



# Challenges Facing Technical and Vocational Education and Training Institutions on Youth Employment in Gasabo District, Rwanda

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**Abstract:** This paper contributed to education stakeholders by addressing challenges faced by TVET graduates on employment and suggesting strategies and recommendations to improve youth employment. Purposive and simple random sampling were used to select 192 respondents and data were collected from 150 TVET youth graduates, 20 TVET trainers, and 12 employers. A descriptive research design was used to collect, interpret and report data. Questionnaires were used to collect data from 150 TVET graduates whereas guided interview was used to collect data from 20 TVET trainers and 12 employers. The study noted the following challenges faced by TVET youth graduates in finding employment: insufficient training facilities, short period of industrial attachment program, training based on theory than practice, untrained trainers in CBT/CBA, and mismatch of acquired skills with employable skills. The study recommends to Rwandan Education stakeholders to set out a Dual TVET Training policy from level one to five, provide to TVET private schools training facilities as they accommodate a high number of trainees than public schools, and to expand training to all trainers on CBT/CBA.

**Keywords:** TVET, Youth, Employment, Technical skills, Employable skills.

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## 1. Introduction

TVET institutions find solutions that respond to training needs offered to trainees from different socio-economic and academic backgrounds and prepare them to get gainful employment and sustainable livelihoods. According to the ILO's Global Employment Trends for Youth 2018, statistics showed that the youth unemployment rate counted at 13.1% worldwide (ILO, 2018).

The Regional workshop on TVET systems for youth employability in Africa (2019), showed African continent challenged by youth unemployment where 20% of its population was young people aged between 15- 24 years old and among them 41% are unemployed. Feedback from that workshop showed the impact of low skills, where 70% of youth who have jobs were employed in vulnerable conditions where any time could lose a job. Youth employment in Africa is a major challenge due to schooling achievement with low skills,

which affect youth graduates' performance at the labour market and employment.

In Rwanda, youth are people with the age of 14 – 35. In 2014, it was at 40% of the total population. However, NISR counted the population aged of 16-35 as the youth at working age and this makes up only 35% of the Rwandan population, which defines the youth employment population (NISR, 2014).

Research made by Rwanda NGOs outlined three critical issues on labour market supply namely low levels of educational attainment in the labor force, a low number of people with needed technical skills, and poor linkage between learned skills from technical training institutions with market needs (Youth employment in Rwanda, 2015). A report made by National Employment Policy (2012), showed the rate of 70% of job seekers do not have the required qualification and skills to perform the job. The labor force survey conducted in 2020, showed 15.4% of TVET graduates unemployed in 2019 and 19.4% of youth unemployment in 2020.

In 2009, MIFOTRA made a National Skills Audit and findings showed a shortage of 60% of skilled technicians in Rwanda. In 2012, a similar survey was conducted by RDB and found a shortage of soft skills like business communication, leadership, human resource management, languages, and innovation and recommended strengthening and making reforms in technical training. The report made by UNESCO (2021) on the challenges faced by TVET schools, especially private schools, highlighted the shortage of equipment and infrastructures like standardized workshops, tools, equipment materials, consumables, and lack of textbooks in all levels of TVET schools both public and private. This affected acquisition of technical skills which should help TVET graduates in their employment.

Youth who graduated from TVET schools did not have enough prerequisite skills needed to perform a task related to attended trade and couldn't have a chance to benefit from opportunities job available for a TVET graduate. TVET as an important skill-oriented education with the prospect of stimulating employability and national development (Raimi & Akhuemonkhan, 2014) should facilitate youth by empowering them with employable skills needed in the labor market.

The aim of this study was to investigate the challenges faced by TVET Institutions in the provision of required competencies and practical skills at the labor market in Rwanda and to identify strategies opted by TVET Institutions to overcome these challenges faced by TVET youth graduates at the labor market.

