

Report of the International Expert Consultation Meeting on Technical and Vocational Education

**UNESCO-UNEVOC Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training
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Acronyms

AAA	Accra Programme of Action
BIBB	Federal Institute for Vocational Training
BMBF	German Federal Ministry of Education and Research
BMZ	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
DESD	Decade of Education for Sustainable Development
DFID	U.K. Department for International Development
EFA	Global Campaign on Education for All
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
GMR	Global Monitoring Report
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
IBE	International Bureau for Education
ICTs	Information and communication technologies
ICTVET	International Conference on Technical and Vocational Education and Training
IDTs	International Development Targets
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning
ILO	International Labour Organization
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LIFE	Literacy Initiative for Empowerment
LLL	Lifelong Learning
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MLA	Main Line of Action
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
RQF	Regional Qualification framework
TISSA	Teacher Training Initiative in Sub-Saharan Africa
TOT	Trainer of trainers
TVE	Technical and vocational education
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNESCO-UNEVOC	International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education
UNESS	UNESCO National Education Support Strategies
UNIP	United TVET Network on Innovation and Professional Development
UPE	Universal primary education
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
WGICSD	Inter-agency Working Group for International Cooperation in Skills Development

I. Introduction

I.1 Background

During the 179th session of the UNESCO Executive Board in April 2008, Member States discussed the possibility of a 'UNESCO Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training' (179 EX/49). Following the request of the Federal Government of Germany, and with the strong support of many Member States, the Director-General was subsequently asked to elaborate (on the basis of document 34 C/4) a succinct and operable strategy to support technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Member States.

This strategy should cover the scope and fields of action of UNESCO at international and national levels, the vital linkages of TVET to broader development goals such as employment and self-employment, poverty reduction and UNESCO's main priority areas, and a review of the internal coherence of present TVET resources across different UNESCO Offices, Institutions and Sections. Furthermore, the Strategy should promote cooperation with other development partners at the country level in line with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

The present International Expert Consultation Meeting ("Experts Meeting"), held at the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre in Bonn, Germany from 12 to 13 January 2009, was convened as part of a series of consultations taking place since August 2008 towards formulating the UNESCO TVET strategy. These consultations have involved, among others, the International Labour Organization, the European Training Foundation, the World Bank, UNICEF and various other multilateral and bilateral development partners. It was jointly organized by UNESCO Headquarters in partnership with the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), and in cooperation with the German Commission for UNESCO and UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre (Bonn).

Altogether, there were 56 participants representing: the Permanent Delegation of Germany to UNESCO; the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF); the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ); the Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB) and the German National Commission for UNESCO. Participants also came from UNESCO Member States, including Member States of the UNESCO Executive Board, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris and the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre in Bonn, multilateral organizations and bilateral development partners, development banks and relevant individuals and organizations with an expertise in TVET.

I.2 Structure of the meeting

The meeting began with an Opening Session on the morning of Monday 13th January, with the first presentation by **Mr. Rupert Maclean, Director of UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre**, who welcomed the visitors and offered an overview of the purpose, background, structure and content of the meeting.

His presentation was followed by that of **Mr. Qian Tang, Deputy Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO Headquarters**, who thanked the hosts, the Federal Government of Germany and the German Delegation. Mr. Tang highlighted that UNESCO is looking for contributions to the elaboration of its TVET strategy, but emphasized that the Organization cannot be expected to undertake everything. What should, and could, the Organization feasibly prioritise over the next 10 years?

Ms. Kornelia Haugg, Director-General for Vocational Education and Training, German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) then offered her greetings from the 'Bundesministerin' and commented that task of education authorities is to ensure that young people get the best chances possible in life and that they have access to relevant and useful education in a lifelong learning perspective. She commented the profile of TVET needs to be improved, with this level of education assigned its proper place in the international development agenda. For its part, Germany can bring its long experience in the area of TVET provision to the debate. But identifying how to reach the goals of TVET through a UNESCO framework, and the role that UNEVOC should take responsibility for, is one of the main tasks for this two-day meeting.

H.E. Mr. Günter Overfeld, Ambassador, Permanent Delegation of Germany to UNESCO stated that Germany's commitment to TVET is based on the country's historical experience and firm conviction that multilateral engagement is central to German foreign policy. In this light, the Government would like to see the reinvigoration of TVET activities within the UN system operating as 'One UN'. The German Delegation, with the support of BMBF, introduced the draft resolution at the meeting of the Executive Board in April 2008. The

Ambassador expressed gratitude to BMBF for its commitment to TVET, and for its contribution to promoting this area of education policy within the UN agenda.

