The Namibia Training Authority has embarked on a pilot programme for entrepreneurship training, coaching and mentorship for Level 3 trainees, who would like to start-up their businesses and those who already have businesses.

The programme, which is to be piloted over a period of twelve months, have already kicked off at the Valombola Vocational Training Centre and Eenhana Vocational Training Centre in September 2016. The two centres have each selected 30 trainees from different trades to participate in the programme.

Indongo Indongo, Manager Research and Planning, told The Stakeholder that the initiative supported the Government’s Harambee Prosperity Plan, which calls for a reputable and competitive VET system and a spirit of entrepreneurship and enterprise development. “The NTA’s Board of Directors through its 2016/17-2020/21 Strategic Plan prioritises the introduction and implementation of a focused and targeted approach to entrepreneurial development in the VET arena, through skills development programmes and attitudes”, he explained.

“The NTA is inspired by the initiative to upskill young Namibians to become job creators rather than job seekers. The training is to capacitate and empower VET trainees with business and entrepreneurial skills and to facilitate a process under which VET graduates are empowered to start their own sustainable enterprises”, he added.

Indongo further highlighted that the programme should not be confused with general business or economic studies, as its goal is to promote creativity, innovation and the self-employment of VET graduates. “Entrepreneurship means different things to different people. Successful entrepreneurship involves much more than having a great concept”, he noted.

Upon completion of the workshops, trainees will also be provided with additional tools and equipment for their businesses and to start their businesses.

Training workshops will also be held at the Okakara Vocational Training Centre, Zambezi Vocational Training Centre (Katima Mulilo) and Rundu Vocational Training Centre.

Consultants from Business Financial Solution (BFS) and Development Consultants for Southern Africa (DECOSA) are conducting the workshops.
SACC Approves Registration of New Training Institutions

The NTA’s Standards, Assessment and Certification Council (SACC) approved the registration of five VET institutions, at a meeting on the 26th of January 2016.

The institutions are Anistemi College and Training Centre (Usakos); Institute of Information Technology (Pty) Ltd. (Windhoek & Swakopmund); Namibian College of Open Learning (NAMCOL) (Otiwarongo); Namwater Human Resource Development Centre (Okahandja), and Silver Spoon Hospitality Academy CC (Windhoek).

The institutions offer courses in the field of hospitality, information technology, business administration, manufacturing, mechanical and electrical.

Having already gone through the accreditation process of the Namibia Qualifications Authority (NQA), they meet the quality requirements required of an institution to attain official accreditation status.

At the same meeting, the SACC approved the re-registration of three institutions, namely Adonal College (Windhoek), African Hospitality & Tourism CC (Windhoek) and Wolwedans Foundation Trust (Windhoek).

Another institution, Africa Institutional Management Services (AIMS) (Arandis) also had its training scope expanded with the following qualifications:
- National Vocational Certificate in Hospitality and Tourism; (Accommodation Services & Food and Beverage Services) Level 2;
- National Vocational Certificate in Hospitality and Tourism (Front Office Operations) Level 3;
- National Vocational Certificate in Hospitality and Tourism (Food & Beverage Operations) Level 3; and
- National Vocational Certificate in Hospitality and Tourism (Core Commercial Cookery Skills) Level 3.

Manager: Quality Assurance, Ian Gicheru told The Stakeholder that both the NTA and NQA have the interest of quality training entrenched in their mandates. “The training market remains small and we need more training institutions. However, it is very important that institutions meet the registration requirements”, he said.

Gicheru also emphasised that registration is only valid for a number of years, whereafter institutions need to re-apply for re-registration. “It is therefore important that prospective trainees always establish whether an institution is still registered with the NTA, before they enroll, he said.

Valombola VTC Plumbing Graduate Establishes Thriving Water Engineering Firm

The Namibian Vocational Education and Training system has birthed a company that currently employs 180 salaried workers.

The firm, called Water Engineering Africa, has its headquarters at Ongwediva. However, its areas of operation are not only confined to the north, but spread throughout the country.

The brainchild behind the establishment of this company is Tangeni Nghiwelekwika, a former student of Chemie AG in Halle, Germany, where he received training in pipe construction. He subsequently completed his vocational studies at the Valombola Vocational Training Centre, at Ongwediva, in 1998.

