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Original Article

Fostering posterity and socio-economic transformation through the prism of indigenous languages in youth training: A participatory approach.

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1.0. Abstract

This paper reviews the mediating role of indigenous languages in vocational skills and national development in the Zimbabwean context. In the wake of the current outcry for jobs, employment creation and entrepreneurship the need for new strategies to revive industry by focusing on community resources has become imperative. Youths need to turn to themselves as repositories of skills required for operationalising dormant and fledgling industries. In pursuit of this new strategy they need the expertise of local artisans. The initiative, adopted in the spirit of national consciousness, should yield an indigenous brand of technology. It is from this perspective that the paper argues for a fresh, broader approach to youth training, through the identification of a national programme that encourages skilled artisans to use indigenous languages as vehicles for imparting industrial skills to out of school youths. The envisaged formal programme can be implemented through the identification of industrial bases that would tap the industrial skills of out of school youths, under the tutorship of local skilled artisans. For more effective implementation the proposed blueprint argues for the liberalization of instructional media.

Trainers and trainees would switch on to their preferred language in skills' acquisition. Such a flexible project, sustained through collaborative engagement, between skilled artisans and youths, would go a long way towards enhancing the latter's creative potential, by fostering familiarity with the terminology required by a particular industry. Further, the article envisages learners' progressive training programmes that motivate vocational training graduates to apply modern technology to productive processes demanded by the respective communities. The study concludes by emphasizing that the achievement of national goals for entrepreneurship and youth empowerment/employment requires the adoption of new strategies encapsulated in the Education 5.0.blueprint.

Key terms: Posterity, vocational training, indigenous languages, socio-economic transformation.

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2.0. Introduction

Language is one of the critical success factors to development. Innovations and ideas need to be communicated in the simplest ways that encourage clear comprehension for knowledge transfer and application with immediacy of both the environment and the creative as well as innovative space. In a report published by Empowerment Magazine 2014, Mutisi lamented that; “One of the major pitfalls of governments and their plans is failure to be fully cognisant of the ordinary people. People from high offices usually forget the man on the street or the woman from the village”. The main challenge is that all official plans are written and communicated in a language that is not ordinarily used by these men on the street or women from the village. Unfortunately the communication barrier presents a development puzzle whereby the ideas remain utopia if they are not simplified. This resonates well with Fanon’s (1952:18) argument that, “A man who has a language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by that language.” Uju (2005:25) extends the argument further by affirming that, “...an individual with lots of potential should be able to speak out so that society could give him or her listening ears”. In this article the authors take a predilection on the role

of youth training with a special interest on the language of communication used in imparting the vocational skills as well as mode of delivery.

The paper starts by giving a background to the reasons why Zimbabwe needs to focus on vocational skills training for sustainable socio-economic development. A proposal for a new model of vocational skills training that highlights some key success factors related to the proposition is presented. The article concludes by affirming that instruction in indigenous languages is vital for enhancing cultural identity necessary for posterity and socio-economic transformation of Zimbabwe.

3.0. Background

Trends in Zimbabwe have indicated that the population is in a reverse migration mode. Whereas it had been progressively migrating to urban areas, the Sunday Mail 18- 24 May 2014 carried an article that reported that there was an upsurge in the urban to rural migration. The Zimbabwean population of youths out of school is estimated to be ranging between 300 000 to 500 000. In the Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband (DVV) International report on a workshop held at Antelope Park, Gweru; Leumer reported that, “19 % of rural households are reported to have children out of school hence Zimbabwe risks

missing the education for all (EFA) target of universal primary education by 2015 and the Millennium Development Goal 2” (Leumer, 2013:ii). Paradoxically, Zimbabwe’s literacy rate is reported to be around 92 % which contradicts the observation made by DVV International as highlighted above. However what emerges is a situation that needs to be curtailed so that the out of school youths can be actively engaged in meaningful projects for the development of the country. Youth unemployment and underemployment has been worsened by severe economic challenges. The situation is compounded by the fact that for decades Zimbabwe has been struggling to make education meaningful due to the weak links between education and training, and the employment sector. This challenge calls for philosophical re-orientation with regards to the role of education and training. Instead of just focusing on the percentage that remains in the mainstream education system, there is a need to mobilise frustrated, idle youths to engage productively in vocational skills’ training that will enable them to contribute to the growth of the economy. It is also important to observe that some of the youths drop out of school as a result of frustration from a formalised education system whose medium of instruction is alien, so in re-