Finally, **Mr. Roland Bernecker, Secretary-General, German National Commission for UNESCO** welcomed the participants to the ‘United Nations city of Bonn’. He commented that the financial crisis has shown that we must learn to live in more sustainable manner, and not be content with short-term solutions. He made the connection between TVET and Sustainable Development and said that the National Commission is convinced that UNESCO can play key role in the international context.

Following the Opening Session, a ‘Brief historical overview of UNESCO’s TVET experience’ was given by **Mrs. Linda King, Director a.i., Division for the Promotion of Basic Education, UNESCO**. This was followed by the presentation by the **Consultant, Mr. Kenneth King**, of his Paper on the ‘Inputs to UNESCO’s TVET Strategy’.

Both of these presentations were followed during the afternoon of the first day by a discussion session wherein individual experts, representatives of international organizations, development partners and country representatives offered their own suggestions on priorities and areas for action. That session was Chaired by **Mr. David Atchoarena, Head of Training and Education Programmes, International Institute for Educational Planning**.

The following morning, Tuesday 14th January, the participants divided into four Working Groups:

Working Group A: [“Global TVET Priorities for UNESCO: Funding, partnerships and capacities”](#)

Working Group B: [“Regional and country TVET priorities for UNESCO: Funding, partnerships and capacities”](#)

Working Group C: [“What should be UNESCO’s niche in TVET”](#)

Working Group D: [“UNESCO: Challenges in conceptualising TVET”](#)

The final afternoon was divided into two plenary sessions. During the first, the different Working Groups presented their findings. A summary of emerging issues and their implications for UNESCO was presented during the second. Following the presentation of the report by the Rapporteur, Mr. Clinton Robinson, the meeting ended with some concluding remarks by the Assistant Director-General for Education, Mr. Nicholas Burnett and H.E. Mr Günter Overfeld, Ambassador, Permanent Delegation of Germany to UNESCO.

I.3 Structure of report

As this meeting was intended as a space in which a broad constituency of TVET experts and practitioners could provide inputs to the UNESCO TVET Strategy, and the discussions from the first afternoon and second day revealed many similar issues and challenges facing individual countries and organizations, this Report first summarizes two presentations and then offers an overview of the key themes, challenges and solutions touched upon. The papers by individual experts, international organizations and country representatives are available online at <http://www.unevoc.unesco.org/snippet.php>. The findings of the Working Group sessions can also be found online at <http://www.unevoc.unesco.org>

II. Brief historical overview of UNESCO’s TVET experience

Presented by Mrs. Linda King, Director a.i., Division for the Promotion of Basic Education, UNESCO

Mrs. King began her presentation by stating that the right to education is intricately linked to the right to work. She underlined that TVET should be situated within a rights-based approach and in relation to EFA, specifically EFA goals 3 and 6 and MDG 1 (poverty reduction). These are all related to UNESCO’s mandate in education.

She highlighted the need to extend our attention from primary education to secondary education, and the links with TVET in this regard. Later in the year, UNESCO will be looking again at its role in secondary education, so this meeting is relevant for that initiative too.

Looking back, UNESCO’s contribution to the development of the TVET landscape can be viewed through the lens of its historical functions: as a Standard Setter, through its advocacy activities, through its assistance to capacity development in Member States, as a Laboratory of Ideas and Clearinghouse, and as a catalyst to international and regional cooperation. Examples of good practice can be found in countries ranging from Bahrain, Ethiopia,

Libya, and Nigeria to Brazil, Colombia and Jamaica. All of these dimensions offer an indication and snapshot of what is currently being implemented at country level.

III. Presentation by Mr. Kenneth King on inputs to UNESCO's TVET Strategy

Chair: H.E. Mr. Günter Overfeld, Ambassador, Permanent Delegation of Germany to UNESCO

During his presentation, Mr. King looked at some of the main issues for the UNESCO TVET strategy, concerns for policy review and capacity development in Member States, and the statistical challenge of generating skills development data. He ended his presentation with some proposals for the next steps forward.

UNESCO is not starting from scratch in developing a TVET strategy. Many basic strategic assumptions about technical and vocational education (TVE) are already embedded in the *Revised Recommendation* (2001) and the *Convention on Technical and Vocational Education* (1989). Now, nearly ten years after both the International Congress on TVET in Seoul in 1999 and the World Forum on Education for All held in Dakar in 2000, there is a new opportunity and global context to refocus on TVET and skills development - both in country priorities as well as in the changing priorities of development agencies. The success of the last decade in supporting universal primary education is translating into huge political pressure to expand educational opportunities within general and technical secondary education. Increasingly, skills training is also seen as critical to the competitiveness of national economic systems, to labour market productivity and as part of measures towards poverty reduction and the promotion of sustainable development.

