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**REPORT ON POST-GRADUATION SERVICES IN VOCATIONAL  
TRAINING IN SOUTHERN AFRICA**

**FOR**

**DIGITAL VET FOR YOUNG AFRICANS  
(D-VETYA) PROJECT 2023-2024**

*Project Milestone: 11*

## MILESTONE DESCRIPTION SHEET

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**Description:** After desk research, an overview paper including all tested post-graduation tools and their effectiveness will be developed and shared

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## Executive Summary

**Introduction:** The transition from training to work is a dual process which involves (i) preparing young people for transition, (i.e. facilitating access to job skills) and (ii) supporting the actual transition, (i.e. facilitating access to productive and decent work opportunities that make effective use of their skills)<sup>1</sup>. The desk study sought to analyse existing Young Africa (YA) reports, studies, and relevant material, whilst benchmarking with best practices to provide recommendations on the improvement of YA's Postgraduate Support practices.

**Methodology:** PGS activities of four YA affiliates were analysed; YA Namibia, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe. A virtual workshop on PGS was held, where the YA Hub staff and representatives from the four Affiliates presented on existing PGS practices and opportunities. These presentations formed part of the data used by the consultant. The desk search identified and presented international and regional good practices to further inform possible new ideas for YA to boost employability amongst its graduates. Selected international and regional best practices were reviewed to establish new and existing practices that could be adapted or adopted by YA.

**Findings on existing practices:** Analyses of country reports and YA-wide studies identified similar themes emerging on what the challenges or barriers to employability were, opportunities arising. YA Affiliates were implementing several PGS practices which include a) coaching and mentoring, b) hiring of Business Development Officers, c) linkages with employers for internships and job placements and d) on the job training through the Franchisee Business Model (FBM). The PGS practices listed above were being implemented to varying degrees. Some affiliates implement some practices and not all PGS identified above, and the extent of implementation of each practice also varied considerably among assessed Affiliates.

**Findings on existing best practices outside YA:** The desk study identified a number of practices that include a) financing for entrepreneurship through either Micro Finance Institutions or cash transfer programmes facilitated by the Affiliates, b) developing innovative tools such as mobile phone applications that allow for graduate job seekers to be linked to employers that are looking for skilled labour, as well as c) Job Booster models (designed by Woord en Daard), whereby partnerships with non-profit entities channel graduates through a specific training course which is linked to industry needs.

**Findings on factors affecting employability:** The desk research showed that employability factors can be grouped into three categories: a) individual factors (e.g.

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<sup>1</sup> Transitions from School to Work. New York: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2019.

skills, capabilities and behaviour on the job), b) personal circumstances (e.g. household stability, social support) and c) economic factors (e.g. economic policies and economic performance). When designing the PGS strategy for YA these factors need to be considered.

**Conclusions:** Employability of YA graduates is hindered by multi-faceted factors, many of which are not within YA's span of influence, such as external employability factors. For instance, YA's influence on policy and labour markets is limited to none. Although YA can put in place measures to collaborate with the private sector to promote employability of YA graduates, YA can also deliberately support its graduates to transition to entrepreneurship.

**Recommendations:** Given that Affiliates are operating in different macroeconomic contexts, a blanket approach in recommendations may not work. The following overall recommendations must be considered:

- a) Standardisation of training curricula to address the lack of/limited recognition of YA certification which is required for formal employment.
- b) Consistency in application of the Franchisee Business Model as a model of training to ensure that the training experiences of all YA learners across different trades is consistent, this requires that the selection process of franchisee, appointment, and implementation are clearly defined and consistently monitored across training units and affiliates.
- c) Given that most recommended trades for the future (YA Future Job Market Study) are for entrepreneurship and not necessarily waged employment, there is need to address the challenge of access to start-up capital, given that the YA target group is not in a position to provide collateral security required to access micro-financing options available on the market. Linkages and special arrangements with Micro Finance Institutions, cash transfer programmes facilitated by the Affiliates or start-up kits may be options to consider.
- d) Given the windows of employment opportunities that on-the-job training offers, it is important that Affiliates invest all effort to guarantee internships to all trainees. This must particularly be anchored on intensified efforts to engage with the private sector to avail these opportunities. Youths from disadvantaged backgrounds may not have the financial means to commute to and from the workplace and even though opportunities may be available, some may drop out. This means YA is required to put in place measures to ensure that such disadvantaged youths are able to complete their internships. These measures may either be funded by the employers or by YA through its funding partners.
- e) There is a need to invest in linking graduates with employment opportunities. Developing innovative tools such as mobile phone applications that allow graduate job seekers to be linked to employers that are looking for skilled labour, as well as Job Booster models are worth considering. Such platforms function like a marketplace, matching employers and clients with workers and graduates for specific jobs. This could be linked to a database with indicators such as reviews and ratings of listed graduates.

- f) Given the varying levels of implementing existing PGS activities across affiliates, there is a need for YA to develop a standard employability framework for training in work transition and employability to guide affiliate level implementation of PGS interventions. The framework must include the necessary tools to be used, monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanisms.
- g) YA can build on its franchise model and its strong involvement of the private sector in its training programme to develop and implement a coaching and mentorship programme to ensure trainees and graduates are handheld through the transition process.

