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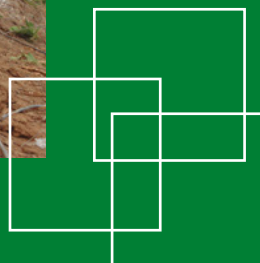
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# SKILLS

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International  
Labour  
Organization



# Zambia

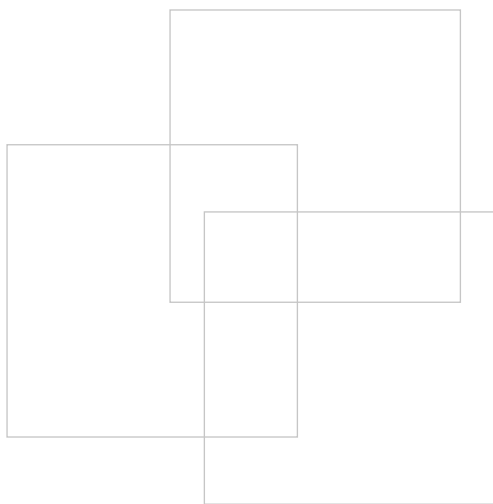


State of

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# SKILLS

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# Zambia



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# ***The socio-economic context***

In the past few decades, Zambia's economic growth has mainly depended on natural resources, such as copper and mining products between 2000 and 2014, the Zambian economy grew by an annual average of 4.3 per cent due to high copper prices, the opening of new mines, and private sector investments in response to an improved business environment. However, the volatility of Zambia's economic development and growth was stifled in 2015–2016 by a downturn in copper prices, poor harvests and power shortages. Moreover, economic growth in the years leading up to 2015 was not matched by corresponding growth in employment, which only grew by an annual average of 2.81 per cent. Poverty remained stubbornly high, reaching 57.5 per cent in 2015 (World Bank, 2017).

## **Agriculture, which suffers from very low productivity and high climate risks, still accounts for roughly 60 percent of employment.**

Agriculture, fisheries and forestry largely dominate in most regions, except in the country's two economic centres, the Copperbelt region and the capital Lusaka. Commercial farming and agro-processing have progressed recently, and agro-based goods now represent half of Zambia's non-copper exports. However, the vast majority of own-account smallholder farmers have not yet benefited from these developments. Job-rich and inclusive growth will therefore largely depend on the successful modernization of the agricultural sector, including through adequate skills provision, investments, and the development of non-farm and off-farm jobs in rural areas, in sectors such as tourism or construction (World Bank, 2017). In urban areas, most employment is in the service sector. Wholesale and retail trade, together with repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles, accounted for 32 percent of urban employment in 2015 (CSO, 2015). Around 63 percent of total employment is in the informal sector (CSO, 2017).

## **Skills formation and job creation are critical, given Zambia's demographic profile.**

Zambia is one of the youngest African countries. The 15–24 age group comprised 26.8 per cent of the labour force in 2014, and is still growing (CSO, 2015). The United Nations estimates that 375,000 young Zambians will enter the workforce each year up to 2030, doubling to 750,000 between 2030 and 2050 (World Bank, 2017).



## **To achieve more skilled employment, Zambia aims to increase the skills and education of its population, and work towards reducing educational inequality.**

