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TVET in South Africa and the international agenda: Are they transformative?

Overview

TVET has been moving up the agenda internationally as in many national contexts. In responding to the myriad of development challenges, South Africa has not been short in developing strategies to respond. This short policy brief examines the nature of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)¹ policy and practice in South Africa and its relationship with key regional and international policy pronouncements. Key regional (African Union), continental (BRICS) and global (United Nations) perspectives are examined. Current developments in TVET in South Africa are endogenous, but exogenous factors have potential to shape and reinforce the current policy trajectory, perhaps not in a manner that is as transformative as would be desired.

This paper forms part of a series of REAL and NORRAG Policy Briefs on TVET and TVSD in Africa, and provides an assessment of the current South African trajectory following from an earlier piece by Lolwana (Lolwana, 2014) regarding the relationship between the international and national in South African education and skills policy.

1. Introduction

TVET has moved up the international education and training agenda as the need for skills and jobs dominate the agenda of nations. In South Africa, TVET has become particularly crucial as a response to the jobs and skills crisis dominating the headlines of the popular press. The large number of youth not in education, training or jobs, together with the discourse of the skills shortage has provided the necessary impetus for TVET to become a significant element of the overall response to

development. The transformation of the TVET system has, therefore become a significant concern nationally, with support of an international context for its revival. Unsurprisingly, the title of a recent UNESCO publication from which this agenda is drawn is appropriately named 'Unleashing the potential: Transforming Technical and Vocational Education' (Marope, Chakroun, & Holmes, 2015).

South Africa has been well positioned to take on board the international agenda. The recent accolade by South Africa in meeting the 'Millennium Development Goals targets'² means that South Africa is considered for better or worse as a significant 'leader' in the international policy terrain, at the forefront of responding to international norms and standards deemed appropriate. It is therefore not surprising that the country is, albeit surreptitiously, expected to lead in the implementation of the international Sustainable Development Agenda, *Transforming our world: the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development* (UN, 2015), referred to as *Vision 2030*. The SDGs are expected to chart the international developmental agenda for the foreseeable future, at least until 2030. The increased attention to TVET in the international agenda, while it provides an important, albeit limited and limiting³ focus on TVET, will inevitably place TVET in the agendas of aid-dependent countries and agencies that are responsive to them.

Since the SDGs provide an important basis for tracking success, the need for clarifying what it is that we are tracking will need to be carefully considered. In this regard the UNs *Agenda 2030*, the African Union's *Agenda 2063* (AU, 2015), and the Southern hemispheric BRICS co-operation blueprint (BRICS 2015)⁴ provide an important basis for understanding key features of the

international TVET agenda. It can be used to provide a starting point for understanding the international imperatives considered appropriate for advancing national TVET systems⁵. The paper will explore the transformative impact of both the international and national agenda and explore the extent to which the country needs to respond to these exogenous currents that are likely to shape TVET developments.

The brief begins by identifying key features of the international TVET agenda, follows with some key national developments in the sector and closes with some considerations for both national policy and the role of the international agenda.

2. The current agenda: International, Bloc and Regional

A discussion of TVET in the sustainable development agenda (*Agenda 2030*), is followed by an assessment of the BRICS co-operation proposals, and by the regional African Union aspirations. The latter, while not normative, provide an important starting point for understanding expectations of TVET systems agreed and accepted by the international community.

UN and Sustainable Development

The recently accepted 17 Sustainable Development Goals with its 169 associated targets (UN, 2015) provides an important, albeit limited, context for national TVET systems. Arguably its greatest achievement in TVET terms is less about being 'supremely ambitious and transformational' as it is about expanding the international education agenda that moves beyond schooling and therefore "...goes far beyond the MDGs" (UN, 2015, p.5). Indeed, the reference to 'promoting lifelong learning opportunities' in the title of Goal 4⁶, is perhaps an important precursor to the more direct TVET objectives indicated in 4.3 and 4.4 recounted below:

4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university

4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship (UN, 2015, p. 12)

Notwithstanding specific reference to TVET, notions of access appear less than appropriate for the transformative vision necessary⁷. The danger of attention to TVET being understood as increasing enrolment - meaning access - is ever present and is likely to undermine its transformative impact.

