

AFTER SCHOOL, THEN WHAT? GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SECTOR INTERVENTION IN YOUTH JOB TRAINING IN ZIMBABWE

By

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Abstract

This paper discusses efforts being made by the Government of Zimbabwe and the Private Sector to prepare youth/school leavers for the world of work. The paper asks the critical question "After School then what?" In other words it asks what provisions exist for school leavers for the enhancement of their employability? What training programmes exist? Who manages the programmes? How effective are they and what is their impact? It also compares the initiatives with the existing employment avenues and looks at their employment capacities. Overall, the paper shows the contribution of government technical and vocational training colleges, as well as agricultural colleges, and that of registered and unregistered private vocational training institutions to the training of youths for jobs in Zimbabwe.

Introduction

The questions concerning the fate of the school leaver have been raised elsewhere in Africa. Peter Williams (1994) raised these issues in his research on school leaver unemployment in West Africa, particularly in Nigeria as did (Zvobgo, 1999⁽¹⁾) in the case of Zambia and Botswana. What emerged in those researches is that there is critical need to prepare school leavers for the world of work as most of them leave school without adequate preparation. Equally important was the fact that such preparation cannot be left to the state alone. There is need for private sector involvement as this sector is also a key player in job creation and in the employment of young people. The captains of this sector know the range of skills that are critical for job seekers to acquire and the jobs that are available on the market. Failure to prepare youths for this important life's engagement results in increased joblessness and frustration amongst youths. As a result society loses trust and confidence with the entire education system.

The inadequacies of Current Education Systems in Africa

Kaiga (2005) in my opinion, summed up the frustrations experienced by most Africans with the systems of Education operating in their countries today. Kaiga cited the following issues:-

- The current structures of education systems in most African countries do not facilitate a revolution in development.
- The curricula continue to address issues that are peripheral to development.

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- Some countries are getting poorer and poorer while progress in others is being hampered by major threats to development such as HIV/AIDS, lack of technological advancement and the ravages of civil war⁽²⁾

Zvobgo (2005) raised similar concerns. These included the following:

- The achievement of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in Zimbabwe as indeed in some other developing countries in the early 1990s, did not achieve the kind of anticipated impact on the economy of the country.
- The rapid expansion of secondary and tertiary education did not lead to the kind of economic revolution that had been expected. School leaver unemployment has continued to increase in the absence of improved economic performance. The efforts of youth training programmes to arm youths with critical skills for national development have not impacted significantly on the country's development agenda in the face of rapid economic decline.
- Education policies have generally not been in harmony with economic policies. This has had the effect of limiting the contribution of education to economic development.³
- This situation has also been compounded by the fact that the African educated elite, brought up in the tradition of western life styles, has tended to resist any radical changes to the existing education systems and the status quo. Furthermore the African political leadership has not been fully committed to change of the status quo despite the many declarations to reform society. In fact, the political will to change things has not been there. In the absence of that will, there is little that policy implementers can do to expedite the reform process.
- Colonial education systems in the developing world were designed during colonial times to support colonial capitalism. After independence few internal mechanisms have been put in place to ensure that genuine reforms occur in education. In fact, in many countries, the structures of the so-called reforms were intended to ensure their failure. The objectives were either obscure or dishonest and in many cases not easily achievable. It was as if the reform initiatives themselves were designed to ensure their failure.⁴

In many instances however, African economies have lacked the vibrancy needed to support costly education reforms. The result is that African societies have experienced extreme frustrations resulting from unfulfilled and betrayed expectations. Kagia suggests that these frustrations can be removed and expectations fulfilled provided there is a re-examination of some fundamental issues in education. She argues that there is need to get a better analytical grasp of "the circumstances under which education catalyses social and economic development, sharpen the tools for raising the quality of education, for engendering intra-country and inter-country equity and systematically harness global experiences as a means to scale up innovation and good practice".⁵

Conditions necessary for successful educational reform

Kagia argues that education works but under the right circumstances, provided certain pre-requisites exist. These include:

- The existence of the political will to support education reforms, which will drive the change processes.
- The existence of a vibrant economy, which supports education reforms and provides opportunities and avenues for school leavers to find or create employment.
- The existence of good governance, which guarantees the proper use of resources and the absence of corruption, and,
- Strategies and systems, which will ensure that development is achieved.⁶

African nations have argued that education kicks off powerful poverty reducing synergies and raises the level of skills and incomes and that it is a catalyst for development. Sadly, these advantages of education have not been experienced in many African countries including Zimbabwe

Ross (2005)⁷ expressed sentiments commonly expressed in Africa today, that people are questioning the benefits and advantages of all the efforts countries are making in education today in the face of such high school leaver/youth unemployment and underdevelopment generally. They are, in fact questioning the usefulness and relevance of today's education to the world of work. It is clear that research on this issue is raising fundamental questions concerning societal discontent with today's education systems in developing countries. Success made in the area of Universal Primary Education (UPE) and the expansion of secondary and Tertiary education are being increasingly questioned as the results of the efforts made in using education to drive development are extremely disappointing.