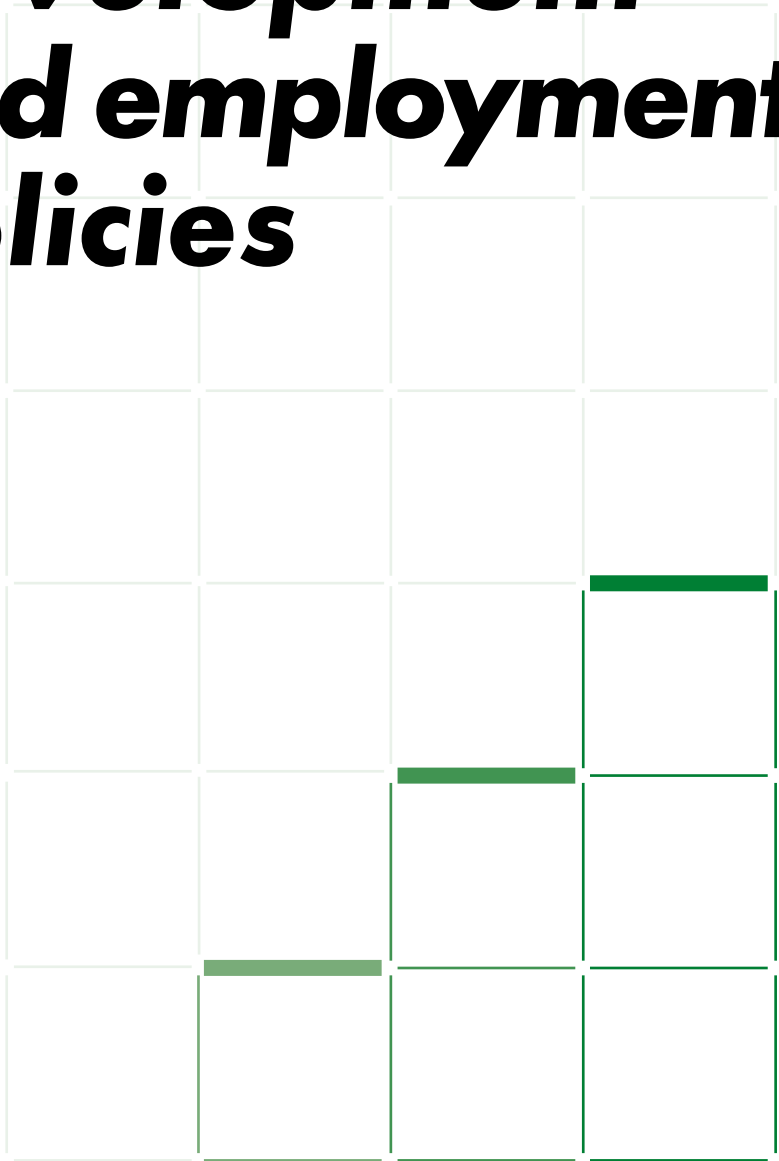
In the past decade, Zambia has almost achieved universal primary education, with a net enrolment rate of 93 per cent in primary education (UNESCO, 2016). The proportion of children completing primary education (Grade 7), and entering lower secondary education (Grade 8), increased from 53.5 per cent in 2004 to 89.4 per cent in 2014. While the completion rate in lower secondary education increased to 62.4 per cent in 2012, transition into upper secondary education remains a challenge. Only 33 percent of pupils transitioned into upper secondary education in 2013, and just 28 percent completed secondary education (UNESCO, 2016). However, an even greater challenge is the provision of education beyond secondary school. In 2009, only 2 per cent of those aged between 15 and 24 were in tertiary education (MoESVTEE, 2014) and the percentage of young people in formal technical and vocational education and training (TVET) was only about 0.6 percent of the total labour force population (TEVETA, 2011). Over half of the education budget is currently devoted to basic education, while post-secondary education expenditure is strongly skewed in favour of university education compared with TVET. In the period 2011–2015, higher education received an average 8.7 per cent of government expenditure, while TVET received only 0.8 per cent (UNESCO, 2016).

## **Expanding access to upper secondary education, TVET and higher education are important in transforming Zambia's employment structure.**

In 2015, the unemployment rate stood at 12.6 per cent, while youth unemployment was much higher, at 17.4 per cent (CSO, 2015). Compared with young people who complete only secondary education, those who complete university education and, to a lesser extent TVET, have an increased likelihood of finding full-time employment, and a lower risk of earning less than the average (Barcucci et al., 2017). However, access to TVET is currently very limited, due especially to insufficient capacities. Only around 6 per cent of the 300,000 young people leaving the school system each year can be absorbed by the TVET and higher education system (Bhorat et al., 2015).



# ***Development and employment policies***



The long-term vision for policy development in Zambia was outlined in 2006 in a strategic document, Vision 2030: according to this, Zambia aspires to become “a prosperous middle-income nation by 2030” (GRZ, 2006). To this end, Vision 2030 sets out sector-specific goals for economic growth and wealth creation, social investment and human development, and the creation of an enabling environment for sustainable economic development. For education, the strategy seeks to increase the system’s capacity by developing comprehensive and diversified curricula that are responsive to the social and economic needs of the individual and the community. Accordingly, the number of university and TVET graduates is to be increased by 2 per cent per annum. Vision 2030 is operationalized through five-year development plans and concomitant budgetary and implementation planning.