The implementation structure of these goals was defined at an earlier conference in Incheon (South Korea), which provided an important context for the implementation of the SDGs (UNESCO, 2015). Challenged by considerable under-emphasis on TVET, and possibly influenced more by Goal 1 and Goal 2 of the current SDGs, the implementation programme of the World Education Forum would perhaps need to still seriously reconsider the notion of lifelong learning established in the SDGs. Perhaps, this will be given impetus at the country level.

BRICS Co-operation

South Africa's role as part of the Southern Hemispheres' BRICS network provides an important opportunity for TVET co-operation. *BRICS Building Education for the Future: Recommendations for co-operation* was developed following the 6th BRICS Summit, held in Fortaleza, Brazil, in July 2014. BRICS leaders, while affirming the strategic importance of the role of education to sustainable development and inclusive economic growth, pledged to strengthen education co-operation in which TVET loomed large. Four of the twelve recommendations relate to TVET/skills. These include co-operation on the basis of the following inter alia:

6. Develop labour market information systems and capacity for skills analysis and forecasting and,
8. Strengthen the links between companies and TVET institutions, and facilitate workplace learning, in particular at the secondary level. (UNESCO, 2015, p. 3/4)

The reference to labour market data-gathering by establishing a TVET/LM Observatory in support of TVET is an important recommendation, as is the formal recognition that the relationship between TVET and labour market is significant. Recognition of the role of industry is another significant area for cooperation, although the lack of attention to the way in which other economies could be engaged is still perhaps weak. Also the reference to the requirement for countries to use national qualifications frameworks is perhaps less than useful.⁸

African Commission's Aspirations for 2063

The African Commission's 'Agenda 2063: "The Africa We Want"⁹ framework document foregrounded the education 'aspiration'. Education takes pride of place, following as it does, the primary aspiration of 'inclusive growth and sustainable development'. Goal: 1.2 refers to the aspiration of a "Well educated citizens and skills revolution under pinned by science, technology and innovation."¹⁰ The importance to TVET is underscored by Target 1.2.1 which recommends an 'Education and science, technology and innovation driven skills revolution'.

This is however recommendation for 'All secondary school students without access to tertiary education have free access to TVET education by 2030' (African Union, 2015 , p. 135). Of course, the implementation of such a wide-ranging proposal is perhaps more ambitious than is likely to be achieved. Access, like the SDGs, is again underpinned by a notion of expansion, but this time, perhaps more dangerously, is expected to step in where other post-school options have presumably failed. The ambition is questioned on the basis that it ignores the challenges of a supply-driven TVET system and invariably undermines its position as an option of choice in the national system.

The document has, nevertheless, reinforced the presence of TVET in national systems accompanied as it is by reference to more conventional areas like the enhancement of teacher qualifications, attention to gender based curriculum, the promotion of 'entrepreneurship programmes'. The aforementioned reference to the requirement for 'national TVET systems that are aligned to labour market' (ibid), has the ever-present danger of the formal labour market at the expense of informal systems.

3. South African TVET

The transformation of TVET has been a significant feature of the post-2008 education and training landscape after the establishment of a dedicated post-school education and training ministry, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET).

It has been argued that South Africa's post-1994 education and skills development trajectory has been powerfully influenced by the international community. Lolwana, for instance points out that,

...it is clear that almost all interventions have been influenced by global debates, policies and models...Although the policies such as the NQF, OBE and the current version of the Skills Development strategies can be seen as less successful if not failing spectacularly, the country still finds it hard to retract from these as it will be going against global wisdom. (2014)

To what extent are these influences still pertinent and how far should we go as a country in resisting these currents. While it would be important for the country to keep in step with the current interest in TVET transformation, the current manner and form that this takes might need review. South Africa's flirtations with the global agenda might, therefore, require some strategic repositioning as it undertakes some critical insight into the result of its own policies in this respect.