## Theoretical Framework

The human capital theory was used in this research and had been developed since Mincer (1958, 1962, Schultz (1960, 1961), Becker (1962) and Ben-Porath (1967) settled their foundations. TVET is an investment that involves cost and benefit, and the assessment can be made by using financial criteria like present value and internal rate of return. Primarily, Janice (2013) analyzed the effect made on wage level to two types of human capital (general and specific) working in the competitive labour market that have no other related problems. He found that one of the two types of human capital can be moved to other institutions and motivates employees to use the cost and get all the benefits of training. In the opposite of the first human capital, the second is more specific to the company and cannot be transferred to the other institutions (Becker, 1975).

Garcia, J.H. (2005), showed that organizations would have increased productivity as they hired employees and provided them with specific skills through training. A Kenya Apurva Sanghi (2016) was leading economist at the World Bank, said that apart from a government that should support the private sector in economic growth and job creation, the government in collaboration with private sector should also intervene in human capital development to increase national productivity. This requires the government to invest more in improving quality education leading to innovation and creativity.

This study was guided by human capital theory which was developed by Mincer (1958, 1962), Schultz (1960, 1961), Becker (1962), and Ben-Porath (1967). From the views of Becker (1964) by analysing the effect made on the wage level of two types of human capital (general and specific) working in the competitive labor market, found that one of the two types of human capital can be moved to another institutions and motivates employees to use the cost and get all the benefits of training. Using this theory, Garcia (2005), said organizations would have increased productivity as they hired employees and provided them with specific skills through training. and creativity.

## 2. Literature Review

UNESCO defined TVET as an educational process that focuses on training of technologies and related science, that involves the acquisition of technologies, practical skills, attitudes, and knowledge about occupations in various aspects of economic life (ILO, 2020). Harvey (2005) defined employment as the propensity of learning institution's graduates to get a job and hope to make a career development. Abbas et al. (2014) said that TVET is an educational process that followed general education with technical training which directs a person to the world of work and leads to the sustainable development of the country.

From the report made by the World Bank (2020), youth unemployment in Rwanda between 2016 and 2019 showed that in 2016 youth unemployment rate was 1.86%, in 2017 was 1.77%, in 2018 was 1.7% while in 2019 was 1.66%. According to Labour Force Survey conducted by NISR in 2020, unemployment rate among TVET graduates in 2017 was 18.7%, 17.4% in 2018, and 15.4% in 2019, and during the Covid-19 pandemic, the survey indicated an increment in the youth unemployment rate from 17.0% in February 2021 to 23.5% in May 2021 (NISR, 2021).

The report showed also that TVET graduates in 2017, 2018, and 2019 were employed as follows 54.2% in 2017, 58% in 2018, and 59.6% in 2019. However, there is still a high number of 40% of TVET graduates in unemployment condition.

The World Bank (2020) report highlighted some causes of Youth unemployment like lack of skills and knowledge which prevent young people the advantage to find employment and these skills and knowledge should be acquired from TVET schools; the report showed also poor attitudes by the youth towards work, especially in agriculture and rapid changes in technology which did not match with TVET programs implemented at school level. The most challenges faced by TVET institutions are the TVET curriculum and structure which are not linked with labor market needs, the quality of training, and inadequate skills required in the labor market which led to unemployment among TVET young graduates (Lynette M.L., 2018).

A study made in South Africa, Botswana, Namibia and Tanzania, showed a very poor quality of Education provided to TVET trainees and their preparation for employment. The study showed also effort made by African countries in increasing enrolment while students' academic performance did not respond to skills and competencies required at the workplace. (Oppenheimer and Spicer, 2011).

According to Wahba (2013), TVET approach of teaching (Competence Based Training) should make more emphasis on linking school-based training with workplace requirements. Certification should be based on acquired technical skills with reference to employability options and it should start from the development of a curriculum that should be flexible to adjust emerging technological skills with work requirements (Reitz, 2018). From his view, Competency is the ability of an individual to use and apply technical and behavioural skills for a given task and duties. This is observed after assessing the accomplishment of required employment standards at the work locations (Wahba;2013).

