
STRENGTHENING TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN NIGERIA FOR QUALITY AND SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD THROUGH PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

¹DR. (MRS) T. C. OGBUANYA; ²EKON, MAGNUS GILBERT

^{1,2} DEPARTMENT OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

The quality of any Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programme is largely dependent on the quality of the training institutions. In view of the growing financial difficulties experienced by the government of many nations coupled with the increasing demand for vocational skills occasioned by the high level of youth unemployment and social unrest, there is need for effective partnership between the public and private sectors for effective TVET delivery. The paper discusses how TVET in Nigeria could be strengthened for quality through Public-private partnership. The paper is of the view that Public-Private Partnership should be effectively utilised for adequate funding of TVET programmes, training and retraining of TVET teachers and instructors, provision of opportunities for Supervised Industrial Work Experience (SIWES) as well as for adequate provision of required infrastructures and facilities. This will obviously strengthen the quality and standard of TVET in Nigeria thus repositioning it for the critical role it must play in facilitating sustainable livelihood of the citizens.

Keywords: Technical and vocational education and training (TVET), Quality assurance, Public-private partnership.

INTRODUCTION

It is widely acknowledged that the quality of any educational programme, including Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET), is largely dependent on the quality of the training institutions. The success of the training institutions in turn is a function of the quality of linkages and collaboration it establish with other stakeholders in the sector. In view of the growing financial difficulties experienced by the government of many nations coupled with the steady rise in the society's demand for vocational skills occasioned by the ever increasing level of

youths unemployment and social unrest, there is need for partnership aimed at bringing together various stakeholders in order to effectively implement the TVET programmes in the country. Musobo and Gaga (2012) noted that many countries around the world have adopted Public Private Partnership for effective TVET delivery. They however noted that in most African countries, the partnerships are loose and lack appropriate policy guidelines to provide a framework for solid sustainable partnerships. Despite the various linkage and collaboration between the public and private sectors in Nigeria, the quality of TVET in Nigeria seems to be declining. This paper therefore discusses how technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Nigeria could be strengthened for quality through effective Public Private Partnership.

THE CONCEPT OF TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET)

Many contemporary definitions of the term “Technical, Vocational Education and Training” (TVET) are evolving to reflect the fundamental changes in the organisation and scope of TVET programmes worldwide. Most recently, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) defined technical and vocational education and training (TVET) as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life. FRN maintained that TVET is further understood to be an integral part of general education; a means of preparing for occupational fields and for effective participation in the world of work; an aspect of lifelong learning and a preparation for responsible citizenship; an instrument for promoting environmentally-sound sustainable development; as well as a method of facilitating poverty alleviation.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, 2009) posited that the term Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) applies to all forms and aspects of education that are technical and vocational in nature, provided either in educational institutions or under their authority, by public authorities, the private sector or through other forms of organized education, formal or non-formal, aiming to ensure that all members of the community have access to the pathways of lifelong learning. The organisation maintained that Technical and Vocational Education and Training refers to a wide range of relevant learning experiences in the world of work that may also take place in a variety of learning contexts such as educational institutions and working places. It further maintained that TVET includes learning aimed at developing skills in the practice of certain trades, as well as learning aimed at preparing for entry into the labour market in general.

The goals of Technical and vocational education and training as stipulated in the National policy on Education (2013) includes, among others, providing trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and business particularly at craft, advanced craft and technical levels as well as giving training and imparting the necessary skills to individuals who shall be self reliant economically. Indeed, Technical. Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is a potent means for fast-tracking technological progress, citizens' capacities, economic growth and national development (Akhuemonkhan & Raimi, 2013).

UNESCO-UNEVOC (2006) identified three main types of TVET programmes namely formal, non-formal and informal TVET. According to the organisations, formal TVET refers to organised vocational education programmes provided within an approved public educational or training institution and it is structured (in terms of curriculum, learning objectives and learning time) such that it constitutes a continuous "ladder" where one level leads to the next and finally leads to certification. Non-formal TVET is the type of vocational education and training which takes place outside the formal school system either on a regular or intermittent basis. It has the advantage of shorter duration, is occupation-specific and its main emphasis is on the acquisition of practical skills for direct employment. On the other hand, Informal TVET is the type of vocational education that is provided by craftsmen of different trades in the informal sector. It is more appropriately often referred to as vocational training or experience based learning and is usually carried out in form of apprenticeship system.