## 1. Introduction

Founded in the Netherlands in 1998, Young Africa (YA) currently operates 8 TVET centres in four countries as a confederation of independently and locally registered affiliated organisations. YA operates in 2 more countries in partnership with 4 other organizations that are replicating the YA model(s). Each Affiliate operates TVET centres, implements youth (self-) employment programs and community outreach activities such as library, creche, art and sporting facilities. The vision of YA is a world of equality and shared wealth by channeling the power of young people to transform the world around them. The mission of YA is the integral development of disadvantaged youths aged 15 to 35 years with a special focus on young women and youths with disabilities. To achieve this, YA imparts skills of the hands to youth to make them self-reliant, skills of the heart and mind to help them live with dignity and skills of the soul to help them live with a purpose. YA's Integral Youth Empowerment Programme is made up of vocational skills training in market-related technical and commercial trades, small enterprise development services, life skills education, inspirational morning assembly talks, academic coaching and promoting talents in art and sport.

YA empowers youth through (i) **Centre Based Training**: where training is conducted within Affiliates' centres. YA leases fully equipped workshops to local entrepreneurs (called franchisees) who use the workshops to run their own enterprises, and in exchange they provide on-the-job training to YA trainees. (ii) **Mobile Training Approach** – where the main target group is youth in remote areas within the countries of operation, ensuring access to training for underserved youth in marginalised areas in collaboration with local entrepreneurs (craftsperson's) who provide on-the-job practical exposure to trainees. Consistent with YA's integral approach, all complementary courses such as life skills education, entrepreneurship training, work readiness, financial and digital literacy are also integrated into the training programme.

The Impact Study showed the employment rate of YA graduates is generally highest 5 years post-graduation. The general trend is a steady increase in employment rate

where, 1 year post graduation only 20% recorded employment. The study also showed it takes considerable time (5+ years) to establish oneself firmly in a competitive labour environment and the accumulation of sufficient start-up capital is highlighted by the graduates as a major stumbling block to entrepreneurship. Self-employment is slightly more prevalent than wage employment (53 as to 47%) and generally employment appears to have been subject to a process of increased informal employment over time and the informal sector currently absorbs more graduates than its formal counterpart.

### **a. Study Objectives**

An impact study conducted by YA in all 4 of its countries of operation in 2021 recommended the need to strengthen the YA postgraduate support programmes to enhance the employability of its graduates. Hence, this study was commissioned to fulfil this recommendation. The main goal of the desk study was to determine pathways to boost employability for YA graduates, by improving its postgraduate support services. The study was intended to analyse, and document proven and successful postgraduate support strategies in comparable socio-economic contexts globally and across the region in Africa whilst taking into consideration the existing post-graduate support interventions undertaken within YA affiliates.

## **2. Methodology**

The study reviewed existing YA reports, Impact and curriculum review studies and relevant documents. It also reviewed international and regional best practices to identify other post-graduate systems and structures for adaptation and benchmarking by YA. A virtual meeting was held with YA International staff and affiliate representatives to discuss existing practices.

### **a. Desk Review**

The study reviewed existing YA documents and studies already undertaken over the past few years. The review used Braune and Clarke's framework. Codes or themes were identified across each report and document, and these were the basis of analysis. The key word used in the search was employability and the following themes emerged from the search and analysis:

- Structured approach to postgraduate support
- Factors hindering self-employment
- Measures to ensure graduates have sufficient information on jobs and opportunities
- The role of mentorship to boost employability (formal and self-employed)
- Financing constraints experienced by trainees and graduates during internships



## b. Focus Group Discussion

Affiliate presentations during the virtual meeting were guided by the following:

- a) Background of Institution
  - *Country & Name of Affiliate*
  - *Location of institution e.g. rural or urban*
  - *Number of technical courses offered*
  - *Title of complementary courses offered*
  - *Any other relevant information*
- b) What is the status of PGS in your institution?
  - *Details on employability boosting activities offered by your institution*
  - *Elaborate on the number and nature of dedicated staff, programmes implemented, integrated training methods, writing/ business plan development, career guidance etc.*
- c) Highlight one or more PGS best practices your Affiliate currently undertakes
- d) Make any remarks on post-graduate support and how to boost employability across YA.
- e) Provide recommendations/ suggestions/ new PGS practices for potential uptake.

Over 15 representatives from the four Affiliates attended where participants exchanged questions and answers regarding their existing practices. Many insights were shared on current and ongoing practices with insightful recommendations made.

## 3. Findings

### a. Employability Factors

The ILO defines employability as relating to “*portable competencies and qualifications that enhance an individual’s capacity to make use of the education and training opportunities available in order to secure and retain decent work, to progress within the enterprise and between jobs, and to cope with changing technology and labour market conditions*” (ILO, 2004, Para. I.2(d))<sup>2</sup>. The ILO goes on to identify the four core skills for the world of work as being: **Learning to learn** knowledge, skills, attitudes and aptitudes which enable individuals to set, plan and reach their own learning goals and become independent. **Communication** – the ability to gain understanding from others – by listening, reading and observation, using both formal and informal, oral and written means – and to put across ideas clearly and effectively. **Teamwork** – the abilities necessary to operate smoothly and

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<sup>2</sup> Skills for Employment Policy brief

[https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed\\_emp/@ifp\\_skills/documents/publication/wcms\\_234467.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_emp/@ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_234467.pdf)



efficiently within a group, including those related to both cooperation and leadership. **Problem-solving** covers the analytical skills required to evaluate information or situations and decide on the most appropriate ways of addressing problems.

Analysis of the YA work shows that its holistic approach addresses all four of the above-mentioned competencies and all these skills were being imparted to youths across all affiliates. However, lack of standardisation of training material and approaches across all affiliates, may render success in some and moderate to weak results in others.

Further analysis of reports and existing literature showed that although YA is imparting the relevant skills, external factors considerably limit successful transition of youths from training to employment or start-up of enterprises. The external factors include: limited demand for skills arising from the labour market; macroeconomic factors; recruitment systems and general employment policies within the micro to macro environment.

