

have developed the National Labour Market Information Systems. Tanzania has three systems, one for mainland, the second one for Zanzibar and the third one for Government Employment Agency in the Office of the Prime Minister. For Uganda, the system is not dynamic. Burundi does not have any. In addition, a manpower survey for EAC region has never been conducted. Since the coming into force of the East African Common Market Protocol in 2010, there has been an attempt to get the Partner States conduct manpower surveys at the national level. Rwanda and Kenya conducted the surveys in 2011/12 and 2010/11 respectively. Unfortunately, Kenya only analyzed and released a basic report. Other Partner States are yet to conduct their manpower surveys.

There are also various forums held between employers and academia targeting skills development at national levels in Partner States. However, these forums are not structured and coordinated well to be able to impact positively and influence skills development. There is need for a proper coordination of these industry academia forums to ensure that discussions influence policy and initiatives on skills development. There are no industry academia forums on Skills development held at the EAC level.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The EAC needs to consider the following policy actions and initiatives recommended for effective skilling of the region.

Short Term Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Establish a Regional Tripartite plus Committee on skills development. This committee should have the employers, the workers, EAC inter-university council, the TVET providers, and the civil society. This committee will not only monitor skills development in EAC but also ensure linkages between the labour market and the education and training systems in the EAC. There should be a linkage between the committee and the national sectoral committees on skills development. This committee should also ensure that partner states' industrial policy, education and skills development are coordinated.

Recommendation 2: Establish EAC Universities-Business Forum (EAC-UBF). The Forum can be modeled along the EU UBF for regional level. At Partner state level, there should be established thematic forums specific to the identified needs at the Partner state level.

Recommendation 3: Develop a Regional program for multinationals and large EAC corporations to support

introduction of knowledge, experience, skills and technology to the domestic workforce. This program of developing skills is deemed necessary for the specifically targeted growth industrial sectors tied to the future industrial development of the EAC. This should also cover the emerging sectors such as the oil and gas, among others.

Medium Term Recommendations

Recommendation 4: Develop a Regional framework of classifying the EAC skills, qualifications, competencies and Occupations. This will help standardization across the Partner States making it easy for mobility, recognition and matching of skills across the region. Once developed the framework should be popularized among the employers, business, training providers and the learners. This framework needs to cover all the sections including the TVET. This framework can draw inspiration from the EU ESCO, the EAC Qualifications framework for higher education and the national qualifications frameworks within the partner states.

Recommendation 5: Establish a Regional skills anticipation and assessment system based on the EU Skills Panorama and Singapore Skills map. This will help in identifying the skills needed in the EAC and guide how resources should be allocated at partner state level to facilitate development of the required skills.

Long Term Recommendations

Recommendation 6: Establish a regional skills development fund (EARSDF). Contributions to this fund should be collected from the skills development levy imposed on employers of foreign workers (employing workers outside EAC). Further to that, development partners and large employers operating across the EAC region should also contribute to this fund. The fund should be utilized by employers' organizations to run programs to train those people already in the workforce, those preparing to join the workforce, those re-entering the work force, on soft and employability skills needed to bridge the gap between their technical competences and practical work. This fund should also support the activities of the regional tripartite plus committee on skills development and the EAC-UBF.

Recommendation 7: Develop a regional skills online open platform. This can be modeled in line with the SADC ODL model and the EU Credit systems.

EAST AFRICAN EMPLOYERS ORGANIZATION (EAEO)



POSITION PAPER

ON

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY (EAC)

APRIL 2017

INTRODUCTION

This is a position of the East African Employers Organization (EAEO) on Skills development in the East African Community (EAC). It is an evidence based position paper which has been developed based on a study that was conducted this year (2017) in five partner states of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda.

The East African Community is a regional organization of 6 Partner States: the Republics of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda established the Community by the treaty signed on 30 November 1999 and entered into force on 7 July 2000. It has its headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania. The EAC is home of about 170 million citizens, of which 22% is urban population. It has a land area of 1.82 million square kilometers and a combined Gross Domestic Product of US\$ 146 billion (EAC Statistics for 2016).

On education, the EAC net enrolment rate stands at about 91% and 32% for primary and secondary education respectively. The literacy rate stands at about 69% and the expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP stood at 4.20% for the year 2012/13. On employment, over 80% of employment is in the informal sector and the unemployment level stands at 2.0% in Burundi, 2.0% in Rwanda, 9.4% in Uganda, 10.3% in Tanzania and 12.7% in Kenya.

Skills development policies at EAC level include Article 5 of the Treaty that allows the Partner States to undertake concerted measures to foster co-operation in education and training within the Community. This is through the harmonization of curricula, examination, certification and accreditation of education and training institutions in the Partner States through the joint action of their relevant national bodies charged with the preparation of such curricula.

