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Leveraging multistakeholder partnerships in technical, vocational education, and training

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ABSTRACT

The present study examines the argument of placing greater emphasis on partnerships between stakeholders and vocational training. The current challenges of unemployment are too dire to be left to one stakeholder or country to resolve, and therefore, multistakeholder partnerships become necessary to tackle these multifaceted problems of practice across borders. The present study is necessary because there is need to illuminate the issues about partnerships for promoting innovation, industrial and infrastructural development through global and multistakeholder partnerships in technical and vocational education training. Evidence gathered from this assessment will inform the improvement of existing on-the-job training, enable institutions to scale-up successful models of partnerships and foster the development of vocational practices that are more adaptable to work ethic and the dynamic world of work.

Key words: vocational training, multistakeholder partnerships, multistakeholder, partnerships, vocationalization

INTRODUCTION

Vocational education has been more assumed than understood. The report card and reality check of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in African countries shows that TVET is underinvested and has over the years faced considerable challenges, with little enrolment rates, low quality, and relevance across most countries.[1] Subsequently, Bleakley *et al.*[2] argued that we need more scholarship to better understand and disentangle these complex legacies in global education and training. In addition, these researchers describe how "decolonized" perspectives in Africa have not gained sufficient traction and how inequitable power dynamics and neocolonialist assumptions continue to dominate technical, vocational, and global health education.

The quest of this study is to understand the strategies used by multistakeholder partnerships (MSPs) to prepare students for higher education, working life or associated challenges and to gain insight into the appropriateness of the multistakeholder approach. This allows us to examine the opportunities, challenges, triumphs, and trials of stakeholder engagements in TVET adaptation. The overall aim is to discuss the concept of MSPs, and to theorize MSPs as an important means to achieve public value educationally and economically. It is our view that MSPs can be an important governance mechanism to facilitate and strengthen public value for the promotion and implementation of sustainable development to improve the lives of people everywhere.[3] We use the term MSP as an overarching concept which highlights the idea that different groups can share a widespread problem or aspirations, while nonetheless having different pursuits.[4]

In MSPs, the governance mechanism brings different actors such as civil society, governments, international bodies, media, and academic or research institutions to act collectively for a common solution, be it at local, national, or international scale. These actors share

experiences, information, technologies, and financial resources working towards solving a societal problem. So, one of the key tenets of good governance for sustainable development is participation. Participation of citizens and business in government decision-making is the glue that holds together partners to pursue a common goal and the essence of the multistakeholder approach.[5]

At this stage, a review of literature and available documents reveal a curious picture: there are no clear coordinated strategies across stakeholders about preparing students for post-secondary education and career progression on the one hand, and there are insufficient welfare support services to students to promote the needed information on the other.[6] While changes have taken place in the rest of the world towards TVET, particularly regarding content, African governments fall short to provide functional and quality TVET despite the euphoria for TVET. In addition, over the years, the reality for individuals has been that general education has the promise of better career mobility and higher wages than vocational streams.[7]

But TVET has acquired the tag of being "useless" education and only useful for those who lack the skills or have less aspiration for better paying jobs.[8] Linked to this phenomenon is that universities have often not recognized vocational qualifications achieved from the Senior Secondary School (SSS). Akyeampong argues that one probable reason for the fact that public perceptions of TVET have not markedly changed is that there has been a tendency in the past for governments not to consult with stakeholders such as teachers, schools, and parents as to the nature and objectives of vocational secondary education reform.[9]

Yet to date, such compelling arguments against full acceptance of vocational education and training (VET) have not dissuaded African governments from promoting VET programs in public education systems. However, for TVET to achieve its aims of enabling learners to catch up with the ever-changing living standard in a fast-growing technological world and creating jobs for sustainable living, it must be strengthened through MSPs because governments cannot single-handedly shoulder this enormous task. It is with this understanding that this paper aims to examine the need for MSPs in TVET, strategic issues for TVET in Africa, MSP models for skill development and ways of revamping TVET through MSP. And that is the focus of this study.

There is need for TVET institutions to invest in partnerships with stakeholders who are going to elevate their level of appeal and interest to learners and potential employers.[10] The current challenges of unemployment are too dire to be left to one stakeholder or country to resolve, and therefore, MSPs become necessary to tackle these multifaceted problems of practice across borders. Partnerships are likely to function as a catalyst for boosting the level of performance both at individual and organizational levels.

The present study is necessary because there is need to illuminate the issues about partnerships for promoting innovation, industrial and infrastructural development through global and MSPs in TVET. What countries need most is an understanding of how to successfully enforce implementation of their public policy initiatives to make TVET effective through skill development towards reducing unemployment. This requires revamping TVET through MSPs, making a huge investment, showing repeated commitment to the cause of TVET and for TVET to gain proper public image. The assumption is that TVET MSPs should be encouraged to address the rising rate unemployment and poverty among youths in Africa. Besides, there should be collaboration between TVET institutions and the workplace or industry during curriculum development to address the employability skills demanded by industries. In sum, understanding the dynamics of revamping TVET through MSP is valuable to governments and civil partners: it helps them to recognize how multistakeholder partners can develop more collaborative and responsive ways of managing partnerships.