The Case of Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe shares these experiences and disappointments and is working towards resolving the negative impact and outcomes of years of frustrating reform initiatives. Among the leading sources of these frustrations and disappointments has been the continuing rise in school leaver/youth unemployment despite the many successes achieved in making education accessible to all .

One area in which government is making frantic efforts to achieve results is in youth training, empowering young people to participate in the economic development of the country by enhancing their employability and capacity to create self employment. This is being done through skills training programmes. We start a discussion of these two issues with a brief look at some of the strategies suggested and developed for the resolution of school leaver youth unemployment.

Unemployment

The 1994 UNDP Harare office Report 2, phase 2 showed the extent of unemployment in Zimbabwe in 1987. Of all the age groups with a primary education level, the 15 to 24 age group constituted the largest group. These were essentially the school leaver youths with no prospects for employment. They numbered nearly 35 000 followed by the 25 to 34 age group who constituted about 29 000. For those with a secondary education the largest unemployed group was the 15 to 24 year age group. These numbered 100 000 followed by the 25 to 34 year group who numbered about 19 000. In 1996 the school leaver population with a Form 4 education stood at 170 000.⁸

Recent figures show that youth unemployment has continued to rise because of increasing economic underperformance. In 2002, it was found that the dominant activity of school leavers and graduates was wage employment mostly in the private sector with large numbers in the informal sector. It was also revealed that unemployment was significantly high amongst Form 4 school leavers but low amongst university graduates. Around one quarter of Form 4 leavers were self employed. There were reportedly few Form 6 or university graduates in self employment.⁹

Zimbabwe has seen unemployment in general and youth unemployment in particular rise sharply. At the same time, the dollar fell drastically against major international currencies. In 1998 the dollar fell from US\$1 to Z \$38 to US\$1 to Z\$89. This followed two major events. The first was the awarding of large gratuity payments of \$50 000 to every ex-combatant. The second was the government's decision to engage in the DRC war. Both these events negatively impacted on the dollar and also raised inflation as the private sector and the international donor community reacted negatively to these situations.

As a consequence of this, donor aid dried up, the IMF and the World Bank were unwilling to aid the country fearing that the funds would be channelled into the war effort. Reduced forex inflows and donor support triggered off a number of problems for the economy for example, spare parts for plant machinery and equipment became difficult to acquire. This prompted, in some cases, the closure of key productive industries and resulted in the retrenchment of many workers.

This created a scare within the large-scale, foreign owned industrial sector. A number of large private companies such as Coca-Cola (Zimbabwe) and Olivine Industries, the manufacturer of soap, cooking oil and other basic commodities, relocated to Botswana. Many dispossessed white farmers left the country with expensive farm machinery and others with farm animals. These farmers headed for Mozambique and Zambia with some going as far as Uganda and Nigeria. Massive retrenchment of farm workers followed. This situation, coupled with several other factors, generated a serious wave of unemployment. In 2002, a multi sectorial report on youth unemployment identified,

in addition to the causes discussed above, the following:

- Slow rate of economic growth often caused or aggravated by poor economic management. Poor economic management led to high macroeconomic instability, which in turn, culminated in low investment, declining economic growth and high unemployment;
- Low export growth and lack of balance of payment support resulting in a critical shortage of foreign currency;
- High population growth;
- Massive expansion in education and training, with the existing infrastructure unable to absorb the swelling numbers of youth seeking training opportunities; and
- High rural-urban migration of youths, exacerbating urban unemployment.¹⁰

Youth unemployment was found to be higher than general unemployment because:

- Youth, as new comers, lack experience and may not have the necessary skills thus placing them at the end of the queue;
- Technological change (automation) may worsen the plight of the youth;
- Mismatch between youth skills and aspirations on the one hand and labour market opportunities on the other make them more unemployable than the experienced workers; and
- Young people, particularly young females, tend to find self-employment difficult due to inadequate access to productive resources.¹¹

Government believes that part of the solution to the youth unemployment crisis lies in providing opportunities and resources for the training of youths to acquire life long skills for employment or for the creation of employment. There is urgent need for public and private sector intervention in order to curb the rising tide of youth unemployment. Such a strategy will strengthen efforts already under way to address the situation.

Public and Private Sector Intervention in the preparation of youths for employment

It is now clear to policy makers, implementers and all key players in the economy that a major factor in reducing youth unemployment is training youths for jobs. It is important that they be armed with requisite skills if they are to compete effectively for jobs.

One of the pressing questions that worry educators and governments in the developing world is what happens to youths after school? It has been noted, and with a great deal of concern, that every year societies continue to be inundated with young people leaving school with no skills and no job prospects. In some countries such as Zambia and Tanzania, a number of youth training programmes were put in place as way back as the early 1970's with the assistance of foreign governments and Non-governmental organisations. While some degree of success was made in tooling young people with skills, a lot remained unaccomplished in the area of job creation. It became apparent

that the question of what happens to youths after school could not be fully addressed unless the issues of youth empowerment and employment creation were addressed simultaneously. In fact the success in meeting both these challenges rested on the revitalisation and regeneration of the economy.

