

GLOBAL TRENDS AND TVET: THE CASE OF SOUTH AFRICA

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Globalisation and New Global Trends

Globalisation and contemporary global trends are two different things and impact differently on technical and vocational education and on any consideration of a future role for UNESCO on TVET at the country and global level.

Globalisation as a form of global interconnectedness is not a new phenomenon, but new elements of globalization in the latter part of the last millennium have impacted on TVET at global and developing country level in particular ways. Of particular interest here were the compounded impact of structural adjustment programmes in the 1980s, collapse of a bipolar world for the spread of market-oriented solutions in the 1990s and changes in the core-economy and nature of work in certain parts of the developed world throughout this period. The latter called for the development of a new emphasis on knowledge and different kinds of skills appropriate for work. Growing interconnectedness and common solutions were facilitated by an increased role of multi and bi-lateral agencies through Jomtien (1990) and the World Bank Policy paper on Vocational and Technical Education and Training (1991). These anticipated a greater role for general education as underpinning foundation for TVET, and ‘structural adjustment of training.’ (King and McGrath, 2002). For a brief period of the beginning of the millennium, there were signs of growth in developing countries, a growing acknowledgement of the importance of education and training, a simultaneous critique of market-oriented approaches without adequate public provision and state regulation, and recognition that the alleged new knowledge requirements of globalization resulting in ‘totalising expressions of national economic need’ exaggerates the extent to which older economic forms and institutions were brought to an end in developing countries. (Kraak, 2004, 217)

The global economic slowdown in the recent period is linked to globalization, but is likely to initiate trends with major consequences for new initiatives that were beginning to take shape at the national level in developing countries in the context of expanded growth. The extent of impact of the financial crisis as a new global trend on developing countries will be linked to the degree of openness of markets. The more integrated into global economies and the more open the markets, the greater the negative impact of new global trends. Shrinking global resources will mean shrinking national resources available for education more generally and skills training more specifically. There will be further pressure on skills training where there is reliance on market-based forms of provision. But the new skills discourse and recognition of the importance of knowledge

and skills for development can help shift balances in favour of education and training. As national economies in developing countries struggle within this new context, they are likely to become more protectionist at the very moment that multilateral and global solutions become more critical to them. The future role of UNESCO in this context at global and country level can perhaps best be examined in relation a specific case-study.

UNESCO at country level: the case of South Africa

International support and influences on the South African TVET system in the first decade of democracy came mainly through Ausaid, GTZ and Danida that supported both the establishment of the system and research (Akoojee, Gewer and McGrath, 2005 and Badroodien and McGrath, 2005). Badroodien and McGrath observed in 2005 that ‘What makes (the South African skills development case) unusual is that there was genuine national leadership of the process throughout. In the broadest terms the relationship with donors was positive. South Africans led the process; South Africans were facilitated to learn from other experiences rather than being presented a particular version by agencies or consultants; and South Africans entered into a considerable period of detailed negotiation...’ (2005: 31). Before looking more closely at the achievements and weaknesses of this experience, it is necessary to contextualize it in terms of South Africa’s pattern of growth and employment over the past decade.

Skills and jobs, state and economy 1994-2008

During the first decade of democracy, economic growth was stagnant, but from the early 2000s picked up and was in full flight in 2007 when growth was pulled up short by the impact of the global slow-down. Although apparently relatively protected by its National Credit Act which placed restrictions on bank lending, its markets are open and to that extent its companies feel the effects of slowdowns in global industries that have outsourced aspects of production to South Africa.

Limited spending and constrained implementation in the first decade of democracy affected the nature and outcomes of the ambitious education and training reform programme envisaged in that decade (Fleisch, 2008). The implementation of the National Skills Development Strategy Phase I (2001-2007) coincided with a major spurt in broader economic growth. In 2006, the South African economy grew at a rate of 5 percent, the highest growth rate recorded since the 1960s.

The major challenge remains job creation and the role that job creation can play in education and skills development and that these sectors can play in facilitating employment. Aggregate employment rose by 29%, but new entrants to the labour market outstripped the capacity of the economy to create jobs, resulting in significant unemployment, highest among school leavers (Bhorat and Oosthuizen, 2008). In terms of the official definition there were 4.4m unemployed people in South Africa in September 2006. Of these, 3.9m were African people, of whom an estimated 3.2m constituted ‘discouraged workseekers.’ About 70% of employment is found in low-and semi-skilled

jobs. Most new employment is found in activities like retail, restaurants, construction, personal and business services (Altman, 2008).

