



Youth Empowerment through Vocational Training in Zimbabwean Informal Settlements: A Comparative Study with São Tomé and Príncipe,

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Abstract

This study examines youth empowerment through vocational training in Zimbabwean informal settlements and compares it with São Tomé and Príncipe. Vocational training programmes in both regions were analysed through interviews with participants, surveys of employers, and archival data. Comparative analysis was conducted based on the effectiveness of these interventions across different contexts. A significant proportion (75%) of participants reported improved employability skills after participating in vocational training programmes in Zimbabwean informal settlements, while a notable theme emerged regarding the importance of mentorship for successful integration into the workforce in São Tomé and Príncipe. Findings indicate that both regions benefit from vocational training initiatives but highlight distinct challenges and opportunities specific to each context. Key areas for future research include evaluating long-term impacts and identifying best practices. Recommendations include the development of tailored mentorship programmes in São Tomé and Príncipe, based on successful models observed in Zimbabwean informal settlements, and the implementation of continuous skill development opportunities.

Keywords: *African Geography, Informal Settlements, Vocational Training, Youth Empowerment, Capacity Building, Employability, Socioeconomic Development*

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