not exist in a particular area, industry representatives are expected to approach the DIVT with draft standards and thereafter a standards-setting exercise will be initiated.

SCOT's curriculum is redrafted every five years and industry representatives are involved in the process. One of the difficulties with respect to this is the need to pay industry representatives for their time, which is particularly difficult where fiscal constraints obtain. SCOT also seeks feedback on courses and enrolees' skills after the completion of work placements. This information is then fed into institutional decision-making processes and is tabled at a meeting of SCOT's academic board.

However, it should be noted that ensuring industry responsiveness is not always as straightforward as it would seem. One institution reported having been approached by one of the larger industries to institute a course for welders and fabricators; when the institution enquired how many students would be sent on the course, they were informed that the company would send only one person. Canvassing of similar industries found that there was little demand for the course and it was likely that industry would send only four people on the course – a course that had to be developed and was going to be fairly costly to conduct.

Skills planning

Skills planning surveys were conducted in 1978, 1986 and 2002. The responsibility for skills planning currently lies with the Public Service Ministry, Human Resources Planning and Development section. This ministry only assumed this responsibility recently and acted on it in 2002. The latest skills survey was conducted in collaboration with the university and was due to be released in December 2003. The ministry instituted the study after it was recognised that current planning and HR priorities were not based on any data. There was also a sense that there was an oversupply of graduates who were not finding employment. The HR Planning Directorate wished to guide institutions on the type of graduate needed by the economy.

It has been noted that decisions on what courses to offer are 'left up to the institution'. Other skills providers indicated that they received some advice from the DIVT on what courses should be offered. This approach suggests that there is very little co-ordinated planning with respect to what types are skills need to be produced. One hopes that the results of the latest national skills survey will address this problem.

HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS is a serious problem in Swaziland with an estimated 40 per cent of the population being HIV-positive. As in many other countries there are no accurate statistics on infection rates and this figure is only a projection based on statistical models. Even if the infection rate stands at 25 per cent, it would have a significant impact on skills production needs. As more and more economically active men fall ill or die, it will mean that younger men, who may not have completed their schooling, will have to be come breadwinners and more women will need to become economically active. The fact that under customary law women are seen as perpetual minors poses difficulties for women entrepreneurs, as they cannot sign surety or purchase property in their own right.

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Individual and state investments in skills development will show less and less of a return, particularly if skills training paths take up to five years to complete.

Amongst those interviewed there were different perceptions of who was responsible for labour force planning and the identification of future skills production needs. Some reported that DIVT was responsible for this function, while others felt that it was the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development. The fact that the agency responsible for doing this could not be identified suggests that future skills needs are not being communicated to the heads of institutions.

International donor aid

Much of the donor assistance directed towards the VET sector has been project based. The lack of a policy framework and the lack of a single co-ordinating agency have meant that funding has been directed through different ministries, and the project-focused approach has contributed to fragmentation and a lack of articulation between initiatives in the sector. Where donors have failed to build sufficient in-country experience, though the appointment of local project counterparts, the projects have not been sustained after the donors' withdrawal.

It appears that donors' assumptions about the way in which VET should operate, based on their own countries' experiences, has shaped or influenced programme implementation. The system shows most evidence of influence from both British and German models, which is not surprising given the country's colonial past and extensive assistance through the GTZ.

A colonial legacy

It has been suggested that some of the problems facing the VET system are a hangover from the colonial period. During the colonial era, academic education was prized and held up as the 'gold standard' for education, while technical or vocational education was seen as a second-class educational route to be followed by those who were less competent or unable to cope with the rigour of an academic programme. It is argued that this perception of vocational education remains, with students and their parents perceiving VET as a last resort. A similar attitudinal frame appears to be present within the Ministry of Education itself, as in many other countries.

International influence on the VET system is also seen through the certification systems that are used and in the influence on the schooling curriculum of an adherence to the Cambridge examinations curricula. The fact that much of the secondary school system's curricula must be aligned to international standards and curriculum frameworks means that there is a strong bias towards academic knowledge and that there is less local knowledge or regional focus in the examined curriculum. In addition, the fact that several VET institutions follow curricula laid down by the certification councils of the City and Guilds of London also means that these courses lack regional or local content or specificity.

Emerging policy issues and directions

In spite of the fact that several key policies (including the National Education Policy statement) make reference to closing the gap between the world of schooling and the world of work and the need for schooling to adequately prepare school leavers for

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meaningful economic activity, these appear to operate largely as statements of intent or desired outcome. Very little has been done, other than the introduction of the pre-vocational curriculum, to give expression to these intentions. One of the possible reasons for this is the challenge of addressing a very fragmented VET system, which is administered through various ministries.

