

Vocational Education in Uganda, a Reality Unearthed: Lessons from the Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Latin American (TVET)

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Abstract

The article is a review of studies that have been conducted on the nature, prominence/effectiveness and relevance of vocational education in providing skills and knowledge to the population especially the youths. It bases on the assertion that vocational education has a lot of positive returns for a country like Uganda and these are known however despite all these, institutional commitment especially on the side of the government remains limited. This is clear from many studies conducted that share themes to some extent and base on them to make recommendations in areas related to design and redesign of curricula and trimming of such education for gainful social and economic life. An exploration of the TVET shall be done to understand how such education has been conducted and the possible lessons that third world countries like Uganda can have in a bid to gain the full potential out of vocational education. A comprehensive and comparative exploratory as well as analytical study of vocational education in Asian societies is suggested so that such studies can be made more reliable in the future.

Key words: Vocational education, Uganda, TVET, UNESCO, Latin America, Caribbean

Introduction

Vocational Education(VE) can be defined as a form of education that is largely based on occupation and in other cases has also been known as career and technical education. one can also understand it as an academic system of study that prepares people for job opportunities based on manual or practical activities. VE can be conducted at different levels whether pre-primary, primary, secondary or even post-secondary. It can also be done by persons of any age.

In most of the third world countries, VE has not been made a priority for both systematic and non-systematic reasons. The systemic reasons are related to absence of enough vocational education centres, low government will to support the available schools and the absence of vocation instructors to extend the skills and the knowledge to people who would be

interested. Other reasons have been related to poor/negative community perception and attitude towards VE, parental discouragement of such schools.

In Uganda, efforts to make vocational education a reality have been underway but to their least. According to the new vision of 9th February 2018, Uganda selected some model vocational schools to act as centres of excellence and they included Karera Technical Institute located in Bushenyi, Nyamitanga Technical Institute (Mbarara) Rwentanga Farm Institute (Mbarara), Kitgum Technical Institute, Kalongo Technical Institute (Agago), Ora Technical Institute (Zombo) and Butaleja Technical Institute. Others are Kasodo Tehanical Institute (Pallisa), Kaliro Technical Institute (Kaliro), Ssesse Farm Institute (Kalangala), Lake Katwe Training Institute (Kasese) and Kaberamaido Technical Institute¹.

Most of the third world countries grappling with the fact that reducing the prevalent levels of early school dropping out is one of the main challenges they face as so happens to some of the European education systems (European Commission 2011; Salva-Mut et al. 2014). However this has received some attention in form of research and scientific studies say by De Wittea et al. (2013) as well as Hovdhaugen et al. (2015). Studies on VE have been a little less and scarce, especially when compared with the amount of studies focused on secondary education and higher education (Dore and Lüscher 2011; Tanggaard 2013). This is largely happening in a period of privatisation in which most countries have privatised educational systems.

On 12th march 2013, the then minister of education and sports, Jessica Alupo revealed there was hope of receiving funding financial help from a number of donors. She noted that that the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) had already promised \$22.95m. Other who had pledged included Islamic Development Bank (\$27.91m), Saudi Fund for International Development (\$11.998m), Kuwait Fund (\$11.9m) and Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (\$5m) which all could give a total of about UGX 219 billions .

The minister said that ;

“They intend to increase funding to the new Technical Examination Board, increase unit costs for capitation grants, scale up the non-formal training programmes and provide instructional materials to Uganda Technical Colleges for students to do real-life projects as

¹ https://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1470850/technical-institutes-selected-act-centres-excellence

part of their exam requirements. With such boost we can now address the critical issues to firmly cement our efforts to transform Uganda into a country with a critical mass of skilled Ugandans. Our focus and vision is to make sure we Uganda needs skilled people to move forward”,

This is what countries like Uganda are missing out and yet it is key if VE institutions are to fully realise their potential.

