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Follow-up on the UNESCO Third International TVET Congress

Editorial

A new strategy for an interconnected world



David Atchoarena © UNESCO

The last few years have seen major developments in education and especially TVET policy with the advent of the Shanghai Consensus, the Incheon Declaration, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development and COP21 and the Paris Agreement, to name but a few. Sustainable Development Goal 4 or SDG4 on education of the 2030 Agenda emphasizes the role of TVET in several of its targets. Such changes in the policy landscape call for an adequate response from UNESCO and the new Strategy on TVET is an important part of that response.

The strategy has been carefully aligned with the aim of SDG4 of ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. It will guide UNESCO on how to help countries around the world as they strive to reach the relevant SDG4 targets. But TVET can also contribute to the achievement of other goals such as SDG5 on gender equality or SDG13 on combatting climate change. It can, for instance, produce the skills and qualifications we need for new green occupations or for making existing systems of production more sustainable.

The 2030 Agenda heralds a much more interconnected approach to human development. This too is reflected in the new strategy. It means that UNESCO and Member States will be paying much more attention to TVET, not just as part of education policy, but also in terms of its contribution to employment, social development, food security energy and environmental sustainability in general.

David Atchoarena

Director, Division for Policies and
Lifelong Learning Systems, UNESCO

UNESCO launches brand new strategy for TVET

UNESCO has chosen 15 July, the UN's official World Youth Skills Day, to unveil its new strategy for TVET at a special event in Bonn. The timing is no accident; the strategy, laying out the principles of UNESCO's work on TVET until 2021, will have plenty of implications for how young people will go about developing the skills they need to make their way in the workplace and their lives.

The strategy aims to "support the efforts of Member States to enhance the relevance of their TVET systems and to equip all youth and adults with the skills required for employment, decent work, entrepreneurship and lifelong learning, and to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".

This new agenda for international development recognizes that the world's problems are inter-related and cannot be tackled in isolation. In close alignment with this way of thinking, UNESCO's new strategy recognizes that "TVET is expected to address multiple demands of an economic, social and environmental nature" and calls for an integrated approach to improving and transforming TVET.

The Strategy has three priority areas. Rising youth unemployment is "a major concern for governments and society", according to David Atchoarena, UNESCO's Director of the Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems. Thus fostering youth employment and entrepreneurship is the strategy's

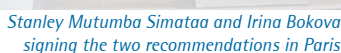


Second comes the need to promote equity and gender equality. In an unequal world, too many people, especially women, do not have access to skills development and decent work. TVET programmes can be gender-biased, thereby channelling women into certain jobs. As part of the new strategy, UNESCO aims to find the best policies for tackling this and other forms of inequality and support the efforts of Member States to put them into practice.

UNESCO signs TVET recommendation

The recommendation concerning TVET provides guidance on five important areas – policies and governance, quality and relevance, monitoring and evaluation, research and knowledge management and, finally, international co-operation. It calls for an integrated approach to education and training which can provide people with a broad spectrum of knowledge, skills and competences for work and for life and empower them to contribute to the transition towards sustainable development.

approach to TVET reform, it is also fully in line with Sustainable Development Goal 4, namely to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. The decision to revise the original recommendation was in response to a request from delegates at the Third International



The revised recommendation is the result of a consultation process which has involved a broad range of actors over the past two years. This has included a virtual conference organized on the UNESCO-UNEVOC TvET forum in April 2014 which gathered input from almost 200 people in 68 countries, a meeting of experts in May 2014 in Hamburg and a series of reviews involving Member States between June 2014 and June 2015. On 13 November 2015, delegates at the 38th Session of UNESCO's General Conference unanimously adopted the final text.

A pioneering UNESCO project is aiming to make sure young people have a seat at the table when it comes to designing TVET policy in ten countries of North Africa and the Middle East. The employment component of Networks of Mediterranean Youth (NET-MED Youth) is hoping to ease the path into the job market for young people, especially women, in a region which currently has one of the highest youth unemployment rates in the world.

Young people from a wide range of youth organizations have attended workshops over the past two years, giving them a working knowledge of how labour markets work. They have now joined national expert teams set up across the region, alongside government officials and representatives of employers and trade unions to take part in the social dialogue on policy. "Young people benefit from TVET, but they should also be a partner in its design and implementation," says H  l  ne Guiol, TVET project officer at UNESCO.

This is just one way NET-MED Youth aims to make TVET more relevant to the needs of society. Another is by boosting capacity for anticipating which skills employers will need.

Working with one institution per country, an international expert team mobilized by UNESCO is helping their staff produce a practical model for skills forecasting. Using a regional perspective, the team are implementing a tailored approach in each country. "In one country we will help improve the existing model – for instance by including an age component, a gender dimension and supply data to link directly with the education and training policy implications or by including data on informal employment," says Ms Guiol, "in other countries it is a matter of starting from scratch, such as developing coordination and information sharing among data providers and users to improve skills anticipation governance."

Each country team will then produce skills projections. Young people will discuss these outcomes together with the relevant policy-makers and will produce policy briefings and others forms of advocacy to communicate the findings to others.

Experts take 2030 Agenda forward in Africa and Latin America

With the ink still fresh on the 2030 Agenda, education experts and policymakers are already thinking about how their TVET systems will need to change to rise to the challenges of this new road map for global education. Two recent UNESCO events in Eastern Africa and Latin America are showing the way.

Fifty delegates from 13 countries of Eastern Africa attended a regional forum in Mahe, Seychelles on 16 – 18 March focusing on TVET and youth skills for work and entrepreneurship. Together they agreed to launch the Mahe Process, which will drive a regional approach to improving TVET, focusing on areas such as quality assurance, teacher training, improving the quality of entrepreneurship education, facilitating the move to self-employment and developing partnerships with the private sector.