Another reason this study is important is that the transitioning of youth from school to work is such a complex issue and is a controversial topic for a long time.[7] It is complex because the vocationalization issue is associated with the boundary crossing of multifaceted issues between secondary school, college and working life choices, inadequate employability skills needed in the job market, and in Africa, postcolonial legacies seem to cloud over the issue.

The present study examines the argument of placing greater emphasis on partnerships between stakeholders and vocational training. It employs a case study approach based on one focused country, Tanzania. This study reviews partnerships between TVET institutions and industry. Assessing how the competencies acquired by graduates align with labor market demands is also critical in this study. This case employs unobtrusive research techniques. Auriacombe et al.[11] explains that this technique "is a type of analytical reasoning that starts with studying a range of specific individual cases, concepts, or instances in order to extrapolate patterns from data gathered through public documents to form a conceptual category".

In using this approach, Auriacombe suggested that such "unobtrusive" methods can provide insightful data

source in any research project. Evidence gathered from this assessment will inform the improvement of existing on-the-job training, enable institutions to scale-up successful models of partnerships and foster the development of vocational practices that are more adaptable to work ethic and the dynamic world of work.[12] First, following this introduction is a brief statement of the context of MSPs. Second, a review of the current theories that support partnerships will follow. Third, this study presents the current understanding of MSPs to examine the need for MSPs in TVET, strategic issues for TVET in Africa, MSP models for skill development and ways of revamping TVET through MSP. Finally, the paper concludes with a discussion of current practices of partnerships, and the prospects of future studies in MSPs in TVET.

CONTEXT OF MSPS IN TVET

Global partnerships, multistakeholder initiatives and global public policy networks are the future of international cooperation, moving beyond traditional nation-state multilateralism or community-government partnerships. MSPs are collaborative forms of governance.[13] In this form of governance, stakeholders can make decisions and act for the collective good, be it at local, national, or international scale.[4] However, leveraging MSPs in TVET is attractive and promising but a complex enterprise.[14,15]

Social sciences classify partnerships according to the specific societal level in which the partnership operates. Examples include private-private partnerships, public private-partnerships, public-public partnerships, business-science partnerships, public-science partnerships, and public social partnerships.[4] We extend this classification further in terms of the sector, for example, health partnerships, water partnerships, energy partnerships. In other contexts, partnerships have a specific organizational structure or type, for instance a network, an alliance, a commission, or a concession.[16] Partnerships may be very formal and others informal, or specific in their purpose, while others may be almost accidental.[3] In the case of TVTEs in Tanzania, partnerships are formal and often specific in purpose.

LEVERAGING MSPS IN TVTE

Leveraging MSPs has historically grown from multiple sources and human needs. In the past two decades, MSP has become an essential element that affects policy decision-making and action on global development issues.[17] MSP is about participatory decision making, where all involved actors take ownership of all stages of decision-making. Among academics, policy makers, and practitioners, MSP is known as a form of organizational structure that includes private and public sectors of governance.[18]

As a governance structure, partnerships incorporate business sectors and civil society organizations that come together to bring a common solution to social issues that are complicated in nature and overly complex.[13,19] This form of partnership governance structure can contribute to systemic change in society.[20] When we talk about social, economic, and political change, we are talking about changing the underlying mode of institutions or traditions. By "institutions" we mean the "rules" of the game, the formal and informal norms and values that shape how people think and behave. Deeply held values, established traditions, and formal frameworks can be real barriers to change, but they can also be supportive or helpful to achieve agreed upon aims.[21] MSPs need to help stakeholders look critically at the institutions-their own and those of others-that affect their work. In fact, there are ways to use MSPs to influence institutions to move in a desirable direction-but it takes time.

The goal of MSPs is to pursue a shared vision and maintain different perspectives by all the participating stakeholders for solving critical policy challenges and identifying the agenda for public policy to support lasting solutions in complex problems, such as youth unemployment.[3] For this reason, stakeholders come together to leverage resources, their strengths, and power to transform TVET. Stakeholder participation and MSPs form key cornerstones and provide direction to the emerging paradigms of integrated approach to solve long-term unemployment.[22]

Creating a better world takes partnerships. But leveraging MSPs in TVET is attractive and promising but complex and a daunting task. Of course, poorly designed or and poorly facilitated collaborative projects are common. Nonetheless, people involved in a partnership do not always know what is needed to make cooperation work well.[4] Increasingly, governments, businesses, civil society, and scientists recognize the need to work together to tackle the challenges of the modern world and bring about change for the common good. Many of the issues we confront today and the opportunities we would like to exploit, collectively, are embedded in a network of changing social, economic, political, and educational or environmental factors. And no one institution has the knowledge or resources to cover all these areas of need. Thus, if a stakeholder wants to tackle real world issues and achieve real change, it will be necessary to work together with a range of different people and engage organizations with diverse backgrounds. This is what we mean by leveraging a "multistakeholder partnership". While the different actors may share a widespread problem or aspirations,

they may also have different stakes or interests.

