The 4th African UNESCO-UNEVOC TVET Summit
Flexible Learning: from TVET Policy to skills training practice
Wednesday 26th May 2010
Lusaka, Zambia

Recap of the day

Mr Murimba from the UNESCO Office in Harare set the scene by talking about the importance of TVET. He emphasised that unfortunately most TVET systems are outdated and there is a lack of professionalism therein. Equipment and curricula are outdated. Teachers do not have access to and benefit from research. Yet TVET is being seen as the engine of sustainable development and has been adopted recently as one of the 8 priorities at the meeting of Ministers in Kinshasha. Hence the reason for TVET reform in many countries. Amongst the strategies of the reform is the use of ICT in TVET. The example of Malawi was quoted as an effective system making use of ICT by private sector. He appealed to member countries to promote open access to knowledge.

Mr Efison Munjanganja, Officer in Charge, UNESCO-UNEVOC, then took the floor and gave the keynote address. He emphasised flexible learning and how it evoked technology, access, opportunities to learning, better employment opportunities. This is in line with SADC countries objectives that want to be competitive globally and calls for rethinking of TVET on their main agenda as exemplified by papers and strategies in various conferences.

Many advantages of ICTs as connected to flexible learning were spelt out. For instance, it could extend capabilities and are characterised by learners taking centre stage. It helps to teach larger and diverse group. However, the challenge is how these advantages can become real in technology poor TVET countries. He also talked about the different appellation of flexible learning. However, he pinpointed blended learning characterised by learners taking centre stage, amongst others. Then he mentioned the different services offered by the UNESCO-UNEVOC as part of the vision of the UN. Various services mentioned were E-Forum, Network, on line services, TVETipedia.

Mr George Herd gave a detailed framework from high level policy to implementation. Evidence from different countries (UK, USA and Australia) was spelt out. The example of UK where more than 52,000 participants moved from Grade D to C in science as a result of ICT support was mentioned.

Different resources were already available but he said that there is no need to have technology to initiate Flexible Learning & Blending Learning. The important thing is to have a new mindset as well as flexible institutions, agile teachers who are ready to move away from the traditional methods of teaching to facilitate students to learn to learn and problem solving etc. This can be enhanced through CPD of teachers, managers and decision makers. Within the institutional strategy, A Quality Management should be high on the agenda. He also emphasised different necessary parameters that need to be available such as the need to transform the work of TVET, service culture, etc. And he concluded by the need to focus

on Quality Management through ICT, long term sectoral view, collaborative networks, national support agencies, change management best practice amongst others.

The morning session ended with the presentation of Mr Engida from UNESCO, IICBCA who talked about the importance of integrating technology and pedagogy in the training of teachers. He also presented the UNESCO toolkit that has been tested in different countries and underlined the necessity for gradual development of teachers from emerging, applying, infusion to transforming stage. The way forward mentioned was that no single agency can tackle all these areas and there is a need for a strong and sustained partnership approach.

In the afternoon, Mrs Richardson started by introducing the Commonwealth of Learning and the "raison d'étre" of flexible skills development initiative (FSDI). She mentioned that the initiative enhances the efficiency by using ICT to improve administration, increase access and quality. She also talked about the various components of FSDI and emphasises once again on the importance of engaging development partners in FSDI. The example of COL and E Forum working together was coined. She ended up by talking about her experience in Zambia.

In conclusion, flexible learning and blended learning needs a new mindset and cannot be implemented in isolation. Various partners need to be engaged if it is to be successful.

Three groups were constituted and were asked to look into:-

- How is Flexible Learning dealt within their national TVET policies
- What does Flexible Learning TVET look like in their institutions in 2020, and
- What needs to happen in their organisations to have the potential of ict IN tvet?

