



Business, Technical and Vocational Training: Are the objectives being met?

Overview

The core aim of the Business, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (BTVET) is to promote an integrated, demand driven and competent based modular system. Learners enter the system at various points suited to their skills and needs, with their qualifications certified and recognised at different levels.

The sub-sector comprises of a total of 163 public and private training institutions as well as firm-based training programmes. The Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) through its BTVET Function and the Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT) provides policy direction, sets skills development standards, coordinates, monitors and regulates curriculum development, licences training institutions, and provides certification and accreditation.

Despite heavy and consistent financial and infrastructural investment in the sub-sector, BTVET has five major challenges. These include; relevance to economic growth, quality of skills provision, access and equity, organizational effectiveness, plus financial and internal efficiency.

This policy brief explores the different investments that have been made in the sub-sector, the current trends, persistent challenges, and proposes policy recommendations.

Key Issues

- ✚ Despite growth in funding to the sub-sector, there is still a substantial funding gap in order to accomplish priorities under the strategic plan.
- ✚ Fluctuating enrolment rates and persistent inequitable enrolment in the BTVET sub-sector with boys almost doubling the girls.
- ✚ The proportion of youth that attain both vocational and tertiary education is twice as high in urban areas compared to rural.
- ✚ The inadequate teaching staff, lack of vital equipment for training and limited participation by private sector affect the growth of the BTVET sub-sector.

rural and urban areas (UBOS, 2016). According to the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, about 40,000 youth enter the workforce to compete for about 9,000 jobs. Youth unemployment and underemployment therefore poses a formidable challenge for the Government.

To harness the productive capacity of the youth, government has put in place some legal and policy measures such as: The Skilling Uganda Strategic Plan 2012-2022, the National Youth Policy, the National Employment Policy, as well as the National Youth Council. The Ministry of Education and Sports has also taken deliberate efforts to revitalize the BTVET system to address the labour market demands.

Introduction

The skills development sub-sector is responsible for provision of employable skills that are critical for socio-economic transformation of the country.

Uganda currently has the second youngest population in the world with over 78% below 30 years. The youth population comprises of both the educated/skilled and the unskilled, living in the

Current Status of BTVET

Domestic Financing

Over the last six years, sector allocations to the skills development component have quadrupled, from Ug shs 69.463 billion (bn) to Ug shs 272.55bn, commensurate with a growth in the share of the total education budget of 30.41%. This



has been in line with the national development plans to boost infrastructure development and increase the relevance of the sector.

Table 1: Domestic budget allocations to Skills Development

FY	Budget (bn)	% share of the total Education Budget
2013/14	69.463	14.57
2014/15	120.66	29.68
2015/16	293.29	14.50
2016/17	258.09	10.55
2017/18	243.25	11.17
2018/19	272.55	44.98

Source: IFMIS, ESSAPR REPORTS FY 2013/14 to FY2018/19

However, despite the growth in the skills development budget over the years, a substantial funding gap of Ug shs 635.95bn exists between the estimated costs to fund the plans detailed in the Education Strategic Plan, plus the current and projected Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) allocations.

External Financing

Currently, external financing to the sub-sector is a combination of Budget support from (Korea (Korea International Cooperation Agency), Japan (Japan International Cooperation Agency) and The World Bank) and off-budget support from Belgium (Enable), Germany (German International Cooperation) and Ireland (Irish Aid). Over the years, external financing has increased to the sub-sector and in FY 2018/19, it took the second largest share, preceded by pre-primary and primary education.

Infrastructure Development

Over the last five years, there have been a number of projects that have led to the expansion, construction and rehabilitation of institutes within the sub-sector. The Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) funded project, completed in 2014 constructed nine new technical institutes located in nine districts (Amuria, Hoima, Kamuli, Lwengo, Mukono, Nakasongola, Namutumba, Pader and Yumbe). Similarly, the

Arab Funded Projects (Islamic Development Bank; IDB1, IDBII, Arab Bank for Economic Development of Africa and Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development) that concluded in 2016, resulted in the expansion of a number of technical institutions and colleges.

There are also a number of ongoing projects set to benefit the sub-sector such as the Albertine Region Sustainability Project, the Skills Development Project, and the Support to the Implementation of Skilling Uganda Project. However these projects are behind schedule.

All these advances notwithstanding, many institutions within the sub-sector are facing a challenge of inadequate infrastructure. For instance, no government funded building has been constructed at the Soroti School of Nursing since it was first opened in 1970. The buildings that were constructed over 30 years ago with a 120 student capacity are housing a student population that ranges from 450 to 500 a year. This has led to the repurposing of various halls such as the dinning and the recreational hall which are now being used as classes. There are also some practical classes being held under trees. In Hoima School of Nursing, one storied administration block was constructed, however this remains inadequate to meet the need for classrooms.

Sub-sector Performance

1. Enrolment

Most BTVET institutions are operating below capacity. The negative attitude towards BTVET, due to previous limited investment in the sub-sector, has made it difficult for the institutions to attract a substantial number of students.

