Reducing Unemployment Rates by Producing the Workforce that Industry Wants:

The Botswana Perspective

Presentation

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Table of Contents

1 BACKGROUND.................................................................................................................. 3
  1.1 Population Characteristics...................................................................................... 4
  1.2 Employment Rates................................................................................................. 4

2 THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING SYSTEM IN BOTSWANA....................... 5

3 TOWARDS REDUCTION OF UNEMPLOYMENT RATES......................... 6
  3.1 Structured Work-Based Learning ................................................................. 7
  3.2 Industry-driven Training System ................................................................. 8
    3.2.1 Development of Regulations and Guidelines................................. 8
    3.2.2 Development of Unit (Training/Skill) Standards and
        Vocational Qualifications.......................................................................... 8
    3.2.3 Quality Auditing of Quality Assurance Activities......................... 9

4 CONCLUSIONS............................................................................................................. 9

5 RECOMMENDATIONS............................................................................................... 10

6 APPENDIX................................................................................................................... 11

7 REFERENCES................................................................................................................ 12
1 BACKGROUND


Some of these challenges include, to:

- place greater emphasis on “technical and practical subjects, and business skills – the skills that are most needed;”
- “reduce the number of youth who are not participating in any form of education or training;”
- “reduce unemployment, which is particularly high amongst the youth, especially females;”
- “find concrete strategies to ensure citizen empowerment and to maximise the participation of citizen owned companies in the economy;”
- “provide initial training for school-leavers of basic education to acquire skills which will enhance their opportunities for employment or self-employment;”
- promote ‘total training’ that “emphasises training for self-employment, adaptability to technological change, increased productivity and diversification of the economy;”
- accredit, monitor and evaluate the implementation of training programmes “for a comprehensive development of the individual, the economy and the society.”
- “deal with the problems of poverty, inequality, and unemployment;” and
- “African governments must help create the right market conditions for developing tourism as a means to alleviating poverty.”

Basically, the above publications realise that education and training have not been quite relevant to Botswana industry needs and that skills development has lagged behind the
economic development. They also reflect unemployment as one of the major challenges to the country.

1.1 Population Characteristics

According to the 2001 Population and Housing Census Report the country’s population has increased from 1,326,796 in 1991 to 1,680,863 in 2001. This reflects an average annual growth rate of 2.4% within this period, compared with 4.5% - between 1971 and 1981, and 3.5% - between 1981 and 1991. Causes of the noted decline in the growth rates include:

- declining fertility rates (ages 15-49 – women);
- increased women participation in economic activities;
- increased literacy rates;
- access to better health care; and
- increased death rates due to the AIDS pandemic (ie during the HIV/AIDS era).

Internal distribution of the population has also been undergoing a change. Villages that are in close proximity of towns and cities experienced annual growth rates of between 6.18% and 10.89% which are above the national average growth rate. The reason for this is mainly rural-urban migration. As a result of the move from an agrarian to a more industrial economy, there has been an increased migration to urban or peri-urban areas in search of formal sector employment. The urban population as a whole grew by about 54.2% between 1991 and 2001 (MFDP 2003).

1.2 Employment Rates

Botswana has a young population. According to the 2001 population Census more than about 36.7% of the population was below age 15 years. The dependency ratio is therefore high estimated at about 71%. In spite of this there is evidence that a demographic transition is taking place as the dependency ration has reduced from a very high level of 91 in 1991 to the current level. However the relatively high dependency ratio means that a smaller proportion of the population are still bearing the burden of supporting a larger proportion of the population.
Unemployment rate was estimated to have reduced from 21.6% in 1996 to 5.8% in 2000 (NDP9-Para 3.13; page 33). Of the 114,859 unemployed people who are actively seeking work, 100,174 (53,569 females and 46,605 males) of them have no training. This means that only 14,685 (2,549 females and 3,327 males) of these have had exposure - of varying levels – to technical and vocational education and training (CSO; Dec 2003).7.

This high unemployment rate has made employment creation a high priority in Botswana’s development agenda. One of the strategies adopted to address this problem is to provide relevant skills particularly to the youth so as to make them either employable or enable them to be self-employed.

2 THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING SYSTEM IN BOTSWANA

The vocational education and training (VET) system is charged with the responsibility of providing skills to the workforce. In the past this system has focused on institution-based, and mainly, theoretical training.

A review of the education and training system undertaken in 1993 recommended critical changes to be made in the provision of VET. The review recommended, among others, the:

- formulation of the National Policy on Vocational Education and Training (NaPVET), which was approved in 1997;
- enactment of a vocational training act (VTA) – which was passed by Parliament in 1998; and
- establishment of a parastatal to be called the Botswana Training Authority (BOTA) to (according to NaPVET):
  - coordinate and implement the policy; and (according to the Vocational Training Act No 22 of 1998) also to:
  - coordinate vocational training activities in order to achieve better integration and harmonisation of the vocational training system being developed;
monitor and evaluate the performance of this system in order to ensure the successful performance of all training activities; and

advise on policy related issues of vocational training.