In this climate, Mr. King argued that UNESCO could play a lead role in reinvigorating the international discourse on TVET, particularly through:

i) Definitions and conceptual clarifications

The first challenge relates to defining, clarifying and translating key concepts related to 'skills' and 'skills training', while recognizing cultural differences in the meanings and interpretations of skills. Different types of skills might include 'core' skills, 'soft' or 'higher order' skills, 'occupational', 'behavioural' skills, 'life' skills. The discourse also needs to take into account that there are multiple terminologies used for training provision, often according to the agency using the term (TVE, TVET, VET).

A second area for attention concerns the domains or locations in which skills are obtained - public and private, work and enterprise-based, formal or informal sector, private-for-profit and non-profit spheres. How, for example, should governments and agencies tackle 'skills development' in the informal economy? A third challenge, related to the first two, is to translate the wide vision for TVE (T) into categories of skills that can be readily assessed and monitored in relation to different learning environments and to educational outcomes.

Following on, a fourth area for clarification concerns the discourse relating to 'skills' versus 'competencies'. Competency-based approaches, according to Mr. King, are associated with the desire to have specific occupational standards set for educational suppliers by the relevant industry or employers' organisation. The skills discourse is more open-ended. Closely linked to the issue of competencies is the current interest in developing national and regional qualifications frameworks - which seek to inject certification into the whole education and training system at different levels. How can the skills discourse be brought into these frameworks?

A fifth challenge relates to the debate about whether skills should be supply led or demand-driven. Supporters of demand-led systems argue that educational institutions should not turn out graduates by virtue of the number of places, teachers and courses, but rather that the supply should be conditioned by labour market demand for skills. But how can demand be measured in developing countries, such as India, where a high percentage of income generating activities is to be found in the informal economy?

Lastly, the claims about the connections between skills provision, the creation of jobs, economic growth and poverty reduction require further research. The Organization could play a key role in the advancement of TVET through evidence-based research and policy reviews and by arguing powerfully that TVET is an investment with significant returns including the well-being of workers, enhanced productivity and international competitiveness and poverty reduction.

Looking into all of these areas might be the job for a 'Commission on Skills', while a series of parallel conceptual clarifications in the six languages of the UN - Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish could take place through a series of regional conferences.

The 35C/5 also included a proposal for an international conference to review concepts related to skills and skills development. In addition, the convening capacity of the UNESCO-UNEVOC global network could be drawn upon to organize an international review conference as the second five-year assessment of Seoul.

ii) *Normative frameworks*

As part of proposed normative work on the landscape of skills and competencies, UNESCO could review the impact of its normative instruments and/or explore the possibility of creating a new normative instrument covering skills, competencies and qualifications. This would prove very relevant to national reforms of skills development systems.

iii) *Policy advice*

UNESCO is refocusing on upstream policy work, and TVET has been included as one of the three EFA building blocks for the next biennium 2010-2011. Mr. King suggested that the Organization has a big role to play in assisting Member States to carry out policy reviews on the responsiveness of TVET systems to labour market needs. Such TVET policy reviews, shaped around the OECD model, would be based on a critical understanding of the country's own TVET traditions, skills terminology, and the articulation between technical and general secondary education.

iv) *Capacity development*

How to monitor skills within the expanding EFA framework is a critical question. The lack of relevant data on skills is evidenced in the EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR) which provides practically no reporting on post-secondary technical education. The EFA GMR 2009 did however mention that it intends to deal with the definitional and data challenges of Goal 3 (appropriate learning and life skills) and give more coverage to skills development within reporting on progress on all six EFA Goals. The TVET Strategy could provide a targeted priority focus for the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) in the realm of developing national statistics for skills – perhaps through the creation of a GMR focusing on skills.

v) *Looking forward*

Mr. King ended his presentation by commenting that UNESCO needs to rethink its own TVET capacity to provide targeted assistance to Member States. Currently UNESCO's research and analytic human resource capacities in skills development are fragmented across different priority areas and between the regional offices, Institutes and Headquarters. In the context of the renewed emphasis on policy work and standard-setting, the Organization particularly needs expertise in research/policy analysis. TVET itself needs to be re-integrated into UNESCO's global work on EFA and be placed higher on the agenda of literacy and teacher education.

Finally, in the interests of coherence and cooperation within the wider development community, especially within the 'One UN', UNESCO must bring its partners together and learn from other organizations such as the OECD, ETF, ILO and the British Council.

