The Stakeholder
Keeping you abreast of developments in the Vocational Education and Training sector

Annual Employer Training Grant Submission Round
A Success

The 2016/17 Annual VET Levy Employer Training Grant Submission Round has been described as a resounding success.

General Manager: National Training Fund, Joseph Mukendwa told The Stakeholder that claim applications from employers submitted before the deadline of 1 May 2017, increased compared to the previous financial year.

“We received about 360 applications during the previous round and as such, we set ourselves a target of increasing the applications received to about 400 for this financial year. By the deadline of 1 May 2017, we received altogether 490 applications”, Mukendwa highlighted.

“We are delighted by the increase. Not only does it demonstrate that more and more VET Levy-paying employers are investing in the training of their employees, but that they are embracing the VET Levy programme as a national initiative aimed at upskilling the Namibian labour force”, he said.

Mukendwa ascribes the increase in applications to intensified engagement and marketing efforts to raise awareness amongst employers about the need to complete and submit their applications before the annual deadline.

“VET Levy training advisors attended to altogether 207 individual meetings with employers across the country, during which they explained the claim process and criteria. Although it was a lot of hard work and sacrifice on the part of the team, we are now reaping the fruits of face-to-face interactions with these employers, who all did not participate in the previous submission round”, Mukendwa highlighted.

“An integrated marketing and public relations campaign ran during the month of April also contributed significantly to our success in increasing the claim applications we received”, he added.

Thanking all VET Levy-paying employers for their support and calling on them to continue their participation, Mukendwa encouraged them to be pro-active in the preparation of claim applications, and not to postpone until the expiry of the annual deadline. “I believe that if all companies follow this approach, we can grow the number of applications, even more. Too many companies wait until the deadline is upon them, before preparing claim submissions”, he noted.

“Unfortunately, the NTA does not accept late claim applications. And monies not claimed are channeled to the Key Priority Training Grant of the VET Levy”, he concluded.
The Namibia Training Authority (NTA) has kicked off with a series of development workshops; aimed at upskilling prospective training institutions to be able to deal with registration application requirements such as policy and procedure development and business plan development.

Speaking to The Stakeholder, Manager: Quality Assurance, Ian Gicheru said the workshops are also aimed at increasing registration applications. “We have decided to act in a more pro-active manner so as to ensure that we attract more applications, and that once such applications reach our offices, they comply with our quality standards. This, in turn, can reduce the registration turnover time”, he explained.

“We have found that many prospective institutions were somewhat put off by our registration process, and what it entails. And while our requirements, as per the Government-gazetted Regulations for the Registration of Training Providers may be deemed strict and demanding, they are aimed at ensuring quality”, he added.

The first workshop took place at NTA Village from the 23rd to the 24th of March 2017 and was attended by representatives from nineteen private and non-governmental organisation sector institutions, of which some have already started with the application process.

“The participation was good and the contribution of the prospective training providers was inspiring. Overall, the initiative was very well received and has been a great success”, Gicheru noted. “More workshops with additional topics are in the planning phase and will be rolled out to other parts of the country”, he concluded.

The workshop was conducted in the form of knowledge transfer presentations and working group sessions, where representative from prospective training institutions had the opportunity to work together in groups to discuss and apply what they have learnt.

Doerte Schneider and Metumo Nakaleke from the Quality Assurance Training Provider Support Unit facilitate the workshops.

Manager: Quality Assurance
Ian Gicheru

NTA & ProVET SUPPORT
INCLUSIVE VET AT KAYEC

A group of twenty candidates, who included five hearing-impaired trainees, successfully completed a six-month inclusive National Vocational Certificate in Clothing Production, Level 1, at the Katutura Youth Enterprise Centre (KAYEC), recently.

The NTA and the Promotion of Vocational Education and Training (ProVET) Project coordinated the training course. According to ProVET Expert, Dr. Bertha Mudamburi, the Namibian National Association of the Deaf (NNAD) identified the hearing-impaired trainees.

“It is a first time for us to have a training course conducted in an inclusive manner. All the trainees interacted well throughout, despite having to communicate differently. The trainees were all very happy with the training course and how it was executed, and they are confident that they will now be able to start up their own businesses, or gain employment”, she noted.

Dr. Mudamburi further highlighted that inclusive VET formed part of the NTA and ProVET’s support to the Harambee Prosperity Plan, under its Economic Advancement Pillar, which amongst others aims to create at least eight-thousand new jobs in the manufacturing sector and render economic empowerment support that can lead to a higher inclusion of disadvantaged groups into the formal economy.

