

SHANGHAI UPDATE

Follow-up to the UNESCO Third International TVET Congress

Editorial

Developing a new narrative for TVET



UNESCO is a unique organization with a singular role. As the organization responsible for supporting the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal on education, it has a vital role to play on the world stage. We know our decisions to prioritise one topic or another have big consequences for people's lives.

Taking on the top position in education in the UN family is also a huge responsibility which I will do my best to live up to. Developing the strategy of the 2030 Agenda is very political work so it calls for a strong political sensibility. The level of financial responsibility is high and we need to be accountable to Member States and to the partners who fund our work.

The UNESCO I joined last May is an organization with plenty of strong points. The expertise of its staff is one. The breadth of its mandate — which brings all the different knowledge tracks on education together — is another. The fact that UNESCO brings education under the same roof as science, culture and communication also enriches our perspective. Occasionally our thoughts may be faster than our actions so we will be working to simplify things and to

make UNESCO a more agile organization over the next two years.

Within UNESCO, TVET is a great example of a cross cutting topic. On the one hand, it contributes to our main mission which is quality education for all including equity and gender equality. But TVET is also fundamental for the more technical and operational aspect of our work — TVET is a good way of fostering entrepreneurial skills and facilitating the transition from traditional to greener economies within the overall mandate of the 2030 Agenda. So it provides a good illustration of the link we can establish between the general principles of education for all and the technical assistance we provide to governments helping link education to decent work and the labour market.

Looking to the future, my biggest aim for TVET is to make the TVET strategy, already on my table, into a real plan of work for our Member States and partners. The subtext to this is to try and develop a new narrative for TVET and to nurture the potential this sector has to build the link between culture, nature, heritage and technical competences. It is obvious that TVET is important but we need to make it more visible, more well-known.

Stefania Giannini
Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO

BEAR II aims to upgrade TVET in Eastern Africa

Launch events in three countries since March have signalled the start of an innovative UNESCO project which aims to make TVET in Eastern Africa more relevant, of better quality and more attractive to young people, businesses and society in general.

The second phase of Better Education for Africa's Rise, or BEAR II, supported by the Republic of Korea and



implemented by UNESCO in partnership with national governments, will work with TVET stakeholders in Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania to improve capacity for leading TVET reform through a series of tailored activities focusing on specific economic sectors. Depending on national needs, these may include identifying skills gaps and improving TVET teacher training, carrying out labour market analysis and using this to develop new curricula and policy, organising a skills competition, upgrading career guidance or building pathways between TVET and other parts of the education system.

Sectoral interventions through BEAR II have been carefully designed to fit within the priorities and development plans of each country. In Madagascar the project activities will focus on the textile industry, one of five priority sectors; in Tanzania they will focus on the sectors of agribusiness and creative industries in line with its 2016–2027 National Skills Development Strategy. In Kenya the efforts of the BEAR team will focus on the environmental technology sector, chosen for its potential to contribute to economic growth and creating green jobs as well as protecting the environment. In Ethiopia the focus will be on agro-processing and in Uganda agro-processing and post-harvest management.

Since March 2018, launch events have been held in Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya while launch events in the remaining two countries are being planned in the next few months. Workplans for each country have already been approved and preparations to start the activities are now underway.

BEAR II will build upon the achievements of the first BEAR project which has made significant progress in increasing the relevance of TVET to the needs of individuals and industry in Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Namibia and Zambia.

During 2011–2016, a total of 744 teachers participated in training to upgrade their skills and 12 new curricula were developed. Stakeholders in each country conducted labour market analyses which were used to update curricula and sectoral committees were set up to facilitate structured dialogue on TVET. Teachers were trained in three core areas and senior teachers were helped to become trainers of trainers. The emphasis on building local capacity and expertise in close alignment with national priorities has produced results which are specific to context and should be sustainable well beyond the project's life span.

Managing skills in times of disruption

Fast-changing technology, threats to environmental sustainability and demographic change, often driven by migration, are causing big disruptions in the way we live and work. TVET has a prime role in giving people the skills they need to cope and to prosper. Just how to turn these ongoing waves of disruption into an opportunity was the theme of UNESCO-UNEVOC's TVET Learning Forum which brought over 100 leading members of the TVET community to Bonn last May.

