

# MARKET SYSTEMS BRIEF

Supporting Young People in the  
Tanzanian TVET System:  
Findings and Opportunities

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## Acknowledgements

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MarketShare Associates led on the development of this toolkit, with contributions from Adriano Scarampi, Ashley Aarons, and Erin Markel.



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## Introduction

Implemented in partnership with the International Youth Foundation (IYF) and the Mastercard Foundation, Via: Pathways to Work improves economic opportunities for underserved youth in Tanzania through sustainable changes in the technical and vocational training (TVET) and entrepreneurship systems. In addition to the more than 15,000 youth to be reached during the initiative's five years, the Via legacy will be in the systemic changes made at the institutional level and across an array of youth training and support service providers, leading to large numbers of youth benefiting from these advances over time.

In 2017, IYF commissioned MarketShare Associates to lead research in Tanzania on both the challenges the Tanzania TVET system faces creating skilled graduates and jobs for young people, and the opportunities where Via can work with system actors to support a TVET system that is focused on youth employability. Research was carried out in Dar es Salaam, Dodoma, Morogoro and Mtwara, the projects' locations, with system actors including trainees, TVET centers, VETA management, government agencies, businesses and recruiters. Innovative research techniques were used to understand their perspectives and networks, including value network analysis and norms mapping. The research summary presented here highlights main findings as a guide to action for key actors in the Tanzania TVET system.

## Graduates' pathway into work

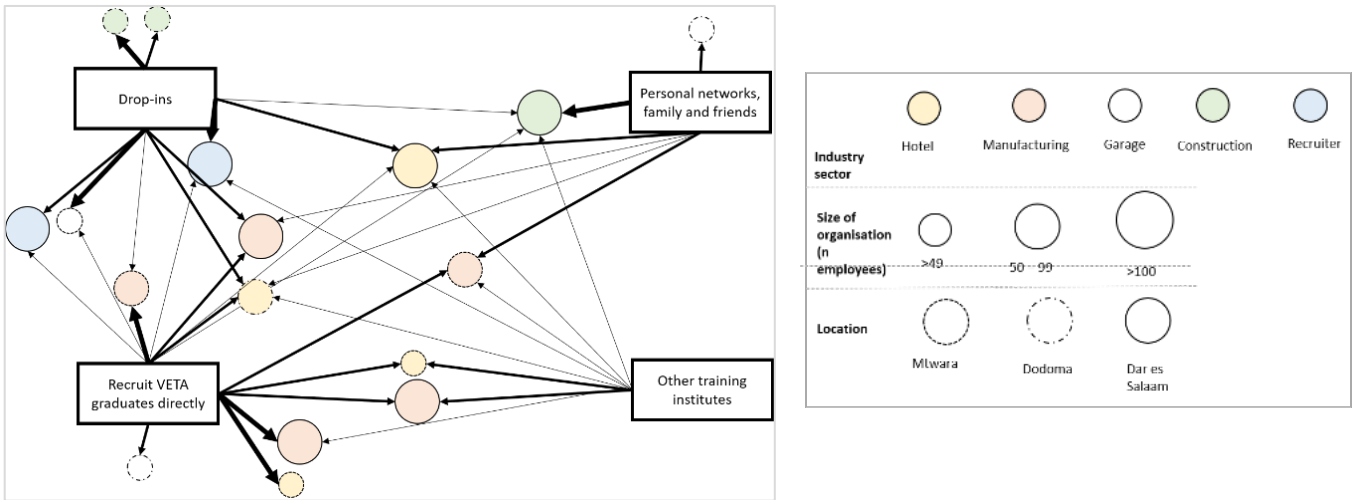
**Nearly 200,000 trainees studied at VETA-regulated TVET centers in 2015.** Around 95% attended short courses, and 62% were male and 38% female. A 2010 VETA tracer study identified that 66% of long course graduates achieved employment and 24% were unemployed. Of the 66%, 50% moved into self-employment and 43% found wage employment (with 7% employed without pay). More recent smaller studies and interviews suggest that unemployment and self-employment outcomes are higher—and employment in large firms lower—in part due to the smaller number of large firms

Trainees generally wish to work in larger companies with better wages and job security. However, though they view training as a pathway to such jobs, larger employers see VETA trainees as more suitable for SMEs or self-employment. Graduates employed in larger businesses generally do not access senior jobs and were rather seen by employers as expected to perform semi-skilled technical jobs.