The provision of VET is shared between four different ministries, with two ministries (Education, and Enterprise and Employment) being responsible for most of the vocational and skills training that takes place through formal institutions. This type of governance system makes it very difficult to develop a common, coherent approach to VET provision, particularly where inter-ministerial collaboration does not happen frequently.

In order to develop a coherent policy on VET, taking into account the range of providers and types of programme currently operating in Swaziland, it would be necessary to establish a new co-ordinating body, either within a single ministry or through the establishment of a dedicated inter-ministerial task team. For an initiative of this nature to succeed, it will need a champion who will be willing to drive the process and take charge of leading it.

A clearer statement of purpose will also make it easier to channel donor funds to support existing policy initiatives and to ensure that the various projects that are established all contribute to a common goal.

Whatever policy frameworks are developed, they will need to provide both a regulatory and an enabling environment. Several of those interviewed felt that current regulations constrained initiative and made it more difficult for VET institutions to respond to industry needs and limited their ability to innovate. The draft HR Bill attempts to provide a regulatory framework that will provide a common system within which different providers, public and private, will operate.

At present, VET provision could be characterised as being supply-side driven, with institutions having very little guidance on what courses should be offered, which leads to courses being offered based on the availability of qualified personnel and the availability of workshop premises.

It appears that the social desire for education that will lead to so-called 'white collar' jobs has skewed educational provision in favour of academic courses and away from vocational education. Vocational education is still perceived as a second-class option, and not as a valid, alternative route to gaining a qualification. Until this attitude is changed, VET will remain a low priority on the policy agenda and institutions will fail to attract entrants.

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CHAPTER 9

Key issues and challenges for transformation

Simon McGrath

Understanding the extent and limits of regional convergence in VET policy

It appears from the discussion thus far in this volume that all seven countries have shown significant levels of parallel development in their VET systems over the past decade and that this process looks likely to continue for the foreseeable future. Indeed, it can be argued that there is an emerging model of VET reform in the region that is analogous to the description of 'flying geese' for the model of East Asian development. The countries of Southern Africa are not all at the same point along a path towards a transformed VET system. In some, the transformation is well into an implementation phase; in others, implementation is beginning; whilst, in yet others, the policy debate is still ongoing or even only starting.

To say that there is considerable convergence between countries is not to claim that they are following identical policies. It does not mean that there are not important historical legacies. For instance, the uniqueness in the context of this study of Mozambique's Portuguese colonial experience and its civil war should be noted, as should the way that the legacy of apartheid has led to a strong focus on access and equity in Namibia and South Africa. It also does not deny the reality that national stakeholders, political dynamics and economic contexts have a powerful effect in the adoption, adaptation and rejection of certain elements of a broad international discourse of VET reform (Ashton & Green 1996). Equally, it does not suggest that international agencies and international ideas have forced a blueprint for VET transformation on helpless African governments. International ideas and agencies such as the World Bank, GTZ and the ILO have clearly been very influential (see McGrath 2002 and Chapter 1 of this volume for a review of key agency policy themes regarding skills development). However, there are significant differences between their general positions on the elements of transformation and their particular advice in different country contexts. National governments in the region continue to have considerable autonomy in choosing which elements of advice to take from which agencies.

What I do want to argue in this final chapter is that there are key elements in a regional debate about VET that have some salience for all seven countries. It is through an exploration of these themes that I will suggest some of the major challenges facing further progress in VET transformation in the region. These are areas where there is potential for individual countries to learn from each other. However, in so doing it will be important that they remember that it is dangerous simply to attempt the adoption of approaches from other countries. Rather, what is required is an adaptation that shows an awareness of both the context in which the initial experience took place and that in which the new adaptation will be grounded.

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In the rest of this chapter, I will focus on three types of issue for southern African VET systems. First, I will ask what the overall vision of VET is and should be and why transformation is seen as essential. Second, I will explore the place of VET in a broader policy environment – specifically through its relationships to economic and educational policy. Third, I will raise ten of the major debates in VET policy and sketch elements of their playing out in the region.

Because of the different development levels of the countries in the region and the differing paces at which VET reform is being implemented, there inevitably will be more reference to some countries than others in what follows. It is important to stress that this should not be read as implying that some countries in the region should be seen as models for the development of VET in the others. Indeed, it will become clear as the chapter develops that there are important negative as well as positive lessons to learn from the early leaders in VET reform in the region.

A vision for VET?

