

UNESCO-UNEVOC catalyses Networking and Partnership in TVET in the post-2015 agenda

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UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre (UNESCO-UNEVOC) is UNESCO's specialised centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and acts as the hub of the UNEVOC Network. This article argues that future challenges in TVET like ›greening TVET‹ or ›youth unemployment‹ call upon robust partnership building and cooperation that supports development of TVET policies and strategies, knowledge sharing and capacity building.

UNESCO-UNEVOC and its worldwide network

The UNEVOC Network is a unique network with a global outreach consisting of very diverse TVET institutions with respect to their structures, responsibilities, and roles within the national TVET system. It acts as a platform for UNESCO to pursue its integrated approach to further mainstream South-South and North-South-South cooperation in TVET. The UNEVOC Network consists of leading TVET Institutions in UNESCO's Member States: ministries (22 %), national bodies (22 %), universities (28 %) and training institutions (28 %). In Germany the Federal Institute of Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH host UNEVOC Centres.

The sociogram of the UNEVOC Network looks like the route network of a major airline. There is one major hub – which is UNESCO-UNEVOC – and several sub-hubs – the UNEVOC Cluster Coordinating Centres, which are responsible for organising activities and relations in the respective regions. The UNEVOC Network is structured into five regions: Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Arab States, Europe and North America, Latin America and the Caribbean. Each of these five regions, named ›UNEVOC regions‹, is divided into clusters of countries based on geographical, linguistic and economic criteria. Each cluster is coordinated by cluster coordinators and facilitates various programmes and projects involving UNEVOC Centres in the clusters.

On policy and capacity building in the ›UNEVOC regions‹, the TVET member institutions contribute to TVET development through influencing policymaking at national level and facilitating information flow within the country. The UNEVOC Network, at the country level, provides a framework for collaboration in thematically addressing local issues with global impact, while at the international level, the UNEVOC Network fosters interaction and learning through South-South and North-South-South cooperation and provides an environment for exchange and mutual assistance among TVET experts and institutions in different parts of the world (cf. UNESCO 2013).

Moreover, UNESCO-UNEVOC provides the UNEVOC Network with rich opportunities to collaborate online and in face-to-face meetings. Information and knowledge about different aspects of TVET are disseminated, thereby broadening the base for clarifying and creating common understanding of TVET issues, challenges, solutions and best practices. UNESCO-UNEVOC facilitates knowledge sharing through research and evidence-based studies. It holds available

• an ›e-Forum‹ (four virtual conferences every year),

• the ›UNEVOC Network Portal‹ including a directory of all TVET member institutions featuring information on their events and activities, and

• ›TVETipedia‹ as a glossary of terms that are commonly used globally in the area of TVET providing definitions and background information.

• Recently, UNESCO-UNEVOC has been developing ›The World TVET Database‹, providing concise, reliable and up-to-date information on TVET systems worldwide.

Furthermore UNESCO-UNEVOC has collected and evaluated ›promising practices in TVET‹ to inform the global debate. These have been assembled in the course of a series of regional fora and provide measures that countries

in each region have already implemented to strengthen TVET's role in promoting youth employability and sustainable development. Each region's unique approach to skills development and progress in addressing the twin challenges of youth unemployment and climate change may be discerned by assessing how far the promising practices fulfil the recommendations of the Shanghai Congress (cf. UNESCO-UNEVOC 2012). Some of the progresses made in countries like Korea, Germany, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Cambodia, Indonesia and Nigeria in greening their youth-focused TVET programmes indicate that there is a foundation on which to build future policies and initiatives.

Pursuing regional integration through the UNEVOC Network

In 2013 five regional fora were successfully organised in UNEVOC regions: Asia and the Pacific in Seoul (Republic of Korea), Latin America and the Caribbean in San José (Costa Rica), Arab States in Beirut (Lebanon), Africa in Abuja (Nigeria) and Europe and North America in Moscow (Russian Federation). The five regional fora were organised on the topic of Advancing TVET for Youth Employability and Sustainable Development (cf. UNESCO-UNEVOC 2013). The purpose of the fora was to reinforce and extend regional networks and partnerships for the advancement of TVET transformation towards regional harmonisation and resource mobilisation. A key message resulting from the five regional fora is that the two aims of promoting youth employability and greening TVET need to converge into one concerted effort towards achieving both, in interlinked and integrated ways.

These regional fora highlighted the UNEVOC Network's promising practices in addressing the challenge of greening TVET and tackling youth unemployment. The practices were shared and discussed during the Global Forum entitled Skills for Work and Life Post-2015, which was organised by UNESCO-UNEVOC in October 2014 in order to draw lessons from the success and pitfalls of implementation with the aim of inspiring and guiding future initiatives in the light of the post-2015 agenda.

Currently, UNESCO-UNEVOC is also leading an international working group on Greening TVET and Skills Development with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP), European Training Foundation (ETF), International Labour Organization (ILO), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). The networking opportunities, thus, set the stage and context for learning new policy approaches in the transition to greening TVET.

Pursuing the post-2015 agenda through the UNEVOC Network

Sustainable development and the steering of economies to generate more jobs and inclusive growth underpin the key transformative shifts needed in education. TVET as a fertile ground for deepening inter-governmental and inter-sectoral (public and private) connections must reinforce global partnerships by setting up cooperation frameworks that can mobilise expertise and resources and tie up a common vision to create a transformative future. The post-2015 agenda must allow nations to fulfil national plans. The Millennium Development Goals have taught that global targets are effectively implemented through clear ownership: they have to be embedded in national plans and targets, too. The Network as a strategy for cooperation builds on local relevance and global impact. It performs as a clearing house for new ideas, a test bed for innovations and a platform for benchmarking in TVET. It captures issues to inform the global debate, and derives consolidated ideas to enrich country and institutional reform initiatives. Network members ideally need to be linked to the local/national TVET agenda and reforms in order to be full-fledged players in a global network.

In this dynamic and challenging context, peer-to-peer knowledge sharing and networking between and among TVET stakeholders enhance opportunities, co-development of solutions and pooling of technical and financial resources. Peer networking and policy learning, not policy borrowing, complement efforts to perform necessary benchmarking and monitoring at the global level. This helps in overcoming the limitations of a conventional donor-recipient model. Experience sharing and exchange between and among systems from across a broad spectrum of economic, social and technical capacities and resources (e.g. high income, middle income, and low income) testify to a new relationship and will become a strategic tool in the post-2015 scenario. ◀

References

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