1. Introduction

The creation of the International Task Force on Teachers for Education for All (EFA) was approved at the EFA High Level Group meeting that took place in Oslo (Norway) in 2008. The goal was to heighten the attention to teacher issues in all forms of education in order to support countries in speeding up their achievement of the EFA goals. As a coordination body, the Task Force builds on, and reinforces interventions and initiatives of global, regional and national education partners aiming to address three gaps with regard to the teacher challenges: (a) the policy gap; (b) the capacity gap, and (c) the financing gap.

In this regards, using the proximity of its Secretariat hosted by UNESCO and the lead role this Organization plays in coordinating the EFA agenda, the Task Force, in close collaboration with the UNESCO Section for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and the UNEVOC International Centre based in Bonn (Germany), is proposing to undertake a review of teacher policies and practices in place in selected countries of the Arab Region.

UNESCO is implementing the TVET Strategy adopted by the 181st session of its Executive Board (181 EX/Decision 8). The Strategy focuses action in three core areas: (i) provision of upstream policy advice and related capacity development; (ii) conceptual clarification of skills development and improvement of monitoring; and (iii) acting as a clearinghouse and informing the global TVET debate. A range of programmes and initiatives are implemented covering advocacy, policy support and capacity development in Member States through upstream policy advice. It acts to strengthen their capacities to develop evidence-based policies and to create relevant global forum for international dialogue in the field.

The Third International Congress on TVET organized by UNESCO in Shanghai (China) in May 2012 provided a platform for revisiting TVET issues and challenges globally. Congress participants reviewed the major trends and policy developments in TVET since the Second International Congress held in Seoul, Republic of Korea, in 1999. They discussed challenges faced by TVET systems and explored appropriate responses aiming at building a better understanding of the contribution of TVET to sustainable development. The Congress also helped define strategic directions for bilateral and multilateral cooperation in support to TVET for all, within the framework of overall efforts in favour of access, inclusion and equity, education for sustainable development and a culture of peace.
The Congress outcomes document called on UNESCO Member States to develop effective policies aimed at improving teaching and learning processes. Specifically, it called for the development of policies and frameworks for professionalizing TVET staff, and develops and strengthens teaching standards for all levels.

The document further called for the reinforcement of frameworks and instruments to improve the collection of quantitative and qualitative evidence, including data on teachers and instructors, relevant to the elaboration of national policy agenda and its monitoring and evaluation. At the Arab region level, the TVET Regional Expert Meeting held in Muscat, Oman (17-19 March 2012) highlighted the importance of Teaching and Learning Processes (Pedagogy) in the region, through the Professionalization of teaching to become an attractive career path, in addition to preparing and continuously training of TVET teachers/instructors and motivating them to perform professionally.

2. Conceptual clarification

The TVET sub-sector, with the diversity of delivery modes and of types of programmes, calls for a specific consideration of the teaching personnel. Given the wide variety of orientation among TVET systems, it is not practical to draw a sharp line between teachers and instructors. In terms of the current study only, we refer to vocational teachers as those who are primarily responsible for theoretical skill instruction, whereas vocational instructors are those primarily responsible for imparting practical vocational skills [1]. The teacher and instructor concept includes, in the broader sense, teachers from technical education, teachers from initial and continuing vocational education and training (private and public). The instructor concept includes also, instructors for in-service training, instructors in specialised institutes, local communities and in other non-governmental organisations and companies that are not part of the education and training system (e.g. company supervisors or tutors). The term “teacher and instructor” is therefore used throughout the study to embrace all these typologies.

3. Main issues

Qualified and motivated teachers and instructors are key for effective learning and are at the heart of TVET quality. What students achieve in TVET institutions is heavily influenced by the effectiveness of teachers’ skills and competency. Teachers often receive insufficient support in many countries especially in developing world and can be left alone in the classroom and workshops to cope with challenges that extend well beyond their professional spheres of responsibility. Pre- and in-service training may also be behind in main-streaming competency-based approaches and transversal issues. The teaching profession in itself needs to be reinforced as a viable and attractive career choice in least developed countries. The low level of female representation in the TVET teaching force and the persistent gender pay gap in certain professions are notable challenges [1, 2].

