

Event Report - Maiden

Future of Work Dialogue

Date: 24th February, 2022

INTRODUCTION

On 24th February 2022, the maiden future of work dialogue, which was themed *Digitalization in TVET: Challenges and Opportunities for Young People in Ghana*, was hosted at Alisa Hotel - Accra. The event, which was a partnership between Participatory Development Associates (PDA), World University Service of Canada (WUSC), and Global Shapers of World Economic Forum, was integrated into WUSC's Innovation in Non-Traditional Vocational Education and Skills Training (INVEST) forum. With about forty (40) people participating in-person, the event featured a panel discussion, and a question-and-answer session. The *Future of Work Dialogue Series* is intended to provide a common platform for stakeholders in the youth development ecosystem to deliberate issues affecting young people's employability, recognizing the massive technological advancement the world of work is witnessing in recent times.

PANEL DISCUSSION

Moderator:

- Aseda Mensah - Head, Advocacy and Communication Unit, PDA

Discussants

- Joshua Fugar - GIZ Ghana
- Sammy Amegayibor - Ag. Executive Director, Ghana Real Estate Developers Association
- Benjamin Nii Kpani Addy - Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Sekondi-Takoradi Chamber of Construction and Industry

In their opening remarks, the panel members underscored the importance of TVET in nation building, and highlighted how privileged young people in TVET are in this current dispensation as stakeholders are working assiduously to ensure a functional TVET system and increase opportunities for young people.

The following highlights the key emerging issues from the discussions

- ***Opportunities in TVET*** - Mr Amegayibor noted that there are lots of opportunities in the TVET sector that young people can take advantage of and develop business models around. He therefore entreated the youth in the sector to be intentional about identifying the areas within the construction value chain that need tailor-made solutions, so that they can develop business models. To this end, young people can form groups of individuals with specific skills to venture into structural component building, or develop their expertise in specific areas like block laying, tiling, interior decoration, etc. Mr. Nii Kpani added that young people in the TVET sector should be intentional about researching and embracing new forms of doing things which leverage digital technologies and innovations to improve efficiency in their work.
- ***Integrating Digital Technologies in TVET*** - On his part, Mr Fugar mentioned that the Government of Ghana has been very intentional about integrating digital technologies into TVET delivery in Ghana. There is a deliberate effort to establish TVET clubs in primary schools nationwide. The Commission for TVET is championing Competence-Based Training (CBT), which will allow learners to create new ideas while the teachers become facilitators. In terms of digital integration, the Commission has developed a system that allows individuals from the informal sector to sign up for specific programs of their choice. While a skills and jobs portal has been designed to enable individuals to advertise their skills to potential clients, the registration portal also ensures that artisans get the accreditation to work.
- ***Digitizing Skills Training*** - In responding to a question on how skills training can be digitized, Mr Fugar noted that TVET schools and instructors can, for example, record videos of comprehensive training sessions or boot camps on intensive hands-on training and upload them in a learning management system where individuals have open access to it. He further highlighted the need for young people to leverage social media to advance their entrepreneurial skills and also widen their clientele base by consistently posting and sharing their skills and products online. Online learning platforms like

Google Garage offer free training on entrepreneurship and other soft skills the youth can make use of.

- ***The Access Challenge*** - Participants acknowledged the challenges young people in rural Ghana may face due to lack of connectivity to access some of the online training opportunities. To this end, the Government of Ghana and development partners are working to connect rural Ghana to the national grid to help address the connectivity challenge. In regard to having the pedagogy delivered in the local dialect in order to make it more relatable, Mr Fugar noted that the TVET Commission will launch the Open TVET MIS System, and online learning platforms translated into local dialects. In the context of partnerships, participants observed that stakeholders within the TVET ecosystem have commenced forging partnerships across the West African Sub-region, to have a harmonized accreditation system which will allow individuals to work anywhere within the Region. These are some measures taken to remove barriers to access to opportunities for young people in TVET.
- ***Poor Attitude to Work***. Participants bemoaned the lackadaisical attitude of some Ghanaian artisans towards work - unfaithfulness, poor delivery of work, the use of inferior products, lack of diligence and commitment etc. When this happens, employers and contractors are compelled to import labor from neighboring countries, especially Togo. This largely pushes the rate of youth unemployment in Ghana to higher levels.

Conclusion

The event concluded on the note that while technological advancement is causing disruptions in the world of work, it is also opening more opportunities for young people in TVET to develop their cross, soft and hard skills and get the needed exposure to be more competitive in the space. Discussants entreated the private sector to be more receptive to young people in TVET and develop internship modules to improve their skills.