



merSETA

MANUFACTURING, ENGINEERING
AND RELATED SERVICES SETA

MerSETA ADDRESS
at the
INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP SKILLS CONFERENCE
of the
BRITISH COUNCIL
SKILLS FOR EMPLOYABILITY
PROGRAM
18 July 2014

OPENING

All honourable guests Mr. Colm McGivern: Country Director British Council,
Ms Kathleen Zhong: Head of Education, British Council in China
Dr. Maharaswa from DHET,
Dr. Joy Papier from the University of the Western Cape,
Mr. Charles Kemp from FORD SA
Ms. Mekano Morojele: Head of Skills Development NB
Ms. Jean September: Deputy Director British Council,
All our visiting UK TVET College partners,
All our SA TVET College partners, and all guests attending this important conference.



Allow me to first apologize on behalf of our CEO Dr Patel who unfortunately could not be with us today, he sends his greetings and well wishes.

I have been requested to address the meeting on the following:

1. Why we as merSETA is involved in the Skills for Employability program
2. Our role within the program
3. Identified challenges, and
4. Hopefully our future involvement, in “taking it to the next level”

It is now common knowledge that SETAs and Public TVET Colleges are siblings within the Ministry of Higher Education and Training.

Our engagement with TVET colleges previously known as FET college started during the implementation of the National Skills Development Strategy 2 (commonly known as NSDS2), The Merseta Board during its strategic planning process identified Public FET colleges as critical partners in the attainment of our Vision, being “leaders in closing the Skills Gap” The strategy adopted by the Govern Board regarding FET College was and I quote “ Elevating the status of FET college within our Sector” close quote. In spite of the challenges faced and believe me there were many we continued to implement the strategy adopted by the Merseta Governing Board.



Within NSDS 3 the Minister of Higher Education and Training's Dr Blade Nzimande took a non-compromising stance prioritizing partnerships between SETAs and TVET colleges. This also forms part of the Minister's key deliverables. As merSETA we have to date entered into no less than 27 Memoranda of Agreement with public TVET colleges on a National Level. And continue to explore opportunities with other Public TVET colleges

As part of our commitment merSETA sponsored study tours to explore and expose our TVET colleges to international best practices, these tours were undertaken largely to the UK, and very recently to Canada and the USA. Some of the best practices, having been modified to suit our circumstances, are currently being implemented in some of the colleges with whom we have agreements. Our study tours of course have been conducted with the assistance of our friends at the British Council in South Africa and we want to once again express our thanks and appreciation for their assistance.

I want to believe that the relationship that has been built with the British Council over a number of years resulted in us being invited to form part of the Steering Committee of the Skills for Employability program.

We are further of the belief that there are lessons to be learned from existing TVET systems, especially from the British System with specific reference to:

- 1.1 The way TVET colleges are managed applying sound business principles that are focused on the needs of their identified clients.



- 1.2 The ability of TVET colleges to be adaptable to address the needs of their client.
- 1.3 The close relationships/partnerships between TVET colleges and immediate industry.
- 1.4 Leadership and management within TVET colleges to manage all of the above.

The fact that the Skills for Employability Programme includes all of the above, seems to be a natural fit with our own priorities, and we therefore got involved in the programme when we approached.

Merseta's role within the programme included assisting in the recruitment of the South African TVET colleges to form part of the program. Colleges that already had partnership agreements with merSETA, and had a proven track record, were approached to become partners in this project. It was also necessary to find a National footprint of colleges to be involved in the project.

As part of the steering committee, we evaluated the responses from UK colleges and attempted to do some "match-making" that seemed to be the best fit with the colleges in South Africa.

Being involved with TVET Colleges for a length of time already, merSETA makes inputs on the relationships as they roll out.

Our role also included, as part of the Monitoring and Evaluation team, the actual monitoring of progress on implementation of the activities



identified. We are fortunate to have full-time employed quality assurers in Provincial Offices for all Provinces.

As Industry is a critical component of the programme merSETA facilitated the process to get industry involved, ensuring a closer working relationship between Industry and TVET Colleges. The involvement of industry is on many levels and includes the donation of equipment, providing on the job training opportunities for learners and exposing lecturers to the current technologies being used within industry

We all are aware of the rapid and continuing changes in the technology used within Industry and as such it is important that all TVET colleges remain exposed to the reality of the world of work. I am told that in future this will be a component within the Continuous Development Plan of all college lecturers.

Now we get to the part of my address that I would like to leave out, I am supposed to give an honest and objective opinion from a merSETA perspective regarding the challenges and lessons learned, off course with the idea of offering positive critique for future and long lasting partnerships.

- Any partnership should have as it foundation optimum advantages for both parties. We are of the opinion that these partnerships were based on what could be offered rather than what was needed. A proper needs analysis would have gone a long way to ensure an appropriate alignment.



- Some of the activities identified within the programme were extremely ambitious and not easily achievable within the budget and time frame of the programme.
- The understanding of Curriculum development process for both main stream funded programmes within TVET College and Occupational directed programmes.
- In some instances assumptions were made on equipment that will be available for the project, without a proper cost analysis and budget to implement.
- More thought should have been given to the structuring of the deliverables against the programme in terms of it being “SMART” specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-based.

It is our view that in spite of the challenges raised, the programme was a success and as MerSETA we have already set aside funding to embark on the next phase. This will be a co-funded programme with the British Council for a Senior Management exchange program to the UK. We are of the opinion successful partnerships start with the vision and involvement of senior management at institutions. We believe this program will support and enhance the Skills for Employability program.

In conclusion merSETA is proud to be part of the British Council’s Skills for employability program. We believe the aim and objectives of the program is in-line with our Minister’s objectives and therefore with those of the merSETA. The project is already yielding positive results and the relationship can only grow from here onwards, hopefully becoming sustainable.



We are of the opinion that sharing of best-practices on an international level is beneficial to TVET Colleges, both UK and SA, beneficial to Industry, both UK and SA, and all stakeholders involved in these partnerships.

We believe that we should also explore a knowledge transfer of best practices identified and implemented during this programme amongst our South African Public TVET Colleges.

I thank you.

