

University of Zurich: Institute of Education

Policy Transfer in Vocational Skills Development Revisited

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Counting the casualties: Some insights into Skills Development and the National Qualifications Framework

.....In quest for a **socially inclusive and economically defensible** TVSD system

Broad Overview

This presentation will

- ▶ Explore the nature of our National Qualifications Framework (NQF) with specific reference to TVET (TVSD)
 - The premises and promises...way back then...and now
 - The current reality
- ▶ Identify whether it has/or has been an ideal mechanisms by which to understand effective skills development practise in RSA context
- ▶ Propose that we develop a new developmental storyline that develops a 'responsive' TVET agenda that takes as a starting point the interests of those with whom we are charged without relegating the role of the labour market

Health Warning!!!!

- ▶ *Not by any means intended to reflect on the entire NQF*
 - *(or detailed analysis might want to refer to Allais, Young and recent work recent work on international comparison study by ILO (Geneva))*
- ▶ Focus on TVET (TVSD) system – referred to as the intermediate level education and training provisioning
- ▶ **Not an official South African (or merSETA) perspective and likely to be renounced by all official accounts...likely to be provocative!!! (intentional)**
 - **Life begins at the end of the comfort zone** – Anon (Gauteng Billboard)
- ▶ A clarion call for an TVET system that is economically defensible and socially responsive..both efficient and effective for purpose..and the possibility of an NQF to do this

National Development Challenges (and responses)

- The PIE Challenge
 - Poverty,
 - Inequality and
 - (Un) Employment
- Demographic Context (Class/Health/Age/Race/Gender/Disability)
- National Response
 - RDP (1994) -GEAR (1996) - ASGISA (2005), HRDSA (2008+), New Growth Path (2010, Oct)
- ▶ New development and growth path for South Africa

Our policy levers to achieve faster growth, higher employment and reduced levels of poverty include skills development which must assist not only support the formal private sector growth but also labour-intensive industries, infrastructure investment, public service delivery and rural development. Quality education and training is needed at all levels. The role of skills development is central...

(NSDS III, p.6)

....LatestNeed for Clinical Analysis

- ▶ ...we desperately **need a frank, no-holds-barred clinical analysis of our condition.** It goes something like this: inequality has grown. Formal employment has shrunk. A single breadwinner supports up to eight dependants. The content of migrant labour remains as deeply entrenched as ever, as subcontracted labour and casualisation continue to marginalise the workers' families...**Now is the time for fearless debate.** Power has to be confronted with the truth. The Marikana massacre shows all the hallmarks of our Apartheid past. Violence from any side is inexcusable, but deadly force from a democratic state is a cardinal sin. It strikes at the heart of democracy.
 - ▶ Excerpt from 'An open letter to Cosatu' by Jay Naidoo, Daily Maverick 4 September 2012

Convinced that....

- ▶ We need a to do different things differently if we are to get anywhere..this means we need to interrogate purpose, means and ends
- ▶ Do the same things in the same way, expecting different results.....a sign of madness

Einstein

We live in different times...Time for Youth or The Youth Time-Bomb

Source: Financial Mail (March 26 2010)



FMCOVER STORY

© Sunday Times

THE JOBLESS YOUTH CRISIS - I

Time bomb

SA's youth are a ticking bomb. As overused as this metaphor is, it is accurate. Youth unemployment cannot be solved on its own, no matter how well the economy performs. **Carol Paton** looks at how SA is failing its youth and why it's critical that something be done