IV. Key policy questions

The participants identified some of the main policy questions for UNESCO to reflect on as it elaborates the TVET Strategy. These include:

- How can skills training contribute to employability and expanding opportunities for self employment, especially for women, youth, migrants, refugees and other disadvantaged population groups?
- How can skills training contribute to the reduction of poverty through income generation for the most vulnerable individuals and families?
- How can skills training contribute to steady economic recovery and social reconstruction in post-crisis situations?
- Given that work is closely tied to questions of identity, gender, language, work ethic, caste and cultural practice, how can 'TVET for all' contribute to reducing different forms of inequality and stereotyping in society?
- What role should UNESCO play in the development of national Human Resource Development strategies for TVET?

- How can technical and vocational education overcome the image that it is a second-rate option for learners? How can TVET become more appealing to a larger population?
- How can the UNESCO TVET Strategy take into account issues of ‘brain circulation’ (brain drain and gain)? This is occurring not just at university level, but among people with lower and middle level skills.
- How can TVET contribute to reducing demographic decline?
- How effective are current TVET teacher qualifications and practices for enhancing skills training and lifelong learning?
- Given that the majority of the population in developing countries are engaged in the informal economy and that training takes place in a variety of settings (industry, agriculture, non-formal settings), what are the implications for the UNESCO TVET Strategy?
- What are the linkages between TVET and UNESCO's other priority areas such as LIFE, the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, TTISSA and Educaids?
- What will be the place of TVET in the revision of the six EFA goals as we approach 2015?

V. Ongoing and emerging issues in the management of national TVET systems

The participants identified the following issues and concerns as requiring consideration in the development of the UNESCO TVET Strategy.

Institutions, coordination and flexibility

Country examples showed that TVET and employment training for different economic activities are primarily offered through government schools and training centres. These are managed by a number of different Ministries, sometimes with overlapping roles. Recently, private training providers have entered the market offering specialized training programmes that respond directly to the needs of employers and learners/workers. But these can only accommodate a minority of students in the TVET system. On the whole, partnerships between government and employers tend to be weak. Employers, even those who would like to cooperate with government, do not have the resources or capacity. The different actors need to be drawn together under a single planning framework to give national systems coherence and uniformity.

The accounts of different participants further suggest that national TVET systems in several countries offer little flexibility to stimulate the upgrading of skills. Training provision is slow in responding to changing labour market needs and has minimal impact in generating innovation opportunities and competitiveness within the local economy. A history of centralized decision-making in the formal TVET system, coupled with generally weak management capacity at training level, limit the ability of public training providers to respond to the specific requirements of target groups, and the economy.

An immediate priority is to get a better understanding of how TVET training institutions work at national level. Reform processes should avoid overloading them with ambitious designs, or asking them to do things they are not well suited to doing. One participant suggested there is a need to be more focussed and realistic on what institutions can do well. In terms of management, some participants suggested that skills training centres should be given greater autonomy. Universities should also become more involved in professional and technical training.

Innovation and investment

The TVET system in many Member States is almost entirely dependent on government resources, but the sub-sector has been losing its identity due to low budget provision, inadequate infrastructure, outdated materials and pedagogy. Certain country accounts underlined the unevenness in the quality of TVET provision between regions. Innovation is needed to reach qualitative improvements throughout the system – particularly in terms of governance and decentralization, teacher education, school/industry partnerships and qualifications frameworks.

At present there tend to be four sources of financing: the State, enterprises and other employers, the learners themselves and non-State actors. Training in the formal sector falls under government authority, but the limited amount of funding reduces impact. The private sector is involved in policy discourse at high level, but many businesses on the ground seem uninterested in financing training or developing apprenticeship schemes. Given

the resource constraints, there is a need to reconsider the role of non-state actors, e.g. NGOs, in countries where formal institutions are weaker.

One participant suggested that the importance of extending discussions around TVET from line ministries to national ministries of finance as planning for future TVET policy must be recognized within mid-term expenditure frameworks. Different financing approaches may be required according to whether the country is low-income, in transition and or developed etc.,

Pedagogy and curricula reform

New approaches to TVET pedagogy are needed that take into account the framework conditions for learning and the needs of potential employers. Curricula reform should also take into account the need for transferable and evolving skills and competencies, while preparing students for other types of learning throughout their lives - the idea of lifelong learning. This recognizes that many young people don't take stay in the sector where they were trained and that the idea of a 'job for life' is no longer a sure thing. One participant mentioned that the changing economic context requires the orientation of TVET to the values of sustainable economic development. Lastly, a holistic approach would take into account the individual's values and attitudes and the ethical dimensions of learning.