It is upon the same that in October 2019, the Speaker of Uganda’s Parliament Rebecca Kadaga, pledged to begin mobilizing funding and support for vocational institutes especially in the area of in Busoga sub-region (eastern Uganda). Her move was to involve local industries and factories as well as appealing to the government because to her, they were the major beneficiaries of skilled labour force from these vocational training centres.

In her words, she is quoted to have said

"I promise to work with the MPs and government to solicit funding and support internationally and locally from the government and other stakeholders to improve the quality of our schools so that they are well equipped",

This was a good move and it all shows the will and commitment of the government however, this has not been explored to the fullest like it happens elsewhere. I guess Uganda still needs more than this².

United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) which is the United Nations(UN) principle agency in charge of education has always expressed that it is fully committed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development especially sustainable Development Goal(SDG) 4 which states that ‘Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all ‘UNESCO has also been deeply embedded in promoting the education 2030 Agenda³.

In the same vain, a new road map was approved between 19 to 22 May 2015 in Incheon, Republic of Korea with emphasis on vocational and technical education with absolute gender sensitivity for all men and women, abled and differently abled and the expectation was that if well-coordinated, such an education system would bring employment opportunities to the

² <https://www.parliament.go.ug/news/3823/kadaga-wants-better-funding-vocational-institutions>

³ UNESCO 2030 Agenda

people arising out of the skills and knowledge got, create room for entrepreneurship which would later on lead to inclusive and participatory growth and development for societies. Latin America and the Caribbean have somehow fared well here unlike most of the African countries including Uganda

Uganda has also tried to be on the call of VE. Uganda's TVET mission is about ensuring that individuals and enterprises acquire the skills they need to raise productivity and income. VE system is under the authority of the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), which is responsible for all processes related to programme implementation and monitoring, including procedures for planning, budgeting and annual reviews.⁴

The call for countries to have Vocational Education AS a part of their agenda is real. Uganda has however had a long history of such educational system though it has been fuzzy in some way and not too much emphasized and coordinated. Vocational education dates way back in the colonial period, especially in the late 1940's period when the,

“World War II former camps were converted into skills training centres to re-train demobilized soldiers and younger children to acquire skills for survival. In 1947, after world war II, legislation was enacted (1947 Ordinance) which was clearly intended to prevent the exploitation of children who were employed when they were underage and made provisions for contractual agreement to ensure a comprehensive apprenticeship training that would help to set down the rights of the younger as well as youth employees (apprentices) and also lay straight the key obligations of the employers.”⁵

From the above, efforts were underway to have an apprenticeship legislation in 1949 and it was in this period that the general practice of most of the organizations was to employ a youth as a helper or a cleaner under the common name of being a “Spanner boy” a name adopted because his major task was to do the cleaning especially of mechanical tools used by engineers. In this way, the boy picked up smattering of skills without proper guidance at all. In 1952, Ugandans saw the establishment of what came to be the Artisan Training Organization in Ministry of Labour, which was headed by the director and whose role was to train Artisans working in various trade areas. This organisation was basically for the objective of resettling of World War II veterans however in 1953, the trade testing and

⁴ <https://sustainablekills.org/technical-vocational-education-training-system-uganda/72461/>

⁵ *ibid*

guidance section was established whose role was to assess the nature of skill competencies of the different persons undergoing training. The organization was housed at the current headquarters of Directorate of Industrial Training.

In 1967, the Japanese government offered the Uganda government an opportunity of building of a modern vocational training institute which was to be situated at Nakawa⁶. The objective of this was to increase the production of craftsmen and women and retraining the same to meet the industrial demands of the time especially as employers continued to raise concerns of lack of due skills needed for industrial production. In 1968, the government came up with a strategy of strengthening the industrial vocational training schemes however the situation was still tricky.⁷

Talking of TVET in Latin America is to talk of a system that started in a very unpredictable manner because it's said that from 1920s to the 1970s it started as alternative schooling path ways to secondary academic training that were to be merged into the school system structures. The mentality held in Uganda is the same mentality held in Latin America as they too thought that TVET was for those who had failed to make it to secondary education. These countries had different experiences which they altered and improved as they evolved over time. Prominent of these were national service for industrial Development (SENAI)⁸ created

