

## **Skilling Africa Youth: What can we do better?**

“In spite of much progress, Agricultural Technical Vocational and Educational Training Institutions (ATVETS) in the region are not yet providing the labour force needed by the agricultural sector.” This was the opening statement of Dr. Richard Hawkins at one of the plenary sessions during the RUFORUM Conference 2018

Citing Lack of practical skills of ATVET graduates, employers want agribusiness functional or soft skills; ATVET programmes are still too theoretical. ATVETs should not be seen as junior universities; many of these institutions want to become universities. Universities and technical institutions should both exist independently. Accreditation, delivery and assessment should be distinct. Skills development is different from academic development, therefore competence based learning should be improved and taught separately.

ATVET instructors need improved skills to deliver CBET. Partnerships are key to delivering results. Private sector can provide facilities, internships and knowledge while universities can provide teaching of specialized ATVET instructors, facilities (Laboratories) and internships.

On her part, Dr. Nyamu, Principal, Baraka technical College said “Industry needs to engage someone who has the skill to be useful in society. Technical colleges produce a technical workforce and a skilled workforce is what will transform our society. Our society needs a change of perspective and attitude when it comes to TVET institutions.”

TVETs should consume research output knowledge from the universities, practice and transfer to the society.

“It is easier for a farmer to reach a technical college back in the village rather than a university to get a solution.” Therefore, the universities should train the managers and TVETs train the workforce.

Nanjakululu, on behalf of Kevin Desai, TVET is the driver of any economy. In Kenya, TVETs have been stigmatized as a place for failures; most prefer to go to the universities. Kenya has a TVET legal framework and its own institution to achieve its mandate.

In conclusion, all the youth in Africa are skilled, the problem we have is mismatching the issue relevantly and competently skilled.