The current 7th National Development Plan 2017–2021 (MNDP, 2017) has five strategic objectives:

- I.** To diversify and make economic growth inclusive;
- II.** To reduce poverty and vulnerability;
- III.** To reduce developmental inequalities;
- IV.** To enhance human development; and
- V.** To create a conducive governance environment for a diversified and inclusive economy. These objectives, and the policies in the 7th NDP, are formulated with reference to Zambia’s demographic situation. They outline plans to create an environment that enables citizens to access education, health, and development, and live free from violence and discrimination.

# ***The Zambian skills system***

As explained in the introduction, the capacities of TVET and higher education are currently limited, which means that the system is unable to absorb the number of young people graduating from secondary education. For this reason, alongside a further expansion of the secondary school system, the Zambian Government intends to strengthen TVET and higher education.



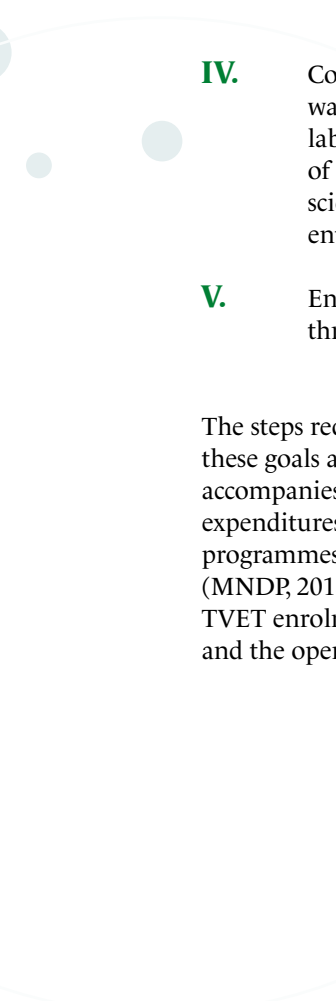
# TVET policies and reforms

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The current strategies and goals for expanding and modernizing TVET are outlined in the 7th NDP, and are clustered around five strategic topics:

- I.** Enhance access to quality, equitable and inclusive education, including vocational education. Investments in infrastructure are to be coupled with teacher training and investments in new learning materials for all parts of the education system. The plan especially highlights the role of information and communication technologies to improve access to, and the quality of education and training. To reduce poverty and vulnerability.
- II.** Enhance access to skills training. More specifically, the plan foresees increasing capacities among training providers for all forms of skills provision, and developing recognition of prior learning assessments, national skills competitions, and career guidance. A vocational bursary scheme is to be established for learners from poor households.
- III.** Enhance private sector participation in skills formation, both by supporting the industry's involvement in TVET and by strengthening private training providers, which currently represent 8.8 per cent of the sector.



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- IV.** Continuous review of curricula. The Government wants to increase the relevance of skills provision to labour market demands. This includes a consideration of skills gaps and training needs in areas such as science, mathematics, technology, innovation, entrepreneurship and strategic leadership training.
  - V.** Enhance role of science, technology and innovation through investments in research and education.

The steps required and the concrete targets for addressing these goals are outlined in an implementation plan that accompanies the 7th NDP. This plan formulates annual expenditures, outcome goals and output targets for 23 programmes dedicated to education and skills development (MNDP, 2018). Concrete targets include an increase of annual TVET enrolment from 20,367 in 2016 to 40,000 by 2021, and the opening of 8 new TVET institutions by 2021.

# Governance

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TVET in Zambia is based on the TEVET Act of 1998, which was later supplemented by the TEVET Act No. 11 in 2005. The Ministry of Higher Education (MHE) and its Department of Vocational Education and Training are responsible for policy-making, monitoring the TVET sector, and the allocation of public resources.

