Three of the formerly state-owned Vocational Training Centres (VTCs), now under the NTA’s supervision, have been granted official accreditation status by the Namibia Qualifications Authority (NQA).

They are Nakayale VTC (Outapi), Okakarara VTC and Eenhana VTC. The NTA’s General Manager: Operations, Richwell Lukonga (photo), describes it as a major achievement, saying it aligned well with expectations under the Vocational Education and Training Act of 2008, which tasks the NTA to support and lead the VTCs towards becoming autonomous training institutions.

“The NTA, through its VTC Transformation Division and its Quality Assurance Division, has put in a lot of hard work into supporting the VTCs and getting their training infrastructure and the quality of their course offerings to acceptable levels, as required by industry. It has not been easy, but we are now beginning to see the fruits of our labour. Our hard work is starting to pay off”, Lukonga stressed.

He now calls on industry partners to team up with the centres in the establishment of attachment partnerships. “Many employers have been reluctant in partnering the VTCs and taking in trainees for job attachment, before. They need not be concerned anymore. The fact that these centres are now fully accredited, should give them peace of mind”, Lukonga stressed.

Lukonga also thanked the respective VTC management teams for their hard work and dedication “The commitment and perseverance of our VTC managers and staff played a big role in this milestone achievement. Their hard work and dedication made all of this possible”, he lauded.

Two other VTCs - Rundu VTC and Zambezi VTC (Karima Mulilo) - were also accredited by the NQA, earlier this year.
As one of the oldest Vocational Training Centres in the country, having opened its doors in 1977, the Okakarara VTC continues to live up to its reputation of turning out high quality VET graduates, who are able to take up employment in their respective industry sectors, with ease.

Under the able and dedicated leadership of its principal, Penson Mootu, the centre has over the years established itself as a preferred destination for both trainees who want to enroll there, and industry stakeholders interested in taking on and employing graduates.

But, what makes this centre such a sought-after training institution? According to Mootu, the secret lies in the importance the centre assigns to excellence and the positive ties it maintains with inhabitants of the town and surrounding settlements. “We value the stewardship and trust placed in us by the community, and as such, we appreciate that we remain accountable to them in preparing their children - our trainees - for the world of work”, he stresses.

Another aspect of the centre’s success, according to Mootu, is its appreciation of its role in empowering the town’s youth. “Vocational training makes individuals employable, it allows them greater access to decent work and good jobs to escape poverty and marginalisation”, he explains.

Mootu and his team are also looking forward to expand the current course offerings at the centre, which include Office Administration, Hairdressing, Carpentry and Joinery, Auto-Mechanics, Hospitality and Tourism, Clothing Production, Electrical General, Welding and Metal Fabrication, Bricklaying and Plastering and Plumbing and Pipefitting.

“Farming and agriculture remain the mainstay of the Okakarara community and there have been calls for our centre to consider offering agriculture-related training courses such as veterinary technician, leather tannery and animal husbandry. These requests enjoy serious consideration and we hope that with the support of the NTA and our donor and development partners, that we will soon be able to meet these demands”, Mootu states.

A major challenge facing the centre is its old and dilapidated infrastructure. However, during a recent visit by the NTA Board of Directors, trainees could be found doing repair work under supervision, as part of their practical training work. The centre is also making headway in generating additional income to sustain its operations and fund repairs to its facilities. Such programmes include the recent construction of a fence for the Town Council, the manufacturing of exhibition items for the annual Okakarara Trade Fair, maintenance work at the Okakarara Old Age Home, the manufacturing and marketing of graduation gowns and upskilling training courses offered to employees of the Ministry of Works and small and medium enterprises.

Greetings!

The year 2014 came with well-documented challenges for the Namibia Training Authority, in ensuring that we meet expectations under our Strategic Plan and Business Plan.

But, amidst everything that the year threw at us, I am proud to say that we are finishing 2014, feeling strong, knowing that we have managed to overcome the challenges, and that we have, in the words of the late former Education Minister, Dr Abraham Iyambo, “delivered”.

Allow me to thank you, our valued stakeholder for your sustained support and partnership.

As we say goodbye to 2014 and prepare ourselves for 2015, let us remember the words of the Chinese philosopher, Confucius, who said more than 450 years before the birth of Christ, and I quote: ‘What I hear, I forget; what I see, I remember; what I do, I understand.’

Let’s do 2015 together. We know what we have to do, and together, we can do it.

I wish you all a blessed festive season. After all, Christmas is a time for family. Let us make use of the opportunity and spend time with loved ones and those dear to us!

Yours in Vocational Education and Training,
Ester Anna Nghipondoka
The Vocational Education and Training Levy – The Year In Review

The National Training Fund Department has recorded significant progress since employers started making their first VET Levy contributions in April this year.