The issue of youth training for jobs in Zimbabwe began soon after the attainment of independence but on a rather low key. The reason was that the focus of government was on reforming and expanding the education sector. But even at that time government was already aware that school leavers needed to be prepared for the world of work and that economic development was also dependent on the increased participation of youths in all economic spheres. For that reason, a number of government ministries and departments were created to spearhead that mission. The Ministries of Manpower Planning and Development and Higher Education and Technology and departments within the Ministries of Health, Agriculture and Youth were created and mandated with the execution of this task. In the discussion that now follows, we look at the roles played by Government and the private sector in the training of youths to acquire a variety of skills.

Vocational and Technical Education

One area in which government is making a significant contribution to youth job training is in technical and vocational education. At independence, all manpower training programmes were run by the then newly created ministry of Manpower Planning and Development. For four years, the Ministry developed a number of training programmes in Engineering and related fields targeted at youths with ordinary level qualifications. A number of training centres were also created in all urban areas to complement the efforts of the polytechnics, technical and vocational training institutions. The objective was to expand technical and vocational education, which prior to independence, had largely been the preserve of white people, and to make it accessible to all Zimbabweans. The move was part of the government's agenda to produce for the nation, the much needed middle level technicians for industry and commerce.

Between 1980 and 1990 a number of young people and school leavers were trained in a number of trades in these institutions as shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1. Expansion of Technical Vocational Education Enrolment 1980-1990

TYPES OF TRAINING	1980	1983	1985	1989	1990
Technical and Vocational	3 469	7 791	18 213	11 007	9 261
% increase	0	125	425	217	167
Teacher Training	2 824	8 429	10 032	16 231	16 576
% increase	0	189	252	475	487
Agricultural Training	176	528	888	1 003	1 010
% increase	0	200	405	470	474
Nurse Training	197	408	408	N.A	950
% increase	0	107	107	N.A	482

Source: Ministry of Higher Education, Lands and Agriculture and Health Statistics Yearbook, 1990 .

There was a significant increase in enrolment in all technical and vocational programmes since independence, a 167% increase from 3 469 in 1980 to 9 261 in 1990. This was also the case in all other fields of training. In teachers' colleges, the rise was 448% that is 2 824 to 16 576 in the same period. In agricultural colleges, the rise was 474% from 176 in 1980 to 1010 in 1990. In nursing institutions, the increase was 482% from 197 in 1980 to 950 students in 1990.

The problem was that, those sectors of the economy which readily promised employment were those least favoured by school-leavers. The largest employment sector was the agro-based formal sector, which employed 23% of the workforce. The non-agro-based informal sector employed only 2%. Communal farming employed 55%, while commercial agriculture employed 8% and the informal agriculture 5%. These are not the sectors that were favoured by school leavers who looked mainly towards the formal urban sector for employment. This means that, in the main, a large number of school leavers remained unemployed because they lacked the skills required in the formal sector. They also lacked capital with which to venture into the non-formal sector.

As at December 2004, there were eight government technical and vocational training institutions run by the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education. These were Bulawayo Poly, Harare Poly, Harare Institute of Technology, Mutare Technical College, Kushinga Pikelela, Masvingo, Gweru and Kwekwe technical colleges. Together, they offer a whole range of technical and vocational training programmes as shown in following table.

Table No: 2 Summary All Polytechnical Colleges: Number of Students by subject area and mode of study: second Term 2004

Subject Area	Full Time			Part time			Block Release			Total			Capacity	Ratio	
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total		M	F
Adult Education	0	0	0	0	0	0	36	28	64	36	28	64	150		
Applied Art & Design	139	332	471	11	0	11	0	0	0	150	332	482	480	1	0
Applied Chemical Tech	178	140	318	33	7	40	20	8	28	231	155	386	100	1	1
Automotive Engineering	1096	57	1153	295	11	306	0	0	0	1391	68	1459	1890	1	20
Bio Applied Technology	11	7	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	7	18	20	1	2
Business Studies	1315	1131	2446	1458	521	1979	2	5	7	2775	1657	4432	5400	1	2
Computer Science	454	218	672	231	68	299	0	0	0	685	286	971	1318	1	2
Construction Civil Eng.	412	51	463	124	33	157	0	0	0	536	84	620	755	1	6
Micro-Enterprises	51	37	88	2	3	5	0	0	0	53	40	93	100	1	1
Cosmetology	2	26	28	0	16	16	0	0	0	2	42	44	45		
Electrical Engineering	792	141	933	331	30	361	6	1	7	1129	172	1301	1260	1	7
Environmental Health	44	12	56	0	0	0	0	0	0	44	12	56	36	1	4
Food Technology	7	5	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	5	12	22	1	1
Hair Dressing	1	21	22	18	15	33	12	7	19	31	43	74	139	1	1
Horticulture	19	2	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	2	21	48	1	10
Hotel Keeping/Catering	196	217	413	0	0	0	0	0	0	196	217	413	400	1	1
Instructor Training	110	34	144	50	34	84	49	21	70	209	89	298	494	1	2
Library & Information	69	75	144	101	70	171	0	0	0	170	145	315	345	1	1
Meat Hygiene	13	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	0	12	10	#	#div/0
Mass Communication	64	52	116	0	0	0	0	0	0	64	52	116	70	1	1
Mechanical Engineering	702	43	745	280	15	295	77	6	83	1059	64	1123	1386	1	17
Metallurgy	9	1	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	1	10	42	1	9
Plastic & Rubber Engineering	16	3	19	8	0	8	0	0	0	24	3	27	60	1	8
Printing & Graphic Arts	54	23	77	60	10	70	0	0	0	114	33	147	510	1	3

Source: Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education Statistics

As can be seen, there were altogether 9717 students enrolled in these institutions on a full time basis. Many of these were in important areas such as business studies (2446) secretarial studies which services both the public and private sectors of the economy (9970).