Overview of the sector: Demand responsiveness and expansion

South Africa has 50 public TVET Colleges created out of the merging of former technical colleges, colleges of education and training centres (Government of South Africa, 1998). The sector has been undergoing reforms and restructuring programmes in recent years, in addition to mergers in 2002, recapitalisation¹¹ in 2005, and policy amendments to the Further Education and Training Act in 2006 and 2012. The latest policy breakthrough in the form of the White Paper on post-school education (DHET, 2013) provides important insight on its envisaged role in the national education and training space. As the first attempt

by the newly formed post-school education Ministry, it represents the quest for 'an expanded, integrated and effective' system, while ensuring that changes to earlier legislation is implemented, including migrating colleges from provincial authorities and ensuring that effective governance and administration systems are put in place in what is referred to as a turnaround strategy (DHET, 2012).

The current South African TVET context is beset by a range of challenges. Years of neglect have left the sector considerably weakened. By all measures the college sector is associated with inadequate throughput and output (The Presidency, 2012; DHET, 2012). Poor labour market outcomes (Lolwana, 2011), understood as poorly defined curriculum responsiveness and inadequate industry and labour market relationships provide a picture of a sector on the weaker side of average by many counts. The lack of resources ostensible as a result of underfunding of colleges, together with inadequate and poorly trained staff lead to challenges in administration and governance. The lack of parity of esteem between it and other higher education forms result in a sector considerably undermined in the national space (HRDC-SA, 2014; DHET, 2013). Government accounts of the sector allude to weak financial management, poor governance and poor quality of education offered (DHET, 2012)¹². Even a recent OECD study, undertaken in association with the higher education ministry admits to challenges with regard to, "... coherence of the system, partnership with labour market actors, and quality in the programmes" (OECD, 2014, p. 25).

The South African experience of TVET attention, dominated as it is with concerns around access and massification has not been a positive one. Enrolment in the public TVET Colleges sector increased radically after 2010, with a particularly sharp increase between 2011 (400 273 learners) and 2012 (657 695 learners). Increased student enrolment at TVET colleges has not been accompanied by complementary increases in resources, either human or infrastructural. For instance, the increase of 64.3%¹³ (400 273 in 2011 expanding to 657 695 in 2012) student numbers have only seen a mere 2.17%¹⁴ increase in staffing in the same period. The challenges to individual TVET colleges as a result of this skewed expansion can only be surmised from these statistics. Yet an OECD report which was undertaken during this time refers to this expansion as one of the strengths of the South African system¹⁵.

"In the face of major challenges in the youth labour market, there are ambitious plans to expand the TVET college system... (and that) The scale of ambition rightly measures up to that of the challenge (OECD, 2014, p. 27).

Clearly the ambition to which the report refers was either ignored or deliberately omitted in the assessment. It is indeed an open secret that colleges are overflowing their capacity and struggling under the weight of expanded student numbers without the associated infrastructure to deal with them. The increase in lecturer/student ratio (from 25.43 in 2011 to 40.88 in 2012) is but one stark reminder of the challenges that pertain as a result of this unfettered access.

In this regard, perhaps the nature of target-setting needs some re-consideration. The White Paper proposed an increase of TVET College learners to one million by 2015 and 2.5 million by 2030 (DHET, 2013, p. xii). Whether these quantitative targets have been met¹⁶ is unclear at this stage as data for 2015 will only be published in 2017, by which time it will be simply a statistic with questionable value. Perhaps more importantly, even if these targets are met, the impact of increased numbers on system health and quality will need some (re-) interrogation. In this regard, it is possible that this kind of perspective is under sway of an international agenda that considers quantitative targeting as intrinsic to effectiveness. Clearly the adage of the data-heavy management perspective that holds that 'what can't be measured, is unlikely to be achieved' is everywhere present. The reality that South Africa is indeed under the spell of an international sword of Damocles is, perhaps, hard to shake off in this respect.

Funding is already constrained and is unlikely to be easily resolved. The current <#fees must fall> campaign is invariably likely to direct the bulk of post-school funds to universities. While it is keenly anticipated that this will not affect public funding of colleges, the current economic downswing¹⁷ will unlikely benefit increased resources to the sector. The steadily increased funding from the public purse is unlikely to be sustained – an increase from R780million (in 1998) to R4.95 billion (in 2012)¹⁸ – (DHET, 2012 and 2013). What is likely to be lacking in implementation terms, is now more than ever needing to be matched by the departments 'ambition', to which the OECD report refers.