There have been various initiatives both at Partner States level and EAC level to classify skills, competencies, qualifications and occupations. This effort has been through development of Qualification frameworks either at sectoral level or at National level. The five EAC-Partner States, namely Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda profess to have National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs). However on the ground, there exist fragmented frameworks that their implementation is not proven to have had a greater positive impact on the education and training systems, employability of graduates, and performance of the business and employment sectors. When the frameworks are not properly harmonized and coordination improved, their implementation becomes a challenge to the Partner States. For instance, although Rwanda and Tanzania have advanced a lot in the NQF systems, a 2014 study by EAC on NQF found out that there is considerable evidence of difficulties associated with implementing NQF because of too many ambitions, lack of legal framework, weak awareness and consensus building and lack of ownership by the education and employment sectors. As a result, the intended objectives of improving employability and communication between education and training systems and labour markets have not been realized.

The main objective of the establishment of the EAC is the prosperity of the people in the regions. The EAC integration is a four stage model that seeks to attain a Customs Union, a Common Market, Monetary Union and Political Federation. The Common Market Protocol requires the partner states to allow free movement of EAC labour across the partner states. For this freedom to be realized, it requires that the skills in EAC are adequate, relevant and competent enough to take on the current and future employment and entrepreneurial opportunities in EAC. Article 10 (8) of the East African Common Market Protocol requires the Partner States to, within the framework of a joint program, encourage the exchange of young workers amongst the Partner States. This provision can be used to support development of skills among young workers in EAC.

Another challenge on facing Qualification frameworks is awareness. The 2014 Situation Composite EAC report on NQF found out that only 13.8% of the businesses and employers in the EAC region are aware of quality assurance practices and qualifications frameworks in the higher education system, and 6.8% have heard that the government was working on one. The employers and businesses in EAC are, therefore incapable of demonstrating how qualifications would add value to their current operations. However they are aware that qualifications should be able to facilitate alignment of learning in universities to the labour market.

CONCERNS OF THE EAST AFRICAN EMPLOYERS ORGANIZATION (EAE0)

There is general consensus that there is a skills gap within the East African Community. The gap is composed of two important elements: “inadequate skills” in certain professions and “mismatch of skills” in others. This leads to high costs of employment as employers are forced not only to pay a higher premium for the scarce skills, but even import those skills from outside the region. This is unacceptable when many of the people in the region remain unemployed. In addition, employers have had to spend a colossal sum of money to retrain graduates they hire to be able to successfully perform the duties they are hired for. It has been noted by various researches that in most cases the graduates lack the competencies and soft skills that are needed to enable them smoothly transit from school to labour market. This phenomenon has not only led to high business costs, but also low productivity in the workforce

EAE0 acknowledges the heavy investment in education and training being made by Partner States’ governments, private entities and individuals. However for the efforts being made to produce the desired results, a change in approach on education and training in EAC is required.

ISSUES HINDERING SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN THE EAC

Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in EAC

At the onset, the Education systems focused more on ensuring the citizens have access to education. However the need to ensure that the citizens get the right skills has become a priority to the region. Partner states are implementing various reforms that are aimed at improving the quality of their education and training systems. Key among the reforms is strengthening of the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in the partner states. TVET has now become an important part of skills development in the majority of the partner states.

The partner states have elevated the TVET from the system of failures as it was previously viewed, to a well respected system that citizens who are interested in advancing their skills in technical areas can attend. The TVET institutions are from the crafts institutes and village centers of Excellence to Universities. The challenge that remains in fully elevating TVET are three fold: building capacity of TVET institutions; changing the negative attitude citizens have on TVET; and making employers insist on hiring TVET graduates on jobs where their skills are needed.

Skills Development Coordination

Skills development is not coordinated at the regional level but rather at National level. Each partner state undertakes both policy and administrative initiatives in development of the skills of her citizens with little or no regard to the initiatives of the other partner states. What has been done is an attempt to push for harmonization of the East African Education Systems and Training Curricula and development of a qualification framework.

Currently, the EAC Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) is spearheading reforms in higher education and training. The challenge with this is lack of employer’s involvement in decision making at IUCEA. Another challenge is that it focuses only on higher education with more emphasis on university education. The other levels of education and training do not get proper coordination.

The challenge with developing skills in the region without a proper regional coordination is unnecessary duplication of efforts and initiatives that lead to wastage of resources. For example in the Oil and Gas sector, if each partner state that has oil and gas reserves and builds an academy to train for the sector, then most likely the capacity of these institutions will be underutilized. Proper regional coordination is also needed to ensure that there is mutual recognition of qualifications from other partner states across the region. Currently recognition of qualifications is left at the discretion of the partner states.

Nature of Skills Development

The common feature among all the partner states is that skills development is supply driven. The emphasis on education and training has been more on enabling access and very limited on its relevance to the needs of the business community in EAC.

Skills anticipation and skills assessment at the national and EAC level

Skills development require that the system to anticipate and asses skills be put in place. This is the only way a nation will be able to develop skills that are relevant to the employers and business in the economy at any time. Skills anticipation strategies include presence of functional labour market and information system (LMIS), periodic conduct of manpower surveys, and structured Industry academia forums on Skills. These strategies are lacking or limited both at EAC level and in Partner States.

At EAC level, there is no regional LMIS collecting and disseminating information on skill needs and ensuring that this information is used effectively to develop the right skills. At Partner States level, Rwanda, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania,