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SHANGHAI UPDATE

One year on



One year ago 740 TVET experts, including 40 ministers and deputy ministers, answered the call of UNESCO and came to the Third International Congress on TVET in Shanghai, China on Transforming TVET: Building skills for work and life. They came to set the international agenda on TVET for the next five years and beyond.

At a time when recognition that TVET has a vital contribution to make to economic and social well-being has never been higher and the issues of skills and youth unemployment are so much on people's minds, the timing could not have been better.

One year on, when the excitement of free-flowing ideas, seeing familiar faces and finally putting names to others and those late night discussions setting the world to rights has long since passed, the slow and careful work of transforming TVET in classrooms, workplaces and small-scale meetings in countries around the world continues.

Here at UNESCO, we would like to thank our hosts for supporting the congress and thank you for coming to Shanghai and giving your valuable input to the congress, but we would like to thank you even more for all your hard work since on putting the ideas we shared there into practice. Less glamorous it may be, but this is the work that really counts.

This newsletter is just one small part of UNESCO's drive to make sure we keep up the momentum. Over the past year, we have begun following through on the promises made in Shanghai. As well as adapting UNESCO's Strategy for TVET, UNESCO has started reinvigorating and expanding the UNEVOC Network to make it a more dynamic platform for sharing innovative practices and a real force for change.

The voice of the Shanghai Consensus was clearly heard at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in June 2012. Education, and especially education for sustainable development or ESD, featured prominently in the Rio+20 final declaration and there was a clear call to continue work on education for sustainable development beyond the end of the UN decade of ESD in 2014.

The Shanghai effect is also already feeding into the debate on what comes after the Millennium Development Goals, known in the trade as the post-2015 agenda. The NORRAG network and UNESCO organized a meeting of experts immediately after the congress to look at what should be the role of TVET and skills development after 2015. The UNESCO-UNEVOC International Forum during November 2012, the October 2012 meeting of the Interagency Group on TVET, key levers for keeping up the Shanghai momentum, explored ways of keeping TVET high on the post-2015 agenda, as did the Post-2015 Global Thematic Consultation on Education held in Dakar, Senegal in March this year.

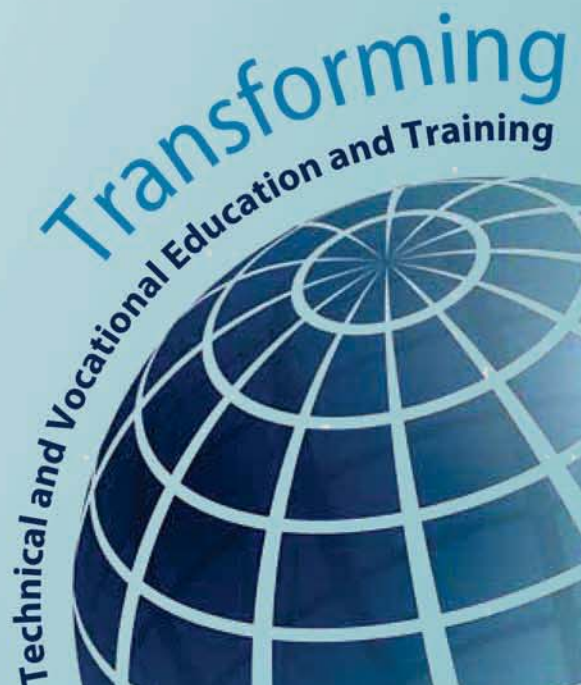
As this newsletter shows, there are plenty more activities and events in the pipeline.

I hope you will enjoy reading this first edition of Shanghai Update.

Dr Mmantsetsa Marope
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Follow-up on the UNESCO Third International TVET Congress

1. One year on
2. It is time to transform TVET
3. UNESCO-UNEVOC presses on with Shanghai recommendations
4. Shanghai Consensus at a glance
5. UNESCO Executive Board gives green light to recommendations
6. Upcoming activities and events



It is time to transform TVET

Technical and vocational education and training is not just preparation for work, it is preparation for life. And this is why it is so important to make it accessible to all.