The outcomes of the 3 workshops are as follows:-

Group 1:

Q1

- There are varied levels of TVET in various countries – for some it is there and for others it is not – ICT is used generally but not specific to TVET
- Many countries have started positioning TVET
- Many countries are integrating ICT in the education policy
- Some governments are ready to fund the implementation of TVET policy
- Others are doing consultation for national policy reforms

Q2

- ICT literate vocational trainers
- Implementation of asynchronous, home based class for learning
- Availability of user friendly materials, appropriate materials and equipment
- Improved accessibility to TVET through improved bandwidth at appropriate cost
- Digitised relevant content/material

- Empowered TVET goal orientated trainers
- Online and continuous assessment and evaluation
- Competence based assessment assisted by TVET
- Gender mainstreaming that is supported by TVET

Q3

- Avail ICT facilities and infrastructure
- More investment in TVET
- Invite all stakeholders such that TVET is made relevant to all who need it
- Devise appropriate technologies to enhance TVET eg low energy consuming technologies
- Community sensitisation
- Lobby for political will to support and implement TVET
- Establish a strategic implementation plan for TVET
- Harmonise stakeholders
- Clear development road map
- Accredited and standardised certification
- Continuous monitoring and evaluation

Group 2

Q1

All members confirmed that there were national policies to support flexible learning and more specifically ICT in education sectors. The group identified both the progress made and challenges in the implementation with regard to national policies.

Progress included:-

- Increased funding for computers at learning institutions
- Increased access
- Some training of teachers in the use of ICT
- Increased flexible delivery

Challenges included:-
- Lack of harmonisation of policies in making them relevant to all institutions
- Instrumentation for implementation is weak
- Change in the mindset of management as well as educators is slow
- Marginalisation of learners because of geographic and socioeconomic status
- Failure of policies to cascade to grassroots level

Q2
The following initiatives were identified in the group's vision 2020:-
- Recognition of formal, informal and incidental learning
- Harmonisation of TVET and ICT policies
- Policies to support independent and self directed learning
- Improved infrastructure (country wide access to broad band)
- Virtual classrooms

- Increased use of technology in every aspect of the teaching and learning process: research, curriculum design, delivery assessment and evaluation
- Continuous research and teacher development
- Use of a variety of media in the teaching and learning process eg tv, radio and cell phones
- Convergence of technologies
- Closing the divide

Challenges included:-
- Aligning delivery to technology
- High cost of access creating a barrier to universal access
- Inadequate government support
- Ensuring quality standards

Q3
The following recommendations were deemed necessary to realise he potential of ICT in TVET:-
- Revise methods of delivery and content of curriculum for teacher training
- Respond to market and labour needs
- Align curriculum to national human resource strategy ad to technology
- Introduce a mixed model of training in order to open access, reduce cosy, improve quality and to establish a culture of learning to lean
- Strengthen linkages with private sector
- Introduce a shared training environment eg multipurpose facility
- Introduce the use of simulation especially in raining environments
- Collaborate with experts
- Decentralise training and make it relevant to the economic activity of the specific region
- Optimise the use of current resources
- Sensitise media houses t use some of their time for educational and development p[rogrammes
- Develop communities of practice
- Engage in advocacy to elevate the image of TVET
- Leverage on access stories to motivate teachers and learners

Group 3

Q1

- ODL Policy
- Learnership scheme
- One authority for TVET
- Standardisation
- Service Learning
- Labour Market

Q2

- More coordinated TVET
- Uniformity in TVET
- Accessibility
- Use of ICT
- Quality in TVET

- Relevance
- More inclusive
- Improve image of TVET
- Staff development in TVET Education and use of ICT

Q3
- Need TVET Authority
- Need for open Policy
- ICT infrastructure will be in place
- Capacity building such as:-
    - Training of Trainers
    - Training of Manager
    - Training of Policy Maker
    - Developing of ICT Experts
    - Curriculum/Training Materials
    - Regular reviewing of the curriculum
    - Relevant programmes at school level
    - Partnership (public/private)
    - Adequate budget allocation for TVET