engaging them it is vital to consider using indigenous languages as media of instruction. Herein lays the nuclei for vocational skills’ training to the out of school youths who may fail to be absorbed into institutions that emphasise elitist education. In a nation where it has been reported that 60% of the Zimbabwean population is younger than 35 years it is critical to direct development programmes that focus on the youth since they are the future of Zimbabwe. Adopting such a flexible agenda/policy will ensure that the rural areas and their respective growth centres transform into veritable hubs of industrial regeneration. This resonates well with the new thrust of Education 5.0.

For a more rewarding operationalisation of this thrust the nation needs to reconsider the dynamics of language use for self consciousness through national training and development. We strongly feel that now is the time for the nation to adopt a more liberal approach in language use, given the growing number of out of school youths, most of whom might have been disadvantaged through the restrictions imposed by a curriculum that is biased towards foreign language proficiency, while undermining the candidates’ potential innovative and creative skills that could propel the country forward in terms of industrial development. Further

adoption of a new approach opens the horizon for grounding the youths into believing in their culture because language and culture are inextricably inseparable.

It is our considered view that the government should promote the adoption of strategies for distilling concepts normally presented in foreign languages through simplifying them or expressing them in indigenous languages. This might also entail the incorporation of indigenous knowledge systems through changed perceptions and action spaces. Professor Mupeperekwi, in his presentation at the Zimbabwe International Book Fair (ZIBF) Conference in Harare (22-27 October 2018), vehemently stressed the point that our language policy should be tailor made to enable Zimbabwean entrepreneurs and local experts to take pride in the publishing and patenting of their “scientific discoveries” of medicines for treating some ailments. The same approach should be adopted where industrial entrepreneurs establish small scale rural industries which can develop to become mega industries. According to the professor, the only difference between the modern pharmacists and indigenous operatives is that while the former market processed products, the latter are doing themselves disservice by not only being secretive but also selling unprocessed medicines that are

ironically undervalued despite them being the raw materials for large scale manufacturers of capsules. He lamented the fact that foreigners “steal” indigenous medicines, process and sell them back to us, labeled in cryptic / complex names. Again this is where language and training can play a big role in diffusion of knowledge and skills particularly to the youths. Young people need to mobilise themselves into repositories of skills for operationalising home grown industries, and in the process, applying their creative potential to modernise business in predominantly rural areas. To spearhead these economic developments youths should be able to tap from the older generation. Both indigenous and foreign languages are critical as vehicles for mediating the exchange of knowledge, training, and moral values associated with emerging enterprises in rural environments. The implications point to the adoption of sound language policies that promote the concurrent use of indigenous languages and English.

The situation described above is exacerbated by the fractured and disintegrated framework for the provision of skills training for the out of school youths. The splintered coordination between different policies and stakeholders leads to isolated approaches and a

disconnection between level of education and skills. What could be the future of Zimbabwe in relation to the skills training for the youths and their contribution to socio-economic transformation? Is Education 5.0 likely to resolve the challenges?

The philosophical underpinnings of education require revisiting so that the education process results in a product that is versatile and adaptable to the new socio-economic and politico-cultural demands where educational attainment should be grounded in vocational skills. The focus should move to what the product of the learning process can do instead of how many distinctions the product has on paper. Endorsing the above blueprint Professor Amon Murwira, in his keynote address at the Midlands State University International Conference on Sustainable Economic Transformation, motivation and governance in Gweru (February 15, 2019), challenged the universities to come up with more programmes that equip students with skills relevant to the exploitation of locally available resources.

Africa has a strong foundation in specialised skills training which dates back to the pre-colonial period. On attaining political independence, African states have been preoccupied by how well they

respond to global conventions on education without addressing the relevance of that education to the African continent. This ties in well with the concern raised about Zimbabwe's response to the Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 2 as highlighted by Leumer (ibid). In realigning the focus of youth training, it is important to be guided by the cultural and philosophical persuasions of the indigenous people. In the case in point aligning training with the way Africans view their world could bring a lot of success as shall be demonstrated below.