In his opening remarks, Svein Osttveit, director of UNESCO's Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems, described what is at stake for TVET systems: "TVET performance is increasingly measured by how it responds to change, by how and what types of skills are developed to adapt to these changes, and by how far youth and adults can use the skills they possess, as an effective currency or passport, to pursue mobility, and professional and personal development.

Members of the Inter-Agency Group on TVET — a group of international organizations for facilitating knowledge exchange and coordination — set the scene on day one by describing the impact of these three disruptive trends and how TVET systems and international organizations are responding. Other plenary sessions examined how countries are adapting their systems of governance to deal with the disruption and how to improve learning pathways for young people, women and disadvantaged groups.

UNEVOC Centres organised six Strategy Labs, workshops and round-table discussions, showcasing how members of the [UNEVOC Network](#) are tackling issues such as diversifying funding, skills development for migrants and displaced people or preparing teachers for a digital future.

How to integrate entrepreneurial learning in TVET was the subject of a conversation-café-style session led by [TKNIKA](#) of Spain with help from Chile's [DUOC UC](#) and Paraguay's [Fundación Paraguaya](#). After learning about innovative approaches to teacher training such as [TKNIKA's training itinerary](#), participants discussed promising strategies for integrating entrepreneurial learning into the TVET curriculum.

Two days of intense debate allowed forum participants to examine the implications of disruption for skills development and TVET and to pool their knowledge of available tools and resources to turn these disruptions into a positive force for change.



| Forum participants and organizers on the last day after the closing session

In his closing remarks, head of UNEVOC Shyamal Majumdar called on people to challenge the status quo in TVET and to facilitate innovation as the best way of addressing disruption. Many TVET institutions have already embraced the future, he added, and their practices can be a source of new learning.

Programme provides call to action for TVET leaders

After her twenty-year career as a lecturer, researcher and trainer of trainers, Christina Boateng was looking for some fresh input on emerging trends in her field — TVET. With these expectations, the Ghanaian academic, a senior lecturer in TVET teacher training at the University of Cape Coast in Ghana, attended UNEVOC's Global TVET Leadership Programme which took place in Bonn, Germany from 25 June to 6 July 2018.



The programme is designed to help TVET leaders become effective agents for change in their institutions and countries by updating their understanding of the latest developments in TVET strategy and equipping them with the skills they need for effective leadership.

It does this by addressing three key dimensions of TVET leadership in a setting which encourages participation and debate. Each module starts with an overview of global trends and developments in key TVET policy areas. Participants then deepen their understanding of the material through practical exercises, group work, case studies and sharing their experiences.

"I learnt a lot, not only from the presenters but also from my colleagues," says Dr Boateng, "the cohort had people from all corners of the world and cut across professions."

The programme is also intended to serve as a call to action. Each participant brought an idea to the table and used their time in Bonn to develop this into a fully-fledged proposal.

Dr Boateng's project aims to give teenage girls and young mothers in the port city of Cape Coast the skills they need to set up small businesses. This aligns with her department's strategic goal of boosting employability for out-of-school youth and other vulnerable groups.

"The training has been helpful in the sense that I am able to describe in concrete terms exactly what we wish to achieve in terms of objectives, outcomes and impact," she says, "with that knowledge I am confident we can come out with a winning proposal."

Equipping TEVET managers for greater autonomy in Malawi

When managers of Technical Entrepreneurial and Vocational Education and Training (TEVET) colleges and community skills development centres from all four regions

of Malawi attended UNESCO's capacity-building course in the central town of Mponela, Malawi last August, they were keen to upgrade their skills. The 10-day programme, organized by UNESCO with EU support – as part of the UNESCO-EU Skills and Technical Education Project – and given by UNESCO-UNEVOC, was designed to give the colleges' heads, deputy heads and bursars the specific management skills they need in a changing policy environment.

Malawian TEVET remains highly centralized. This makes it hard for TVET centres to react to local demand for skills, attract alternative sources of income or attract more students with new, innovative courses.

Plans are afoot for greater autonomy and decentralization. In some technical colleges efforts are underway to set up full management systems.

