

“ We need to break gender stereotypes that link STEM to masculinity, exposing young generation to positive role models; women engineers, scientists and researchers.

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka  
Executive Director of UN Women

”

ZAMITA

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#### TEVET NEWS

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#### Disclaimer

*Views expressed in the articles and stories in this newsletter are not necessarily those of TEVETA, its board members or management.*

## Foreword

WE WELCOME you to our third quarter TEVET newsletter. During the quarter, the 2020 examination calendar was adjusted. The examination sessions were reduced to two due to loss of learning time arising from closure of learning institutions as the coronavirus cases increased. Learning institutions opened on July 1 after closing in March. Only July/August and November/December examination sessions were maintained in 2020. November/December examinations were for graduating students only.



Minister of Higher Education, Hon. Dr. Brian Mushimba launched the World Youth Skills Day (WYSD). The WYSD provided a unique opportunity for dialogue between young people, skills development institutions, the private sector, policy makers and development partners. The WYSD came at a time when most of the youths were out of school because of COVID-19 disruptions to learning systems and job market shrinking as the pandemic raged most sectors of the economy. Creating resilience among the youth was core to the message for the 2020 WYSD.

TEVETA and the Zambia Correctional Services (ZCS) have signed 15 training contracts for K1 million to train 400 inmates as part of reformation for smooth integration into society. The funding was for seven programmes, which included fishing farming, electrical engineering, carpentry, fashion and design, metal fabrication, general agriculture (horticulture, animal husbandry and poultry management) and automotive mechanics.

In the quarter, Euphrasia Mulenga, the WorldSkills International Representative for Africa shared her skills excellence ambitions and the opportunities the ambassadorship brings into skills training. Euphrasia studied Aircraft Maintenance Engineering at Zambia Air Services Training Institute (ZASTI). She joined WorldSkills Zambia, a member of World Skills International. After successfully competing in various local competitions in Aircraft Maintenance, Euphrasia travelled to represent Zambia at an international competition in Abu-Dhabi in 2017. She was one of the only two female competitors in aircraft maintenance at the international stage. She was also the only competitor from Africa in the aircraft maintenance.

We hope that you will enjoy reading this edition and we welcome contributions from our readers.

# TEVET institutions to open on July 1, examination calendar adjusted

By TEVET Newswriter

Minister of Higher Education Dr. Brian Mushimba has announced that universities will open on 8 June and TEVET institutions on 1 July to allow students in their final year sit for their examinations. Squatting has been abolished to meet social distance requirements in the COVID 19 era. Visitation to learning institutions has also been abolished by government to prevent the spread of COVID 19 in learning institutions.

Students will be required to buy their own masks, hand sanitizers and soap. Foreign students will continue with e-learning and write their examinations online. Non graduating students will continue with e-learning until further notice. Surveying of cases in collaboration with other relevant institutions will be done to monitor compliance to COVID 19 guidelines.

The cautious approach to reopening will be reviewed to ensure students are not put in harm's way.

TEVET assessments and examinations for April will held in July and July and December assessments and examinations will be combined in December. The reopening applies to both private and public learning institutions in the country. The learning institutions will be granted certificates to reopen by relevant government institutions to ensure appropriate preventative measures are adhered to across the country.

The key guidelines the Minister outlined as colleges and universities reopen are:

- ◇ Temperature checks at entry gates
- ◇ Provision of hand washing facilities at all entrances of hostels, lecture rooms, labs, administration built building
- ◇ Restriction of students to 2 per room in hostels
- ◇ Restricting visitors on campus
- ◇ Closing social clubs and amenities
- ◇ Peer to peer monitoring of compliance to COVID -19 guidelines
- ◇ Regular inspections of hostels to ensure compliance
- ◇ Regular cleaning, disinfection of buildings and surrounding areas.

Examination sessions for TEVET have been reduced to two (2) this year following the

closure of training institutions on 20 March as a preventative measures against the spread of COVID 19. Examinations that were scheduled for April/May will be held from 27 July - 7 August. Examinations scheduled for July/August and November/December will be combined and held from 8 - 23 December.

## Re-sitting for arrears

Students with arrears they intended to re-sit for in April/May or July/August will re-sit for them during the July/August and November/December examinations respectively. The time tabling for November/December examination will give students an opportunity to sit for both their arrears and the principle/terminal examinations. The examination session for November/December will be longer to accommodate re-sitting for arrears and sitting for terminal examinations.

Students with carryover subjects should register for both re-sitting and terminal examinations for the combined sessions (July/August and November/December) to be sat for in November/December examinations.

Time tables will be posted on the website and shared on Facebook and Twitter next week after revising them. Students are urged to prepare sit for both their arrears and terminal examinations as they reopen.

## World Youth Skills Day: skills for resilient youths in COVID-19 era, beyond

By TEVET Newswriter

Skills development is a primary means of enabling the youth to smoothly transition into the world of work. Skills development for the youth is prominent in the Seventh National Development Plan (7NDP). The 7NDP devotes significant attention to the role of TEVET in imparting quality skills for the youth for employability, actualisation of decent work and entrepreneurship, gender disparity elimination and access to skills and education by the vulnerable.

The strategic role of the youth in socio-economic development has been recognised by the United Nations General Assembly by

dedicating 15<sup>th</sup> July as World Youth Skills Day (WYSD). The WYSD celebration is aimed at exploring strategies to development a skilled youth workforce for employment, decent work/entrepreneurship, and to highlight the crucial role of skilled youth in addressing current and future global challenges. The 2020 WYSD in Zambia was under the theme "Skills Keep the Economy Moving," which emphasised the importance of skills during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The theme supported the international theme "Skills for a Resilient Youth". The 2020 World Youth Skills Day took place in a challenging context of COVID-19. It was held at a time when the pandemic and lockdown measures have led to the worldwide closure of TEVET institutions, threatening the continuity of skills development. Physical delivery of services became challenging, which stimulated re-engineering of processes to develop electronic systems to support learning.