The teacher gaps in terms of quality and quantity are even harder to grasp when it comes to the TVET sub-sector. The need to develop and implement evidence-based teacher policies and strategies, which cover TVET teacher and instructor training, recruitment, deployment, continuous professional development, living and working conditions, is a global issue. In the Arab States TVET has traditionally provided very few learning opportunities and rather
second-choice, lower quality alternative to general education, with limited opportunities for lifelong learning and limited payoff in the labour market. Those countries’ efforts towards higher quality and more relevant TVET are severely hampered by teacher shortage, gender inequality, low qualification and insufficient provision of teacher and instructor training, relevant curricula, teaching and training materials, teaching methods as well as appropriate TVET career structures.

In many Arab countries, teacher training and career development still struggles with ensuring that teacher and instructor education and training, pre and in-service, and continual professional development can achieve quality, coherence, sustainability and are compliant with high quality standards, and probably more importantly, meet the demands and needs of the TVET system. There are also challenges to improve teaching/training and learning environment in terms of workload, health and safety in many TVET institutions in this region.

Furthermore, in many countries a key question is the sustainability of Teacher and Instructor Training system, more particularly concerning the funding of teacher and instructor training. To meet a country’s expectations for sustainable development goals, strong and effective social dialogue mechanisms and public-private partnerships need to be expanded to enhance good policy and modes of TVET delivery and skills strategies. Another key element absent from the present policy design is building capacities for supervision, monitoring and assessment of the performance of TVET personnel.

Finally, the absence of relevant career management schemes that can genuinely take into account teachers’ qualifications and experience as well as introducing a teacher performance assessment system which, along the teacher professional development, would determine teacher salary and promotion in the teacher career development path. It should be noted that significant non-academic work experience is often not highly appraised. For instance, at present, in most Arab countries, there are elements of rigidity regarding the career paths and progress, which do not take into account the capacities and necessity for teachers to develop and evolve individually and collectively through academic track and also through involvement in innovative and project-based initiatives. For example, involvement in accreditation process, experimental and pilot projects that help teacher acquire new knowledge, skills and competencies that should be recognised by the system. Portfolio-based mechanisms can be helpful in this sense.

Recent research and international and regional reports, especially from UNESCO, ILO and ETF, suggest that progress in improving TVET quality and relevance depends largely on the quality of teachers and instructors. This was the basis of the Oslo Declaration establishing the International Task Force on Teachers for EFA, and was echoed at UNESCO’s 36th General Conference where an overwhelming number of Member States rightly pointed to teachers as the key area to focus on when addressing the quality and equity provisions of EFA.

The World Bank launched in 2010, the System Assessment and Benchmarking for Education Results (SABER) Programme with objectives to improve the quality of education around the world. Part of the SABER Programme is on Teachers and Education Technology and include most countries in the MENA region [3, 4]. However, this programme mainly concentrates on a survey of the current status of teachers (in general) and education policies at primary and secondary levels. Given the importance of TVET to support economic growth, alleviate youth
unemployment, reduce poverty and improve social inclusion, as well as the diversity of TVET delivery modes and programmes, special attention should be given to TVET teaching personnel, which calls for a study with particular emphasis on field research on the practices and policies of TVET teachers and instructors, ranging from secondary and post-secondary to tertiary levels as well as trainers and instructors involved in non-formal TVET and work-based programmes such as apprenticeship and alternance.

4. The Task Force and UNESCO’s response

Established following the realisation that progress towards EFA is only possible if and when countries lagging behind on the 2015 benchmark are further supported to develop and implement sound teacher policies, the Task Force focuses its interventions on mobilization for the coordination of various partners working on education and teachers at country level; reinforcing national capacity through the production and dissemination of information and data on key teacher issues; and promoting exchange of experience and expertise on teacher issues in all forms and types of education. The present study on TVET teachers in the Arab States is the first major intervention of the Task Force on this sub-sector.

As the leading agency in teacher issues, UNESCO ensures cooperation and social dialogue to reach sound teacher policies and strategies that are congruent with national education goals.

UNESCO is a standard setter in the field, having issued important documents as the UNESCO/ILO recommendations concerning the status of teachers (1966) and the UNESCO recommendation concerning the status of higher-education teaching personnel (1997), and acting through the Joint ILO/UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations concerning Teaching Personnel (CEART).

The main aim of UNESCO interventions is to support Member States to address issues of quantity and quality of teachers at all levels and including non-formal education and the consideration of gender and sustainable development.