But TVET managers lack the vision and the skills to manage more autonomous institutions. "Our institutions have a lot of resources but we lack the vision to put them to proper use," said course participant and Julius Phiri.

The UNEVOC training programme aimed to do just that and equip them with the vision for change and the skills to lead. It covered generic skills for managing institutions, including finance, human resources and managing students, units on leadership and specialized TEVET subjects such as attracting alternative financing, improving relevance and quality or managing the learning process. This was rounded off with sessions on writing proposals, communications and handling critical illnesses in the school environment.

Participants drew on their own experiences at work to inform the debate. Bursars, for instance, explained the finer points of financial housekeeping during the sessions on financial management. Working in small groups with the accent on interaction and participation made for a more useful learning experience.

After 10 days' hard work and lively debate, the 127 participants were able to take some useful new knowledge and practical skills back to their home institutions. Follow-up support to help them put their vision into practice was provided this autumn.



Participants doing group work

Celebrating World Youth Skills Day

Quality education is key for success in the job market and young people need the skills and knowledge to be able to respond to technological innovation', according to Jayathma Wickramanayake, the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, speaking at an event to mark the UN's official World Youth Skills Day on 17 July 2018 in New York, United States. "Young people need to take on a leading role in the global effort to create a sustainable world," she told an audience of policymakers, diplomats, UN and youth organizations, civil society and, this year for the first time, experts in emerging technologies.

They debated how to leverage emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, big data and machine learning, to boost skills acquisition and job opportunities for young people. The need for adaptive skills, including soft skills such as problem solving, was also emphasized.

UNESCO-UNEVOC chose to celebrate the day by focusing on improving the image of TVET. Activities included a photo [competition](#) asking people to illustrate skills in action and a virtual [conference](#) on how to make TVET more attractive to young people. "What works in Maastricht won't work in Marrakesh or Maputo," said conference moderator Stephen Billet, Professor of Adult and Vocational Education at Australia's Griffith University, "the low image of TVET is common to many countries but the way it plays out and what needs to be done is likely to be quite distinct."

Since its launch in 2015, the day has become a useful tool for raising awareness of the need to give young people the skills they need to progress. The reasons why are clear — low-income countries will need 45 million workers with secondary education by 2020, according to UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report 2016. But while young people aged 15–24 make up 18% of the world population, [they are disproportionately affected by unemployment](#) says the ILO.

Recent and upcoming events

East Asian and Southeast Asian UNEVOC Network consolidation workshop. 24 – 25 October 2018. Seoul, Republic of Korea

Virtual conference on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage through TVET. 29 October – 7 November 2018. UNESCO-UNEVOC TVeT Forum

Regional UNEVOC TVET Leadership Programme for Northern, Central and Eastern Africa. 12 – 16 November 2018. Dakar, Senegal

Skills for Innovation hubs (i-hubs) Experts' meeting. 14 – 15 November 2018. Bonn, Germany

Expert Group workshop on World Reference Levels (WRLs). 26–27 November 2018. Paris, France

Virtual conference on entrepreneurial learning in TVET. 26 November – 7 December 2018. UNESCO-UNEVOC TVeT Forum

COP24 UN Climate Change Conference. 3 – 14 December 2018. Katowice, Poland

Global Education 2030 Meeting. 3 – 5 December 2018. Brussels, Belgium

Regional workshop on Qualifications system in ECOWAS. 10 – 11 December 2018. Abuja, Nigeria

UNESCO Mobile Learning Week 2019. 4 – 8 March 2019. Paris, France

Recently published

Building tomorrow's digital skills – what conclusions can we draw from international comparative indicators

Funding skills development: The private sector contribution

Making learning visible: Representing skills, competences and qualifications

Open Education Resources for skills development

UNESCO-UNEVOC in Action. Biennial Report 2016–2017

UNESCO-UNEVOC Medium-Term Strategy (MTS-II) 2018–2020

Skills for a connected world

Taking a whole government approach to skills development

Global Education Monitoring Report 2019

Pathways of progression. Linking TVET with post-secondary education

Digital credentialing: Implications for the recognition of learning across-boarders

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