⁶ Nakawa Vocational Training Institute (NVTI) is one of the four Public Vocational Training Institutes directly operated and administered by the Ministry of Education & Sports (MoES) through the BTVET Department. The Institute was established in 1971 by the Government Of Uganda in cooperation with the Government of Japan through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The primary objective of the establishment was to provide vocational training skills to school leavers and apprentices in enterprises and to upgrade and assess competencies of industrial workers.

⁷ The idea did not take off until 1972, when the Employment Act was repealed and the Industrial Training Decree No. 2 of 1972 together with the Industrial Apprenticeship Training Regulations were promulgated. This made apprenticeship training more prominent than ever before especially among the manufacturing, repair industries and organizations. In 1972, the Directorate of Industrial Training was established by the Industrial Training decree No 2

⁸ SENAI is the largest institution of professional and technological education in Latin America, calling more than 2.3 million Brazilian workers each year. It is a network of not-for-profit secondary level professional schools established and maintained by the Brazilian Confederation of Industry (a patronal syndicate). It is one of the most important institutions in the country providing formal training for specialized workers for the industry, in the areas of chemistry, mechanics, construction, etc.

in early 1940s in Brazil adopted later on by other countries. Others included SENA⁹ in Colombia and INA¹⁰ in Costa Rica to mention but a few.

In Uganda, the perception of vocational education as reported in daily Monitor of 28th November 2017,

“For so long, there is a perception that when one fails to attain better grades in secondary their only option is to join a vocational institution. This is wrong because the 21st Century dictates that professionals should acquire skills which most theoretical education does not offer. According to Yahaya Yusufu Walusansa, the academic registrar Uganda Technical College, Kicwamba, a number of Ugandans still do not know the importance of vocational studies and have the perception that it is for those that have performed poorly academically.”

This same view was agreed upon by Okuonzi, John (2009) who found out that In Uganda most parents have the perception that vocational education is meant for school dropouts with poor performance in primary and post primary education. Many of these students are normally brought to these institutions as a last resort with no future for academic progression.

This makes students to opt for other forms of education like enrolling to primary or secondary schools. However, one should also note that most of the third world societies have not built the capacity even in these forms of education. In other cases, the problem is on the applicants to these schools. It is easy to realize that sometimes the students do not have the potential to make it to primary or secondary or even universities due to unforeseen or even

⁹ The National Learning Service (in Spanish called Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje-SENA) is a Colombian public institution focused in the growth and development of programs of professional formation. It's a government initiative to develop educational systems in Colombia as people get skilled and knowledgeable for employment. It is responsible for fulfilling its role for the government to invest in the social and technical development of the population through providing and ensuring free Comprehensive Training for the incorporation and development of people in productive activities which can bring about transformation in society. It was established on 21st June 1957 as a result of a joint initiative of organized workers, businessmen and the Colombian Catholic church with the support of the International Labor Organization (ILO) and has worked hard to see the presumed transformation becoming real and beneficial for the community. Uganda needs to have such comprehensive institutions well facilitated to offer desired transformation.

¹⁰ INA, is a key educational institution whose motto is **“key to progress.”** It boasts of about 52 centres around the country with courses offered in community centres, the door goes in and out with providing technical training for students and turning them into skilled labor for the nation's industries. Or, as their website puts it, “to foment production ... to contribute to the improvement of living conditions and the economic social development of the country.”

unavoidable circumstances that may be linked to inefficient incomes, the grades such students get or even the entire admission procedure that they have to go through to be qualified as students in those systems they yearn to enter. All this gives us reasons to opt for a vocational system at all costs possible.