Internationally, VET systems tend towards two main elements in their vision (Crouch, Finegold & Sako 1999). First, they focus on addressing the problem of youth unemployment. In Chapter 1, I sketched out the origins of this concern in Africa as post-independence educational expansion increasingly outstripped the expansion of the formal labour market. I also noted that the phenomenon is not exclusive to Africa. However, where many African versions of the debate have differed from those in OECD countries is in the stress placed on self-employment and the informal economy as an important part of the solution. I will return to this issue later in this chapter.

Second, they seek to provide skills development geared to current and projected economic opportunities and challenges. There has been a huge growth of attention to this issue in OECD countries in the last quarter of a century as the policy community has become increasingly concerned about the implications for education and training of the perceived transition towards a globalised knowledge economy. One of the most visible recent political expressions of this was in US President Bush's 2004 State of the Union address where he promised massive new investment in reskilling for the new economy in what was essentially the launch speech for his re-election campaign. This issue has received less attention in much of Africa where notions of a knowledge economy seem far-off and far-fetched. However, some countries in the region (most especially Mauritius) do show a growing interest in new skills needs for a new economy whether that is an increasingly industrial one (as reflected in the growth of textile industries in Lesotho and Swaziland) or an informational one (as in the Mauritian vision of a 'cyber island').

Inevitably, there is a challenge for national systems in managing the potential tensions between these two objectives and in developing coherent strategies for addressing them (Crouch et al. 1999). A range of authors (for example, Williams & Raggatt 1998; Keep 1999; Payne 2000; Guile 2002) highlight that the new economy is not necessarily one that brings high skills for all.

For southern African countries there may be sound reasons for seeking niches within the increasingly globalised and 'knowledgised' economy, but skills development for these will need to be balanced against the realisation that such niches are likely only to provide employment for a small proportion of the economically active population (King & McGrath 2002).

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The hard question to be asked in several of the seven countries under consideration is whether they in fact have a clear vision for their VET systems. Even where there may be a clear internal vision within the relevant department or agency, it may not be well understood by the broader policy community, both within and outside of the government. Mauritius stands out in this regard as an example of a country that has sought to develop such a shared vision, built very consciously on lessons from East Asia.

A vision in itself is not enough. Clearly, it also essential that such a vision can be manifested in a VET system that does meet the shifting needs of learners, employers and the national economy.

There appears to be a consensus across the seven countries that VET transformation is necessary, although the sophistication of this vision varies. However, it is important to briefly interrogate this consensus rather than taking it as self-evident. An entirely plausible, and lengthy, list of weaknesses of VET systems can be produced. VET provision is costly and many graduates do not get formal employment. Some VET curricula are very old and some infrastructure is even older and more worn-out. The range of programmes often appears to have little to do with existing and potential labour market opportunities. Indeed, in some cases, it reflects a history of importation of curricula from other countries, most notably Britain.

Nonetheless, it is important to raise three health warnings about VET reform in the southern African context. First, a better, even a far better, VET system may not have dramatically positive effects on employment, growth and competitiveness (Ashton & Green 1996; Wolf 2002). These indicators are shaped by a far more complex set of factors and interactions.

Second, VET reform must be seen, in part, as an ideological project. On the one hand, the previous point about the potentially limited impact of VET reform on economic performance has led a number of authors to suggest that part of the attraction of VET reform is because politicians can then be seen to be doing something about issues such as employment and competitiveness (see, for example, Keep 1999, Payne 2000; Wolf 2002). On the other hand, many specific elements of the VET reform package have emerged out of the ideological certainty of neoliberalism, most notably from the World Bank. Some of the issues to be discussed later in the chapter, such as autonomy for public institutions and the role of private providers, are not value-free good practices but are based at least as much in belief as experience. Indeed, there is considerable evidence from countries such as Britain, the USA and Australia that questions the practical success of such policies (Harkin 1997; Falk 1998; Keep 1999; Unwin 2003). Even authors broadly supportive of the reform agenda, such as De Moura Castro (1995), argue that the pendulum has swung too far towards the ascendancy of the market.

Third, it must also be remembered that any likely impact for VET in the region is constrained by the tiny size of most of the national systems. Whilst the South African government can plausibly plan to have one million learners in its FET colleges by the end of the decade and even larger numbers accessing the Department of Labour's system, other systems can be counted in the thousands. Namibia, for instance, had total enrolments of less than 2 000 learners in all its VTCs in 2002, whilst the whole system in Lesotho and Swaziland is of a similar size.

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VET and the bigger policy picture

VET needs to be seen as a means to multiple ends. It does not exist in isolation from other policies but is intended to respond to, and is shaped by, broader policy imperatives and trends. The range of possible interactions is complex, including with areas such as science and technology policy and social development. However, here I will focus only on two key interactions: with economic strategy and with educational policy.

