



VET teaching and learning: innovation in marginalised and resource poor contexts

The VET Africa 4.0 Collective

Today IDS presentation c/o Dr. Jo-Anna Russon

VET Africa 4.0: Case Studies

Case 1, Uganda: Community led VET and skills initiatives and coalitions in a post-conflict setting facing high youth unemployment and low economic development.

Case 2, Uganda: Skills development initiatives with international companies, donors, NGOs and other stakeholders seeking to harness the potential of international investment.

Case 3, South Africa: Investments in skills planning and skills infrastructure and the links to improved livelihoods, particularly for youth in the local economy.

Case 4, South Africa: Green skills and rural climate change mitigation projects, bringing together subsistence farmers, women, community-based organisations, higher education institutions and other stakeholders.

A principled approach: Case team priorities

- **Overarching Framework**
- Critical Realist approach
- Project research questions
- Social skills ecosystem
- Issue focused (e.g. VET pedagogy)
- *Weakness: limited comparative cross-case data*



Case 1, Uganda: **Community led VET** and skills initiatives and coalitions in a post-conflict setting facing high youth unemployment and low economic development.

Participatory Action Research

Case 2, Uganda: **Skills development initiatives** with **international oil companies**, donors, NGOs and other stakeholders seeking to harness the potential of international investment.

Participatory Action Research

Case 3, South Africa: **Investments in skills planning and skills infrastructure** and the links to improved livelihoods, particularly for youth in the local economy.

Workstreams and occupational pathways

Case 4, South Africa: **Green skills and rural climate change mitigation projects**, **bringing together** subsistence farmers, women, community-based organisations, higher education institutions and other stakeholders.

Network Mapping Analysis



Critical realism:

- A realist ontology - three layers: the empirical, actual and the real (deeper structures, causal mechanisms)
- Realist evaluation: what works, when, where, why and for whom?
 - Within distinct case settings

VET Africa 4.0: Project research questions

Project aim:

Explore how **new approaches** to vocational education and training (VET) may work both theoretically and practically to **reduce inequality** and **enhance sustainability** (environmental and livelihoods), constituting a fourth phase in vocational education strategies

1. Is there evidence that **different emergent approaches** to skills for development in Africa are **viable**, both at the project level and, potentially, at larger scale?
2. What do **different stakeholders think works** (and doesn't work) in such initiatives, **when, where and why, and for whom?**
3. To what extent do the different interventions offer a fruitful approach for **promoting decent work and sustainable livelihoods for all**, with a particular emphasis on meeting the needs of those facing multiple forms of disadvantage? What enables and/or constrains this?
4. Are skills interventions such as these capable of overcoming the **old productivist approach** so as to address the rising challenges of environmental sustainability?

Facilitating Verticalities ?

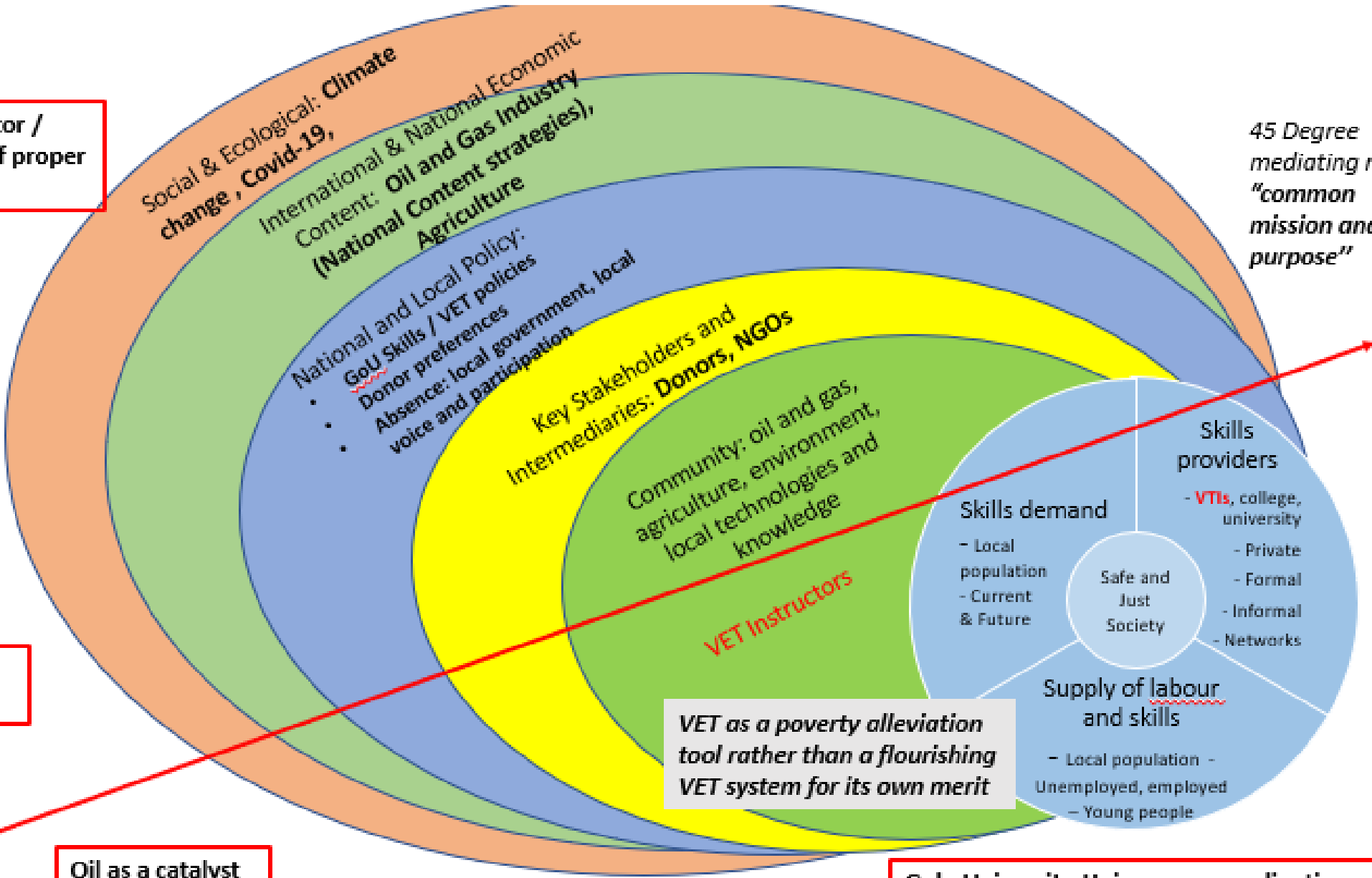
Donor / private sector /
GoU coordination of proper
communication