**Figure 1 explored how businesses recruit entry level roles across various sectors** by comparing frequency of waiting for graduates to visit companies ('drop-in'), use of personal networks, recruiting VETA graduates through teachers or contacting students who did placements ('recruit VETA graduates directly'), or recruitment through non VETA managed TVET centers. Key insights include:

- **The main business recruitment channel is direct recruitment of VETA graduates,** in particular for manufacturers requiring many semi-skilled machine operators and with centralized on-site operations to manage staff. However, no business had a formal partnership (e.g. an MOU) with VETA to employ graduates, and they relied instead on approaching students who had been on placements and teacher recommendations.

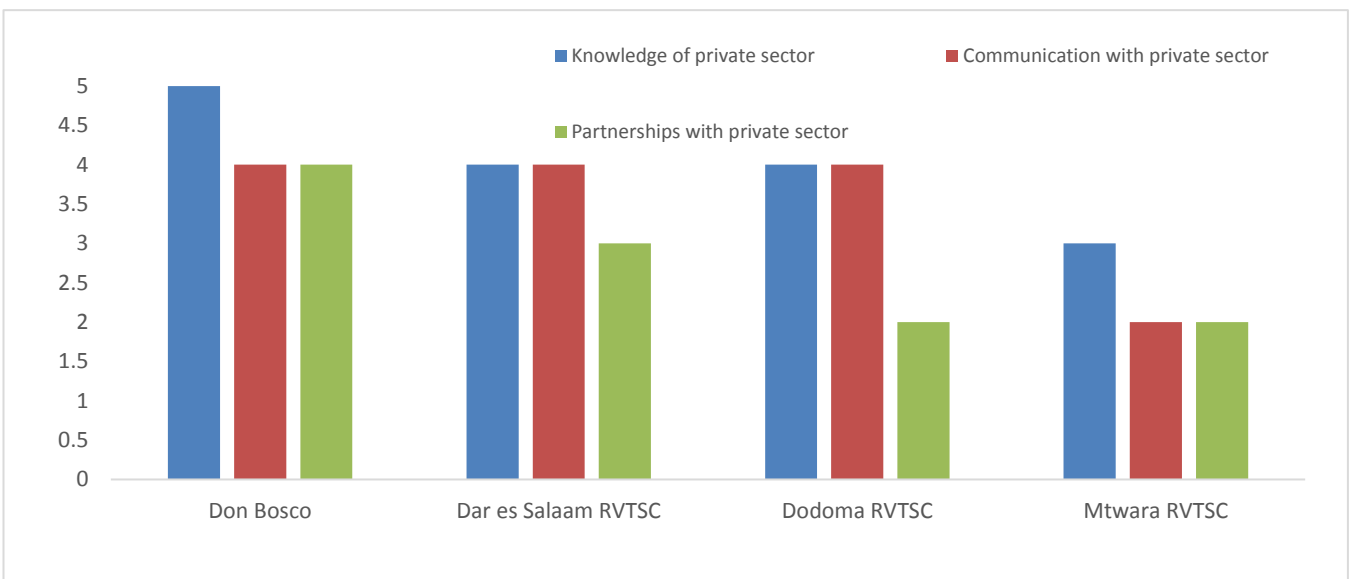
- **Job seekers visiting businesses is also a key channel**, in particular for small constructors with higher skill requirements, and recruiters who develop databases of workers.
- **Word of mouth is key for recruitment into small teams**, such as garages and construction site teams, as security concerns creates a bigger reliance on own networks as guarantors.



**FIGURE 1** MarketShare Associates' channel network map

## Employer – TVET center relations

The research explored the two-way relations between TVET centers and employers. For TVET centers, interviews with four highlighted clear patterns as illustrated in Figure 2.