Central responsibility for regulating the TVET sector lies with the Technical, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Authority (TEVETA), which was established as a semi-autonomous agency, and whose mandate is defined by the TEVET Acts of 1998 and 2005. Its main functions include advising the ministry on TVET, regulating and coordinating apprenticeship and trade testing facilities, providing guidelines for curriculum development, and developing curricula in consultation with stakeholders, setting minimum standards and qualifications for TVET, approving and conducting national examinations, awarding TVET certificates, and registering training institutions (TEVETA, 2018).

Additionally, the Zambia Qualifications Authority Act No. 13 of 2011 provided for the establishment of the Zambia Qualifications Authority (ZAQA) to develop, manage and operate the Zambia Qualifications Framework (ZQF). The ZAQA is not itself a quality assurance body, but coordinates the outputs of relevant awarding and quality assurance bodies, such as the Ministry of Education or TEVETA (ZAQA, 2018).

# Social dialogue

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Zambian TVET legislation provides several means to support social dialogue and the participation of key stakeholders in TVET governance. For instance, the TEVETA board includes three members from the private sector, one trade union representative, one representative from the University of Zambia, one representative of a religious organization involved in providing TVET, and three members from different ministries (UNESCO 2016). The ZAQA board includes representatives of civil society organizations.

While TVET policy explicitly aims to include various stakeholders, there is in fact very little accessible evidence to demonstrate cooperation between the Government, employers, as well as workers' and learners' representatives in TVET. Sectoral associations, such as the Zambia National Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture, or employers' associations in the informal sector, are not systematically involved in TVET (UNESCO, 2016). The limited involvement of these stakeholders and social partners at regional or industry level can partly be attributed to a lack of organizational structures (Mulimbika and Mahbub, 2018). Giving these actors a stronger voice in the development of TVET at national and regional level should therefore go hand in hand with capacity building, as has historically been the case in countries with a well developed dual training system (Busemeyer and Trampusch, 2012).

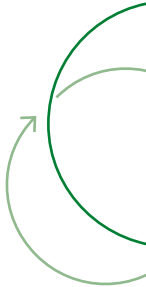
# Financing

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The Zambian TVET system receives a very small proportion of the public budget compared with other parts of the education system. For example, TVET received an average of just 0.8 percent of government expenditure between 2011 and 2015 (UNESCO, 2016).

However, aside from government, there are a number of additional funding sources:

- I.** All training providers take student fees, which pay for registration, tuition and instruction. While maximum fees for public institutions are determined by the MHE, other institutions are allowed to set their own fee levels (Du Vivier, 2016).
- II.** The Government provides various bursaries to trainees in the form of grants and loans, which are often allocated based on need.
- III.** Many TVET providers market the goods and services that are produced as by-products of the training process.
- IV.** Some firms invest a proportion of their own budget into training provision for their employees and apprentices/trainees. Precise numbers regarding the volume of private investment in education are not available. However, the figure is likely to be low, given that less than 10 percent of the labour force receives skills training (CSO, 2012).



- V. Finally, TVET development is also supported by international donors., There is scope for strengthening the skills component of economic development projects (Bala and Peterburs, 2017).

In order to broaden the financial basis for TVET, the Government established a Skills Development Fund in 2016. This is financed through a levy worth 0.5 percent of the employer's wage bill. The levy is payable by employers whose annual wage bill is above 800,000 kwacha (MNDP, 2017). Employers tend to perceive the levy as an additional tax on the private sector, and have complained about unclear allocation mechanisms (Phiri and Chisanga, 2018). In order to reduce industry opposition and increase ownership, it could be helpful to find mechanisms by which employers and unions are involved in the decision-making, alongside the Government, on how to allocate the funds.



# ***Skills anticipation***

One of TEVETA's main functions is to collect, manage and disseminate labour market information related to TVET. However, the data available have several shortcomings (UNESCO, 2016). Current data do not provide information on the number of students in public/private institutions, or their drop-out rate. Nor do the data reflect the characteristics of trainees and their employability. Moreover, the information about the types of courses offered by private providers is not systematically captured. There is a need for regular tracer studies to investigate the transition of TVET graduates into employment. Furthermore, labour market needs still have to be systematically assessed, and employer skills shortage surveys should be carried out on a regular basis (UNESCO, 2016).