Automotive Engineering (1153) Electrical Engineering (933) Mechanical Engineering (745) Computer Science (672) Science Technology (1900) Construction Engineering (463) Library Science and Information (144) Instructor Training (144) and Textile Technology (141).

A total of 4624 students were enrolled on a part-time basis. These were students in full time employment who came to acquire and/or improve their trade skills. Of these 1979 were registered in Business studies. Some 306 were in Automotive Engineering, 299 in computer science, 361 were in electrical engineering, 295 in mechanical engineering, 236 were in science technology and 477 were in secretarial studies. The rest were scattered across the curriculum.

There were also those who were registered on a block release basis and came to train intermittently for given periods of time. A total of 442 students were registered on this mode of training. Of these, 164 were registered for science technology, 83 in Mechanical engineering, 70 were in the Instructor Training Course and 64 were in Adult Education. The remainder were, as shown in the table, registered in the remaining programmes.

The requirements for admission into Polytechnics and Technical Colleges is five "O" level passes including a pass in English. Prior to the existing economic challenges, graduates from these institutions easily found their way into professional jobs in industry and commerce. Some of them still do but the majority are now engaged in small to medium scale enterprises using their own ingenuity and entrepreneurship to create employment for themselves and others. Many are found in the furniture manufacturing industry, the automotive industry as motor mechanics and auto electricians and in the tourism industry.

Government also had a number of Vocational Training institutions which trained youths to acquire a variety of vocational skills in many different trades including wood technology, horticulture Leatherwork, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, civil construction and automotive engineering. As at August 2004, four such Institutions were in existence. These were Mupfure, Msasa, Westgate, and St Peters Kubatana Vocational Training centres. Mupfure had a total enrolment of 274 students spread across the curriculum, Westgate had 292, St Peters 216 and Msasa 141 making a total enrolment of 923. These trainees were spread across the curriculum as follows.:-

Table 3 Summary of Vocational Training Centres: Enrolment for upgrading courses by subject area: level and sex: second term 2004

Subject area	NC			CLASS 4/1 ST YEAR			CLASS 2/3 RD YEAR			Class Two/3 rd year			Class 1/4 th year			Total		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Automotive Engineering	0	0	0	122	1	123	126	4	129	94	4	98	2	0	2	365	9	374
Constructive Civil Eng	0	0	0	13	0	13	16	2	18	24	2	26	0	0	0	53	4	57
Electrical Engineering	25	2	27	0	0	0	37	0	37	22	2	24	8	0	8	92	4	96
Mechanical Engineering	0	0	0	31	0	31	76	3	79	25	0	25	3	0	3	171	3	174
Horticulture	0	0	0	15	5	20	16	4	29	10	2	12	0	0	0	41	11	52
Leatherwork	0	0	0	3	2	5	6	0	6	4	3	7	0	0	0	13	5	18
Textile Technology	0	0	0	1	1	12	1	9	10	1	2	26	0	0	0	3	45	48
Wood Technology	0	0	0	36	0	36	27	0	27	30	1	31	0	0	0	93	1	94
TOTAL	25	2	27	221	1	240	305	22	326	210	3	249	7	0	7	831	82	913

Source: Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education Statistics 2004

Once again, significant enrolments were recorded in critical areas such as Automotive Engineering (374), Mechanical Engineering (9174), Wood Technology (94), Electrical Engineering (96), Civil Engineering (57), Horticulture (52) and Textile technology (48).

Admission requirements to these vocational training centres are lower than those of technical colleges. A minimum of three "0" level passes is required. The level of skills taught is also lower. Graduates from these centres find employment mainly in self created projects.

From the enrolment figures in the table, it is clear that there is need to increase women enrolment. It may be necessary to create positive discrimination admission requirements to favour women. The reasons for the low women representation are deeply rooted in the education system itself. Fewer girls take science subjects at secondary school levels. So the real solution lies in removing impediments which result in less girls doing sciences early in the education system. Also, many rural schools are unable to offer sciences because of the lack of conventional laboratories, a situation which should improve as a result of the rural electrification programme which is bringing electricity to rural schools. The curricular reform drive should pay particular attention to this aspect of the education of women in the sciences.

It is not clear what role is being played by the newly created Border Gezi youth training centre named after the late Minister of youths. Government argues that the youths are engaged in various vocational training programmes. Critics of government argue that this and other centres are designed to train youths in the political ideology of the ruling ZANU PF

Party in order to instil youths commitment to the party with the intention of promoting the kind of nationalism which perpetuates the party's rule. Some credence to this argument is borne by the fact that attendance at these centres will soon become compulsory for all school leavers. Infact all aspirants to teacher training and other professional training provided by government are now expected to have attended the Border Gezi centres for at least three to six months. This is not unusual. In other countries all over the developed world, youths are required, before proceeding to tertiary education to undergo some kind of youths service. Infact, even in countries such as the United States and Israel youth service is compulsory for all youths especially in the military.

