UNEVOC Network sub-regional consultation meeting
Ha long, Vietnam, 21 to 24 June 2011

Organized by UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (Bonn, Germany)
in close collaboration with
UNESCO Office Ha Noi and the UNEVOC Centre in Viet Nam

BACKGROUND NOTE

Effective engagement of UNEVOC Network in national responses to prevent HIV and AIDS in the scope of TVET

1. The UNEVOC Network

The UNEVOC Network of specialised technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions is a unique platform for the sharing of knowledge and experiences regarding all aspects of TVET. The UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for TVET (UNESCO-UNEVOC) located in Bonn is the hub of the UNEVOC Network and has taken various actions\(^1\) to promote and foster collaboration in developing and improving TVET through a world-wide network of UNEVOC Centres; to strengthen UNEVOC National Centres into an inclusive and effective network providing various forms of assistance to vocation education leaders and practitioners; and to share best innovative practices.

As UNESCO’s work is increasingly focusing on activities at country-level, the UNEVOC Centres gain importance as national TVET institutions in the fields of planning, research, development and delivery of TVET with a broad range of profiles and strengths. Thus the UNEVOC Network Centres are being mobilized in the implementation of the UNESCO Strategy for TVET with particular reference to enhancing effectiveness of the UNEVOC Network in advisory services at the country level through establishing coherent and cooperative multilateral approaches.

As the fundamental purpose of technical and vocational education is to prepare youth for the transition from school to work, and to equip people with capabilities that can broaden their opportunities in life, technical and vocational education programmes can play an important role in producing competent human resources for economic and social development. The UNEVOC Network Centres that design, plan, support and/or run such programmes thus have a very important role to play at national level.

1.2 The UNEVOC Network and HIV/AIDS

In many countries the impact that HIV and AIDS is having, and will continue to have, on youth\(^2\) and their access to sustainable livelihoods and development is an emerging area of concern. This poses a great

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\(^1\) Details on these and the profile of the UNEVOC Centres can be found in the online UNEVOC Network database at www.unevoc.unesco.org/network.

\(^2\) UNAIDS released alerting figures, estimating that approximately 33.3 million people are living with HIV worldwide in 2009. Globally, nearly 23% of all people living with HIV are younger than 24 years, and people aged 15–24 years account for 35% of all
challenge to TVET development, provision and management in those countries in achieving international development goals, in particular Education for All (EFA) goal 3. Thus, TVET systems must go through significant changes if those countries are to survive the impact of HIV and AIDS, especially in response to the demand for TVET, the supply of TVET and the quality of TVET for the world of work.

In recognition of this, the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre is advocating for the integration of HIV and AIDS prevention programmes and promoting related knowledge at all level of TVET programmes as a means to reach adolescents and youth who are vulnerable to the AIDS epidemics. In line with UNESCO’s overall strategy for responding to HIV and AIDS, UNESCO-UNEVOC intends to increase the effectiveness of the UNEVOC Network Centres in building the capacity of TVET educators and planners to develop and implement effective responses in the TVET sector. This will also contribute to the good profile and visibility of UNEVOC Centres as a driver of effective development in TVET, particularly in South East Asia region where the impact of the AIDS epidemic has increasingly affecting the internal capacity of education systems.

2. Background

To achieve EFA goals will necessitate putting HIV and AIDS at the highest priority in TVET including formal, non-formal and informal TVET, with strong, sustained political commitment. This implies mainstreaming HIV and AIDS perspectives in all aspects of TVET policy, redesigning TVET teacher trainings and curricula, promoting innovative methods and strategies and significantly enhancing resources to these efforts. The TVET systems of those countries most affected by the pandemic, need to be adapted to address the problems caused by the AIDS pandemic which hinder the socio-economic development process. The quality of existing information and awareness-raising programmes, training and behavioural change programmes, and prevention programmes in TVET has to be better monitored and assured.

The year 2011 marks 30 years of AIDS and therefore can be considered a historical marker in the global response. This year allows UNESCO-UNEVOC to review the current work of UNEVOC National Centres to maximize its contribution to achieve high-quality, relevant, lifelong and cost-effective TVET for all and to reflect on achievement and lessons learned on successful approaches in integrating HIV and AIDS issues into national TVET planning and management.

