

## Common Perspectives of Integrated Skills Outreach Programme That Can Benefit both the Individuals and Communities

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**Abstract:** The important field of TVET is an essential element in reducing rural poverty but has been put aside for many years by policy makers, donors and the private sector. On one side, this resulted in a general neglect which is evident in the lack of technical expertise and crafts people at all levels. On the other side, There is a multitude of training and capacity building initiatives that provide only short term solutions and cannot circumvent the larger problem of low levels of education and persistent illiteracy. Many of these initiatives might be well-intended, but often do not produce the results desired. There is a non-respect of basic principles of adult education and a lack of coordination between private and public providers. Too often training does not address the needs of target groups nor anticipate how the training skills will be set to use. The lack of attention to employability leads to a situation where a lot of resources are being wasted. The Integrated Skills Outreach Program is one such example of a TVET programme to the unskilled people.

**Keywords:** Communities, outreach, skills, individuals, vocational, programme.

### INTRODUCTION

The public provision of vocational training at the tertiary level has been reduced in the past 30 years in many developing countries and investment in primary education was considered to bring better returns (Heyneman, S. P. 2003; King, K., & Palmer, R. 2006). Vocational training rarely reached the rural population and was urban based, even in the field of agriculture, thus attracting students often not really interested in agriculture or rural development. Today, these views are changing given the increasing requirement for qualified middle-level personnel and the increasing numbers completing secondary education or its equivalent. Many argue that the development of technical and vocational programmes at tertiary level should be given high priority, by both public and private providers (ILO, U., & UNICEF. 2002).

Currently new ways of linking the indigenous knowledge of farmers to the work of research institutes and passing this knowledge on through vocational training are being explored. IFAD has supported various efforts on pro-poor methodological,

professional and institutional change and innovation, in particular related to agro-forestry and biodiversity conservation (Heyneman, S. P. 2003). This involves the CGIAR research centers but also a number of universities as partners of a North/South network on selected IFAD-financed field operations that aim at supporting the convergence of farmers' adaptive capacities and knowledge with formal scientific research towards the co-generation of innovations. The goal of this on-going effort is to enrich the university curricula and improve the teaching methodologies in support of pro poor and by-poor innovation, hence improving the social relevance of academic institutions.

### OBSERVATIONS FROM FINLAND AND THE MAGHREB

Surbrahmanyam (Surbrahmanyam, G. 2013) assessed the effects of technical and vocational education in Finland. In her findings, she established that technical training could help to tackle unemployment. The Finns embarked on a vocational training programme over a decade and within this time frame, a drop in youth unemployment rates was noticed.

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Surbrahmanyam (Surbrahmanyam, G. 2013), however, bemoans the growing mismatch between supply and demand of skills in developing countries. Making observations from the Finland case, Integrated Skills Outreach programme has the potential to equip, not only the individual, but disadvantaged members of society with skills which are relevant to their communities. The training is in small groups so that focus is made on the individual acquisition of skills. These domestic skills can help each and every individual to tap locally available resources for economic development. If successfully implemented, the programme can help reduce unemployment rate, poverty and rural urban migration especially by youths.

Analysing how youth unemployment can be tackled in the Maghreb, Surbrahmanyam (Surbrahmanyam, G. 2011) also identified the youth bulge problem in the Maghreb states. There were a large number of unemployed youths in the states. She argues that the youths bulge could present a window of opportunity for economic growth and poverty eradication. She posits that a young population can be a resource that can be a driver for economic development.

If not gainfully employed each individual can be a liability that can undermine growth prospects (Agbor, J., *et al.*, 2012).

#### **SURBRAHMANYAM (2011) CONTENDS THAT,**

Providing education and training to develop human capital creates high value-added jobs which utilise technical and vocational skills. The nations can ultimately enjoy enormous demographic dividends from the youth bulge if individual youths are equipped with skills.

The Finns embarked on a vocational training programme over a decade and this contributed in lowering youth unemployment rates, Surbrahmanyam (2011) posits. Surbrahmanyam's recommendations reflect the ideas behind the introduction of ISOP. If the individual youths are equipped with technical and vocational skills, Manicaland can enjoy a lot of economic dividends when the individual youths efforts then cascade to the communities by putting the skills into practice.

#### **IN SUMMARY,**

Skills development may also be seen as the outcome-oriented provision of skills and knowledge through individuals learning things that are related to their specific livelihood needs" (Faudel, P. 2005).