After completing his studies at the two institutions he worked for various town councils in northern Namibia where he gained valuable experience in technical affairs of regional and local authorities.

Nghiwelekwika has fifteen years of technical and practical experience in mechanical, civil and structural engineering. Before establishing Water Engineering Africa,

Nghiwelekwika worked for ELWIWA as a project manager and played a pivotal role in the establishment of ELWIWA’s northern branch, where he oversaw the design and construction of various multi-million dollar projects.

Water Engineering Africa offers expert advice and guidance to commercial and domestic customers through full service, backup and maintenance of installations. “We also supply a comprehensive range of electrical, solar and diesel-driven borehole pumps,” says Nghiwelekwika on his company’s website. More interestingly, 81 staff members out of the 180 are women while the whole workforce is Namibian, mainly from the previously disadvantaged group.

The NTA’s ‘Live Your Passion’ production crew visited Nghiwelekwika at his premises in Ongwediva’s industrial area as part of its drive to highlight the importance of VET in Namibia.

This story by Sakaria Khadikwa was recently published in local daily, New Era. Make sure to catch Tangeni Nghiwelekwika’s story on mbc1 on Tuesday, 21 March at 18:45, as part of the ‘Live Your Passion’ Campaign.
The NTA, from time to time, spearheads the review of unit standards and qualifications, registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

The review must follow processes similar to those followed in the development, and thus calls for a formal consideration that is inclusive of the engagement of the relevant national stakeholders.

The Stakeholder caught up with Acting VET Standards Manager, Ruusa Iltula-Hango (photo), to shed more light on this process.

SH: What does NTA mean when it calls for national stakeholder consultations?

RIH: These national stakeholder consultation workshops are also commonly referred to as validation workshops.

It is a very important process whereby the NTA, through the VET Standards Division, validates the coverage and structure of newly developed or reviewed unit standards and qualifications by the relevant stakeholders and social partners.

SH: Why is it so important to have national stakeholder’s consultations every time unit standards and qualifications are reviewed?

RIH: Developing unit standards is an activity that sits firmly as a responsibility of the industry or profession that requires such qualifications for formal recognition and/or selection purposes.

The NTA, as a national recognised body responsible for quality VET provision in Namibia, coordinates the development process by obtaining the required technical input from industry through various consultation platforms, as required by the NQF regulations.

To become registered, qualifications and unit standards must fit within the broader principles of the NQF, and any regulations made in relation to awards placed on the framework.

Processes leading to the development of new or revised qualifications and standards must be inclusive of the meaningful involvement of relevant stakeholders and social partners and be inclusive of the support for, and preferably endorsement of the qualification coverage and structure by such stakeholders and social partners.

Therefore, national consultation is a very important requirement for the registration of qualifications and unit standards, to ensure that they reflect and have the general endorsement of all relevant stakeholder interests.

SH: Tell us more about the registration process of unit standards and qualifications on the NQF.

RIH: Once the draft unit standards and qualifications are finalised, they are then sent to the relevant Industry Skills Committee (ISC) for submission to the SACC for endorsement.

When the unit standards and qualifications are endorsed by the SACC, they are sent to the NQA for registration.

The NQA have its own processes of quality checking and ensuring the unit standard content and verifying the stakeholder participation. Once the unit standards have gone through the NQAs quality checking criteria, they are then registered on the NQF.

SH: How often are the unit standards and qualifications reviewed?

RIH: Unit standards and qualifications must be reviewed regularly, but at least once every five years. This is to ensure that they remain ‘fit-for-purpose’ and that they continue to specify the requirements to be met for any candidate to be awarded the credits for that unit standard or qualification, and thus receive formal ‘recognition’ within the relevant sector.

SH: What are your expectations from the industry stakeholders at these workshops?

The industry stakeholders are urged to provide input in the developed qualifications and unit standards in terms of ensuring that the competencies identified continue to specify requirements that reflect the current need of the sector for which they are applicable. It goes without saying that we expect their full and active participation in these sessions.

As required by the NQA, stakeholders should provide letters of support that validate the content of the unit standards and qualifications that they meet industry needs. We have managed to establish a solid database of stakeholders over the years, but we still go out of our way to ensure that all relevant stakeholders for the identified occupations, including workers, employers, professional body representatives, educators and trainers attend.