“Inclusion education is based on the simple idea that every child and family is valued equally and deserves the same opportunities and experiences. As such, inclusive education is about children with disabilities – whether the disability is mild or severe, hidden or obvious – participating in everyday activities, just like they would if their disability were not present. It’s about building friendships and having opportunities, just like everyone else”, Dr. Mudamburi explained.

“For a long time, children with disabilities were educated in separate classes or in separate schools. People got used to the idea that special education meant separate education. But, we now know that when children are educated together, positive academic and social outcomes occur for all the children involved”, she added.

A sign language interpreter of the NNAD, Erika Uushona, supported the training process, throughout.

ProVET also donated five heavy-duty sewing machines to KAYEC.

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EAGER PARTICIPANT
Sign Language Interpreter, Erika Uushona, assisting one of the hearing-impaired trainees during a training session
Recognition of Prior Learning Gains Momentum

The NTA, through its Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) programme, has been making solid progress in assessing and certifying eligible Namibians, since the programme’s inception in 2013. Speaking to The Stakeholder, Acting Manager: Assessment and Certification, Moses Tjirare said that for the 2016/17 financial year, a total of 2038 applications in 29 different occupational areas were received, of which 769 candidates were assessed, and 289 were found competent. “Although these outcomes represent a relatively low competence rate of 38 percent, we are confident that things will improve over the short- to medium-term”, he said.

Highlighting the NTA’s intent to incorporate a strong mentorship component during its 2017/18 rollout, Tjirare said that a strong need existed to train more mentors to ensure sufficient capacity in all regions of Namibia.

“The availability of mentors in all regions will also help to reduce the high personnel costs incurred by the NTA, as a result of mentors travelling from one region to another”, he noted. Tjirare also expressed hope that the mentorship support will result in a significant increase in overall competence rates, especially as far as candidates with a Modular training system background, are concerned. “RPL in the Competency Based Education and Training (CBET) system is not as challenging as in the Modular system, which has always excluded a mentorship component”, he explained.

During the 2016/17 financial year, the RPL team also invested significant time and resources into introducing RPL and its benefits to stakeholders across the country. “We have paid visits to a wide array of employers and stakeholders to sensitise them about the programme. We intend to do much more this year, to get the message out there and to create awareness about the programme and its benefits”, Tjirare stressed.

The Millennium Challenge Account-Namibia (MCA-N) funded the first RPL pilot programme in 2013. Under the pilot programme, a total of 120 candidates were certified in the area of Hospitality and Tourism, while 36 candidates were issued with a Statement of Achievement (SoA) in the area of Road Construction.

Increased RPL certification also forms part of targets under the Harambee Prosperity Plan, which expected 2000 candidates to be certified over the implementation period.

“Although an ambitious target and despite the fact that we’ve only managed to certify 289 candidates last year, we remain confident that we will be able to live up to expectations,” Tjirare said.

INDUSTRY SKILLS COMMITTEE STAKEOUT

Tell us more about yourself? Born 36 years ago in exile, I hold a BA Tourism degree from the University of Namibia. After graduating, I have lectured Travel and Tourism at a private college for 18 months. I then worked as a Field Guide for three years before joining the Namibia Tourism Board (NTB) as SME Development Officer. Two years later, I was promoted to my current position as the NTB’s Human Resources Development Coordinator. I’ve served on the Tourism and Hospitality ISC, since May 2012. I was then appointed Deputy Chair of the ISC in May 2015 and subsequently Chairperson in March 2016. I like reading a lot. I am a motivator and very passionate about the development and growth of the Tourism and Hospitality sector in Namibia.

What are your responsibilities as ISC chairperson? I am responsible for ensuring that our meetings are properly conducted in accordance with the rules and procedures of the NTA; that the committee acts at all times in conformity with its Terms of Reference and delegated authority; and that our sector’s skills needs are identified and addressed.

Let us focus on the activities of your ISC. What are your plans? For 2017, we plan to host a stakeholder forum to bring together industry stakeholders to share information pertaining to the NTA’s activities, the ISC’s operations and skills development information relevant to our sector. Through the NTA, we also intend to visit some of the VTCs that offer Tourism and Hospitality courses and familiarise ourselves with their operations, activities and challenges. We believe that this will help us in devising recommendations based on best practice to address some of the challenges and shortcomings, experienced at training level.