Revised National Employment Policy (2019) emphasizes strengthening the institutional frameworks for the development of skills and employability; enhancing the quality of TVET to be responsive to current and future needs of labour market through emphasis on practical skills; improving hands-on skills among youth outside regular education system and employment; enhancing demand driven employability skills for productive job creation and private sector satisfaction and ensuring human resource.

The role of Private Sector is not only related to provision of training but also in policy formulation, setting educational priorities, provision of labour market demand, designing curricula, quality skills standards and indicators, training design and courses, industrial attachment and employment provision, strategies for implementation of TVET policy, joint school management and finally in certification.

Youth employment-population refers to an employed person with the age between 16 to 35 inclusive (NISR, 2021). It is reflected in the Private Sector Development and Youth Employment Strategy 2018 – 2024 that most of the provisions for youth employment are concerned with increasing the quantity and quality of education and training to match the perceived needs of the labour market.

Unemployment is the best way to understand the status of labour market and it occurs when active people are willing to work but do not get paid jobs. According to NISR (2021), Youth unemployment refers to the share of the labor force aged between 15-24 years old without work but available for and seeking employment. According to the UNFPA report (2017), among the factors which contribute to unemployment is inadequate and poorly human capital.

A labor market survey conducted every year by Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA)

in Tanzania, found that skills acquired by TVET graduates help two-thirds of them to gain employment, especially in agriculture, food processing, construction, and tailoring (Leyaro & Joseph, 2019). Therefore, the way TVET is implemented should convey satisfaction of youth employment and Rwanda uses TVET as one of the strategies to strengthen youth employment and for poverty reduction (Rwandan Ministry of Education, 2016).

## **2.1 Factors affecting Youth employment**

Rwanda TVET schools use Competence Based Curriculum (CBC) which is designed to help trainees to compete at labour market. It is implemented in the form of competence-based Training (CBT) and assessed in Competence-Based Assessment (CBA) approaches. A Competency Based TVET System generally uses combinations of techniques to ensure that the needs of different Industry sectors are addressed (demand), courses or competency-based training programs are developed, competency-based assessments/verifications are conducted, and employees/apprentices/trainees/students are efficiently trained and competent. This linkage facilitates TVET graduates' employment.

The research made by Whalley (1986) found that the Government of French in the identification of the importance of IAP found more benefits to trainees who did IAP to be more employed than trainees who did not have IAP. From the research made by Government of France in 2005, 80% of young students who did IAP between 6 months and 4 years, have been employed and secured at work. In Rwanda, IAP is organized to be done one month per year with the purpose is to expose TVET trainees to the labor market.

## **2.2 Challenges of youth employment**

Most challenges faced by youth employment include both supply (mismatch between skills acquired and employability) and demand (limited job development and expansion). The mismatch between demand and supply hurts youth employment where many young graduates from TVET schools cannot be absorbed by the market in need.

The number of graduates from both general education, TVET, and Higher learning institutions in this decade has increased faster than it has ever happened before in comparison to the economy's absorption capacity. The utilization of technology reduces the workforce while supply is high. Shortage of Skills is attributed to educational disparities (Dias, R. and Posel D.; 2007).

Today many countries are moving from labour-intensive to capital-intensive production processes at the same time the service sector. This leads to a low number of employment opportunities, especially for unskilled people. The countries are now not dependent on a high number of employees but on high-skill technology, which contributes more to economic growth but

excludes many young people, especially those with low skills.

In many countries, the increase in unemployment has been related to economic growth since 1999 and has given a call for unemployment growth among youth with low capital to start up their own business. On the other hand, the economy developed slowly in comparison to employment over the years (NPC 2012). There was no sustainable development of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in such a way it reduced unemployment and affected highly youth than other people.

The economic background of some TVET graduates contributes a lot to their studies. Some trainees are coming from poor families who cannot support them with job creation and are sometimes not even ready to finance their studies. Some strategies should be put in place to facilitate the education of this category of youth (MIFOTRA, 2019)

According to the ILO (2013), youth at the workplace are challenged by skills mismatch, especially in Africa, and barriers to quality employment. Normally, graduates from TVET institutions should be equipped with employable skills required by potential employers. However, the mismatch between acquired skills from the training program and required skills at the workplace produces imbalances between demand and supply. Youth with low skills encounter a very high risk of lacking a job.