Education White Paper 3

The White Paper is expected to define what needs to be achieved. Described by the Minister as, "...a definitive statement' of the governments vision of the post-school education and training system (PSET) (Nzimande, 2013), the paper is intended to provide the context for achieving an 'expanded', 'effective' and 'integrated' higher education system. In support of developing a 'single co-ordinated post-school education and training system', the Ministry intends to 'expand access, improve quality and increase diversity' (DHET, 2013, p.10). The bold scope of the purposes of the PSET is impressive. In a section entitled 'education and work', one of the purposes of the system is defined as the need to, "...prepare workers for the labour market, or enable individuals to earn sustainable livelihoods through self-employment or establishing company cooperative" (DHET, p.8). Although how this is to be carried out in practice with reference to the TVET system is perhaps less coherently understood than is anticipated?

The importance given to TVET is underscored by not only the name change (from FET¹⁹ to TVET²⁰) but by reference to its role in the PSET system. Together with universities, they are "...institutions expected to be the 'cornerstone of the country's skills development system; (p. 12). The 'main purpose' of colleges and universities is the 'direct provision of education and training'. In reality, however, the scope of TVET colleges is considerably undermined, both in terms of the way in which it restricts who they are responsive to, and the purposes for which they are designed. Firstly, it is clear that as an integral part of a diversified system, Colleges are expected to respond closely to the post-school excluded youth component referred to as '...those that have completed schooling, have not completed schooling and have never been to school (DHET, 2013, p. 10). While these institutions are expected to play an important role in the youth agenda, its restrictive focus in not responding to 'older', 'unemployed' and less certificated learners is clearly a blind spot. These are to be accommodated in a new institutional form, referred to as community colleges, a watered-down skills development institutional structure for those not accommodated by the TVET colleges.

Secondly, it is clear that as a component of the post-school system, TVET colleges are expected to respond to the needs of the formal labour market, perhaps exclusively:

"...main purpose of...colleges is to train young school leavers, providing them with skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for employment in the labour market."

The purpose of colleges is still intact in keeping with their 'traditional' role as they, "...tend to concentrate occupations in the engineering and construction industries, tourism and hospitality and general business and management studies' (pp. 11-12). This is not only restrictive, but tends to ignore the economic realities of an economy just not able to create formal jobs. The Deputy-Minister at a recent TVET College visit is on record urging youth to enrol at colleges (as opposed to universities) to enable employment, with some questionable claims about the value of the College offering²¹. The fact that these colleges are expected to exclusively respond to the formal labour market will undermine its wider purposes of skills development responsive to a wide and divergent audience with multiple purposes for different livelihood purposes, including the all elusive informal economies responsive to community needs (see below).

It has been proposed, however, that the new community college is expected to respond to those that are not accommodated by colleges (or universities)²². Importantly while the distinctive target group of this institutional-type is based on an older learner cohort²³, the 'livelihoods' promise made in the initial PSET promise is captured here. The community-based institutional focus is expected to involve skills training in 'community health care, diseases, consumer technologies, marketing local products, skills for self-employment in market gardening to small scale manufacture, arts and crafts...(DHET, 2013, p.20). The one million learners anticipated in this sector is expected to be significant coming from 265 000 currently in PALCs. These colleges are also expected to provide classroom and workshop opportunities that link with public service work-based initiatives. The relegation of those left outside of the loop of other education, training and work opportunities to this 'community' institutional form is clearly problematic. In light of their importance in the national education and training space, current indications suggest that it is far from taking on what is the real and urgent priority in skills development.

Two other proposals, while important, are less likely to achieve their intended purposes. First the establishment of a purely advisory TVET College entity (SAIVCET) and second, the establishment of a skills planning unit, with data-collection responsibility pertinent to skills development. The establishment of these separate entities is unlikely to link education, training and the world of work (understood in its widest sense). The golden opportunity of merging these entities into one holistic unit that both defines what TVET should do, and its relationship with the economy has unfortunately been lost. With regard to SAIVCET²⁴, it does seem that the nebulous nature of this entity is less likely to make it remotely effective as one worthy of being taken seriously by anyone except the Minister, while the questionable relationship between data-gathering and data-use will need to be assessed for its effectiveness as a support-structure.