What more can the NTA do, to achieve an effective and sustainable system of skills formation, aligned with the labour market? In my view, the NTA needs to be more flexible in addressing sectoral industry skills needs in a manner that works best for each sector. Not all approaches work for all sectors. It is also important to continuously engage industry stakeholders; address concerns timeously; as well as to take recommendations, suggestions and inputs seriously. I believe that doing so will enhance the relationship with industry and guarantee industry’s continued support and active participation in the NTA’s activities.

How would you describe the employment potential in the Tourism and Hospitality industry? The ISC has supported the development of a Sector Skills Plan aimed at identifying critical skills shortages that need to be developed in the shortest possible time to fill the skills gaps in our sector. A key challenge, however, is that graduates are not necessarily well equipped for employment, resulting in some not able to secure jobs timely, while others end up in other streams. It often results in potential employers having to invest their own resources in retraining such graduates, sometimes training in-house from scratch, or soliciting training skills from outside the country. Nevertheless, considering key NTA interventions and initiatives such as the Employer Training Grant, Training Provider Capacity Building, and the VET Expansion Plan, we are confident that we will soon see a drastic improvement in this regard.

What more can you share with us? I would like to appeal to all our stakeholders to continue supporting the NTA and the ISC activities, because these are meant to address shortcomings and challenges in our VET sector.
During the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in South Africa in 2002, a very critical declaration was made. The promulgation of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014) was a major international effort to mainstream sustainable development in the education sector by ensuring that Vocational Education and Training plays a key role as a basis for creating a democratic and human society.

For a very long time, VET in Africa has suffered from the unfortunate colonial legacy, which relegated many Africans to low-ranking manual labor while settler populations benefited from largely non-manual and invariably better paying jobs in the formal economy. With this negative association of VET, coupled with a global convergence on boosting primary schooling enrollments, few African countries have historically placed VET at the center of their national education systems.

The foundation of every nation is the education of its young people. The way the youth of any nation is brought up and educated in society determines the future prosperity of that nation. The challenges facing many African nations today are slow economic development, prevalence of poverty, diseases and ignorance. The continent is also searching for how best to engage the teeming population of youth in VET skills. Productive and self-employment achieved through properly grounded VET could be the best weapons for fighting poverty and the numerous associated vices plaguing the continent.

In Kenya, the current youth in rural areas continue to engage in traditional agricultural activities and is a positive factor that has now become a lucrative venture into agribusiness. The effect of this has been that a majority of youths aged between 15 and 24 are now in the informal sector while other youths between aged 24 and 34 are either in formal sector or unemployed.

This, however, does not negate the fact that current youth are in quest for new job opportunities, innovation and self-employment. The high unemployment rates are attributed to high dependence on formal jobs as a source of livelihood with the majority falling under the age of 35. There is therefore a need for the public and private sector to develop strategies that will empower the youth with life skills and entrepreneurship training that will generate self-employment and boost innovation.

Despite the perceived neglect of the youth empowerment agenda, there are institutions and organisations that have already taken up the responsibility of reversing such trends. Our youth have brilliant minds, ideas and skills that need to be channelled and financed for startups, but the biggest challenge being lack of financial access. We need to take it upon ourselves as business leaders to be involved in the youth affairs by creating various platforms for their growth.

While VET can facilitate the transition to a sustainable economy by inculcating sustainable environmental values, it also plays a vital role in developing the skills which are needed to improve output, quality, variety and occupational safety, thus increasing incomes and livelihoods.

Therefore, there is a need to adjust development efforts and build the human resources and capabilities of our youth. There is a link between poverty reduction, skills training, increased growth, productivity and innovation, in particular in for the informal sector.

This article was written by Adil Popat, CEO of the Kenya Association of Manufacturers.

Source: https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2001233499/integrating-technical-education-is-key-to-achieving-the-sustainability-agenda

WorldSkills Namibia Visits South Korea for Capacity Building Partnership Programme

Members of the WorldSkills Namibia (WSN) Secretariat attended a Capacity Building and Partnership Workshop from 03 to 14 April 2017, in Seoul, South Korea, organised by that country’s Global Institute for Transferring Skills (GIFTS), to build national capacities in the hosting of National Skills Competitions and to support preparations for the 2017 Abu Dhabi World Skills Competition.

Welcoming the delegates, GIFTS Executive Director, Dr Hwaick Jeon shared his country’s success story in the development of a VET system that supports national development, and of which skills competitions form a key component.

The workshop coincided with the hosting of South Korea’s local skills competitions, while the programme also included visits to several vocational schools and industry roleplayers.