While giving a keynote speech at the round table meeting on Youth and Adult Learning and Education (YALE), Mrs Graca Machel remarked that:

The current education systems have been slow to acknowledge that academic knowledge does not adequately prepare youth for the future... We need to revise the content of education...children must leave school with the ability to do something with their lives.” ...We say **skills training for employment**, (own emphasis) but I want to be controversial and say **skills training for “work”** (own emphasis). No government or private sector can employ its entire young people... millions will need to

employ themselves...youth and adults must be able to say “I’m working, I’m productive and I can even employ others... although I am not working...” (22 August, 2012 in Johannesburg).

This article takes the argument further and demonstrates that it is possible to motivate the youth and create employment through skills training. It also argues that much as the government preoccupies itself with fulfilling EFA, MDG and now sustainable development goals (SDGs), that should be done in the backdrop of factors raised in the above citation as well as matching educational output with skills development.

Zimbabwe as a country has great potential to lead in agricultural production as well as in mining. Other than its natural resources the socio-economic and politico-historical developments offer fertile ground for enhanced economic stability provided the country comes up with programmes that can stimulate nationhood and eradicate the cancerous corruption bedeviling the country at the moment. To tap into the great potential, Zimbabwe simply needs to realign its education and training to focus on skilling the youths in vocations starting with the very simple ones such as skills in agriculture, mining and entrepreneurship. It should be borne in mind that, “A hen

that slept on a bag of corn died due to lack of knowledge.” The abundance of natural and human resources does not translate into socio-economic development. It requires skills and sustainable intervention models to tap into the potential.

4.0. Methodology

This paper argues for the use of indigenous languages as ideal media of instruction to effectively and meaningfully engage youths in skills training. Significantly the paper sets out to delineate a roadmap for harnessing, integrating and modernising technical skills that guarantee a future for out of school youths. Given the enduring centrality of mother tongue instruction to learning and teaching, and the importance of shared meanings, we propose a skills based programme that will enhance critical thinking and practical faculties of the participants.

We contend that indigenous languages provide opportunities for learners to conveniently internalise skills through interaction with their mentors. Indigenous languages also provide a platform for cultural diffusion between the mentees and their mentors. However, this does not imply that foreign languages will be discarded. Rather, where the instructional materials are presented in English, these

can always be simplified through translation and or transliteration.

Participatory tools such as the Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques (REFLECT) will be appropriate for affording the trainees opportunities for navigating between indigenous languages and the foreign languages in the process of skills acquisition. Further the tools empower the trainees to navigate through their environment, innovating new ways of addressing challenges they may encounter. This approach will create and enhance a product that is couched within the philosophical and cultural environment that promotes what Mazrui (2004:222) calls "elite of labour" as opposed to "an elite of leisure." While an "elite of labour" maximizes social commitment and values work for the benefit of the community, an elite of leisure is one that minimizes social commitment and exertion, and is placed in a situation in which it can pursue a life of comfort without worrying about social disapproval" (ibid). Hence the proposed approach is likely to yield better results as well as guarantee sustenance for the community. We insist that for youths to derive a purpose for training in any practical skills, the best medium is a

shared language, signs and symbols. The call is louder now than ever especially when globalisation is threatened by the advent of the novel corona virus and global reactions to the COVID-19 epidemic.

4.1. Fostering nationhood through language

Without doubt language and culture play a vital role in moulding and sustaining both community and national youths' skills training. Graduates who see no value in upholding nationhood are a recipe for economic disaster because they strive to emulate the rich through any means. To redress this situation there is need to reflect on ingredients for national development, that is, African culture, art and language. This imperative is echoed by Mudimbe's, (1988) recasting of the concept of "Retraditionalisation". For this philosopher:

'Retraditionalisation does not mean returning Africa to what it was before the Europeans came...But a move towards renewed respect for indigenous ways and the conquest of cultural self -contempt.'

Arguably, people who find value in themselves and their community would also strive to improve their quality of life through evolving technologies that preserve and add value to those resources.