Articulation between VET and economic strategies and realities

At its core, VET is supposed to prepare learners for the world of work. This can be manifested in different ways: in programmes for youth yet to enter the labour market, aimed at both formal and informal sector employment and self-employment; in courses targeted at employed workers seeking new or improved skills in response to technological changes; or in retraining programmes for those who have become unemployed. All such programmes require that relevant skills and knowledge are developed for the current, and likely future, shape of the economy. However, this is an area in which VET systems internationally have come under severe criticism. Therefore, it is important to consider the extent to which countries have strong national information systems and effective national forums through which economic and VET strategies can be aligned.

Such an information system is relatively well developed in South Africa (Macun 2001; Kraak 2004) and Mauritius, whilst Swaziland's 2003 National Skills Survey shows a national appreciation of the importance of improved information about skills utilisation patterns. However, across the region generally, concerns remain about the evidential basis on which decisions about VET provision are made. This is notwithstanding the commitment of the *SADC Protocol on Education and Training* to ensure the development of adequate information regarding education and training supply and demand trends (SADC 1997).

Structures to articulate human resources development (which includes VET) with overall economic strategy are best represented by the multi-stakeholder HRD Council, established by a new Act in Mauritius in 2003. Similar bodies are planned in some other countries. South Africa has a HRD Co-ordinating Committee at present, but this is comprised entirely of government stakeholders. However, the government's 'NQF response' (DoE & DoL 2003) suggests the establishment of a public-private HRD Forum (see Chapter 7). South Africa also has a cluster system for government departments that is designed to promote cross-sectoral coherence.

Whilst some economies in the region are showing some impressive statistics, it is clear that a number of serious socio-economic challenges remain across all seven countries. There is a general regional unemployment crisis, with figures ranging from approximately 10 per cent in Mauritius to over 30 per cent in South Africa. The burden of unemployment falls especially upon youth and the rural populace. The region has particularly serious problems arising from several of the highest global rates of income inequality, and this is closely related to a high incidence of poverty, as well as taking apartheid-influenced spatial and racial forms in Namibia and South Africa. Mozambique faces the particular challenge of post-war rehabilitation.

The region is one of the worst global locations, too, for the HIV/AIDS pandemic (with the exception of Mauritius). Strikingly, this has resulted in declining Human Development Indices (HDIs) in several countries. Botswana, Namibia and South Africa are also amongst

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the worst countries globally in respect of HDI ranking as compared to GNP per capita ranking. The labour market impact of this is still poorly understood. However, one implication that the ILO shows is that of falling labour market participation rates. It estimates that male labour force participation fell by 16 percentage points between 1995 and 2002 in South Africa and by the same amount between only 1995 and 1997 in Lesotho, whilst Botswana experienced a 23 per cent fall between 1995 and 1999 (ILO 2003). The ILO has also suggested that skilled labour is relatively badly affected (ILO 2001a). This adversely affects output and places increased burdens on education and training systems. Moreover, the burden of dealing with HIV/AIDS is likely to depress corporate and family investments in education and training (Bennell 2000).

Much of southern Africa is also prone to drought. This further depresses national output and family incomes, yet again constraining educational investment at all levels, as well as producing considerable suffering.

In the face of these socio-economic challenges, there is an unevenness of economic response. All countries in the region can be argued to be at different points on a trajectory from a resource-based economy. The most diversified economy is South Africa, where economic diversification has been an ongoing process for more than a century, but where the economy still bears a heavy imprint of its former reliance on the minerals sector (Fine & Rustomjee 1996; Altman & Meyer 2003). Mauritius can be seen as being in a second phase of diversification, having moved from a sugar plantation economy through export processing to a new focus on ICT. For the rest, they are largely in the early stages of diversification from mineral or agricultural bases. This has often brought limited success to date, although Lesotho and Swaziland have been able to take some advantage from the US *African Growth and Opportunities Act* in developing textiles industries. It is important that national VET systems reflect the challenges and opportunities that such economic responses bring.

Articulation between VET and the broader education and training system

VET is only one part of a large education and training system. This raises issues about the appropriate education levels at which VET should be offered. The levels at which VET is offered clearly relate to decisions about the likely employment opportunities and ongoing skills development needs at differing skills levels. It is important to consider whether national VET systems have clear strategies for meeting low, intermediate and high skills needs.

Decisions about the positioning of VET provision lead on to questions about the optimal configuration of entry and exit points between VET and general education. It is important to consider whether VET systems should have formal educational requirements for entry or whether there is a place for recognition of prior learning. It is also important to ask what the appropriate base in terms of education, age and experience is for different levels. Whether VET qualifications permit learners to re-enter the academic stream, and at what level, is also increasingly a focus of attention for policy. The regional commitment to National Qualifications Frameworks means that all these issues will need to be addressed in those countries that have not yet come to firm conclusions through their NQF development experiences.