The higher education system has not fully explored the potential of the employment market as sometimes the skills and knowledge of graduates are not in line of the 'expected' by these employers. Needless to note, the biggest employer in Uganda is the private sector and this has always required a reduction in export labour. However, this calls for vocation and professionally skilled labour force which Uganda does not have in place. The gap thus remains unfilled. Similarly, the increased specialization of the Ugandan job market also calls for vocational and technical skills that cannot be provided by the formal education sector that largely concentrates on 'theorization' with limited if not 'no' element of practicability. The public sector cannot offer jobs for all the graduates from education system and thus vocational education would help create an 'enabled and economically empowered' population that can use the skills and knowledge to create their own welfare.

This is premised on the fact that Vocational Education offers a wide variety of options in administrative, business, computer technology, printing, agricultural disciplines, automobile, craftsmanship, laboratory technics, and cosmetic fields. In a more specific way, these programs can range from typewriting to secretarial practices, computer operator, desktop publishing, laboratory technician, librarian, mechanic, electrical technician, plumbing, refrigeration and air conditioning, tailoring, beautician to mention but a few.

This has not been the case for TVET where countries explored the potential of vocational and technical educational for gainful opportunities to their population. This is worth exploring if other countries see the need for such vocational education to be used as a driver of development in its real sense.

If Uganda is to be pro-active and take vocational education as a key educational system for its people as a basis to respond to both the current and future challenges, then it will have to respond to a number of needs:

- Concerted effort to adapt to labour market evolutions and understand the emerging sectors as well as the required skills because this is the only way to win the trust of the

different stakeholders and employers that VE is as vital as other educational forms if not even better;

- Emphasis must be put on facilitating and encouraging VE learners' and teachers' transnational mobility which also involves multi skilling and diversified training on the side of the learners;
- People must be empowered to adapt to and manage change by enabling them to acquire key competences
- The Government must ensure that there is continued provision of tailored and easily-accessible vocational training. This calls for establishment of VE centres across the country coupled with proper facilitation and retraining of the instructors;
- There is need for proper sustainability and excellence of VE basically through a common and agreed upon approach to quality assurance in all VE centres and by all concerned stakeholders so as to advise and where necessary;
- There must be as assurance of a secure and sustainable financial source for VE which must be followed by proper use of the available resources.
- VE needs to be flexible (accommodate people at different levels and from different backgrounds) and of high quality;
- VE should be inclusive and gender sensitive so that everyone has an equal opportunity like another to benefit from the education and training;

A quick analysis of the data that was compiled from about eleven countries in Latin America by Psacharopoulos in 1994¹¹ reflected that majority of the countries showed that the rate of return for vocational secondary education was higher than that for secondary general education. The same study reported of a further study in seven out of these eleven countries, the private return to secondary education does not in any way differ between general and vocational education.

If Uganda is to have the best out of vocational education system, then there is need to have a vivid Technical, Vocational and educational policy (TVET)¹² with the following elements.

¹¹ There is an update of compilations of rate of return estimates to different levels of investment in education from the period 1985 - and further shows the different philosophical and methodological as pertains to the estimates. There is consideration of three main levels of education, primary education as this service industry continues to offer the biggest social profitability globally.

¹² The term 'Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) was officiated at the World Congress on TVET which was held in 1999 in Seoul (Republic of Korea).TVET institutions play an important role in

The joint OECD-AfDB AEO review of the successful African countries 'experiences suggested eight necessary conditions for formulating and implementing successful TVET strategies:

- a) Addressing the skill and knowledge needs of both the formal and the informal sector;
- b) Emphasis on improving the nature of vocational institutions as well as the quality of TVET;
- c) Ensuring participation of the local communities through continuous request for views and support;
- d) Fostering and ensuring increased partnership with all stakeholders who are party to vocational education (i.e. the government, social partners, business associations, and various stakeholder groups in the formal and informal sectors of the economy);
- e) Improving forecasting as well as ensuring comprehensive planning to cater for knowledge and skill needs;
- f) Need to adopt a clear vision, mission and transparent leadership at the highest political level as a way of ensuring increased political will to support vocational education.
- g) Prioritize the process of facilitating the growth of the productive sector through best practices related to technological learning and innovation;
- h) Strengthening decentralized local management of TVET through the delegation of responsibilities to regional authorities.