We feel that for Zimbabwe while the language debate remains critical in planning for national development, it should not be used as an excuse for the dearth of skills development and creativity in communal areas. Zimbabwe has already defined its language policy with respect to corpus and status, by adopting bilingualism, a policy that allows for flexibility in language use; depending on the environment one finds himself or herself in, whether it is a formal or informal training session. According to Vygotsky (1962) “access to two languages accelerates the development of meta-linguistic skills. In this case, bilingualism as a national philosophy is critical to youth training because it is a vehicle for enhancing cognitive flexibility, analytical skills and creative thinking that is rooted in community values. Since Zimbabwean youths have become bilingual, through education and cultural orientation, what remains is for the government to enforce training in entrepreneurship in communities where there is potential to tap on local resources. Indigenous languages should be used interchangeably with

English where necessary, to enhance the young people’s creative potential in skills’ development. Apparently Zimbabwe needs to capitalise on her high literacy rate, and shift attention more towards the promotion of indigenous languages which are laden with cultural values, positive attitudes and commitment to work that promote nationhood.

Language has been viewed as an identity marker which is inseparable from its cultural baggage. In view of this the media of communication in delivering vocational education training to the youths should therefore consider the language of that particular community group and its cultural orientation for it to be relevant, meaningful and sustainable. It should be borne in mind that African communities have always embedded education and training in the socialisation of their youth and social functions of the community. Isolating vocational training from daily activities and placing them into specific institutions defined by specific time-tabling, narrowed curriculum content and delivered in alien languages resulted in the creation of “elites of leisure” who migrate from their environment because for them to be learned means to move out of the traditional environment. Sadly, the graduates of such training came out of the vocational training centres with a

preoccupation to get employed and never or rarely to start utilising their skills to work and create employment for others. This has replicated into production of graduates and or artisans who see no value for upholding values of nationhood. Instead they blame the government for failure to get employed, parents for sending them to the wrong schools and teachers for failure to design a curriculum relevant to their needs. But who is the government? Such graduates even struggle if not fail to adapt to perennial changes emanating from technological innovations, socio-economic and politico-cultural changes. What they learnt quickly becomes outmoded because they did not learn adaptive skills to deal with eminent changes. The language of instruction should be that which empowers the products of learning who should be motivated to be perpetual learners who are transformational.

4.2. Youth Training for development: a new modus operandi

The training programme we envisage, for the out of school youth in particular, is one that is intended to promote individual skills for sustenance. While the proposed blueprint encourages use of indigenous languages in training, it also emphasises adherence to Ubuntu as a guiding philosophy. This means that the core

values of kindness, hard work, honesty, courtesy, consideration and friendliness should be maintained and blended with other relevant modern values such as entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation.

Through the interplay between language and culture wherein the two shape each other, the impartation of elements of local culture and values is enabled when teaching in local languages. The critical role of languages should be extended to the so called minority languages such as Kalanga, Tonga, Ndaou, where community involvement in development projects is often hamstrung by failure to tap into the esoteric language within which indigenous knowledge systems are couched.

In a world where business is moving towards not just individualistic profit maximisation but holistic corporate social responsibility, teaching in local Bantu languages can engrain this approach into how professionals see their trade. Local languages can impact on work ethics, values, and relations between and within ranks, including a host of workplace culture. These will then help build lasting beneficial relations through shared local values.

It is worth noting that many projects have failed because of different mindsets

adopted by the youths and skilled mentors. Furthermore, part of the conflict is attributed to modes of communication, reluctance to adapt to community values, as well as the tendency by trainees to underrate the relevance of skills offered, let alone the trainer's expertise. Often the trainees overlook the mentor's experience, failing to see the value of tacit knowledge in the modern context. For the youths to benefit from internalising the skills in the value chain, they need patience and mutual respect. In addition, appreciation of the community in which the project is based is a necessary requirement for effective training and sustainable development.

The foregoing points to the need for a national training programme that is similar to the Israeli perach, which combines skills training and patriotism for national consciousness. In the Zimbabwean context, the pursuit of a heritage based youth training programme is a sine qua non for promoting national consciousness. We argue that when out of school youths find in their immediate environments repositories of knowledge, jobs and cultural pride, the country will be on the road to community driven industrial development. Then, where citizens identify with their national heritage, they are more likely to apply critical thinking faculties for personal, community national and

global sustainable development. This new philosophy should carry Zimbabwe through the fourth industrial revolution, where citizens mobilise local resources for purposes of innovation and the creation of industrial hubs.