A new report released on 31 March, 2011 stresses the importance of shared responsibility and accountability to ensure the AIDS response with sufficient resources for the coming years and also provided recommendations to work towards realizing global targets. These recommendations are:

- Harness the energy of young people for an HIV prevention revolution;
- Revitalize the push towards achieving universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support by 2015;
- Work with countries to make HIV programmes more cost effective, efficient and sustainable;
- Promote the health, human rights and dignity of women and girls; and
- Ensure mutual accountability in the AIDS response to translate commitments into action.

In line with the International Centre’s role as a resource centre, UNESCO-UNEVOC is putting efforts in documenting and disseminating best practices with regard to experiences, lessons learnt and challenges faced in mainstreaming HIV and AIDS in TVET that are of particular relevance to developing countries,

Note that for the terms ‘adolescents’ ‘youth’ and ‘young people’ the following UN definitions are used: ‘adolescents’ are aged 10-19, ‘youth’ are aged 15-24 and ‘young people’ are aged 10-24.


countries in transition, and those in a fragile state. Through the effective participation of the UNEVOC Centres, TVET related knowledge and innovative best practices can be transferred from one country to another. Given the diversity among the Centres, it is also possible that UNEVOC Centres facing similar challenges cooperate with the aim to jointly identify and implement possible solutions.

In addition, UNESCO-UNEVOC is supporting new initiatives to further improve the implementation of HIV/AIDS within national TVET systems through a range of modalities such as national or regional cooperation, capacity building in planning and implementation, knowledge sharing, research and development, and by utilising the UNEVOC Network. Strengthening and scaling up the contributions of the UNEVOC Network Centres and their efforts, as national focal points of UNESCO-UNEVOC, in the HIV and AIDS policy implementation at the national level have been the subject of increasing attention of the UNESCO-UNEVOC’s agenda in 2011.

Ideally, UNEVOC Network Centres should work together in a better co-ordinated manner to provide a more effective response to HIV and AIDS and address the educational issues and challenges on how best to respond to the effect of the pandemic on the TVET sector. They can also consider the implications for and impact on TVET and human resources development, and how countries have been currently dealing with developing TVET sector specific HIV/AIDS national policies and in what ways the UNEVOC National Centres can help fight the impacts of HIV and AIDS on TVET development. This implies an increasing need for sharing innovative practices and experiences in the field amongst practitioners and policy experts alike. UNESCO-UNEVOC will strive to stimulate fresh initiatives; to promote new forms of cooperation; to enhance the availability and dissemination of good and innovative practices in HIV and AIDS; and to place strong emphasis on enhancing partnerships in HIV and AIDS to better mobilise and engage with key stakeholder groups.

3. HIV/AIDS in the SE Asia region

Asian HIV epidemics remain largely stable. Most national HIV epidemics in the region appear to have stabilized. An estimated 4.9 million [4.5 million–5.5 million] people were living with HIV in 2009, about the same number as five years earlier. An estimated 300 000 [260 000–340 000] people died from AIDS-related causes in 2009 compared to 250 000 [220 000–300 000] in 2001. An estimated 360 000 [300 000–430 000] people were newly infected with HIV in 2009, compared to 450 000 [410 000–500 000] in 2001—a 20% reduction over eight years. HIV epidemic patterns vary between and within countries. Overall trends in the epidemic hide important variations, e.g. in Indonesia’s Papua province, HIV infections levels are 15 times higher than the national average.

Asia’s HIV epidemics remain largely concentrated among injecting drug users, men who have sex with men and sex workers. About 16% of people who inject drugs in Asia are living with HIV. In some countries, this estimate is considerably higher: 32%–58% in Viet Nam. High prevalence among men who have sex with men has been reported in several countries in the region: 29% in Myanmar, 5% in Indonesia. Nearly one in five (18%) female sex workers surveyed in Myanmar tested positive for HIV in the mid-2000s.

Although it is possible to recognize some common patterns as to the mode of transmission of HIV, which is to a great extent linked to the so-called three Ms —men, mobility, and money—, the statistics and indicators issued by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS show a well-diversified picture.

