

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET)

EQUIPPING SCHOOLED YOUNG PEOPLE TO SUCCEED IN THE WORKPLACE

AWARENESS

The development of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programmes has long been absent on the political and economic agenda in Africa and yet:

- Recent developments in education systems to achieve universal primary education (UPE) goals are now exerting great pressure on secondary education, of which TVET is an integral part.
- Ninety percent of young people (between 15 and 24 years), without further preparation for working in a vocational setting, join the informal sector which now employs (with traditional agriculture) the majority of the labour force in Africa.
- It is estimated that 7 to 10 million people in Africa enter the labour market each year. However, these markets do not have the capacity to absorb them, causing high unemployment and under-employment rates that primarily affect those people lacking in occupational choices or professional skills.
- Finally, competency gaps are often determined based on data that do not sufficiently take into account the absorption capacity of the informal labour market.

As a result and given the apparent willingness of new intakes to join the labour force at the end of their secondary school education, government and international agencies have now listed TVET as a priority for the African continent and acknowledge that this sub-sector contributes substantially to the realization of the Education for All (EFA) goals as well as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set by the international community.

THE UNESCO APPROACH

To provide young people with a fair opportunity to succeed in their professional lives, UNESCO and its partners promote the development of a secondary education whose ultimate purpose is to create greater synergies between general education and TVET, as well as between TVET and the socio-economic world.

UNESCO BREDa performs its duties through the application of its various areas of expertise, which are:

- Coordination and advocacy with Regional Economic Communities (RECs): the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Africa (UNESCO BREDa) and its partners conduct coordination and support missions to raise the awareness of RECs on the need to foster consistency and efficiency at the sub-regional level for greater impact at the country level while recognizing its cross-cutting and multi-faceted nature (formal, non formal and informal)
 - o *Example of a practical application: The establishment of a multi-stakeholder regional process within a Regional Economic*

Community to revitalize TVET.

- The creation and emergence of innovative approaches: UNESCO BREDa supports TVET policy reforms in Sub-Saharan African countries for fair and effective systems in terms of access and integration by enhancing context-specific innovative experiences.
 - o *Example of a practical application: Experimentation with mobile training teams for equal access to TVET.*
- Improving the management of TVET: In order to provide support to policy-makers and analysts in the sub-sector, UNESCO BREDa encourages the development of statistical information systems (SIS) at the country and sub-regional levels which focus on both the training mechanism and the labour market.
 - o *Example of a practical application: UNESCO BREDa fosters the sharing of strategic analyses and recommendations at the regional level and participates in country reform processes in this regard.*

TANGIBLE RESULTS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

Actions undertaken by UNESCO and its partners are very encouraging as illustrated in the following accomplishments:

- Coordination and advocacy with RECs: As TVET is now clearly on the political agenda of African governments and financial partners, UNESCO BREDa in collaboration with the ECOWAS Secretariat initiated the "Abuja process" in 2009, a sub-regional process to revitalize TVET and promote TVET policy coherence among member countries for greater mobility and the harmonious development of skills through national reforms. More recently, in 2010, a task team including United Nations agencies and financial partners was created following the recommendations of the Abuja process to strengthen this policy coherence and provide further support to countries.
- The creation and emergence of innovative approaches: Capitalizing on existing experiences, UNESCO BREDa supported the TVET policy reform in Senegal to set up mobile training teams (MTT). These national teams help to address the training needs of populations in disadvantaged areas. MTTs (which include trucks, containers, tents, etc., based on the geographic and cultural environment) provide short-term training courses with human resources and materials that can easily be moved. Testing is being conducted in the Northern part of Senegal and has aroused the interest of the Gambia.
- Improving the management of TVET: UNESCO BREDa finalized and shared a regional study on the review and development of quality SIS for Sub-Saharan African countries. It provides a certain number of relevant indicators for the sub-sector while clearly

articulating the strategic actions to be undertaken. This research builds on diagnostic studies and works conducted by UNESCO BREDA in Côte d'Ivoire and Cameroon. It facilitated the development of relevant tools and methodologies for good quality data collection.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

