



High-level Policy Dialogue and Capacity Building Workshop on Quality
Apprenticeship - South Africa, July 31 to August 4, 2023

*Promoting quality apprenticeship in India, South Africa, China, Ethiopia, and Switzerland - A
South-South and triangular cooperation (SSTC)*

Background

The evolving landscape of work, influenced by emerging technologies, demographic shifts, climate change, globalization, and recent global health challenges, has led to significant disruptions. Adaptation to these changes necessitates a flexible workforce equipped with updated and relevant skills, achieved through skilling, reskilling, and upskilling efforts.

Traditional education systems need help to keep up with the rapidly changing skill demands. Apprenticeship models and dual training systems are emerging as effective solutions. These systems bridge the gap between education and practical workforce needs, even as their applicability in the context of lifelong learning is being examined.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) recognizes apprenticeships as vital for decent work and addressing unemployment, especially among youth. The ILO works to enhance apprenticeships by setting global standards, facilitating research, sharing knowledge, and promoting best practices.

The ILO's SSTC project involves senior policymakers from China, Ethiopia, India, and South Africa. It creates a platform for a High-level Policy Dialogue and Capacity Building Workshop on Quality Apprenticeships. In collaboration with the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET South Africa), the ILO's South Africa branch is organizing this event in Pretoria **from July 31 to August 4, 2023**. The objective is to advocate for top-tier apprenticeship programs that equip youth with skills and practical experience for success in the labour market.

High-level Policy Dialogue

The High-level Policy Dialogue brought together senior policymakers from China, Ethiopia, India, and South Africa to comprehensively explore Quality Apprenticeship. This event comprised a series of Policy Dialogues, each delving into key aspects of the subject. These senior policymakers actively engaged in discussions, sharing their countries' practices and experiences to shape the future of apprenticeship programs.

The event focused on three main areas:

1. **Making Apprenticeship Attractive:** Strategies and Challenges in Achieving Apprenticeship Targets while appealing to youth and industry.
2. **Apprenticeship Benefits for SMEs:** Unpacking the advantages and addressing challenges, highlighting how apprenticeships can be advantageous for Small and Medium Enterprises.
3. **Role of Sector Skill Bodies:** Understanding the contributions and opportunities these bodies offer in facilitating and promoting apprenticeships.

Each dialogue provided a platform for in-depth discussions, allowing policymakers to draw from their expertise and national contexts. They exchanged insights on enhancing the appeal of apprenticeships, maximizing their benefits for SMEs, and utilizing sector skill bodies to support successful initiatives.

Throughout these dialogues, participants collaborated to explore innovative strategies that could reshape apprenticeship landscapes in their respective countries. By sharing ideas, experiences, and approaches, the event cultivated an environment conducive to developing high-quality apprenticeship systems, contributing to advancing workforce development and economic growth.

Capacity Building Workshop

The Capacity Building Workshop targeted apprenticeship policymakers from China, Ethiopia, India, and South Africa, aiming to enhance their abilities in identifying policy options and innovative solutions. The objective was to reform their respective national apprenticeship systems by implementing these solutions. The workshop involved sharing successful apprenticeship practices, including visits to enterprises showcasing their accomplishments.

The Policy Dialogue was a reflective process involving diverse interest groups discussing mutual but not necessarily identical concerns. This approach recognized varied perspectives and interests among stakeholders, aiming to achieve shared understandings and agreed solutions to policy-related issues. The High-level Policy Dialogue and Capacity Building Workshop on Quality Apprenticeship provided a platform for exchanging practices and strategies among participating countries, fostering the modernization of apprenticeship systems. The anticipated outcome was a draft action plan to reform and modernize national apprenticeship regulations, guided by capacity building and policy dialogue inputs.

Senior policymakers from each country, including representatives from the national government, employer associations, and workers' unions, attended the workshop. These representatives utilized inputs on quality apprenticeship and insights from successful initiatives to formulate policy options and solutions for improving their apprenticeship systems. Implementation of the draft action plan was expected within a defined timeframe.