Inevitably, there must also be difficult decisions made about the relative levels of funding for VET and for primary, secondary and tertiary education. VET systems have typically

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been a rather minor element of overall educational expenditure in the region. The international trend towards greater importance for VET implies that this needs to be revisited.

More importantly, it is evident that much of the VET transformation agenda is highly expensive. Whilst the agenda also highlights the need for greater cost recovery from learners and higher employer contributions, there may well be considerable extra pressure on the public purse, at least in the short term. However, in differing ways in each country in the study, this greater claim from VET will need to be balanced against the desire to improve the levels of basic education enrolments (as in Mozambique, for example), concerns about the quality of secondary education (particularly in mathematics and science in the cases of Namibia and South Africa), attrition rates at the secondary level (as in Lesotho, Mauritius and Swaziland) or a desire to expand the university sector to meet perceived high skills needs (as in Botswana and South Africa).

The VET debates

System coherence

National VET systems tended to develop in an unsystematic way. After independence, many countries built new public institutions through the support of donors. The presence of multiple donors in a country resulted in a series of loosely articulated institutions that often reflected strongly their German, Danish or British partial funding and staffing. NGOs or churches established other institutions, typically as they became aware of regional gaps in provision or concerned about issues such as youth unemployment and rural development. A number of ministries also built their own institutions, which operate largely autonomously from the main system, such as agricultural and nursing colleges.

Indeed, often there is not one system, but two largely separate systems under the control of Ministries of Education and Labour, as is seen in countries such as Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique and Swaziland. In South Africa the system has evolved in a particularly unusual way with the Department of Education responsible (in partnership with nine provinces) for 50 institutions that are essentially funded and regulated separately from a Department of Labour system that is more closely aligned with private providers.

This lack of system coherence seems to be undesirable. Often it reflects a gap between a training and an education philosophy. This also reflects a division between theory and practice, and between an education-oriented and an employer-oriented model (although VET provision is often criticised for its weaknesses in both domains). The duality is particularly problematic if it results in a situation such as that occurring presently in South Africa where public provision under Education needs funding for upgrading (funds which the Labour system has) and the Labour system blames delays in delivery on a lack of providers (which the Education system has).

The best way to ensure coherence between such systems is a complex issue and different countries have varying experiences in this regard. At the heart of the complexity is the reality that decisions will be strongly shaped by political considerations, not least the relative influence of the two ministers and their senior civil servants. Often 'umbrella' agencies are proposed that should be independent from both ministries. However, experience shows that these are not necessarily a complete solution – a point I will return to in later discussions.

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National Qualifications Frameworks

One potential tool for greater system coherence is a National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Moreover, NQFs offer the possibility of greater coherence of all education and training provision, although the emergent Botswanan model is beginning life as National Vocational Qualification Framework before seeking to include schools and universities within its ambit. There may be merits in such an incremental approach (also present in countries such as Scotland) as opposed to attempts to build a full NQF in one go, as in South Africa.

There is a SADC-wide commitment to a Regional Qualifications Framework and a series of NQFs. The earliest NQF in the region dates back to 1995 (South Africa) whilst Mauritius and Namibia have also established Qualifications Authorities. However, the level of understanding regarding the implications of this commitment appears very limited in those countries that are yet to introduce an NQF.

In moving towards NQFs, it is vital that countries in the region remember that NQFs can take quite wide-ranging forms (Young 2003b). It is also important to note that some existing models have undergone quite radical revisions over time. The current review process for the South African NQF is very pertinent in this regard. Particular challenges exist in funding and managing such systems in ways that would be sustainable in poorer countries.

National training authorities

National training authorities have been seen in the international policy literature as a way of breaking the dual role of ministries in provision and regulation (Johanson & Adams 2004), as part of the broader ideological thrust to reduce the role of the state in VET. They also have the potential to act as an umbrella agency, free from domination by either Education or Labour ministries, although this rarely happens in practice. Agencies exist in Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia and South Africa but they take on different forms. The World Bank recommends that authorities should be autonomous, have significant employer representation and possess decision-making powers. It is also generally seen that such agencies need to have financial autonomy through levy funds (present or planned in Botswana, Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia and South Africa) or some other independent source. Otherwise, there is concern that they may be too subject to government interference.