#### **THEMES:**

- How has the ISOP programme improved social life of the participants and the community at large? and

- How can the successful implementation and sustainability of the Skills Outreach Programme be ensured?

Bouyer (2005) posits that rural development is going to remain a priority for developing countries because the vast majority of the populations of these countries still live in rural areas.

Despite this fact, rural areas are characterised by under-investment and lack of development policies, especially regarding skills acquisition for these rural communities.

#### **OBSERVATIONS FROM ASIA**

Latchem (2014) reports that The IFAD supported Livelihood and Economic Development Programme of the International Network for Bamboo and Rattan (INBAR) aims to create sustainable rural livelihoods and enterprises by using bamboo and rattan resources. One of the capacity-building activities of this grant-financed programme was a south-south exchange between Asia and Africa.

Pauline Samata, a single mother of four children from Tanzania discovered the vast potential of bamboo through the south-south exchange. In the Philippines, she learned how to use bamboo to build houses, while in China she was shown how to make furniture and such diverse objects as dustbins for offices, desks for schools, and scarves, using bamboo (Latchem, C. 2014).

Similar to the Tanzania story by Latchem (2014), ISOP is conducted out of available natural resources which are then used to craft into meaningful saleable commodities out of which income is realised. She also realised that firewood could be replaced with bamboo charcoal. So, back in Tanzania, she established the Mbeya Bamboo Women's Group and offered training courses free of charge. However, Latchem (Latchem, C. 2014) explains that she sets one condition, namely that the ladies come to stay with her in the community for at least six months. As a disincentive to dropping out of the training programme, Samata pays the ladies 1,500 Tanzanian shillings (TZS) a day (US\$1.30).

So far I've trained 60 women on how to work with bamboo, says Samata with a smile. I need to make more money to be able to train more women.

Samata also trains children who are heading households and young girls who have not benefited from any type of education.

I do not like young girls to work as domestic helpers, I want to teach them a trade so that they can have a better life, says Samata (IFAD. 2014).

IFAD and the Belgian Survival Fund Joint Programme have also assisted the Uganda Women's Effort to Save Orphans (UWESO) in providing cluster-based training sessions for caregivers of orphans on topics such as business skills, improved agricultural practices, HIV/AIDS and health, children's rights and protection and nutrition (IFAD. 2014). This is precisely what this study on ISOP is all about, that is, imparting short skills to rural communities in order to equip them for self - sustenance.

The IFAD (IPGRI, P., & IFAD. 2005) reports that vulnerable groups, including the blind, disabled and single mothers received training in income-generating skills under the Upper West Agricultural Development Project. The outcome showed that it is feasible to enhance social protection for the most vulnerable. Through the distribution of irrigated land to training participants, further opportunities were created to apply the imparted skills (IPGRI, P., & IFAD. 2005). These experiences show that traditionally by-passed groups need to be clearly targeted and measures put in place to support their participation and create an enabling environment. This is the essence of ISOP.

While still drawing related literature from Africa, The Gash Sustainable Livelihoods Regeneration Project (GSLRP) in Sudan provides training on food processing among other trades. It is a good example of how training should be targeted to those who are most likely to use it that is, the rural vulnerable groups (Hussein, K., *et al.*, 2008). More than 90 percent of young women below 18 years indicated that they had no source of income before the training but were now able to make full use of the training. One reason was the restricted mobility of young women, even if married compared to older women. Women capable of marketing goods such as handicrafts or processed food by themselves were either older women or widows and household heads.

Constraints related to selling produce due to limited mobility were often cited as a reason for not using the training (Palmer, R. 2007).

#### **IN ADDITION,**

As a result of the training, income increased and family diet was diversified. It was noted that some men started to appreciate the training delivered. They became less resistant about women's mobility and allowed the participation of their wives' and daughters in the training (Bennel, S. T. 1999).

#### **IN SUB-SAHARA AFRICA, HARTL (2009) POSITS THAT,**

Poor women are not participating in equal numbers in formal and informal TVET and continue to be disadvantaged, also because of their low level of schooling and literacy, in particular in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Arab States and in South and West Asia.

There is greater awareness that training programmes need to specifically address inclusion and equity.

#### **FURTHER TO THAT,**

The only way to empower the youth is to provide them with adequate and qualitative education in order to make them job creators and eradicate poverty (Sekemu, B. 2004).