Day 1

Welcome and Introduction to the SSTC High-level Policy Dialogue and Capacity building workshop

- In his opening remarks, ILO Country Director for South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, and Eswatini, Mr. Joni, highlighted that the High-level Policy Dialogue and Capacity Building Workshop on Quality Apprenticeship were meant to ensure constructive dialogue and the invaluable sharing of knowledge between South Africa, Ethiopia, China, and India.
- He also noted that it was important to note that the collective efforts had been set in motion after adopting Resolution 208, signifying ILO's commitment to quality apprenticeship, and tackling the pressing challenges of youth unemployment, skill mismatch, and strategic skill development.
- South Africa has taken remarkable strides by formulating a comprehensive national strategy with the establishment of over 30 specialized centres across the country, which has laid the foundation for targeted skill enhancement and capacity-building, which provide a good opportunity for South-South and triangular cooperation (SSTC) among the countries.
- He also highlighted the importance of digitalization in apprenticeship programs as the world rapidly transforms, with technology playing an instrumental role in reshaping industries and economies. Therefore, embracing digitalization was not merely a choice but a necessity, and we need to harness its potential to facilitate progress and inclusivity.
- Director FEDUSA pointed out that the active involvement of workers in decision-making processes ensures that their experiences and perspectives are considered in designing effective interventions.
- The government is pivotal in setting the foundation for systemic change. Policies, regulations, and funding mechanisms can be tailored to incentivize skill development, support apprenticeship programs, and promote women's participation in traditionally male-dominated industries. Collaborative efforts between government agencies,

educational institutions, and businesses can lead to the development of comprehensive frameworks that address the challenges faced by the Women Sector. By creating an enabling environment for upskilling and reskilling, governments can bolster economic growth, reduce gender disparities, and ensure a workforce that is prepared for future demands.

- In her remarks, Ms. Anita Amorim – Head of the Emerging and Special Unit (ILO), highlighted the significance of South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) in facilitating dialogue and promoting the exchange of knowledge. She also noted that the essence of SSTC lies in its ability to transcend traditional boundaries and unite diverse stakeholders with a common purpose; thus, it was important for the stakeholders from the four participating countries to come together to learn from one another's experiences, expertise, and perspectives on apprenticeship and skills.

Partnerships and collaborations among institutes, organisations, and ministries

Mr. Duncan Chando emphasized the significance of South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) in apprenticeship:

1. **SSTC as a partnership between equals:** Mr. Chando highlighted that SSTC is a partnership based on principles of horizontality, where countries in the global system engage in mutual exchanges to find development solutions. It promotes a multi-stakeholder approach, fostering collaboration and cooperation among diverse actors.
2. **Principles of SSTC:** The principles of SSTC include domestic ownership, mutual benefit, non-conditionality, respect for national sovereignty, and non-interference in internal affairs, among others. These principles guide the partnership and ensure a balanced and respectful approach.
3. **Demand-driven mechanisms of SSTC:** SSTC operates in a demand-driven manner, focusing on capacity development, exchanging ideas, experiences, and good practices. It emphasizes the importance of building alliances and partnerships, democratizing access to finance, reintroducing values and practices of solidarity and reciprocity into the financial sphere, and fostering local development. SSTC encompasses social and ethical banking and blended finance approaches.
4. The linkage (as the 2 concepts are not equal in their terms) between BRICS nations and South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) is characterized by several key elements. Capacity-development activities are centered around technical cooperation initiatives in education departments, aiming to bolster a country's capability to foster targeted development. Sharing experiences and best practices involves countries coming together, often through conferences, to exchange expertise in specific domains, enabling the identification and adoption of successful practices across nations. The formation of partnerships occurs when two countries or regional organizations align their developmental interests, leading to cooperative strategies and resource sharing. Additionally, creating and reinforcing networks and platforms involve various stakeholder groups from different developing countries, utilizing periodic meetings or web platforms to foster frequent interaction, knowledge dissemination, and effective expertise management. There is strong synergy between BRICS and SSTC in driving sustainable development through shared knowledge, cooperation, and innovative strategies.
5. The ILO Recommendation on Enhancing the Quality of Apprenticeships emphasizes collaboration at the international, regional, and national levels to elevate the standards of apprenticeships. This involves exchanging information on effective practices, fostering

partnerships to provide comprehensive learning experiences for apprentices, and acknowledging competencies gained through apprenticeship programs or prior learning. The recommendation highlights the importance of forming strong partnerships through national, sectoral, or occupational skills bodies, global alliances, and apprenticeship networks. Additionally, it underscores the need to promote the recognition of apprenticeship qualifications on local, regional, and global scales.

Quality apprenticeship in the context of Future of Work: Challenges, Policy Options and Recommendation

During the presentation session facilitated by Dr Ashwani Aggarwal¹, participating countries provided insights into quality apprenticeships within the evolving Future of Work context. This encompassed an exploration of the challenges encountered, the array of policy options considered, and the recommendations put forth.