5. Objectives

This project/initiative has two-fold objectives:

**Policy objective:** To provide an up-to-date account and analysis of existing TVET teacher and instructor training and career management policies and practices and an indication of likely regional trends and challenges;

**Cooperation objective:** To provide a framework for comparison of the prevailing practices, highlighting similarities and differences, in order to pave the way for the development of collaboration and partnership at regional level among countries and institutions of the Arab region and beyond.
6. **Expected results and outputs**

**Result 1:** Better understanding of prevailing policies and practices on Teachers and Instructors in Arab region;

**Result 2:** Strengthened national capacities of participating countries for the development and implementation of evidence-based teacher and instructor training and career management policies and practices; and

**Result 3:** Enhanced regional cooperation in the area of TVET teachers and instructors.

A number of outputs will be obtained, including the production of country reports and one synthesis report on Policies and Practices on TVET Teachers and Instructors in the Arab States, and a network of policy-makers and practitioners from the region will be established. The results of these studies will be used as starting point for policy dialogue with Member States to enhance collaboration and partnership. It will be also used by the UNESCO-UNEVOC Centre to develop relevant thematic network and capacity building activities. The Task Force will disseminate the results among its broad membership and with partners to start filling the knowledge gaps on teachers of the sub-sector. Adaptation of lessons learnt to other contexts will be promoted as well.

7. **Overall approach**

The project will start with the development of the implementation process jointly by the implementing partners, participating countries’ representatives and experts from the regions. A common methodology and outline will also be developed to use in preparing country reports in order to ensure their comparability.

One local expert from each participating member state will be included in the team to produce country reports. In addition, one national focal point will be nominated by Ministry in charge of TVET in the Member States. The focal point shall be a decision maker at central level or senior manager of a teacher and instructor training institution. Following the organisation of an inception workshop in October 2012, local experts will conduct field work including interviewing key actors such as policy makers, teachers unions, TVET institutions managers, teachers, learners, representatives of UNEVOC Centres etc. The field work shall also include collection of data and information regarding teachers and instructors profile and their numbers, quality of programmes and impact. Based on the field work, local experts will then (for their respective countries) draft, the country reports with the support of the Coordination Team (the Task Force on Teachers, TVET Section, UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre-Bonn, and UNESCO Regional Bureau-Beirut), and an International Expert. The reports will be consolidated and combined into a synthesis report to serve as a final product (publication) of this initiative (2012-2013).

It is expected that the synthesis report will facilitate transparency and mutual understanding on teachers and instructors training and career management policies and practices, allowing the identification of policy challenges and relevant recommendations. It will also serve as a basis for a constructive dialogue and exchange with/among participating Member States.
The synthesis report will be discussed in a network established on the same topic from policymakers in the Task Force and UNESCO-UNEVOC networks. Inputs gathered from these discussions will be reflected in the final product.

The synthesis report is expected to be in three languages (Arabic, English, and French) for interested countries, research institutions and development agencies working on TVET to use. It will be published and distributed (as hard copy as well as soft copy on the UNESCO and the Task Force websites) for wider dissemination.

8. Project experts

In addition to UNESCO Coordination Team, a Team of National Experts and an International Expert will be involved in the project implementation (based on communications with concerned Ministries and National Commissions for UNESCO).

Tasks of the **International Expert:**

- Assist the Coordination Team in the development of the overall methodology and reports outlines for country analysis
- Participate in experts meeting at UNESCO-HQ
- Draft the meeting report
- Assist the Coordination Team in the finalisation of the country analysis carried out by locally based experts (backstopping function)
- Prepare a synthesis report on TVET teachers and instructors in the Arab region
- Participate in a final workshop in a participating country to be determined to discuss the draft reports

The International Expert, with the support of UNESCO Coordination Team is responsible for the quality of the synthesis report.

Tasks of the **National Experts:**

- Carry out desk research of relevant documents for the development of the report
- Participate in a preparatory experts meeting at UNESCO-HQ
- Organise his/her mission in consultation and agreement with UNESCO and the national TVET authorities
- Collect data through interviews and visits in his/her country
- Produce a draft report for comments by the Coordination Team on the basis of the methodology proposed during the experts meeting;
- Produce a final report on the basis of the comments received from the Coordination Team
- Provide feedback on the draft of the synthesis report

The National Experts are responsible for the quality of the country reports.

Tasks of the **Focal Points:**

- Facilitate the International and National Experts to access relevant documents related to educational policies and practices
Facilitate the International and National Experts to conduct field study to collect data

The Focal Points, as a facilitator of the study, will not receive remuneration from the project.

In the Coordination Team, the Task Force on Teachers, TVET Section, UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre-Bonn are responsible for the overall management of the study, including the determination of the general methodology, contracting international and national experts, and overseeing the production of all the country and synthesis reports; UNESCO Regional Bureau-Beirut is responsible for communicating with participating countries to ensure their commitment and commenting on all the country and synthesis reports.

