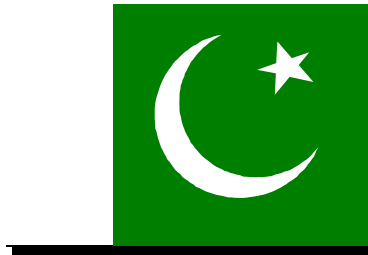


Country Paper

PAKISTAN



REORIENTING TVET POLICY TOWARDS EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Introduction

Pakistan is the second largest country in South Asia with a land mass of 796,096 square kilometers. Home to approximately 180.80 million people, Pakistan ranks as the sixth most populous nation in the world. Like other South Asian countries, the literacy rate -- estimated at 49 percent of total population remains low.

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan was founded on the 14th of August 1947. The seat of the federal government is based in the city of Islamabad, which is the Republic's capital.

Pakistan is the land of Indus river, which flows through the country for 2500 kilometers (1600 miles) from the Himalaya and Karakoram mountain ranges to the Arabian Sea. It is a land of snow-covered peaks and burning deserts, of fertile mountain valleys and irrigated plains. It has an estimated population of 180.80 million (January 2009) representing an array of ethnic groups.

Pakistan is strategically located at the crossroads of Asia, where the road from China to the Mediterranean meets the route from India to Central Asia. For thousands of years, this junction has been a melting pot of diverse cultures, attracting traders and adventurers, pilgrims and holy men. Now the old Chinese trade route is reopened; the spectacular Karakoram highway threads its way through the Himalayas, Karakorams and Pamirs, following the ancient Silk Route and entering China over the 4733 meter (15,528 feet) Khunjerab Pass, the highest metalled border crossing in the world.

Pakistan's 4000-year history is richly illustrated by archaeological sites and imposing monuments scattered over the length and breadth of the country. Brick cities from the Indus civilization, which flourished around 2000 BC, stand beside Buddhist ruins contemporaneous with the birth of Christianity. Magnificent Muslim tombs from the 12th century vie with the palaces, mosques and forts of the Moghul emperors of the 16th and 17th centuries.

Geographically, Pakistan comprises of three main regions, the mountainous North, where three of the world's great mountain ranges (the Hindukush, the Karakorams and the Himalayas) meet, the enormous but sparsely populated plateau of Balochistan in the south-west and the Punjab and Sindh plains of the Indus river and its main tributaries. Located in South Asia, between 23° – 42' and 36° -55' latitude north and between the longitudes of 60° – 45' and 75° -20' east, Pakistan is bordered by India on the east, China on the north east, Afghanistan on the north west while Iran shares its border in the south west and Arabian sea in the south.

Pakistan has continental panorama with magnificent mountain ranges, plateaus (Potohar), deserts (Thar and Thal), plains (Punjab), rivers, lakes and the Arabian Sea. The Himalayan, Karakoram, Hindukush, Suleman and Salt ranges are some of the most renowned mountain ranges in the world with K-2 (second to Mount Everest), Nanga Parbat and Tirich Meer as some of the highest peaks in the world. Out of 14 highest peaks (more than 8000 m), in the world, 5 are situated in Pakistan. Pakistan boasts the densest concentration of high mountains in the

world, with 82 peaks over 7000 meters (23000 feet) within a radius of 180 km (12 miles). The Himalayas and Karakoram rose to the heights when the northward drifting Indian geological plate collided with the Asia plate, its northern edge nosing under the Asia plate and pushing up the mountains still, causing the mountains to rise 7millimeters (¼ inches) in a year.

Mountain Peaks of Pakistan

Name of the Peak	Height M (F)	Range	World Rank
K2	8611 (28,253)	Karakoram	02
Nanga Parbat	8125 (26,660)	Himalaya	09
Gasherbrum I	8068 (26,470)	Karakoram	11
Broad Peak	8047 (26,400)	Karakoram	12
Gasherbrum II	8035 (26,360)	Karakoram	14

Pakistan is repository of ancient civilizations, such as those of Mehr Garh, Moenjodaro, Harappa, Gandhara and Taxila and a vast collection of relics relating to art and sculptures has been unearthed and rehabilitated. Pakistan's archaeological sites are located at number of places such as Mehr Garh (Quetta), Chakwal, Kot Diji, Moenjodaro, Harappa, Taxile, Takht-i-Bahi, Dir and Swat. The Mehr Garh site, at the foot of Bolan Pass in Balochistan, discovered in 1984 is the first Neolithic site in the world. The evidence suggests that the site remained occupied for 5000 years (from 8th to 3rd millenniums BC) before the Indus Valley civilization of Moenjodaro and Harappa.

Program Theme as Practiced in Pakistan

Rationale:

The theme of the program we are today gathered for is “Reorienting Technical & Vocational Education and Training Policy towards Education for Sustainable Development” through work force development. This theme is fundamental to a country like Pakistan. The current conference is a commendable initiative in this regard on the part of the organizers viz. InWent, Capacity Building International, Germany, Colombo Plan Staff College for Technician Education, Philippines and UNESCO – UNEVOC International Center, Germany.

It is now recognized internationally by the developed and developing countries that there is need for new paradigms of both development and learning for the world of work. As we have learnt in Pakistan, education and technical training for and through the work place is the **master key** (if education is considered the key) that can alleviate poverty, improve social equity, ultimately conserve the environment, improve the quality of life for the households and as a result thereof, help to achieve sustainable development. We have come to the realization that skills

empowerment and work force development has a direct bearing on ensuring sustainable development.

This as we are all by now aware, requires three cornerstones:

- Economic, to provide adequate and fair standard living for all
- Social, to develop institutions that promote values, practices and relationship that can sustain everyone equally and
- Ecological, to stay within the carrying capacity of the planet.

The Brundtland Report conceptualizes sustainable development that,
“meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

It is now accepted that,
“achieving sustainable development will require balancing environmental, societal and economic considerations in the pursuit of development and an improved quality of life”.

Agenda 21 identified education as an essential tool for achieving sustainable development and highlighted four areas of action for education.

These were:

- Improve the quality of basic education
- Reorient existing education programs to address sustainable development
- Develop public awareness and understanding and
- Provide training for all sectors of private and civil society.

A number of ideas and principles underlines sustainability have been identified. One of the important components is poverty alleviation. I will during the course of my presentation be relating **TVET to poverty alleviation** and education as a tool for sustainable development.

Sustainable development is basically relating the present for the future. It requires sensitivity where EST is a vision of education that seeks to empower people to assume responsibility for creating a sustainable future. There is no **single route** to sustainable development. Each economy, country and culture has different options and requirements to negotiate the process of achieving sustainability. For a country where 30% of the population lives below poverty line, sustainable development will have a totally different orientation and strategy. These would help define decisions at the Government and societal level. In this scenario of poverty, a core component of EST would be **empowering** people both in terms of their incomes, social security in life, education for their children and programs which enhance and empower them with skills. That is where Technical and Vocational Education and Training would play its role and make an impact.

TVET Programs

In Pakistan, a country with a population of 180.80 million and a per capita income of US\$ 1044, the strategy of implementing TEVT policy towards Education for Sustainable Development is being implemented through:

- a. Skills empowerment programs for those living below poverty line. The Punjab Vocational Training Council (PVTC) is specifically designed in the largest province of the country with a population of 89 million to carry out this.
- b. Providing free education to the poorest of the poor. This program is initially designed for the backward areas of the province.
- c. Action plan for permanent rehabilitation of Food Support Scheme beneficiaries by imparting income generation skills/technical training as social protection initiative. Development of Technical and Vocational Training Programs on need based models.
- d. The Federal Government is also as a part of education for sustainable development by introducing the **NATIONAL TECHNICAL TRAINING CENTRES PROGRAM (NTTCP)**, which envision skills for the 21st century. The objective is to wean the country out of the low skills, low productivity and low expectation trap which permeates many spheres of our national economic activities.

The instruments for this change will be a wide- ranging dissemination of skills upgrade and training of the workforce, so that its employability, productivity and competitiveness can be enhanced. **The resulting societal transformation and well-being will far outweigh economic benefits, and will help turn our youth away from negative influences and actions.**

Pakistan is currently on a favourable portion of the demographic transition until 2030, with an influx of some 60 million people in the economically productive age group. However, without skills and opportunities for employment, social cohesion and well-being can be severely impacted.

In order to access the potential dividends, it becomes essential to manage this transition through a set of calibrated programmes. *In the absence of any such planning and investment in Pakistan, the emergence of large numbers of uneducated, unskilled and unprepared population will only lead to a social disaster with negative fall out for sustainable development.*

The Current Situation:

Pakistan is suffering from both skills shortage and skills gap.

- The number of persons enrolled at present in vocational and technical training institutes is only 1.3 % (about 300,000) of the 14-19 age cohort.
- This is dangerously low when compared with numbers of 35-60% for OECD countries, and 6-20% for the Asia Pacific economies.
- Pakistan is even finding it difficult to maintain its large and varied infrastructure, or compete in the modern global workplace.
- There is also a major mismatch between desired and actual quality levels and relevance. Pakistan's growth and development is limited by lack of competence in both hard and soft skills, rather than under investment.
- The nature of work and demands for skills is changing in Pakistan, and employment opportunities are shifting across industries and occupations.
- The profile of the Pakistani work force in 2008 shows share of employment in agriculture, services and industry at 43.6, 36.2 and 20.2 percent respectively.
- National surveys also indicate that over 8 million workers have moved away from agriculture into services and industry since 1995, with the service sector absorbing nearly 55 percent of such persons.
- This is to be seen in the context of a steady migration from urban to rural areas; some 80 million people are expected to migrate from rural to urban areas in the next two decades.
- While there has been some productivity improvement, it reflects a lower starting base rather than a real growth, and the skill levels still remain low. The grave mismatch between demand and quality skills is clear from labour surveys over the period which indicates that 59.2 percent of the unemployed are literate or semi-literate.
- 33.6% of the Labour Force possesses less than 1 year of education, while 70% has less than 8 years of schooling.

In the Province, where I come from i.e. Punjab with a land area of 205,344 squares kilometers and population of 89 million, skill development for poverty alleviation is like a national anthem. Human capital is a precious resource.

The Punjab Vocational Training Council (PVTC) as a leading organization, has by now trained over 100,000 girls & boys which has contributed over Rs. 13.12 billion (US \$ 160 million) to the national economy.

The model works on a public-private partnership with stakeholders such as PVTC & local industry working together to apply the resources and competences of industry and vocation for the benefit of all. All institutes are managed by a Board, constituted by the private sector to identify market needs. The upgradation of the human capital is the core component for sustainable development. We empower girls and boys between the ages of 18-35 with skills and competences for work which directly advance the employability of individuals. In this regard, it will be relevant to emphasize before this august gathering that we don't ignore the "Special Persons" who are devoid of hearing and speaking faculties. They are encouraged to apply for trades and trained through teachers qualified to handle such special persons.

PVTC provides an opportunity through 36 different trades to young people to increase their chances of employability relevant in trades to the demands of our society. Our training methodology possesses a combination of knowledge, practical, social skills and positive attitude. This is infact a regular course of twelve months on "Life Skills" which is designed for girls and boys who are educated only upto the primary / middle level or matriculation with ten years of formal school education.

Let me also inform that to keep curricula relevant, we have regular links with the end users i.e. industry and service sector. We have a regular internship program without which no certificate is awarded.

Through skills and TVET, we can also export our manpower and receive a premium on TVET efforts. We have a vision of vocational education that focuses on practical or life skills.

We have seen decency being brought to the lives of such families which brings social advancement through dignity not only for the families but also for the social community. Even in the case of pro-poor initiatives, the Government is emphasizing "**rehabilitation**" rather than "**relief**". Massive programs are being undertaken which will replace "Food Stamp Programs".

We understand that education is the key to unlock the "cage of human misery" which will open up the future of freedom and hope. Who can deny that education paves the way for freedom from poverty and hunger. Similarly our initiative in free primary education will also lead to productivity in the formal and informal sector of economy. This has led to personal empowerment and socio economic development.

Here I would like to interact more informally with my fellow participants and talk about our experience of Technical and Vocational Education and Training and solicit any questions or interaction.

Other sectors that I will be taking about relate to:

- Education for poorest of the poor
- Food Support Program
- National Technical Training Centers Program

On the above three interventions for sustainable development, I would like to interact informally so that it is able to generate interest and a learning process. Essentially, I am looking for a feedback from all of you so that we can improve ourselves in our endeavor for a modest contribution towards global sustainable development.

In our country we are aware of a ticking time bomb, where a large number of young population in the age bracket of 10-25 is and will be awaiting work opportunities. As I have mentioned above our recent TVET reform effort also include National Technical Training Centers though out the country which will hopefully cater to skills for the 21st century. As has been remarked in an international conference, it is a means to jump on the bandwagon of globalization. TVET provides a larger vision of sustainable development. That is one of the reasons we are also catering making the skills girls and boys into exportable commodity.