Private Sector Intervention; Foreign Governments and Non-Governmental Organisations

The second most important player in the training of youths for the world of work is the private sector. This includes Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's), foreign governments, Churches and private companies.

Many international agencies and organisations established links with the Zimbabwean government in the early 1990s in the area of technical co-operation and training. This was the period of the economic structural adjustment programme when relations between Zimbabwe and the outside world were warm and cordial. Indeed Britain, Australia, Europe and America were amenable to Zimbabwes' requests for assistance in youth training. Mamasi and Roamanarivo have observed that a number of foreign governments and NGOs played a prominent role in funding youth training programmes that had been identified by government for example: ¹²

The Australian Agency for International Development (AUSAD)

The Agency committed in January 1995, \$1.6 million through Opportunity International Organisation to support technical assistance and training . Several training workshops were organised and funded for school leavers in a number of trade areas such as business management, production and marketing. The Ministry of Higher Education and Technology also received financial support for the inservicing of college lecturers and teachers. This assistance was sadly withdrawn after the year 2000 as a result of the souring of relations between Zimbabwe and Australia over land reforms and other policies perceived by the later as undemocratic. Only humanitarian aid is reaching the country through the United Nations and civic organisations.¹³

The British Department for International Development (DFID)

Through a project entitled Credit for the Informal Sector Project (CRISP), the department committed, in July 1995, \$2 232 million in support guarantee assistance to small scale youths projects. This donation provided invaluable assistance to young entrepreneurs to undertake projects at a time when banks and other finance houses were not readily willing to provide unsecured capital to unskilled young people. The fund also enabled government to train school leavers in project management, production and marketing in the scheme of small to

medium scale industries. Popular projects were in vegetable production and marketing, horticulture, furniture manufacturing welding and metal fabrication. The assistance was also critical at a time when the negative impact of ESAP on the economy and the reduction in foreign capital inflows were devastating the formal sectors of industry and commerce resulting in the increased closure and/or relocation of previously viable businesses to the neighbouring countries. Despite the poor relations between Zimbabwe and Britain, DFID continues to contribute significantly to a number of projects in Zimbabwe but through the United Nations and through other civic society organisations. No direct aid is going to the government of Zimbabwe. The Agency has contributed well over £ 71 million for humanitarian assistance and the fight against HIV/AIDS since 2001. DFID is also supporting protracted relief programmes aimed at 1.5 million of the poorest and most vulnerable people in Zimbabwe. These relief programmes include targeted food inputs, agricultural support such as seed and fertilizers for young farmers and the rehabilitation of water projects.¹⁴

The British Council/Commonwealth Secretariat

The British Council ran a scholarship programme for the British government for young Zimbabweans wishing to undertake university studies in the United Kingdom in all fields of study while the Commonwealth Secretariat provided grants and scholarships to young Zimbabweans eligible to undertake post “A” level studies in universities and other higher education institutions throughout the commonwealth. Unfortunately, due to the very strained relations between Britain and Zimbabwe following the introduction of the land reform programme in the year 2000 and the latter’s withdrawal from the commonwealth club of nations, all these facilities have virtually ceased save for those Zimbabweans already studying in the United Kingdom.¹⁵

German Development Co-Operation (GTZ)

The German Development Co-operation (GTZ) which relocated to Malawi after 2000 had two micro enterprise projects which ran for over a ten year period. These were the Micro and Small scale enterprise promotions programme (MISSEP) and Resources Network (ISTARN).

Both these programmes focused on providing technical training to youths and funding youths projects mainly in agriculture and water development in rural areas. Some of the areas in which the Agency provided aid were in the provision of micro-economic advice to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning and Development. The organisation also gave advisory service to the private sector. GTZ was particularly active in the Masvingo and Manicaland provinces before relocating to Malawi.¹⁶

United States Agency for International Development (USAD)

Technical co-operation between the United States and Zimbabwe began at independence in 1980. A total of US\$870 million has been invested in various development programmes between 1980 and 2003. These have included economic adjustment, housing investment guarantees, environmental programmes, health education and training, urban development and small and medium scale enterprise development. The US government through the agency also funded some aspects of country’s reconstruction agenda in the 1980’s and 1990’s. These included the resettlement programme and agricultural extension services.¹⁷

During this period, USAID provided US\$172 million in commodity import programmes that financed the foreign exchange of manufacturing and agricultural equipment, with local currency generated being used to improve the productivity of smallholder farmers, health and education. Much of USAID financing also supported private sector development and small and medium enterprises which are the major creators of employment opportunities for school leavers. Infact, the Private Enterprise Development Programme focussed on private Sector-led growth which resulted in increased job creation for school leavers and foreign currency earnings. The programme also broadened indigenous participation in the economy and created avenues for youth involvement in the building of business linkages, business advisory services and employee ownership.¹⁸