Regulations and other guidance material continue to be developed to facilitate smooth implementation of the mandate of BOTA.

One of the objectives of NaPVET is to set up an integrated vocational training system. BOTA is currently developing, coordinating and promoting this system, the focus of which includes quality assurance of providers, assessment centres, trainers, assessors, assessment procedures and awards, as well as provision of support and guidance to providers and standards generating bodies. The new approach to assessment includes the recognition of prior learning (RPL, or the recognition of current competence – RCC). This process involves recognition of learning (knowledge, skills and attributes/attitudes) gained outside formal education or training.

This work-based, industry-driven/oriented system has three levels of responsibility as follows:

- **level 1:** policy and planning – the Minister of Labour and Home Affairs;
- **level 2:** coordination and implementation of the policy – Botswana Training Authority; and
- **level 3:** provision of training – training institutions/providers.

### 3 TOWARDS REDUCTION OF UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

The vocational training system that is being developed is intended to promote structured quality work-based learning, access, equity, life-long learning and competence/outcome-based learning.
3.1 Structured Work-Based Learning (SWBL)

This refers to the type of learning that develops in the individual competences and skills that will enable them to perform at the workplace. It is work-based because it is based on the workplace requirements pertaining to knowledge, skills and attributes/attitudes. Such requirements are developed by sector standards generating task forces, which have a strong representation of industry. The requirements are expressed in the form of outcomes of learning. These outcomes of learning are reflected in unit (skill/training) standards. The quality assured unit standards and qualifications (which together constitute national awards) are registered on the Botswana National Vocational Qualifications Framework (BNVQF). Guided by the level descriptors for the respective BNVQF qualifications as well as the agreed sector qualification clusters, a standards generating task force identifies relevant unit standards and compiles them into a qualification level.

Assessment of learners’ performance and development of curricula are based on the registered unit standards. It therefore follows that industry/workplace needs will be addressed through the provision of curricula that are linked to unit standards.

The learning has to be structured – ie planned, systematic and coherent, and based on agreed processes and outcomes. For example, training plans have to be developed, training agreements between the learner and the training institution/provider signed, and internal and external quality systems developed, implemented, monitored and evaluated. A diagram of the SWBL is attached to this paper as an appendix, for information.

The Botswana training system also encourages the infusion of generic (transferable/key/core/personal) skills in the curriculum in order to develop a total/complete person. BOTA has so far identified these as being:

- communication;
- entrepreneurship;
- information, technology and communication;
- literacy;
- numeracy;
- problem solving;
- self-management;
- team skills;
- and work ready.
The infusion of these is expected to prepare a ‘rounded’ work-ready and versatile person, who would:

- be marketable and employable, thus reducing dependency on foreign expertise/labour resources; and
- have the right knowledge, skills and attributes for venturing into self-employment, where they would contribute towards the reduction of unemployment rates through creation of more job opportunities.

One of the pillars of the Botswana’s economy is tourism, and the Department of Tourism appreciates the need to improve and promote tourism in the country. The Department realises that tourism can create “opportunities for people to start their own businesses and employ others.” It further appreciates that tourism has attracted business to the rural areas, which does not only serve tourists, but also local people – who can work in them (Baxter Jul 2004).8

3.2 Industry-driven Training System

The industry-driven/oriented vocational training system that BOTA is developing espouses the involvement of key stakeholders throughout the quality assurance process. Central to these stakeholders is industry.

3.2.1 Development of Regulations and Guidelines

Input into all regulations and guidelines developed by BOTA is collected from, and verified with, stakeholders through consultative workshops and other fora.

3.2.2 Development of Unit (Training/Skill) Standards and Vocational Qualifications

Standards generating task forces, which have a strong representation of industry, are appointed within each sector/field of learning to develop these BNVQF awards. During the development process BOTA provides the necessary guidance and support to the task forces, and ultimately quality audits the submitted drafts. The awards are reviewed by the same task forces every five years, to ensure relevance.
3.2.3 Quality Auditing of Quality Assurance Activities

The quality assurance activities and processes of BOTA are audited by the Quality Assurance Committee. This is a BOTA Board subcommittee and like the Board itself, it has a strong representation of industry. The BOTA quality assurance activities include:

- registration and accreditation of training institutions, assessment centres, trainers and assessors;
- assessment procedures; and
- quality auditing and registration of unit standards and qualifications on the BNVQF.