South Africa, India, and Ethiopia emerged as countries facing analogous challenges in terms of Industry participation and the task of rendering apprenticeships more appealing to the youth. Meanwhile, China showcased a distinctive approach where enterprises play a pivotal role in the apprenticeship landscape, fostering a robust collaboration between enterprises and schools. However, a notable disparity was highlighted in China, with certain marginalized segments such as women, migrants, and individuals with disabilities encountering greater obstacles in accessing training opportunities.

Across these nations, the concept of apprenticeships has been incentivized in diverse ways. South Africa, India, and China have all initiated incentive mechanisms to encourage greater engagement with apprenticeship programs. On the other hand, Ethiopia is implementing a Pilot Apprenticeship program specifically designed to incentivize the participation of apprentices.

The conversation further revolved around significant reforms adopted by each country. South Africa has formalized the National Artisan and Apprenticeship Advisory Body (NADAB) to provide a structured framework for artisan development. Integrating technology, particularly digital platforms, into apprenticeship programs has been a transformative reform in India. On the other hand, Ethiopia has focused on enhancing governance by establishing a framework through the National Skills Development Council and sector skill boards. In China, the innovative Dew Drop Programme was unveiled, which amalgamates skills training with a support system for citizens to relocate to urban areas grappling with skill shortages.

China

Enterprises are pivotal in facilitating apprenticeship training, taking on a prominent position. These enterprises must establish formal agreements with the apprentices and the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) school partners.

The curriculum for an apprenticeship should adhere closely to prescribed training standards, ensuring comprehensive coverage of various domains. A particular emphasis should be placed on enhancing proficiency in technical skills, digital aptitude, eco-friendly competencies, and occupational safety measures, among others.

In terms of assessment methodologies, a multifaceted approach is employed. This includes formative assessment to track progress during the learning journey, modular assessment to evaluate specific skill modules, and summative assessment to gauge overall competence.

As a motivating incentive, enterprises actively involved in delivering apprenticeship training are entitled to claim subsidies. The stipulated amount is a minimum of 5,000 CNY, equivalent to around

¹ The team leader for ILO's thematic work area on Work- based Learning, Apprenticeships and Recognition of Prior Learning.

705 USD, for each apprentice annually. This financial support serves as a recognition of the enterprises' role in nurturing skilled individuals and fostering a competent workforce.

Next steps encompass the full-scale implementation of the China New Enterprise-based Apprenticeship program, the establishment of a comprehensive national lifelong vocational training system, the reinforcement of collaborative efforts on both bilateral and multilateral fronts, and the intensified focus on the nurturing and development of highly skilled talents.

Good practices on apprenticeship In Changxing County of Huzhou City in China

In Changxing County, every town has its dedicated continuing education institute. These institutes serve as valuable hubs for a range of educational initiatives catering to different needs, primarily focusing on developing and enhancing skills among the local populace.

The offerings at these institutes encompass a variety of programs, including workforce transfer training, reskilling programs, enterprise staff training, and community education endeavours. These initiatives are specifically tailored to meet the needs of urban residents, ensuring that they remain competitive and adaptable in today's dynamic job market.

Two examples are the Continuing Education Institute of Si'an Town and the Continuing Education Institute of Lijiaxiang Town. These institutions play a pivotal role in harnessing the unique strengths of their respective regions. By collaborating closely with local businesses, they actively engage in the nurturing of apprentices. This partnership approach is instrumental in equipping apprentices with relevant, practical skills that align with the demands of the local job landscape.

The township continuing education institutes have carved out their reputation based on their exceptional recognition, adaptability, and hands-on experience. Township enterprises have noticed this, showing enthusiastic support and involvement in the apprenticeship programs offered by these institutes.

A strategic move has been made to further elevate the quality of apprenticeship training by establishing "branches + centres" of the prestigious Changxing Technician College within the townships. This forward-looking initiative aims to enhance the overall calibre of apprenticeship training, ensuring that participants gain theoretical knowledge and practical insights that will stand them in good stead in the workforce.

In essence, these continuing education institutes contribute to the growth and upskilling of individuals within Changxing County and actively foster a symbiotic relationship between education and local enterprises. This synergy is pivotal in creating a well-prepared workforce and well-aligned with the needs of the evolving job market.

Within the realm of apprenticeship management and implementation, the structural framework is influenced by the National Policy on Skill Development and Entrepreneurship of 2015, underscoring the significance of apprenticeship in shaping a proficient workforce in India. In alignment with this

vision, the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme was introduced on August 19, 2016, with the primary objective of furnishing monetary incentives to establishments that engage in apprenticeship initiatives as defined by the Apprentices Act 1961.