The Third International Congress on TVET has been significant in many ways – not least due to the impressive international consensus it managed to build over three days of intense debate. But perhaps its lasting legacy will be that it marks the turning point when the process of rethinking the fundamental purpose of TVET began – the transformation of TVET.

TVET must deliver learning for the many and varied needs of human development and not just function as a response to immediate needs for skills. Once you accept this basic tenet, it becomes clear that it is no longer enough to merely concentrate on expanding existing TVET provision – it goes much deeper than that. It is all about transforming TVET for inclusive societies and sustainable development.

This sea change happens at four levels – at the strategic, the people, the lifelong learning and the policy process level.

The shift in strategic focus means recognizing that TVET happens in a much greater and more varied range of settings than conventional, formal TVET in secondary schools and colleges. In the same way, work is not only that which occurs within formal jobs and which generates a salary but includes all forms of productive activity.

The people focus means that people who have been excluded, such as women and youth in rural areas, must be able to access to the skills they need. But if we are to make TVET accessible to all, it also means reaching out to new communities of learners such as virtual communities, and encompassing new occupations such as those in emerging technologies, recognizing that a skilled workforce is the key to ensure the industry's responsible use of our planet's resources.

This necessary transformation will only occur if TVET can become a truly lifelong form of learning. This shifts the emphasis from initial formal TVET learning, important though it is, to the recognition that a great deal of learning occurs outside formal settings and that people continue learning throughout their lives. Thus for TVET, foundation skills and the ability of learning to learn are as important as specialist know-how. And only if we can make the many places where skills

development occurs visible and valuable can we hope to really transform TVET.

This new inclusive and transformative vision of TVET will make fresh demands on policy and policymakers and it is clear that there are no readymade solutions. If we accept that one size does not fit all, this suggests that the new, improved breed of TVET policies will have to transcend the traditional dichotomy of equity versus the economy and forge deeper and stronger links with other areas of policy such as rural and industrial development, poverty reduction or youth employment.

As the Shanghai Consensus points out, transforming policy will only work if approaches are development-orientated, sensitive to the local context and encourage policy learning. And as Borhene Chakroun, the chief of the TVET section at UNESCO says, "scaling up existing models of TVET provision to include more young people and adults is not the solution... profound transformations are needed in the conceptualization, governance, funding and organization of TVET."

UNESCO-UNEVOC presses on with Shanghai recommendations

The UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre is moving forward on making evidence the basis of sound policy by stepping up its work on gathering and publicizing promising practices for transforming TVET. In the process, the International Centre, which acts as a hub for a worldwide network of TVET institutions, is reorganizing the Network for greater effectiveness.



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This, the essence of the Shanghai recommendations for UNESCO-UNEVOC, was the focus of the International Forum that brought 125 participants from 60 countries to Bonn on 14-16 November 2012.

As TVET continues to rise up the global political agenda, the UNEVOC Network has a unique role to play in sharing knowledge, building capacity and leading the global debate on transforming TVET. In order to do this, it needs to engage more with both politicians and practitioners by encouraging international cooperation among all stakeholders of the TVET system.

In Bonn, Shyamal Majumdar, Head of UNESCO-UNEVOC, announced a new thematic direction for the year 2013 on



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youth and skills, with a special focus on school-to-work transition and entrepreneurship, and on greening TVET, with a special focus on teacher training and curriculum development. Delegates approved plans to redefine the roles of the international and national centres. The Network has since been regrouped into five regional clusters and a regional forum has been held for each to follow up on the Shanghai Consensus.

Shanghai Consensus at a glance

TVET has a key role to play in meeting the challenges facing modern society. The Shanghai Consensus provides a wealth of ideas on how TVET can live up to these expectations. Its recommendations to governments and other stakeholders include making TVET more relevant by better identifying skills needs, incorporating information and communication technologies (ICT) and education for green economies, and ensuring the right people are involved in designing and governing TVET.

Access, quality and equity are another priority. This means developing effective policies for improving teaching and learning, especially by professionalizing TVET staff, enhancing quality through the definition of standards and benchmarks, facilitating access for disadvantaged groups and improving gender equality.