Individual
examples:
successful
skills/VET
projects

Locally inspired
networks

Oil as a catalyst

Gulu University-Hoima as a coordinating actor



VET as a poverty alleviation tool rather than a flourishing VET system for its own merit

Collaborative Horizontalities ?

VET Africa 4.0 Research process



Stage 1
PESTEL +

Stage 2
Programme theories
*(what do we think is
working ...)*

Stage 3
Mapping the social skills
ecosystem
*(understanding what is
working ...)*

Stage 4
Analysing the issues (e.g
pedagogy)

Stage 5
Critiquing and refining
the SSEM

**A fourth phase of VET:
reducing inequality, enhancing
environmental and livelihood
sustainability?**

VET teaching and learning: innovation in marginalised and resource poor contexts

Introduction: Challenges and prospects in VET teaching and learning

Literature: Debates on teaching and learning within VET spaces (contextualised in Africa particularly)

Case data: Illustrative examples of emerging innovative practices

Discussion: Strengthening embryonic practices from an ecosystems perspective



Introduction: Challenges and prospects in VET teaching and learning

Historically:

- VET trainers have lacked the recognition of teachers
- Range of different definitions and sites of practice – diffuse and inappropriate governance

Increasing expectations of what VET can deliver:

- *Make the economy work, systemic role of VET, backdrop of unemployment (locked in to outdated HCT perspectives)*
- Changing expectations and pressures for VET trainers

VET trainers in Sub-Saharan Africa

- Ongoing challenge of inadequate facilities and lack of financing of the VET system

Literature: Debates on teaching and learning within VET spaces

Generalised and popular perceptions:

- Teaching within VET spaces is often ineffective / behind the curve in terms of knowledge and teaching practice
- VET teachers poorly equipped in education, knowledge and experience
- VET graduates are underprepared, qualifications not valued in the workplace

But research also shows variations and complexity:

- Heterogeneous contexts for VET
- Curriculum offered and control over the curriculum varies greatly
- Much VET happens outside of the system that is formally understood as TVET

Conceptual issues that straddle this complex field.

- **Knowledge:** tensions (i) equip learners with appropriate knowledge and skills for occupational tasks, (ii) 'knowing how', 'knowing that' and 'knowing (the right thing) to do' (Tang 2011), and (iii) the skills, knowledge and behaviour required for the workplace. This is also addressed in the competences vs holistic competence debate
- **Pedagogical questions:** how students best learn these 'knowledges'.
- **Teachers:** face complex educational demands, lack of formal educational training, divided occupational identity - teacher and their occupation.

There is a critical need for vocational education to be understood as, linked to and actively integrated with workplace and life-long learning.

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Illustrative examples:
emerging “**innovative**”
practice.

*Embryonic forms of VET
pedagogical practice,
either within institutional
spaces, but often outside
of them.*

1. Innovative technologies: bridging low-cost and high-tech
2. Informal apprenticeship
3. Curriculum networking and learning
4. Personal professional development
5. Partnerships for teaching and learning
6. Curriculum innovation within the formal system.

Strengthening: How do we strengthen these efforts in the context of dysfunctional, resource poor skills ecosystems?

- There is a need to see these embedded in the horizontal and vertical ... showing what is possible at a system level.
- Real(ist[ic]) expectations: Less attention on judging a VET system in terms of its ability to prepare people for work, but rather the ability of a VET system to prepare individuals to learn in the context of ongoing life-long learning and updating of skills.
- Focused resources: e.g: expertise in one place that creates a catalytic process within a specified sector and place
- National – local: Promoting the pathway between responsive, locally driven qualifications/skills, through to internationally recognised qualifications.

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