9. UNESCO Contacts

For further information on the initiative, you may contact one of the following Coordinators:

- Mr. Edem Adubra (e.adubra@unesco.org), Head of the Secretariat of the International Task Force on Teachers for EFA;
- Mr. Borhene Chakroun (b.chakroun@unesco.org), Chief of the Section for TVET at UNESCO Headquarter;
- Mr. Shyamal Majumdar (s.majumdar@unesco.org), Head of UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre-Bonn;
- Mr. Sulieman Suliman (s.sulieman@unesco.org), Programme Specialist at UNESCO Regional Bureau-Beirut.

References:


Annex (1)

REPORT STRUCTURE

The country and synthesis reports should aim to keep to about 35/40 pages in length. The indicative structure for country reports should be as follows. The synthesis report follows the same structure except that an extra section is dedicated to a review of international trends and issues. The structure will be discussed in detail during the experts meeting:

1. **Brief description of Education/TVET System**
   This should describe the structure and organizations of a country’s education and training systems. What types of education and training systems were found? What reforms and other projects are happening, in particular those that have a bearing on enhancing teacher and instructor training (TIT)?
   *Aim to keep this to facts describing everything succinctly in about 1/2 pages.*

2. **National TVET strategies: policies, programmes, institutions**
   This section will describe the adopted policies and strategies in TVET sector. Where policies and strategies descriptions are found? How comprehensive are they? Are they coherent with socio-economic development? It will look at policy objectives related to improving quality of teaching and learning processes and specific objectives related to teaching staff.
   *Aim to keep this to facts describing everything succinctly in about 2/3 pages.*

3. **TIT in TVET: profile of teachers, TIT projects, schemes and pilot actions**
   This section will first provide a comprehensive analysis of the profile of teachers and instructors including their number, qualifications, age, flows and wastage, etc. It should present a broad selection of statistics and indicators to be collected through the field visits. The section then will focus on key TIT issues: What type of initiatives for TIT is implemented with details regarding the life cycle of programmes: needs analysis, instructional design, development, delivery, and evaluation? The following questions should be answered: What is the organization and planning for TIT to happen? How are trainees selected? How are teachers and instructors needs identified? How long is their training and who funds? What is the relationship between client and supplier? What training methods are used and in what environment does the training take place? What is the profile of instructors of instructors and the competencies required by them? Finally what assessment is conducted of the trained staff and is certification provided for successfully completing?
   *Aim for about a total of 15 pages for these three sections*

4. **Challenges**
   This section identifies some key issues that hamper the development of TIT. The issues can be country-specific or common to the region. Causal relationships between the issues
and their implications will be analyzed. Particular attention will be given to those problems that current actions are not likely to cope with effectively.

[Aim for about 2 pages]

5. **Funding**

In this section we look at sources, allocation and use of financial resources for TIT. Do TIT initiatives have a public budget contribution? What international donors are engaged in TIT projects? What regional co-operation already exists among Arab States?

[Aim to keep this section to about 2 pages]

6. **Quality and relevance of the TIT**

What weaknesses/strengths have been identified? How relevant is the curricula design methods being used in the country? What is the competence level of the instructors of instructors? What training did they undertake? How relevant and suitable is the training environment in which the various types of training are conducted? What kinds of pedagogic approach are used? What is their usefulness and relevance to the people who are being trained? How effective is the management and organization of the training of instructors? How effective and efficient is the training carried out?

[This section should cover about 4 pages]

7. **Qualification and quality assurance**

In this section, we look at what systems are in place to support flexible pathways and the accumulation, recognition and transfer of individual learning through transparent, well-articulated qualifications systems; reliable measures for assessment, recognition and validation of qualifications. What quality assurance mechanisms exist (certification of teachers and instructors, licensing, etc.)? What type of career guidance systems to assist teachers and instructors and promote the acquisition of career management skills?

[This section should cover about 2 pages]

8. **Strategic orientations and development of TIT strategies**

In this section we begin to make an analysis of the actual policies, programmes and initiatives being implemented and begin to look for possible future strategy orientations and not at recommended solutions. We need to look at whether present policies, strategies, programmes and schemes may be useful and whether any future strategies might be developed based on lessons learnt. We may suggest whether new initiatives, approaches, strategies may be a helpful way forward.

[Aim should be for about 2/3 pages for this section]