USAID's role has also been prominent in supporting programmes which benefit disadvantaged groups such as the unemployed youths, women, subsistence farmers, farm workers and orphans affected by HIV/AIDS. Much of the agency's aid went into the following:

- Providing appropriate technology such as drip irrigation to promote better food security.
- Improving business capacity through skills training.
- Commercial linkages, agribusiness and market opportunities for subsistence farmers and
- Technical Teacher training¹⁹

USAID also made a significant contribution in the communal Areas Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE, by providing funds for the control and efficient use of wildlife, Between 1990 and 1987 CAMPFIRE received US\$28.1 million under the USAID's Natural Resource Management Programme helping communities to earn more than US\$20 million. Through the (CAMPFIRE) Development Fund, a number of projects were created. These programmes provided new opportunities for rural young people, school leavers and the unemployed to train and engage in beneficial activities in fisheries, which is one of the most successful industries in Zimbabwe today, as well as eco-tourism and bee-keeping.

At the time that government was engaged in the vocationalisation of the curriculum, USAID came in and supported the initiative through a programme of technical teacher training. Infact the agency went so far as to fund the construction of the Belvedere Technical Teacher's Training College in Harare, one of the large single contribution made by the Americans in the youth skills training programme in this country. The institution has, over the last ten years, produced hundreds of teachers for Agriculture, Technical Graphics, Physical Education, Home Economics, Metal Technology, Wood Technology and Mathematics.²⁰

Many of USAID's activities were scaled down after the inception of the 2000 controversial land reform programme. Since then, it supports health programmes, particularly HIV/AIDS, and good governance and democracy and securing lives and livelihoods for the most disadvantaged groups and vulnerable populations.

Private Sector Contribution towards the development of vocational and technical education: The role of Local Organisations

The general political environment at the time of independence was not conducive to the development of Private Sector Training Institutions (PSITs). There were a number of reasons for this. Politicians and senior policy makers at the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology which, until 1988, was responsible for the registration and inspection of PSITs, publicly and privately stated that they could see no role for PSITs in the overall government. In fact government, as a whole, considered private sector vocational and technical education institutions as exploitative of Africans. Their profit motive was dismissed as capitalist by a regime that was Marxist and ideologically opposed to private sector participation in youth training activities. As a result of this attitude, the requirements for the registration of such private institutions were said to be stringent and openly adversarial. The 1980's therefore saw very limited private sector activity in vocational and technical training.²¹

Furthermore, the unavailability of foreign currency limited the scope for individuals to pay fees and pursue vocational technical education courses leading to foreign qualifications. Foreign currency shortages also restricted imports of new production technologies necessary for teaching. In any case, the programmes were not popular since good jobs were tied to academic education. A research into Private Sector Training Institutions carried out by a group of scholars from Tanzania and Zimbabwe in 1997, found out that prior to the liberalisation of the economy in 1990, only one in ten applications for PSITs registration was approved. The report also alleged that more direct attempts were made by government to undermine the operations of such institutions including attempts to recruit trainers in the institutions for the civil service. The report also claimed that the Ministry of Higher Education established and expanded its own institutions in order to force private ones out of business.

The Liberalisation of Vocational Education Training Since 1990

The liberalisation of the economy in 1990 triggered the liberalisation of private sector voc-tech education. Government acknowledged that public sector training efforts could only satisfy a small section of the rapidly growing demand for voc-tech education. The number of profit PSITs grew during the 1990 decade. The Research team found that 12 out of the 25 were surveyed established PSITs in a space of just seven years. The stringent requirements for registration were and many centres were established by former public servants. Prior to 1990, only 3 out of the 11 profit PSITs were African owned and managed. After 1990, all but 3 of the 10 PSITs that were established were set up by African entrepreneurs. A large number of students in these institutions had well paying jobs or came from privileged homes.²²

The 1999 report showed that the degree of private sector training provision in Harare in 1996 was impressive. The 25 survey PSTI's amongst themselves, sold a wide variety of training services to nearly 35 000 people. The largest centre had well over 11 000 students while the smallest had 26, the median enrolment being 500. It was estimated that 180 000 individuals about 5% of the economically active population was engaged in some form of private sector Training. Table 4 shows enrolments by main subject area at the time of the survey in 1996.

TABLE 4

Enrolments by main subject area at the time of the 1996 PSITs survey

SUBJECT	NUMBER & CENTRE		TOTAL ENROLMENT	
Academic	0	8	4814	14.3
Secretarial	1	12 ^a		
Commercial	1	12 ^a	12906	38.3
Computing	8	11 ^a	11871	35.2
Clothing	1	4	1459	4.3
Technical	1	4 ^b	1570	4.7
Other	0	3 ^c	1082	3.2
TOTAL	15	-	33702	100.0

Source: *Vocational Education and Training in Tanzania and Zimbabwe in the context of Economic Reform-Education Research Paper NO28, 1999 p 75. Table 4.12*

- NB: a more than 75% of enrolment
 b Computer servicing
 c mainly English as a second language

Table 4 shows that commercial, secretarial and computing training courses accounted for nearly 75% of all enrolments while technical training in trades such as motor mechanics masonry and electrical installation comprised a mere 5%. A wide range of commercial course was available. These included Accounting, Marketing, Bookkeeping, General Credit and Supervisory Management, Salesmanship, Purchasing and Supplies, Banking and Hotel and Tourism Management.

