

## Promoting effective skills policies and systems

### Improving skills development and national TVET policies and systems

Bridgetown, Barbados 26-30 September 2011

#### 1. Background and aims of the training seminar

National skills development policies and systems encompass technical and vocational education and training (TVET), lifelong learning, workplace learning and learning opportunities in the informal and rural sectors. Skills development is a key factor for the employability of the labour force, the sustainability of enterprises and for ensuring that young people entering the labour market have the skills employers are looking for.

Skills development can also contribute to social cohesion and inclusion, so efficient policies are important from a social, not just economic, point of view. The vicious circle of inadequate education and training, poor skills, low productivity jobs and low wages can trap and exclude the poorest and most vulnerable groups of the working population and can deprive young labour market entrants from the relevant skills they need in order to participate fully as citizens in their societies.

Increasing accessibility to good quality training enables more people to participate in and benefit from development and economic growth and may thus improve social cohesion.

The training seminar *Promoting effective skills policies and systems* was co-organised by several organisations working in the field of TVET and skills development: in addition to UNESCO Headquarters, the UNESCO Kingston cluster office and UNESCO-UNEVOC, the ILO regional office in Port of Spain and the ILO International Training Centre in Turin and the Caribbean Development Bank were co-organisers and co-sponsors of the event. The aim of the seminar was to help constituents in the Caribbean to learn about international standards, conclusions of international conferences and fresh research to their own circumstances and policy objectives. The seminar covered major policy challenges and options for building effective skills development and TVET systems that are responsive to current labour market and economic challenges and help to achieve long-term development goals.

#### 2. Objectives

It was aimed that by the end of the seminar participants would have:

- Discussed approaches to skills development and TVET policies and systems being applied in different countries around the world and in the Caribbean;
- Analysed relevant elements of effective skills development systems, with a special focus on enhancing youth employability

- Identified critical points and gaps and possible actions in order to improve skills development and TVET systems in their countries;
- Strengthened their capacities to formulate comprehensive skills and TVET policies that support a virtuous circle of training, productive and decent work and employment growth.

### 3. Participant profile

The intended audience for the seminar was:

- Senior policy staff, technical staff and advisers to Ministries of Education and/or Labour, working in the area of skills development and TVET
- Senior staff and advisers in other ministries and agencies involved in the development of skills and TVET policies
- Managers from national training agencies
- Representatives of workers' and employers' organisations dealing with issues of skills and training policies
- Programme staff of national, bilateral or multi-lateral development agencies working on skills development and TVET programmes.

The seminar was very well attended by nearly 40 participants from 20 countries and territories. The participants were mostly senior policy makers in Ministries and TVET councils, although there were also some representatives of trade unions and a participant from the University of the West Indies. A wide range of countries was represented, including OECS and non-OECS member states, and two Dutch-speaking countries and territories (Curacao and Suriname).

Four participants were directly sponsored by funds provided by UNESCO-UNEVOC (transport, accommodation and meals). They are indicated in the list provided in Appendix 1.

A full list of participants is presented in Appendix 1.

### 4. Content

The seminar aimed to cover the following themes and topics:

- International concepts and instruments for skills development
- Identification of skills needs: labour market and social dialogue institutions;
- Sectoral policies for supporting regional development strategies through skills development;
- Teacher training and development;

- Skills development and TVET standards and quality assurance;
- Skills development for social inclusion of youth and promotion of inclusive TVET and youth employment strategies;
- Building and maintaining social dialogue on skills development and TVET.
- Design of comprehensive national skills development policies, integrating skills development in national, sectoral and regional development strategies.

In addition to the sessions facilitated by staff UNESCO and the ILO, there were presentations from the OECS Secretariat, the Caribbean Examinations Council, the Caribbean Development Bank, and Dr John Ritz, of the Old Dominion University, USA. A full copy of the programme can be found in Appendix 2.

More specifically the programme consisted of the following sessions:

- **Day 1 - 26 September 2011**

The **opening ceremony** consisted of opening remarks from representatives from the following organisations:

- Barbados TVET Council
- ILO Office for the Caribbean
- UNESCO
- Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Barbados
- International Training Centre, ILO

These opening presentations were followed by an introductory exercise facilitated by Ms **Alessandra Molz**, of the ITC-ILO, with the aim to introduce participants to each other.

This was followed by a video-conference with **Christine Evans-Clock**, Director, ILO, Skills and Employability Department. In her presentation, Dr Evans-Clock presented the ILO skills for employment strategy. She started her talk by discussing today's global context affecting employment strategies, including issues such as youth employment, social inclusion, globalisation and climate change. She followed this discussion with a presentation of ILO's mandate on decent work and the skills component of decent work, as per the Recommendation no 195 on *Human Resource Development: Education, training and lifelong learning*, adopted by the International Labour Conference in June 2004. The ILO skills strategy aims to link skills development to decent work, so as to move away from a vicious downward circle of low-skilled, low-wage jobs, low productivity and social exclusion to a virtuous circle of more and better skills leading to innovation and adoption of new technologies, investment and

diversification of the economy, and job growth. She discussed the building blocks of the G20 training strategy, which are the following:

- Anticipating skills needs
- Participation of social partners
- Sectoral approaches
- Labour market information and employment services
- Training quality and relevance
- Gender equality
- Broad access to training
- Finance
- Assessing policy performance

Coordination is essential for a successful implementation of an employment skills strategy, including inter-ministerial co-ordination and between international organisations.