In Uganda, with the adoption of the Poverty Eradication Plan (PEAP¹³) for the period 2004/05 to 2007/08, there was an ardent call for need to balance within post-primary education between academic and vocational education. In this regard, the secondary curriculum was reviewed to make it more responsive to national labour demands, and about 56 secondary schools were “vocationally re-oriented to create room for vocational and technical education. (OECD, 2008). Point 7 in the UNESCO revised recommendations on

equipping young people to enter the world of work and in improving their employability throughout their careers.

¹³ The Government of Uganda endorsed the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) in 1997 as the comprehensive national development planning framework aimed at guiding public action to eradicate poverty in Uganda. PEAP had long-term strategic objectives which included reduced income poverty and inequality, improved human development and increased GDP growth .It was to take a period of 20 years from its inception.

TVE states that —TVE should be planned and designed in a way that makes it to be an integral part of people’s basic ‘general education in the form of initiation to technology, the world of work, and human values and standards for responsible citizenship.’¹⁴

If Uganda is to be pro-active and take vocational education as a key educational system for its people as a basis to respond to both the current and future challenges, then it will have to respond to a number of needs:

- Concerted effort to adapt to labour market evolutions and understand the emerging sectors as well as the required skills because this is the only way to win the trust of the different stakeholders and employers that VE is as vital as other educational forms if not even better;
- Emphasis must be put on facilitating and encouraging VE learners’ and teachers’ transnational mobility which also involves multi skilling and diversified training on the side of the learners;
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- There is need for proper sustainability and excellence of VE basically through a common and agreed upon approach to quality assurance in all VE centres and by all concerned stakeholders so as to advise and where necessary;
- There must be as assurance of a secure and sustainable financial source for VE which must be followed by proper value for money
- VE needs to be flexible (accommodate people at different levels and from different backgrounds) and of high quality;
- VE should be inclusive and gender sensitive so that everyone has an equal opportunity like another to benefit from the education and training;

¹⁴ Given the disparities that may exist between formal education, whether secondary or tertiary, and the employment and career opportunities available, the highest priority should be given to technical and vocational education.

The above shall not and cannot be free of challenges and concerns and these are always a test of efficiency and success. The successful lessons as well as the adoption of the TVET shall be pegged to the extent to which Uganda responds to concerns in line of the early criticisms by Philip Foster (1965), and other numerous concerns which have been voiced over the past decade. Atchoarena and Delluc (2001) have summarized them in Africa and they include amongst others:

- a) Disregard of the informal sector's needs due to lack of personal touch and also denial of the concerns and areas raised for improvement;
- b) Lack of consideration of the labour market and of the high unemployment rate among graduates which also not culminated into studies to establish the rationale behind this. (This is as reported in Oketch, 2009:541).
- c) Poor quality nature of the education;
- d) Training not suited to actual socio-economic conditions;
- e) Very high costs which make it unaffordable and hence inaccessible;

In regard of this, Wadi H Haddad (1997) reports that...

'As in many other countries of Anglophone SSA, VET in Uganda is generally offered outside of the mainstream school system (Atchoarena and Delluc, 2002). It has been reported continuously that in most of these countries, the "school system often leads to two directions that is general education which enables pupils who have access to continue their schooling to higher levels and second is the vocational education basically for those who wish to opt to focus on immediate employment or even those who, because of having limited access to educational opportunities usually get locked out of the general 'education ladder' (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2006, p. 30). ...