The most common framework on employability provided by McQuaid and Lindsay (2005), categorises these predictors of employment into three: *individual factors; personal circumstances and external factors*.

PREDICTORS OF EMPLOYMENT		
Individual factors	Personal circumstances	External factors
Skills and capabilities	Household circumstances	Demand factors of labour market
Psychosocial factors	Caring responsibilities	Macroeconomic factors, demand and recruitment factors
Demographic characteristics	Social support	Employment policy factors
Health and well-being	Work culture	
Job behaviour	Ease of access to resources e.g. finance, transport, social capital	
Mobility		

Figure 1: McQuaid and Lindsay Predictors of Employment Factors

Figure 1 above shows that YA Affiliates address most of these hindering factors especially factors to do with strengthening the individual and personal factors. YA addresses each of these factors to varying degrees and for others, e.g. internships support where none of the Affiliates is placing more than 20% of their trainees, despite the target being 100%.

- **Individual Factors:** YA imparts life skills, offers psychosocial and wellness services, imparts vocational skills, entrepreneurship skills.
- **Personal Factors:** YA offers work readiness training, internships and job placement support services (offered by business development officers), psychosocial support and wellness services.

- **External factors:** YA commissions studies on labour market trends and relevant skills to meet future job prospects to inform its interventions. Prior to programming in mobile training sites, YA conducts rapid market surveys to assess relevance of training to job market needs. However, much of what has been learnt through studies conducted recently has not yet been implemented.

The recommendations from this study focus more on the external factors and what more can be done to bridge the gap that exists. Whilst *YA influence on policy and labour markets is limited, much can be done around macro-economic, vacancy and recruitment to promote the YA graduates accessing previously hard to reach employment or entrepreneurship opportunities. This can be achieved through the creation of partnerships with the private sector.* Where possible, new partnerships with private sector apex organisations (commodity associations, industry trade associations etc.) are required to ensure more opportunities for new employment for the graduates are unlocked and mentors from companies emerge to guide the recently graduated youth.

#### b. Post graduate support practices in the Affiliates

The table below depicts the various PGS practices ongoing within the affiliates which were presented during the virtual discussion held by the consultant and the YA Hub team.

Table 1: PGS practices by the YA Affiliates

Post Graduate Practices	Zambia	Namibia	Mozambique	Zimbabwe
Coaching and Mentoring	X	X	X	
Dedicated Business Development Officer	X		X	X
Relationship building with companies (incl. company visits)	X	X	X	X
Business Plan development and Case management support	X			
Scouting for internship/ on the job training opportunities, research and registration		X	X	X
Linkages with relevant agencies eg. For Entrepreneurship support		X		
Attachment Induction				X
Financial Literacy and Money management			X	
Sharing information and opportunities via social media/ WhatsApp		X		
Career Guidance,				X
Promoting Volunteering for work experience		X		
Training on company creation, product dissemination & service provision			X	
Start-up kits and Microcredit		X	X	

Analysis of YA documents and studies what elements were already in practice, under development and have the potential for upscaling or improvement.

- **Already in Practice:** Business development support (minimal); coaching and mentoring for youths in entrepreneurship (minimal); business plan development support (minimal), business incubation support services (minimal), start-up kits(minimal).
- **Under development/ pilot phase:** comprehensive micro credit programme (although YA Mozambique has been giving small amounts to a few of its graduates since inception).
- **Potential for upscaling:** cash transfers; company creation & service provision; start-up kits; micro credit; coaching and mentoring.

The efforts of the Affiliates to source opportunities and prepare the trainees for post-graduate life are commendable, however, social, and economic constructs of the graduates' environment play a bigger role in the probability of them finding a job or starting up a viable business. Examples of social constructs include household circumstances (e.g. single, married, orphaned, child headed household etc.), unpaid care work & responsibilities, work culture and social support structures. Affiliates based in urban or peri-urban areas have a higher probability of graduates finding wage employment as well as self-employment due to the increased demand for goods and services by the higher concentrated populations. Whilst the centres based in rural areas do have the same opportunities, there is a need to fully exploit the value chains skills demands for both on farm and off-farm occupation especially in Dondo, Mozambique.

### c. Standardisation of YA curriculum

The focus by YA on underprivileged youth as its key beneficiaries not only provides opportunities to these at-risk groups but also ensures further education where traditional pathways may have not proved accessible for various reasons. However, the challenge highlighted by most Affiliates is the lack of recognition of the YA certification by curriculum agencies due to the lower level of training offered which accommodates the needs of the vulnerable youth who are YA's main target group. Whilst the trainees leave YA competent in the skills required to carry out a particular occupation, *the lack of recognition of YA certification remains a challenge where certification along qualification frameworks is required for formal employment.* The paradox lies where YA either remains offering this easy to achieve skills competence level or begins a process of gradual alignment to national qualification frameworks for all their training offers. *In countries where a vocational qualification framework exists, it is recommended that YA curriculum be developed or adapted to meet the requirements of vocational qualifications frameworks within the countries of operation* as a first step towards accreditation of courses for recognition nationally. Where no vocational qualification frameworks exists, YA must identify (to the extent possible) where each of its courses lie within the qualifications frameworks and to what extent the YA course acts as a precursor to a recognised qualification. Again this is a first step toward recognition and eventual accreditation of YA courses.

Whilst the YA Hub promotes a level of autonomy in the functioning of the Affiliates, there is a need to urgently investigate the relevance of the training curriculum used by all affiliates. The YA Future Job Market Study (2020) recommends the need to discontinue some courses due to their low uptake by the youth.