He further posits that many countries of the world, including Nigeria have considered Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as relevant in equipping young people with technical skills that would enable them to engage in productive livelihoods. However, the United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) section for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in 2006 observed that TVET programmes have led to increased employment, because of increased technical and vocational services.

In a country like Nigeria where high rate of unemployment is being experienced as evidence in this paper, likely brought by the system failure, coupled with inability of government to create jobs for the teeming youth (Mohammed, D. S. 2010).

It means that entrepreneurship in TVET could be employed to develop saleable skills in the youth so that they become easily self-employed or employable after graduation. The promotion of entrepreneurial studies would create opportunities for employment with subsequent income multiplier effects for the surrounding community, Muhammed (2010) further posits the argument in this study that,

If job creation and entrepreneurial activities are carefully co-ordinated, then it would not be argued that increased entrepreneurship would no doubt help the most disadvantaged in the labour market.

#### **DRAWING FURTHER RELATED LITERATURE FROM MOZAMBIQUE, AKYEAMPONG (2002) REPORTS THAT,**

The JFFLS expanded from a pilot project in 2003 working with 100 rural youths in four Community Based Organisations (CBOs), to 2007, to be a full-fledged and diversified programme benefiting 840 youths per year and indirectly their families, caretakers and communities.

The same Akyeampong (2002) report further states that an evaluation carried out in 2005 showed that the JFFLS, known locally as "Celeiro da Vida" (Granaries for Life) had an important impact on the empowerment of the beneficiaries and for increased and sustainable food production. Akyeampong (2002) further reports that, the programme also had a multiplier effect on rural local communities and institutions in that local schools hosting JFFLS activities were expected to

include JFFLS activities in the 20% of the school term devoted for the local curriculum.

A major impact of the activities in Mozambique was improved diet. The production of vegetables in the JFFLS learning fields improved the food diet of the children who sometimes were not accustomed to eating vitamin rich vegetables. For instance, a community around a JFFLS in Mozambique reported improved nutrition because of the introduction of new vegetables for home consumption (lettuce and green peppers).

Enhancing the employability of deprived youth and rural poor, in particular women, is a prerequisite for mitigating the risk of further poverty and marginalization (Akyeampong, A. 2002).

This study Therefore borrows and compares favourably with the Mozambique experience. Without pre-empting Mozambique's Akyeampong (2002) findings for chapter 5, The ILO's Maputo study of 2007 on the Socio-

#### **ECONOMIC INTEGRATION OF MOZAMBICAN YOUTH INTO THE URBAN LABOUR MARKET REPORTS, AMONGST MANY ISSUES THAT:**

- There are few vocational training levels (such training is often expensive) among most of the youth,
- There are inadequate vocational training institutions,
- There are limited education levels among students entering these institutions,
- There is resource scarcity in terms of financial and material needs,
- There are learning methods that are far removed from the realities of the world of businesses,
- Youths fail to recognize vocational training as a level of education and
- There is a tight labour market.

#### **AFRICA, ISOP PERSPECTIVES FISCHER *et al.*, (1989) POSIT THAT,**

It is fairly settled in economic literature (Blanchard, O. A., *et al.*, 1989; Walsh, C. P., *et al.*, 1998; Pindiriri, C., & Mubayi, E. 2011; Lewis, M. K., & Mizen, P. D. 2000) that unemployment is influenced by factors from both the demand and supply sides of the labour market" (Pindiriri, C., & Muhoyi, E. 2000).

While a number of studies have been made recently on youth unemployment and vocational training in Zimbabwe and many other African countries, most of these studies were done by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Claudio de Moura Castro (de Moura Castro, C. 1987) in Haq and Kirdar (1988) assesses the problems faced by technical

and vocational training particularly the mismatch between skills acquired and the occupations subsequently taken up by the graduates. This ILO study establishes that many things can go wrong with training centres, for example, methods can be clumsy or inefficient; the quality of teachers, students or materials can be inadequate and so on. These shortcomings can be detrimental to the quality of graduates produced by these vocational training centres. Claudio (Schneider, C., *et al.*, 1988) further argues that,

Technical and vocational programmes often offer skills that find little subsequent utilization and leave graduates in need of others that were not taught. In fact, this mismatch tends to be the most persistent and serious problem with vocational education and training.