When scholars talk about leveraging partnerships, they imply a practice that tends to enable a firm to gain a large exposure to competitive advantage or financial market while only tying up a small amount of its capital. For this paper, MSPs can be one or more stakeholders involved in joint activities or supporting programs with common interest or goals to achieve desired aims. The partners may decide to work together as co-actors, facilitators, sponsors, or clients and service providers. The members of the partnership could be private operators, public or state institutions, non-governmental or civil societies, or a blend of all of these in the form of bilateral and multilateral arrangements.[23]

Some of the salient MSP issues concerning TVTE that continue to dominate the debate until recently have to do with (1) what to do with unemployed youth; (2) how to train the youth to facilitate job entry that incorporates vocational specific skills over lifetime; (3) how to prepare youth for job markets; and (4) how to harness resources to guarantee integration of knowledge (content) skills, and quality. It is with this understanding that the present analysis aims to examine the need for MSPs in TVET, strategic issues for TVET in Africa, MSP models for skill development, and ways of revamping TVET through MSP.

Practices of MSPs in Sub-Sahara Africa

MSPs and involvement in TVET are not new concepts in Africa by any means. Vocationalization in TVET was in various forms since the 1960s, including the village polytechnics of Kenya,[24] Brigades of Botswana,[25] and education for self-reliance of Tanzania.[26] The underlying assumption of these early practices of vocationalization was that if governments adopted TVET in the educational system at all levels, it would reduce the constraint of societal development and growth of the developing countries.[27] However, the notion of MSPs in social development is a more recent practice[28] and was not yet a trend or extensively adopted in the initial stages of vocationalization in African countries.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, there have been a wide variety of experiments in the education of the youth to vocationalism. Witness, for example the Kenya Village Polytechnics and National Youth Service,[24,29] the Lidep Project in Tanzania,[30] the Kabusha Farm School in Zambia,[31] and Animation Rurale in Senegal.[32] Less known, but at least equally impressive are the brigades of Botswana.[25] Since the first brigade opened in 1965, affiliated with Swaneng Hill School, the movement expanded to include forty-three brigades and brigade-type projects that trained over nine hundred young people. Because of these successes of collaboration

between stakeholders, Botswana continues to serve as example of a successful vocationalization approach to TVTE.[7]

Over the years, various stakeholders have discussed vocational training. This second-tier education was viewed as a solution to a variety of youth at various stages of their careers, both in the formal education system and private institutions. At the time of independence struggles in Africa, governments faced the serious question of youth unemployment.[33–35] Until recently, African governments are faced with youth unemployment that has emerged as a complex issue and, in some quarters, it is explosive. This is true when we note for example, that Africa remains to be the most youthful continent in the world with approximately 20% of the global youth population. This number of the youth will increase to 42% by the end of 2030. Currently, however, many youths are unemployed.[14,36] Obviously, Africa could benefit from this demographic dividend by identifying strategies for investing in the massive youthful workforce. African governments adamantly believe that TVET specifically aimed at providing occupation-oriented training, is a way to go in a bid to reduce unemployment among the youth population.[37] And the current efforts to return to Competence-based Education in Tanzania addresses the desire to produce graduates who are ready for work.

To address the unemployment problem, African countries have introduced TVET to develop competencies in the relevant technical and vocational subjects for the world of work.[38] The courses offered under TVET provide training that can lead to skilled occupations, whereby learners are pursuing competence-based training to become skilled workers for meeting the specific requirements of occupations.[39] For example, in Tanzania, TVET is offered through Folk Development Colleges (FDCs) and Vocational Education Centers (VECs). Like many youth programs in both developing and developed countries, success stories like the Botswana Brigades are designed to offer economically useful training, but equally important and unlike most such programs, they are also intended to cover most of their own recurrent costs. Reports indicate that with remarkable success, the brigades have raised capital costs overseas but aside from the salaries of expatriate volunteer staff, all other recurrent costs are expected to be met by the productive labor of the trainees.[40] It is this combination of features, training, and financial self-sufficiency, which distinguishes the brigades from most other youth programs which have similar aims.

Multistakeholder partners in TVET

In Tanzania, the involvement of partners in TVET began with a national plan to coordinate the efforts and

practices of vocational education. This is coordinated by the Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training Ministry. Overall, the VET system in Tanzania focuses on providing skills to the labor force to enable the youth to enter, re-enter the job market; providing skills training and retraining with a view of getting and keeping decent employment and employability status.

The history of TVET in Tanzania dates to the 1940s when the "Apprenticeship Ordinance" was enacted to guide training in industry. The *Vocational Educational and Training Act. No. 1 of 1994* which established the Vocational Educational and Training Authority (VETA) as an autonomous agency of the government financed through a payroll levy, replaced the *Vocational Training Act* of 1974, and which earlier established the National Vocational Training Division (NVTD). VETA is under the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training and governed by the VET Board. It has the responsibilities of coordinating, regulating, financing, promoting, and providing VET in Tanzania.[41]

A close examination of the composition of the VETA Board reveals a curious MSPs that brings together a membership that includes (1) three members representing the Government, that is, two Permanent Secretaries of the Ministry of Labor and Employment and the Ministry of Industries and Trade; (2) three members representing non-governmental organizations (NGOs); (3) two members representing employers; (4) two members representing employees; (5) the VETA Chairman and the Director General, who is Secretary to the Board. VETA has established close collaboration with the following stakeholders to foster linkages with employers and the labor market, provide an avenue for improved employability of VETA graduates and quality training provision. The multilateral stakeholders include internal and external entities.