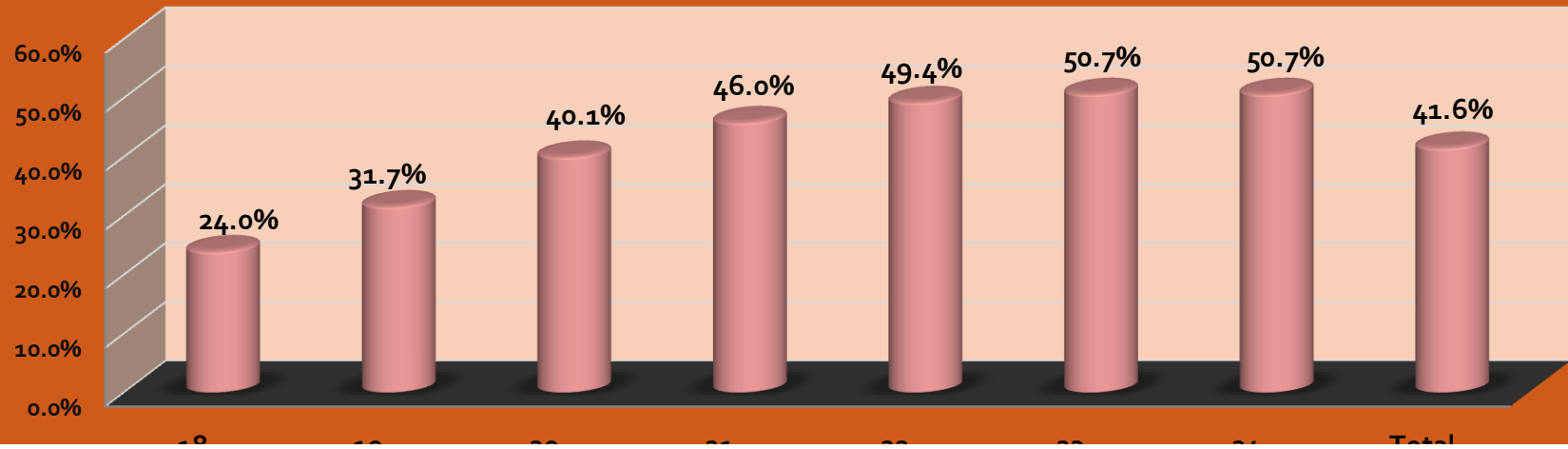
The statistics are frightening: 2.5m young people aged 18 to 24 are neither working nor in any kind of education or training. Most have dropped out of school early: only 46% stayed in school long enough to write matric, of whom about 60% passed. The result: only 28% of them have a matric certificate.

And though statistics show them as having 10-12 years of schooling behind them, we know from systemic tests conducted at primary school level that their abilities to read, write and calculate are at levels that are way lower.

Besides being undereducated and at a

32 FINANCIAL MAIL MARCH 26, 2010

2007 CS: Not Employed, Not in Education Not severely disabled 18 – 24 age cohort



Age	Total Population	Number not in education, not employed and not severely disabled	% of Population in age group not in education, not employed and not severely disabled
18	1,002,363	241,056	24.0%
19	964,195	305,333	31.7%
20	981,625	393,441	40.1%
21	990,984	455,434	46.0%
22	961,272	474,501	49.4%
23	914,732	464,119	50.7%
24	943,195	478,587	50.7%
Total	6,758,366	2,812,471	41.6%

Some key indicators (indicative)

		2nd Qtr 2008	2009	Impact	Comment
Broad Employment (%)	Overall	27.1	31.2**	3.8	firms retrenching younger/inexperienced workers and not hiring new job-seekers
	Youth Employment (wide)	50.3	57.3**	7	
	Absolute numbers of unemployed (million)*	5.12	5.58	0.46	increase in discouraged workers from 1.1 million (2nd Qtr 2008) to 1,7 million (4th Qtr 2009)***
	African	31.9	34.8	2.9	Young african males with some education hardest hit
	Males	22.9	26.5	3.6	
	Females	31.9	32.7	0.8	
	Age (15-24)	49.9	56	6.1	95% African/increase by > 200 000 (increased by 377 000 (3rd qtr 2009)).
	Age (25-34)	31	33	2	youth unemployment serious challenge > no impact over 36
Unemployment by educational level	completed matric	26.9	29.9	3	
	Grades 9-11	35.4	37.3	1.9	
Narrow Unemployment (%)		22.7	24.5**	1.8	Job losses: Manufacturing 149300/Retail Trade (223300)/Agriculture, Forestry and fishing (101100)
	youth unemployment (narrow)	44.5	48.4**	3.9	

Demographic Profile of Labour Force

	African	Coloured	Indian	White	Total
Managers	15.6	7.2	9.1	68.2	100.0
Professionals	44.8	9.0	10.6	35.6	100.0
Technicians	48.4	19.9	5.9	25.8	100.0
Clerks	38.5	20.3	10.8	30.4	100.0
Service & Sales	56.4	18.1	6.4	19.0	100.0
Crafts	68.3	17.5	3.3	10.8	100.0
Operators	76.5	17.5	4.1	1.9	100.0
Elementary	77.5	17.2	3.1	2.2	100.0
Total	62.0	16.7	5.2	16.1	100.0
<i>Total ('000s)</i>	1 026	277	87	267	1 656

Demographic Profile (Manufacturing) >>>

statsSA 2010

Inequity

- ▶ the triumph of globalization and market capitalism has improved living standards for billions while concentrating billions among the few. It has lowered inequality worldwide but raised inequality within most countries

(The Conference Board, 2011) – Richard Freeman (Harvard)

- ▶ Reinforced in latest Stiglitz book, *The Price of Inequality!* (2012), focussing on instability and youth and international post-2008 world

**THE WORLD AND SOUTH AFRICA NEEDS A NEW DEVELOPMENTAL
STORYLINE**

The NQF is introduced:

- The White Paper Promise

- ▶ An integrated approach to education and training...
 - ...are now a major international trend in curriculum development and reform of qualification structures. An integrated approach to education and training will not in itself create a successful economy and society in South Africa. However, the Ministry is convinced that this approach is a *prerequisite for successful human resource development*, and it is thus capable of *making a significant contribution to the reconstruction and development of our society and economy*
 -linked to the development of a new National Qualifications Framework (NQF) based on a system of credits for learning outcomes achieved, will *encourage creative work on design of curricula and recognition of prior learning achievements* wherever education and training are offered. It will open doors of opportunity for people whose academic or career paths have been needlessly blocked because their prior knowledge (acquired informally or by work experience) has not been assessed or certified, or because their qualifications have been recognised for admission to further learning for employment purposes

(...RSA 1995, Ch. 2 (7))

Key Principles

- ▶ create an integrated national framework for learning achievements;
- ▶ facilitate **access** to, and **mobility** and progression within education, training and career paths;
- ▶ enhance the quality of education and training;
- ▶ accelerate the **redress** of past **unfair discrimination** in education, training and employment opportunities.

Then6 YEARS LATER (2001) – Establishment of Review by Joint Ministerial Working Group (RSA 2007)

The new policy retains the original objectives of the NQF but envisages changes in its organisational structures to **improve the efficiency and efficacy of implementation....**They are designed to address the **allocation of responsibility, resolve tensions** among important role-players, and **simplify the NQF** apparatus, in order to speed up the achievement of NQF objectives. ...

Joint Policy Statement – Labour and Education (18th Oct 2007)

Overview ...Key elements of Introduction...

- ▶ What forces were at play
 - Tri-partite buy-in (Government/Business and Labour Movement)
 - Certification as means for achieving a meritocratic labour market choice....
- ▶ **Not imposed** from outside...
 - Internal forces at play
 - Sometimes considered ‘crass policy introduction’ ...horror stories...not even cut and paste..but paste (without cut-ting)
 -we have ourselves to blame
- ▶ Took hold at critical time
 - Post-apartheid....response to ‘world class’...breaking new ground
 - Post 1991 TVET context...Structural Adjustment (self imposed)...Washington Consensus World....
- ▶ To respond to local imperatives...in context of an international dimension
- ▶ Access, redress and equity (Reconstruction and Development giving way to GEAR (considered to be a neo-liberal sideward shift..1995/6)

Conception..in retrospect

- ▶ The South African NQF was **conceived in the democratic labour movement**, later supported by elements in the business community and by the education constituency.....Its first objective was to deal with the **legacies of job reservation and retrogressive and discriminatory training practices** in the South African labour force by creating **ladders of opportunity or learning and career pathways**.... Closing skills gaps, improving equity, and achieving greater labour market efficiency and higher levels of productivity were assumed to be outcomes of a national qualifications framework....

