

UNESCO-UNEVOC Trends mapping on innovation in TVET

Briefing note

Background

UNESCO-UNEVOC's 2018 Global Learning Forum on 'Managing skills in a time of disruption' put a spotlight on the factors shaping the future of the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) landscape, including changes in climate, demography, business and labour markets, technology, and migration. The transition to a green economy, the implementation of digital technologies in the world of work and the emergence of new forms of entrepreneurship are not only changing the profile of jobs but are also creating new possibilities for generating solutions for social and economic problems in the form of innovations. On the one hand, this scenario is driving TVET systems to improve their capacity to identify the future demand of skills (e.g. soft and specific technical skills – including digital, greening and entrepreneurial skills) and to expand access to these skills. On the other hand, TVET systems are also leading the way to innovation development by incorporating new activities (e.g. the development of applied research, business incubators, and intellectual property activities), with aims to enhance local innovation capacity and to create greater social and economic impacts.

In all, these changes represent a great challenge for the future of TVET, but at the same time also expresses a need to seize the prospects and enhance the social and economic benefits from TVET in different regions of the world.

Discussions at UNESCO-UNEVOC's Learning Forum underlined that new and radical shifts are needed to ensure that TVET systems can respond to these changes, and that TVET systems can no longer just operate according to a 'business-as-usual' model. The speed and scale of change calls for a broad process of transformation, with TVET institutions increasingly acting as drivers of innovation in their local eco-system¹, and in parallel innovating the learning processes and products offered to youth and adults and increasing citizens' potential to innovate.

As TVET adapts itself to the impacts of significant social, environmental and economic disruptions, innovative practices emerge with great potential to rejuvenate the future of TVET. Current developments in TVET suggest that many types of innovative practices are already being developed or deployed, significantly changing the way we define and practice TVET.

However, despite the international appreciation of the important role innovative practices can play to transform TVET, there is a need to better understand what is meant by innovation in the TVET sector and its implications. For this reason, UNESCO-UNEVOC will conduct a trends mapping study in the next months to identify the current ways through which innovation contributes to the development of TVET.

¹ This local eco-system comprises public and private institutions, infrastructure and assets that combine to sustain ongoing business in the local area and provide opportunities for innovation and development.

A trends mapping study on innovative practices in TVET

Description and objectives of the study

With the objective of strengthening collaboration, knowledge exchange and peer learning on innovative practices in TVET, the trends mapping study aims to improve the understanding and further clarify what innovation means for the TVET community, taking into account the different stages of development they find themselves at, and the different geographic, socio-economic and political contexts. The study aims to map current trends and showcase innovative practices in, amongst others, institutional culture, stakeholder involvement and partnership, teaching and learning processes – including curriculum design – and practices that successfully promote, for example, start-up companies.

The study will help to generate awareness about the potential contributions of innovation to the development of TVET systems and the challenges involved, and will analyse the current trends from two perspectives:

1. How TVET contributes to innovation in the economy and society, in particular through providing digital, greening and entrepreneurial skills;
2. How TVET institutions are innovative in terms of the institutional culture, relationship with the local skills eco-system, products (e.g. the qualifications they offer) and processes (e.g. the type of teaching and learning they provide)

Structure of the study

In order to capture as many perspectives and trends as possible, the trends mapping study will cover all five regions of the world and will involve UNEVOC Network members and the wider TVET community. The trends mapping study will be conducted in several phases:

- A questionnaire will aim to capture current trends of innovation in TVET including in institutional culture, innovation strategies, relationship with the local skills eco-system, and innovative practices (e.g. teaching and training processes, curricula, qualifications and research projects);
- A one-week virtual conference on UNESCO-UNEVOC's TVeT Forum will share the initial findings of the study and engage the TVET community in discussions on innovation in TVET. The discussions will help reinforce the TVET community's understanding of what innovation in TVET means and will share innovative practices from the field.
- The publication of the trends mapping study report in May 2019, including:
 - a. A literature review of publications, journal articles, position and working papers and reports from a variety of sources on innovation in TVET;
 - b. The Virtual conference summary report capturing the main outcomes of the virtual conference;
 - c. A number of examples of innovation in TVET from the UNEVOC Network and other partners;
 - d. A discussion on innovation in TVET, including challenges and recommendations.

The results of the trends mapping study will be used to develop and reinforce activities by UNESCO-UNEVOC to support institutional-level initiatives that enhance innovation in TVET and improve the contribution of TVET institutions to the global and local prospects in relevant areas, such as greening TVET, digitization and entrepreneurship.

Next steps

As previously mentioned, our first activity will be based on a questionnaire on trends of innovation in TVET. Please find the document with the questionnaire attached. In addition to questions on the scope of activities of the TVET institution and specific innovative practices, you will also find in this document some important instructions on how to fill the questionnaire.

I will be leading this study in a participatory manner to gather as much feedback from a variety of TVET stakeholders as possible. I encourage you to take this important opportunity and help the TVET community to better understand the potential contributions of innovation to the development of TVET systems.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions,

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