Internal stakeholders
(1) Mining companies in Tanzania (apprenticeship training at Moshi and Mwanza RVTSCs);

(2) Renewable Energy Authority (rural electrification);

(3) National Housing Corporation (training in hydra foam brick making);

(4) MORUWASA and MAZAVA FABRIC of Morogoro.

External stakeholders
(1) British Gas and Volunteer Service Oversees (enhancing employability of VETA graduates);

(2) Association of Canadian Community Colleges

(hospitality, agriculture, mining, and construction training);

(3) Hamburg Chamber of Commerce (apprenticeship training);

(4) Swiss Contact Group (agriculture training);

(5) Utalii College in Kenya (hospitality training).

VETA as potential partner of TVTE in Tanzania and beyond

TVET quality provision requires cooperation of partners in the improvement of training facilities to match the requirements in the labor market. This entails modernization of TVET workshops in their broad sense. The VETA authority is implementing the modernization project in phases depending on availability of funds. Currently, seven workshops are under the program in collaboration with partners. The completion of first phase of the modernization program has been reported, including Workshop for Tanga (Industrial Electricity), Kihonda (Agro mechanics and Truck driving), Mwanza (Heavy duty equipment mechanics and Industrial Electricity) and Moshi (Civil droughting). The VET delivery is divided into four approaches: (1) Institution based training: Long and short courses as well as tailor-made courses. (2) Direct apprenticeship training or work-based learning. (3) Integrated training for entrepreneurship promotion (INTEP) focusing on the informal sector. (4) Skills enhancement program (SEP) for employees in the industries to support or address skills gap in in-house training.

The effort to forge a working partnership between TVET institutions and other institutions of higher education like universities as well as external stakeholders such as British Gas or the Swiss Contact Group, has been determined to be beneficial. There are several determinants for establishing partnerships of such organizations which need to be recognized and emulated. They include (1) need to access industry skills and facilities, (2) ease of access to infrastructures, (3) need to enhance financial capacity, (4) need to enhance the research capability, (5) creating a platform for sharing the available resources, (6) adding value to the job opportunities of the human capital, and (7) increasing the capacity for credit transfer for the learners.[42] However, such endeavors can have undesired consequences for the relating parties.[43] One of the challenges is that TVET institutions and universities have diverse visions, missions and organization cultures which can create friction in the relationship.[44] On the contrary, partnerships may also result in more scholarship opportunities for the tutors and the learners as well as expansion of the existing programs in these

institutions.[7]

At this stage, we need to recognize that both internal and external stakeholders hold dear their unique operations of their companies and industries, including finances, internal dynamics and company secrets, challenges, or personnel conflicts and sometimes even their successes. Information about these areas of operation is not for public consumption until they are strictly scrutinized. Therefore, we should an illusion to expect information in these areas to be divulged in stakeholder partnerships.

A close examination of the challenges experienced by partners, both internally and externally, include cultural barriers (most visible in the communications, language of operations, meetings, and correspondence). This situation is most notable in the involvement of interactions between local and foreign or international partners. Both groups bring to the mix different understandings of the nature of the task, the expediency to manage time, sensitivity to keep timelines and deadlines, use of technology to manage distant operations or meetings (*e.g.*, the use of ZOOM) and messaging.

Regarding the collaboration by partners to augment the unemployment problem of the youth, we realize that education and training are not the only barrier. Many stakeholders are involved, including governments, the private and public sector, as well as the general tax-payer public. And each country is different because policies may differ. For example, Adelakun *et al.* estimated that about 50% of the learners in upper secondary school level are likely to enroll in TVET education.[45] For India, China, and Southeast Asia, about 35%-45% of the learners join TVET institutions, while in Africa the situation is dire since less than twenty percent of learners are willing to enroll in TVET institutions.[43] As of 2011, there were more than 100,000 students enrolled in over eight hundred centers in African countries, pursuing various courses such as agriculture, food processing, automotive repairing, and business administration.[46] Other courses included clothing and textiles, plumbing, carpentry, electrical, hospitality and tourism, laboratory technology, and auto-mechanics and printing.

In most of the sub-Saharan African countries, about two-thirds of all graduates in the labor market—95 million people—lack the basic skills that industries seek or the skills necessary for self-employment.[47] The current labor market requires graduates not only with high academic qualifications, but also, the so-called employability skills, like the ability to communicate, collaborate, mediate information, and solve problems with people worldwide.[48] These skills are missing in most of the graduates in sub-Saharan Africa, and partic-

ularly in Tanzania. For example Nkirina *et al.*[46] identified some of the major challenges facing the VETA in its effort to integrate entrepreneurship training to include (1) time too limited to cover the core subjects; (2) form IV leavers and standard VII trainees have different understanding levels; (3) financial/budgetary constraints; (4) few instructors with relevant skills; (5) lack of role models of successful former trainees who are practicing entrepreneurs; (6) course too theoretical, lacking the component of field studies; and (7) the course too boring compared with other mainstream courses.