There is a need for YA Hub to ***employ a TVET curriculum development & delivery expert to ensure that the curriculum meets the goals, objectives and standards of the organisation.*** The mentioned expert would review the curricula and **identify opportunities for upgrading or updating it to ensure relevance to job market demands.**

There must be regular feedback mechanisms in the curriculum based on the industry and economic shifts faced by all the Affiliates. By implementing the above there is a level of alignment to national standards thereby creating a platform to promote the relevance of the YA courses.

Given the overall intention of YA is to create employment opportunities for the youth, the current rates of employment, self-employment or entrepreneurship of graduates post-training remains relatively low. According to the YA's 2018 annual report only 61,1% of graduates became self-employed within 3 months post-training. This figure dropped to only 34% in 2020, a decrease which can be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic's effects on labour activity. There is a need for an urgent shift in approach required to ensure that the excellent results of the life skills modules are complemented by strengthened labour-market relevant technical skills.

#### d. Franchise Business Model

The franchisees are the primary window for trainees to experience what their future post-training could encompass and therefore, the franchisee's conduct and competency development approach must be emphasised. Findings from the study showed that the level of skills transfer from the franchisee to the youth is not happening as per model design and requires uniformity in approach and implementation. YA Hub may possibly relook into the process of franchisee selection, appointment, and daily implementation guidelines.

#### e. Availability and Accessibility of Work Based Learning (WBL)

The study established that ***availability of internships for on the job training has been a challenge for most Affiliates, where local companies or crafts persons are not always willing to engage students.*** The issue of whether students must be paid a stipend by the companies or not is one of the major contributing factors. ***Many students from disadvantaged backgrounds (who constitute the main target group of YA) do not have the financial means to commute to and from the workplace during internships hence they drop out.*** In situations where the trainee doesn't reside in the town or area where the company is based, challenges of lodging accommodation and

general upkeep for the duration of the internship is another major factor. The difficult economic contexts in which YA Affiliates operate have constrained operations of many businesses hence limited their capacity to take on interns and give them stipends.

#### f. Lack of financial support for entrepreneurship

All countries that were assessed as part of the YA Future Job Market Study (2020) reported a downward GDP trend, which is usually associated with formal job losses and increased informal self-employment. Owing to reduced formal employment opportunities in countries of operation, the need for graduates to create their own business opportunities is crucial. Most of the jobs recommended by the YA Current and Future Job Market Study as future employment opportunities are for entrepreneurship and not necessarily waged employment. Jobs such as: ICT repairs technicians, solar repair and installation; agriculture; food and agro-processing and construction are all potential self-employment opportunities. However, for the target group of vulnerable youth, who come from a background of poverty, where many could not afford to pay for the training, expecting them to avail funds to startup businesses is almost unrealistic.

The study found that basic principles of entrepreneurship are taught within all Affiliates, the extent or quality of the training can be argued however, this is not the biggest hurdle. A lack of entrepreneurship training is usually manifested by start-ups which fail to grow and expand. In the case of the YA graduates, many do not even start the businesses due to lack of capital and equipment. Hence, financing and supporting access to finance remains the most important business development service that all Affiliates must offer its graduates. This can be done in the various forms such as: linkages with MFIs, cooperative business training (for access to group lending schemes), developing business plans and general information provision on borrowing opportunities and requirements.

#### Case Study 1: Woord en Daad

##### Programme – Job Booster programme and Job Booster Entities

**Country of Implementation:** India, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Colombia and Ethiopia

**Innovation and Unique Approach:** in four countries that already hosted the Job Booster project, entities were established to ensure that vulnerable young people will have access to a job in the long term as well. These entities are social enterprises, in other words, they operate on a not-for-profit basis. For example, the Indian Job Booster entity bridges the gap between large companies (such as McDonalds) and organizations that train young people (Woord en Daad partners that provide vocational training courses). Due to the contracts that the entity concludes, young people from the vocational training courses can more easily





obtain a job and the companies connected with the entity are guaranteed qualified personnel.

**Overview:** A study to determine the efficacy of the Job Booster programme was carried out over 4 years on 40 graduates and results showed that vocational training is not in all cases sufficient to find a job or start a business immediately after finalizing the training. Therefore, Job and Business Services are an important supplement to vocational training, to support alumni to find a job or to give them access to opportunities and markets.

**Key Results:** The approach saw a steady increase in employment rates of the 40 graduates traced with a year-on-year increase from 72% employed in 2017, 84% employed in 2018, 91% and 94% employed in 2019 and 2020 respectively. Some of the alumni were working in more than 1 job and many reported working in sectors other

than that which they trained for. Notably, there was a shift in employment status, from wage employment to self-employment (59% in 2020) and of the self-employed 77% were females who stated that self-employment allowed them flexibility to combine family responsibilities.

**Success factors and challenges:** Whilst many alumni received support through counselling, mediation and soft skills training they stated other success factors such as family members linking them to job opportunities. Interestingly, they stated that lack of finance was a hindrance to enterprise growth in the years after they switched from waged employment. Through its Job Booster programme *Woord en Daad* alumni did allude to the fact that TVET training made a difference in their lives as previously vulnerable youth, where both technical and soft skills proved indispensable. However, it also proved that vocational training alone is not sufficient to open opportunities for employment, and its Job Booster Entity programme supplemented the training to open up spaces for employability.

### Case Study 2: YouStart

**Programme - Ghana Jobs and Skills Project**

**Country of Implementation:** Ghana

**Innovation and Unique Approach:** The YouStart programme provides financial support in the form of competitive business start-up grants where funds are sourced from several development partners and financing houses but overall distributed under government authorities.