The next presentation was made by Ms **Katerina Ananiadou**, Programme Specialist at UNESCO-UNEVOC. In her presentation she had the opportunity to give an overview of UNESCO-UNEVOC's work, informing participants of the Centre's mission and programme of work, focusing also on the UNEVOC network and its work in the Caribbean, as well as the Centre's intention to increase their engagement with the Latin American and Caribbean Region as a whole.

There followed the first substantive session of the day, entitled: *Elements of comprehensive skills and TVET policies*. The session was co-facilitated by Mr **Keith Holmes**, Programme Specialist at UNESCO TVET Section and Ms **Katerina Ananiadou** from UNESCO-UNEVOC.

The session started with some introductory guided exercises and input on what TVET means in the particular Caribbean context. It then focused on the drivers and trends that have impacted TVET in the region in the last ten years and on significant reforms in the TVET systems.

The session was conducted using a participatory method, with participants working on a series of questions in small groups. Questions discussed included the following: What is TVET for in the Caribbean? What are the drivers and trends (economic, political, demographic) that have had an impact on TVET in the last ten years or so? What reforms have taken place in the last ten years, what were their outcomes and impact?

The session proceeded by asking participants to state the main elements that need to be analysed to inform the development of comprehensive skills and TVET policies. The elements that participants

generated were then compared with the themes of the UNESCO policy review guidelines and the two sets were discussed and contrasted. In particular, participants were asked to provide feedback on the guidelines thinking about their own national and regional context. Given UNESCO's plans to conduct policy reviews in selected OECS countries in late 2011 and 2012, this feedback will be particularly valuable for this exercise. Some of the elements that need to be analysed to inform the development of comprehensive skills and TVET policies generated and discussed by participants during the session were: Underpinning philosophy; labour market needs/labour market information/research/statistics; financing/ funding models; curriculum reform; infrastructure, resources, consumables; competence standards; assessment and certification; qualifications framework; quality assurance; training of TVET professionals.

- **Day 2 - 27 September 2011**

Mr **Marcellus Albertin**, of the OECS Secretariat, made a presentation on the *development of the skills strategy of the OECS*. In his presentation, Mr Albertin presented the OECS's definition of TVET, skills for lifelong learning that helped to frame the skills development strategy of the organisation. He then presented the framework of the OECS strategy, some of the key elements of which are: collaboration and partnerships; universal participation; accreditation and assessment; evidence-based approach; financing and pedagogy. Some of the challenges involved are the difficulties in obtaining consensus from all major stakeholders; the lack of suitable champions for the policy; and the limited use of rigorous analysis and debate. Some of the policy responses to the challenges are: the articulation of a strategic vision; the use of robust data from tracer and other studies and the establishment of labour market information systems; the mainstreaming of skills programmes at schools; and a public education campaign to change people's perceptions of skills programmes.

Ms **Leona Entage**, Assistant Registrar, Exams Development & Production Division of the Caribbean Examinations Council gave a presentation on *Quality Assurance for implementing the Caribbean Vocational Qualifications (CVQ)*.

A group activity on regional integration and the implications for TVET followed. This was a participatory exercise, facilitated by Ms **Alessandra Molz**, that enabled participants to work in small groups on the following questions: What are the implications of regional integration on TVET policies? What would be the implications of regional integration for the development of quality TVET? In the context of regional integration, what are the resulting issues for implementing the CVQ on the country level?

Ms **Alessandra Molz** also facilitated the last session of this day on the topic of *Identification of skills needs*. The session used a combination of presentations on labour market information for skills needs and participatory exercises in small groups. In her presentation Ms Molz focused on how we can analyse the shifts that are happening everywhere in the world of work (products, production processes, human relations, organisation of work, tools and instruments) in order to provide more suitable TVET for young people entering tomorrow's labour market. She discussed the types of information that how labour market information systems (LMIS) can use these to help with skills needs analyses. The presentation then focused on the identification of future skills needs, and specific methods, such as quantitative

forecasting techniques and qualitative techniques such as Delphi, were discussed. The group exercise that followed used specific scenarios that asked participants to identify what labour market and skills-relation information would be needed to address a specific question, as well as what methodologies and information sources should be used.

- **Day 3 – 28/09/2012**

Dr **John Ritz**, of the Old Dominion University, Virginia, USA facilitated a session on *Teachers' training and professional development*. In his presentation, Dr Ritz discussed the benefits of technical and vocational education to economic improvement, reviewed knowledge on effective teacher preparation for technical and vocational education; discussed how to plan for effective professional development of technical and vocational education teachers and how to use knowledge to plan for improvement of technical and vocational education teachers. He focused on the different types of skills and knowledge that teachers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century need to have: technical Knowledge, pedagogical Knowledge, general literacy knowledge, qualifying standards and being able to apply all these types of knowledge in the classroom. He then focused on the types of development activities that can enhance these skills both in in- and pre-service teachers. The session also included an interactive activity asking participants to discuss specific questions relevant to teacher training and development.