Over the span of the last three years, there has been a remarkable three-fold surge in the count of women apprentices who underwent training, escalating from 54,280 in the fiscal year 2020-21 to an impressive 1,48,831 in the fiscal year 2022-23.

The apprenticeship system encounters several significant challenges, including the need for greater industry engagement, the presence of multiple implementing agencies, the promotion of women's participation, and the endeavour to make apprenticeship a compelling and aspirational choice among the youth.

Lessons learnt: The integration of technology and streamlined processes through the apprenticeship portal (www.apprenticeshipindia.gov.in) has significantly accelerated apprenticeship engagement. Incentives like stipend sharing under the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS) and increased employer flexibility have successfully boosted industry involvement. Industries now have the liberty to introduce demand-based courses, recruit apprentices from different states, and set their own apprenticeship policies. Advocacy efforts have made apprenticeship training more appealing to youth. Enhancements include broader apprentice coverage, optional trades for school dropouts, opportunities for non-engineering graduates, and the use of Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) to enhance stipend payments and financial distribution under NAPS.

Good practice on use of technology in apprenticeships

Technology has significantly revolutionized apprenticeships, most notably by establishing a portal-based system that efficiently manages every aspect of apprenticeship training, enhancing administrative efficacy. This platform provides convenient access for various stakeholders, including establishments, candidates, apprentices, State Governments/ UT Administrations, SSDMs, RDSDEs, SAAs, AAAs, NSDC, SSCs, TPAs, and others.

Furthermore, technology-driven learning and capacity-building resources play a crucial role. These resources encompass comprehensive user guides, interactive tutorials, and chat-based support services, all reinforced by instructive videos. In tandem, the system incorporates review, monitoring, and continuous portal enhancement mechanisms. It offers an interactive dashboard that generates real-time reports, presenting data on various parameters such as age, gender, caste, State/ UT, district, sector, specific courses (job roles), training duration, claim status, and the status of Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) payments, ensuring up-to-date information availability.

Ethiopia

Industry-led cooperative training or apprenticeship emerges as the premier choice among suitable training methodologies, particularly finding its stride within medium and large-scale enterprises. This approach entails substantial involvement from the industry itself, encompassing the entire spectrum

from designing and developing training programs to registering trainees, facilitating placements, delivering training, and overseeing its progress through monitoring and evaluation processes. Within this framework, trainees undergo foundational theoretical, skill-based, and attitude-focused training within the industry, often facilitated by industry trainers. In cases where executing fundamental theoretical training within the industrial setting proves unfeasible, alternative arrangements are made to conduct these sessions within nearby Technical and Vocational Training (TVT) institutions.

Several challenges beset the cooperative training landscape, including constrained industry involvement in the program, inadequate training program design and coordination between training institutions and industries, dearth of industry experts qualified as competent trainers (with both certification and appropriate training methodologies), limited capacity within sectors to absorb the available trainee pool, insufficient awareness and understanding among industry stakeholders and experts regarding occupational standards and cooperative training concepts, deficiencies in conducting industry competency assessments, budgetary limitations that hinder adequate financial coverage by training institutions, the absence of a mandatory legal framework to facilitate streamlined implementation, and notable quality gaps present within the national occupational standard documents.

South Africa

The apprenticeship system grapples with several key challenges, including securing robust employer support and buy-in from small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs). Addressing curriculum reform necessitates increased industry engagement to ensure its relevance. Overcoming capacity limitations encompassing facilities and equipment, as well as enhancing the proficiency of lecturers, stands as a significant hurdle. Existing funding mechanisms often need to be more supportive. Additionally, fostering employer commitment to providing adequate workplaces, streamlining bureaucratic and administrative processes, and ensuring efficient execution remain pivotal areas demanding attention.

South Africa Good practices in apprenticeship system

1. Centres of Specialisation Programme Roll Out
2. Decade of the Artisan Advocacy Programme
3. Standardised apprenticeship grant for ALL Sectors in place, including a standardized grant for Artisan Recognition of Prior Learning
4. Statutory Establishment of National Apprenticeship and Artisan Advisory Body (NAADAB)

Functions of apprenticeship currently using technology Innovation in Apprenticeship -Promoting digitalization.