Minister of Higher Education Dr. Brian Mushimba who launched the World Youth Skills Day, said the day provided a unique opportunity for dialogue between young people, skills development institutions, the private sector, policy makers and development partners. Dr. Mushimba said Zambia was mindful of the ever-increasing significance of skills as the world is embarking on a transition towards a sustainable model of development. "This is the reason why Government in the 7NDP recognises the need for improved education and skills development as instrumental in developing the youth and creating societies that are better able to respond to social and economic development challenges they face."

This year, COVID-19 pandemic has resulted into lockdown measures, leading to economic recession, disruption of education and closure of higher education institutions and businesses at national and global levels. This has threatened continuity of skills development, including all forms of work-based learning, such as apprenticeships and internships. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) estimated that nearly 70% of the world's learners were affected by school closures caused by coronavirus across various education levels by early May 2020.

The economic recession that has resulted from the COVID-19 crisis is causing a massive rise in unemployment and underemployment, as more than one in six (1 in every 6)

young people have stopped working since the onset of COVID-19 according to the International Labor Organisation (ILO) estimates. The socio-economic impact this state of affairs could have a long-lasting impact on incomes and livelihoods.

Without leaving anyone behind, the Government is taking practical steps to ensure that the youth are provided with an enabling environment to confront the challenges of COVID 19. Imparting relevant skills on the youth is one of the steps to foster their resilience. It is hence crucial for Government and all stakeholders to ensure the continuity of skills development, especially through distance and blended learning to guarantee the safety of staff in the education and training workforce and provide continuity to all learners including apprentices and interns and those wishing to up skill and re-skill.

One of the priority areas for the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Technical Skills Development Strategy for 2018 to 2027 is a regional approach to developing and improving technical and vocational training by addressing issues to do with quality assurance, curriculum review/development, assessments and certification, qualifications frameworks development and implementation, and developing skills for the Green economy. Member States have collaborated to develop and coordinate their efforts in the above areas. Zambia as a member state of SADC is committed to ensuring that the technical skills development system in the country expands and provides the requisite skills despite the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The TEVET sector seeks to implement fast-track skills training programmes to support quick post COVID-19 economic recovery. Government is supporting innovative digital technologies that support skills and entrepreneurship development despite the challenges that the coronavirus pandemic has presented. These programmes are being pursued within the context of the 7NDP and the Vision 2030.

The World Youth Skills Day was commemorated with a realisation that "Skills Keep the Economy Moving" despite disruptions caused by coronavirus. Water continues running, testing of COVID-19 goes on, power generating systems supplies power to medical facilities and homes, personal protective equipment for frontline staff are produced and delivered as the skilled workforce keep systems functional as others stay home amid lockdowns.

Without appropriate skills, the economy would shrink and competitors from the region and outside the region would have an advantage over the Zambian youths. Government is ensuring that relevant skills that address local, regional, and international needs are imparted on to youths to make them competitive today and tomorrow.

The World Bank has identified low skills as one of factors that perpetuate poverty and inequality. Skills development is thus key in reducing unemployment, raise incomes and improve standards of living. TEVET provides inclusion skills training to help young people to develop competences that make economic sense to their wellbeing in their communities.

Some of the training pathways to increase access to skills training are national, regional and international skills competitions. Different training pathways in delivering are aimed at ensuring inclusiveness for people with different learning abilities so that no one is left behind. The 7NDP prioritises national skills competitions to increase skills

acquisition opportunities and improve the quality of skills training for the youth. Skills competitions are organised through the WorldSkills International. Zambia was admitted the WorldSkills International in 2014.

The celebration of World Skills Youth Day brings different stakeholders to highlight areas that lead to a robust TEVET to make Zambia



Dr. Mushimba during the launch of the World Youth Skills Day on the Zam-

competitive. The day promotes skills for the youths through awareness and action to foster acquisition of skills for the youth to enhance their ability to make informed choices regarding life and changing labour market.

## TEVETA signs training contracts with Zambia Correctional Services to training inmates

By TEVET Newswriter

TEVETA and the Zambia Correctional Services (ZCS) have signed 15 training contracts for K1 million to train 400 inmates as part of reformation for smooth integration into society after serving their sentences. The financing is under the TEVET Fund managed by TEVETA. The fund goes towards the acquisition of different skills by inmates at Milima, Lusaka Central, Kansenshi and Mukobeko as well as two correctional facilities under Mukobeko (Mpima and Kalonga).

TEVETA Director General Cleophas Takaiza said correction facilities were key training centres to provide relevant skills for inmates, which they could utilise after their incarceration. The skills were meant to enhance the contribution of the inmates in society after their reintegration into their communities.

"Hands-on skills help inmates to find footing by making products such as metal ware, welding, fish farming and general agriculture to earn income to sustain themselves and their families. Even when no one employs the former inmates, with capital support, they can start enterprises to provide goods and services to earn income. Self-employment will give them freedom to manage their wellbeing without prejudice from anyone," Mr. Takaiza elaborated.

Seven (7) programmes that were funded were fishing farming, electri-

cal engineering, carpentry, fashion and design, metal fabrication, general agriculture (horticulture, animal husbandry and poultry management) and automotive mechanics.

