



SKILLS AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Submitted by

The Zambia Institute for Policy Analysis and Research

To

The Committee on Education, Science and Technology

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Introduction

This memorandum has been prepared in response to the request by the Committee on Education, Science and Technology to the Zambia Institute for Policy Analysis and Research (ZIPAR). The Committee has requested ZIPAR to comment on the following;

- i. Skills and Career Development in Primary and Secondary Schools

Background

The provision of skills and career development in Zambia is premised on the 2013 Zambia Education Curriculum Framework which introduced a two-tier learning system in secondary schools. The two-tier learning system offer learners two career pathways; Academic and Vocational. According to the framework, the academic pathway allows for learners passionate about academic subjects to pursue a career related to those subjects while the vocational pathway is meant to accommodate learners with ambitions and interests in technical and practical jobs.

Policy and Legislation Framework

The provision of skills and careers development in schools in Zambia is anchored by following pieces of policy and legislation;

1. **2013 Zambia Education Curriculum Framework** – The framework introduces a two-tier leaning system in school providing for the provision of either an academic or vocational path for learners. The academic path would provide learners with skills to attain higher level of education while the vocational skills would equip learners with skills to allow them to immediately contribute to the economic growth by participating in the priority sectors which include Agriculture, Tourism, Construction, Music and Sports.
2. **Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training (TEVET) Act of 1998 (2005 Amendment)**- The TEVET Acts provides for the establishment of Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training Authority (TEVETA), an authority responsible for the provision of technical education, vocational and entrepreneurship training. TEVETA is also responsible for setting the standards for minimum standards and qualifications for skills and trades acquired in TEVET institutions.

The mandate of TEVETA does not extend to learning institutions established under the Education Act such as primary and secondary schools. However, despite the limitation in the mandate of TEVETA, the institution is still responsible for certifying the skills acquired by learners in secondary schools under the vocational pathway.

Progress in the provision of skills and career development in schools

The 2013 Curriculum Framework aims to equip learners with practical skills throughout secondary education. Table 1 lists various programmes under the two pathways available to learners at various stages in secondary school.

Table 1: Programmes on offer under the two-tier Education System

Academic Pathway	Vocational Pathway
i. Business Studies (Entrepreneurship integrated)	i. Agriculture
ii. English Language	ii. Technology
iii. Computer Studies	iii. Performing and Creative Arts (PCA)
iv. Integrated Science	iv. Physical Education and Sports (PES)
v. Social Studies	v. Home Economics and Hospitality (HEH)
vi. Mathematics	
vii. Religious Education	
viii. Zambian Languages	

Source: 2013 Zambia Education Curriculum Framework

Following the onset of the 2013 Zambia Curriculum Framework, TEVETA embarked on a process of accrediting learners using trade test certificates. Initially, the certification was planned to be done at the three levels as follows;

- i. Level three (3) certification at grade nine (9);
- ii. Level two (2) certification at grade ten (10) and;
- iii. Level one (1) at grade eleven (11).¹

However, the Government's decision to abolish examination fees at Grade 9 in a bid to reduce the cost of education affected the implementation certifying the skills acquired by learners.² The scraping off of the examination fees implied that there would be no one to meet the cost of the trade tests used to certify skills. As a result, the trade testing has been limited to grade nine (9) level where it is done for free and the learners are given a level three trade certificate.³ However, this level of certification is not recognized in the ZQF as will be shown later in Table 3.

The certification of learners commenced in 2015 and by 2019 there were 424 schools countrywide participating in the assessments. As shown in Figure 1, the Copperbelt

