



## Call for Papers

### Special Issue of the Southern African Journal of Environmental Education (SAJEE)

#### Vocational Education and Training (VET): Skills for Green and Just work in Southern Africa

Guest Editors: Dr Presha Ramsarup (Wits University, South Africa) and Prof Volker Wedekind (Nottingham University, UK)

Strengthening Vocational Education and Training (VET), a marginalized educational and training sector in the Southern African region, is critical for social equity, inclusion, Sustainable Development Goal 4 and the Education for Action 2030 Framework.

VET has immense transformative potential in transitioning societies towards a more socially, ecologically and economically just world. Across the world, local economies are facing significant challenges, while at the same time they are crucial for people's livelihoods, well-being and for building a more just society. If the VET system is to 'built back better' it could provide more equitable jobs, enhanced green entrepreneurial activities, new options for pathways into green, just work and enhanced wellbeing. This transition will involve deep-seated structural changes across many societal subsystems, including the VET system, and will also involve cultural change towards greater inclusivity and social justice.

There is hence a need for a rethinking of VET models to take equity and environmental sustainability objectives into account, and to question the normative ideas of production that have traditionally been central to VET framing. A revised model could involve a wider understanding of economy, beyond the dominant productivist, growth and market-based model (McGrath et al, 2019), would introduce sustainable production and consumption, and consider far-reaching feminist, de-growth and other ecological economics concepts (Bauhardt, 2014) for shaping work, learning and VET. Such models could involve new ways of theorising the role of VET in labour markets or the role VET can play in social, environmental, and economic justice, and also need to consider the ontological foundation from which the argument emerges.

SAJEE is a nationally-accredited Journal published for Southern African and international scholarly readers, and is regarded by ASSAf as equivalent to its peers internationally. In this Special Issue SAJEE aims to profile papers mapping out the growing concern that VET discourses focus on the productive elements of work and neglect the reproductive aspects of work. A sustainability lens on VET will introduce a regenerative dimension of work. This re-purposing of the work focus within the VET system will need a focus on the ontological dimensions of work, but also on the ontological dimensions of jobs, occupations, qualifications, curriculum, institutions and subjects (Lotz-Sisitka and Ramsarup, 2020).

This Special Issue will further aim to illustrate a sustainability lens on VET that does not simply require an 'add-on' or adaptive response to existing institutional structures and curricula, but implies a change of fundamental epistemology in our institutional and social cultures and hence also in our educational thinking and practice. Seen in this light, sustainability is not just another issue to be added to an overcrowded VET curriculum, but a gateway to a different view of curriculum, of pedagogy, of organisational change, of policy and particularly of ethos within VET. At the same time, the effect of patterns of unsustainability on our current and future prospects



is so pressing that the response of VET should not be predicated only on the 'integration of sustainability' into VET.

The call welcomes papers from a range of perspectives from around the world inspired by, e.g., disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, political science, education, EE/ESD, economic/labour/human/political geography, business education, and more.

The following type of papers are encouraged, for example:

- Theoretical or conceptual papers rethinking VET and the role of work
- Mapping and analysis of local VET actors (networks), local skills and regional innovation (systems) that support sustainability transitions
- Case studies of VET curriculum innovation involving sustainability
- Policy analyses reflecting the role of sustainability
- Examinations of environmental learning in workplaces
- Reviews of the relevance of experiential, informal, tacit learning and formal VET institutions in mainstreaming sustainability.
- Systematic reviews
- Viewpoint and Think Piece papers (3500 words)

Research papers should comprise a theoretical contribution, an outline of methods followed, and sound empirical evidence. We also welcome different (quantitative or qualitative) methods.

### Instructions

The Special Issue shall be published in December 2021. Potential contributors should submit an abstract (of no more than 500 words) to the Journal Manager, Carlene Royle ([C.Royle@ru.ac.za](mailto:C.Royle@ru.ac.za)), by 25 June 2021. Authors will be informed about the guest editors' decision by latest 20 July 2021.

Full papers (6000 Words, please follow the author guidelines <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/sajee/about/submissions>) should be uploaded to the online system for review by 20 September 2021, and finalized after review by 15 November 2021.

### References:

Bauhardt, C. (2014). Solutions to the crisis? The Green New Deal, Degrowth, and the Solidarity Economy: Alternatives to the capitalist growth economy from an ecofeminist economics perspective. *Ecological Economics*, 102, 60-68.

Lotz-Sisitka, H. and Ramsarup, P. (2020). Green Skills Research. Implications for systems, policy, work and learning. In Rosenberg, E. Ramsarup, P. and Lotz-Sisitka, H. *Green Skills Research in South Africa. Models, cases and methods*. Routledge. Abingdon.

McGrath, S., Ramsarup, P., Zeelen, J., Wedekind, V., Allais, S., Lotz-Sisitka, H., Russon, J.-A. (2019). Vocational education and training for African development: a literature review. *Journal of Vocational Education & Training*, 1-23. doi:10.1080/13636820.2019.1679969



Powell, L., & McGrath, S. (2019). *Skills for Human Development: Transforming Vocational Education and Training*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group.