

# REPORT ON THE BRITISH COUNCIL SEMINAR – UNITED KINGDOM, 4 – 7 MARCH 2019



3/8/2019

## British Council Seminar: The Future of TVET: Disruptions and Development

To provide feedback and reflections on the seminar hosted by the British Council in the United Kingdom from 4 March to 7 March 2019. The theme of the seminar was the future of TVET: disruptions and development.

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## BRITISH COUNCIL SEMINAR: THE FUTURE OF TVET: DISRUPTIONS AND DEVELOPMENT

### Background

1. The Minister approved three (3) departmental officials to attend the British Council seminar and study tour held in the United Kingdom (UK).
2. The key objective of the seminar and study tour of the UK TVET sector was to provide an understanding of how their TVET system has had to change provision as the world changes. Some of these changes included technological and industrial change, increased labour mobility and the accelerated impact of climate change. The seminar was aimed at showing that while these changes provided significant challenges, they also provided opportunities. The seminar focussed on how we could best shape systems and institutions to respond and enable the future of TVET.
3. It was anticipated that the South African delegation would identify policy learnings and innovation that could be useful in further developing and supporting TVET provision and its responsiveness to the changing skills demanded by the South African labour market and in support of its socio-economic policy imperatives.

### Delegation

The South African delegation of six (6) consisted of the following departmental officials:

Name	Designation
Ms Patricia Garza	DHET Project Manager: Professional Development of TVET Campus Managers
Ms Melissa Erra	DHET Director: SETA Support and Learnerships
Mr Pule Mashele	Principal: Letaba TVET College

and the following officials from merSETA and QCTO

Name	Designation
Ms Cheryl Pretorius	COO: merSETA
Mr Naphtaly Mokgotsane	Senior Manager: QA and Partnerships
Ms Heidi Peters	Deputy Director: QCTO

The seminar was attended by six (6) countries namely Nigeria, Nepal, India, South Arica, Uzbekstan and United Kingdom. This provided for rich discussion and insights on how other countries were responding and shaping their TVET provision to the changing educational and skills needs in their respective countries.

## Seminar Overview and Objectives

### Primary Objective of the seminar:

Participants would leave with an improved knowledge and understanding of effective practices in delivering quality TVET provision that meets the needs of the future and insights into policy setting and implementation models.

### Scope of Seminar:

- How can systems best be governed to ensure responsiveness and autonomy in a changing world?
- How can we provide flexible routes to work and adaptable skills for a changing labour market?
- What does the learning space of the future look like, both physically and digitally?
- What emphasis do we need to place on life-long learning and how can this best be combined with initial TVET offers?
- How do we develop partnerships to shape this new offer?

## Programme

The programme included both presentations and a study tour that featured:

- Visits to Employers;
- Visits to independent Training Providers;
- Expert Speakers;

- Interactive workshops; and
- A networking dinner.

### Workshop and Study Tours

The Seminar comprised of two elements: seminars and study tours. The seminar commenced with presentations from the British Education Department, the Association of Colleges, an Employer Association, a College principal, a representative of Skills Council as well as presentations from three research and support partner institutions namely International Labour Organisation, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and Centre for Social Justice. The study tours included visits to colleges and employers. Further details will now be provided on each component.

The seminar commenced with each country presenting the strategic position and policy frameworks for Skills Development and TVET Colleges in their respective countries. This provided the group with a snapshot of each country's challenges, priorities and opportunities in relation to skills development and TVET provisioning. It provided the basis of clearly outlining each country's expected learning focus.

It was clearly identified by the South African delegation that strengthening of TVET Colleges to provide quality and responsive educational provision was a key policy imperative. The strengthening of TVET provision must be coupled with an empirical research to identify skills in demand and skills supply considering the change drivers at local, national and global level. The quality of provision must be supported by effective quality assurance regimes, programme structure and flexible pathways to work. Interestingly, partnerships between employers and colleges arose in each country report back to plenary.

### Policy Lessons Learnt

During the seminar and study tour a number of policy learnings were identified.

SA and UK TVET and Skills systems are fairly similar at policy, system and institutional level. It was clear that similar challenges have impacted on the responsiveness of the UK education and training system as

is the case in SA, and these include high unemployment rates especially the youth cohort, shortage of skilled workers, changing needs of the labour markets and sluggish economic growth.