Zambia Correctional Services Senior Superintendent, Katongo Chishimba Incharge at Mukobeko Skills Training Centre said the ZCS focus was reformation of inmates through equipping them with relevant skills they will need for reintegration into society. "Reformation is based on two perspectives of counseling and empowering inmates with hands-on and entrepreneurship training. Correctional facilities have identified skills training as one of the most important components of reforming inmates and facilitate their smooth transition into society beyond imprisonment."

Sup. Chishimba said some of the inmates who served their sentences have been incorporated in the making of face masks to supply to schools and other institutions to prevent the spread of COVID-19. "In this COVID-19 era, the Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU) gave ZCS a contract to make face masks and some of the former inmates were involved in the production of the masks to meet the quantities DMMU needed."

TEVETA has registered some correctional facilities as training centres and accredited them as examination centres. This was done to ensure inmates have access to hands-on and entrepreneurship skills, which will give them base of livelihood when they were re-integrated into society after completion of their jail terms.

There are currently eight (8) correctional facilities registered as training centres. These are Katombora Reformatory, Livingstone, Lusaka Central, Mukobeko, Kansenshi, Kanfinsa, Chipata Central, and Milima in Kasama. They offer construction, manufacturing, agriculture (animal, poultry and crop husbandry), engineering, fashion design and tourism related programmes.

The correctional training centres implement national curriculum and administer national assessments and examinations like any other TEVET institution. The policy is to harness talent and re-engineer the inmates into valuable resource to the country utilising their skills to earn income and contribute to national development.

The inmates are awarded national qualifications they can use to seek employment in sectors where their past brushes with the law matters less as long as they have the relevant skills required. Some of them have ventured into entrepreneurship to put their skills into practice.

## Narrowing welding skills gaps through employee up-skilling

By TEVET Newswriter

Welding has attracted low learners in the past in TEVET. Training institutions offering the programme recorded dismal numbers of learners mostly due to safety fears and preference to white collar jobs among young people. The low supply of skilled welders in the country has resulted into welding skills insecurity and importation of skilled welders to meet the skills gaps in the industry, especially in the mining sector where welders are highly sought.

Welding is one of the skills that promote self-employment. Individuals with welding skills can easily set enterprises to sustain their wellbeing. They can also easily get employment in the industry due to low numbers of skilled welders in the country. Northern Technical College employment tracer shows that people with welding skills were taken up by the mines in no time.

To narrow the skills gap in welding, enhance employment opportunities and reduce import of skilled labour, financing of welders was provided under the TEVET Fund through Employer-Based Training. The financing was meant to meet inadequate welding skills demanded by the labour market in the country. Employer-Based Training is one of the financing areas under the Skills Development Fund (SDF).

The objectives of the SDF is to ensure availability of relevant skills, increase productivity and competitiveness across sectors, create linkages between training institutions and industry through training collaborations and enhance curriculum development and review. It also promotes inclusive and increased access to skills training across sectors of the economy.

Welding has ancient roots with evidence of welded objects dating back to the Middle

Ages. But while the concepts of welding remain the same, new tools, chemicals, uses, and safety standards reflect modern technology and techniques. Modern welding techniques have evolved to offer better performance partly inspired by contemporary inspection techniques that have improved to the point that minute defects and inclusions can now be easily discovered.

Currently, there is efficient personal protection equipment for welders' safety in welding fraternity. In the past, the personal protection equipment was at times inadequate to assure occupational safety in workplaces. However, the modern types of personal protection equipment pacify occupational safety worries when welding.

There are several types of welding for different materials and purposes. Among the types of welding are arc, plastic, and gas (tungsten inert gas and metal inert gas) welding. With most motor vehicle bodies made from synthetic fibre, plastic welding has emerged to work on damaged parts of motor vehicle bodies. The new welding skills using gas and plastic materials required up-skilling of metal fabricators in specialist welding.

To meet the demand for skilled welders, tailor-made employer-based training for different companies was financed using proceeds from the Skills Development Fund. The training was meant to sharpen skills and knowledge of employees in line with changing production processes and technological advancements. The training was financed from proceeds of the Skills Development Fund (SDF).

Last year, more than K19.3million was invested in enhancing employability and productivity of employees in funded companies. Some of the employees were from water sector, mining, hydro generation, automobile, and manufacturing sectors.

The companies trained their employees in different areas based on skills gaps they identified. After identifying the skills gaps, the companies identified TEVET institutions to up-skill their employees to enhance their skills and competences. The companies include Bell Equipment Zambia, ZESCO Ltd, Zambia Sugar, Lubambe Copper Mine, African Mechanics and Superlift, and Epiroc Zambia Ltd. Others were Nkana Water and Sewerage Company, Chambishi Copper Smelter and Konkola Copper Mines.

The employees for these companies were upskilled and re-skilled at Northern Technical College, Industrial Training Centre, Kitwe Trades, ZESCO Training Centre and Kafue Gorge Regional Training Centre. Different skill areas were covered in the training. The skill areas were based on each company's human resource development plan and skills gaps identified in the employees.

Employer-Based Training financing pillar is one of the mechanisms to improve efficiency and productivity in workplaces. The financing promotes national development objectives of quality skills for anyone who aspires to acquire a skill. The major challenge to equip citizens with appropriate skills for self and formal employment was inadequate resources such as financial, human and training materials. Thus, the establishment of the Skills Development Fund is to facilitate increased access to quality, affordable and relevant skills development support to the TEVET sector.

The TEVET sector is one of the important sectors to national, which could support economic growth and poverty alleviation; facilitate the transition of young people to decent work and adulthood; improve the productivity of existing workers and allow for the reinsertion of the unemployed into work. It is also key in the development green skills to help meet sustainable development goals and promote social inclusion.