From now until 2015, UNESCO BREDA wishes to pursue activities aimed at strengthening the cooperation and coordination of its interventions, particularly within the framework of inter-agency and multi-stakeholder coordination by fostering the establishment of inter-agency task forces within the other sub-regions, as well as at the sub-regional level based on the conclusive experience with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

These mechanisms will foster the development of quality TVET systems, the mobilization of resources and a synergy of actions in areas such as:

- Frameworks for national and regional qualifications: These frameworks will, inter alia, facilitate the enhancement of TVET systems with regard to the recognition of qualifications and national harmonization, an improved link with the labour market as well as the mobility of skills within and between countries;
- Information systems on the labour market: their development should allow countries and sub-regions to equip themselves with reliable and sustainable short-, medium- and long-term statistical data for a better assessment of the needs for TVET systems.

In an effort to draw from the experience of the United Nations' "Delivering as One" approach and process, UNESCO BREDA intends to prepare a mapping of international, regional and bilateral cooperation agencies, as well as other donors including non-governmental organizations working in the TVET sub-sector in Sub-Saharan Africa. This tool will help to strengthen the exchange of information and improve cooperative ties between partners.

LINKS AND GATEWAYS

The TVET sub-sector is a component of the literacy section and activities are conducted in close collaboration with the following units and sub-sectors:

- Basic Education in Africa Programme (BEAP): Through the integration of TVET in basic education, particularly for entrepreneurship development and linkages with the labour market.
- Literacy and non-formal education (LNFE): With regard to activities in the non-formal TVET field, particularly skills training and the integration of local languages into the various systems.
- Statistics, planning and sectoral policies (UNESCO Institute for Statistics and Dakar Pole): By further monitoring literacy and non-formal education supply and demand through reliable and recent data to better address NFE issues in the analyses and strategies of the education sector.
- Education for Sustainable Development (ESD): By promoting a global TVET approach taking into account human rights, ecological aspects, etc.
- Higher education: on the vocationalization of higher education and consistency in the development of secondary education systems.

- Teacher Training Initiative for Sub-Saharan Africa (TTISSA): Through the development of centres of excellence, particularly for training of trainers in TVET.

STRATEGIC PARTNERS

- ECOWAS: As a privileged partner of the Community for TVET within the framework of the Inter-Agency Task Team on the revitalisation of TVET (IATT).
- South African Development Community (SADC): As a privileged partner of the Community for TVET within the framework of the joint UNESCO-Southern Africa planning process.
- Luxembourg Agency for Development Cooperation (LUX DEV): By promoting technical and financial synergies in countries and sub-regions.
- Countries funding the Cap-EFA programme: Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland finance, through the Cap-EFA programme, NFE programmes implemented with the support of UNESCO BREDA.
- Agence Française de Développement (AFD): By promoting technical and financial synergies in countries and sub-regions
- African Development Bank (ADB): Financing of sub-regional and national action plans via IATT
- Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA): Through joint discussions on TVET development.
- International Labour Organization (ILO): By working on employment and training linkages.

LESSONS LEARNED

In less than ten years, TVET has generated much renewed interest worldwide and on the African continent. According to 2005 data, out of 512 million secondary school students in the world, more than 51 million were enrolled in a TVET programme. In Sub-Saharan Africa, formal TVET only plays a minor role in the development of skills that ensure a smooth transition from school to work. In 2005, the attendance rate at formal technical and vocational training programmes in secondary schools in two-thirds of Sub-Saharan African countries was 5% or less. However, OECD 2008 states that, "Yet, very few countries place emphasis on skills development in the informal sector, the main employer and training provider in Africa."

Considering the ever-growing challenges to be met, UNESCO BREDA is making every effort to stimulate the interest of member countries in TVET programmes by providing them with greater resources to boost their understanding and that of development partners of the issues at stake in this sensitive sub-sector.

The revitalization of quality TVET mechanisms at the country level cannot be done without coherent and multi-stakeholder strategies at the sub-regional and regional levels.