Teshome Lemma, Ethiopian State Minister of TVET, pointed out how much is at stake. "All of us have common understanding that our youth are the future to sustain our generation and countries for the years to come, and therefore skills and entrepreneurial talents of youth and women are critical for our development" he said.

Representing the Director of UNESCO's Regional Office for Eastern Africa, Salah Khaled highlighted several areas where further co-operation in the region is needed including the ability to gather good data and monitor TVET systems as well as skills development in addressing gender disparities and migration.

Meanwhile education experts from across Latin America and the Caribbean convened in Santiago, Chile on May 5 – 6 to begin the process of drafting a UNESCO position paper on TVET needs in the region. In the framework of the newly adopted UNESCO Strategy for TVET, the aim is to identify the key principles for transforming TVET to help those who design public policy.

As well as reviewing key trends in TVET in the region, the experts discussed areas such as how TVET can contribute to sustainability and economic development. Lines of action on labour qualification systems, educational curricula, financing and the social responsibility of TVET were also on the agenda.



Regional forum in Mahe, Seychelles in March

Gender inequality and TVET

On the occasion of International Women's Day last 8 March, UNESCO and UNESCO-UNEVOC organized a workshop to draw attention to the persistence of gender inequality in TVET. Women are still more likely to be unemployed and face higher risks of working in vulnerable jobs than men says a 2015 [report](#) by the ILO. Male students outnumber females in TVET and women have very low participation rates in many training programmes that offer good career opportunities, as many TVET programmes are heavily gender-biased. This helps to perpetuate gender inequalities in training and in the labour market.



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Representatives of IFAD, ILO, WHO, the European Commission, OECD and GIZ gathered in Paris to discuss their work in the area and hear about case studies on promoting gender equality in and through TVET from Burundi, India, Peru, the Philippines and Ukraine. The aim is to create a platform to work together on this area. As a first step in defining a new role for TVET in promoting gender equality, UNESCO is preparing a publication on the different initiatives presented at the workshop.

Busy agenda keeps UNESCO-UNEVOC on its toes

It has been a busy six months for UNESCO-UNEVOC. April saw the first meeting with UNEVOC centres NCVET and KRIVET and the UK's University of Sheffield to start work on collaborative research to find better ways of measuring returns on investment or ROI in TVET. This was followed by a virtual conference on UNESCO-UNEVOC's TVET Forum in May to gather feedback and input on the subject from the wider TVET community. The project hopes to produce a set of indicators and framework which can provide a more meaningful way to measure ROI and which is applicable to countries around the world.

May saw UNESCO-UNEVOC staff in Suva, Fiji, helping TAFE Queensland and the Asia Pacific Technical College provide a ten-day training programme for TVET leaders in the Pacific Islands. Part of a UNESCO-UNEVOC initiative for promoting regional co-operation between UNEVOC centres, the course covered issues such as global developments in TVET, benchmarking for the region and how to align TVET provision to local industry needs as well as providing a welcome opportunity for networking and sharing of promising practices.

May was also the month when a two-day regional forum for managers of TVET institutions from eight Arab states was held in Cairo, Egypt. Co-organized by UNESCO-UNEVOC, the Arab League Educational Cultural and Scientific Organization, the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the National Commission for UNESCO in Egypt, the event aimed to encourage participants to contribute to developing TVET policy, especially strategies to tackle youth unemployment.

Recent and upcoming events

World Youth Skills Day 2016. 15 July 2016, Bonn, Germany

Coinciding with the launch of UNESCO's TVET Strategy for the next five years, UNESCO-UNEVOC will be celebrating the second edition of the official UN day to draw attention to the importance of skills development as a means of tackling youth unemployment and creating more opportunities for young people.

Virtual conference on Youth Entrepreneurship. 18 – 29 July 2016 on the UNEVOC TVeT forum

UNESCO-UNEVOC will host an online debate that will discuss what are the key skills young entrepreneurs need and how to design and implement successful youth entrepreneurship programmes.

Quality Assurance of TVET Qualifications in Asia-Pacific. 11–12 July 2016, Manila, Philippines

As part of UNESCO's global study on quality assurance in TVET, UNESCO Bangkok is organizing a regional meeting to share experiences and discuss the draft regional guidelines for effective quality assurance of qualifications systems.

Meeting of the Inter-Agency Group on TVET. 14 July 2016, Bonn, Germany

International agencies, including new member UNIDO, will come together to share expertise and co-ordinate their efforts to improve and transform TVET.

Recognizing Green Skills in Non-formal Learning Settings – A comparative study in Asia. 30–31 August 2016, Hamburg, Germany

Organized by UNESCO-UIL and UNEVOC Centre Education University of Hong Kong, the international symposium will review the latest progress in this aspect of the green skills agenda.

TVET Leadership Programme. 17–28 October (tbc), Bonn, Germany

The TVET Leadership Programme seeks to capacitate potential leaders to become change agents and contribute to implementing the SDGs in their own countries. The programme, hosted by UNESCO-UNEVOC, targets TVET experts from in- and outside of the UNEVOC network.

Skills, jobs and sustainable development: global trends, local challenges. 20–21 October 2016, Paris, France

The conference, organized by UNESCO and CEDEFOP, will look at what global economic trends and market forces will mean for the need for skills and how educational and training systems can use labour market intelligence to respond. It will build on evidence gathered through the Inter-Agency Group on TVET to do so.

Recently published

Greening TVET in the context of climate change policy developments. Report of the online conference. UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2016

Level setting and recognition of learning outcomes. James Keevy and Borhene Chakroun, 2015

Enhancing Relevance in TVET. Review of Progress in the Asia-Pacific since 2012. UNESCO Bangkok, 2016

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