The potential of VE is too much but requires stakeholder cooperation with all parties being interested in the same way. An organisation's approach to the development of individual expertise is likely to be determined by a number of factors, ranging from the product market in which it is located to the organization of the work and the distribution of skills as noted by Fuller and Unwin (2004). This becomes clear therefore that if organisations fail to map the range of skills to be covered, learning risks becoming haphazard and they are more likely to be driven by the need to preserve organisational productivity (Chan 2014; Fuller and Unwin 2004; Smith 2000). This implies that guidance must/should be recognized as an important

task to be carried out at the workplace because if and when the processes of guidance in the work place becomes transparent, both learners and other members of the work community become more aware of the objectives of VE and the potential of the VE students while at their workplace. This implies that the GOU must commit itself to supporting the adequate allocation of financial and non-financial resources for proper guidance. A structured training program makes the training objectives more transparent for both the learner and the job/work community in which they are going to participate.

Latin America's (TVET) has also faced some challenges which countries like Uganda must try and overcome. One of them has been at the level of delivery of vocational training: teachers and trainers have been directly responsible for delivering vocational initial and continuing training although, looking at Latin America, the training of the instructors is not in any way comparable to training in European countries. Those appointed are generally either graduates of the self-same courses, or, increasingly, people from the field say the unemployed vocationalists and technicians like engineers who have no formal training in education or have received any form of basic rudimentary training. Due to this, the chances of the skills around being outdated are too much and this makes the learners to also be exposed to the same nature of skills.

Another challenge happens at the level of planning and management where there are curriculum developers, planners of training and heads of VE centres. Some of these professionals have always showed weaknesses in the same way as teachers and the cited reason has been that they lack proper training. Moreover, appointments like it happens elsewhere have been made due to reasons related to nepotism and politics. This ends up making the VE centres fail if not offer sub-standard skills and training to learners and the risk becomes too high. In other cases, from the perspective of decision-making which too is double politicised: management teams in most of the vocational training centres have not demonstrated well-founded professional knowledge and appropriate management skills. This is pegged to the fact that administrators in these centres have been appointed because of the political and meritocratic influence but which has only been exercised by their own interest groups in society, which care relatively little about matters to do with the internal and external effectiveness of vocational training systems. Uganda must therefore desist from politicisation of education whatsoever though the regulation and control can be done at that level but with absolute openness and transparency.

What is reported is exactly what happens in Uganda as the general community tends to think that vocational education must happen outside the mainstream educational system and thus for only those who have not made it to such systems. This mentality and attitude must change as a society is to benefit from vocational education.

The lack of funding of formal TVET has led to the obsolescence of the equipment and weak managerial capacity, which in turn affect the quality of training programmes. Moreover, the oversight responsibility for TVET is in general shared between the ministries responsible for education or technical education and labour or employment, although some specialized vocational training programmes (in agriculture, health, transport, etc.) fall under the supervision of the sector ministries as reported in Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD 2008). In Latin America, the financial investment in vocational training has also improved tremendously unlike in the past where there were only two basic funding schemes that is taxes or levies with a specific end arising from the general budget of the Nation. Today tax mechanisms coexist with a wide range of provisions including incentives and tax rebates, the sale of consultant services, technical assistance, certification, to mention but a few. There has also been cooperation with other organisations to ensure financial sustainability. The two major sources of VE funding are the public budget and private households through training fees paid by the trainees. The overall share of VE in the MoES budget is relatively low, approximately 4% to 7%. Generally VE in most of the third world countries has been and continues to be low. Training for the informal sector is to a large extent donor-financed. Uganda thus must follow suit¹⁵.

A number of recommendations can be made for Uganda's VE. One of the recommendations involves the creation of good management teams that can help to develop or even improve strategic plans that are in place for VE centres so that these are tailored towards meeting the needs of the population (Cadena, 2013). Likewise, it is important that these developed teams are given enough time to meet, develop or even improve as well as discuss their strategic and comprehensive plans. They must also have the mandate to track and monitor the progress of students as well as carrying out an assessment on the effectiveness of the plan and these plans must be adjusted anytime need be. (Cadena, 2013). In the same way, there is need to promote vivid collaboration as well as teamwork between teachers at all the different levels. This can also be done across the VE curricula (Cadena, 2013; Aguirre, 1991; Tien, 1978; Mohd Kamalludeen, 2012).