The survey also found that there were three main clients for these courses. The first was that of people already in wage employment in the formal sector who were seeking relevant professional and other vocational qualifications in order to advance their careers and improve their incomes. Nearly two thirds of all enrolments came from this client group. The second group was that of school leavers who were either re-sitting secondary school examinations or were full-time students on secretarial, commercial clothing and technical courses. The third group was trainees directly sponsored by employers as part of in-house staff development programmes. Nearly 60% of all PSTI students were women which was in sharp contrast to the 30% in government post secondary centres.

While PSTIs were allowed to offer foreign qualifications during much of the 1990s, after 2000 and in line with the toughening and reversal of government policy with regard to the operations of education and training institutions, all PSTIs seeking registration are now formally

required to offer national courses leading to local qualifications through the Higher Education Examination Council (HEXCO). It is seeking to establish a local system and stem the preponderance of foreign programmes and qualifications. This is also in line with cabinet decision to localise all examinations in this country. Under the current difficult economic conditions characterised by high inflation and a weak and constantly falling dollar, most students can no longer afford fees paid in foreign currency. This has led to a drastic shift by students from foreign courses to those that lead to local qualifications. Many PSTIs actually offer internationally recognised local qualifications particularly in the Business management spheres.

While enrolments in commercial, computing and secretarial courses have expanded dramatically, those for clothing and other technical subjects have stagnated. Students are now moving away from courses that are related to trades currently under stress. The Clothing industry has been particularly hard hit by cheap second hand imports from Zambia and Mozambique and those from China. What is happening in the economy is now having a direct impact on course selection by students.

The survey also found that fees charged by most of the survey PSTIs in particular for commercial, computing and secretarial courses were, in 1996, beyond the reach of the poor. On the average, fees for most of these courses were, at least, equivalent to the minimum wage of Z\$480 per month. In addition to the fees, were registration and examination fees. This meant that in the final analysis, the fees were very high. A good example was that of the CIMA accountancy course which, at the end of four years easily amounted to Z\$40000. Sub-professional foreign qualifications such as ACP, IAC, ICM, and L CCI were less costly amounting to between Z\$500 to Z\$1500 per course. Although local qualifications cost 3 to 4 times less than their foreign equivalent, students consider them to be less prestigious. As a result, there is still high demand for foreign qualifications and private institutions continue to challenge government in law courts when they feel that their operations are under threat.

Non-Registered PSTIs

The registration requirements were relaxed after 1990. A number of people particularly in the western suburbs found difficulty in meeting them. The conditions included getting approval for buildings and other structures where training was to take place. The teaching staff had to be properly qualified and teaching equipment had to meet set standards both in terms of quality and quantity. This resulted in some private authorities deciding to operate without approval and therefore without licence.

A number of such institutions were found in Highfield, Mufakose, Tafara and Chitungwiza. These institutions were often found operating in backyard accommodation at shopping centres, church premises or personal homes because of their illegal status.

A total of 37 non-registered centres were found in the city centre. In 1977, there were approximately 95 non-registered centres in Harare. This constituted a sizeable proportion of the total private sector training market. It was often difficult for Ministry of Higher Education to identify these centres due to inadequate funds needed to establish an inspectorate system.

Also, the very small penalty of Z\$1000 for illegal operation and trading was not a sufficient deterrent to halt these operations.²³

The non-registered PSTIs that were surveyed were found to offer courses similar to those offered in registered institutions and were therefore in direct competition with them as shown in Table 2.

Table 5. Summary of courses offered by non-registered PSTIs in Harare Central District in 1997.

Type of Training	No. Found	% In one classroom only	Average No of Computers/Sewing Machines	Student observed	% Poor conditions
Computing	23	76.5	5	1-12	30.8
Clothing	9	100.0	4	60-3	33.3
Hotel Tourism and catering	3	Na	0	Na	Na
Commercial	2	100.0	0	Na	0.0
Motor Mechanics	1	0.0	-	70+	100.0

Source: Economic Reform Education Research paper No. 28 1999, p.80

It is clear that the scale of operations in the non-registered centres was quite limited. All premises in which operations took place were rented and thirteen out of seventeen (76.5%) that could be inspected had only one small room for teaching. Four were in very poor condition. Ten had just three or less computers for teaching purposes. At eight centres, just one instructor was observed with 2 to 3 students under instruction.²⁴

Non degree Agricultural Training In The Republic of Zimbabwe 1995 to 2005

Agriculture is one sector in which the training of youths/school leavers has been most consistent. Although the numbers of trainees has never at any one point, been as high as that of student teachers in Teachers Colleges, efforts were consistently made to train young farmers though largely for government service and for the white farming sector.