We feel that the current dearth of industry is an opportune moment for the nation to refocus on resources that have been ignored. What we are proposing calls for patience, critical thinking, innovation and national consciousness. Ideally, then, Zimbabwe needs to tap into the resource potential of communities, where the majority of our out of school youths languish in poverty and despair. A holistic approach that takes cognisance of the complementary roles of the five pillars of the development matrix, that is, teaching, research, community service, innovation and industrialisation, will go a long way towards achieving Zimbabwe's contribution to sustainable development goals (SDGs). Using the heritage based philosophy as a guiding philosophy, researchers should identify available resources within specific communities, carry out a needs analysis exercise, and identify existing skilled personnel who can spearhead the establishment of small scale industries or revive dormant ones. From

this standpoint we envisage a new version of training that is more widespread, yet less formalised to cater for a broad spectrum of youths in different industrial and semi –industrial setups.

4.3. Turning the tables in Vocational Education Training (VET)

Every community is naturally endowed with sufficient natural resources for youth training, engagement, active exploitation and production of what is within its grasp. This means that with the help of local skilled artisans, even seemingly less important activities such as bee keeping, mopani worm harvesting and fish farming can be formalised and modernised through the blending of traditional means of production with modern technology. This requires identification of youths who have the zeal, aptitude, commitment and creative potential to embark on such projects. Blending of traditional training methods of imparting life skills with modern scientific skills would also help in coming up with an indigenous brand of technology, one that could eventually be marketed abroad. This is where languages will play a big role. The enriched repertoire of skills and training should derive from collaborative efforts of both skilled community leaders communicating

and sharing their knowledge with the young people who in turn would contribute through providing modern techniques such as measuring, refining, food fortification, packaging, preserving and marketing of the products. If properly coordinated this could be applied as an innovative way of implementing the Education 5.0 by linking community service with industrialisation.

The now derelict Training centres such as Kukwanisa, Nyanyadzi, Mupfure etc, should be revived through re-equipment and refurbishment to allow youths in those respective communities undergo training. Training the youths in their indigenous languages will allow them to absorb all the indigenous spirit they wish, and it will develop spontaneously in their natural environment (Ives, 2009). This is likely to appeal to the indigenous spirit since there will be a close link between vocational skills and their socio-economic environment.

In pursuit of future development projects that target youth empowerment through innovations in industry, we find Professor Murwira’s Education 5.0.

Blueprint particularly pertinent. Outlined under the topic ‘‘Unlocking value in Research and Innovation’’, the design traces processes and timelines that should

guide researchers and trainers in implementation of the innovation development process. Professor Murwira suggests that the initial concept should be developed to a prototype, which can then be subjected to control testing before the pilot testing. This would be followed by the Standard Association of Zimbabwe assessment for approval before the final product is adopted and marketed.

The above design, if adopted, provides ample opportunities for community and youth involvement in industrial training and development through harnessing and refining local resources for job creation. The article provides sufficient basis for mobilising local industrial potential through the adoption of innovative practices that derive from indigenous knowledge systems within the communities. The use of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) becomes relevant in this regard since it facilitates storage, retrieval and application of modern technology in skills training. We therefore propose the adoption of potential entrepreneurial skills in the out of school youth, especially those who are academically less gifted. Those endowed with practical skills need to be identified, nurtured and trained to benefit the nation eventually. As a modus operandi, within any community, skilled artisans can be

encouraged to use their indigenous language as a vehicle for imparting industrial skills to out of school youths. This will enable innovators to think, create and name their products in their indigenous languages thereby contributing to global economic development. The challenges of communicating in a foreign language were poignantly brought to the fore when one of the respondents argued that;

I believe we cannot conceptualise in a foreign language. We fail to understand the mechanics of a language.” To sustain his argument the respondent cited an example of his colleague who obtained ten distinctions in his ‘O’ level results but failed English. His case became a topical issue, which drew the attention of senior educationists, because by Rhodesian standards he did not qualify to go for Advanced Level. When eventually that colleague of his was permitted to attempt Advanced Level he excelled and he now holds a doctorate in Mathematics. *Imagine shamwari yangu iyi ingadai yakatadza kuenderera mberi nokuda kweChirungu chete chete,* (imagine my colleague could have failed to proceed with education

just because of English alone), the interviewee concluded

It is our submission that vocational education training delivered in indigenous languages stand a chance to unlock the creative potential and innovation that drive resident in the youths. On the issue of media of educational instruction, the interviewee maintained that: *Mother tongue helps us to foster self image and that we will be defending our posterity*. He pointed out that language is a form of nationalism thereby authenticating nationalistic views, (Fishman, 1974). This perspective was later endorsed by Thondhlana (2000), when he asserted that mother tongue instruction will certainly provide the cultural confidence and identity necessary for nationhood.