King (1990) and Bennell and Nyakonda (Bennell, P., *et al.*, 1991) argue that Zimbabwe has been experiencing increases in youth unemployment as a result of the mismatch of skills offered versus skills demanded, poor coordination among government departments and under-utilized industrial capacity. In their "Analysis of Manpower Planning", Richards and Amjad (1994) note that,

Although African countries have been very concerned about unemployment, There was until fairly recently an apparent lack of understanding among policy-makers and planners of the usefulness of labour market information for a variety of decision-making purposes, such as determining manpower training needs, identifying the availability of labour and ascertaining prevailing wage rates and exploring potential markets, among others.

#### **KANYENZE (1997) POSITS THAT,**

The present education and training systems in Zimbabwe are now continually designed to satisfy the human resources requirements of the economy (both formal and non-formal).

#### **ACCORDING TO KANYENZE (1997),**

Several initiatives have been undertaken by the government of Zimbabwe to deal with unemployment both through the creation of SMEs and the promotion of the non-formal sector but much still needs to be done in terms of coordinating these government efforts.

In addition, the study indicates that a lot of non-state actors are actively involved through their own initiatives.

#### **KANYENZE'S (1997) FINDINGS POINT OUT THE FOLLOWING;**

- That There is need to re-orient the education and training system from its current academic thrust towards acquisition of practical skills,

- re-define the curricula so as to meet the demands of the informal sector,
- reduce bureaucracy through allowing stakeholder participation in the government structures of colleges and
- establish an authority with executive powers to ensure proper coordination.

At the beginning of 1998, President Mugabe appointed a Commission to inquire about the state of education and training in Zimbabwe. This commission was chaired by Dr C. Nziramasanga. The commission was to make recommendations regarding the basic principles and philosophy of education and training, the curricula and the organizational and financial frameworks.

The commissioners were tasked specifically to propose strategies relating to education and training, to employment, to ensure a bias towards science and technology, to promote the use of indigenous languages, sports, culture and health and environmental education. They were to review the organisational structure with a view to decentralization and to advise on methods of financing which could include greater participation of the private sector, local communities and other organizations” (Kanyenze, B. 1997).

In general, the Commission found the system as it existed at the time entirely inappropriate to meet the needs of the nation or of individual learners. Education was said to be too academic, geared toward examinations, still based on rote learning with insufficient emphasis on science and technology and life skills. The Commission criticized the existing curriculum strongly, stating that it fails to develop leadership and entrepreneurial skills, encourages a white-collar mentality and contributes to high unemployment levels (Kanyenze, B. 1997). In brief, the report advocated for a new approach to non-formal education and training in order to cater for the disadvantaged rural populace, among other things.

A strategy for implementation included, among other issues, vocational education and training. In line with Kanyenze’s (1997) findings on coordination, Mambo(2010) argues that the authorities responsible for vocational and technical training have poor coordination, for example, the Ministry of Labour and Social Services has a department that deals with matching skills of job seekers with jobs available, known as the Department of National Employment Services. The provincial offices produce monthly reports that are submitted to Headquarters as hard copies. The information shows the trades where jobs exist, and which trades are difficult to fill. However, this information is neither shared with training institutions nor with National Manpower Advisory Council (NAMACO), advisor to the Minister on manpower issues. What this serves to show is that the

recommendations were pointing to a unified training curriculum that would take into account non-formal training, namely ISOP.

#### **AS FOR THE INFORMAL SECTOR IN ZIMBABWE, MOYO (1984) STATES THAT,**

The sector has remained one of the largest employers of youth labour. In a study carried out by ILO in collaboration with the University of Zimbabwe in 2006, it was revealed that between 82-88% of those working were in the informal sector, providing an insight into how important the informal sector is in employment creation.

Most of the studies on youth unemployment and on VTCs in Zimbabwe have come out with similar results ranging from skills mismatch on the labour market, lack of financial and material resources, amongst the factors which have been highlighted above. However, no study has attempted to identify areas with potential youth employment, that is, sectors with value chains.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The importance of TVET to human development cannot be over-emphasised. Training and capacity building for both men and women is a key for poverty reduction. Basically, if people lack in technical skills, knowledge and entrepreneurial skills, the natural resources will tend to remain unutilised and underutilised. TVET offers skills aimed at rural development like farm related skills and knowledge, establishment and sustenance of small and medium enterprises directly related to rural needs and demand. This can go a long way in curbing rural-urban migration as individuals would have skills to keep them occupied in the rural areas. TVET also has the potential to curb high rate of unemployment, especially among the youth and women, as it offers the much needed skills to develop the informal sector especially in developing countries. Through TVET, individuals are being positioned to develop self-employment, thus reducing pressure on the few available jobs in the formal sector.

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