The Stakeholder caught up with the General Manager: National Training Fund, Joseph Mukendwa, (photo) and asked him about the major achievements over the past year.

SH: The NTF recently ran a survey collecting information on the types of training conducted by levy-paying employers. Tell us about the survey.

The idea to collect the information was to generate a database of training conducted by employers. We are happy with the response. More than 107 employers returned the questionnaire. We are still encouraging employers that have not responded, to complete and submit the questionnaire.

SH: What activities, with regards to levy collection and disbursement, are planned for the New Year?

From the disbursement side, the system developers are working towards finalising the online system to be used by employers to submit levy claims for training conducted, meeting the eligibility criteria of the NTA. We are also planning another round of regional educational roadshows to create awareness on how to use the system, in February 2015. The detailed schedule will be placed on our website and in the local print media.

Further, to improve the quality of training conducted by employers, the NTA is to develop a number of guideline documents to be used as resource documents by employers. We are also planning a first ever conference to be attended by personnel responsible for coordinating training in industry.

SH: What is your message to levy-paying employers?

We want to thank them for their support and at the same time reassure employers of our commitment to ensure that the levy becomes a programme under which a high degree of self-financed, employer-based training and the development of an employer-based training culture is promoted. Their continued support will make the VET Levy a reliable source of financing Vocational Education and Training in our country.

SH: What would you single out as notable achievements since the start of implementation of the VET Levy?

To date, a total of 2,193 employers have registered as levy payers. As at the end of November 2014, a total of N$146,6 million had been collected in levies. Based on current employer numbers and monthly collection rates, we estimate that a total of N$220 million will be collected at the end of the 2014/15 financial year.

The identification of key priority interventions is another notable achievement. The NTA Board approved the NDP4 priorities of Agriculture, Hospitality and Tourism, Logistics and Manufacturing as interim areas of focus for the levy priority allocation. Requests for proposals have been advertised in the local media soliciting submissions from eligible training providers to provide VET training in the abovementioned focus areas.

SH: How would you describe the participation of employers? Are you satisfied with your partnership?

The employer response and participation has been very good. As indicated above, 2,193 employers registered on voluntary basis.

Several employer representative bodies/associations arranged platforms where we presented the framework to their members. Through these associations and platforms, the NTA was able to reach a bigger audience.

SH: What challenges have you experienced?

Mostly administrative challenges, including employers not using their levy registration number as a reference for payments lodged. This makes it difficult for the NTF to reconcile the payments and match them to the respective employer’s record.

General Manager: National Training Fund: Joseph Mukendwa

Sector Skills Plans Development Gains Further Momentum

The NTA is making headway towards the development of Sector Skills Plans (SSPs) for the Health and Social Services; Postal and Telecommunications Services; Wholesale and Retail, and Tourism sectors.

According to the Manager: Research and Planning, Ernst Mbangu, (photo), the SSPs are essentially “roadmaps” developed in consultation with industry, aimed at identifying shortages and mismatches in specific occupations, and to plan strategic priorities for skills development. As sector skill planning is relatively new in Namibia, a developmental approach, which is facilitative, flexible and proactive, is important in ensuring that the SSPs are aligned with human capital expectations as articulated in Vision 2030, the Fourth National Development Plan and the National Human Resource Strategy.

Two rounds of consultations with the designated industry sectors, which included interviews and group discussions, took place in August and November, respectively. The input and feedback of participants enabled the Industry Skills Committees (ISCs) to further study the draft SSPs and ensure their alignment with industry priorities. Mbangu stressed the importance of the SSPs, saying they should in the end contribute towards the realisation of national economic and social development goals through increased employment and sustained livelihoods.

Mbangu is confident that the approach used in triangulating different information sources to identify occupational skill shortages ensures the credibility and legitimacy of the draft plans. He is he also pleased with the input from the consultation workshops. “It’s very encouraging to note that major employer bodies and trade unions were all actively involved. This proves that our process has been stakeholder-driven, and that we indeed value stakeholder input in the development of our programmes to establish a demand-led national VET regime”.

A third round of consultations is scheduled for January 2015. These engagements will constitute the final feedback from industry representatives and the outcomes will be presented to the ISCs for input, whereafter the draft SSPs will be escalated to the NTA’s Board for endorsement.
The NTA is making headway in the organisation and staging of a national Vocational Education and Training career fair, as a key deliverable under its current Business Plan. The activity ties in with the strategic goal to promote and market Vocational Education and Training as a viable career path amongst young Namibians.