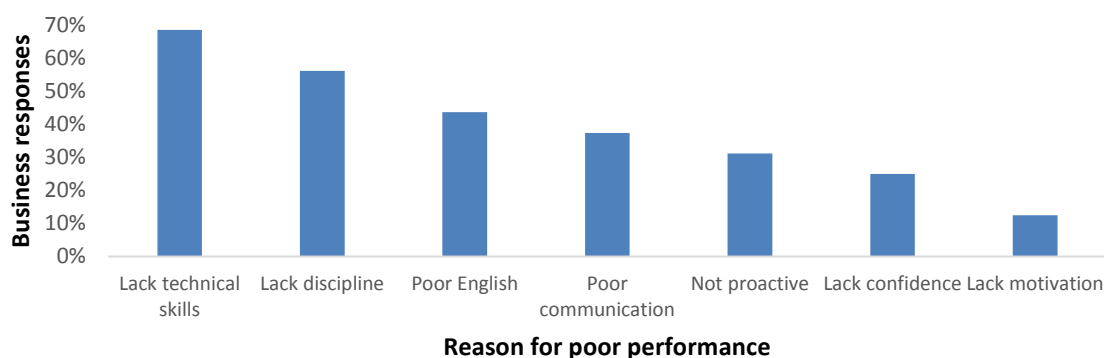
**FIGURE 2** TVET center relations with businesses

- **All centers have some knowledge of local companies**, in part as placements are mandatory for long courses. However, some are more pro-active in scouting out new businesses for placements, while only one carried out labor market assessments.
- **Communicating and developing relations with businesses is a bigger challenge**, due to factors such as not knowing how to engage with employers and high travel costs. Most centers were still able to visit businesses across the year for placements and invited them to center events - however none organized careers fairs.
- **The largest challenge is in formally partnering with businesses to assure jobs for graduates.** Two centers had specific staff members responsible for this, though for one this was just one person. Only one, though, had set-up formal MoUs with businesses to employ high quality trainees.

**Employers agreed that their relationship with TVET centers was too limited.** Though overall relationships were viewed positively, for many they focused only on placements. Some employers, particularly in the manufacturing and the hotel sector, are involved in teaching, input into curricula and allow training on their premises. However, these exceptions were generally due to the business taking the initiative.

## Employer Perceptions and Norms

**The research found that employers tend to have poor views of graduate skills levels.** Most noted that they need to be retrained on arrival. For some, this was a serious limitation to recruitment, while others saw this as a more complementary relationship between basic training at VETA and advanced on-the-job training provided by them. Figure 3 outlines the most common employer concerns.



**FIGURE 3** Employer perceptions of graduates

- The most common challenge was **low technical skills of graduates**. Graduates often had good theoretical knowledge but lacked the practical skills to carry out tasks.
- **Life skills were also a key concern.** Over half noted poor graduate discipline, a third poor communication and a quarter that graduates were not proactive and lacked confidence.
- **The biggest life skills gap** by sector was faced by hotels and manufacturers, regionally in Mtwara and Dar es Salaam, and in larger businesses rather than small.

Employer norms also had an important impact on recruitment. These are mapped out in Figure 4, which compares the strength, prevalence and researcher confidence on different norms.