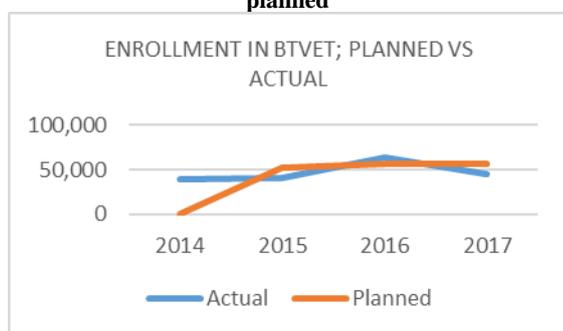
As depicted in Figure 1, enrolment in the sub-sector has fluctuated over the last four years. In 2014 the number of students enrolled in BTVET institutions was 39,712, which saw a sharp increase of 59% to 63,285 in 2016. This was not maintained and in 2017, the enrolment fell by



28.6% to 45,153. However, this still represents an increase of 13% in absolute terms from 2014.

As the graph further depicts, there exists a substantial gap between the enrolment figures planned and those projected by the strategic plan. In the plan, the sector anticipated enrolment to reach the 50,000s' by 2015 and then grow in smaller increments to reach 58,002 students by FY2019/20. However actual enrolment has hovered around 30,000 to 40,000, excluding the 2016 enrolment –an outlier.

Figure 1: Enrolment in BTVET 2014 – 2017, actual and planned

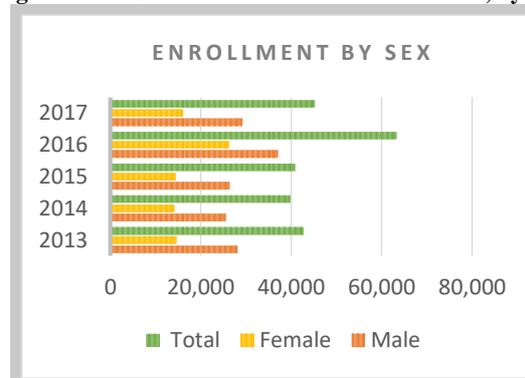


Source: ESSAPR, Education Strategic Plan 2017

2. Inclusivity

The male students have persistently outnumbered girls in BTVET enrolment, in some instances by over double (Figure 2). The enrolment rate of girls has experienced mild growth in absolute terms from 14,650 in 2013 to 16,051 in 2017 - 9%. Total BTVET enrolment in 2017 was 45,153 (male: 29,102 females: 16,051) implying greater enrolment of boys than girls at a ratio of 0.55. The sector plan was to achieve a boy to girl ratio of 0.87 by 2016, and full gender parity by 2020. They have therefore missed their medium term target and are far from reaching that of 2020.

Figure 2: Enrolment in BTVET FY 2014 – 2017, by sex



Source: Annual School Census, MoES, 2013 – 2017

3. Access

In general, the proportion of young people that attained both vocational and tertiary education was twice as high in urban areas compared to rural (Table 2). Youth based in rural areas tended to attain vocational education over tertiary. Currently, 90 districts have at least a BTVET institution. The Government plans, for the medium term, is to ensure that all the districts have at least one Technical Institution. This is projected to encompass 55 districts, beginning in FY2018/19 with 16 districts. In accomplishing this, they would be able to ensure that the perceived demand is absorbed. However, with the overall plan for the sub-sector being to equip BTVET institutions to international standards, it is important to ensure that they do not become too expensive for the rural market in absence of bursaries.

Table 2: Attainment of Vocational and Tertiary education by young people, 2015 (percent)

	Sex		Residence	
	M	F	R	U
Vocational	4.7	4.3	4.2	5.1
Tertiary	3.8	3.1	1.1	9.1

Source: Labour Market Transition of Young People in Uganda

Challenges

1. Lack of vital training equipment

The development budget is unable to support the acquisition of new equipment for all the technical and vocational institutes. The students are trained



with obsolete and inadequate equipment that does not meet international standards. The students meet unfamiliar equipment for which they require several months of training to get acquainted to modern and automatic ones once in the workplace. To many employers, this is a cost they would not incur if students were trained with modern equipment.

2. Inadequate teaching staff

BTVET institutions are understaffed. For example, Uganda Technical College (UTC) Bushenyi has a staffing level of 28 technical staff against a ceiling of 40 teaching and 40 non-teaching staff. The UTC Kichwamba has a staffing level of 19 technical staff (16 lecturers, 2 technicians and 1 librarian) against the same staffing ceiling. This inadequacy affects the professional development or upgrading for underqualified teachers.

3. Negative perception towards BTVET

Due to the initial low investment in the sub-sector in comparison to higher education, the general perception of technical and vocational training by the population is negative. Lack of equipment, sub-standard quality and inability to meet the market needs led to the view that BTVET is a less desirable option than “formal education” at the university.

4. Inadequate participation by private sector – no guiding policy and incentives

The link between the private sector and BTVET training institutions has to date been very weak/non-existent. There is need to re-design the curriculum to address functional needs identified within the private sector. The curriculum should be robust, flexible and continuously responsive to the changing needs. The current misalignment results in graduates that have garnered skills that are inapplicable to the market demands.

Conclusion

While there have been many positive changes and advancements, the sub-sector is still failing to

achieve its planned targets. If the Ministry of Education and Sports, intends to achieve the numerous objectives set out in the Sector Strategic Plan, there is need to effectively address the challenges.

Policy Recommendations

- The MoES and the private sector should agree on a comprehensive policy framework to articulate, direct and coordinate private sector participation in skills development. This policy would also detail incentives provided to companies and recognize the cost of skills training as a legitimate social responsibility by companies, which should qualify for tax rebates.
- The MoEs should construct technical institutions in the districts that do not have any.
- The MoES should adequately equip and staff existing BTVET institutions.
- The MoES should conduct mass campaigns to sensitize the public on the benefits of BTVET.

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