Flexible pathways and transparent, outcome-based systems of qualifications that will allow non-formal and informal learning to be accumulated, recognized and transferred are another key issue. This includes establishing routes from TVET to general education and to higher levels of education for TVET learners and should be backed up by effective career guidance to inform their choices.

To see what works and what does not, you need evidence. The recommendations call for better data collection to inform policymaking as well as stronger monitoring and evaluation. Policymakers need more capacity to make good use of this evidence as do social partners and civil society. Data collection must serve local needs and conform to international standards and there is a need for more research into TVET.

There is also a call for improving governance and making it more participatory by engaging and involving employers, workers, learners and representatives of civil society, especially young people.

TVET should be seen above all as an investment in human development. Funding should be increased and diversified by involving all stakeholders through the use of appropriate incentives. It should also be targeted to make it easier for people from disadvantaged groups to access TVET and employment, including green jobs.

Finally, TVET has an essential role to play in building prosperity and social cohesion, but its public image often lags behind. Efforts must be made to boost the public profile and attractiveness of TVET by using the media and other channels to inform learners, their families and other stakeholders about the opportunities TVET can offer.

The Consensus recommends that the international community acknowledge the essential role of TVET in tackling youth



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unemployment and give it priority as an integral part of the post-2015 agenda. Research and analysis, as the basis for sound policymaking and efficient use of resources, are also important.

International cooperation must be aligned with national needs to promote ownership and special priority should be given to less developed countries, small island developing states, countries facing conflict and disaster as well as middle-income countries.

The international community should also facilitate the exchange of ideas on policies and approaches, thereby supporting, and in turn benefiting, from south-south and north-south-south cooperation.

UNESCO Executive Board gives green light to recommendations

The Shanghai Consensus has strong implications for the work of UNESCO in terms of programming, norms, the institutional set-up and relations with partners such as the Inter-Agency Group on TVET. It also puts forward ways of fine-tuning the work of UNESCO on the recognition of qualifications and quality assurance as well as TVET statistics and indicators.

UNESCO's Executive Board took note of the outcomes of the Congress at its meeting in Paris in October 2012. UNESCO has since begun feeding these into its 2010-2015 Strategy for TVET.

The Consensus has provided a new way of looking at TVET which redefines the traditional links between education, training and the world of work by placing it firmly within the perspective of lifelong learning.

This means that UNESCO's strategy should give more priority to helping governments to transform TVET than simply expanding provision. This transformation will mean going beyond traditional divisions such as academic/vocational, public/private or school/work-based. Quality assurance and recognition of certification and qualifications across national borders will be key for overcoming these divides and UNESCO will aim to encourage more work on these areas. The UNEVOC Network is a significant resource for advancing UNESCO's work in TVET.

Upcoming activities and events

WorldSkills, 2-7 July 2013, Leipzig, Germany
UNESCO-UNEVOC will take part in several events at the 42nd WorldSkills Competition.

www.worldskillsleipzig2013.com/en/

UNEVOC Network regional meetings, August – September 2013 in each of the five UNESCO regions, with a focus on youth and skills and greening TVET as well as the collection of promising practices in TVET. www.unevoc.unesco.org/network

Global workshop on Policies and Practices on TVET Teachers and Instructors in the Arab Region, October 2013, Paris, France Workshop jointly organized by UNESCO TVET Section, UNESCO-UNEVOC and the International Task Force on Teachers for Education for All. www.teachersforefa.unesco.org/int/en/news/152-an-effort-to-bridge-tvet-teacher-gaps.html

8th UNESCO Youth Forum, 29-31 October 2013, Paris, France The youth forum brings together young delegates from around the world to voice their ideas and concerns and make suggestions directly to the UNESCO General Conference. www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/youth/youth-forums/

UNESCO General Conference, 5-20 November 2013, Paris, France

The general conference takes place every two years and set the policies and main lines of work of UNESCO as well as deciding the programmes and the budget. www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/events/general-conference-events
www.unesco.org/new/en/general-conference/



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