QUALITY IN TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The term quality, according to Morris (2013), refers to the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs. It connotes the degree to which a product, service or phenomenon conforms to an established standard which make it to be relatively superior to others. With respect to education, Ayomike (2013) posited that quality is a multidimensional concept, embracing all functions and activities of the education system, including teaching and academic programmes, research and scholarship, staffing, students, buildings, facilities, equipment, services to the community and academic environment, taking into account national cultural values and circumstances and international dimensions such as exchange of knowledge, interactive networking, mobility of teachers and students as well as international research projects.

The Romanian Ministry of Education, Research and Youths (n.d), specifically defined quality of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) as the totality of characteristics of a learning programme and of its provider, through which the expectations of the beneficiaries and the quality standards are met. They maintained that in TVET, quality is directly related to the

achievement of the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences achieved at the end of the learning process) that fulfils the expectations of the key stakeholders which include students, parents, employers and the community in general.

It should be noted that for quality TVET to be achieved, a sound quality assurance mechanism is required in vocational institutions. According to Akhuemonkhan & Raimi (2013), quality assurance (QA) refers to performance measures designed by the authorities for assessing the performance of educational institutions with a view to ensuring that the learning outcomes meet the needs of each society. In other words, quality assurance simply refers to the established procedures, processes and standard systems that support and ensure effective delivery of educational services. Examples of quality assurance mechanisms in TVET are inspection, supervision, monitoring and accreditation. Indeed, the essence of quality assurance is to enhance and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the system towards achieving the set standards (Akhuemonkhan & Raimi, 2013). They pointed out that there are many types of quality assurance measurements or indicators such as Input Quality Indicator (IQI), Output Quality Indicator (OQI) and Process Quality Indicator (PQI) all of which ensure that standard and quality of TVET are strictly regulated, maintained and enhanced by educational institutions.

Bowen-Clewey, Cooper and Grannall (n.d) posited that quality management in any TVET system is necessary in order to satisfy the wide range of stakeholders namely students, funders, employers, education providers and government policy makers. They maintained that the students would want to know that their qualifications are of good quality, comparable with others from other providers and credible in the marketplace. The funders (including national governments), would want to ensure that they are getting value for the money invested in terms of skilled and employable graduates. Also, the employers would want assurance that a qualification means a graduate has the requisite knowledge, skills and attributes to be useful in the workplace. Moreover, the education providers would want to be able to benchmark their programmes against other comparable providers and receive funding for their provision. Lastly, government policy makers who invest in a TVET system would want to ensure that their country workforce is skilled and can meet the labour requirements for industry and of the international labour market.

In view of the foregoing, it is very important that TVET in Nigeria should be adequately strengthened for quality. Obviously, quality TVET would satisfy the needs of the various stakeholders and also help to increase access to TVET institutions, improve on the quality and relevance of their programmes, thereby reducing the existing skills gaps and addressing the rampant unemployment problem especially among the youths.

THE CURRENT STATUS AND QUALITY OF TVET PROGRAMMES IN NIGERIA

Numerous literature evidences indicate that the current status of TVET programmes in Nigeria is not very encouraging in terms of quality. Yusuff and Soyemi (2012) maintained that most formal TVET institutions in Nigeria are currently operating in an environment that is characterised by low quality training, mismatch between training and labour market skill demand, poor perception of TVET and discrimination against graduates of technical institutions, particularly those from polytechnics and monotechnics. Others are low enrolment at all levels of technical education, weak monitoring and evaluation and inadequate financing.

Similarly, Okeshola (2012) reported that the delivery of TVET in Nigeria has suffered from years of neglect, compounded by inadequate attention to policy frameworks within the sector. He added that there are a lot of challenges facing TVET in Nigeria the greatest of which is inadequate funding by the federal, state and local governments. In addition, infrastructure in most schools, including higher institutions, are dilapidated. Moreover, there is adverse learning conditions characterised by paucity of teaching and instructional materials, absence of adequate infrastructures as well as over-crowded classrooms in most TVET institutions. Okeshola further noted that the hygiene and sanitary conditions in most TVET institutions are also critical and this has been identified as a contributory factor to the poor retention and participation of girls in Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET), particularly in some parts of Nigeria.

Indeed, there are several documented evidences of numerous other challenges against the attainment of quality TVET programmes in Nigeria. For instance, in a study to find out the quality of TVET facilities in tertiary institutions in Nigeria, Akhemonkhan & Raimi (2013) reported that majority of the respondents rated as fairly adequate the quality of TVET facilities like workshop rooms, books, learning environment, machines, computer rooms, TV/Audio visual, instructors and contents of curriculum. On the status of quality assurance exercises in TVET Institutions in Nigeria, Akhemonkhan & Raimi (2013) reported that quality assurance is only appreciated in most Institutions but there are several areas that require improvement to make it more impactful.