All these inputs are aimed at improving the quality and status of vocational training in the country so that this training:

- is relevant to industry needs;
- is palatable enough to become a competitive alternative to academic studies;
- enjoys the ownership of stakeholders - especially industry; and
- prepares a quality workforce that can not only be appealing to employers, but can be productive enough, as well as self-employable, to boost the country’s economy, and therefore reduce poverty.

4 CONCLUSIONS

It is important to ensure that our TVET systems are aligned to industry training/skill standards, if we are to improve the unemployment rates and subsequently reduce poverty in our respective countries. Industry input into a TVET system would lead to ownership (by same) of the final product. This ownership is likely to enhance commitment by industry to absorb/retain graduates of this quality assured system.

Its involvement can be at the plan, design, implement, monitor and evaluate stages of a project cycle or of the curriculum process, an approach which could ensure that training is in concert with the world of work.
With its small population and a stable economy, Botswana stands the chance of improving quality of its workforce through a quality assured vocational training system; a workforce that would be in high demand and also self-reliant and self-employable, and therefore having a significant share in enhancing the standard of living for Batswana through creation of more job opportunities. The country should identify priority areas like the “hospitality and tourism sector” for which quality workforce need to be prepared through TVET as a matter of urgency, in order to improve the economy.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

That:

6.1 IVETA members commit to the promotion of TVET through continuous improvement of its credibility; and
6.2 TVET providers and qualifications/training authorities should involve industry in their activities to ensure curriculum relevance, quality workforce and economic growth.
APPENDIX

STRUCTURED WORK-BASED LEARNING

The Botswana National Vocational Training System
“Upskilling Batswana through Structured Work-Based Learning (SWBL)”

Entry
- Quality Assurance
  - Registration and accreditation of Training Institutions and Assessment Centres
  - Registration and accreditation of Trainers and Assessors
  - Registration of Training Standards and Qualifications and management of BNVQF
  - Audit, review and re-registration

Exit
- Quality Assurance
  - Moderation (audit of assessment)
  - Awarding/Issuing of Certificates
  - Research (tracer studies, …)

Learning Process
- Many Pathways (fleet of vehicles)
  - On/ off job
  - Short/ long courses
  - Company/ school/ college
  - Apprenticeship
  - Job attachments
  - Brigades
  - Informal Sector
  - E-learning/ distance learning/ self learning
  - Centres of Specialisation/ Centres of Excellence
  - …
  - Assessment (ongoing), RPL/RCC
  - Advice for companies and other training institutions concerning the learning process:
    - Development of Training Plans, Curricula and Learning Material,…
  - Coordination of the Learning Process

Target Group:
(Passengers)
Learners, school-leavers, adults, unemployed and employed people, (prosp.) trainees, apprentices, people with and without work-experience, …

Maps, Manuals:
Regulations, VT Act, other Acts, Policies, NDP, Vision 2016,…

VT System
Life-long Learning
Access and Equity
Gender Issues
HIV/AIDS

Fuel:
Coordinator, Monitor
- Coordinator, Monitor
- Learning Process
- Many Pathways (fleet of vehicles)
- On/ off job
- Short/ long courses
- Company/ school/ college
- Apprenticeship
- Job attachments
- Brigades
- Informal Sector
- E-learning/ distance learning/ self learning
- Centres of Specialisation/ Centres of Excellence
- …
- Assessment (ongoing), RPL/RCC
- Advice for companies and other training institutions concerning the learning process:
  - Development of Training Plans, Curricula and Learning Material,…
- Coordination of the Learning Process

Destination:
Do the job and apply the skills in the World of Work

Oil:
- Coordinator, Monitor
- Learning Process
- Many Pathways (fleet of vehicles)
- On/ off job
- Short/ long courses
- Company/ school/ college
- Apprenticeship
- Job attachments
- Brigades
- Informal Sector
- E-learning/ distance learning/ self learning
- Centres of Specialisation/ Centres of Excellence
- …
- Assessment (ongoing), RPL/RCC
- Advice for companies and other training institutions concerning the learning process:
  - Development of Training Plans, Curricula and Learning Material,…
- Coordination of the Learning Process

Driver, Engine:
Industry (with Government support)

Vocational and Career Guidance and Awareness

Maps, Manuals:
Regulations, VT Act, other Acts, Policies, NDP, Vision 2016,…

Life-long Learning
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Gender Issues
HIV/AIDS

Target Group:
(Passengers)
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Maps, Manuals:
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Oil:
Coordinator, Monitor
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  - Development of Training Plans, Curricula and Learning Material,…
- Coordination of the Learning Process

Destination:
Do the job and apply the skills in the World of Work

Fuel:
Funding through Government, Companies, Learners, (VTF)
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