Conclusion and Recommendations: How far do we still have to go?

South Africa's real achievement will be assessed in the way it can implement the intention-its own rather than those of the international community. While the White Paper (DHET, 2013) proposal is wanting in a range of counts, it could still be usefully used to engage the system to advantage. While the country is likely to have bragging rights internationally regarding the legislative promises of TVET, implementation challenges remain. The following could be used as a guide:

1. Understanding what our priorities are based on national circumstances, regional priorities and the international context (Where are we?)
2. Clarifying where we need to be in 2030 and 2063, based on clearly identified objectives (Where do we need to be?)
3. Establishing key TVET mechanisms and support systems to achieve the identified objectives (How do we get there?)

The paper has identified a range of issues with reference to the relationship between the international, regional and national TVET agendas.

While the value of an exogenous agenda is useful in placing TVET at the forefront of the national education and training space, its role cannot be downplayed. It is clear that much has to be done at the national level to translate broad intentions (or aspirations) into real positive achievements. Indeed, even the TVET agenda of the regional and international needs to be carefully scrutinised - for instance in regard to flaws identified in its understanding of access.

So, what is the value of the international agenda? South Africa has presumably already ticked off all the boxes (except for the African Union's, perhaps less than realistic and appropriate target of free TVET access for those that have no access to other opportunities). So, are we likely then on the basis of this to be conferred another best practise award? Perhaps, yes. But whether we should is another question altogether. We have a long way to go to achieve our own targets.

The South African case does suggest that the TVET policy and practise is largely endogenous and underpinned by its contextual realities. Clearly TVET is seen as a real and tangible solution to a youth crisis. But this has to be a temporary solution, with the best that can be achieved by TVET is its role as a holding bay until more sustainable solutions are sought. Indeed, while the danger is that it will undermine the entire system as the promised jobs and labour market outcomes don't materialise, the frustration will invariably turn to scorn and rebelliousness. The importance of the supportive role of TVET in responding to development challenges needs to be grasped. It has been argued that skills are not the solution, but without skills, any solution is unlikely to be successful. This is an area that international policy could quite easily have reminded the development community, but it too appears to have neglected to do so.

The role of the international agenda in reaffirming the attention to TVET cannot be underestimated. In this regard, the value of international research and policy 'think-tanks' must have a bold 'health warning' component when they are unable, or unwilling, to consider carefully the kind of systemic analyses they offer based on selective or limited data and policy advice as the OECD proposal on access.

South African TVET has, of course an important role to play in refining and giving substance to the SDGs. Its experience in an understanding of access that

goes beyond enrolment is important as its real and ongoing challenge of system coherence with labour markets. The access referred to in SDGs must go beyond 'expansion' and 'massification'. It needs to provide a real and tangible means by which the sector can take its rightful place in the education and training system. Furthermore, South Africa already has the infrastructure, at least in policy terms, to make the BRICS education and training co-operation in TVET a reality. The dialectic relationship between the national and international cannot be forgotten, whether it is in policy-making or policy implementation. The implementation context of the BRICS TVET agenda will be a vital follow on to this policy brief if we are to realise the fruits of the South-South co-operation promise.

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This paper draws on TVET experience in South and Southern Africa and incorporates experiences as Chair of the Human Resources Development Council of South Africa's Technical Task Team on FET Colleges (Pretoria/South Africa) between 2012 and 2014 and as Technical Specialist to the UNESCO/UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education (Bonn/Germany) (2015/16)

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End Notes

¹ TVET is understood in its broadest context of Vocational learning. The latest definition in UNESCO's 'Revision of the 2001 Revised Recommendations Concerning Technical and Vocational Education', refers to it as, "...comprising education, training and skills development relating to a wide range of occupational fields, production, services and livelihoods...(and) as part of lifelong learning, can take place at secondary, post-secondary and tertiary levels and includes work-based learning and continuing training and professional development which may lead to qualifications" (UNESCO, 2015). It incorporates the term Technical and Vocational Skills Development (TVSD), intended to marry the well-known older terms 'technical' and 'vocational' with the newer term 'skills development' (King & Palmer, 2010; Palmer, 2014) and which a recent ADEA report refers to it as a 'paradigm shift' incorporating both formal and informal skills development systems (ADEA, 2014).