**Overview:** The project provides entrepreneurial training across three levels (basic, intermediate, and advanced) using standardized quality assured packages across the country. They also offer mentoring and coaching support for advanced training participants which includes guidance on how to prepare business plans, and meeting business registration and licensing requirements as well as connections with input and output markets.

**Key Results:** the programme focuses on a range of needs of a start-up therefore, the grants allocated cover several aspects such as, purchase of equipment, raw materials payment of advisory services training and subscribing to platforms, as well as payment for regulatory compliance, registration, and licensing. This removes several restrictions on how the funds can be used and thus opens opportunities for expansion and entry to new markets.

**Success factors and challenges:** the programme is open to all Ghanaian youth however, the participants must have a minimum basic education qualification, this renders entry for several disadvantaged youth (eg. school dropouts) difficult if not impossible. Mentoring and coaching is only available for advanced level trainees, thus the basic and intermediate training graduates cannot access the benefits of mentoring. The grants are not repayable; however, the Grant Manager reviews and checks expenditures to ensure funds are used in the agreed upon manner. Out of a targeted 50,000 to be trained the grant funding was only available to 5000.

**Recommendation for YA:** The Ghana Jobs and Skills project allows for advanced level business training for graduates and only those who complete the final level of this business training access loans. This is critical for YA to adopt as not all entrepreneurship ideas will be successful and in order to minimise repayment default in cash transfer or micro-loans there is a need to ensure all graduates going down this route are adequately trained on business concepts.

#### 4. Recommendations

For a sustainable development of employability skills all the critical stakeholders need to work together proactively to respond holistically to the challenge of enhancing graduate employability.

##### a. Developing a Young Africa Employability Framework

YA Affiliates already undertake several employability activities and programmes such as mentoring and coaching, start-up kits, work readiness training, job placements, linkages to companies for on-the-job training etc. which vary in degree and extent of implementation from one affiliate to the other. Whilst this has proven moderately successful there is significant room for improvement in the overall approach and institutionalisation of practices across Affiliates. For there to be comparable measurement of the outcomes (employability) and subsequent impact (improved economic livelihoods of youth) Affiliates must in their individuality



ascribe to a given framework for training to work transition and employability as they are interrelated concepts.

Employability is defined by UNICEF as an individual's ability to secure and retain employment, progressing within the enterprise and between jobs, and to cope with changing technology and labour market conditions<sup>3</sup>. It has a capability and an opportunity dimension i.e. capability (i) whether the individual has the skills demanded by the labour market and (ii) opportunity, whether the individual can access employment opportunities that make optimal use of his/her skills. The transition should be viewed as a process of both **preparation** – Affiliates primary role and responsibility and **actual transition** – graduates' access to productive and decent work opportunities. As shown below, employability must be approached across the entire spectrum of TVET training, with conscious efforts made at every opportunity to integrate concepts, provoke trainees to think of their future and engage the relevant stakeholders to build sustainable relationships and partnerships to actualise the intended results. A skeletal outline of the intervention employability chain is depicted below.

Affiliates need to also measure results such as graduates' ability to maintain employment (including transition to another job) and obtain new employment (including promotion) within YA's M&E as also illustrated in *Fig 3*. The employability framework in *Fig 3* shows several processes which YA can adopt or adapt to enrich their employability focus.

In the process of curriculum selection, development and design, the primary step is to determine in each learning outcome the opportunities for employability (see immediate outcomes). The curriculum review process recommended earlier would ideally ensure that as the trainer delivers the training, clear pathways are shared with the trainee on how the module outcome/ competence or skill can be used toward self-employment, formal employment and what individual characteristics the occupation would demand from the trainee.

Through deductive pedagogy, trainers need to ensure that as they impart technical skills and that they are also drawing out conversations on how these skills can be used in a real work environment from the onset and not left to a singular module or course on soft skills or entrepreneurship.

<sup>3</sup> UNICEF (2019) <https://www.unicef.org/media/60366/file/Transitions-from-school-to-work-2019.pdf>

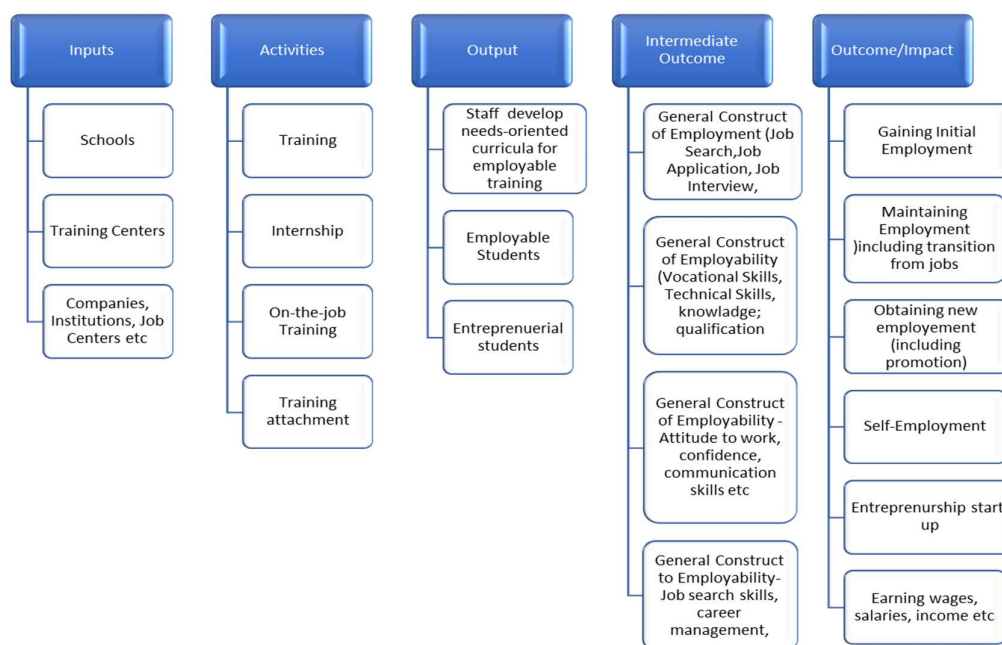


Figure 3: Logical Model and Result Chain for Employability Spectrum (Adapted from the Campbell Collaboration)