From the report made on Rwanda Youth Labour Markets and the School-to-Work (2020), reported a short period of short course training where it took between four to six months for graduates to get an unspecified job. According to EICV5 2016/2017, the percentage of youth employment decreases with time. For example, the said report mentioned youth employment was at 79.1% in 2013/2014 and become 77.2% in 2016/2017 (NISR, 2018).

## **2.3 Strategies to enhance youth employment**

According to The National Skills Development and Employment Promotion Strategy (NSSEP, 2019 – 2024), the youth should be equipped with marketable skills and get access to quality employment. The NSSEP has three pillars, namely, skills development, employment promotion, and job matching. For each pillar, there are well-structured programs with well-defined interventions like the provision of education relevant to the labor market at national and international levels and the creation of employment. Rwanda National Employment program (2014-2018) had four pillars, namely, skill development, entrepreneurship and business development, labor market interventions and coordination & monitoring, and evaluation of national employment interventions. These strategies should be enhanced with an education curriculum ready to respond to employment needs.

TVET institutions together with Employers should support new youth employment by offering apprenticeship and internship programs to ease them into the world of work and develop acquired skills as one barrier required as experience. Ministry of Education should invest more in career guidance from primary to lower secondary by organizing one career guidance day at the school level and a career guidance campaign at district and national level.

Self-employment and creating their own business are the strategies to solve youth employment challenges but young people encounter the problem of having less start-up capital to start their business, and fewer entrepreneurship skills, experience, and knowledge, which suggests that they should be facilitated in their entrepreneurship development by setting tangible measures like provision of tool kits. Schools should organize sessions to be delivered by young entrepreneurs and share experiences with students to motivate them and to answer some of their questions.

## **3. Methodology**

This study set to answer the following questions: What are the challenges faced by TVET institutions and which affect students' required competencies and practical skills in labour market in Rwanda? What are the strategies to be taken by TVET Institutions' Leaders and policymakers to overcome these challenges? Questionnaires and guided interviews were used to collect data and a descriptive survey design was used for recording, describing, analysing, and reporting data.

### **3.1 Target population**

The target population in this research was TVET graduates, trainers, and employers in the Gasabo district. According to EICV 5 (2018), Kigali City was among the provinces with the highest Youth at 36.5% and Gasabo district was the first district with a high number of Youth (36.8% of 898,764 total youth in Kigali). Statistics also showed that Kigali City was leading among provinces with 4% of youth who attended TVET schools. According to the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR) from the Labour Force Survey (2020), Gasabo district was among six districts with a high youth unemployment rate of 18.4% and the first in Kigali city (NISR, 2020).

### **3.2 Sample size and procedures**

The sample size of this research was divided into three categories namely TVET Graduates, Trainers, and employers. The research involved 192 respondents which were selected using purposive and simple random sampling and composed of 150 TVET graduates and 30 Trainers, selected using simple random sampling and 12 employers selected using purpose sampling. Purposive sampling was used to select 5 TVET schools, 2 hotels, and 4 companies.

### 3.3 Data collection instruments

Information from different respondents were collected by use questionnaires from TVET graduates and structured interview used to collect data from TVET trainers and employers, and this helped to get more significant information in a short period from different respondents. According to Gay (1992), questionnaires give room to respondents to express their understanding or options on the needed information and provide suggestions.

### 3.4 Data analysis

Mixed method was used to analyse collected data. Quantitative data was used to analyse descriptive statistics data from TVET graduates while qualitative

data was used to analyse data from interview made with TVET trainers and employers. Data were interpreted and reported as summary in the form of graphics, tables, pie and texts. To collect reliable and valid data, piloting was conducted and because this study was related to employment, youth under 16 years old were not considered.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 TVET graduates' employment status

The respondents of this category were asked if they are currently employed, self-employed, or unemployed. The chart below shows the employment status of TVET graduates.