Area	China	Ethiopia	South Africa	India
<i>Use of technology</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Online teaching - Curriculum development -Registration of candidates -Progress monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Registration of apprenticeship - Registration of companies -To generate all data- enrolment, graduates, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Training -Teaching and learning -Application & uploading modules - Accreditation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Employers registration/establishment -Registration of candidates
<i>Area's technology can be used</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Online curriculum delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Labour demand identification Registration of trainees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Digital certification - Enhance rollout of existing digital technologies using multiple areas -Use of existing digital enablers such as Nahanal pathways management system & SA youth Mobi-zero rated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -App based technology
<i>Challenges in using DT</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of practical operation for apprentices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Availability of right information /data in industries -Digital literacy and coverage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Connectivity -lack of access in rural areas -Loads shading (2/4hrs blackout) -Note well enough used/advocated Verification -Employers buy in - Electricity/blackouts -Lack of skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Tech glitches -Internet access in rural areas.
<i>How to overcome the challenges</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hybrid mode of training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Advocate the use of technology -Training -Explore better technology and training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lobby for digital access -work within existing energy challenges -Build digital capacities so no one is left out -Create awareness/champion in TVETS Advocacy -Verification of agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Expand internet coverage in rural areas -Use App based system -Creating more awareness among MSMEs -Use of 3rd party to support MSMEs on DT

Promoting Apprenticeship in MSMEs

Country	Issues to be addressed	Proposed solutions
China	Work together to collect evidence	Through joint studies
	Senior experts training technical workers and solve technical problems in MSSMES	
	Fund support (subsidy, Tax break	
	Make full use of provincial public training.	
Ethiopia	Entry point – dialogue -Strategic framework & provide quality training standard	- implementation guidelines; capacity development based on needs assessment. Special attention
	Special attention for MSMEs	
	Making apprenticeship attractive	-incentives, funding -package based on demand of the enterprise
	Strategic collaboration and partnership -	With business org, professional association, trade association, federal & regional public bodies.
	Digitalization	
	Digitalization	
South Africa	Improve funding and cashflow	
	Incentivising the SMES	Intermediary to sort admin
India	Expand the definition of SMES	
	Mandatory registration of SMES	
	Advocacy initiatives all levels.	
	Apprenticeship should be part of universal education curricula	
	Incentivise policy for MSMEs to be strengthened.	

Challenges in Policy/Strategy Implementation

1. **Target Achievement and Quality Balance:** Shifting from target attainment to prioritizing quality and diversification brings forth challenges in maintaining a delicate equilibrium between quantity and superior standards.
2. **Inclusivity and Skills Mismatch:** Persistent challenges arise in rectifying gender and disability imbalances while addressing the growing skill-relevance gap for an evolving future labour market.
3. **Industry Engagement and Employer Buy-In:** Garnering support from Micro and SMEs remains a crucial obstacle, as involving employers is pivotal for effective policy and strategy execution.
4. **Apprenticeship Appeal and Resource Allocation:** Enhancing the attractiveness of apprenticeships necessitates infusing aspirational elements, and addressing practical concerns such as stipends while securing sustainable funding mechanisms remains an ongoing challenge.
5. **Capacity Strengthening and Long-Term Impact:** Building essential facilities, obtaining necessary equipment, and fostering expertise are integral to successful implementation, contributing to long-term employability, entrepreneurship, or self-employment outcomes.

Some of the root-causes

1. **Awareness Deficiency:** Insufficient understanding among educational institutions and students is a fundamental obstacle impacting effective implementation.
2. **Coordination Constraints:** Limited coordination poses a challenge, hindering the seamless execution of policies and strategies.
3. **Systemic Gaps:** Deficiencies at the systemic level, encompassing qualifications frameworks, apprenticeship regulations, dedicated oversight bodies, incentives, and funding, contribute to implementation barriers.
4. **Bureaucratic Hurdles:** Administrative red tape, ranging from employer recruitment to grant and workplace approvals, introduces complexities and delays.
5. **Curriculum Relevance:** The alignment of curricula with labour market needs, including the adaptability and diversification of programs, emerges as a significant concern.
6. **Inclusivity Shortcomings:** Insufficient inclusiveness in policy and strategy formulation undermines their effectiveness and impact.
7. **External Influences:** Factors beyond direct control, such as economic stagnation, structural transformations, and industrialization, can disrupt implementation efforts.

Innovative strategies and actions to achieve policy targets.

