

MUTUMBA JOSEPH (2009-M092-20027)

'The Vocational Education and Training Curriculum' and Environmental Sustainability in Uganda: The Case of Lugogo Vocational Training Institute and Cowa-Centenary Vocational Training School.

This study was about assessing the extent to which the Vocational Education and Training (VET) curriculum takes care of environmental sustainability in Uganda. The problem that prompted the study was the mismatch between observable practices in the workplaces of VET practitioners /artisans in relation to environmental concerns. This raised questions whether trainers, learners and workers in VET have requisite skills for environmental sustainability. In this regard, the case of Lugogo Vocational Training Institute and Cowa-Centenary Vocational Training School was undertaken. The objectives of the study were to establish the green skills in the VET curriculum; to explore the relationship between green skills in the VET curriculum and environmental sustainability; and to examine gaps for green skills in the VET curriculum. A case study research design with an exploratory, descriptive and qualitative approach was used. This was so because the study was not about examining the research problem by quantification but by exploring and describing how the situation of environmental sustainability varies with the VET curriculum. Green skills were traced in the VET curriculum and pedagogy as well as description of possible attitudes and behaviour that contribute to the status quo. The sample for the study comprised of 44 respondents: 6 VET teachers, 33 VET trainees and 5 key resourceful persons. Focus Group Discussions were conducted to collect qualitative data from the VET trainees and individual interviews were used for the key resourceful persons and the VET teachers. The other methods of data collection employed were observation and document analysis of the VET curriculum and records for teaching. Thematic analysis of the collected data was then manually done according to themes and concepts indicated in the conceptual framework of the study. It was found out that the current VET curriculum, in form of the Assessment Training Packages per occupation, deals with aspects of occupational health and safety and not environmental sustainability per se. Any observable efforts to address issues of environmental sustainability are a result of innovations in the implemented curriculum at the school level. There was minimal application of green skills in the VET pedagogy to deal with environmental sustainability, although there was some awareness about harmful by-products from VET processes and production. For effectiveness in greening VET, experiential learning is preferred. The actions that were taken for or against environmental sustainability in VET also depended on the influence of the latent curriculum (the attitudes and values) as well as socio-economic factors like poverty. Curricular gaps were also identified at the policy, resource (human and financial), pedagogical, governance and technological levels. In view of the said findings, the study concluded that sensitivity of the VET curriculum to environmental sustainability is still very minimal. This means that the subtle existence of green skills in the VET curriculum and pedagogy explains the wanting situation exhibited in the matters that concern environmental sustainability in VET and its outputs. In order to have a VET curriculum that is more sensitive to environmental sustainability, it was recommended that the VET curriculum should be re-oriented by the line ministries to explicitly incorporate green skills in all vocational courses. Secondly, in order to apply green skills in VET pedagogy, the capacity of VET teachers in environmental management has to be built first so as to enable them to meaningfully play a leadership role in greening the VET teaching and learning activities. Lastly, participation should be instilled

through action spearheaded by the individual, teachers, trainees and the community as far as greening VET is concerned under coordination of the line ministry/ministries.

Key Words: Vocational Education, Training Curriculum, Environmental Sustainability,