National and Regional Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs and RQFs)

Skill standards and the need for quality assurance mechanisms are ongoing issues. NQFs must be flexible enough to take into account diverse TVET pathways within an integrated system, including both general secondary education and broader skills training. Within the informal sector in certain developing countries, qualifications and certification schemes are emerging giving value to skills learned in the informal sector. Coordination and regulation of roles and responsibilities is now needed. On the whole, there was general agreement that standards and norms should be set on the basis of comparable yardsticks.

Career advice and counselling

In some western countries, up to two thirds of all young people participate in some kind of skills training programme - whether through the public or private sector. Yet, as the participants noted, they still need help in finding a job afterwards, otherwise how will they find their place in labour market? Career guidance and counselling is one way to promote skills training, but needs cooperation between the Ministries of Education and Labour.

Teacher training and recruitment

Promoting excellence through investment in teachers and trainers is important. There are too many teachers who are not up-to-date on new methods of teaching technical and vocational skills and technologies. Retraining is not sufficient. The participants underlined the need to validate the experiences and competencies of TVET trainers to attract qualified professionals into this sub-sector. The ILO also recognizes the need to pay attention to working conditions, remuneration, accountability and voice.

Changing the image of TVET

The participants noted that there is often a very poor image of TVET among school students, largely due to the absence of career guidance and media strategies in national education systems. The authorities need to be able to convince learners and parents that skills training is not a second rate choice for young people. At the same time, there is a need to be realistic and accept that TVET might not be the first choice. The idea of flexible training pathways would perhaps make the system more attractive to learners.

VI. Main conceptual and thematic challenges for UNESCO

As identified by the participants, this section summarises the main challenges for UNESCO related to discourses and thematic areas.

VI.1 Reconciling rights-based and demand-led approaches

Rights based approaches attempt to address the issue of ensuring access and equity for the most at risk, including rural populations, migrants, women and other disadvantaged or socially excluded groups. Rights-based approaches also take into account that many young people fall out of the academic system, and need structured support that enables them to come back into training and update their skills. UNESCO as the UN agency with the mandate in education and leadership role in Education for All, would naturally lean towards a rights-based approach.

Demand-led approaches recognize the importance of equity, but argue that access to TVET does not guarantee labour market outcomes for learners or poverty reduction unless the training is relevant. In certain developing countries, up to 100 000 learners might graduate from secondary vocational level every year, but the national formal labour market can only absorb 14,000 people. The training itself must improve employability and/or prospects for self-employment by responding to the basic needs of the local labour market.

The challenge for UNESCO is work and generate synergies with development partners that are implementing complementary activities. As one participant argued, the two approaches can in fact be compatible. For example, UNESCO and the ILO are dependent on each other to achieve their individual mandates – EFA will only achieve poverty reduction if people get work, generate their own income and contribute productively to the well-being of their communities. Decent work implies basic education. Both organizations should find practical ways of working together to promote seamless pathways between basic education, decent work and lifelong learning.

VI.2 Clarifying language and defining concepts

Definitions of skills and the issue of language are important to the development of the UNESCO TVET Strategy as different words are associated with different education philosophies in different cultures. For example, theoretical and practical education have no distinction from training in some countries. Clarifying these issues is necessary as the basis of national strategic decision and policymaking, curriculum development and teacher training. It is also important to reach agreement on definitions if the UNESCO Institute for Statistics is to get involved in collecting information on them and monitoring them.

VI.3 Policy learning

Political pressures have traditionally driven reforms to national TVET systems, however the financial crisis and economic slowdown are forcing new thinking in this area. Resources and institutional models vary from country to country. In the U.K., there is a movement towards a demand-led system with an emphasis on employability and self-employment. The government has been reviewing occupational standards, creating sector skills councils, introducing flexibility within the system and updating National Qualifications Frameworks.

In Germany, the TVET system already has a very positive image, based on strong public private partnerships, the dual system of learning in companies and vocational schools, didactic approaches for learning in the process of work, professional teachers and trainers within companies, and public funding for research on the potential of TVET.

In developing countries, where there is little formal sector employment and up to 80% of economic activity taking place in the informal economy, innovative TVET models are enabling marginalized groups the chance to re-enter learning environments and obtain productive skills through partnerships with actors in the non-formal education sector. Training building on traditional skills areas leading to increased opportunities for income-generation.