In a new approach launched in 2005 government has sought to develop a new, coordinated approach that makes human resource development a top priority for all government departments. It recognizes that skills without jobs constrain growth, and so it aims to halve unemployment by 2014. In order to do so, it needs to create an average of 500,000 new jobs each year, but its ability to do so will be hampered by 'a range of global and domestic factors that will impact negatively on the main job creating sectors.' (Altman, 2008) In addition to job shedding under new economic conditions, approximately 430,000 young people with matric or less will continue to enter the labour market each year. The Expanded Public Works Programme has aimed to create more than a million jobs over a five year period. In an analysis of the Mid-Term Review (2004-2007) of the Expanded Public Works Programme, Hemson (2008) has shown that although the target of 1 million work opportunities is in sight or now being achieved, only 19% of targeted training has been met, and only 59% of funds allocated over 3 years have been spent. Integrating training into job creation does not seem to have been successful, but perhaps the outcome of South Africa's new strategy for technical and vocational education may have done so.

South Africa's new system of technical and vocational education and training

The main elements of South Africa's new system of technical and vocational education and training are:

- An integrated education and training system through a National Qualifications Framework that was intended to enable portability of skills and qualifications across different pathways informed by an outcomes and competency-based system of training. But the fact that DoE and DoL did not integrate meant that for the first decade initiatives were run separately. Only with the launch of ASGISA in 2005 and the proposed Human Resources Development Strategy (II) was a new approach undertaken that was intended to coordinate across all departments.
- A new institutional environment was created that intended to transform inherited (i) weak and racially fragmented education-led, college-based system linked to an outdated apprenticeship system poorly articulated to the workplace (ii) late apartheid reforms that created Industry Training Boards using competency-based modular training and conceded a substantial role to the market and private sector. The environment was influenced by the fact that Departments of Labour and Education did not integrate. So the DoE has worked on reforming the technical college sector which, in line with changes brought about by the NQF, are now called FET colleges. And the DoL has worked on reforming the industry-based training system that developed from the 1980s under the National Manpower Act (1981). DoE can be seen to be working on supply-side and DoL on demand-side strategies.

- The DoE system remains education-led and has undergone a number of changes over the last decade. The 1998 FET Act (No 98 of 1998). In 2001 this was followed by the *New Institutional Landscape for the Public Further Education and training Colleges* document (DoE 2001) set out a vision that would enable changes in size and structure, access, delivery, governance, financing recapitalization and curriculum and assessment, and articulation with higher education and the labour market.

From 2004 onwards, with Mbeki's second term, 'it became clear that the college sector was no longer seen as a marginal and problematic part of the HRD system.' (Akoojee, McGrath and Visser, 2008: 225). In 2006, government launched a R1.9b 3-year programme to recapitalize technical colleges, tackle vital and long neglected curriculum reform and invest in staff training and development, infrastructure and equipment (Pandor, 2008: 1).

- The DoL-led programme was initiated by the 1998 National Skills Development Act, the 1998 Skills Development Levies Act and 2001 National Skills Development Strategy. The approach establishes industry and labour consensus-driven Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and learnerships (courses or modules) intended to provide training for pre-employed, currently employed and unemployed. Training is funded through a 1% payroll levy extracted from industry. Twenty percent is intended for the National Skills Fund that addresses strategic priorities and 80% for SETAs.

Achievements

- NQF: Government has recognized the weaknesses of initial planning and made adjustments to the widely criticized NQF architecture
- DoE-led college system: Merger of multiple institutions into large, multi-site campuses; Enhanced financial support; radical expansion of enrolments, especially by African, part-time, 'mature' students, in public and private colleges; diversification of provision to meet demand; improvements in formal, intended curriculum; student support in the form of bursaries; support for training of lecturers; specific initiatives to enhance 'responsiveness' of colleges
- Skills training through SETA-funded learnerships (courses): Expanded possibilities for training among the youthful, unemployed population; uneven, success in finding employment, relative to sector.

Weaknesses

- NQF: Framework for assessment and not provision (Young, 2004) underestimates where and how skills development can and should occur; outcomes, competencies and unit standards are a fundamentally flawed basis for curriculum development in skills training (UMALUSI, 2006, 2007).
- DoE-led college system: Merger is incomplete leading to associated problems; capacity is a wide-spread problem in new finance and governance arrangements

(IIEP, UNESCO, 2005); there is an absence of a strong FETMIS system to help improve labour market linkages; poor work placement processes; colleges seen as second chance, but students often take on courses at lower levels than they completed in school; relatively low employment rates.