However, there appears to be some hesitance in some countries about adopting the full model. The National Skills Authority in South Africa, for instance, has only advisory powers and its Chief Operating Officer is a Department of Labour official. Across the region, national training authorities remain new and largely untested. Major challenges for the future are likely to include ensuring their capacity and financial sustainability, as well as establishing their appropriate role in the overall VET system. The appropriate level of autonomy in each country will need to be established.

Finance

VET systems are relatively expensive. Especially in the technical subject areas, they are reliant on costly infrastructure and require low learner-instructor ratios. They also have been criticised for their lack of efficiency (see, for example, World Bank 1991; Middleton, Ziderman & Adams 1993). Indeed, it is on the grounds of their low rates of return and

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high cost that many agencies have justified their reduction of support to VET systems since the beginning of the 1990s. It is clearly important that the efficiency and effectiveness of VET systems in the region be addressed, but not at the expense of other considerations as is the tendency in some international policy writings.

Adequate finance is crucial to the development of high quality VET systems and to the achievement of many elements of the VET transformation agenda. However, many VET systems and sub-systems in the region remain highly dependent upon state funding. This is clearly the case for Lesotho, Mozambique and Swaziland, and for the education components of the Botswanan and South African systems. Until the levy system comes into full operation, it is also the case for Namibia. This dependence is particularly problematic as VET continues to be accorded a low priority amongst the conflicting claims on education budgets in these countries, and as aid to VET continues to be a low priority.

Levies can be an important source of funding for training, and different models have been adopted or are planned within the region. The South African model shows an interesting blend of a national strategic fund and a sectorally organised levy-grant system, whilst other models lack a sectoral focus. Whilst levies can generate large amounts of money in countries with relatively large formal sectors, such as Mauritius and South Africa, it is less clear how well they can function in very small countries with very small formal sectors, such as Lesotho and Swaziland.

There is also debate as to how effective levy-grant systems are in stimulating new training. Indeed, concerns have been raised in South Africa that too many employers continue to treat the levy as a tax and that the levy-grant system has not led to a change in the national training culture. However, it must be remembered that the system is only three years old.

I have also noted the current problems facing public providers in accessing the system in South Africa. These issues need to be taken into account when developing levy systems, as is being considered in Lesotho. Whether or not a levy model is introduced, it is clear that systems such as those of Lesotho, Mozambique and Swaziland need to access greater employer contributions. However, this may not be easy.

The funding problems of VET systems have also led to greater encouragement of public providers to cover more of their costs through their own fund-raising. This is clearly in keeping with the vision of them becoming more businesslike. There are three other main sources of funding that providers are increasingly identifying.

First, there is increasing fees. Whilst VET learners in the public system were once either apprentices or had their places paid for by the state, they are now increasingly private candidates paying full or only partially subsidised fees. In countries such as South Africa and Swaziland there has been a strong upward pressure on fees. Indeed, they doubled between 2003 and 2004 in Swaziland. What makes the case of Swaziland even more striking is that these fees are not retained by the institution but are remitted to the central Treasury, from which an institutional grant is then disbursed.

Second, there is fund-raising through the sale of products and services. Elements of training with production are most notable in the semi-NGO parts of systems such as the Botswana Brigades and the COSDECs of Namibia, where the interest is partly

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philosophical (Biervliet 1994). However, training with production also takes place in state institutions, such as those in Swaziland (although again funds go to the central Treasury). Nonetheless, concerns have been raised about the desirability of training with production, both because it can tend towards production overwhelming training, and because of the unfair competition that can result when subsidised public institutions start producing in the same areas as local enterprises (King 1985; McGrath & King with Leach & Carr-Hill 1995).

Third, there is provision of training at full cost for employers, typically though the delivery of short courses tailored to their needs. There is very little of this in the region, and in some countries it would be seen as inappropriate behaviour for public institutions, already recipients of state funds. Such offerings are slowly developing in South Africa, however, and appear likely to grow quite rapidly in the medium term. There do appear to be merits in expanding this approach across the region, although it will be important to balance such programmes with overall institutional and system-wide missions.

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Curricular reform

One of the most common criticisms of public VET is that it has curricula that are outdated, both in terms of learning theory and relevance to industry. This is a message that has been widely accepted within the region, at least in principle. There has been growing attention to the importance of making curricula more responsive to the needs of industry and more focused on promoting the employability of graduates across all seven countries. Competency-based modular training has been introduced in a number of countries and there is the beginning of concerns with core skills. The NQF revolution in the region will necessarily further such processes.

However, it is apparent that the process of curriculum reform is challenging. At different rates, each country in the study is having to address the international trend towards the growth of the service economy and the new pressures that this places on VET provision. As Gamble (2004) notes, this does not simply mean the introduction of new subject areas but also entails a realisation that service sector skills are often built on a very different foundation than are craft skills. Making informed decisions about new subject areas and new curricula is not easy, and employer and union participation cannot be assumed even where it is sought.