## Closing skills gaps in energy sector through employee up-skilling

### By TEVET Newswriter

The provision of reliable energy is one of the main drivers of social and economic development. Reliable energy supply results into better living conditions and stimulates enterprise development, wealth and job creation across sector depend on the energy sector to remain productive and competitive.

Skills gaps hinder the achievement of developmental objectives utilising reliable energy supply. As technology changes in energy generation, distribution and maintenance of energy infrastructure, up-skilling the workforce is cardinal to ensure they consistently have appropriate skills required in the sector.

Proceeds from the Skills Development Fund were used to up-skill employees in the energy sector to meet the demand for workforce with appropriate and modern skills. Employer-based training is one of the financing pillars that address skills gaps emerging in the workforce across sectors of the economy either due to technological advancements or changes in production systems.

Kafue Gorge Regional Training Centre (KGRTC) and Zesco Training Centre were anchor training institutions that partnered with different companies to up-skill their employees for efficient energy management to be achieved. Director at KGRTC, Engineer Kennedy Siame argued that "any industry depends on energy to produce anything. Skills in the energy sector are pivotal for us to run sectors efficiently and delivered effected for the sectors to remain competitive and productive." Up-skilling was for companies in energy generation, distribution and use. These are companies in the water sector, manufacturing and energy sector. Some of the companies are not energy generators but users who need workforce with relevant skills in mainte-

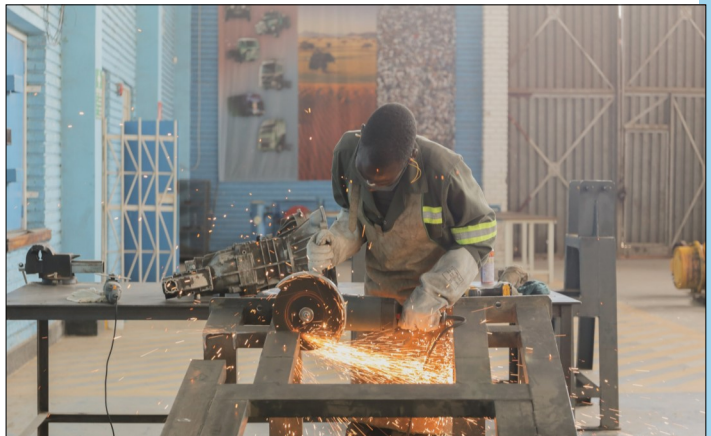
nance of power supply and distribution equipment.

Having adequate and appropriately skilled persons gives the country comparative advantage in attract investment, generate and supply energy in an effective manner across sectors of the economy. The up-skilling programmes cut across hydro and alternative energy generation to include solar and other sources of energy used by companies to ensure efficient energy supply to their production units.

The up-skilling areas were decided by the companies based on identified skills gaps in their employees. With technology changing at faster rate in the energy production processes, up-skilling the staff was critical to ensure the companies have the right skilled persons to ensure maintenance, switching and scheduling of substations were done appropriately to elongate lifespan of equipment in the energy sector. The training included soft/essential skills to ensure employees had a combination of technical and people management skills to ensure workplace harmony.

The energy sector is constantly evolving as technology changes. Technological changes require new approaches and equipment in power generation and distribution. As a result, some skills become absolute when new equipment for energy generation and its distribution systems are introduced. It is thus important that skills of staff are upgraded for them to match new challenges in managing new transformers, switch gear systems and protection systems.

There is need to develop adequate skilled workforce among the local people in the generation, distribution and maintenance of equipment in the energy sector to minimise import of labour. Failure to up-skill the workforce often results into stop-gap measures of bringing experts from abroad. The practical nature of up-skilling programmes gives the staff relevant skillsets required by the industry to remain competitive and productive. The soft skills help the staff in planning repairs of equipment, costing of materials for maintenance and repair



Reliable energy is key to productivity in the economy.

works, scheduling and people management to minimise labour disputes.

The up-skilling programmes are short and tailored to meet the needs of the companies. The companies define the valuable skills the staff needs to be up-skilled for them to prudently distribute energy and maintain the equipment used for the distribution of energy across production sectors of the companies. Employer-based training model

is tailored to the address skills gaps in employees.

The skilled workforce in the energy sector has spiral effects over to other sectors that need energy for their production. The availability of human capital helps meet national development aspirations. In addition, infrastructure in the energy chain is capital intensive and requires appropriately skilled persons for proper maintenance of the energy equipment to achieve energy efficiency.

The up-skilling in the energy sector included companies in the water sector, manufacturing, mining and companies in other sectors. The companies used substantial amounts of energy and the efficient management equipment that distribute energy is significant for productivity to be realised and sustained. The up-skilling programme seeks to ensure employees have apt skills, enhanced knowledge of the energy generation and efficient utilisation.

A reliable energy sector is one of the pillars of the economy that the training programmes seek to enhance to meet sectoral developmental aspirations. The up-skilling programme also builds important collaborations in the development of right skills for the industry. It also provides technical exposure to both trainers and learners especially that some training takes place at the workplaces where trainers are exposed to state-of-the-art equipment, production systems and technologies to improve the quality of training. The partnerships between training institutions and industry are vital in curriculum reviews to realign it to industry needs and structure assessments in a manner that ensures learners exit the learning system with right competences for smooth transition into industry.

## Aspiring for skills excellence: Euphrasia Mulenga – the World Skills Representative for Africa

By TEVET Newswriter

Skills excellence in Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training (TEVET) is central to the employability, competitiveness, and productivity of the youth across sectors of the economy. Zambia is striving to provide young people with quality skills that relevant to the industry either for

those looking for salaried work or self-employment through entrepreneurial undertakings.