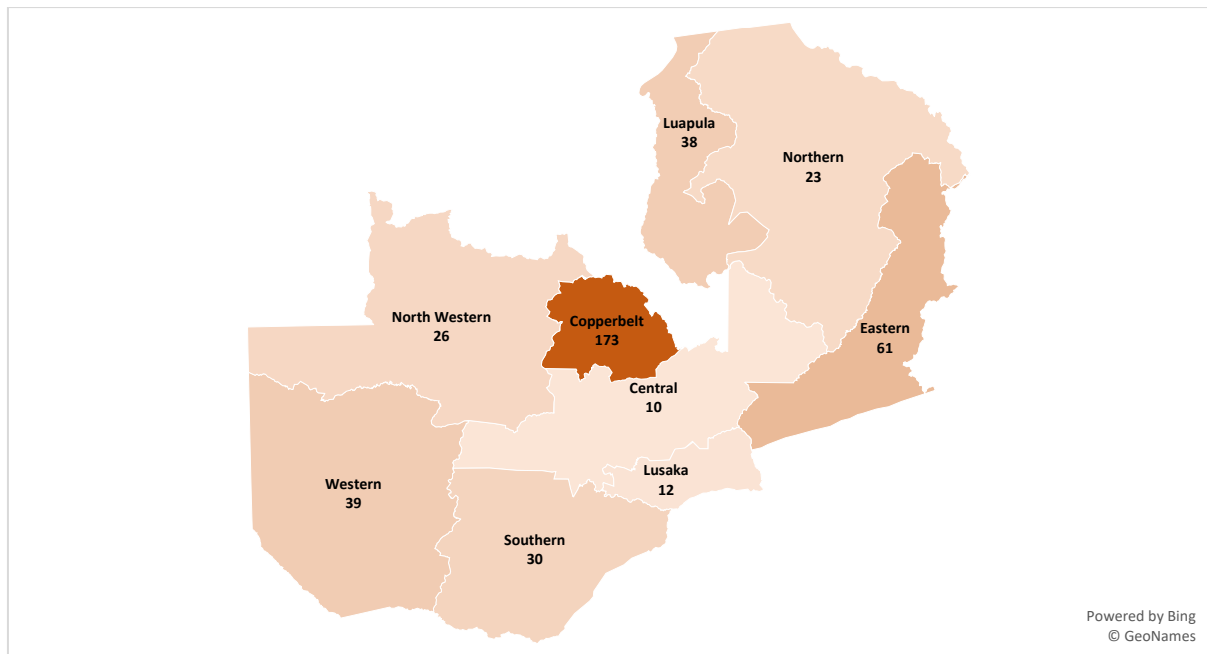
¹ Key informant interview with TEVETA

² <https://zambia.co.zm/news/local-news/2012/01/05/govt-abolishes-grade-9-examination-fees/>

³ Key informant interview with TEVETA

Province accounted for the largest share of schools participating in Vocational Education Training (VET) with 173 followed by Eastern Province. Central province accounts the least share of participating schools with 10 while Lusaka accounts for the second least share of schools with only 12.

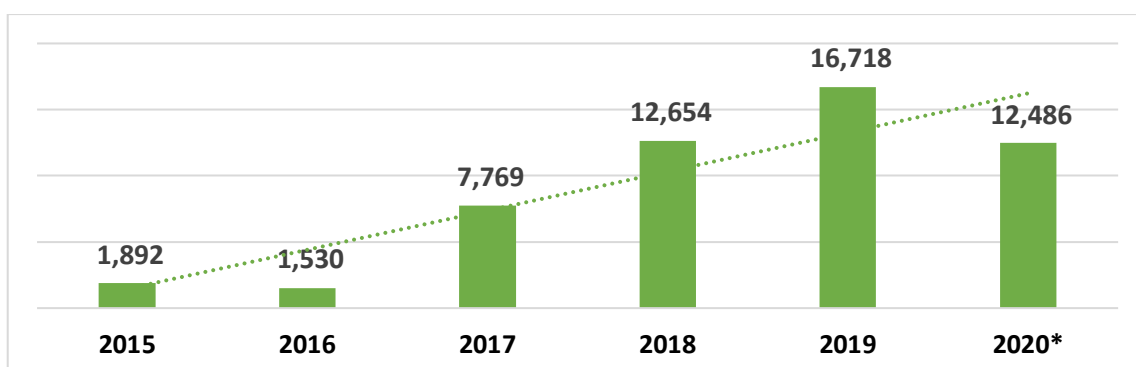
Figure 1: Number of Participating Schools by Province



Source: Author’s construction from the TEVET Learner’s Data Management System (LDMS) 2020

In the first year of implementation, over 1,800 learners received certification, by 2019 this number had increased to over 16,000. As shown in Figure 2, this represents an eightfold increase in the number of learners who received certification between 2015 and 2019.

Figure 2: Number of Learners who obtained certification



Source: Author’s construction from TEVETA Records 2016-2020 *The 2020 figure represents learners yet to be certified who enrolled for assessment as of September 2020.

In 2019, the 424 VET participating schools offered learners a wide range of programmes which ranged from piano playing to metal fabrication. These subjects fall under the five

programmes on offer under the vocational pathway. The full list of programmes available to learners in the 424 schools are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: List of Subject on offer to Learners in 2019

1.	Art & Design (Ornaments)
2.	Band Leadership
3.	Basic Coaching
4.	Bricklaying And Plastering Trade Test Level 3
5.	Carpentry And Joinery Trade Test Level 3
6.	Carpentry And Joinery Trade Test Level 3
7.	Computer Studies Trade Test Level 3
8.	Designing,Cutting And Tailoring Trade Test Level 3
9.	Electrical Trade Test Level 3
10.	Fabric Printing
11.	Fitness Training
12.	Food Production Trade Test Level 3
13.	General Agriculture Trade Test Level 3
14.	House Keeping Trade Test Level 3
15.	Metal Fabrication Trade Test Level 3
16.	Piano Playing
17.	Sign Writing
18.	Sports Event Management
19.	Paralegal Studies Trade Test Level 2