A challenge for UNESCO is to identify what policies work and under what circumstances? Which options respond to different policy objectives? What mistakes have been made and the lessons learned? The regional dimension should also be taken into consideration. Effects such as the migration of labour forces within regions will have an impact on the development of national TVET systems. A regional approach can be productive for sharing ideas and experiences, as well as developing regional qualifications frameworks, accreditation and information systems.

The participants underscored that imposing what works in the north will not necessarily be effective elsewhere. Even though developing countries will borrow from other systems, factors such as institutional capacity and readiness to support the reform process need to be taken into account. One participant stressed that it will not be useful for the UNESCO Strategy to promote ideal standards that do not fit in with local realities, require intensive resources to design and could become problematic to implement.

VI.4 Statistics and raising the profile of TVET

In western countries, governments use statistics to match the number of places available on TVET courses to learner and market demand, to maintain the relevance of training and to monitor and evaluate outcomes for learners. However in developing countries, national planning and evaluation systems run up against data gaps. In some Member States, information is available but dispersed. In others, there are difficulties in even collecting data and without this it is hard to energise the policy discourse. One of the challenges is to generate statistics that can be used to plan and monitor the performance of skills training courses and, further still, to generate internationally comparable data.

Statistics can also be used to energise the policy dialogue. Politicians are often sceptical about the direct contribution of ‘skills’ training to dynamic economies and to broader development goals. But mobilizing governments may require data-based evidence of the impact of political commitment to TVET in other countries, and highlighting levels of government funding.

VII. Possible elements for a renewed UNESCO TVET strategy

The participants identified the following caveats, issues and activities for inclusion in the Strategy.

VII.1 At international level

Standard setting

Any new standard-setting process led by UNESCO should keep in mind the skills needed for lifelong learning. The development of a new Convention among countries should also recognise competencies needed within knowledge societies.

Clarification of concepts

- UNESCO could set up a Commission for defining concepts and terminology used in the TVET discourse (and addressing problems of translation).
- Issues related to translation can be addressed in cost-effective ways without resorting to big conferences. In terms of skills, this process could start with a comparative glossary in the official UN languages, and in the future lead to voluntary guidelines.
- Another solution could be to create a media platform for the explanation of notions. This could also serve as an online forum for conceptual debate and experience sharing.
- UNEVOC can play a key role in find acceptable translations related to skills concepts.
- More analytical and monitoring work should be done by UNESCO on different forms of TVET, including TVET run by other public agencies than Ministries of Education and by firms and private providers.

Advocacy and policy dialogue

- UNESCO should move towards greater stress on the “employability” dimension of TVET, and pursue the implications of such a shift. Such a shift could be accompanied by a major event (e.g., conference or monitoring report).
- UNESCO should assist in putting TVET more strongly into regional and national education agendas where appropriate.
- One participant commented that more candour and down-to-earth dialogue is needed. Development partners involved in the discourse around skills should cut the rhetoric and tell countries what has been found in different contexts in order to avoid making mistakes later on.

Identification of good practice in management and governance of TVET institutions

- UNESCO can help to carry out stocktaking exercises on initiatives and reform programmes in TVET at regional level.
- The dissemination of information on national TVET systems, good practices, pilot projects and innovations would allow the Organization to assist Member States with similar institutional or organizational issues in tackling issues of access, financing, gender stereotyping, quality, etc.,.
- Conversely, the Organization can work with Member States in assessing capacity development issues as a way of procuring assistance.
- Research, knowledge exchanges and study tours are needed to share experiences on practice and policy.

Regional cooperation

One participant asked whether it might be possible to adapt the Copenhagen process as a model for strengthening regional cooperation on TVET. The Copenhagen process assists EU Member States in identifying priorities and reviewing their strategy every two years. The process would work on four levels:

- i) A political process to decide priorities for the next two years at regional level.
- ii) The development of common tools for assisting Member States.
- iii) Fostering mutual learning by identifying best practices and making connections for solving similar problems.
- iv) The involvement of all social partners including the private sector, the TVET system and government.

Raising the image of TVET

- In the vein of the ILO and OECD proclamations on decent work, UNESCO needs to craft a media-friendly policy statement that emphasizes the social protection dimension of TVET and highlights that it is « good value for money ».
- UNESCO should also consider the creation of Flagship initiatives: e.g. The concrete preparation of a TVET Global Monitoring Report would send a strong message to governments to start collecting statistics. A sequel to the Delors Commission (a Skills Commission) may be of benefit to UNESCO in addressing clarification and definition issues, as well as discourses related to rights-based and demand-led views of education, work and employment.