Figure 1: Employment status of TVET graduates

Among 150 respondents, 48% were employed, 21% were self-employed and 31% were unemployed. The findings suggest that there is a considerable contribution of TVET on youth employment where 69% have employment. However, 31%, which is one third of TVET graduates, do not have an employment.

To understand why TVET graduates did not get employment after graduation, 82.6% of unemployed TVET graduates, highlighted lack of experience on the advertised job and technical skills, which lead to failure while doing recruitment exam, and shortage of vacant post related to pursued trade in TVET schools. Only 8 respondents (17.4%) added two reasons namely lack of start-up capital and shortage of soft skills like entrepreneurship skills to help sustainability of their business. The finding showed improvement needed to match technical skills with employable skills, enrolment with available workplace, and training methodology based on practice than theory.

TVET is a good engine to increase employability and well-paid employment for youth people. Hirshleifer, al. (2012) agreed that even if the cost of education in TVET is very high in relation to general education, the earning is also very high compared to general education. Tripney and Hombrados (2013) conducted a comparative

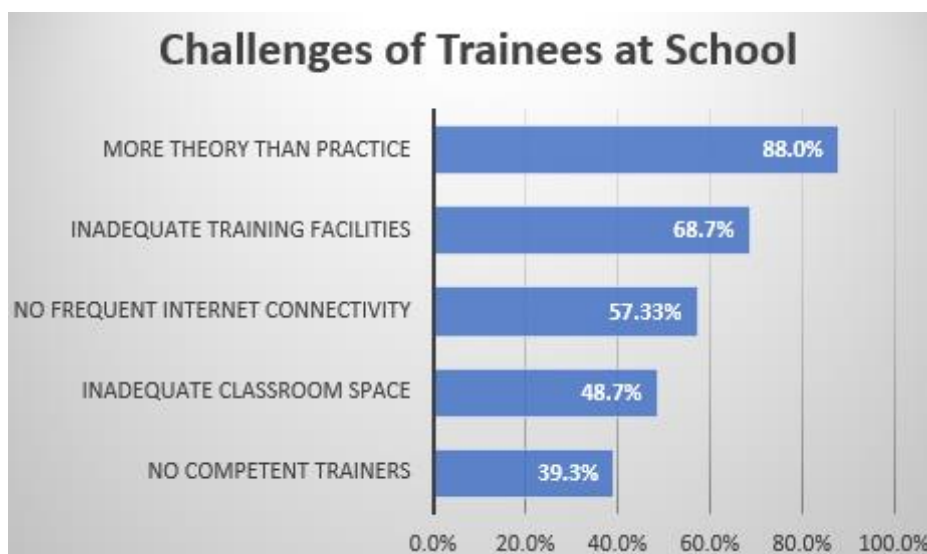
quantitative analysis related to the impact of TVET on employment and realized that there was high probability of TVET graduates finding employment in the formal sector than their colleagues graduated from general education

### 4.2 Challenges faced by TVET graduates which affect their employment

Data from labour Force survey 2021 made in Rwannda, knowledge and skills gap, poor support or facilitation of new entry into job market, high-skill technology labour market, low labour absorption capacity and labour market demand and supply were mentioned as hurted youth employment ( NISR,2021). From the World Bank (2020) report some of the causes of youth employment are, lack of skills and knowledge which prevent young people the advantage of getting employment and these skills and knowledge should be acquired from TVET institutions as reported by Skills for Productive Employment (ILO, 2008). ILO (2019), added the primary cause for the country's people unemployment including youth, is mismatch between the skills needed

at labour market and the skills of graduates acquired at school.