The Stakeholder approached the NTA’s Manager: PR, Marketing and Stakeholder Engagement, Mornay Louw (photo) to shed more light on the event.

SH: What makes the National Skills Expo different from other career fairs on offer?

VET career fairs differ from ‘ordinary’ career fairs insofar that the latter focus more on a document approach where teams engage visitors to stalls and hand out brochures, flyers, application forms and prospectus documents. In contrast, VET career fairs place significant emphasis on having actual job practitioners on site and creating opportunities where visitors can directly engage professionals and practitioners and gain first-hand knowledge about the various career options. Other typical activities include on-site demonstrations and simulation activities.

The National Skills Expo is to adopt the same concept, which has already proven very successful internationally. It is indeed the same concept being applied by World Skills International affiliate countries, when staging regional and national skills competitions.

The rationale behind the aforementioned activity, as formulated in our Business Plan, is clear: Improving the efficiency of the national training system and managing its interface with the labour market.

If individuals make decisions about what they are to learn in a well-informed and well-thought-through way, linked to their interests, their capacities and their aspirations, investments in education and training systems are likely to yield higher returns.

Staging the National Skills Expo can also support equal opportunities and promoting social inclusion through raising the aspirations of disadvantaged groups and supporting them in gaining access to opportunities that might otherwise have been denied to them.

Another important objective is to widen the net beyond what is traditionally considered the VET cohort (learners who have failed Grade 10 and 12, early school leavers, unemployed youth).

SH: What is the main objective behind the National Vocational Education and Training Career Fair?

ML: We anticipate that the event, which is to be known as the National Skills Expo, will support the NTA in bringing together on a shared platform, public and private registered training providers, corporate entities and other industry stakeholders to partner the NTA in the promotion of technical and vocational careers.

Not only does it align well with our current “Live your Passion” advocacy campaign, but we also hope that through the expo, we will establish another platform from which to counter perceptions stigmatising VET as “last choice education” and fighting stereotypes profiling VET practitioners as inferior”.

SH: Any other objectives?

Yes, a number of them. We want to generate institutional experience in the staging of an event of such a magnitude and lay the groundwork for the staging of Namibia’s first national skills competition. We also want to support equal opportunities and promote social inclusion by raising the aspirations of disadvantaged groups and support them in gaining access to opportunities that might otherwise have been denied to them.

Another important objective is to widen the net beyond what is traditionally considered the VET cohort (learners who have failed Grade 10 and 12, early school leavers, unemployed youth).

SH: In your opinion, how can the staging of the National Skills Expo contribute to the overall objectives of the NTA?

The National Skills Expo is to adopt the same concept, which has already proven very successful internationally. It is indeed the same concept being applied by World Skills International affiliate countries, when staging regional and national skills competitions.

The National Skills Expo can also support equal opportunities and promoting social inclusion through raising the aspirations of disadvantaged groups and supporting them in gaining access to opportunities that might otherwise have been denied to them. It can also go a long way in profiling the NTA and the VET sector at large, as important enablers in the development of skills required for the economic development of our country. The event can create positive brand awareness for the NTA through profiling the organisation as a responsible, efficient and effective custodian of the VET sector.

SH: The NTA is to partner with Namibia Careers Expo in the staging of the National Skills Expo. Tell us more about your partnership?

*Namibia Careers Expo* has organised the biggest local annual career fair for the past six years. NCE also has strong networks with corporate entities, sponsors and exhibitors and indeed key partnerships with local and regional training institutions. They also have key logistical links with support service providers such as transport, staging, lighting, sound, security, cleaning services, amenities, catering and on-site event management support.

Under its advertising and marketing arm, NCE is also going to take the lead in creating awareness about the event amongst exhibitors and visitors.

Indeed, the track record of Namibia Careers Expo, having reached in excess of 16 000 Grade 10 – 12 learners through its premier annual event since 2009, makes it a key strategic partner to assist the NTA in the successful organisation and staging of the National VET Career Fair. It just makes business sense for the NTA to partner with this entity and tap into its progressive knowledge, experience and networks in the organisation and staging of career events.

SH: When is the event going to take place and who can interested parties contact?

We have secured the Ramatex Textile factory as a venue, where the event is to take place from the 25th to the 28th of February 2015. Interested parties can contact PR and Marketing Officer, Roberta da Costa at 061-2078521, or rdacosta@nta.com.na. Our NCE partners can be reached at 061 245 711, or helenangaifiwai@gmail.com

Participate in our e-newsletter! Send us your contributions, comments and pictures!

info@nta.com.na

www.nta.com.na
Another Registered TP: Quality Assurance Manager, Ian Gicheru handing over a registration certificate to Simon Williams from Kambaku Hospitality College.