At present, most of the information that is currently available to anticipate, plan and monitor the skills development gaps in Zambia is based on studies produced by international scholars and organizations (for example, see Bhorat et al., 2015; UNCDF, 2015; World Bank, 2016). These studies mostly suggest a mismatch between the content of TVET and labour market needs. However, more evidence is needed to clarify how TVET qualifications can be aligned to address current and future labour market requirements.



NO BOUNDARIES

# Skills development

Within the Zambian TVET system, there are six main pathways for skills formation (Konayuma, 2017; TEVETA, 2016).

- I.** Institution-based training.
- II.** Secondary school vocational system (also called two-tier system).
- III.** Learnership/apprenticeship system.
- IV.** Work-based training system.
- V.** Open and distance learning.
- VI.** Recognition of prior learning (or assessment only system).





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# Improving delivery and assessment of training

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In 2016, there were 293 Institutions registered with TEVETA that provided TVET within the formal training system (TEVETA, 2016). These enrolled approximately 40,000 learners in 2016 (MNDP, 2018). Of these institutions, 32.1 per cent were government-owned, 30.4 per cent privately-owned, while the rest were run by churches/faith organizations, communities, trusts, companies or NGOs. Some 37.54 per cent of all registered institutions are located in the Lusaka province, and 27.3 per cent in the Copperbelt province, the two most economically important regions of Zambia. However, only 33.4 per cent of Zambia's total population resides in these regions. This indicates an imbalance in terms of the regional presence of TVET providers.

The unequal geographical distribution of TVET institutions is coupled with strong heterogeneity in terms of quality. TEVETA's Training Standards Division is in charge of evaluation and quality. The division rates registered TVET providers on a three-point scale, ranging from Grade 1 (very good) to Grade 3 (satisfactory), based on criteria related to management and trainer qualifications, trainee-trainer ratios, curricula in use, assessment standards and training equipment. By December 2016, only 12.6 per cent of all institutions had been classified as Grade 1, while 51.9 per cent were graded in the lowest category. More than 75 per cent of the best rated institutions were located in Lusaka or the Copperbelt region, indicating that training provision in the remaining regions is on average of lower quality (TEVETA, 2016).

Training providers are allowed to develop their own courses, but curricula for formal training programmes have to be accredited by TEVETA at national level, in order to ensure standardization. Data from 2012 suggest that half of all trainees were enrolled in business studies or secretarial skills, while less than one-quarter were enrolled in skilled craft occupations. This might be an indication that TVET provision is systematically tilted towards programmes that do not require investment in expensive training equipment (Du Vivier, 2016).

Alongside institution-based training, there are also some forms of work-based training in the Zambian skills system. The TVETA Learnership programme is a formal apprenticeship system that combines school-based and work-based learning within a company. There have been several donor-funded programmes to support this kind of dual apprenticeship, and large companies are still advertising apprenticeships for secondary school graduates. The number of apprentices, however, remains limited. Besides this, it is common practice for young people to learn a trade while working in the informal sector. However, this kind of informal apprenticeship is not as well developed as it is in other sub-Saharan African countries. Apprentices in the urban informal sector are mostly called ‘helpers’, and there is no clear distinction between apprentices and casual workers as regards status. There is limited statistical information on the prevalence of informal apprenticeship, but evidence from other countries suggests that upgrading informal apprenticeships could contribute to addressing some of the challenges facing the country (Ryan and Aggarwal, 2015).

While an increase in open and distance learning could complement training offers outside the Lusaka and Copperbelt regions, only 2 per cent of registered institutions provide distance learning opportunities (Konayuma, 2017). The Government plans to increase the number of people enrolled in distance learning courses from 3,361 in 2016 to 5,500 by 2021 (MNDP, 2018).

# Skills recognition and quality assurance

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The Zambian Qualifications Framework (ZQF) has 10 levels, with TVET situated at Levels 3 to 6. Trade test certificates are positioned at Level 3, followed by craft certificates (Level 4), advanced/technician certificates (Level 5), and diplomas (Level 6). These programmes vary in duration and training content. Trade test certificates typically take 1 year of study, while the completion of diploma programmes usually takes 3 years.