'One UN' and development cooperation

Increasing cooperation arrangements with development partners would allow UNESCO to think about what it can feasibly do and multiply its effectiveness.

- The UNESCO TVET Strategy should particularly consider the role of the European Training Foundation, the ILO and the OECD.
- Collaboration between the ILO and UNESCO on developments within the teaching profession is important, bringing the Ministry of Education and teachers unions together with employers.
- The UNESCO Institute for Statistics could have a great impact working in collaboration with the ILO to develop TVET indicators within national labour market information systems.
- With similar interest in renewing their activities in the field of TVET, UNESCO and the British Council might also find a way of collaborating on developing a GMR focusing on skills.

Monitoring

The UNESCO TVET Strategy might also incorporate a reporting mechanism on TVET every five years, analogous to the CONFINTEA process. Reporting procedures from Member States would be followed by an international conference

VII.2 At national level

The participants offered the following suggestions for direct assistance to Member States.

Policy advice

The Organization could:

- Provide technical assistance to the evolution of the institutional framework. This might include national skills training policies, standards-based Qualifications and Training Systems and quality improvements in TVET institutions. The modalities might include analysis (diagnostic studies), methodological tools (which questions need to be asked, which processes followed, which actors to involve) and councils (how to mobilize resources, actors, cooperation mechanisms). One participant emphasized that UNESCO should look at the whole of the skills provision landscape, not just the secondary level, and avoid a 'silo' approach.
- Provide technical advice (at regional and country level) on quality of TVET provision, including: curricula and materials development, pedagogy, methods, standards, assessment and evaluation, finance and governance, students career guidance, labour market linkages.

Capacity development

UNESCO could:

- Play a role in country-specific TVET needs assessment, taking into account institutional and organizational needs, as well as the needs of TVET trainers.
- Provide tools to national skills training bodies in specific pedagogies.
- Assist in the development of quality standards in national vocational training systems - initially at the level of secondary education, but extending also to the informal sector.
- Facilitate the production of general indicators allowing countries to determine policy and plan their actions. These indicators should inform the capacity of training graduates to find employment, while maintaining equilibrium within systems between the supply of general, technical and professional training.
- Facilitate the generation of indicators for a monitoring system for skills training in the informal sector, working in association with other partners – a system with its own profile covering what the OECD or ETF do not already do. A GMR focusing on skills could be a tool for policy learning and generating better data.

Facilitating dialogue and strategic partnerships

TVET alone does not create employment, but the TVET Strategy process must involve discussions with employers to identify skills and types of training that respond better to economic and labour market demands. Changing the image of TVET will also require working closely with the private sector and civil society. Through its convening function, UNESCO can get involved in facilitating strategic partnerships between governments and industry/private sector actors. Otherwise, as one participant argued, the UNESCO TVET strategy will become an academic exercise that will not lead to greater employment or poverty reduction opportunities.

VII.3 Allocation of resources to implement the UNESCO TVET Strategy

As part of the process of budgetary planning for 2010-11, UNESCO Member States will be endorsing the Programme and Budget in 2009 to reinvigorate responses to TVET. So resource issues were important as a context for the present meeting. How will funds be allocated for actions?

The participants underlined the need to consolidate and enhance TVET expertise and support capacities within UNESCO itself, while learning from and working with other organizations, regional clusters and country offices towards the achievement of goals.

They recommended:

- A revision of the allocation of internal human resources within UNESCO towards strengthening this implementation sector. The strategy should also identify the roles and the division of responsibilities between UNESCO HQ, the UNESCO specialized Institutes, Field Offices and UN agencies within the framework of a 'One UN' system. This also involves reviewing the roles of both the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning and UNEVOC.
- The mobilization of networks: countries, institutions, research networks.
- (Re)building a critical mass of experts and staff in order to focus on funding partnerships and capacities to strengthen research, information and knowledge sharing in the field of TVET.

International cooperation should also involve regional banks, foundations, the European Commission, the European Training Foundation, the ILO and FAO.

VIII. Report by the Rapporteur: Mr. Clinton Robinson

The presentation of the Rapporteur covered the goals of this meeting, its timing, the issues, elements of a UNESCO strategy and some remaining challenges.

Recalling that the goal of the meeting was to contribute to a new UNESCO TVET strategy, to give TVET a stronger profile within UNESCO's actions in education, and to sharpen the focus of UNESCO's assistance on TVET to Member States, the Rapporteur noted that the significance of the timing: as a follow-up to previous TVET events and in a period of economic and financial crisis.