Many approaches have been utilised to achieve skills excellence in the country and globally including skills competitions to showcase the benefits of vocational education in relation to the world of work.

Skills competitions help students to develop and sharpen key employability skills such as effective teamwork, communication problem-solving and time-management. Learners also develop confidence and networking skills, which are useful in their future careers. Importantly, the skill extension opportunities that competitions provide help students to develop high-level technical skills through completing additional and stretching activities.

The environment at skills competitions promotes the opportunity for young people to enhance their competences, skills, and exposure to increase their employment prospects. Through fostering the youth's experiences and skills, young people gain confidence by demonstrating their ability to meet industry standards.

The skills competitions are organised by the WorldSkills International. It is the largest vocational education and skills excellence event held every two years to showcase the importance of professional education and provides a forum for the leaders in the industry to share best practices. Former participants at the skills competition apply for the skills ambassadorship role on a competitive basis.

Euphrasia Mulenga who participated at the skills competition in 2017 gained skills, knowledge and competences that earned her the role of skills ambassador for the World Skills Championship. She represents for Africa at the global platform to contribute to events and conferences focused on advancing the future of skills for the young people. The skills ambassadors are drawn from different continents geared towards addressing skills shortages, mismatches and enhancing income generating opportunities for the youth.

The main thematic areas of skills ambassadors' work are on career development, international cooperation and development in education and skills training, research and development (R&D) and excellence in education and training. Other thematic areas are

advocacy for improved skills profiles, employability and entrepreneurship potentials especially of youth.

Euphrasia studied Aircraft Maintenance Engineering at Zambia Air Services Training Institute (ZASTI). She joined WorldSkills Zambia, a member of World Skills International. After successfully competing in various local competitions in Aircraft Maintenance, Euphrasia travelled to represent Zambia at an international competition in Abu-Dhabi in 2017. She was one of the only two female competitors in aircraft maintenance at the international stage. She was also the only competitor from Africa in the aircraft maintenance.

She became WorldSkills Champions Trust for the African Continent in 2019. Euphrasia has represented continent in different education and training platforms globally. The opportunity has helped her to effectively hone her skills, network and share obstacles and opportunities to be utilised to equip the youth and women with quality skills that make them competitive to the world of work.

Euphrasia's developed interest in hands-on skills as she observed her father doing repair works. "Every time my Dad would be fixing something, servicing his car, or doing anything mechanical, that is where I loved to be and would be helping out in every way possible. From that moment I knew I wanted to fix something. I researched and discovered not many women pursued Aircraft Maintenance Engineering for its challenging reasons. I choose to be one of the Odd One Out and actually fix something."

The skills competition challenged and encouraged her to remain resilient in the aviation industry, especially aircraft maintenance, which is mainly dominated by male engineers. Despite my home country not having a national airline, her interactions with people in my field at the competition challenged her to dream bigger, sharpen my skills and continue seeking opportunities in my career as a licensed Aircraft Maintenance Engineer.

Euphrasia urges young people to acquire hands-on skills that enhanced their opportunities in the world. "Skills become part of us and no one can take that away. It begins with taking up a skill that one is passionate about. I found it within me to strive hard to find a place in the aviation industry due to my passion for my field despite the challenges. Passion combined with an innovative mind leads to skills excellence and this makes one stand



Euphrasia during the skills competition in Aircraft Maintenance in Abu Dhabi

out in their skills be in self/ government/ private company employed.”

There are many opportunities ahead of Euphrasia as an aircraft maintenance engineer and skills ambassador. She joins the few women in Zambia who have taken up the challenge of pursuing careers in aviation. We Congratulate Euphrasia on her achievements, a proud aircraft maintenance engineer and true champion for Zambia and Africa!

## TEVET Fund strategic interventions to address targets of the 7NDP

By TEVET Newswriter

Zambia has set a goal to create jobs and diversify the economy as articulated in the Seventh National Development Plan (7NDP) and Vision 2030. Key sectors to increased and diversified job creation include agriculture, extractive industry, construction, and transport industries. A skilled workforce is one of the main factors in wealth creation aspirations. In the 7NDP, TEVET has identified as a critical sector to develop relevant skills to actualise individual and national development aspirations.

The development of relevant skills requires increased access to education and training opportunities in the country. Financing education and training enhances the development of skilled workforce in the country. In the TEVET sector, the TEVET Fund is pivotal in enhancing the sector's outputs in skills development. The TEVET Fund plays an important role in developing a high quality, sustainable, demand-driven, and equitable TEVET system. Disbursement of the fund is through four pillars namely pre-employment, in-service, investment/development and MSME/informal sector training.

The fund establishes financing platforms that purchase training services on a competitive basis for skills development for both informal and formal sectors. The informal sector financing is through up-skilling in the MSME/informal sector and employer-based training for the formal sector. Financing of the MSME/informal sector players increases their participation in socio-economic development, enhancing their employability and competitiveness. Employer-

based training financing seeks to upgrade employees' skills and imparting on them new skills as technologies and production system change.

The fund provides for continuous improvements in quality, relevance and accessing to training in relation to the Seventh National Development Plan (7NDP). The 7NDP recognises TEVET as a strategic component that ensures enhanced human capacity for sustainable national development, increased skilled persons' employability, productivity, and efficiency. The TEVET Fund provides a mechanism that encourages training institutions in TEVET to respond to skills demands from the labour market in the formal and informal sectors.

The fund has five intervention areas in relation to national development goals articulated in the 7NDP. These are increasing access to skills training, increase private sector participation in skills development, enhance income opportunities for marginalised groups, entrepreneurship skills development and enhancing the role of science, technology, and innovation in the economy. The intervention to increase access to skills training is through the provision of financing for MSMEs and informal sector up-skilling and re-skilling to improve productivity. The training is provided through training providers in the TEVET sector across the country.

