



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



# Outline Issues for a Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Strategy for UNESCO

**Kenneth King**  
**University of Edinburgh**  
**[Kenneth.King@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Kenneth.King@ed.ac.uk)**



Federal Ministry  
of Education  
and Research

# ***A SUMMARY***

- **Context and history of this paper and of Skills/TVET in UNESCO**
- **Phase of conceptual development towards a global strategic vision**
- **Phase of policy, review and advice to member states in selected skills domains**
- **UNESCO's current and planned portfolio for skills development, from 2010**

# ***HISTORY AND METHOD OF DEVELOPING THIS PAPER – 1 YEAR***

- **Germany and many Member States propose TVET Strategy, April 08**
- **Permanent Delegations discuss TVET Proposal, September 08**
- **IIO, ETF, World Bank, UNICEF and Bilateral Agencies, Aug-Nov 08**
- **International Conference on Education + UNESCO Staff, November 08**
- **International Expert Meeting, 12-13 January 09 Bonn**
- **Face-to-face and email exchanges**
- **Executive Board April 2009**

## ***CONTEXT AND HISTORY OF UNESCO'S TVE POLICY INSTRUMENTS***

- **1962 Recommendation on TVE, and Revisions, 1974, 2001**
- **International Congress on the Development and Improvement of TVE 1987 (East Berlin)**
- **Convention on TVE November 1989 - after long gestation**
- **Launch of International Project on TVE, 1992**
- **Seoul Congress 1999 and Plans for New Global TVE(T) Strategy**

# ***TVE IN UNESCO LOSES MOMENTUM AFTER E. BERLIN 87 AND SEOUL 99***

- **Impact of World Conference on EFA, March 90**
- **Loss of Expanded Vision of EFA in 1996 (OECD/DAC Targets)**
- **Dakar 2000 and refocusing of UNESCO on EFA Programme**
- **Loss of holistic vision of EFA at Millennium Summit, September 2000**
- **The power and peril of targets: Seoul, Dakar, New York**
- **No link between Seoul Recommendations and Dakar Goal 3 on Skills - not making skills one of the EFA building blocks**

# ***DRIVERS OF SKILL, AND SKILLS AS THE DRIVERS OF PROSPERITY?***

- **Very success of EFA and challenge of Post-EFA lead to interest in skills**
- **Skills for competitiveness and poverty reduction**
- **Skills within sector-wide approaches**
- **Politics of skills-for-employment and skills-for-security**
- **Skills for enterprise productivity and individual prosperity**

# **CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION - UNESCO'S NICHE IN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

- **UNESCO's role not TVET financing & investment but knowledge development**
- **Strategic vision critical for repositioning skills after Jomtien, Dakar and MDGs**
- **Multiple meanings of skills in/for EFA and Post-EFA planning**
- ***'Skills ..we have not figured out properly how to define them and measure them'***
- **See agenda and papers for this meeting – both TVE and TVET used, and VET**

# ***STRATEGIC GLOBAL CONCEPTUAL MAPPING OF SKILLS AND TVE/TVET***

- **Core, essential or communication skills**
- **Soft skills or new skills [+ higher order skills]**
- **Occupationally related technical and vocational skills [work skills]**
- **Behavioural or attitudinal skills**
- **Life skills – social, health and interpersonal**
- **Synergy and complementarity amongst these different sets of skills**



# ***DISCOURSES AND DOMAINS OF TVE/TVET & SKILLS DEVELOPMENT***

- **TVET or VET still widely used in ministries of education (MoE) and of labour (MoL), North/South**
- **TVET/VET: school-, college- and institute-based, both public and private**
- **TVET/VET: also non-formal, life-long and community-based**
- **Skills development: institution- and enterprise-based, formal/non-formal, public/private, multiple sectors**
- **Compromise: Technical and Vocational Skills Development (TVSD)**

# ***UNESCO'S NICHE IN TVSD***

- **Formal skills development thru MoE, at basic, post-basic and college-levels**
- **Non-formal skills development thru MoE**
- **NOT skills development in the informal sector or enterprise-based**
- **Same true of any SKILLS GMR, since data comes from MoEs and UIS**

# ***STRATEGIC CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES IN TVSD***

- **Rights-based supply-led skills vs demand-led skills**
- **Skills vs competencies (and CBT)**
- **Conceptual assumptions about skills in NQFs and RQFs**
- **Claims about links between skills and growth, work and poverty reduction**
- **Skills coherence and clarification across UN specialised agencies & in One UN**

# ***TOWARDS A COMMISSION ON SKILLS?***

- **The challenge of the language and translation of skills**
- **‘Skills’ within the Six languages of the UN, and beyond**
- **A series of regional consultations on the language and discourse of skills**
- **From ‘Learning to Do’ towards a new Commission on Skills**

# ***POLICY REVIEW AND ADVICE IN SELECTIVE SKILLS DOMAINS***

- **From conceptual development to policy advice at the country level**
- **First country priority – strategic expansion of secondary education**
- **Massive demand for advice on articulation of general and technical secondary**
- **One modality would be the OECD-style [or ETF] country policy review**
- **Later priorities - college-based higher technical education & non-formal TVSD**
- **Key focus – NOT policy borrowing, but policy learning, South-South, and North-south**

# ***STATISTICAL CHALLENGE OF POLICY REVIEWS AND ADVICE***

- **Currently minimal reporting on skills/TVSD thru the GMR process**
- **Make better use of existing data sources at the country level**
- **Targeted improvement, via UIS, of technical secondary and post-secondary data**
- **Indicators to monitor non-formal skills provision thru NFE MIS**
- **Time for a new UNEVOC/UIS TVSD Statistical Study and a Skills GMR**

# ***CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT, CRITICAL MASS AND INSTITUTIONAL COHERENCE***

- **Currently, UNESCO's capacity in skills development is fragmented**
- **Expertise is scattered across centres, institutes, field/regional offices and HQ**
- **Conceptual work, networking, upstream policy, and micro NGO-style projects**
- **TVSD capacity development will require major transformative work on UNESCO's own capacity [cf IOS review of UNESCO]**
- **Work in phases 1 & 2 will need in shorter term high quality external resources in skills research and policy analysis**

***UNESCO'S PLANNED PORTFOLIO FOR SKILLS  
DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES, FROM 2010***

- **A refocusing on upstream policy work and normative standard-setting**
- **Skills in from the cold as one of UNESCO's three 'EFA Building Blocks' for 2010-2011**
- **Skills as a full and legitimate component of EFA, as EFA now covers secondary**
- **Implications for UNESCO's support to a Skills GMR**



# ***‘PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AROUND TVET’***

- **Beyond skills coherence in the UN family, scope for UNESCO’s convening around skills**
- **Learning from ETF’s ‘policy learning in VET’**
- **Learning from OECD’s ‘Learning for jobs’**
- **Relating to ILO’s ‘*Skills for improved productivity, employment growth and development*’**
- **But UNESCO will need analytical and conceptual investment if it is to bring something to the international table**

# **RETHINKING UNESCO'S SKILLS CAPACITIES AND CONTRIBUTIONS**

- **A global Commission on Skills**
- **A series of major regional consultations around Skills**
- **A new normative instrument around skills, competencies and capacities**
- **A new UIS/UNEVOC Statistical Study on formal and non-formal TVSD**
- **A new Global Monitoring Report *On and Beyond Dakar Goal 3***



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



# Outline Issues for a Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Strategy for UNESCO

**Kenneth King**  
**University of Edinburgh**  
**[Kenneth.King@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Kenneth.King@ed.ac.uk)**



Federal Ministry  
of Education  
and Research