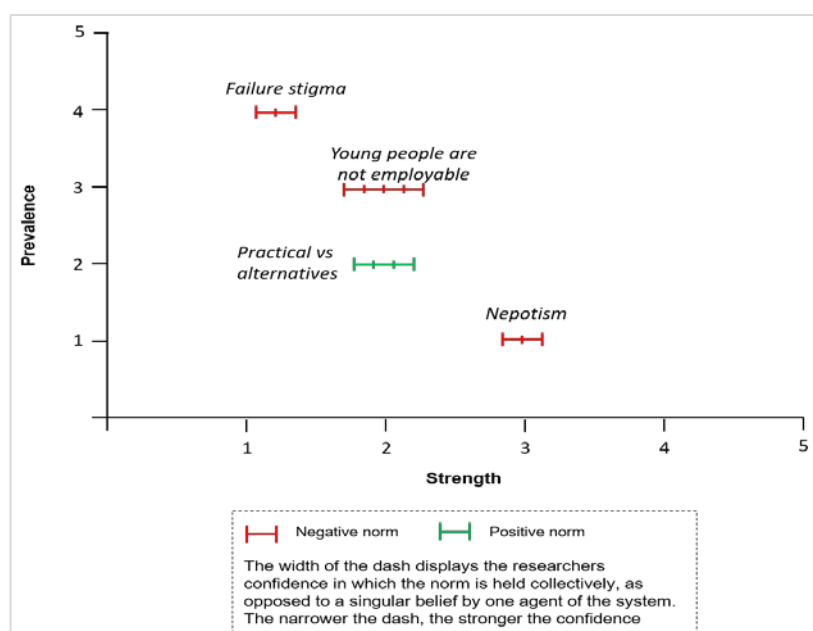


FIGURE 4 MarketShare Associates' Norms mapping tool ©

- **Favoritism limited to employment in small enterprises:** Though most employers did not prioritize employing friends, networks were important for hiring into small teams due to business security/safety.
- **Seeing graduates as failures does not impact recruitment:** Employers often see graduates as 'failures', studying at VETA as a last resort. However, most noted recruitment is based on ability, and this stigma did not affect hiring.
- **More practical than the alternatives:** Though VETA graduates were not seen as highly skilled, several employers would choose them over university/ technical school graduates for semi-skilled jobs as comparatively they have more practical skills and are said to be "less arrogant".
- **Broader norms:** Several employers noted a localized norm, that the culture in some regions is less focused on discipline, making supervision a bigger challenge. A broader national norm also exists, though not specific to VETA, that young people have a poor work attitude.

## Understanding the wider system

The research explored how the wider VETA system works by exploring more broadly how the key actors in the VETA system work together, the types of networks between them, challenges and opportunities.

- **Service provision by TVET centers is limited:** Centers do not tend to provide career guidance or support short-course graduates to find jobs or to become self-employed. For short courses, training has tended to only consist of technical content; Via, though, is working with VETA to make sure all trainees have access to life skills training.

- **A challenging funding environment for VETA:** As trainee numbers increase, VETA's budget does not increase proportionally while constraints are increasing. Employers are willing to support VETA through a national Skills Development Levy, but are unwilling to further fund training
- **Flow of information is weak.** VETA-run centers don't regularly share enrollment figures, plans and required resources with VETA HQ. VETA is introducing a new management information system which should help address this.
- **Potential for governance to support links to employment:** Though some in the Ministry of Education may have traditionally seen their role as ending when trainees graduate, this appears to be changing. A strength is that the TVET system is decentralized with more responsibilities assigned to centers and zonal offices.
- **No incentives for centers to help trainees find employment:** Funding to VETA run centers is based on enrollment numbers, not graduates' employment. However, information on employment outcomes by course and center would allow trainees to make employment-based enrollment decisions.

## OPPORTUNITIES

The analysis highlighted significant opportunities for system actors to work together to create a TVET system that is focused on youth employability.

- **Enhancing graduate skill levels and employment outcomes.** Via is working with several centers to trial Passport to Success® (PTS), an internationally tested life skills curriculum, and job placement services for trainees. There is an opportunity for more centers to provide these through modest course price increases and staffing changes, while Via is also interested in experimenting with how to bring down costs further. Based on trials, VETA can consider supporting scale up across centers.
- **Enhancing TVET center- employer relations.** There is a large opportunity for employers to develop formal relationships with TVET centers in order to assure they are able to recruit highly skilled young people. Via is interested to support centers and employers to develop such relations and VETA to establish overall center partnership procedures.
- **Strengthened zonal capacity and coordination.** There is a significant opportunity for strengthening zonal TVET coordination in order to match labor markets to training suppliers. Via is interested in supporting zonal offices to carry out labor market assessments, tracer studies and trial zonal job placement services, and in collaborating with TVET centers to improve coordination within and between zones.
- **Improved training provision through increasing trainee representation.** Increasing trainee voice in the TVET system would ensure that VETA received quicker feedback on when courses worked best. VETA could increase this voice by adding student representation to the VETA Board, Trade Advisory Committees and VETA Zonal Board.
- **Trainees better able to make informed application decisions.** Improving information on the likelihood of different courses and centers leading to employment, and the types of jobs, would help trainees make more informed decisions. Via is interested in supporting centers to pilot quick methods to measure employment outcomes and making this information more accessible to trainees. An enhanced career guidance process would also allow trainees to explore interests and talents, and their market relevance.
- **Competitions to highlight leading centers and courses.** There is significant interest in which courses and centers have the highest employment level outcomes, and learning the lessons from these, while understanding the different contexts. Via is interested in working with VETA, development actors, employers and other stakeholders to organize events to help publicize high achieving centers.
- **National campaign to highlight the ability of graduates.** Graduate recruitment is limited by negative stereotypes of graduates specifically, and young people more generally. To address these negative views, TVET centers, VETA and other stakeholders could together explore a national communication and advocacy campaign highlighting the ability of graduates to employers.
- **Agreeing as a sector how to increase graduate employment.** The TVET systems has many stakeholders, each with their own experiences and perspectives on how to increase graduate employment. Via is interested to keep on supporting these voices to come together to agree on how to increase the system focus on employment and to learn from successful initiatives, including in other countries.