Here are challenges highlighted by respondents during research:



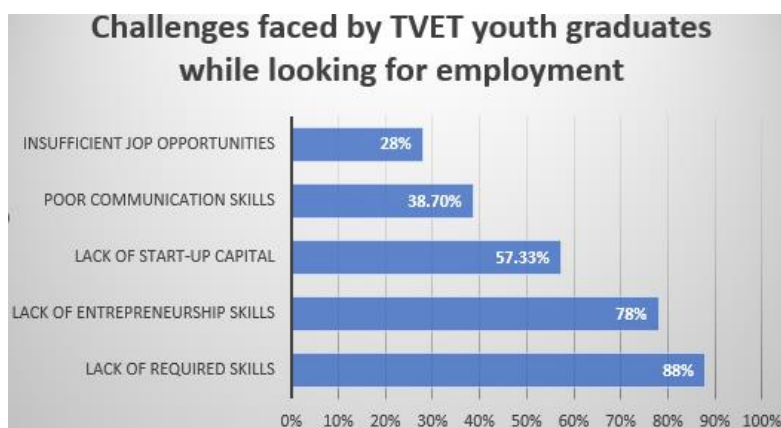
**Figure 2: Challenges faced by TVET trainees at school**

Among 150 respondents, 132 rated learning theory than practice ( 88%) , 103 respondents equivalent to 68.7% , rated inadequate learning facilities( materials, tools, equipment, and consumables), 86 respondents equivalent to 57.33% rated none frequent internet connectivity at school , 73 respondents equivalent to 48.8% rated inadequate classroom space and 59 respondents equivalent to 39.3% rated no competent trainers to adopt content to trainees.

According to Olaitan, (1996) TVET is an education that provides people with competencies which are

responsive to social needs and is quick solution to the youth employment crisis.

Analysis of the results showed the challenges of TVET schools to implement new curriculum of CBT/CBA, which requires trainees to do more practice than theory. Practice itself requires schools to avail enough training facilities and organize frequent training of trainers in CBT/CBA. Schools with not training facilities do not meet minimum standatds to offer technical skills and thereafter affect TVET graduates' employment.



**Figure 3: Challenges faced by TVET graduates while looking for employment**

Data collected from 150 TVET youth graduates showed , 88% ( 132 respondents) lack of required skills to perform given recruitment exam, 78% ( 117 respondents) lack of entrepreneurship skills, 57.33% ( 86 respondents) lack of start-up capital and only 28% ( 42 respondents) insufficient job opportunities. From the

findings, there is connection between lack employment with acquired skills at TVET school. with inadequate skills at worplace like communication skills, entrepreneurship skills and technical skills.



### 4.3 Challenges faced by Trainers which affect TVET youth employment

Even if there is great contribution of TVET on youth employment, TVET graduates in Gasabo district still have challenges while training students. The findings from interviewed 20 trainers mentioned lack of adequate training materials, tools, equipments and consumables, curriculum which keeps on changing and which does not correlate with labour market need, insufficient training of Trainers on CBT/CBA, shortage of companies to host trainees during Industrial Attachment Program (IAP), and insufficient time for Industrial Attachment Program. For example one trainer said: *“At our school, no book related to the trade I am teaching, I try to make notes refer to curriculum. So it is not very easy for our trainees to read a book and do their homework”*. One trainer said: *“How can you pretend a trainee to get employment while he has never make practice at school?. For example in tailoring, students used sometimes carton, while it reserved for beginners. Schools do not have electrical sewing machine, she added”*. Provision of training facilities should improve trainees performance and increase their employability.

Lack of skills of the workforce is the most cited explanation of unemployment among the youth graduates and sometimes this shortage of Skills is attributed to educational disparities (Dias & Posel, 2007). According to ILO (2013), youth at workplace are challenged by skills mismatch especially in Africa. From the report of UNESCO- UNEVOC (2013), countrywide, youth claim of lacking jobs and others are underemployed. According to Hausmann (2008), the primary cause for the country’s people unemployment including youth, is a structured mismatch between the skills needed by the modern economy and the skills supplied.

### 4.4 Strategies to enhance Youth employment

#### 4.4.1 Role of TVET Trainers and leaders

School leaders have the responsibility of monitoring trainers during teaching and learning. They provide advice for improvement and motivate them during the teaching and learning process. The impact of teaching and learning monitoring is, improvement of quality of teaching and learning, which lead to employment of graduates. Teachers on their sides manage classrooms and monitor industrial attachment program.