Up-skilling MSMEs and informal sector players is key in line with changes in production systems, technology, and ways of conducting trade and commerce. The business environment has become more uncertain and at the same time more flexible by enabling up-skilling within workplaces to bring production positivity than in the past. Training systems that allow staff to learn as they work and have their learning documented for assessment and credit generation are possible in the current world of work. The TEVET sector is tap-

ping into these skills training opportunities to up-skill MSMEs to augment their economic role in different sectors.

The up-skilling of MSMEs provides them new skills to remain competitive. Up-skilling is one of the strategic interventions to ensure enterprises remained buoyant, especially that the business world has become very fluid, technology is becoming more sophisticated and people's roles and type of skills for production have change. MSMEs thus need to be open to new skills and learning opportunities for them to remain competitive and strengthen their role in the economy.

The major objectives of up-skilling MSMEs and informal sector players are to increase their productivity and enhance their technical skills for improved product quality and service delivery. It is also meant to improve their management and social skills for partnerships and business linkages with others to booster their ability to produce or meet market requirements. Broadening their knowledge base and potential to grow their enterprises and learning how to efficiently use material and time management are the other objectives of the up-skilling.

Private sector participation in skills development is through coordination of the provision of skills that match industry/ labour market needs. The private sector participates in curriculum development and reviews to ensure relevant skills are developed in TEVET sector. The private sector/industry also participates in MSMEs and formal sector skills development to improve linkages between training sector and labour market. The TEVET Fund provides financing for training MSMEs and employees in the workplaces.

The TEVET Fund also intervenes in enhancing income opportunities for poor and marginalized groups, and enhance access to quality, equitable and inclusive education. People in remote areas have been disenfranchised because of being excluded from education. The fund provides inclusive skills acquisition by the youth and other age groups lacking financial capacity and training opportunities by financing skills training across the country and sectors. The finances are accessed through training providers, which has led to reduction in skills inequality in the economy. Inclusive access to education and training is one of the goals of the 7NDP.



# How Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) creates seamless progression

## TEVET Newswriter

The previous article on the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) highlighted on the policy and criteria of recognising informal prior learning to improve employability, mobility, lifelong learning, social inclusion and self-esteem of persons applying for their experiential, job-on-training and work-based-earned skills and competences to be certified after a standard assessment. Focus was more on RPL in technical education, vocational and entrepreneurship training (TEVET). This article looks at how RPL smoothens progression from one level of qualification to another.

Qualifications awarding bodies are required to have systematic procedure for implementing RPL protect the integrity of qualifications. The standard approach should be verifiable to ensure that prior learning recognition is not done based on emotional status of the assessor on that particular day. Institutions undertaking assessments of individuals who apply for determination of the extent to which their previous learning is equivalent to the learning outcomes of the components of the destination qualification are required to create committees of experts to do the assessments.

Individuals learn and pursue different routes to attain qualifications. Some start from the bottom like at certificate level up to doctorate level. This is common in Zambia. For many reasons, the majority Zambians for years have crowded below undergraduate level of qualification. But when they progressed to bachelor's degree, universities rarely or completely did not recognise learning achievements they came with from college or other learning environments. Universities mostly enrolled them into bachelor's degree programmes based on their school certificate obtained at Grade 12. No assessments of their prior learning above Grade 12 was done for possible exemptions. Only in some programmes did exemptions based on RPL applied. People got frustrated and their prior learning felt like valueless to their progression. Some quit and pursued different programmes in despair.

RPL seeks to make progression from one level to another easier. For instance, someone with a technician qualification can get exemptions to progress into technologist level. RPL entails that when technologists get

into university, they can progress easily without starting from first year as though they have never been to college. RPL provides for them to get exemptions either in particular subjects or a whole stage (or first year) of study. RPL emphasizes three key aspects. The first refers to the processes related to identifying informal learning (like learning achievements earned by mechanics along Panganani road); the collection and presentation of evidence of learning; the assessment and validation of the evidence; and issuance of a recognised qualification if claims are valid.

The second aspect concerns the independence of the learning method. Some learning are more "show me how to do it" without the learner learning how to do it themselves. Giving chance to demonstrate their skills, knowledge or competences, they will not do it. The RPL policy stipulates that well established criteria and mechanisms for recognising prior learning with a view to determining whether a candidate meets all or part of the requirements for the attainment of a qualification should be put in place by awarding bodies of qualifications and universities. Awarding bodies are institutions like the Examinations of Zambia, TEVETA, General Nursing Council, and others.

The third aspect RPL emphasises on specifies that only the learning that conforms to standards of a qualification (full or part) is to be certified by an authorised body. An authorised body is a competent qualifications awarding body according to the national qualifications framework on a country. The Zambia Qualifications Framework defines competent awarding bodies whose qualifications are placed on the framework. The RPL policy requires that methods used to assess student's learning and achievement by awarding bodies of qualifications or quality assurance authorities' decision-making process used to assess a claim for the recognition of prior learning and the outcomes of this process are transparent, consistent, repeatable and demonstrably rigorous and fair.

The aim for recognising prior learning in Zambia is to allow learners who have not been able to attend formal education but have managed to gain significant experience in a particular field to be given an

opportunity to earn a qualification or to upgrade an existing qualification, which can be at any level of education and training. This policy recognises equivalences rather than a precise match between experience and academic learning. Assessment of learning from experience, consideration of relevant competences and equivalences contained in the qualification requires a set of agreed criteria, policies and procedures.