1. **Comprehensive Apprenticeship Diversification:** Broadening the scope of apprenticeships to encompass diverse sectors like agriculture, services, transportation, and sustainable economic practices fosters inclusive skill development.
2. **Future-Ready Curriculum Overhaul:** Revamping curricula in anticipation of the rapidly evolving future of work and the Fourth Industrial Revolution ensures alignment with emerging trends and their pace.
3. **Holistic Progression Avenues:** Establishing pathways for vertical and lateral mobility empowers learners with opportunities for advancement within and across various fields.
4. **Responsive Course Introductions:** Introducing courses driven by current demand and targeted entrepreneurship training equips learners to meet market needs effectively. Incorporating optional trade courses further enhances specialization.
5. **Digitalization for Efficiency:** Leveraging digital platforms for apprenticeship processes, including registration, contract signing, monitoring, examination, and certification, streamlines operations. Additionally, a dedicated help desk aids both apprentices and industries.
6. **Stimulating Competition Initiatives:** Implementing competitive schemes incentivizes innovation, fostering a culture of excellence among apprentices and institutions alike.
7. **Lifelong Vocational Skills Ecosystem:** Establishing a continuous vocational skills training framework ensures skill enhancement throughout individuals' careers, catering to evolving demands.

Issues that require social dialogue

- Does the country have all the required institutions and bodies that are key to an apprenticeship system?
- Are roles and responsibilities clear and agreed?
- Funding mechanisms: incentives vs. quotas
- Different categories of apprenticeships
- Cooperation and collaboration among institutions

Day 2

Innovations in apprenticeships: Promoting digitalization. High-level Policy Dialogue 2: Apprenticeship-- a win-win proposition for MSMEs

During the session, representatives from various countries shared presentations showcasing exemplary practices in high-quality apprenticeship. A consensus emerged on the pressing need for innovative approaches within the apprenticeship framework, particularly in embracing the transformative potential of digitalization. The importance of involving Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) and macro enterprises in apprenticeship initiatives was also underscored.

The discourse also delved into the challenges that specifically impact MSMEs offering apprenticeships. Foremost among these challenges was financing, which emerged as a significant obstacle. The existing payment method employed by SETAs in financing MSMEs was critically examined, as it was identified as a substantial factor contributing to the inability of MSMEs to provide apprenticeships effectively.

Moreover, the lack of qualified training providers within MSMEs and the inadequacies in infrastructure were highlighted as formidable hurdles. These factors collectively hinder the capacity of MSMEs to engage in apprenticeship programs to their full potential.

One noteworthy aspect that emerged from the discussions was the acknowledged trust deficit between employers and the government regarding the funding of apprenticeship programs. This observation reflects a crucial area requiring collaborative effort and policy consideration.

Recommendations Chinese delegates

- **Tripartite constituents:** to work together through a joint study to collect long-term evidence about the return on investment in apprenticeship.
- **Governments:** to provide subsidies to support enterprises at the beginning of the apprenticeship instead of reimbursing at the end of the year after they have implemented apprenticeships at their own cost
- **SMES:** to use public training centres that can train their workforce cost-free.
- **Social partners:** China Federation of trade unions should select senior technicians to train SME personnel; enterprises and digitalization promotion committees could support SMEs to use digital technologies better.

Recommendations from South African delegates

- Improve funding and cashflow for SMEs
- SMEs need to be incentivized for real costs over and above the grant funding they are receiving
- SMEs cannot work on the administrative process of the grant due lack of adequate staffing. Third parties such as TVET should take care of the management of funds and administrative reporting at the same time
- Bargaining councils should be involved in marketing and communication efforts to promote quality apprenticeships.

Recommendations from the Ethiopian delegates

- Convene a national consensus/ dialogue on apprenticeship, entrepreneurship, and skills development among all relevant stakeholders.
- Assess the capacity of training institutions and the receiving enterprises to promote quality apprenticeship.
- Strengthen partnerships and collaboration among all stakeholders.
- Develop quality training standards and implementation guidelines.

Recommendations from the Indian delegates

- Inspired by the Chinese model, expand the definition of MSMEs to include the “number of employees.”
- Mandatory registration of MSMEs in the apprenticeship portal to minimize fraud cases.
- Advocacy initiatives at the district level to promote apprenticeship.
- Apprenticeship as a part of universal education curricula
- Strengthen the incentive policy for the MSMEs.

Inclusiveness in apprenticeships- Gender and informal economy

- **In South Africa**, the Department of Labour and Employment provides education and training services to vulnerable groups. For example, people living with disabilities have been trained on how to operate machines.
- A representative from employers pointed out that South Africa’s apprenticeship system is very inclusive from a government policy perspective. However, the country is still struggling to meet the targets they have established at the policy level: 80% of apprentices should come from indigenous groups, 54% should be female, and 5% should come from people with disabilities. More than 70% of apprentices in South Africa are male.
- **In Ethiopia**, the apprenticeship system is not inclusive because there is a big gap between people living in remote and rural areas and those at the urban level. In addition, Women and children are left behind.
- **India** has proposed a promising two promising practices to close the inclusivity gap in apprenticeship systems:
 - **A Single portal** – a one-stop-shop – where enterprises and potential apprentices can access information on apprenticeships anywhere, anytime.
 - A distinction between a **designated trade system** governed by a central compliance agency and an **optional industry-driven trade system** that allows industries to develop their curriculum and courses.