Based on these reported data, the most recent of which date back to 2009, it can be noticed that Sri Lanka and Lao People’s Democratic Republic were characterized by both a lower level of HIV epidemic, with respectively 2.800 and 8.500 people living with HIV in 2009, and a lower mortality rate due to AIDS if compared with the other countries. On the contrary, the incidence of HIV infections has steadily increased in Vietnam, Indonesia and Myanmar, with respectively 280.000, 310.000, 240.000 people infected by HIV in 2009.

Further statistics are retrievable from the website of UNAIDS, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS: http://www.unaids.org/en/aboutunaids/
As to the status of the epidemic in Cambodia and Malaysia, the number of adults living with HIV in 2009 was estimated to be 63,000 and 100,000 respectively, whether the deaths due to AIDS were 3,100 and 5,800 in Cambodia and Malaysia respectively. In Cambodia, adult HIV prevalence declined from 1.2% [0.8%–1.6%] in 2001 to 0.5% [0.4%–0.8%] in 2009. It will be interesting to have more information and data on how HIV/AIDS is affecting national economic development and cross border labour migration, particularly in the construction, transportation and other sectors.

3. Consultation meeting focus, objectives and the way forward

Given this context, UNESCO-UNEVOC in collaboration with UNESCO Ha Noi, UNEVOC Centre in Viet Nam and other relevant UN agencies from this field will organize a consultation meeting in Ha long, Viet Nam from 21 to 24 June 2011. The meeting provides opportunities for the UNEVOC Network Centres, namely from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia and Sri Lanka to discuss the regional challenges and priorities in relation to the role of UNEVOC Network and its effectiveness in fighting the impacts of HIV and AIDS on TVET development. The meeting will provide a platform to share best practices, to determine research and capacity building opportunities, and to strengthen partnerships in providing a more effective response to HIV/AIDS at the national level. The focus is to foster regional cooperation as well as bilateral and trilateral institutional cooperation between UNEVOC Network Centres in the South East Asia region.

The meeting will review relevant approaches, issues and concerns in the HIV and AIDS policy implementation at the national level by addressing the need of increasing HIV and AIDS knowledge through TVET and identify areas for collaboration and cooperation between and among the UNEVOC Centres.

Vietnam has made major advances in the response to the AIDS epidemic since the development of its National Strategy on HIV and AIDS Prevention and Control until 2010 with a vision to 2020 (approved in early 2004) and the establishment of the Viet Nam Administration for HIV and AIDS Control (VAAC) in 2000. Many lessons can be learnt from the Vietnam experience and the other countries in the sub-region. The participating countries will also have a chance to learn more about the implementation of national HIV and AIDS programmes, particularly in TVET in Viet Nam and share country level experiences among UNEVOC Network Centres.

The meeting intends:

- to collect the most up-to-date information available and lessons learned on successful approaches in integrating HIV and AIDS issues into national TVET planning and management;
- to identify best practices which showcase innovative experiences on how TVET has been effectively engaged in national responses to prevent HIV and AIDS;
- to share the knowledge of how HIV/AIDS is integrated in the TVET curriculum, and how sensitisation and awareness of the pandemic is treated both formally and informally
- to establish a framework for future work of the UNEVOC Network aimed at improving the availability of learning and teaching resources and innovatory tools;
- to review and clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of UNEVOC Centres in the region, and information updated;

The expected results of the consultation are the following:

- the effective response of the UNEVOC National Centres in facing the challenges of HIV and AIDS epidemics in the scope of TVET are strengthened and scaled up
- UNEVOC National Centres are enabled to be active channels for offering assistance to TVET educators and planners for providing reliable services, including the dissemination of UNESCO messages on HIV and AIDS related matters;
- Good practices are compiled for publication purposes
• follow-up actions by UNEVOC Network Member countries and strategies for improved institutional management are identified
• Clear governance agreements are defined: setting objectives, identifying functions, defining membership in a sustainable manner
• the quality of evidence to affect both credibility and legitimacy of the Network Centres is improved
• a sub-regional Centre is identified for the purposes of coordinating the activities of the UNEVOC Centres of SE Asia