We are soon to stage another round of consultations aimed at validating unit standards and qualifications in the areas of Hairdressing; Beauty Therapy; Fitter and Turner; Millwright; Retail Buyer; and Merchandiser.

SH: What about the development of new unit standards and qualifications? How does it work?

RIH: Yes, the VET Standards Division not only facilitates the review of existing unit standards and qualifications, but also new ones where they do not exist.

Such unit standards and qualifications are developed by industry experts appointed by the Industry Skills Committees.

The development process is co-facilitated facilitated by the NTA’s Standards Development Officers. On completion of the development process, the draft unit standards and qualifications are then circulated for other stakeholders to comment on and correct.

SH: You are now staging consultations aimed at a number of areas including Hairdressing; Beauty Therapy; Fitter and Turner; and Millwright. What other areas are lined up for the rest of the year?

RIH: We are focusing on a number of qualifications identified as priorities under the various Sector Skills Plans.

We are currently busy with development work in the priorities identified by the Industry Skills Committees and our industry stakeholders.

My team is working around the clock to ensure that qualifications in these areas are developed and submitted to the NQA for registration on the NQF. Other areas include Instrumentation; Electronics; Auto Mechatronics; Panelbeating and Spraypainting; and Agriculture.
NTA INTRODUCES THREE VTC ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Members of three newly-established Vocational Training Centre (VTC) Advisory Committees (Valombola VTC; Nakayale VTC (Outapi) and Eenhana VTC) attended a two-day induction workshop at Oshakati, in the Oshana region, on the 9th and 10th of February 2017.

Addressing the committee members, Deputy Board Chairperson, Loide Shaanika commended their proactive response to serve the VTCs. “We are very excited by your appointment and we are confident that your contribution to our important work will better equip the NTA and the public VTCs under its supervision, to address the training needs in your respective industries, communities, and in the country, at large”, she said.

“You are to do so through advising us on the strategic direction of the VTC; through monitoring the implementation of the Strategic and Business Plans; and through reporting progress to the NTA CEO or his/her delegate. You are also to assist in the implementation of resolutions and instructions of the CEO, particularly on aspects related to the Strategic Plans of VTCs. Another key role is the development and submission of annual work plans to the Board as well as bi-annual reports on your activities”, she added.

On his part, CEO, Jerry Beukes emphasised the importance of the active participation of committee members. “The priorities you will identify will in turn inform the NTA’s programmes of action to better prepare and position our VTCs to meet the skills needs of our industries. We anticipate your advice, direction and support to be a driving force in ensuring that we grow the public VTCs as accessible and responsive training institutions”, he stressed.

Beukes also stressed the development of the public VTCs into more autonomous centres with improved overall service delivery as a shared responsibility.

“I am confident that together, we can find ways to do just that, and transform all our public VTCs into centres of excellence for the VET sector. We need your new and innovative ideas. We need your commitment to the task at hand. We need your technical know-how and expertise. We need your backing, support and encouragement to succeed in this endeavour”, the CEO highlighted.

The NTA plans to stage other joint induction sessions for members of the Advisory Committees of the Okakarara VTC, Zambezi VTC (Katima Mulilo) and Rundu VTC, in March this year.

The committee members are:

Valombola VTC: Gideon Nitepenge; Milton Shikulo; Olle S. Nangolo; and AA Ogunmokan.
Nakayale VTC: Joshua Hambondi; Etuhole Haimbili; I.S. Mweudina; Laban Shapange; Petrus Nambele; and Helena Thomas.
Eenhana VTC: N. Muandingi; Hendrina Kagola; Lineekela Hambunda; Rosalia Kapembe; and Paulus Nghikembua.

SACC Approves Reviewed Office Admin & Plumbing Qualifications

The Standards Assessment and Certification Council (SACC), at a meeting held on the 11th January 2017, approved revised unit standards and qualifications for Plumbing and Office Administration, currently registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

The approval was preceded by a series of Technical Working Group (TWG) meetings with industry members and stakeholders, during the review process.

As part of the national stakeholders consultation process, the proposed outcome of the review was posted on the NTA website and adverts were placed in the local newspapers for relevant stakeholders input.

In October 2016, the Mining Industry Skills Committee approved the review of 38 Plumbing unit standards on Level 1 to Level 4, while the Financial and Business Services Industry Skills Committee approved 34 Office Administration unit standards on Level 1 to Level 4. Emerging from the review, the subfield for Plumbing was changed to Civil and Building Services Engineering. Special notes and range statements were also amended to give emphasis and clarity to any terms used in the unit standards.

In Office Administration, new industry terminologies were incorporated into the unit standards, while new competencies were identified and added to the unit standards and qualifications.

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Ready to Serve
Valombola VTC Advisory Committee members joining Centre Manager, Titus Malangu (back left) and COO, Richwell Lukonga, Deputy Chair, Loide Shaanika and CEO, Jerry Beukes (front row) for a group picture.
International VET Opinion
Market VET to Remove Image of Greasy Hands and Dirty Overalls

The devaluing of so-called blue-collar work is a mentality borne out of a contorted notion of education’s function in the society. One that gives priority to examinations and assessment scores over comprehensive learning covering diverse disciplines.

Further to this, the perceptions of boring old machines, dirty greasy overalls and smoke-filled factories have been sustained over time by more than just a rigid education system.

The politics of national investments, value placed by corporate bodies on college degrees, prestige bestowed upon white collar jobs, the ‘mystery’ of industry and assumed complexities of its functions and functionality have all greatly contributed to these myths.

The misconceptions about manufacturing have been compounded by society’s tendency towards a false dichotomy that is pegged on gendered occupations and privileged career spaces. These lock out many young people from readily available economic opportunities that are lucrative and accessible.

Yet, the truth of the matter is, outside of these long-held prejudices lies not only productive jobs for the thousands of graduates per year, but a proven solution for the economic and social advancement for our country towards industrialisation. One argument that continues to propagate the above warped view is that manufacturing is fast becoming obsolete, and that the services sector is taking over its functions. Because of this, emphasis has been laid on the ‘wow-factor’ of technologies and innovations presented by the services sector and the education curriculum has in turn underlined this by structuring courses that would ramp up the sector’s marketability.

Subsequently, potential graduates are trained to aspire to jobs in blue-chip companies at the expense of manufacturing jobs, whether or not their abilities and talents match up.

But manufacturing is, in reality, not in competition with the services sector but its foundation and backbone. The relationship between manufacturing and services sector is more than symbiotic because, the former is quite critical to the commercial innovation in the latter. For instance, it is no coincidence that Finland, which stands a stellar example in global excellence for Vocational Education and Training is also ranked fifth in the World’s Most Innovative Economies according to Bloomberg’s 2017 Innovation Index.

Some of the metrics used for these rankings were research and development expenditure, manufacturing value-added, and the concentration of high-tech companies in the country. The essential correlation of the two sectors and their interdependency is then clearly reflected in the rankings in which the country scored 83.26 out of 100 on a global scale.

Finland’s leadership in innovation is rooted in its commitment to the manufacturing sector especially in its investment in VET. Their legislation reforms, for example, have allowed VET graduates to further their studies at university or applied sciences level and increased funding for the technical institutions to ensure marketability and professional development.

This opinion piece by Phyllis Wakiaga was published on Kenya’s ‘Business Daily Africa’ webpage. Read the full story through the link below: http://www.businessdailyafrica.com/Opinion-and-Analysis/Explain-technical-education/539548-3795898-gc1p8c/

National Consultations Schedule

01 March 2016
National Stakeholder Consultations – Fitter & Turner, Tsumeb, Makalani Hall, 08h30 – 13h00

01 March 2016
National Stakeholder Consultations – Retail Buyer & Merchandiser, Windhoek, NTA Hall, 09h00 - 13h00

02 March 2016
National Stakeholder Consultations – Retail Buyer & Merchandiser, Gobabis, COSDEC, 09h00 - 13h00

03 March 2016
National Stakeholder Consultations – Retail Buyer & Merchandiser, Keetmanshoop, Bird’s Accommodation, 09h00 - 13h00

06 March 2016
National Stakeholder Consultations – Fitter & Turner, Windhoek, NTA Hall

06 March 2016
National Stakeholder Consultations – Retail Buyer & Merchandiser, Swakopmund, Municipal Bungalows,
Engaging Speaker
Deputy Board Chairperson, Loide Shaanika pictured at the recent VTC Advisory Committee Induction Session

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14 March 2017  Tangeni Nghiweweke  Plumber
21 March 2017  Paul Nomiseb  Panelbeater
28 March 2017  Chrisjan Apollus  Television Producer
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