



## **TVET: A ROADMAP TO ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**

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### **Abstract**

Across the globe, Technical and Vocational Education (TVET) is not only well known, but also internationally accepted as a roadmap to economic transformation by empowering people reducing poverty, creating wealth and sustaining livelihood. Also, the role of TVET in socio-economic development in sub-Saharan Africa cannot be underestimated. This feat is achievable by TVET via acquisition of relevant skills, programmes that enhances wealth creation, self-sufficiency and self-employment. Various economic transformations are now witnessed in the sub-Saharan Africa, while many young people are now skilled and trained to handle future jobs due to restructuring of TVET. However, TVET is not free from challenges, despite these upsides. This paper highlights some economic transformations that are witnessed in some countries in the sub-Saharan Africa. Besides, it highlights the salient challenges facing TVET and also proffers practical ways of repositioning it for greater exploits.

**Keywords:** TVET, skills acquisition, self-employment opportunities, economic transformation.

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### **Introduction**

Nations across the globe are leaving no stone unturned to establish robust and sustainable economy through human resources development. In view of this, TVET has become relevant and popular because of its impartation of skills to the workforce. Africa is not an exemption as many countries in the continent are making effort to establish and restructure their TVET programmes to boost economic transformation. This paper will explore how TVET has been useful in the economic transformation of some countries in the sub Saharan Africa.

TVET has been defined by various authors and researchers, but one important aspect that is constant in these definitions is skills acquisition. According to Boateng (2012), TVET impart skills in diverse areas like science and technology, agriculture, visual arts, business, to mention a few.

From the above illustration, TVET is seen as a tool to impart relevant skills in diverse fields, thereby opening job opportunities, create wealth through income generation, and reduce poverty among people (Yusuf and Soyemi, 2012).

TVET is widely known worldwide for empowerment, mostly the youth. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the International Labour Organization (ILO), TVET is a form of education which incorporates the general education, science and technical subjects and the acquisition of relevant skills (theoretical and practical), knowledge and attitude in diverse skills of human endeavor.

Furthermore, according to FRN (2013), TVET is defined as follows:

- i. A core component of general education
- ii. A roadmap to professional vocations to prepare people for employment opportunities
- iii. A pathway to sustainable environmental
- iv. A means of poverty eradication and wealth creation (FRN, 2013).

Figure 1: (TVET) in the Nigerian economy



Source: Emamorose Felix2023 - <https://medium.com/>

### **Methodology**

As a qualitative research, this paper employs expository research design method. The author systematically evaluates texts and various research contents and derive conclusion from the analysis of previous researchers. To achieve the aim of this research work, secondary data was used and their sources include reference books on TVET, journals, e-books, text books and international research books related to TVET in sub-Saharan Africa.

### **Discussion**

#### **TVET's Economic Transformation across Countries**

TVET is highly instrumental to the economic transformation of countries in the sub-Saharan Africa. This paper considers some of these countries:

#### **Ethiopia**

The growth sector of Ethiopia has developed over the years and one important factor for this is TVET. Sectors like the agriculture, tourism, ICT, and mining have witnessed tremendous transformation. The manufacturing sector had boosted industrialization. TVET offers support to the sectors in Ethiopia and the government has not only given it great recognition, but has also encouraged it through several initiatives.

A prominent initiative by the Ethiopian government is the establishment of Technical and Vocational Education and Training Strategy 2016-2020. With this program, the Ethiopian citizens are accessible to TVET programs. Besides, the program creates a link between the trainees and employers of labor. In addition, more TVET training institutes are established while trainees receive world class and updated skills to function in high skill vocations (TVET 2008).

The industrial park development programme in Ethiopia is also an innovative initiative of TVET. The programme leads to the creation of several industrial parks, thereby contributing to the development and growth of manufacturing firms (Yechalework, 2019). These parks are fully loaded with standard facilities. In addition to the standard park development programme is the establishment of TVET institutions which is incorporated within the park's premises. This is intended to train people, especially the youth in specialized disciplines, who will eventually work in the parks.

Huge success was recorded in the innovative programme. As a result, another programme known as the Leather Industry Development Institute's (LIDI) TVET programme came on board. The aim of this programme is to train young people in the production of leather products and acquisition of leather work skills. The training was a huge success as over 5,000 trainees have received specialized training with over 80% of the trainees gainfully employed in the leather industry (Leather Panel, 2022).



## **Togo**

TVET has also recorded a landmark breakthrough in diverse sectors across Togo. Various initiatives have also been implemented by the government in a bid to standardize programmes offered by TVET and made the citizens benefit from them (Afeti, 2017).

The first initiative to discuss here is the National Plan for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (PNETFP) (Afeti, 2017). The aim of this programme is to equip students with the relevant skills that will prepare them for the world of work. The government also expands this programme and ensures its accessibility to the less privileged, women, and the vulnerable (Afeti, 2017).

Furthermore, another TVET programme in Togo is the Skills for Employability and Productivity Project. Construction, agriculture and tourism are the main focus of these projects. With this program, technical institutes in Togo receive a boost because of the capacity development and train the trainer program offered by this project (AfDB, 2023).

In addition, the aforementioned programme collaborates between TVET and employers of labour through various apprenticeship programs it organizes. TVET graduate trainees are then provided gainful employment at the end of the training.

The International Centre for Agriculture Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) is another vibrant TVET programme in Togo in which technical skills are imparted into the youths living in rural areas (Afeti, 2017). The scope of this programme covers animal husbandry and agriculture. This programme has boosted the agricultural sector, while many rural youths have been gainfully employed. Since the inception of this programme, over 1,500 rural youths have benefitted. Besides, over 70% has been gainfully engaged while a large number of the graduate trainees have become owners of their businesses in the agricultural sector (SIFA, 2023).

## **Ghana**

Ghana, like other aforementioned countries also give high preference to TVET and its programmes. This is achieved by implementing a lot of programmes. First and foremost, is the development of the Ghanaian curriculum, restructuring the vocational educational system and emphasizing the need for skills training of young people to meet the demand of the competitive labour market (Afeti, 2017).

The Ghanaian government also establishes an organization known as the Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs). The aim of SSBs is to harmonize the private sector, captains of industries, government institutions, TVET bodies and capacity building institutions and proffer solutions to the workforce challenges across industries in Ghana (SIFA, 2023).

This body supports the government of Ghana by restructuring TVET and providing high skills and competence that is not only relevant and demand driven, but also thrives in the labour market (SIFA, 2023).

The Ghanaian government also introduces a project termed Technical and Vocational Education and Training Improvement Project (TVET). The programme helps to develop practical based curricula, impart relevant skills to trainers and trainees and upgrade training facilities in TVET institutions across the country.

Programmes like apprenticeship and internship are created from the TVET project. Besides, trainees that graduate are successfully given employment (SIFA, 2023).

The impact of TVET in Ghana is also witnessed in a project known as Ghana Skills and Technology Development Project (GSTDP) (AfDB, 2023). The sponsor of this project is the African Development Bank (AfDB).

With this project, technical assistance is provided to TVET institutions while their training equipment and infrastructural facilities are upgraded. Another contribution of the GSTDP project is that scholarships are given to the less privileged like women and the disabled (SIFA, 2023).

According to World Bank (2023), over 70% people have benefitted from this project, either by gainfully employed or setting up their own business.



Other parts of Africa are not left out as beneficiaries of TVET. In Kenya, traditional apprenticeship is providing the relevant skills to the vulnerable youths and increases their employability (African Union, 2007).

Today, many countries have engaged their youths with TVET, having realized its contributions to economic development and industrialization. Some have even gone extra miles to develop and implement various strategies and legal framework, all in a bid to reform TVET. Examples of such countries are Rwanda and Ghana. While Rwanda creates a Workforce Development Authority, Ghana establishes council for TVET (COTVET). At all levels, these programs coordinate and impart skills in these countries.

### **TVET as a Tool for Harnessing Socio-Economic Development in Africa**

The contributions of Technical and Vocational skills through economic development are enormous. Apart from enhancing profit and enterprise production, it helps in wealth and national growth. Besides, TVET enhances individual prosperity via skills acquisition. Acquired skills result in financial gain and productivity. Furthermore, TVET helps people to develop their career. Most of the problems being encountered in the sub-Saharan Africa today are pointers to the importance of TVET via career development. Among these problems are over population, poverty, poor income generating skills, unemployment of school graduates, to mention a few (Oyebolu, 2011).

To boost employability skills among school graduates and youths in African society, repositioning of TVET is the way out. This will boost sustainable and economic opportunities among Africans and by extension, promote economic growth (Oyebolu, 2011).

Youth employment in sub-Saharan Africa is a major challenge to the continent. A recent data released from World Bank reveals that over ten million African youths graduate yearly from schools without any skill, in search of jobs in the labour market. Many of these graduates are poorly skilled and as a result, do not meet the prerequisite skills demanded by employers. School leavers are often denied jobs because they lack employment related skills.

### **Challenges Facing TVET in sub-Saharan Africa**

TVET is facing myriads of problems in the sub-Sahara Africa region. Although TVET provides skills, there is a need for advance technological skills advancement, teamwork, and collaboration among stakeholders (Mc Elvey Hall & Lynch, 1987). It is expected that TVET provides relevant programmes to trainees with the aim of making them employable (Bronker, 1993).

Many developing countries marginalize the female gender and concentrate on skills impartation to the male fork. This had negatively affected their national development plan. Also in some cases, TVET facilities do not consider the female gender. Worst still is the cultural belief that discourages women from participating in vocational carrier and trainings. To support this point, there is low enrollment of women in TVET institutions among some developing nations (Wahba, 2020).

Apart from the above highlighted challenges, TVET in the sub-Saharan Africa are also facing the following problems:

#### **i. Low priority given to vocational education**

Vocational education is not given priority and this is in accordance with African Union (2007), which revealed that Africa is under sourced, with infrastructures that are obsolete, inadequate or damaged. An example of this illustration is Nigeria. The country owns over 5,100 and conventional secondary schools with just 169 technical colleges. Besides, there are over 4.5 million pupils in these secondary schools compared to just 44,000 students in the technical colleges. (Olukoya, et-al. 2018).

#### **ii. Vocational education degrees are ranked low**

According to African Union, in many countries, parents and the general public still consider Technical and Vocational Education as an education for the academically challenged. (Allais, et. al, 2021).

#### **iii. No collaboration between TVET and company requirements**



There is disparity between the offers of TVET and individual firms. While the former is supply oriented, the latter is demand oriented, creating a lack of balance. In addition, there is no nationally accepted curriculum to regulate TVET training in sub-Saharan African countries (Wahba, 2020).

**iv. Trainers are not adequately skilled**

TVET relies on the trainers is to impart skills. Unfortunately, many of them are not sufficiently skilled and experienced in the vocation they teach. Apart from professional inadequacy and certification, many trainers lack the practical experience and cannot handle sophisticated equipment in their areas of training Onjewu, M.A. (2011).

**Repositioning tvet for greater exploits: recommendations**

To reposition TVET for greater economic exploits, the following recommendations should be looked into:

- **Trainees should be provided high quality and relevant training**

This can be achieved by providing modern and adequate practical training materials to trainees. Besides, training manuals and relevant textbooks should be provided to trainees to supplement training. The training received by participants should be enough to acquire employment-related skills in their chosen vocation and make them relevant in the labour market (Afeti, 2017).

- **Restructuring TVET for better delivery**

This can be achieved by accrediting TVET trainers, service providers and school instructors. Quality assurance should also be administered from time to time to uphold TVET's standard, while learners should be assessed periodically within the training period to confirm if intended objectives are met.

- **Regular capacity development programs for workers**

Workers in every organization should be trained and retrained on a regular basis for skills upgrading. This is a concept of lifelong learning in which they acquired the latest skills to enable them cope with the demand of the latest technology in workplaces.

- **Adequate funding**

TVET in sub-Saharan Africa requires funding to upgrade its facilities for learning. Government and the private sector should provide enough funds for TVET institutions to procure modern equipment and carry out various initiatives that will sustain economic development in sub-Saharan Africa

**Conclusion**

The role played by TVET to achieve economic transformation in the sub-Saharan Africa region cannot be underestimated. However, to achieve sustainable economic development through TVET requires serious commitment and unrented effort of the government and the private sector. Besides, the recommendations proposed in this paper should be looked into if sub-Saharan African countries will experience the anticipated economic boost.

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