Moreover, Ayomike (2013) identified the following as students' factors that act as challenges against attaining quality TVET programmes in tertiary institutions in Nigeria: poor interest to learn, poor entry qualification for TVET programmes, poor reading culture, lack of required learning material such as textbooks, poor parental background, peer group influence, lack of self confidence, examination malpractice and irregular attendance. Ayomike also identified the following as school factors that act as challenges against the attainment of quality TVET programmes in tertiary institutions: poor teaching methods employed by teachers, teachers lack

interest to teach, poor research attitude of teachers, poor preparation of lesson by teachers, poor use of teaching aids by teachers, poor students' teacher relationship, poor evaluation of students' academic performance, inadequate classroom blocks, lack of conducive staff offices, inadequate electricity supply, lack of water supply, inadequate workshop spaces, lack of TVET machines and tools, lack of TVET textbooks, lack of consumable materials and inadequate instructional materials.

Furthermore, the following were found by Ayomike (2013) as government factors that act as challenges of attaining quality TVET programmes in tertiary institutions in Nigeria: poor supervision of vocational technical education programmes, poor provision of instructional materials to TVET institutions, poor provision of facilities in TVET institutions, poor funding vocational technical education programme, poor curriculum planning of vocational technical education, poor implementation of vocational technical education curriculum, poor welfare packages for vocational technical education educators, poor training and retraining programme for vocational technical education teachers and instructors, poor scholarship scheme for TVET teachers, instructors, and students, poor curriculum planning and review process by federal/ state ministry of education and politicisation of employment of staff in TVET institutions. Indeed, the list is endless. Obviously, the effect of all these challenges is that training of the students becomes grossly impeded and they may end up not acquiring adequate skills needed for getting and sustaining employment in the 21st century labour market.

ACHIEVING QUALITY TVET IN NIGERIA THROUGH PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

The concept of Public Private Partnership (PPP) has gained increasing popularity in recent years. Musobo and Gaga (2012) defined Public-private partnership as an arrangement in which a service is delivered to the public through the involvement of government and a private entity. This source explained that public-private partnership involves contractual arrangements between a public sector authority and a private entity, whereby the private party provides or delivers a service that should have under normal circumstances been provided by the public sector and assumes substantial financial, technical and operational risk in the process of service delivery.

Various forms of public-private partnerships do exist. According to Musobo and Gaga (2012), in some, the cost of using the service is entirely borne by consumers of the service and not by the taxpayer while in others, the cost is carried either wholly or in part by the government. Furthermore, contributions made by government to a public-private partnership may vary from contribution in kind like the transfer of existing assets or financial. Government may also contribute through provision of subsidy in form of a grant in order to make it more attractive to

the private investors or it may extend support to the project by providing revenue subsidies, including tax holidays or provision of guaranteed annual revenues for a fixed period of time.

Petrov (1999) posited that public-private partnership is necessary due to the growing economic and financial difficulties which have made it impossible for many governments to pay for the rather high cost of TVET. Ikechukwu & Najimu (2012) stressed that public-private partnership paves the way for entities in the private sector to perform their corporate social responsibilities by extending their services and financial cooperation for substantial development in the education sector. Public Private Partnership therefore bring many advantages to educational development such as delivery of quality educational services and facilities to the public.

There are many ways through which Public-Private Partnership could be utilised to strengthen TVET in Nigeria. It could be effectively utilized for adequate funding of TVET programmes, training and retraining of TVET teachers and instructors, adequate provision of required TVET infrastructures and facilities, adequate provision of instructional materials and adequate provision of scholarship/grants for TVET teachers/instructors and students. This position is shared by UNESCO-UNEVOC (2012) which posited that public-private partnership could also be effective in strengthening TVET teacher education and facilitating their professional development. The organizations explained that partnership between public TVET institutions and private sector industries could foster TVET teacher education through acquisition of practical skills and development of positive professional attitudes as well as providing opportunities for prospective and serving teachers to have industrial experience.

In addition, it would enable teachers to have access to the latest technology and practices and also enable TVET institutions to know the level and types of skills currently required. Moreover, an effective collaboration between public TVET institutions and private sector industries will ensure that TVET curricula and teaching methodologies are up to date and relevant to the needs of the industry. Adequate internal and external supervision, adequate planning and implementation of TVET programmes by government, try.