Conceptual issues raised in the meeting covered areas such as: the multiple meanings of 'skills'; skills, education, training, etc and their representation in other languages and cultures; inequalities, roles and stereotypes; tensions between rights-based, demand-led and supply-led approaches; how TVET is framed within country development plans; the impact of demographic and economic change; the need for lifelong learning perspectives.

Many concerns on ways to organize and implement TVET came up in the meeting. The Rapporteur grouped these together as operational issues, under the following rubrics:

- Links between TVET and other parts of the education system: its place in and bridges with secondary education, dual or integrated system.
- Standards and normative work: are new instruments necessary? How to take difference of context into account?
- Qualification frameworks: TVET in relation to larger questions of validating learning and coherence among different ministries.
- Data, monitoring and evaluation: no adequate statistics or indicators, at national or international levels, work is needed to develop indicators and develop monitoring systems, evaluation frameworks; the possibility of a GMR focusing on skills was mooted.
- Advocacy: to improve the status and image of TVET, advocacy linked to better statistics/data would be a stronger basis for deeper commitment on the part of governments and donors.
- Learning / policy learning: important basis for progress and needs a sector-wide approach to situate TVET in the larger education policy context.
- Governance and management: could investment in the effectiveness of institutions constitute a frame for tackling many of the other issues in TVET?
- Private sector role and engagement: enterprises, employers and unions have a key role in all aspects of TVET.
- Financing: TVET is costly and must mobilize multiple sources of funding ~ state, enterprises, learners.

Towards a UNESCO strategy

In TVET, is it UNESCO's role to occupy a particular niche or elaborate a bold strategy? Elements of UNESCO's strategy that were proposed at the meeting can be linked to UNESCO's comparative advantage as a laboratory of ideas, standard-setter, clearing-house, capacity builder and catalyst of international cooperation.

1. Laboratory of ideas:

- Conceptual clarification around TVET
- Language and translation issues: a glossary?
- Focus on key organizing principle: employability?
- Analysis of diverse forms and providers of TVET and learning lessons
- Identify themes and priorities in the longer term, to guide collective reflection

2. Standard-setter:

- Normative work: review existing instruments and assessing the need for others
- Promoting quality: this includes appropriate, professional teacher training and quality assurance systems both at national level and across countries.

3. Clearing-house

- Identifying and sharing good practice, for example through UNEVOC networks and other websites
- Analysing experiences and learning lessons
- Draw on and share results of research, in order to improve policy dialogue

4. Capacity builder

- Policy advice: reviewing existing policies and providing perspectives from elsewhere
- Better statistics: data collection and analysis through UIS, NFE-MIS, setting indicators, and guidance on M&E systems

5. Catalyst of international cooperation

- Partnerships and alliances: key partners, complementing UNESCO's reach and effectiveness

- Convening power: to bring relevant actors together regionally and internationally
- Inter-agency cooperation and ‘One UN’ process: for effective dialogue and cooperation at country level; revival of the international inter-agency consultative group
- Promote South-South and South-South-North cooperation

Some remaining challenges in promoting TVET, within UNESCO and beyond:

- Skills development in the informal economy: what are the key parameters?
- Re-invigorating inter-agency cooperation: a condition for sustained international efforts.
- Strengthen place of TVET within EFA, ESD and the MDGs: these linkages need stronger and more frequent articulation
- Engagement with civil society, especially NGOs and unions: these key actors must be brought into the strategy debate
- Resources and capacity: UNESCO its own critical mass of expertise to enhance current initiatives and envisage new ones.
- How to secure funding for implementing the strategy?

IX. Conclusions

As the Assistant Director-General for Education, Mr. Nicholas Burnett, stated in his closing remarks, UNESCO is focussing on TVET in response to the Member States request to the Organization through the Executive Board, as well as to the request for help from the Ministers of Education during the Inter-ministerial Roundtable in 2007.

Over the past few years, Ministries of Education from both developing and developed countries have asked for a refocus on TVET. Secondary, followed by higher education is not a realistic option for many young people in developing countries. Acute unemployment among the young, increasing poverty and underemployment of semi-skilled and skilled workers are priority concerns. ‘Skills for work’ has become part of the solution.

Certain participants underlined that UNESCO should draw heavily on its main functions as a standard setter, provider of capacity development and promoter of international cooperation. The Organization already enjoys close working relationships with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the European Training Foundation (ETF). It should continue to nurture these relationships and pay careful attention not to duplicate efforts, ensuring that each agency uses its comparative advantage.

Executive Board members will be looking for a bold strategy to address some of the most pressing policy issues facing their countries. The urgent task for UNESCO is to translate all of these concerns into an implementable strategy.