A key question that should be asked about the design and implementation of RPL is: Why do this? Laying a solid foundation and identifying target groups, stakeholders and partners in designing and implementing a national RPL system is important. Other questions – the **how** (is it going to be done)? **Who** (qualifies to do it and qualifies to have their prior learning recognised)? **When** (does one qualify to have their prior learning recognised)? These are also important questions that should be asked when planning and executing an RPL system.

### Quality assurance in RPL

Quality assurance is fundamental to learning in general and RPL in particular because trust and transparency in qualifications are a requisite for the comparability and recognition of qualifications nationally and internationally. To ensure the validity and trustworthiness of qualifications, the RPL process needs to be underpinned by reliable and standardised quality assurance mechanisms. Quality assurance focusses on providing confidence that required standards have been fulfilled in recognising prior learning. It involves planning, implementation, learning evaluation, reporting, and quality improvement to ensure that RPL validation of learning outcomes meet the quality requirements expected by stakeholders.

There are various methods to measure prior learning using evidence of performance. The good practice is guided by: i) policies and procedures that are explicit and fair; and applied consistently, ii) adopted policies and procedures to help an institution to demonstrate that it properly exercises its responsibility for the standards of all awards granted in its name, iii) availability of clear information to learners and staff, iv) clearly defined roles and responsibilities of learners v) learners wishing to access RPL should be competent to undertake their responsibilities, and vi) regularly reviewed and monitored policies and procedures on RPL.

### Quality Assurance: standards, principles and procedures

Recognising prior learning achievements requires principles, standards and procedures to follow for stakeholders to be confident of the RPL system. Firstly, the decision regarding RPL should be transparent and demonstrably rigorous and fair. This entails that awarding and quality assurance bodies should assure that the learning derived from experience or prior certificated study is equivalent to that of the learning that might otherwise have been achieved by following the awarding or quality assurance body's accredited programme of study.

In reaching a decision about the equivalence of learning, the awarding and quality assurance body should consider a combination of skills and learning outcomes, the level and relevance prior acquired knowledge and understanding of the subject to be evidenced by a learner. The awarding and quality assurance bodies should describe and explain its decision and stipulated limits (if any) on the volume of learning that can be achieved through the recognition process. Limits may be applied to the smallest or a maximum amount of learning that can be accredited or claimed. For example, a module of learning outcomes or number of credits made may be applied for recognition.

The other principle is about prior experiential or certificated learning that has been accredited by the awarding or quality assurance body, which should be clearly identified on student transcripts. The awarding or quality assurance body should identify how the recognition of prior learning may be stated on student transcripts of learning. Information on learner, teaching and instructional staff, examiners, assessors and stakeholder on policies, procedures and practices for RPL should be accessible and presented in a clear manner in accordance with the Zambia Qualifications Framework Level Descriptors or learning outcomes appropriate to a qualification at that particular level.

To ensure the credibility and consistency of RPL certification, specific quality assurance mechanisms should be put in place by bodies responsible for undertaking RPL.

The most frequently used systems are; i) establishing common standards, ii) ensuring the availability of competent RPL practition-

ers, iii) collaborating with employers' and workers' organisations and other relevant stakeholders, and iv) developing assessment tools and methodologies. Others include v) accrediting RPL centres, vi) moderating assessments, vii) monitoring and evaluation frameworks, viii) independent auditing of the entire RPL process and ix) disseminating results.

There are many benefits derivable from RPL to learners and industry. Firstly, a learner should be able to establish the value of his or her competences through an assessment of prior learning for the purpose of i) personal development by gaining credits towards a qualification, ii) progression into a learning programme, iii) seeking acceptance to higher studies, iv) promotion or a salary enhancement in an organisation, v) changing a career path, and vi) necessity to abide to a new regulation to protect employment. Industry benefits from RPL through i) fast tracking workers through the skills recognition process, ii) reduction in costs of training (less time and money is spent on upgrading qualifications by workers), iii) reduction in down time while workers are in training, and iv) efficient identification of skills gaps allowing for more focused training.

The overall goal of the RPL policy is to stipulate well established criteria and mechanisms for recognising prior learning with a view to determining whether a candidate meets all or part of the requirements for the attainment of a qualification. Learning is a tool for society in the social, economic and political development. Therefore, every individual should be given an opportunity to access it. One gains knowledge, skills, values and positive attitudes that enable them to function in any given environment.

## **Financing skills training for improved economic participation, productivity in rural areas**

**By TEVET Newswriter**

Job creation and economic diversification are among the national goals for the country. Having a skilled workforce is one of the main factors in achieving national aspirations in job and wealth creation. Government identified the TEVET sector as a critical sector in the development of relevant skills to actualise national development goals espoused in the

seventh national development plan (7NDP). A financing mechanism was established in the TEVET sector to enhance the development of the appropriate skilled workforce for different sectors of the economy.

The TEVET Fund is the financing mechanism in the sector. The fund increases education and training opportunities in the country. It plays an important role in developing quality, sustainable, demand-driven, and equitable TEVET system. The fund establishes financing platforms for skills development in the formal and informal sectors. One of the financing areas is towards the MSME/informal sector. Financing of the MSME/Informal sector players enhances their participation in socio-economic development, enriching their employability and competitiveness.

Technical, vocational education and entrepreneurship training can improve the livability of rural areas; an undertaking Ukwimi Trades Training Institute seeks to meet. Skills are central to improving employability and livelihood opportunities, reducing poverty, enhancing productivity and promoting environmentally sustainable development. Globally, protracted youth unemployment, underemployment and poverty have partly been attributed to young people's limited access to skills development opportunities.