As the UK government sought to respond to these challenges, it firstly has undertaken a review of the education and skills development systems in the UK, referred to as the Sainsbury Report. The report outlines a number of recommendations to strengthen the education and training system of the UK. These recommendations include a review of legislative, programme streamlining (T-Levels) and strengthening TVET to be responsive to labour market demands. In the SA context, the processes to develop the White Paper for Post School Education and Training has provided SA with the policy and system vision for the PSET system based on Ministerial Task Team reports and recommendations. Similar strengthening of TVET provisioning, understanding labour market demands, partnerships and collaboration between colleges and employers as well as qualification and programme review and streamlining have been outlined.

The presentations indicated that the implementation management of the Sainsbury Report is well considered and is owned by all the stakeholders especially the colleges and employers. Change management and piloting of the new T-level at the post school level is a well-considered and strategically managed. Central to the pilot was strong partnerships between the educational institutions i.e. the FE colleges and local employers. The seminar took place at Derby College. Employers with whom the college had strong partnerships were visited. This area has a long history of being industrialized. What was apparent was that the long history of the involvement of the employers in the college, was only possible through the sustained nurturing of the partnership with industry. The implementation and piloting of the T-levels could provide SA insights on how skills and TVET systems, programme review and partnerships are reformed and implemented. Central to the T-levels is the work place component of the qualification.

The range of presentations at the seminar, also showed that here are critical elements that enable and support skills development and TVET provisioning that is of quality and inclusive of the responsiveness required. These elements include effective governance, strong quality assurance regimes, accountability

frameworks and evaluations, research and empirical studies, partnerships and collaboration, funding regimes and international collaborations focussed on research. While in the South African context there are similar structural and institutional arrangements in terms of governance structures, the role of quality councils, accountability frameworks, funding regimes and international collaboration, there was much we could take from the UK experience.

On reflection of the presentations and discussions, it should be noted that the UK took its historical and current contexts into account in developing and reviewing their TVET and skills systems and in determining the country's policy priorities. Thus policy learning should be the focus and not policy borrowing. In other words SA system and programme reviews should be informed by its specific contexts to ensure the socio-economic challenges are responded to effectively and programmes are relevant to the skills needed in the SA labour market context as a priority.

Further, the governance structures follow a similar stakeholder model as SA however differ in that the college boards are appointed independently of government approval. Participation on the college governance structure is voluntary and selection is determined by the college based on expert knowledge and experience. However, the TVET boards subjected to rigorous inspection, regulation, accountability, evaluations and audits by the national education department's Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED). This is a model that SA may consider, while taking into account our specific context.

The relationships between the FE colleges and the skills councils in the UK also had lessons. The skills councils are both skills development funding agencies but also the quality assurer of a particular sector, thus employers participate through skills councils to identify the skills in demand. While in SA the QCTO and SETAs undertake these functions respectively. However, despite the relationships between skills councils and employers, the relationships and partnerships with colleges and employers are growing in strength and is prioritised in the UK, as the colleges see it as their core responsibility to engage with employers to refine programmes, build lecturer and resource capacity and to enable work place experience. Unfortunately, the representative from the UK Skills Council did not join the study tour. There

will be a need for further engagements to obtain a deeper understanding of the relations between UK Skills Councils and the colleges

The colleges and employers visited during the study tour had solid and long term planned arrangements. Both the college principal and the training director of one of Rolls Royce indicated that this underpinned the quality of the programme, both in terms of training at the college and within the employer environment. Long term partnerships enabled investment in equipment and training for both immediate and long term skills development. Lifelong learning was embedded as part of an individual's work and self-development. Both the National Plan for PSET and the National Skills Development Plan envisage skills development and educational institutional planning cycle taking place over a longer term. Evidence from the study tour was that partnerships are more sustainable with longer term planning.

## Conclusion and Recommendation

The delegation would like to thank the Minister for providing the team with the opportunity to attend the seminar and study tour. It is most relevant and critical for the scope of work of the department and related constituencies.

Considering the policy learnings and reflection, it is recommended that:

1. A partnership with the British Council be explored in the following areas:
  - a. Sharing of information especially in relation to the implementation of system reform, particularly the mechanisms and pilot findings of the T-levels being piloted by the UK
  - b. research partnerships reflecting on SA programme and qualification reviews,
  - c. global and national change drivers and areas of innovation; development and sharing of partnership modelling between employers, colleges and skills council.
  
2. Capacity building of TVET College Councils through the sharing UK of best practice

3. Explore the opportunity with the British Council to host a seminar in SA.

The delegation informally engaged with British Council Officials regarding the options to host the seminar in SA and South African PSET Community. These discussions to partner with the British Council will need to consider the following:

1. The objectives and scope of the seminar offerings;
2. The target audience and the volume;
3. Alignment of planning and budgeting with British Council to link with the timeframes to implementation;
4. Other funding sources – both locally and in partnership with ILO/other donor agency.