¹⁵ **Source:** <https://sustainableskills.org/technical-vocational-education-training-system-uganda/72461/>

In line of this, it is important to note the benefit of creating VE institutions like dropout commissions (Taş, Bora, Selvitopu, and Demirkaya, 2013) or workgroups for reducing absenteeism (Azzarano, 1981) and promoting student attendance (Tien, 1978). In these cases, the point is to suggest the need to involve various stakeholders and educational interested agents, such as the guidance and psychology departments (Taş, Bora, Selvitopu, and Demirkaya, 2013). These can work closely with the community to carry out the assessment of these institutions, operational procedures and suggest any possible interventions all tailored towards improving VE. Uganda can make this a reality

Likewise, some recommendations refer to the utility of having centres establish various links (through directors, teachers, and counsellors) with the community and other levels of education. Co-curricular and extracurricular activities can develop as a result of these links, and beyond assessments and exams, they can stimulate students' interests or reveal hidden talents (Tien, 1978; Kamalludeen, 2012). Along this line, King K, et al (2007) suggests organizing activities such as, job fairs, career days, field trips, and seminars. It is also suggested that the education centres provide students with internship or work placement opportunities in the communities in which they are located or in nearby areas King K, et al (2007).

One is tempted to agree with Mara JK (2006) who noted that there is need to involve students already in the system as well as tracking down the graduates from the VE schools. This is to enhance participation and association as said by Klinger (1973).it is agreed upon by Wade (1974) who adds to it by noting the need to introduce, and expand institutions for younger population that have or are yet to benefit from VE. The ministry of education must additionally facilitate student bodies both in these VE schools as well as while they have graduated (in form of alumni trafficking as well explored by Tien (1978). This shall help to highlight the basic social and non-social challenges faced by the students while in and out of such VE

We also found recommendations referring to the need to increase student participation in committees and/or bodies representing the education centres (Tien, 1978). Given that school leaving is a phenomenon that can be influenced by factors that are unrelated to the school, a series of recommendations explicitly deal with the need to involve families in their children's academic lives (Wade, 1974; Aguirre, 1991; Fanoiki, 2014).

It is also important that the government encourages the parents to be more interested and participative in the various VE education centres and the programs at the centres so as to advise but also guide their careers. Additionally there is need to organize social activities that involve parents (e.g., a day for sports or to visit the school), and including them in extracurricular activities such as field trips or school fairs as identified by Aguirre, 1991). Whereas this may not be possible at this point in Uganda, it is also recommended with time that parents be given work space or centres where they can meet and get involved in the decision making process regarding issues of the VE centres. (Aguirre, 1991).

Most programmes emphasize the improvement of skills of the youth labour force or support the creation of youth entrepreneurs, and the emphasis is placed on improvement of quality in the supply of employable labour. As for demand, emphasis is placed on creation of an environment conducive to the growth of the private sector – a measure that has indirect, but nevertheless important, implications in the creation of employment for youth. However, UNIDO, African Union et al. (2007) argue that the two aspects should not be isolated from one another, but be undertaken in a linked and complementary manner. There is need, therefore, for concerted efforts to seek a more direct role for the private sector in programmes that generate jobs for youth.

In conclusion therefore, Uganda has to learn from other areas that have a long history of VE as it puts into consideration the challenges they faced all till the present. This shall help to offer both a flexible solution to the problem of training and skills shortages as it will henceforth diversify the training centres and education systems breaking away from the mainstream primary and secondary systems that have been prominent since the colonial system. GOU must emphasize and reemphasize trust among the population that VE centres can work vividly well despite the changing economic and political landscape. This thus calls for training of VE instructors coupled with changing in VE structures, renovation and increased financial facilitation of these centres. They must be continuously systematised and standardised as the stakeholders too monitor them closely. Lessons learnt elsewhere must be customised to fit the Ugandan case as we strive to move forward.

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