Agricultural Training has always been a government undertaking. It started at Gwebi College, even though, in the slump period 1931-41, it was leased. Many early farmers had their

Zimbabwean (then Rhodesian) farming initiation on “Gwebi Experimental Farm”, and some of the buildings in which they lived exist today and are occupied by staff. In 1913, plans were made for “Gwebi Agricultural School”. However, due to the intervention of the 1914-18 War, the plans were never brought to fruition and when the matter was re-opened in the “twenties”, the buildings which had been planned for Gwebi were erected at Matopos and became the Matopos School of Agriculture. Due to the slump and lack of interest in agricultural education, the School of Agriculture was closed and the buildings were used by Rhodes Estate Preparatory School.

After World War II, interest in agricultural education revived and ex-servicemen did practical training at Gwebi. In 1950, the first students entered Gwebi College of Agriculture to take a two-year diploma course, which was basically modelled on that previously provided by colleges of agriculture in the Republic of South Africa. Since that time, one other college, Chibero College was established in 1963. Then, because of the need to serve the African farming community, two Agricultural Institutes were set up. These were offering certificates in agriculture. Agricultural training has gone from strength to strength on the labour market. Today, the graduates face stiff competition from large numbers of other graduates from within and outside Zimbabwe. However, because of the increased demand for higher skills, all the five colleges are now offering training at both diploma and certificate levels. There are two private colleges offering training in agriculture. These are Blackforby College and Watershed College. However, their contribution to national agricultural human resources needs is negligible.

Training facilities

A variety of crops are grown. Irrigation facilities are available for instruction in a range of irrigation techniques. The colleges’ farms provide facilities for instruction in the management of dairy cows, pedigree and commercial beef cattle, pigs, poultry, ostriches, sheep, goats and rabbits. A wide range of machinery and equipment is provided for instruction and practice. The students are also exposed to computers and many aspects of farm accounting and agribusiness management.

Every college has a good technical library, a modern lecture hall fully equipped with audio-visual gadgets, a laboratory, engineering workshops, and spacious offices and student hostels. There are also multi-purpose halls, staff residences, farm buildings, a large dairy, cattle, sheep and goat facilities, extensive piggeries and poultry houses, ostrich egg incubator and setter, feed handling and feed mixing plants, tobacco barns and a 0.5 hectare-greenhouse and handling shed for horticulture.

The Ministry of Agriculture administers the Colleges. The College Advisory Boards, appointed by the Minister of Lands Agriculture, take a very active interest in matters affecting these institutions. Through associateship, the University of Zimbabwe and recently the Midlands State University provide academic guidance to colleges. Major disciplines are animal Production, Crop Production, Farm and Agribusiness Management and Agricultural

Engineering. Colleges work as a team with the sole objective of providing soundly trained persons in the field of agriculture.

Higher National Diploma, Diploma and Certificate In Agriculture Programmes Entrance Qualifications

Agricultural Colleges have set themselves high standards. This does not mean a “highbrow” outlook, but the young person entering Agricultural colleges must have their wits about them if they are to do well. To this general end, applicants should have sound basic knowledge of, and ability in mathematics and science. They should be able to understand and express ideas clearly in the language of instruction, which is, English.

A General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level Certificate qualification, with Grades C or better in English language, mathematics and an acceptable science, is regarded as the minimum entry qualification. The applicants go through a selection interview conducted by a selection committee. The entrance requirements for the Young Commercial farmer Education Programme are relaxed.

The Ministry of Agriculture undertook the process of upgrading agricultural education and training below university level in order to meet the diverse needs of the changing agricultural industry. In February 1997, the Government of Zimbabwe approved the introduction of the Higher National Diploma in Horticulture at Gwebi College and Chibero College to run parallel to the universities Associate Diploma in general Agriculture. The HND programmes in Horticulture and Animal production are meant to produce practical oriented middle level specialists. A market survey which was carried out in 1997 indicated that the Higher National Diploma in Horticulture and Animal Production were in high demand and the numbers of applications received indicated so. To be admitted into HND, one should possess five (5) ‘O’ level subjects including English Language, Mathematics and Science, a diploma in agriculture or horticulture/animal related diploma from a recognised institution and at least 12 months post qualification relevant experience. The age of students is normally between 18 and 25 years.

The colleges’ year runs from September to July, coinciding with the farming year. Breaks of approximately one month occur over Christmas and New Year and again at Easter. The Diploma Course extends over three years for schools leavers (with first year on campus, second year of farm attachment and third year on campus again) and two years for those with certificates in agriculture who are exempted from farm attachment. The certificate is run as an apprenticeship programme, where the students are on campus for three months and then they go to farms for another three months alternately for two years.

Trainees are exposed to the widest possible range of agricultural programmes. The training itself is intensive and demands serious commitment on the part of the students. This has become even more necessary following the availability of land for aspiring farmers under the land redistribution programme.

The course is structured in such a way that practicals and theory are equally weighted. The diploma students spend 50 per cent of their time on theory and 50 per cent on practicals. However, the certificate students spend 25 per cent on theory and 75 percent doing practicals. Higher National Diploma students spend more time in theory.

Conclusion

This paper has tried to show how government and the private sector are contributing to the training of youths for employment in Zimbabwe. It is important to note that, although there are many different initiatives in progress, the actual numbers of youths involved are still very few and, for many, the question; 'After school then what' remains unanswered.

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