Conception

- ▶subsequently extended to embrace a universal system of quality assured standards and qualifications embracing all education, training and skills development at all levels, both in the workplace and in learning institutions. Typically, national qualifications frameworks elsewhere have originated in the skills or vocational education domain. Some have remained there. In South Africa, the comprehensive approach... was unique in the world when it was conceived and remains unique in its architecture. (RSA 2007:1/2)

International dimension emphasised

- ▶ ...originated in **Scotland, England and New Zealand** twenty years ago and was taken up early by Australia and South Africa. Despite its relatively recent origin the NQF phenomenon has spread rapidly. Most NQFs worldwide are in their infancy or still in conceptualisation and only a handful of countries have relatively mature NQF systems. Nevertheless, the development of national qualifications frameworks is supported by inter-governmental bodies like the **ILO, UNESCO and the European Commission**, which regard them as important vehicles for harmonising qualifications...(NQF Review 2007)

Key features of Review

- ▶ Retain initial objectives
- ▶ Simplicity, clarity, flexibility and trust (NB)
- ▶ coherent, clear and unambiguous roles of various role players
- ▶ Changes in organisation structure..roles of SAQA and Quality Councils
- ▶ Establishment of QCTO (Quality Council for Trades and Occupations)
- ▶ Any uncertainty over the role and significance of unit standards in relation to qualifications must be removed. Presently both qualifications and unit standards must comply with national criteria in order to be registered on the NQF. ...Need for unit standards clear....

The post-2009 – Structural adjustment of the Education and Training World

- ▶ Establishment of Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET)
- ▶ Re-organisation of Higher Education Ministry incorporating entire post-school sector
 - Universities, FET Colleges, Sector Education and Training Authorities, SETA's, Quality Councils
 - Structural shake up
 - Focus on unemployed youth and pathways
 - Intermediate level skills impt.-TVET...Minister in Shanghai
 - Skills on agenda
 - FET College review (national competence)
 - Green Paper on Higher Education and Training

Green Paper and NQF (2011)

- ▶ Our system has created a proliferation of qualifications and unit standards, but there has been no corresponding proliferation of learning or of educational provision. (p. 15)
- ▶ 818 Qualifications
- ▶ 11 615 unit standards on the SAQA database
- ▶ resources on short unit-standards based courses, some of which have been of little value in improving the skills of the workforce
- ▶ ...difficult for providers to offer non-formal programmes
- ▶ ...difficult to fit the training that they do into unit standards, let alone find accredited assessors to assess it, and moderators and verifiers to moderate and verify it
- ▶ ...In the developed world qualifications frameworks are used for regulation of a system that exists.... However in the developing world they are used as a tool to develop a market (Green Paper)
- ▶ The reality..have we understood impact/expectation on the ground....

Overall Assessment

The NQF was introduced into the South African education and training system with, among other objectives, the hope that it could create a **coherent education and training system**, by creating a set of levels (now ranging from Level 1 to Level 10) on which all qualifications would be placed. ***This has not fully succeeded.*** (Green Paper, 2011, p. 14)

Some reasons for 'failure'

- ▶ (1) Conceptual base – link with Outcomes (Allais, Young, Raffe)
- ▶ (2) Lack of capacity (and commitment) to implement (RSA)
- ▶ (3) Inadequate time (Isaacs)...need long duree
- ▶ (4) Nascent politics (Education and Labour)
- ▶ (5) Advocacy – Inadequate systems in place to enable awareness
- ▶ (6) Symbolic nature of educational change (Jansen)
- ▶ (7) Notion of NQF – subverted in the SA case