The further development of the NQF process in South Africa has raised concerns about the appropriate balancing of educational and employer interests in the new VET curriculum (Young 2003a), and this is seen clearly in the attempted compromise position of the 'NQF response'. South Africa has also seen a debate about the appropriate structure of new qualifications between those who favoured the currently dominant unit standards approach and those who favoured whole qualifications as the key focus.

It is also evident that capacity for curriculum development is often very weak and will be put under severe pressure by the need to align all curricula with new NQFs. Again, the South African experience of Standards Generating Bodies and National Standards Bodies (Cosser 2001) and the proposals for radical reforms to the model need to be carefully studied elsewhere in the region.

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Equity and access

Public VET systems are widely seen as having a duty to provide access to all citizens, and this is strongly stressed in the *SADC Protocol on Education and Training* (SADC 1997). Racial disparities in access, most pronounced under apartheid in Namibia and South Africa, have largely been eradicated. However, in some cases, such as Mozambique, there are major spatial inequalities in access, most notably a large urban bias. Gender biases in access to VET generally and gender stereotyping in enrolment in particular courses are still pronounced across the region.

Moreover, across the region, other forms of unequal access are evident. VET institutions are beginning to address equity issues around disability and HIV status but efforts are generally unsystematic to date. They remain particularly weak on developing awareness programmes, although some examples such as Lesotho's HIV/AIDS programme have emerged. Those planning equity programmes need to be mindful of the potential gap between pro-equity innovations in the VET system and the continuation of less progressive practices by employers. It is important that learners are not given false hope of employment and that innovations at the VET level inform policies for employment.

It is also important to note that there is a potential tension between the tendency towards greater cost recovery and the imperative of widening access to VET. Poorer students are clearly disadvantaged when fees are increasing rapidly, as with the doubling of fees in Swaziland in the past year. VET learners typically cannot access bursary funds, even where these exist for higher education learners.

A focus on the informal economy

One of the biggest trends in the VET literature on Africa since the late 1980s has been an emphasis on training for the informal economy. However, this appears to have had far less impact on southern African VET systems than elsewhere on the continent.

The region typically has less developed informal economies than in other parts of Africa. Nonetheless, it is clear that (self) employment in the informal economy is the likely destination of many VET graduates. Even in South Africa, those in informal work are estimated as being as many as four million, or approximately one-third of the labour force (ILO 2002). The relative proportion of those in the informal economy is likely to be greater in several other countries in the region.

However, there is often limited understanding of the nature of skills required in the informal economy and a lack of systematic addressing of the skills needs of both those already in the informal economy and those likely to enter it. The greatest focus has often been in NGO programmes such as the Brigades and the COSDECs. However, even here the adequacy of preparation and the degree of labour market analysis can be questioned.

It will be important that more attention be paid to skills development for the informal economy in the region. However, in doing so it will be crucial that the difficulties of interventions of this kind are understood. This may require a closer examination of experiences elsewhere in Africa whilst remaining mindful of the very different contexts involved. The latter will require the development of strong situational analyses of the informal economies of the region.

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It is also important to remember the great difficulty inherent in trying to make the youth successfully self-employed. International evidence shows clearly that success in self-employment is strongly influenced not only by skills but also by capital, experience and networks (McGrath et al. 1995; King & McGrath 2002). The typically long process of becoming successfully self-employed cannot easily be accelerated.

The quasi-privatisation of public providers

There has been considerable international policy advice to the region stressing the desirability of making public provider institutions more like businesses. This has been a central theme of VET reform discussions since the World Bank's *Vocational and technical education and training* report in 1991, and has been reinforced by other agencies such as the ILO (Grierson & Mackenzie 1996).

In particular, this advice stresses the desirability of stronger decision-making and fund-raising powers for institutions. The beginnings of a national debate in this regard can be seen in the more centralised VET systems of the region (Lesotho, Mozambique and Swaziland). The process of granting greater autonomy to public providers is already further developed in the other countries, most notably Mauritius and South Africa and more tentatively in Botswana and Namibia.

However, national ministries rightly have to balance such arguments against the importance of central leadership and delivery on national goals and this remains a concern even in those systems were autonomy has gone furthest. None of the countries of the region looks likely in the foreseeable future to allow the degree of institutional autonomy that is to be found in countries like England or Scotland. What constitutes the correct level of autonomy needs to be decided upon according to each national context.