Another way through which public-private partnership could be used for strengthening TVET is through the Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES). Wodi and Dokubo (2009) noted that SIWES is a skill development programme designed to prepare students of universities, polytechnics/monotechnics, and colleges of education for transition from the college environment to work. They stressed that SIWES has helped to strengthen TVET in various ways such as:- Providing an avenue for students in institutions of higher learning to acquire industrial skills and experience in their approved course of study; Preparing students for the industrial works situation which they are likely to meet after graduation; Exposing students to work methods and techniques in handling equipment and machinery not available in their institutions;

Providing students with an opportunity to apply their knowledge in real work situation thereby bridging the gap between theory and practices; Enlisting and strengthening employers' involvement in the entire educational process and preparing students for employment in Industry and Commerce.

THE BENEFITS OF QUALITY TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN NIGERIA

Through effective PPP, the quality of TVET in Nigeria would be enhanced and this will foster sustainable livelihood and economic development of Nigeria in many ways. The Columbia University (n.d) defined livelihoods as the means by which households obtain and maintain access to the resources necessary to ensure their immediate and long-term survival. First, high quality of technical and vocational education and training would provide youths with technical and vocational skills which are needed for enterprise productivity and profitability, as well as for national productivity and wealth creation (Yusuff and Soyemi, 2012).

Secondly, it would facilitate the development of technical and vocational skills which are essential for individual prosperity. According to Yusuff and Soyemi (2012), skills enable the individual to increase his/her productivity and income. This is especially important for those who are seeking out a living in the informal sector of the economy. Odu (2010) stated that if every citizen of Nigeria is properly equipped with practical skills, they will contribute effectively to the welfare of the country thus increasing their productive power and that of the nation. Odu added that the development of relevant skills can open doors to economically and socially rewarding jobs and can help the development of small informal-sector businesses, allow the re-insertion of displaced workers and migrants, and support the transition from school to work for school drop-outs and graduates (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2012). In addition, developing job-related competencies among the poor, the youth and the vulnerable is not only crucial to progress in the countries' human resource strategies but also contribute to its economic-growth and poverty-reduction.

Moreover, Kombe (2010) asserted that quality Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in general has potential benefits which accrue to the individuals, to organizations and to the country as a whole. He explained that to an individual, quality Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) would enhance their future earning potential, career progression and employability. To the unemployed, it would offer them capacities to find ways of earning a livelihood which can be through paid employment or setting up of their own businesses and becoming self employed. He added that to organizations, quality Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) results in increased productivity, profitability and

competitiveness. This in turn enhances its existence. He further emphasized that with increase in productivity and high profits, the organisation or company will in turn contribute to the wealth of the country through taxes.

In agreement with Kombe (2010), The Romanian Ministry of Education, Research and Youths (n.d) noted that quality TVET has potential benefits for students, employers, TVET providers and the community. The ministry outlined the following as the specific potential benefits of quality TVET for students: it will bring about student-centred teaching and learning process; equal opportunities; good information about educational and training offer; responsibility regarding own academic and professional evolution; learning programmes that meet their expectations (mainly as a result of their active involvement in the self-assessment process at school level); and increased capacity for employment.

For TVET providers, the benefits of quality TVET include: higher legitimacy and acknowledgment; confidence in own offer of vocational education and training; increased satisfaction of beneficiaries (students, employers, parents); higher chances of employment for graduates; development of a culture of reflection and of continuous improvement for all staff members; responsibility and greater autonomy (by emphasising the importance of the self-assessment process); facilitation of inter institutional cooperation and dissemination of good practice between TVET providers; access to information about good practices and experiences of success

For employers, the benefits of quality TVET include: (1) confidence in the quality of vocational education and training, and in the validity of the professional certificates; correlation of the provision of initial vocational training to the demand of the employers and adjusting the content of the training provision to the needs of the employers. Lastly for the community or society, the benefits of quality TVET include: transparency of the TVET programmes' quality; responsibility of TVET providers as key element in TVET quality assurance; supporting the decentralisation process in technical and vocational education and training; greater public responsibility of TVET providers; increasing TVET programmes' attractiveness.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Public-private partnership models as well as quality assurance best practices that have worked in other countries around the world should henceforth be developed and effectively utilised to strengthen TVET in Nigeria. Better models of Public-private partnership
2. Existing loose partnerships between private and public TVET providers should be strengthened for co-financing and provision of facilities and infrastructures such as

classrooms, workshop equipment and machines, books, computers in all TVET institutions in order to enhance the quality of TVET programmes

3. Government should put in place a partnership framework established by law and guided by a clear policy and strategy to provide guidelines upon which PPPs in TVET could be implemented for purposes of clarity and sustainability.