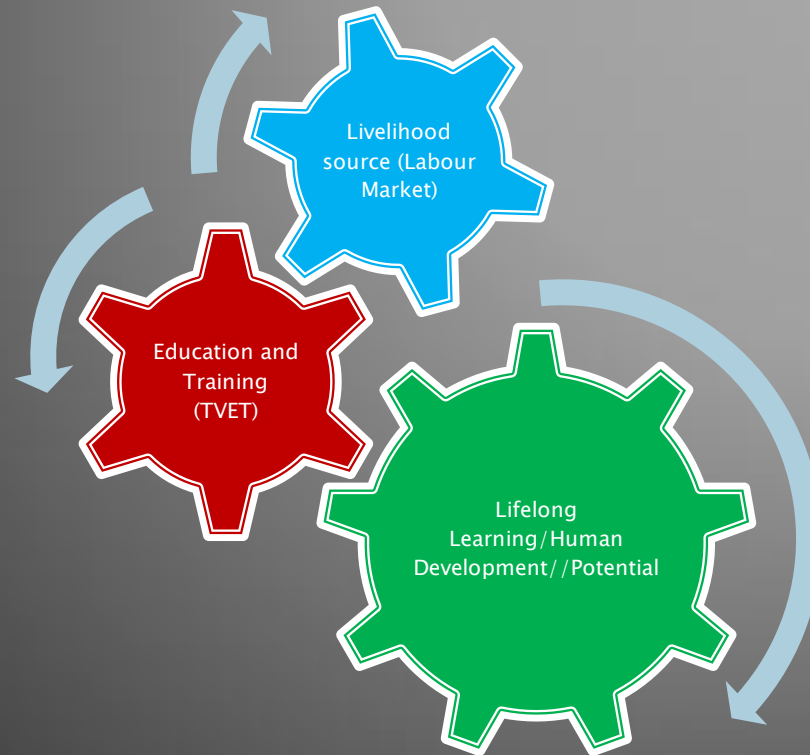
Give me hopeJoanna.....



The TVET-LM Linkage



Role of Education and Training



What challenges: NQF

- ▶ Qualifications Market created..and implications on expectation..in developing context
- ▶ Specialist consultants who have expertise
- ▶ Has detracted from real TVET issues
 - Provisioning Quality (Public sphere)
 - Party of esteem
 - quality...can QFs impact by themselves
 - Of public educational provision
- ▶ Excessive 'bureaucratisation' – can it be avoided
- ▶ Can centralisation and 'authority' thinking really impact on delivery
- ▶ What cost...
- ▶ and what sacrifices are being made
- ▶ Implications on current TVET Practise (since inception)
 - Business buy-in..have we mis-understood a 'homogenous' business/private sector..ito buy in
 - Public TVET system still referred to as 'ailing' with range of problems
 - Distinction between 'hand' (vocational) and 'mind' (academic) not resolved....can it be (as per promise by some QFs and ours in particular
 - Private TVET sector burgeoning (at higher level) and struggling (at 'lower' levels)
 - Maybe promises of what QFs can deliver might need to be reviewed....

Unintended
consequences

Unresolved issues!!!!

Some issues for consideration to close....

- ▶ Who does it serve?
 - Private sector (nuance..)
 - Labour Unions
 - Government
 - Learner
- ▶ Why do countries choose?
 - What problem is being attempted to be resolved?
 - Notion of World Class
- ▶ Do we have a robust research base underpinning its introduction?
- ▶ How/To what extent has NQF become a gospel? Is the NQF a strategy or a principle of operation to resolve other issues?
 - Need to determine what a vibrant VSD system needs to maximise its impact..then implement accordingly
- ▶ Notion of a National and System?
 - To what extent is it necessarily exclusionary..what about rural agenda and inclusion of vulnerable groups/sectors?
- ▶ Link between NQF and labour market?
 - Who drives it and from where?
- ▶ Relationship between NQF and particular development trajectory?
 - Is the informal sector considered real or imagined or damned...
- ▶ Notion of a private sector
 - Is it a homogenous one?

The message ...

- ▶ The ideal of a democratic, socially inclusive and economically viable developmental state
- ▶ Requires a TVET system that is

Deliberately designed toward establishing a developmental *socially inclusive and economically defensible* system

JURY IS OUT...

not sure that it has been done in the South African context and the extent to which NQF has undermined its achievement

Say what!!!!!!! ...CHANGE ...again!!!!!!!

I cannot say whether things will get better if we change; what I can say is they must change if they are to get better...

Georg C. Lichtenberg
(German scientist)

1742-1799