TEVETA has central responsibility for assessment, examinations and awarding certificates. While continuous assessment is usually carried out by the training provider, the final testing of trainees' competency is conducted by external assessors and examiners. These have to be registered with TEVETA, but legislation also allows for the accreditation of foreign examination bodies. By 2016, 17 foreign examination bodies had been accredited by TEVETA. These institutions are also responsible for recognition of prior learning, which enables individuals to have their skills formally certified, even if they attained them informally in the process of work.

The evidence about the labour market value of certificates at different levels and in different occupations is somewhat patchy. However, it has been found that 63 per cent of TEVET graduates have professional occupations. In contrast, secondary school graduates are hardly ever employed in professional occupations. Graduates with TVET certificates have much higher chances of being in formal employment. Some 78 per cent of men with a certificate are in formal employment, compared with 31 per cent of those who have only completed secondary education. For women, the effect of obtaining a certificate is even stronger: some 77 percent of women with a certificate work in the formal sector, compared with just 16 per cent of those with secondary education (World Bank, 2016). Overall, skills provision mainly takes place at the lower levels of the ZQE. Almost 60 per cent of training institutions only offer short courses of less than three months, or Level 3 certificates as their highest level of qualification (TEVETA, 2016).

# ***Social inclusion***

## **Accessing skills development**

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According to recent reports, the Government intends to quadruple the number of out-of-school children attending alternative education (MNDP, 2018). One good example is a programme financed by the Skills Development Fund (Siachiyako, 2018). As part of this programme, the Government signed contracts with 46 training providers, which will benefit 4,165 unskilled out-of-school youth, as well as small and medium entrepreneurs (SME), or informal sector players who need skilling, upskilling or reskilling.

The Flexible Education and Training Programme offers a training alternative for adolescents who have been excluded from formal schools. It was established in 2014 by the Government, and combines vocational and basic skills provision at schools and vocational training centres (Du Vivier, 2016). In 2017, 7,600 learners participated in this programme (MNDP, 2018).



Recognition of prior learning is a potential means for increasing formal labour market participation. It could be of particular benefit to young people trained as apprentices in the informal sector, helping them to get their skills validated and certified. According to the current 7th NDP implementation plan, 2,000 students should be certified through RPL by 2021 (MNDP, 2018). One important unresolved issue remains the how to best share the costs of implementing RPL between individuals and the state.

Young people with disabilities and HIV/AIDS are targeted by programmes with skills development components within the framework of the revised National Youth Policy, and the National Action Plan on Youth Empowerment and Employment for the period 2015–2020. Helping youth to gain employable skills in order to increase their participation in the formal labour market is a main building block of this policy (UNESCO, 2016). Some of the programmes under the plan are still being implemented, and have not yet been evaluated.

# Supporting transition to the labour market

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Despite the economic growth of the past two decades, many Zambian youths still struggle to find formal employment after graduating from the education and training system. In 2017, the youth unemployment rate stood at 17.4 per cent, compared with a total unemployment rate of 12.6 per cent (CSO, 2017). While there are multiple causes of youth unemployment in Zambia – including a lack of decent work opportunities – experts point to the lack of relevant skills in young people leaving the education system.<sup>1</sup>

Besides expanding the capacities of the TVET system along the lines of the 7th NDP, the Government has ring fenced up to 20 per cent of the education budget for the procurement of works for young entrepreneurs, which may create substantial jobs and business opportunities for this target group. An additional focus of current policy development is to involve more companies in the provision of working and learning opportunities.

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<sup>1</sup> Personal communication with ILO field expert, January 2019.



# **Lifelong learning**

While initial and continuing vocational training in Zambia also involves companies, there is very little evidence as to which companies are involved in training, who among their employees receives training, and which skilling needs are addressed. Finding ways to link institutional and company-based training effectively is part of the agenda in the discussion between the Government and social partners.

In 2017, the Government and social partners undertook a review of the legal framework surrounding apprenticeship, attachments, internships and other work-based learning formulas. Among other problems, the review pointed to the regulatory gap regarding the financing of apprenticeships.

Finally, the Ministry of Higher Education is planning to launch a national internship programme, 'Let's Skill Zambia'. This will be based on a partnership between the Government and leading private sector companies. The programme will target local, multinational and large corporations operating in Zambia across sectors. The main objective of the internship programme is to help young people develop employability skills, and facilitate their transition into formal employment.