Even where it is decided that greater autonomy is desirable, the extent of institutional capacity for self-management needs to be carefully considered, and a strategy for its enhancement put in place. South Africa has invested considerable sums of money in building management and governance capacities within its 50 newly merged institutions and it appears that the process is likely to be ongoing for a considerable period of time. It is probable that the challenge of institutional capacity development may be even greater and longer term in some other countries in the region. Greater institutional autonomy also impinges on the work of national (and in South Africa, provincial) bureaucracies. Part of the capacity development challenge lies in equipping and orienting officials for new, more facilitatory, roles, if these are deemed desirable.

The role of private providers

In a number of countries in the region, private non-profit providers have played an important role in the evolution of VET provision. This has included the role of NGOs such as the Foundation for Education with Production in establishing the Brigades system in Botswana and the more recent work of the COSDEC Foundation in Namibia with its Community Skills Development Centres. Churches have also played a significant role in provision in countries such as Lesotho and Swaziland. In such cases there has tended to be a relatively good relationship between the state and the non-profit providers (although the relationship of the Brigades and the Ministry of Education has not always been positive) and their institutions have often become state-aided.

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The role of private for-profit providers has been more contentious. Again, the World Bank has led the way in international advice recommending a greater role for private providers (World Bank 1991). Claims are made for the greater efficiency and responsiveness of such providers as compared to public institutions and it is argued that they should be free from excessive regulatory requirements and should be able to access state funding.

In practice, little is known about the size and scope of private provision in most countries in the region (but see Mudariki, Malikongwa, Kgosi & Weeks 1997 for Botswana and Akoojee 2003 for South Africa), although the international tendency towards urban location and a focus on commercial and ICT subjects does appear to hold to a large extent across the region (Atchoarena & Esquieu 2002).

In spite of the international arguments in favour of private provision, and official recognition of its role in the SADC protocol (SADC 1997), many national officials appear either hostile or indifferent to such institutions. It is important to consider the extent to which such hesitations are justifiable. Across the region, there is an apparent need for clearer policies and strategies for regulation.

Where skills levies exist, it is sometimes possible for private providers to access state funds, as in Mauritius and South Africa. However, the South African experience to date clearly shows the problems that can be caused by a separation of funding and regulation systems between Departments of Education and Labour.

The status of VET

One of the greatest challenges for VET is a continuation of its low status in the eyes of many learners, parents, employers and policy-makers, a problem that is identified clearly in the Botswana, Mauritius, Mozambique and Swaziland chapters, but which largely holds also in the other countries. It is a problem that seems particularly pressing for the pre-vocational systems of countries such as Lesotho, Mauritius and Swaziland. Some proponents of NQFs argue that one of their key advantages is that they address the parity of esteem problem between academic and vocational education. However, it is clearly over-simplistic and naïve to think that the status of academic and vocational education is equalised simply by conflating qualifications.

This problem has its roots in the colonial system where academic education was the route to modernity, social status and relative prosperity. Particularly in South Africa and Namibia, it was also apparent that black access to such education was deliberately limited during the colonial period. A rational preference for academic education continued in the early independence period due to the better employment and income prospects it offered, as Foster (1965) clearly showed from his Ghanaian research. Although the economic rationality of such a position appears less certain in the current era (King & Martin 2000), there does appear to be a strong continued legacy.

Indeed, the challenge of VET's poor status is not easily solved, as the promotion of attitudinal change is highly complex. The most powerful potential contributors to a change in VET's status would be an improvement in VET quality and in the placement of VET learners in decent and well-remunerated work.

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Conclusion

VET can play a role in southern African responses to major socio-economic challenges. However, this role will be most pronounced if it is articulated within a broader educational and economic vision that is shared by a range of stakeholders in society and supported by an adequate funding base, effective information systems and qualified and motivated planners and implementers. However, it is also important to remember that VET reform will not in itself transform economies or societies.

There is much that is of merit in the current broad package for VET transformation but it is essential that it is carefully critiqued and that elements are adapted to national circumstances and visions. In all of the ten areas of the transformation agenda discussed here there are valuable experiences from across the region that other countries can learn from. Although some countries are further along the road towards a full transformation of their VET systems, it is clear that they have had to refine certain elements of their approaches and may need to revisit others. Thus, these countries may still be in a position to gain new insights from how others are trying to learn from what they perceive to be the mistakes as well as the successes of those at the head of the 'flying geese' formation.

Such learning could be promoted by a reinvigorated SADC commitment to meeting the objectives set out in its *Protocol on education and training*. Whether through the SADC, NEPAD or other channels, it is important that government and academic capacity be developed for knowledge sharing and mutual learning in the field of VET and its linkages with broader development challenges.

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