But despite the progress made by various African governments to skill youth through TVET and ease unemployment, most youth remain unemployed.[46] A World Bank report claims that the unemployment rate among vocational training graduates worldwide was 86% in 2014.[49] Studies show that increased unemployment rates amongst vocational training and VETA graduates is due to the mismatch between the skills acquired in colleges and the skills required by the labor market.[50]

Despite good intentions and progress made to reduce unemployability, many of VETA graduates remain unemployed due to the inadequate employability skills to develop competencies in the relevant technical and vocational subjects for the world of work[38] and graduates lack the work ethics needed in the current job market.[6] Based on the challenges posed by the current post-secondary transition paradox, we wonder, where are the differing and counter voices and views to help create the building blocks and thus usher in a new understanding of what it is that educators are trying to accomplish by TVET. The persisting question being how stakeholders in the education sector perceive the importance of policies in integrating workplace learning and technical higher education. This is where MSPs can play a key role in TVTE.

TRENDS, THEORY, AND PRACTICE OF PARTNERSHIPS IN TVTE

This section discusses the rationale behind TVET practices of teaching and learning and the strategies stakeholders use aimed at *shifting the paradigm* and the need to involve industry and research in the preparation to transition the youth for work in the 21st-century. First, we ask what role or rationale has been or will MSPs play in vocational training. The following roles are common for MSPs: (1) MSPs can mobilize a wide range of private sector actors to deliver adaptation goods; (2) MSPs can overcome barriers to adaptation for Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in remote regions; (3) MSPs can expose Small to SMEs to new risks and vulnerabilities; (4) MSPs may help upscale SME

adaptation through more integrated approaches; (5) MSPs may need to rethink donor programming to enable ongoing monitoring.[51]

Present needs in today's complex and interconnected global world demand interest groups to come together and collaborate. That is, partnerships between interest groups, spanning the boundaries of business, government, civil society, and science. However, to bring about effective collaboration is no simple matter. It requires a deep understanding of what enables and what stops people from working together. It requires patience, time, and commitment from leaders. However, with the right mindset, and by using the practical process steps and tools known to help such groups, actors can unlock people's potential to cooperate and innovate for social, educational, and environmental good.

While practical facilitation methods and tools are essential, it is even more important to be able to design processes around the underlying dynamics of human systems, power relations, conflict, and teamwork. Partnership innovators have developed principles and theories that offer facilitators and stakeholders in partnerships a set of guidelines and conceptual models to help inspire creative and critical processes of change. There are ways for groups to work together to solve a large and complex problem or exploit a promising new opportunity. And people use different words to describe these types of partnerships and interactions and the processes involved, from coalitions, alliances, and platforms to participatory governance, stakeholder engagement, and interactive policymaking.[4,52] And this brings us to the discussion of theoretical models pertaining to partnership governance, stakeholder theory, and competence-based outcomes of educational interventions.

Theoretical trends
MSPs in education and development have a mutually beneficial relationships between two or more institutions, including businesses, industries, universities, NGOs, school systems, and service organizations.[53] Gray et al.[54] emphasize the importance of MSPs to help address complex problems of practice, such as TVET. Past research studies exploring solutions to the challenges involving unemployment, collaboration, and partnerships focus on the relationship between the district and one other party, but few studies explore the contribution stakeholder partnerships of universities, local government, private, or regional business and industry partners. Nonetheless, recent studies present inconsistent arguments, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa where policies have too often prescribed vocationalization as the panacea to addressing youth unemployment.

The scholarship of MSPs derives from the intellectual history of the public-private partnership (PPP) movement.[55] The provenance of PPPs is varied with major contributions from across the social sciences. As shown by Bovaird,[55] this variation has contributed to the richness of the understanding of MSPs but also it has made it difficult for critical comment to develop a constructive perspective from which to suggest options for their change or evaluate PPPs as well as MSPs. However, the potential of MSPs still reigns high.

Some of the social science theories that influence the thinking of partnership development include among other things: collaborative empowerment theory,[56] regime theory,[57] collaborative advantage theory,[58,59] welfare economics,[60] exchange theory,[61] transaction cost economics theory,[62] network theory,[63] stakeholder theory,[64] resource dependency theory,[65] historical institutional theory,[66] complex adaptive systems theory,[67] and evolutionary theory.[68,55] In addition, meta-theories that have also influenced the rationalization of partnership development include New Public Management (NPM) (from the 1980s), strategic management (collaborative advantage from the 1990s), public governance (from the 1990s) and postmodernist theories (from the 1990s).[45] Table 1 outlines the contributions of these theoretical perspectives to provide the rationale for collaboration.