### b. Formalise Mentorship Approach

The definition of mentoring in the context of TVET and employability varies, however, it can loosely be described as a long-term relationship between an experienced, skilled wise professional (mentor) and a student (mentee)<sup>4</sup>. It is important that the mentorship be regarded as a long-term intervention where the mentor imparts not only basic employment skills to graduates who may be self-employed but also to the workplace mentees who are formally employed.

Affiliates through their BDO’s must proactively seek out the companies they identify as potential up takers of graduates (formal employment) or master craftsman’s willing to take in graduates as interns ideally post-placement to allow for the graduates to actively practice what they would have learnt from the mentor.

General research shows that formal or waged employers identify several shortcomings of TVET graduates which include unclear career pathways or goals, low self-confidence, inadequate basic skills, lack of drive and enthusiasm and unrealistic job-related expectations. Whilst the solutions to these challenges can be taught in a TVET institution, the need for a work environment to build these intrinsic qualities is important and workplace mentors are the prime source of transfer of these skills to the graduates.

Identifying mentors and building their capacity is a process which Affiliates must commit to increase in employability. The mentors need to be willing to take on the

<sup>4</sup> Vand, N.(2017) The role of mentorship as an approach to Enhancing Employability [www.afritvet.org](http://www.afritvet.org)

role and devote their time to regular follow ups and coaching sessions with the graduates. The following basic principles can be applied to establishing Mentorship and Coaching practices in Affiliates:

- *Win-win relationship mentality* – by imparting skills to the graduates they take on they are guaranteed of a future workforce which is better trained, efficient, and guaranteed of the quality output they require in their industry.
- *Establish mentorship agreements* – formal agreements, MoU's can be drawn up to indicate commitment and willingness by both parties towards the Mentorship programme. The agreements must detail what each party brings to the table (Affiliate and Employer) and the expected outcomes and long-term impacts of the partnership.
- *Mentor Willingness is key* – not every employee can be a mentor, therefore there is a need to assess the suitability of each proposed mentor to ensure they are willing, able and eager to carry out the task at hand.
- *Mentors basic training* –YA graduates have low literacy rates, therefore, there is a need for YA to institutionalise mentorship training to impart the basic principles of mentorship pedagogy to guarantee effective mentorship.
- *Journaling by mentees is essential* – mentees must keep track of their daily learnings. YA must develop a standard mentorship journal to ensure everything is fresh in their minds, detailing: day to day lessons learnt; employability skills and values the mentee exhibited and areas for improvement.

### c. Access to finance

The study of Young Africa's Holistic Youth Empowerment Services in Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia & Zimbabwe (2021) identified several areas of improvement and most common to all Affiliates was the concern on access to finance post training. According to the Impact study, self-employment was slightly more prevalent than wage employment (53% to 47%) with two-thirds of the group running their own informal businesses. This finding suggests the need to ***emphasise on start-ups as part of PGS across all affiliates***, to encourage self-employment.

#### i. Cash Transfers

The concept of cash transfers to provide accessible funding for start-ups post TVET has proven successful and shown its limitations in several contexts. For purposes of this study Conditional Cash Transfers (CCT) will be defined as transfers which are in the form of a revolving fund, where beneficiaries are required to pay back all or a portion of the transfer sum at a specified time interval. Unconditional Cash Transfers (UCT) will be defined as transfers that require no repayment at any point and time and are issued without expectations of repayment.

Conditional Cash Transfer programmes have been cited as one step toward breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty faced by millions of young graduates around

the globe. However, it must be mentioned that cash transfer programs coordinated with other postgraduate support programs should also be considered, in addition to context-specific strategies aimed at accelerating self-employment.

Cash transfers can be a revolving fund (CCT) or a once off grant (UCT) funded by donors, which in all likelihood is not a sustainable option. The decision on which type of cash transfer can be customised to the context of each affiliate, country, or specific group of graduates.

The rationale for unconditional cash transfers is that the poorest of the graduates merely lack the resources (money) to realize preferred investment levels and with the new knowledge gained from their training they will be able to make wise spending decisions that would improve their livelihoods, but they cannot do so currently because of financial constraints. Whilst this may be true for many, the reality is that the opposite may be the case, where the transfer money can be diverted to use in other household priorities and the enterprises remain an unattained vision. The overall assumption is that education and skills transfer should be able to change the spending habits of an individual.<sup>5</sup> The recommendation would be to issue start-up kits as an alternative to cash or reinforce the need for accountability through group approaches.

Any Cash Transfer programme must meet several high-level criteria, such as:

- Identification and thorough assessment of the poorest of the beneficiaries.
- The beneficiaries are selected based on merit and their level of participation, engagement, and perceived success during the courses.
- Comprehensive business plans developed and assessed for viability, taking into account socio-cultural contexts, local economies and sector specific factors.
- Considering the possibility of market failures and phenomena (climate occurrences or disease outbreaks such as COVID-19) which could potentially impact enterprises rate of return.