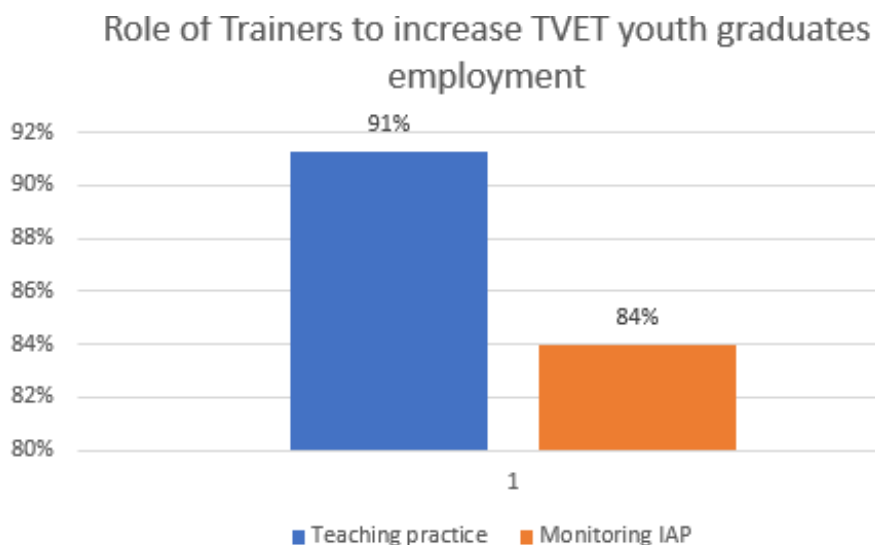


Figure 4: Strategies to improve employability

Finding from 20 trainers, 91.3% rated teaching focussed on more on practice than theory while teaching and 84% (18 of respondents) rated to monitor regularly industrial attachment program. This number showed their contribution on youth employment.

#### 4.4.2 Role of TVET Institutions and companies on youth employment

Trainers and employers interviewed suggested equipping schools with tools, equipment, materials and consumables by enhancing use of made in Rwanda product, textbooks and where possible digitalize them to increase their access, increasing time for industrial

attachment program; regular monitoring of TVET schools to be sure that they meet training standards in terms of skills acquisition & competencies, alternating time for IAP to trainees of L3, L4 and L5 in order to reduce overcrowding in the same and limited companies, involvement of Private sector during development of curriculum, especially occupational standards, content design, and industrial attachment program, ensuring that Trainees have full and updated information about labour market demand and needs and ensuring linkage of enrolment in trades with available labour market demand. For example one employer said: *“It is my 8 years in management of hotel,*

*I have never participated in workshop related to TVET training, we do recruitment at least once per year for new employees and receive trainees in IAP; None has asked us challenges met with our staff or trainees, it is also a challenge. He added: " They should invite us while collecting data on content to be taught at school because some times when trainees came in IAP, they complained on the content learnt at school which is differ from content practised in the companies". One employer said: " How can you learn to use carpentry machines in three weeks ? it is impossible. They are in 5 categories, and you ask a young girl or boy to perform its parts in three weeks. It requires enough time to know how it works and start performing a task. it can't be possible".*

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The government of Rwanda has strengthened TVET by implementing TVET and other policies which provide opportunities for youth employment. The findings of this study showed a significant role of TVET on employment. However, more effort should be made to the provision of school facilities, monitor implementation of IAP for effective labour force exposure to world of work, and training of trainers in the new curriculum. TVET sector should continue to be more attractive in terms of job employment & opportunities if they equip students with employable and technical skills. In collaboration with different stakeholders, TVET institutions will overcome highlighted challenges and the number of TVET graduates employed increases with taken measures.

The Ministry of Education should set out a dual TVET Training policy for level one to five, providing TVET private schools with consumables as they accommodate the high number of trainees than public schools, and strengthening regular training of trainers in CBT/CBA.

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