Challenges in the provision of skills and career development

The provision of skills and career development has faced a number of challenges in the last five years, these challenges are as follows:

1. ***Failure to fully implement skills certification to the minimum recognized level.*** Currently, learners are given a TEVET level 3 certification which is not recognized in the ZQF. Higher levels of certification have been hampered by the failure to finance the cost of testing for levels which are recognized by the ZQF and improve the employability of learners.
2. ***Misalignment of classifications between the TQF and the ZQF.*** The Zambia Qualifications Authority (ZAQA) and the development and implementation of a national qualifications framework referred to as the Zambia Qualifications Framework (ZQF). The key role of ZAQA is to register and accredit qualifications.

However, the skills acquired by learners in vocational pathway do not appear in the current ZQF. Furthermore, the classification used by TEVETA differs from the classifications used by ZAQA. For example, a level 3 Trade and Occupations

Certificate in the ZQF is equivalent to on the level 1 certificate as classified by TEVETA Qualifications Framework (TQF). Additionally, Trade Test Certificates Levels 2 and 3 are not included in the ZQF.

This mismatch affects the employability of learners as employers have challenges understanding the level of qualification.

Table 3: Structures of the ZQF vs TQF

Zambia Qualifications Framework (ZQF)		TEVETA Qualifications Framework (TQF)	
ZQF LEVEL	Trades and Occupations	Qualification / Skills Awards	TQF LEVEL
6	Diploma	Diploma	6
5	Level 5 Certificate	Advanced Certificate	5
4	Level 4 Certificate	Certificate	4
3	Level 3 Certificate	Trade Test Certificate Level 1	3
		Trade Test Certificate Level 2	2
		Trade Test Certificate Level 3	1
		Skills Awards	

Currently, TEVET which is responsible for certification of skills provided in schools uses its own qualification framework which is not aligned with the overall Zambia Qualification Framework. For example, a Level 1 certification on the TQF is equivalent to level 3 certificate on the ZQF. This leads to the confusion for employers who cannot rate the qualification and ultimately the skill set of the qualification holder.

3. ***Lack of accreditation for instructors of VET reduces the quality of skills provided.*** Currently, instructors in schools responsible for delivery VET are only accredited to the Teaching Council which offers accreditation based on academic qualifications. However, the delivery of VET requires instructors to possess both academic and vocational training. As a result, it cannot be ascertained whether instructors in schools are appropriately trained to deliver VET to learners. The lack of vocational accreditation implies that there is very little quality control on the part of the instructors.
4. ***Schools are poorly equipped to offer VET.*** Schools face many challenges in providing VET as they are poorly equipped to deliver high quality training to learners. In the provision skills it is evident that there is still reliance on hand tools, lack of machinery and even the absence of workshops which impact the quality of training. In 2018, 42% of secondary schools were not connected to the main grid implying that some subjects would be difficult to teach without electricity.⁴

⁴ 2018 Educational Statistical Bulletin. Ministry of General Education

Learners are also not fully equipped as it was evident from exams, for example, in the design and technology subjects some students opted to use free hand instead of drawing instruments.⁵

Recommendations

We recommend the following in order to enhance the provision of skills and career development in schools;

1. **Government must use the Skills Development Fund (SDF) to finance the trade tests for higher skills levels.** We urge the Government to allocate part of the SDF to finance the trade testing for certificate levels 1 and 2. This will allow the Government maintain the cost of education for learners and equip learners with a high level of certification.
2. **Government must adopt a two-tier accreditation system for teachers that recognises both vocational and academic qualifications.** We urge to develop a two-tier system for teachers to provide for the accreditation of vocational qualifications. This will ensure that teachers responsible for VET are appropriately trained and possess the correct qualifications to deliver high quality training to learners.
3. **Government is urged to develop a medium-term plan to equip schools with appropriate modern infrastructure and machinery necessary to deliver high quality training in schools.** Embarking on a two-tier learning system implies that schools must be equipped with modern infrastructure and machinery besides what is provided for teaching academic subjects. We are cognisant of current financial challenges and therefore urge the Government to develop a medium-term plan to equip schools while managing the process of economic recovery.
4. **Government must harmonize various policies and pieces of legislation for the efficient and effective delivery of skills training in schools.** The Government is urged to undertake a review of the ZQF to ensure that skills attained in schools are recognized within the framework. Secondly, Government must review and harmonise the mandates ZAQA and TEVET to ensure that the provision of skills in schools is adequately addressed.

⁵ 2016 Performance Review Report. Ministry of General Education