² An award was presented to the country on its success on meeting the MDGs at the 26th Ordinary Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU), in Addis Ababa, 30-31 January 2016.

³ The inadequacies of the SDGs with regard to TVET has been identified by a range of commentators. See for instance the range of responses to the Global Governance Agenda. Issue 51 of *NORRAG News* (2015) Education and skills post-2015 and the global governance of education: Agendas and architecture Available at, < <http://www.norrag.org/en/publications/norrag-news/online-version/education-and-skills-post-2015-and-the-global-governance-of-education-agendas-and-architecture.html> > News blog (NORRAG BLOG, 2014/15). See for instance (Palmer, 2014).

⁴ *BRICS Building Education for the future: Recommendations for cooperation*, following the 6th BRICS Summit, held in Fortaleza, Brazil in July 2nd and published 1st November that year (UN, 2014).

⁵ This does not assume that they represent the gold standard. The changes of these have been documented. See for instance, the range of challenges identified by a range of academics @ <https://norrag.wordpress.com/tag/post-2015-education-goals/> and <<https://norrag.wordpress.com/tag/beyond-2015/>>

⁶ Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

⁷ Indeed other challenges to the Education SDGs have been extensively documented, see for instance, the blogs @ <https://norrag.wordpress.com/tag/post-2015-education-goals/> and <<https://norrag.wordpress.com/tag/beyond-2015/>>

⁸ The relationship between establishing qualification frameworks as a mechanism for improving education and training systems has been uneven at best (Allais S., 2010). The South African system in particular has been notorious for not being able to achieve its ostensible objectives (Allais S.M., 2003; ILO, 2010), see also (DHET, 2012).

⁹ "A shared strategic framework for inclusive growth and sustainable development & a global strategy to optimize the use of Africa's resources for the benefit of all Africans"

¹⁰ With education only second to the goals of 'A high standard of living, quality of life and wellbeing for all citizens' suggests the primacy of education in the broad African agenda.

¹¹ An injection of funds to undertake curriculum upgrade/development initiatives an upgrade resources and facilities.

¹² For this purpose, the Ministry developed a college turnaround strategy in 2012 directed to, "address the levels of functionality and dysfunctionality in colleges, and bring about comprehensive sustainable improvement in college performance" (DHET, 2012).

¹³ College enrolments were estimated at just over 345 000 (2010), increasing to 400 273 (2011), before quite an explosive expansion to 657 695(2012), before stabilising to 639 618(2013). Increases in university enrolment on the other hand was gradual - 938 201 (2011) to 983 698 (2013), (DHET, 2014) (DHET, 2013) (DHET, 2012) (DHET, 2015, p. 6).

¹⁴ Staffing increases during this period, was less robust, from 15 744 in 2011 (DHET, 2013) to 16 087 (2012) to 17 582 (2013) (ibid).

¹⁵ The OECD report refers to the following as strengths: 'open and committed approach to resolving the challenges' (OECD, 2014, p. 25), probably obtained by interview with government officials; the creation of the DHET, a national political structure which consolidated the control of Higher Education (OECD, 2014, p. 25); a 'well established qualification structure' (ibid), which even in terms of earlier Government Green Paper (DHET, 2012) was found wanting in a range of ways ; and Consolidation of the sector, which was incidentally completed in 2001 (p.26), a bold plan to expand (ibid) and a strategy to turn the system around (DHET, 2012).

¹⁶ They are unlikely to be met, especially if measured in a conventional manner (with only public TVET college numbers. More recently however, private college numbers have been used to supplement these and targets reached. In 2013 Public college numbers were 639319 (DHET, 2015)

¹⁷ As a result of the quite serious currency depreciation and looming currency downgrade – possible Chinese economic contraction together with a looming international meltdown. Moody's own 0.5% to 1.5% forecast, is similar to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecast of 0.6%, and the World Bank's 0.8% forecast. SARB (The South African Reserve Bank) also reduced its forecast for 2017 growth to 1.6% from 2.1% <From <<http://www.fin24.com/Economy/nenagate-weakened-sa-govts-credibility-moodys-20160204?isapp=true>>.