To complement these theories, various scholars have contributed conceptual models. My understanding of the salient theoretical models relevant to this study include models of partnership governance, stakeholder theory, and competence-based outcomes of educational interventions:

(1) Muir and Mullins describe stakeholder partnerships as involving at least two organizations with a mutual interest working together, in an association characterized by some degree of trust, fairness and mutuality.[69]

(2) Pattberg and Widerberg argue that "partnerships are, in theory, networks of resource exchange, meaning that balancing powers and finding a working mix of resources, knowledge and capabilities is necessary to exploit synergies and enable fruitful division of labor".[70]

(3) According to Seitanidi,[71] "partnership is the dynamic constellation of entities across different sectors that require coordinated partnership governance to provide society with public goods".

(4) As a non-regulated form of association, partnerships allow different sectors and spheres in society to address complex social problems.[71] Theoretical framework expansion: A more robust theoretical underpinning could fortify the manuscript's analytical foundation.

Table 1: Intellectual history of the public-private partnership movement

Questions	Positive rationale	Opposing view	Pragmatist view
Why Collaboration?	To achieve a shared vision: collaborative theory regime theory collaborative advantage welfare economics resource maximization	To enhance or maintain position: resource dependency theory principal-agent theory public accounting theory conspiracy theories	To respond to new environments: complex adaptive systems theory evolutionary theory
What form of collaboration developed and why?	Multiple relationships: collaborative empowerment theory Power-sharing coalitions: regime theory Learning networks: network theory Knowledge and information sharing partnerships: resource-based view of strategy	Inter-organizational network: resource dependency theory Power capturing coalitions: urban growth coalition theory	Organizational, promotional, and systematic networks: evolutionary theory Public networks as meso-level governance instruments: policy network theories
Which factors affect collaboration?	Individual factors: collaborative empowerment theory Leadership: regime theory	Organizational factors (culture, bureaucracy, professionalization): resource dependency theory historical institutional theory	Institutional factors: mediation of individuals and organizational factors: new institutional theory Initial conditions: complex adaptive systems

Adapted from Bovaird *et al.*[55]

Integrating relevant theories pertaining to partnership governance, stakeholder theory, or the outcomes of educational interventions would facilitate a more coherent analysis and discussion.

In functionalism, for example, scholars argue that design choices reflect the most efficient way to address a given problem.[72] A key "functionalist" determinant of institutional design is problem structure. To the extent that development challenges are increasingly complex, partly because of global economic interdependence, the transaction costs of creating new organizations tend to increase despite the potential for issue linkage that may facilitate institutionalized cooperation.[73] In summary, these theoretical models and the intellectual history of the PPP movement can benefit the process of leveraging partnerships in TVTE. The theoretical models and the intellectual history of the PPP movement have been employed to construct the following useful questions to guide the establishment, implementation, and the effort to revamp partnerships:[4]

(1) Stakeholder identification: Who are the main stakeholders, and how do we know the right ones are involved?

(2) Power: How can we deal with power differences?

(3) Common goal: How can we define a common goal among diverse stakeholders? Should there be one?

(4) Governance structure: How do we organize our collaboration and decision making?

(5) Conflict: How do we deal with conflicts among stakeholders?

(6) Capacity: What can we do if essential stakeholders lack the capacity to lead and deliver?

(7) Efficiency: In which situations are MSPs not the right choice?

(8) Tools: What tools are available for helping the MSP achieve its goals?

(9) Facilitation: Who should facilitate an MSP, one person, a group? From within the system or an outside professional?

It is important to note that issue complexity makes intergovernmental or stakeholder partnership solutions ineffective because complex problems require the involvement of all relevant stakeholders that contribute specific expertise, relevant capacity, and financial resources. The diversity of these perspectives shows that in addressing youth unemployment and vocationalization of secondary and higher education has never proven to be a straightforward solution or remedy to youth unemployment in Sub-Saharan Africa.[7,59]

Overall, studies have addressed the mismatch between education and the labor market, but have failed to show how to prepare the youth adequately for the specific occupations associated with it.

Despite increasing interest and support for MSPs, examples of successful partnerships and sustained collaboration in TVTE are either uncommon or undocumented.[74] Most partnerships operate without sufficient information on existing partnership experiences, lessons, and models.[75] Nevertheless, there is wide recognition that a partnership approach is a core function for research organizations working effectively

in a network of innovation stakeholders. Therefore, research attention should focus on how partnerships can be managed to achieve collaborative advantage, and to identify the critical factors that contribute to effective partnerships.[76]

DISCUSSION AND PROSPECTS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

From the outset, this study aimed to explore the strategies used by MSPs to prepare students for higher education, working life or associated challenges and to gain insight into the appropriateness of the multistakeholder approach. The goal of the study was to determine whether MSPs provide the opportunities to support TVET. The assumption was that MSPs can strengthen public value for the promotion and implementation of sustainable development to improve the lives of people everywhere.[3] The examples of stakeholder partners collaborating with VETA in Tanzania provided clues to the current practices and experiences of MSPs. The examples show that it is possible for diverse groups to share a widespread problem or aspiration, while nonetheless having different pursuits.[4] Evidence gathered from this assessment suggests there is much to be learned to inform the improvement of existing on-the-job training, enable institutions to scale-up successful models of partnerships and to foster the development of vocational practices to produce ways that are more adaptable to work ethic and the dynamic world of work.[12] Equally, there are barriers including but not limited to cultural differences, language use, inferiority and superiority syndrome involving local and international partners, and oversight of the mutual benefits garnered by all stakeholders.