A Penny for Your Thoughts: Assessment Officer, Moses Tjirare and WVTC Trainer, Neville Uandara listening attentively during a consultation session.

Happy Training: A smiling female instrumentation trainee at the NIMT Campus at Arandis.

Media Engagement: PR Manager, Mornay Louw at a recent media event.

Ready for VET Action: Acting CEO, Ester Anna Ngipondoka in her office.

Levy Talk: Consultant, Willem Odendaal and NTFC Chair, Patrick Swartz.

River Smile: VET Levy Disbursement Manager, Veripi Kangumine on the banks of the Zambezi.

Asset Management: Transport Officers, Reinhold Gaeb and Lukas Shinana joining intern, Aili Ithikua for a picture.

HR@Work: GM: HR, Bernadette Sam donning her corporate look for the camera.

Taking Measurements: A NIMT metalwork trainee preparing for a practical session.

Circuit Testing: A trainee electrician at Windhoek VTC testing a circuit model.

Metal Fabrication: A welding trainee during a practical training session at NIMT, Arandis.

SEND US YOUR PICTURES AND HAVE THEM PUBLISHED IN OUR E-NEWSLETTER!
info@nta.com.na
Gobabis VTC Construction Making Excellent Progress

The Namibia Training Authority is making excellent progress towards the construction of a vocational training centre (VTC), at Gobabis in the Omaheke region.

The construction project forms part of the NTA’s ongoing effort to expand the provision of Vocational Education and Training services to Namibians in all four corners of the country. According to the NTA’s Capital Projects Manager, Gad Kangueehi (photo), the community of Gobabis seems very eager for construction work to wrap up and for the centre to open its doors.

“What makes this project special is the excellent cooperation we are receiving from our stakeholders at the eastern town. One can understand their excitement as there are currently no such facilities in that part of our country”, he emphasised. The appointed contractor for the N$ 11.4 million Gobabis VTC project is X Construction CC.

Kangueehi is also satisfied with the progress of construction work under two other projects to expand the physical infrastructure at the Eenhana VTC and the Rundu VTC, respectively.

As far as construction work at EVTC is concerned, Kangueehi, says progress reports point to project objectives and deliverables being met, within the agreed timeframes.

Other than alterations and additions to the existing physical infrastructure, the contractor, ID Building is also tasked with the construction of a new administration building for the centre. The value of the EVTC construction project is N$ 22.7 million, of which N$ 5.7 million has been spent to date.

Kangueehi is however concerned about the progress at the Rundu VTC, which he says is slightly behind schedule. “We have shared our concern with the contractor, Jiangsu Zhengtai, and they are working around the clock to ensure that construction gets back on track, as per timelines”, he noted.

The tender value for the Rundu VTC project is N$ 35.9 million, of which N$ 10.3 million has been spent to date, making the contractor well on budget as per the project timelines, Kangueehi stated.

The three projects form part of the NTA’s ongoing efforts to expand access to Vocational Education and Training services to communities across the country and to ensure enhanced access, equity and equality in the provision of such training services.

The NTA is to organise groundbreaking ceremonies for each of the projects early in the New Year.

NTA STAFF COMMEMORATE WORLD AIDS DAY

Devastation, fear and confusion consumed South African gospel singer, Musa “Queen” Njoko, as she learned of her HIV-positive status, at age 22. She could almost hear the cries of her mother and anticipated the stigmatisation of her community. But, what frightened her most was the thought that her infant son could soon be without a mother.

Njoko was a motivational speaker at the NTA’s World Aids Day commemoration ceremony on the 1st of December, where she shared an inspiring tale of hope and a future.

On his part, the guest speaker from the Ministry of Health and Social Services, Abner Xoagub, stressed the need for partners to create a platform for themselves and their children to talk openly about the pandemic. “Our children need to see mommy and daddy kissing and hugging. We need to start open communication within our households. Kids need to know its alright to wait until their bodies and minds are developed, before engaging in sexual relations”, he said.

The NTA’s Human Resources General Manager, Bernadette Sam, said she was delighted by the attendance from staff and applauded the organising team for a job well done. “Our people remain our most valuable resource and as a caring employer, it is imperative that we show love and support as much as we can”, she noted.

Twenty years later, Musa “Queen” Njoko is still going strong. She is the epitome of elegance and contentment. She has forgiven. She has chosen life, because she can.

STAKEHOLDER DIARY

- 05 December 2014
  - NTA End-Of-Year Function
- 09 December 2014
  - Board of Directors Meeting
- 25 December 2014
  - Christmas Day

Season’s Greetings!

The Board, Management and Staff of the Namibia Training Authority wish all our esteemed stakeholders a blessed festive season!

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