# ***Key challenges***

In line with Vision 2030, Zambia has formulated important policy goals for its future economic and societal development. The country has made significant progress by expanding access to primary and lower secondary education. It now faces the challenge of expanding the scope of its TVET system, and ensuring that curricula keep pace with demands of the labour market. Challenges include:

## **1 Lack of systematic skills needs identification and anticipation, as well as monitoring of skills development.**

Policy-making and implementation are stifled by a lack of data. For instance, there is very little evidence on which skills are needed for the labour market. Similarly, it is unclear which employment pathways exist for TVET students who graduate from institutions run by different organizations or entities (public/private/NGO). This has led to a skills mismatch, where available skills do not match those demanded by the labour market.

## **2 Weak involvement and consultation of social partners in TVET governance.**

While some stakeholders are represented at the central level of TVET governance, the inclusion of representatives with more sectoral experience (workers, employers and learners themselves) could help to make the system more relevant to employers' and learners' needs.

# 3

## **Underfinancing of TVET.**

Setting budgeting priorities in the allocation of financial resources is another pressing challenge for developing the Zambian skills system. Compared with general and university education, TVET has traditionally received very little funding from the public budget. In line with the 7th NDP, investment in skills formation will increase, partly due to the launch of the Skills Development Fund. However, given regional disparities in the availability of training programmes and institutions, a balance has to be found between expanding the quantity and quality of training, since only training that matches labour market needs is likely to contribute towards reducing youth unemployment. For example, in 2014, Zambia introduced a two-tier system to provide learners with both academic and practical skills. However, implementation of the two-tier system has faced a number of challenges, such as inadequately trained teaching staff, inappropriate infrastructure, inadequate tools and equipment, and inadequate teaching and learning materials for the delivery of vocational training.

## 4 Lack of training capacities.



Expanding the capacities of TVET is one of the key challenges that Zambia has to address in order to harness its demographic dividend and increase productivity. Currently, Zambia's post-secondary education and skill formation system can only cater to the needs of a small number of school graduates. One way to strengthen the delivery of initial and continuous vocational training may be to involve more companies in training initiatives.



# The way forward

In recent years, the Zambian education and training system has attracted increased political attention. Under the 6th and 7th NDP, important institutional reforms have been introduced that can strengthen Zambian skills formation in the future. Recent reforms have often been accompanied by consultations in the form of social dialogue, and both the Government and national social partners have shown their willingness to cooperate in improving the TVET system.

The review of current trends points to a few suggestions, which, if implemented, might further support development of the Zambian skills formation system.



## **1** Develop a skills anticipation system to facilitate evidence-based policies and programmes.

This requires systematic collection of relevant data, including labour force surveys, employers' surveys, and education and training data. Such data collection and analysis can be tailored to address growth sectors in a strategic manner.

## **2** Strengthen social dialogue on TVET.

Social dialogue at national and/or sector level should be further supported and extended to involve representatives of youth and higher education students' unions, to help ensure that TVET programme development addresses the interests and aspirations of young women and men.

### **3** Ensure the effective use of the Skills Development Fund.

This is important since it is one way in which Zambia can accelerate the development of its TVET landscape. It will be crucial to designate some areas that are prioritized for investment through social dialogue. Areas such as the provision of adequate teaching and learning staff, effective teacher training programmes, initiatives for rural and out-of-school youth, and expansion of work-based learning (WBL) initiatives and training infrastructure investment appear to be high on the agenda. The ILO has been supporting development of a WBL framework that is now ready for use by training institutions, employers' organizations and other stakeholders. In 2018, employers' organizations developed a proposal to establish an employer-led internship initiative that will contribute to aspirations for a demand-driven National Skills Development programme under the newly developed National Work-Based Learning Framework (2018).







## **4 Enhance the employability of young university and college graduates, so as to help smooth their transition from school to work.**

This is closely aligned to the national Vision 2030, and therefore focuses on promoting employability through skills development and lifelong learning as a means of facilitating sustainable employment. This can be achieved through supporting national partners, especially employers' and workers' organizations, designing, implementing and monitoring skills development initiatives that prepare young people for the world of work. This would in turn reduce incidences of skills mismatch.

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