However, the general perception is that MSPs are a useful tool and a collaborative governance necessary to revamp TVTE. While external stakeholders may pursue different goals, there is room for common ground and interest to solve the unemployment problem. Partnership contacts benefit from the opportunities for field research, reputations in foreign operations and foreign partners gain legitimacy and broaden public relations within their organization and beyond.

In addition, the theoretical models we explored that support the MSP approach include models of partnership governance, i.e., a dynamic constellation of entities across different sectors that require coordinated partnership governance to provide society with "public goods";[71] stakeholder theory, involving networks of resource exchange, meaning that balancing powers and finding a working mix of resources, knowledge and

capabilities;[70] and competence-based outcomes of educational interventions involving at least two organizations with a mutual interest working together, in an association characterized by some degree of trust, fairness and mutuality.[69,77,78]

This discussion showed areas that need attention by MSPs. Some of the relevant MSP issues concerning TVTE that until recently continue to dominate the debate are (1) what to do with unemployed youth, (2) how to train the youth to facilitate job entry that incorporates vocational specific skills over lifetime (i.e., employability), (3) how to prepare youth for job markets (i.e., curriculum issues), and (4) how to harness resources to support services to students of TVTE (i.e., to meet employers' demands on employability skills). Throughout history, experts have claimed that MSPs have been challenged to address the issue of unemployment. As discussed in earlier sections, many attempts have been made by different stakeholders to offset the unemployment problem.

First, we wondered: Why is youth unemployment such a quagmire? Why does this problem confound African governments? Has the involvement of multistakeholders been effective? Unemployment is such a challenge because it is both a social problem as well as an economic issue. Around 800,000 to 1,000,000 youth are entering the job market every year in Tanzania, but their access to formal employment is minimal. The infrastructure to support those who are interested in social entrepreneurship is limited. Challenges are skills mismatch between formal education and job market requirements, accessing capital as well as prohibitive costs of running a business in Tanzania.[79] These are the results of inadequate initiatives to support youth in search of economic empowerment opportunities especially through social entrepreneurship and formal businesses, minimal recognition in formal governance processes as well as mismatch between skills they get in schools with the job market requirements. This signals untapped youths potential. It is key for partners, stakeholders, and the government to recognize youth power and leadership as a key asset in addressing all the development challenges facing communities in the country.

Regardless of the specific job skills possessed by graduates, employers have a certain view that when graduates enter the labor market, they are deficient in communication skills, teamwork skills, and decision-making skills.[80,81] There is a consensus among employers that when recruiting, they look for future employees to have a certain required profile. This profile consists of a set of skills that are considered crucial for the correct performance of the tasks that the employees will be performing. It is easy to identify which hard skills

employers require, but it is not so easy to find out which soft skills employees should have. In addition to this difficulty, there is the possibility that higher education institutions may not be preparing students to align with employers' envisioned skill sets.

Skill mismatch is a critical issue to address for the 21st-century workplace in Sub-Saharan Africa and in Tanzania in particular. Workers must nowadays have an additional set of skills besides occupational-related technical skills. Some employability studies demonstrate that employers place highest value for generic skills and lowest value on academic reputation.[82] In the Learning and Employability Series documents, employability skills are defined as "a set of skills, knowledge and personal attributes that make an individual more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy".[83]

Having the ability to communicate, work with other people, solve problems, use analytical and critical thinking, and be a continuous learner are the employ-ability skill attributes required of graduates when entering the world of work. In other words, the current workforce not only requires graduates with high performance in specific skills and knowledge, but also equipped with generic skills and attributes. In Tanzania, language use and ability to communicate with other people are big issues. This is one area that stakeholders can contribute to TVET by helping sensitize VETA to recognize employer' needs and help in the preparations of future workers.

Second, the process of curriculum development can be informed by seeking the views of stakeholders, including employers, academics, students, and recent graduates, about the skills, attributes and personal characteristics required by various professions.[84] Analysis of job advertisements for current industry skill requirements may provide valuable clues to curriculum developers. Job advertisements aptly represent the skills and qualities that employers are looking for, because the skills listed in the advertisements are carefully chosen to suit the positions being advertised.