Young Africa Namibia at the time of the study was engaging with partners on the development of a cash transfer programme to support graduates with start-up kits.

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<sup>5</sup> Joan Hamory Hicks, Michael Kremer, Isaac Mbiti, and Edward Miguel (2011) Vocational Education Voucher Delivery and Labor Market Returns: A Randomized Evaluation Among Kenyan Youth.

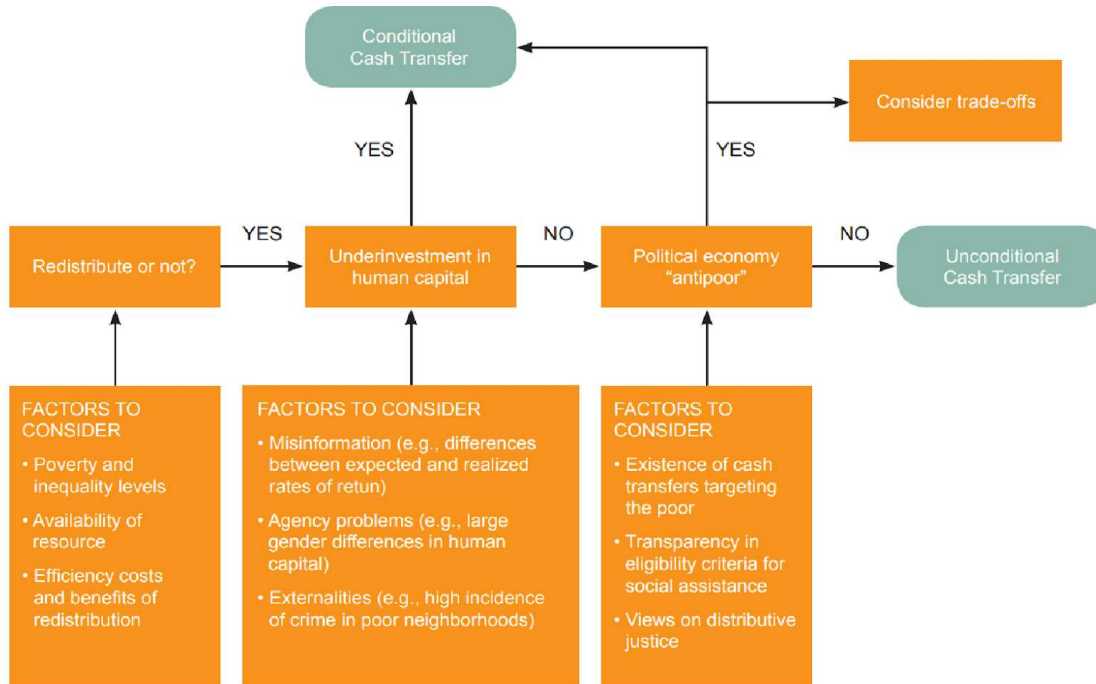


Figure 4: Decision Tree to determine Cash Transfer model for Implementation

### Case Study 3

#### Programme – Cash Transfers in TVET: Uganda Youth Opportunities

Country of Implementation: Uganda

*Increased Earnings and Employment from an Unconditional Cash Transfer to Finance Non-Formal Skills Training*

Uganda’s Youth Opportunity Program provided unconditional cash grants to youth groups for investment in training or self-employment. Groups of 20 to 30 youth were asked to submit a proposal for purchasing skills training, tools, and other materials required to start an enterprise. Nearly 80 percent of participants enrolled in training (mainly tailoring and carpentry), and 13 percent re-enrolled in secondary school. Two years after the cash transfer, two-thirds of the participants were engaged in skilled work, mainly self-employed, compared to just one third of the control group. The program doubled hours of employment and increased savings for youth by nearly 50 percent relative to the control group, with similar results for male and female youth. Participants rated the value of their business assets at \$390—more than twice as high than that of the control group. The rate of return of project investment was 35 percent per year, which compares favourably with commercial lending rates to small firms.

#### ii. Start-up Kits as an alternative to Cash Transfers

The complexities of cash transfers and potential misuse by beneficiaries remains the highest risk associated with this form of PGS. However, within YA several Affiliates



have come up with alternatives to ensure that the cash is converted to start-up kits of the same monetary value as an alternative to giving cash. The case study from Namibia below is a case and point of the successes of such an initiative and the potential for upscaling to other countries.

#### Case Study 4

##### Programme - Start up kits for Entrepreneurs: Young Africa Namibia

**Country of Implementation:** Namibia

Graduates from YA Namibia who showed interest in starting a business were identified and taken through a one-week business training carried out in partnership with SME Compete (a local organisation offering business training). Thereafter, a panel consisting of YA Namibia's Director, Business Development Officer and Franchisees assessed the proposals developed by the graduates. The start-up kits were not handed to individuals (unless they were already in business) but rather to pairs or maximum 3 entrepreneurs. Agreements between the beneficiaries and YA Namibia are signed to formalise the process and include details on commitment of the beneficiaries and what should happen in the event one or more of them decide not to continue with the business i.e., tools and materials remain under the ownership of those who remain under the agreement.