This blending of indigenous languages with the official language will go a long way towards cross fertilisation of creative potentials between the youths and adults. Furthermore, existing vocational training institutions in various districts could serve as development nuclei for research and training in local industry. In concurrence with Professor Murwira's design, the first step should be concept development through identifying the special skill that derives from a potential resource base. This would be followed by a meeting of

local mentors and students to map out the requirements of the enterprise. Next, the trainers and students would do a pilot application of the product, which would be followed by controlled testing. The last step would involve reorganising the productive process through the infusion of innovative practices. Once the product has passed through these stages approval for marketing and patenting would be sought from members of Standards Association of Zimbabwe (SAZ).

4.4. Characteristics of sustainable VET

The success of African nations depends on developing the people through quality inclusive indigenous education that is meant to solve immediate local problems. Unless we think we cannot invent, therefore languages that invoke thinking capacities of the masses should be adopted in vocational training. It is our submission that unless we take education to the doorsteps of people, we will not take it to the citizens. Taking education to the doorsteps of people implies opening doors of learning (odl) which learning can be delivered through Open Distance Learning (ODL) which is the best option to educate the masses. Sustainable development is realised when Africans use inclusive education to solve their own problems. They can only use knowledge from other

countries to fine tune their problem solving capacities. African problems are unique to Africa, therefore solutions should also be based on the uniqueness of the problems. In the same vein Zimbabwean problems are unique to Zimbabwe hence solutions should be based on that uniqueness. African wisdom advises that “If a hyena has medicine for curing a running stomach, it should first cure itself.” Professor Tennebe while giving a keynote address at the Zimbabwe Open University International Research Conference argued that, “To solve her problems Africa must tip-toe from the definitions offered by people external to the environment.” He concluded by asserting that “The owner of the house knows where the leakage is coming from.” According to Professor Tennebe, Africa should integrate traditional with modern education the old and the new for sustainable development.

This paper concurs with the above argument and proposes an incremental approach in adopting mother tongue instruction. It should be noted that adopting indigenous languages as media of educational instruction does not translate into annihilation of English and other foreign languages. Indigenous languages are a useful alternative medium because they serve as avenues for creative and

innovative potentials in youths. The interplay between language and culture wherein the two shape each other leads to instruction in local languages also imparting elements of local culture and values. In a world where business is moving towards not just individualistic profit maximisation but holistic community centred corporate social responsibility, indigenous languages can engrain how professionals view their trade. Indigenous languages can have a lasting impact on workplace ethics, values, relations between and within ranks and host elements of workplace culture than help build lasting and beneficial relations through shared local values.

This dovetails with what Mazrui (2004) calls “an elite of labour,” as opposed to “elite of leisure.” An “elite of leisure” is one that minimises social commitment and exertion, and is placed in a situation in which it can pursue a life of comfort without worrying about social disapproval” (ibid). It must be emphasised that the type of education people receive has a bearing on how the elite will interact with their immediate environment. We therefore advocate for a type of training that inculcates sound labour practices founded on values of commitment, honesty and accountability.

5.0. Conclusions

This article has inaugurated an agenda for developing and implementing a new training programme for out of school youths. The proposed strategies entail taking vocational skills to the doorstep, by identifying youths who are motivated to create employment for themselves under the mentorship of local skilled artisans in marginal communities. Based on the concept that innovations and ideas reside in the communities where resources for industrial expansion are found, the article has taken a predilection on the role of indigenous languages as media of instruction in vocational training for the out of school youths. The proposed blending of traditional training methods of imparting practical skills with modern scientific skills through an indigenous brand of technology is expected to pave way for the marketing of finished products abroad, evidence of an enriched repertoire of skills deriving from joint entrepreneurship. Throughout the paper it has been our submission that a viable solution to youth unemployment resides in the formalisation and expansion of small industries in local communities. The development of such industries would be guided by a national education programme that uses indigenous languages as media of instruction, given that language is a form

of asserting one's nationalism. The article recommends a participatory approach to vocational skills training to the out of school youths.