CONCLUSION

As is obtainable in many developed and developing countries, the education and training of the youths is a collective effort of both government and non-governmental organisations, private firms and private individuals. Therefore, if Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Nigeria is to be adequately strengthened for quality, effective partnership is needed between the public and private sectors. This partnership would undoubtedly address the issues and challenges which has led to the fall in standard and quality of TVET programmes in Nigeria thus repositioning it to create meaningful positive impacts on sustainable livelihood of the citizens who constitutes the driving force for technological and economic growth of the nation.

REFERENCES

1. Akhuemonkhan, I. A. & Raimi, L. (2013). Impact of quality assurance on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Nigeria. Retrieved June 3, 2014, from www.iveta.org/Resources/Documents/about/.../Akhuemonkhan.pptx
2. Alam, G. (2008). The role of technical and vocational education in the national development of Bangladesh. *Asia Pacific Journal of Co-operative Education* 9(1), 25-44
3. Ayomike, C. S. (2013). Towards quality technical vocational education and training (TVET) programmes in Nigeria: challenges and improvement strategies. Retrieved June 3, 2014, from www.iveta.org/Resources/Documents/about/.../Ayomike.pptx
4. Bowen-Clewey, L; Cooper, K. & Grannall, R. (n.d.). A comparison of quality management approaches for the training and vocational sector in seven countries. Retrieved June 3, 2014, from www.loea.info/documents/paper-4c12287df.pdf
5. Columbia University (n.d) Youth and sustainable livelihoods: linking vocational Training to market opportunities in Northern Uganda. Retrieved June 3, 2014, from www.cedefop.europa.org
6. Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) *National Policy on Education, 2013*. Retrieved December 10, 2013, from www.nerdc.gov.ng.org

7. Hillenkamp, U. (1999). The role of the public sector in Vocational Education and Training systems. *Vocational Education and Training in Europe on the Threshold of the 21st Century*, 50-54.
8. Ikechukwu, O. & Najimu, H. (2012). Public-private partnership for skill acquisition and vocational technical education development in Nigeria. Retrieved April 3, 2013, from <http://www.mcser.org>
9. Kombe, A. M. (2010). Technical education and vocational training as a tool for sustainable development. Retrieved May 4, 2013 from www.unevoc.unesco.org/publications
10. Morris, H. A. (2013), Quality assurance for TVET in the Carribean: an example of best practices. Retrieved June 3, 2014, from www.iveta.org/Resources/Documents/about/.../Morris.pptx
11. Musobo, I. C. & Gaga, J. (2012). Restructuring TVET as part of the educational reforms in Rwanda, a case on public private partnership in Rwandan TVET. Retrieved June 3, 2014, from <http://www.erisee.org>
12. Odu, K. (2010) Skills acquisition in Nigerian education system: problems and prospects in technical education *Journal of Qualitative Education*, 6(1), 20-26
13. Okeshola, F. B. (2012). Challenges facing the realization of millennium development goals (MDG's) in educational reform in Nigeria. *European Scientific Journal* 8(3), 201-205
14. Pederson, M. (1999). The changing role of the public and private sectors in vocational education and training. *Vocational Education and Training in Europe on the Threshold of the 21st Century*, 48-50.
15. Petrov, N. (1999). Financing issues of Vocational Education and Training. *Vocational Education and Training in Europe on the Threshold of the 21st Century*, 56-59.
16. Romanian Ministry of Education, Research and Youth (n.d). Quality assurance in Romanian Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Retrieved June 3, 2014, from www.erisee.org/downloads/library.../Brochure%20QA-EN.pdf
17. UNESCO (2009) Regional Contribution to statistical Information Systems Development for Technical and Vocational Education and Training. Retrieved April 12, 2013, from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002160/216065e.pdf>
18. UNESCO-UNEVOC (2006) Participation in Formal Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Worldwide: An initial statistical survey Retrieved October 05, 2012 from http://unevoc.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/pubs/UNEVOC UIS report.pdf
19. UNESCO-UNEVOC (2012) Strengthening TVET Teacher Education: Report of the UNESCO-UNEVOC online conference Retrieved December 03, 2013, from <http://unevoc.unesco.org/>

20. Wodi, S. W. & Dokubo, A. (2009). Appraisal of Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) in Five Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State Nigeria. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 7(3),1-10
21. Yusuff, M. A. & Soyemi, J. (2012). Achieving sustainable economic development in Nigeria through Technical and Vocational Education and Training: The missing link. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* 2(2), 71-77.