#### d. Digital Job Matching Platforms

The evolution of digital labour platforms has allowed their use to be more widespread due to the increase in cell phone penetration across Africa. Whilst categorised in mainly two broad categories, online web-based platforms, and location-based platforms, they can be further distinguished by the type of tasks they perform, duration and complexity. For this study recommendations will be made on the possible adoption and use of freelance platforms<sup>6</sup>. Digital labour platforms can be defined as “*digital technologies that intermediate between suppliers and clients or directly engage workers to provide labour services*”. This can be done for those seeking formal employment as well as entrepreneurs providing services. Freelance platforms function like a marketplace, matching clients with workers for specific tasks based on a proprietary database with indicators such as reviews and ratings. For the platform to be successful, there is a need to ensure it is also location-based to ensure graduates are linked to opportunities within their localities for ease of access and transportation. The benefits of such a platform or mobile application (App) for YA graduates are numerous, however, the development, use and success are dependent on several factors.

- Cost of Platform or Mobile Application development remains high. This may require extensive funding, however, a Mobile Application developed for all YA Affiliates can be ultimately used and customised to each country or area

<sup>6</sup> ILO (2021) World Report: The role of digital labour platforms in transforming the world of work [www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public)

- The platform must have a viable business model, with several functionalities such as not only catering to YA graduates but also other TVET graduates from other institutions placed in the database after their certification or skills have been verified. YA graduates however, can be “spotlighted” to ensure they have primary placement based on algorithms.
- Payment structures need to be defined – apps which allow for adverts can charge advertisers for ad placement which in turn covers the costs of the App maintenance.
- Requires a dedicated team of back-end maintenance, (BDO can oversee the day to day running) there is need to ensure that at least one staff personnel are on hand always.
- Attracting the employers requiring the labour means extensive outreach and marketing as well as sensitization to build their trust so that they can use the platform. Urban Affiliates may benefit from charging employers to access the database, but this may reduce the number of employers willing to use the platform overall.
- Metrics from the App usage and graduate use, and subsequent employment can also be used to monitor graduate employment and as a feedback mechanism from employers/ clients on graduate’s job readiness.

### Case Study 5

#### **Programme - Digital Labour Matching Platforms: BISCATE Mozambique** **Country of Implementation: Mozambique**

In Mozambique a tenth of its population work in the informal economy coupled with at least forty-five percent of the population owning a mobile phone, UX Information Technologies launched Biscate (“odd-job” in Portuguese) in June 2016. This service allows the numerous informal and often uncertified skilled workers located throughout the country to register and advertise their services with a basic phone using USSD technology. Biscate offers potential customers access to a register of workers sorted by trade, location and experience level. Once a job has been completed, customers can rate workers, further enriching the database. As of July 2017, the 14 team members at Biscate have attracted more than 46000000 workers to the platform, connecting them to more than 28000000 customers across Mozambique’s 10 provinces. Eighteen different trades are available on the platform with the 46,000 workers distributed as follows:

In order to enable workers and customers to enjoy the service either free of charge or at a limited cost, Biscate developed a B2B cross-subsidisation model through which it charges external organisations for the following services: Data analysis on Mozambique’s labour market and informal sector; targeted below-the-line advertising through bulk SMS to the workers or customers database (for instance for hardware shops wanting to sell tools workers in specific locations); talent database subscription allowing companies to access a pool of workers filtered by trade and location, using a dedicated platform; online advertising on the website and mobile app. Biscate also partners with Vodacom, one of the top 3 leading



cellular network providers in the country in areas such as branding, USSD and billing integration.

### Case Study 6

#### Programme – Self Sustaining TVET Institutions – Bouge ONG, Benin

##### Country of Implementation: Benin

Established in 2007 as an NGO, Bouge set its sights on providing local youth with training opportunities in Agriculture. The centre started off with very low enrolment rates, however, was able to boost its results to an annual graduate total to 239 youth with 179 supported in self-employment and an overall employment rate (2018). The business model used by Bouge was one founded on flexibility and seizing the moment. Due to the Agriculture based training the centre ensured that every value chain/ crop that youth were trained on provided an opportunity to develop an occupation and revenue for the institution. As students were trained on crop production or livestock rearing, the training was coupled with entrepreneurship training and formal employment job readiness. The institution opened a Distribution centre (store front) which served as a marketing instructional unit for trainees to experience running a small marketing enterprise. A restaurant was also opened, and this resulted in the development of catering and hospitality courses, where students under instruction served as the staff (cooking, waiting and management roles). All products from the trainees' practical sessions are either sold to the public or used within the restaurant with a zero-waste policy. The institution also sought the opportunity to provide services to its surrounding community for a fee, such as agronomic advice and basic agro-related information. The centre expanded its classrooms and also built hostels (mainly for female students) where the trainees within the construction courses served as the labour force whilst also gaining practical expertise.

The centre went from 100% donor funding to 20% funds from Education workshops (participants from surrounding community attended fee-based sessions), 20% self-generated revenue (product sales, restaurant etc.) 60% partnerships (providing internships for universities and other TVET institutions who pay for their learners to attend Bouge sessions).

The centre thrives on its model of turning every training stage into a business for its financial sustainability and continues to expand. It is hailed as one of Benin's TVET success stories, with additional streams of income and revenue flowing in from its multiple partnerships.

## 5. Conclusion

The process of PGS is not by any means linear and will undoubtedly take multiple resources: time; human and financial. However, the level of effort required will go a long way to ensuring that YA achieves its vision of empowering disadvantaged youth

through skills development towards employment. The information synthesised in the study leans toward interventions at three levels (i) institutional realignment of affiliates to offer strengthened PGS mechanisms (ii) partnerships with private sector for not only mentorship but also financing through loans and credit and (iii) cash transfers or start-up kits offered via YA Affiliates to boost entrepreneurship prospects. The role of Affiliate staff is of paramount importance therefore to the success of any PGS interventions, and where needed BDO or PGS staff recruitment (part-time for implementation set up phase) would be a prerequisite.