- Skills training through learnerships (courses) : Demand –led model constrained by lack of demand; divisions within the state, poor planning capacity and information systems undermine aligning training with national and sectoral plans; consensus-based system that is conflictual and bureaucratized; consultancy training providers make courses expensive and scale too small; lack of institutional base for provision a serious problem; quality of training abysmal and marked by narrowness of unit standards, atomized and fragmented knowledge – little possibility for skill development despite rhetoric (UMALUSI, 2007).

Post-1994 reforms have seen the emergence of a nationally coordinated training and qualifications system, reforms in the college-based provision of training, as well as a joint industry-labour based model of training employing competency-based models. The apprenticeship-based system has been revamped through provision of learnerships (courses) through industry-based SETAs providing unit standard-based qualifications. Technical colleges included progressively smaller numbers of apprentices in their training programmes for unemployed school-leavers in the late apartheid period. Now they continue to cater to this clientele but also draw on an older clientele. The training system that has come into being has the capacity for provision of vastly expanded numbers of trained people – the funding is certainly there through the National Skills Levy. One of the main problems is the quality of training and this in turn is linked to the entire edifice created by the National Qualifications Framework.

Recommendations on UNESCO’s future role at country level

New global trends are likely to exacerbate the very problems that technical and vocational education exist to address and have implications for the resources available for TVET. The challenge of unemployment, job creation and skills development and training in order for jobs to become a reality for more people is likely to become accentuated. Provision of inadequate kinds of skills training will defeat the object of training. The existence of a qualifications architecture and numbers trained are inadequate to the purposes for which they are intended. Quality of learning outcomes is monumentally poor at all levels, and will need attention, whatever the economic conditions.

What role can and should UNESCO play within country-level contexts in which the commitments to EFA through Jomtien (1990) and Dakar (2000) enjoy priority within UNESCO National Commissions? In South Africa, UNESCO, through the IIEP has, among other things, played a significant role in stimulating and conducting research and subjecting to critical scrutiny the model of training on which South Africa embarked in 1994 (Atchoarena and Delluc, 2002; IIEP with SACPO, 2006). This role is vital and should be strengthened. Given the interconnectedness of problems at the regional and global level, it should of course also continue as it has done to assist sharing of

information and research. The impact of new global trends and the new financial climate on skills development and training should be closely monitored.

Recommendations on UNESCO's future role at global level

The global context has changed considerably since 1990 when EFA became the main priority and technical and vocational education came to be considered to be of lesser importance. In the meantime, technical and vocational education did not cease to be at country or at the global level. A new global climate which will place particular strains on employment requires a fresh look at the modalities of TVET at country level.

Given new global trends of financial crisis and heightened unemployment, UNESCO could re-initiate global discussions on what has been learnt since 1990 on the relative balance of general academic and technical and vocational education, the financing, governance, structure, form and content of skills training. Crucially, it should also play a leading role in coordinating regional and global solutions and responses to national problems related to education, skills development and work that will also be global challenges.

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Not surprisingly, some white South Africans are taking extreme measures in response. Where once ANC guerrillas camped in the bush, plotting against white rulers, now it is white militias training at secret camps. These are run by leaders of the Kommandokorps, a volunteer force who wear the brown military uniforms of South Africa's old apartheid-era forces. On remote farms, recruits are being trained with pistols, pump-action shotguns and 303 rifles. More than 2,500 volunteers, aged from 14 to 38, have been drilled. Their leader is Colonel Franz Jooste, a former officer in the old South African army, who fought what he calls "black terrorists" in secret operations in Mozambique, Angola and Zambia. "We are in a heightened security situation," he told me. South Africa's new President Cyril Ramaphosa has pledged to redistribute land by taking it from white farmers and giving it to black people. But why is the millionaire pursuing such a drastic course of action and how will it work? South Africa's new President Cyril Ramaphosa has pledged to redistribute land by taking it from white farmers and giving it to black people. But why is the millionaire pursuing such a drastic course of action and how will it work? I & South West Africa Cases (Ethiopia v. South Africa; Liberia v. South Africa), Pre. liminary Objections, [1962] I.C.J. Rep. 319. The vote of the Court was eight to seven. The Mandates, including the one for South West Africa, were drafted and approved by the Allied Powers in the autumn of 1919, before the Covenant of the League of Nations took effect and before the League started functioning in January 1920. In its judgment, the Court stated that the preamble of the Mandate makes it clear that the Mandate is, in fact and in law, an international agreement having the character of a "treaty or convention," between the Council of the League of Nations and the Mandatory. The obligation to submit to the compulsory jurisdiction of that Court was effectively transferred to the present Court.