As discussed at length in this paper, the new training programme envisages an organised reengagement of unemployed youths through an awareness campaign that directs their attention to vast resources in their communities. We affirm that it is within these communities that they can tap and develop entrepreneurship for their own sustenance and for contribution to SDGs. For the implementation of such a worthy enterprise we have recommended the adoption of indigenous languages as media of instruction. Since these languages are the repositories of culture it is possible that communities who value themselves are better placed to adapt and embark on a programme that improves their quality of life as they are likely to evolve technologies that preserve and add value to their resources. The new strategy for training however, allows for flexibility in the language of instruction. This explains why we have suggested that ideas and innovations garnered through the foreign language should be simplified and disseminated in languages that the communities are familiar with.

The paper has highlighted the need for young people to mobilise themselves into repositories of skills for operationalising home grown industries. As they tap skills from the older skilled local artisans the young people should apply their creative potential to modernise business in their respective communities. We have further indicated that where possible concurrent use of English and indigenous languages as media for disseminating knowledge, training and moral values associated with emerging enterprises in marginal communities constitutes a veritable added advantage.

Finally, we have emphasised the expected benefits of pursuing an educational process that moulds a versatile and adaptable product, one suited to the demands of the new socio-economic demands. We have drawn attention to the new economic imperatives that call for realignment of youth training guided by cultural and philosophical persuasions of indigenous people. Our intention was to spearhead ways in which vocational training should foster nationhood by embedding community values and national interests while at the same time fulfilling the needs of the out of school youths through employment creation that replicates into sustainable development.

6.0. Recommendations

The foregoing underscores the need for youth training programmes to be responsive to issues that are critical to development. It should raise aspirations and human potential by providing opportunities for learning outside the formal education system. Vocational training should largely result in employment creation and it should focus more on what its graduates can produce than how many certificates they have. It therefore means development of practical skills in crop science, animal husbandry, fishing, forestry, health and nutrition and many lifelong skills. Such development should break new ground by insisting on the application of new technologies that ensure value addition to the products. In other words, efforts should be made to transform primary industries such as fishing, chicken rearing and others into processed and packaged products for the export market. This entails constant evaluation and analysing of the potential markets as well as the aggressive adoption of competitive technology. Sustainable vocational education training should be grounded in the philosophical underpinnings of its recipients. This implies having a system that blends the traditional ways of imparting life skills with the skills required in the modern era.

First of all the beneficiaries of vocational training must identify with the nation through their unique cultural and linguistic identity.

Zimbabwe requires an education system that trains the youth to value their national identity so that they can reconstruct their cultural and linguistic heritage. A system that is grounded in the *hunhu/ubuntu* philosophy is likely to restore socio-economic values consistent with the traditions of Zimbabwe. We aver that use of non-African languages as media of instruction has presented illusions that to be educated means to be different. It posits that the economic misfortunes of Africa are a result of Africa's dependence on European languages. Throughout this article we have emphasized that that lack of language power leads to retardation of social development and economic marginalisation. At a time when Zimbabwe is facing a multitude of economic challenges as evidenced by the declining Gross Domestic Product and investor fatigue, vocational education training for the youths should target not only skills development but also an appreciation of the African culture. The African cultural philosophy of *hunhu/ubuntu* is expressive of the social relations which could help obscure the deep-seated relations of exploitation. A

system that is grounded in ubuntu philosophy is likely to restore socio-economic values that are consistent with Zimbabwe's national developmental aspirations as enunciated in education 5.0 thrust.

The youths would also need a "rewiring" so that they value hard work as well as innovation. They need to appreciate that technological innovations come with cultural overloads of the innovators hence to fight electronic colonialism (e-colonialism) there is dire need to encourage innovations done and communicated in African indigenous languages. Africa can also upload information on the information highway. Therefore the youths should be made aware that in the Information Age; wars are fought on grounds of information technology, so to establish a Zimbabwean nationhood the indigenous languages of Zimbabwe must play a central role in vocational education training.

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