Day 3- Study visits

The Bidvest McCarthy-Toyota Dealership

South Africa shared good practices in apprenticeship on-site visits. The first visit was to the Retail Motor Industry, The Bidvest McCarthy-Toyota Dealership, where delegates met with the Management of the Dealership. Toyota is offering internal academic training with the assistance of the government, and the training manuals are obtained from the Skills Development providers. They comply with the country's labour laws in that their apprentice enjoys all the rights and benefits of the employees in terms of the Labour Relations Act.

They shared their experience in providing quality apprenticeships, their expectations from the apprentice, and their remuneration. They indicated that they get funding from SETA for remuneration. However, they do not pay the standard stipend as provided by SETA; they give their apprentice more than the standard stipend provided by SETA.

Apprentices shared their experiences working at the dealership and their goals to work for the organization on a full-time basis.

Sector Education Training Authority (Mining Qualifications Authority – MQA)

Delegates visited the SETA (Mining Qualification Authority). It was indicated that South Africa was one of the countries that set an earlier sector authority with Australia. They provide recognition of prior learning on various qualifications. Furthermore, they have launched sector specialization. It is

the third sector that produces the most artisans. Additionally, training is moving from the traditional way of learning to eLearning. The function of SETA, among other things, was stated, which included Skills planning, funding, and quality assurance of work base learning under the delegation from QCTO.

Retail Motor Industry (Next Level Learning Artisan Academy)

The last visit on day three was to the McCarthy training centre. Delegates had to experience the practical sites of the apprenticeship in South Africa on motor mechanics. The engagements with apprentices, facilitators, and the CEO of the Academy brought some light on some of the successes and challenges of apprenticeship in the country. The Academy works with dealerships, thereby training apprenticeship received from the dealerships, and the latter is responsible for remunerating the apprenticeship.

Day 4 - Study visits

Public Sector TVET College: Tshwane South Pretoria West Campus Gandhi-Mandela Centre

On day four, the delegates visited Tshwane South Pretoria West Campus. There was a round table discussion about the institution, curriculum, and phasing out of some curricula to allow qualifications that are in high demand. Curriculums are reviewed based on the need of the employers. There was a plea for employers or industries to participate in curriculum development as they know what is currently needed in the labour market. They are phasing out the old curriculum and replacing it with an occupational qualification in which the qualification combines theory and practice. TVET institution provides free education, whereby the government pays 80%, and NSFAS pays 20% of the tuition fee, including accommodation, meals, and transport.

Country representatives were allowed to observe the Gandhi Mandela Centre of Specialisations for Artisan Skills workshops², where apprentices were taught different skills. The centre focuses on four different areas of specialization. That is, Electrician, Boilermaker, Mechanical Fitter, and Millwright. Furthermore, it promotes quality vocational training in these identified sectors to meet the youth requirement in South Africa, both unskilled and semi-skilled.

INDLELA - Government-Funded Trade Test Centre:

Indlela stands as a trade test centre fostered by government funding and is often likened to a fertile ground that nurtures artisans. This centre plays a pivotal role in facilitating the growth and development of skilled artisans, enriching industries with their expertise.

They currently have 24 skills participating in the competition. Artisan Development and National Artisan Body. They conduct advocacy on artisans through Basic Education career guidance.

Furthermore, stakeholder engagement in occupational qualification developed by the QCTO is one of their responsibilities. Indlela's mandate is informed by the Legislative framework, the Apprentice Act, and the Skills development act as amended. The Act established the QCTO and NAMB. The delegate had an opportunity to visit the trade centre at Indlela, which is responsible for assessing training.

² The Centre was set up in 2018 following an MoU between South Africa and India during the BRICS Ministerial meeting. The Centre is thus the practical manifestation as envisioned by leaders of both countries to promote quality vocational education and training to meet the training requirements of young people as well as the artisan skills requirements of South Africa.

Day 5

Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) in South Africa: Enhancing Vocational Excellence

The Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) in South Africa plays a crucial role in shaping the landscape of vocational education and training. As a key component of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), the QCTO focuses on ensuring that vocational training programs align with the practical demands of various industries. This alignment is essential to produce skilled, readily employable individuals who can contribute effectively to the workforce.