National Technical Training Centers Program

Economic and Social Benefits of the Programme:

The National HRD Programme based on internationally benchmarked skills is not just about building the skills needed for the workplace in Pakistan's future economy, it is also about present day marketable and economically relevant education for young people in the economically productive age group.

SMEs:

The first major beneficiary will be the Small and Medium Enterprises ((SMEs). Their contribution to Pakistan's economy, employment absorption, and poverty alleviation, can be gauged from the fact that 90 percent of all private sector manufacturing units employ less than 99 persons. Their impact is also extremely high in the manufacturing sector, even when most of this may be employment generation at 'subsistence levels'.

This *change management* (training, skill development, and adaptation of technology) will be a key objective of the Centres and will be intensified by enhanced networking with industrial clusters and business houses.

- SMEs in Pakistan are an integral part of the manufacturing supply chain in all sectors. They are also major players in the industrial and service supply chain, producing a variety of products and services.
- The entire process for increasing high quality skills and productivity in Districts, will place these opportunities close to most people who actually *do* work (farmers, workers on building sites or the office / factory floor, and those who work in trade), and who are hardly educated and may not even be literate.

- The skilled personnel will be able to partake of the fruits of globalization which, apart from other factors, has brought about a massive change in the nature of work and the workplace. The 90s showed that manufacturing can also be done anywhere if the skills and physical connectivity/electronic connectivity is appropriate. Now even design activities can be undertaken anywhere, if trans-national skills and management levels are matched.
- Ultimately, each and every one who enrolls will acquire **core skills** together with some other skills, which are **transferable**; that is to say, they are skills which every individual needs to continue learning and be effective at work. This is the requirement of the workforce in the 21st Century
- Apart from practical skills in the chosen trade, the individuals will improve their ability to handle numbers, analytical skills, and effective communication.

The Community:

The program will be embedded in local communities at the district level, in order for them to be strengthened economically and socially through learning and employment. A whole new generation of trained and productive manpower will be produced which will help maintain the infrastructure and implement development activities, and partake of productive employment in agriculture, industry and services at the local and national levels. Apart from poverty alleviation through decent employment (with decent wages), its impact on social transformation and solidarity will be enormous.

UNESCO in Pakistan

I have briefly covered four (04) areas of TVET interventions in education for sustainable development. **UNESCO in Pakistan** has undertaken following activities under Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in 2007-08.

Project:

Building and mobilizing effective partnerships and networks for ESD in Pakistan.

Activities:

- Establishment and operationalization of a National Forum on ESD
- Awareness and capacity of relevant ESD stakeholders and partners
- Development of advocacy materials on ESD
- Organized a National Conference on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) entitled "Learning to Live on Planet" in March, 2007 in Karachi. This two day conference included focus group workshops, such as ESD and Formal Education, ESD and Civil Society, ESD and Media etc.

Material development:

- Adaptation, printing and dissemination of Teachers' Guide Book for Teachers and Teacher Educators: Education for Sustainable Development
- Adaptation, printing and dissemination of the Book "Rethink, Refuse and Reduce – Education for Sustainable in a Changing World.

The above is not enough. As a lead role, more tangible effort and guidance would be required. The Government in Pakistan would require / need more agency support for the development of TVET. How much UNESCO could respond to such expressed needs? UNESCO will have to take into account the characteristics of TEVT and those of country needs and the state of economy. Given current global situation, the needs are sensitive. But other countries might help – such as Germany, Australia, Switzerland etc. Focus should be on **capacity development** and **better international sharing of knowledge and experience**.

We of course do not expect UNESCO in Pakistan to cover the whole range of TVET themes as that would be a **recipe for superficiality**. What however is required is at least a concerted effort towards fulfillment of clear definable and measurable inputs for a less developed country like Pakistan.

Conclusion

Given the **poverty of skills**, TVET is an ideal adjunct to education for sustainable development.

We are conceptually involved in a movement whereby a **snowball effect might gather into an avalanche**. TVET thus as a tool for sustainable development can refute some of the cynics who consider that the term is more charming than meaningful.

Given the above, we will also have to be mindful that we live on a planet where 20 percent of the population consumes 80 percent of the national resources. Sustainable development as a cliché will have to provide tangible bite for the majority of the poor.