Speaking to The Stakeholder, WSN Marketing and Communications Coordinator, Katrina Newaka, said the visit provided delegates with an opportunity to learn more about the organisation and hosting of skills competitions. “We now have a thorough appreciation of World Skills International and its values. The knowledge we’ve gained, especially in the areas of strategic marketing and communications activities, competition management, venue and ceremony preparation, test project development, marking, judging and awarding, will be applied locally to help improve our future national skills competitions” she said.

Delegates from Costa Rica and Mongolia also attended the meeting. (See WSN Competitors on next page)

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Okakarara VTC to Celebrate 40 Years of Existence

The Okakarara Vocational Training Centre (OVTC) is to celebrate its 40th anniversary, next month.

Speaking to The Stakeholder, OVTC Manager, Penson Mootu said although the centre is today considered a leading institution, it started out from humble beginnings. “It has been a long journey. Four decades of training young Namibians in a wide array of occupational areas, who are readily absorbed by industry as skilled VET practitioners, is no mean feat. Considering that we started out with training in only two occupations and 21 trainees, we’ve come a long way, indeed”, he said.

Asked about what was planned for the celebrations, Mootu said that the organising committee was working hard behind the scenes to make the anniversary celebrations a memorable event. “We have a wide range of activities lined up, which amongst others include a special anniversary publication, sports and entertainment activities, site visits and a fundraising gala dinner. I appeal to the Okakarara community and indeed the whole VET fraternity to join us in sharing in this momentous occasion”, he responded.

Mootu also indicated that the opening of a newly constructed hostel facility was to coincide with the anniversary celebrations. “For years, accommodation at OVTC, especially for trainees from outside Okakarara, has been a challenge. With the support of the Namibia Training Authority, we are in the process of finalising construction work on a brand new accommodation facility for female trainees, which we expect the Minister of Higher Education, Training and Innovation, Hon. Dr. Itah Kandji-Murangi to inaugurate during the celebrations”, he noted.

Mootu also called on OVTC graduates to return to their alma mater and to share in the celebrations, scheduled for the 7th to the 8th of July 2017. “OVTC is one of the country’s oldest VET institutions and we’ve produced a number of graduates who today are making a difference in society. I call on all of them to join us and support us in our preparations”, he said.

WorldSkills Namibia Team for 2017 Abu Dhabi Competition Announced

WorldSkills Namibia has released the names of the competitors who will be representing Namibia at the 44th WorldSkills International Competition, scheduled to take place in Abu Dhabi in the Middle East from the 14th to the 19th of October 2017.

WorldSkills Namibia has entered competitors in seven of the about fifty skills competition areas, namely: Bricklaying; Carpentry; Cooking; Electrical Installations; Joinery; Plumbing and Heating; and Wall and Floor Tiling. The competitors were selected through the National Skills Competition, held at the Ramatex Complex in the capital, in September 2016.

The competitors are:
1) Kaute Kavezembua
2) Zanodean Zaal
3) Kakoro Johannes
4) Sakaria Ndaningina
5) Tjihimise Kareraua
6) Albertina Shitalangaho
7) Justina Ashiyana

Cooking
Carpentry
Bricklaying
Wall & Floor Tiling
Electrical Installations
Plumbing & Heating
Joinery

Nakayale VTC
Windhoek VTC
Windhoek VTC
Windhoek VTC
NamPower Training Centre
Windhoek VTC
Valombola VTC

More than 70 member countries are expected to participate in the event, which is to take place at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre.

Thousands of spectators will watch over 1,300 competitors in 51 skill areas represent their country or region in the world’s largest skills competition.

This year’s event takes place under the theme: “Think Future”.
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Exciting Training
Eenhana VTC Trainees working on repairing a gearbox on a demonstration vehicle

Inclusive VET
Participants in the recently concluded Inclusive National Vocational Certificate in Clothing Production, Level 1 course at the Katutura Youth Enterprise Centre (KAYEC) posing for a group picture

Live Your Passion
Composer of the ‘Live Your Passion’ theme song, Damara Dik Ding, pictured at a production team event

It’s A Wrap!!
ProVET’s Martin Wilkinson (front right) pictured with industry representatives following the conclusion of a series of industry stakeholder engagement meetings

Proud Achiever
ProVET Expert, Bertha Mudamburi, received a doctorate at the 2017 UNAM graduation ceremony

Excited Competitor
Kakoro Johannes is a Bricklaying Competitor in the WorldSkills Namibia team to compete in Abu Dhabi in October

Proud VET Levy Team
National Training Fund Department colleagues posing for a group photo at NTA Village