¹⁸ An increase from 1.7% 2.4% of national education budget.

¹⁹ The definition of FET for instance in the 1998 White

paper refer to FET as "Our concept of FET is broad and inclusive.... learning programmes that will be registered on the NQF from levels 2 to 4, and that will correspond with the present Grades 10 to 12 in the school system and N1 to N3 in the technical college system.... When fully developed, the new FET system will provide access to high-quality education and training within a differentiated system, which will offer a wider range of learning options to a diverse range of learners, including school-going young people, out-of-school youth, young adults and the larger adult population. (RSA, 1998, pp. sect. 2.1-2.3).

²⁰ The name-change to TVET colleges (from FET Colleges) because they are considered to, "...better reflect their nature and better defines their main role in the diversified PSET system".

²¹ The Minister pointed out that "The reason we have so many unemployed graduates is because of minimal career counselling. The implication that the 600 000 unemployed graduates were the result of 'wrong career choices' is perhaps less ingenious, but perhaps more alarming is the claim that "If we don't have [an artisan qualification], the rate of unemployment will be higher" with a promise that "With the artisan programme, jobs are guaranteed..." The absence of a South Africa's formal-employment-creating economy belies these claims as is the consolation that "We must strengthen industrialisation." And suggesting that "Eskom promised to take 100 artisans from...(college)" News24 (02.02.2016) Beware varsity degrees that will leave you unemployable – Manana, 2016-02-02 19, downloaded from <<http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/beware-varsity-degrees-that-will-leave-you-unemployable-manana-20160202?isapp=true>>

²² The 'diverse range of possibilities' to which these colleges are expected to respond include provision of 'second chance' opportunities– those that 'need skills to enable them to 'enter the labour market' and 'others' who 'may have lost their jobs or were made redundant by new technologies and seek to reskill themselves".

²³ Those according to the White Paper that 'have little chance of entering the formal labour market as employees and need to find alternative ways to earn sustainable livelihoods' (DHET, 2013)

²⁴ The South Africa Institute for Vocational and Continuing Education and Training (SAIVCET) is an independent advisory body directed at supporting the College system to inter alia, developing curricula, staff development, materials development, research into skills, promoting dialogue, coordination and linkages between colleges and other parts of the education and training system and employers with a monitoring and evaluation functionality.

About REAL:

The Centre for Researching Education and Labour (REAL) is an established research centre in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa. It conducts projects into important policy areas in education and training, focusing on the complex relationships between education, knowledge, work, the economy, and society. REAL brings together researchers from different disciplines, builds theoretical and systemic insights based on empirical research, improves the quality of empirical research, develops insights across different research areas, and contributes to national policy debates.

About NORRAG:

NORRAG is an independent multi-stakeholders network hosted by the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID) in Geneva, Switzerland, seeking to inform, challenge and influence international education and training policies and cooperation. Through networking and other forms of cooperation and institutional partnerships, it aims in particular to stimulate and disseminate timely, innovative and critical analysis and to serve as a knowledge broker at the interface between research, policy and practice. As of February 2016 NORRAG has more than 4,500 registered members in about 170 countries, with 47% from the global South. NORRAG is supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the Open Society Foundations and the Ministry of Higher Education of the Sultanate of Oman.

About the Collaborative Programme of Work between REAL and NORRAG:

REAL and NORRAG have established an *International Collaborative Programme of Work in Education, Skills and Labour Policy*. The broad purpose of the programme is the sharing and dissemination of their knowledge, research, insights and perspectives with local, regional and international stakeholders. The joint vision is to engage in the fields of knowledge creation and dissemination as well as policy dialogue on skills development, education and labour, with the aim of contributing in an informed and evidence-based manner to the South African, regional, continental and international debates on skills, education and training policies. The overall objective is to improve the quality of Technical and Vocational Education and Skills Development.

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This paper is the first of a series of Policy Briefs on TVET and TVSD policies in Africa that will be released in the framework of the Collaborative Programme of Work between REAL and NORRAG. Follow our activities to receive updates about the forthcoming issues.

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