General education fails to equip rural youth with the competences needed to seize available productive and decent livelihood opportunities. This also limits young people's capacities to pursue viable livelihood alternatives, including starting their own rural enterprises. Coupled with lack of access to skills development opportunities due to TEVET facilities being too far away, it becomes prohibitively challenging to develop peri-urban and rural areas.

Ukwimi Trades provides both easy access to skills training in Petauke and seek financing through financing opportunities in the TEVET sector for young people to acquire skills. The institution has been accessing TEVET Fund over the years and results of its efforts are visible across Petauke. Beneficiaries of the funded training have ventured into different economic activities to earn income and create employment for others. Among the beneficiaries are Beatrice Mwale, Vainala Phiri and Mercy Sakala. The trio has ventured into agriculture after acquiring appropriate competences in general agriculture.

Beatrice Mwale had interest in fish farming. She used to sell fish she ordered from Chanda border (border between Mozambique and Zambia). She wanted to be involved in aquaculture instead of just trading in fish. "I wanted to acquire skills in fish farming. Buying fish is expensive. I also needed to learn how construct fish ponds and rearing fish. I further needed capital to venture into the new waters – aquaculture." To raise capital, she rented fields for growing red onion. The red onion fetched highly in Kasumbalesa where she took it for sell.

She acquired a containerised truck and a ten tonner refrigerated truck. The containerised truck was mainly for carrying goods to Kasumbalesa and refrigerated truck for fresh fish deliveries to the market. Beatrice Mwale further acquired 10 hectares of land from Chief Kalindawalo to actualise her aquaculture dreams. She runs a laundry business alongside her farming businesses. The 10 hectares is situated on a perennial stream (has water throughout the year).

"Since I acquired

land, I now need funding to actualise my ideas. Agriculture gives me good money, but I need more capital to expand my business. I am working on beehives in the area where I am renting fields. Some of my ideas require sustainable energy; I am looking at a solar incubator for hatching chicks, borehole (in case the stream dries due to climatic factors) and gas cylinders for freezers.

She also ventured into horticulture to increase her benefits from agriculture sector. "I have tomato at different stages so that I supply without disruptions. For me to break-even, I require large quantities of tomato, onion, fish, vegetables and chickens. Horticulture earns good money. I operate under Bechioni Enterprises."

Vainala Phiri is another beneficiary of the funded skills training programmes. With her husband, they acquired 40 hectares of land in

Petauke. "My husband is a teacher. When he is breaking the choke, I am breaking the ground to earn bring something money on the table."

In the 2019/2020, she produced more than 300 bags of maize. She keeps pigs and goats at the farm. She sold some bags to acquire farming inputs for the following farming season. "I do not want to get stuck with farming inputs. I have to keep 170 bags of Maize for farming inputs. I also sold some of the pigs. I always keep a manageable number within the pens at the farm. Once I have capital, I will get into fish farming. There is good money in fish farming. Fish is depleted and the demand for it is becoming higher every year. It is a niche market to explore."

Mercy Chisi Sakala is the other beneficiary of the financed skills training. She benefited from the funded training in poultry management (broilers and layers), horticulture, agro-products supply and breeding German Shepard dogs for sell.

She started a sunflower out grower scheme of more than 900 women in rural Petauke. She aims to increase the number to 1, 500 women by end of 2021. "This is part of empowerment to fellow women who face problems in acquiring farming inputs and finding market for their products. I provide them with farming inputs and link them to the market for sunflower."

The training she acquired empowered her with hands-on and entrepreneurial skills, understanding and knowledge to start running a business. She ventured into rearing chickens after the training as she had acquired relevant skills and knowledge to run the business effectively. The training gave her competences to face the business world with a basket of apt attitude, attributes, and abilities to identify opportunities and actualise them.

Mrs. Sakala worked as a sale assistant before venturing into poultry management. But after the training, she started rearing chickens

in two of rooms in the house. The profit from the sales of chickens enabled her build chicken pens to rear more than 10, 000 chickens for meat and laying eggs. That gave her control of the market share for chicken meat and eggs in the district. Mainly, chickens and eggs in Petauke came from Lusaka. Keeping both broiler chickens and layers gave Mrs. Sakala ready market for chickens and eggs.

She later identified other opportunities in the agricultural sector to supply different agro-products. She secured shops in Petauke, Katete and Chipata for selling agro-products. Musika Zambia facilitated business linkages for her with companies that supply agro-products. The linkages were with SeedCo, Panner, Pioneer, Klein Karoo, Zamseed, Hybrid Chicks, and Pembe Feeds.

Mrs. Sakala was among the agro-dealers that were selected by Musika Zambia to participate under a project that promotes post-harvest technologies such as Purdue Improved Crop Storage (PICS) bags among smallholder farmers. Expanding into the agro-business earned her Government contract to provide farming inputs under the e-voucher system. The e-voucher system was designed to ease the process for farmers to access farming inputs across the country.

After she became an agent for companies supplying agro-products, Mrs. Sakala started educating farmers on available farming products, poultry farming and other agro-knowledge to rural farmers. Her 'extension services' became a marketing approach to secure orders for agro-products at her shops in Chipata, Petauke and Katete.

She later started running an out-grower scheme in sunflower growing with farmers in the province. She bought the sunflower from farmers for stock feed production. More than 100 farmers are part of the out-grower scheme. Mrs. Sakala uses the sunflower for feed formulation for her poultry and other livestock.

Petauke is typically a rural town with few training opportunities. Coupled with poverty, most youth fail to acquire relevant skills for them to be productive and participate in wealth creation in the economy. The TEVET Fund provides training opportunities for the out-of-school youth, which resonates with the 7NDP on inclusive access to skills and education and job creation.



Mrs. Sakala receiving stock feed at her agro outlet in Petauke