- **Purpose and Mandate:** The QCTO aims to develop and maintain occupational qualifications that equip learners with the competencies for specific trades and occupations. By establishing these qualifications, the QCTO aims to bridge the gap between educational institutions and the job market, promoting a seamless transition for learners from education to employment.
- **Occupational Qualifications Development:** One of the central activities of the QCTO involves working closely with industry experts, employers, and educators to design and develop occupational qualifications. These qualifications encompass the practical skills, knowledge, and attributes required to excel in a particular occupation. This approach ensures that vocational training is directly aligned with employers' actual demands and expectations.
- **Quality Assurance and Assessment:** Besides qualification development, the QCTO is responsible for quality assurance and assessment in vocational education. It sets standards for assessment practices, ensuring that learners are evaluated fairly and accurately. This process guarantees that learners who complete their training possess the requisite skills and knowledge to excel in their chosen field.
- **Apprenticeships and Learnerships:** Apprenticeships and learnerships are cornerstones of vocational training, and the QCTO plays a pivotal role in overseeing these programs. It ensures that apprenticeships are structured to provide hands-on experience, theoretical knowledge, and practical skills that align with industry requirements. This alignment enhances the employability of apprentices, making them valuable assets to their respective industries.
- **Promoting Lifelong Learning:** The QCTO's influence extends beyond initial vocational training. It encourages lifelong learning by creating opportunities for skills upgrading and career progression. This approach ensures that individuals continue to develop and refine their skills even after entering the workforce, remaining adaptable in the face of evolving industry needs.

Experience Learning

Experience that can be learnt from other countries.
South Africa: Planning and training innovations <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Establishment of the Gandhi and Mandela Training Centre - A model of achieving win- win South- South cooperation.- Formulation of a vocational education development plan - In 2012, the "2030 National Development Plan" was formulated to emphasize vocational education.- Industries lead apprenticeship training - More responsive to business needs, making it easier for apprentices to access decent jobs.- Appropriate provisions in apprenticeship for future of work and lifelong learning (to adopt reskilling, upskilling and RPL/ Universal Lifelong Learning (Adult). This will ensure lifelong job retention of skilled employee. Also strengthening grievance redressal during apprenticeship.- Formation of technical working group in every ITI/ TVET institution for recommendation of new and obsolete trade practices.
India: Strategies to make apprenticeships more attractive to youth and industry. <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Launch of reward programs - Encourage more young people and business owners to actively participate in apprenticeship training.- Development of apprenticeship legislation - Legislated in 1961 and revised in 1992.- Development of an apprenticeship website – Government builds a bridge between youth and business.
Ethiopia: Timely adjustments of training to attract young people. <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Four training models are constantly updated - Adapt to respective needs of business owners, trades, and apprentices.- Establishment an Unemployment Registration - Centre - Various ways to attract youth participate into training.
China: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- MSME definition currently in use may also include minimum employee numbers to align with the Apprentices Act. This will help in bringing more SME participation and decent stipend which may also pave way to absorption/ employment.
<i>What can be learned and applied into the national context?</i>

Policy Level: How to launch a reward plan, how to balance supply and demand, how to improve social acceptance of apprenticeship.

Service Level: How to set up an apprenticeship portal for assessment and evaluation, how to carry out advocacy activities, how to provide career guidance and establish a service centre.

Technical Level: How to use digital technologies to improve apprenticeship management and services, how to develop and operate mobile apps, online platforms, virtual reality, etc.

Drawing from experience of other countries...

- In terms of policy formulation, governmental departments need to motivate and incentivize enterprises, and pay special attention to the real needs of employers.
- Qualified enterprises can set up training centres (training schools) and implement independent evaluations. Large scale enterprises can help SMEs in the same sector to carry out apprenticeship training.
- Strengthen advocacy and promotion of apprenticeship. Sectoral bodies need to improve research and data analysis on this area so that employers can see the true benefits of apprenticeship training.
- While strengthening skills training, employers and training providers need to pay attention to core competencies and transferable skills regardless of industries and sectors, which will benefit apprentices for life and make apprenticeship become an important platform for lifelong learning.

Links to Tweets and visibility

1. https://twitter.com/sstc_mp/status/1687071096208510976
2. https://twitter.com/sstc_mp/status/1687398577084018688
3. https://twitter.com/sstc_mp/status/1687398507357863936
4. https://twitter.com/sstc_mp/status/1687072048055500800
5. https://twitter.com/sstc_mp/status/1686334724191510528
6. https://twitter.com/sstc_mp/status/1685944971495407616
7. https://twitter.com/sstc_mp/status/1685957216749096960
8. [Link to the photos](#)
9. [Links to the presentation](#)