For instance, within the workplace there are ways TVET partners can play a role to increase the extent to which work is learning rich. These techniques are by now well understood from the theory of and research on work-based learning. They include encouraging people to reflect on their experience, guidance by other workers and by experts; using mentors, demonstration and practice, simulation, task rotation and task variety, project work, and providing workers with problems to solve.[85] A visit to VETA in Northern Tanzania and Vijana center, this researcher learned that reflecting on

experiences is least referenced or valued. These techniques can readily be integrated with the normal cycle of work and production. The changing nature of today's employment expects the workers to work independently in roles that require problem-solving and decision-making skills, improving collaboration and teamwork; and employers need creative, flexible workers who have a broad range of communication and interpersonal skills. This is yet another area VET partners can play a critical role to increase the opportunities to make work to be learning rich.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Leveraging MSPs in TVTE was the central theme of this paper. The main task was to provide background and broad baseline appraisal of MSPs in TVTE for a larger study of MSPs in Sub-Sahara Africa. The experiences and practices of partnerships in TVTE in Sub-Saharan Africa and in Tanzania were examined. The paper alludes to the challenges of leveraging MSPs and ways of incrementally building their capacity to partner. The literature review found several employability skills attributes required by graduates in entering the workforce. This paper concludes that evaluating MSPs requires more creative and process-based participatory evaluation approaches that recognize the explicit interests, different perspectives and judgments of different stakeholders who play the role of monitors themselves and treat their subjective judgments as important data. This researcher concurs with Brock and Haririson[86] and argues that, if research is there to really influence partnerships and institutional change, researchers need to become more visible, and more reflexive. Reflexivity refers to research where stakeholders recognize and explicitly analyze their own actions and experiences in the processes and outcomes of partnerships.

However, Costello and Zumla[87] caution that current partnership practices in TVTE as well as in research for development may emphasize the outputs and products (*i.e.*, technology impacts, adoption, and income) and ignore process outcomes, such as ownership, sustain-ability, and development of national and local research capacity. In tandem, partners in TVTE may need to adopt other ways of evaluating their practice and experiences by adopting reflective learning practices and empowerment evaluation.[88] This is a neglected area stakeholders in TVTE in Africa need to leverage and direct attention. Empowerment evaluation is an evaluation approach that aims to increase the probability of program success by providing stakeholders with tools for assessing the planning, implementation, and self-evaluation of their programs, and mainstreaming evaluation as part of the planning and management of

the program organization.[88] The utilization-focused evaluation is used not only as tool to inform the improvement of existing on-the-job training, improve project and program effectiveness, but also, and perhaps most importantly, to build a learning organization, such as in TVTE. This realization may warrant further research in the future, particularly in Africa because evaluation research is weak in most places. Such analysis will be useful for documenting lessons and challenges for building and sustaining effective partnerships and is possible due to reflective practices of project partners. In addition, the results of this analysis are consistent with and complement recent findings on partnerships.[89] The recurring themes are the necessity of adequate funding, effective management and leadership, interpersonal trust and committed participants. The paper revealed that building and sustaining MSPs is a dynamic process and reinforces Barret *et al.*'s observation that scholars and practitioners need to guard against wishful thinking that partnerships are a panacea and critically examine current practices of partnerships. This is an area for further scrutiny.[90]

Second, another area that stakeholders in TVTE need to leverage and direct attention and resources revolve around the mismatch issue between the skills acquired in colleges and the skills needed in the workplace. The current labor market requires TVET graduates with high technical skills as represented by the subject they studied in college and the 21st-century skills. In fact, countries with well-established TVET systems have lower youth unemployment as TVET is coupled with the acquisition of employability skills to address issues such as skills mismatch amongst graduates. This discussion has shown that with some planned activities within colleges and collaboration between curriculum developers and TVTE administrators, students can acquire the needed employability skills. However, this implies that teachers' roles and skill levels need to change.

The range of skills required by TVET graduates of the 21st-century implies that teachers must have the necessary skills to be able to facilitate learning in the new knowledge domain. There is a need for equipping vocational education teachers with extensive knowledge and the skills needed for the 21st-century through professional development programs. This researcher concurs with Mtebe *et al.*[14] that in each of the middle- and low-income countries, employers expected new workers to possess several employability skill attributes. For example, the current VETA curriculum does not prepare learners in responding to the changing nature of economies and societies and the impact of globalization. The current labor market requires graduates with both job specific skills and employability skills known as 21st-century skills, facilitated by the emergence of information and communications technologies.[48] As

explained in the previous sections, employers prefer to hire graduates who have employability skills. The top five generic skills often requested by employers are communication skills, self-management skills, teamwork skills, creativity and innovation skills, and problem-solving skills. This is a new awakening and certainly will need further research in Sub-Sahara Africa in the future.

Third, higher vocational education providers need to adjust the existing curriculum to reflect the 21st-century employability skills and needs. The goal will be to revamp curricula to provide space to reflect 21st-century needs and enrich the curricular program in developing student employability skills. Emphasis for future research should consider conducting a cross-industry survey, focusing on the identification of important employability skills needed for successful school to work transition. Specific areas for recommendations for TVTE in Africa include (1) expand access and improve quality and equity, (2) adapt qualifications and develop pathways, (3) improve the evidence base, (4) strengthen governance and expand partnership, (5) increase investment in TVET and diversify financing, (6) advocate for TVET. The collaborative and learning-oriented approach of MSPs is certainly not a silver bullet for every demanding situation we face. Yet, it is often surprising just how much progress can be made when partners focus on the human aspects that help people cooperate, rather than remaining locked in conflict.

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