The second topic for this day was *Youth and Social Inclusion and Youth Employment Training Strategies*. The session was co-facilitated by Ms **Alessandra Molz**, ITC-ILO, Mr **Keith Holmes**, UNESCO and Mr **Hassan Nhahi**, ILO, Port-of-Spain. Ms Molz discussed past and current definitions and approaches to the concepts of social inclusion, exclusion and integration and then proceeded with four main tendencies: flexibilisation, individualisation, professional development of teachers and trainers and early guidance and counseling.

Mr Holmes focused on contrasting policy approaches to social inclusion: the target groups approach and the equality approach. The former locates the problem with the target group and may lead to social segregation and loss of human development potential, whereas according to the latter the problem is relational and the approach may lead to social cohesion and increase human development potential. More equitable and inclusive learning opportunities require: convergence between academic and vocational pathways and providers; vocationalisation of secondary and tertiary education; transformative scale-up within education sector reforms (TVET for all); responding to the needs of diverse youth and adults in learning and work; rethinking and reinventing TVET.

Mr Nhahi's presentation focused on youth employment strategies and transition to employment. He discussed the importance of understanding the causes for youth unemployment (eg demographic changes, lack of relevant skills, wages, labour market policies, lack of entrepreneurial culture). He then continued with discussion of possible short term strategies, eg providing help with application writing and career guidance and counselling through the employment services as well as long term strategies, which can include curricular reforms, different types of partnerships and articulation across institutions and programmes.

- **Day 4 – 29/9/2011**

Ms **Donna Koeltz**, of the ILO in Geneva, gave a presentation on *Vocational guidance* via a videoconference. In her presentation Ms Koeltz discussed definitions of related concepts such as career guidance, career education and career counseling, before proceeding to focus more on vocational and employment counseling. She finished her presentation by discussing some of the policy issues that need to be considered in relation to the topic of vocational guidance, amongst others: the need to assign priority to the development of career guidance systems; providing incentives to encourage private career guidance services; improving training for career guidance specialists; ensuring diversity, availability and delivery of services; and developing appropriate quality assurance and evaluation mechanisms.

Dr **Idamay Denny**, Operations Officer, Education, Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), gave a presentation on the *CDB's work on TVET in the Region*. The CDB's overarching mission is to be a catalyst for poverty reduction across the region, with education and training being major vehicles for improvement of efficiency and effectiveness, provision of equitable access, diversification of programme offerings and alignment with labour market requirements. Dr Denny presented the focus of the CDB on TVET interventions, which was the expansion of access and improving the capacity of TVET, including administrative, operational and teaching capacity, provision of resources, and support through development partners. The financing mechanisms used included the use of grants, loans and offer of technical assistance. Dr Denny presented some of the past, current and future national and regional activities in TVET supported by the CDB. Future regional activities include: meeting regional tertiary education targets through expansion of TVET; developing 2<sup>nd</sup> chance programmes for school dropouts and other out-of-work youth; supporting the implementation of CVQs and supporting the development of National Qualifications.

Mr **Hassan Ndahi**, of the ILO Port-of-Spain, next facilitated a session on *Financing training*. The focus of Mr Ndahi's presentation was on understanding the reasons, advantages and disadvantages of alternative modes of financing technical and vocational training, as well as the different sources of alternative financing. In relation to policy, Mr Ndahi pointed out that training policies need to move from being supply-based to demand-based, adapt to micro, small and medium-size business, clarify objectives of funds and the types of skills training to be supported. The management of funds for accountability purposes was discussed extensively next and the importance of accountability of funds, as weak management and accountability are considered one of the disadvantages of alternative sources of financing.

The last session of the Day 4 was facilitated by **Katerina Ananiadou**, UNESCO-UNEVOC and **Keith Holmes**, UNESCO HQ. The topic was *Developing national skills and TVET policies*. The session was directly linked and followed up on the Day 1 session on *Elements of comprehensive skills and TVET policies* and used some of the material produced by participants during that session. This time participants were asked to work in groups of OECs and non-OECs countries, in view of UNESCO's greater involvement with OECs countries during the policy reviews next year. After a short presentation of the

UNESCO TVET strategy, participants were asked to present their top reasons for developing a TVET/skills development policy in their country and then discussed these in plenary. The next exercise focused on the steps that are necessary in the development of a TVET/skills development policy, by asking participants to think about these steps. The group exercise was followed by a presentation of the steps involved in policy development. These included drafting a working document, carrying out research and/or focus groups, meeting stakeholders to arrive to a consensus, defining policy objectives, and consulting with stakeholders. Participants were then given examples of developed TVET and skills policies from other countries and spent the last part of the session preparing their presentations for Day 5.

- **Day 5 – 30/9/2011**

The last day of the seminar was devoted to presentations by participants, who were required to make a short presentation on an action plan for a policy review, analysis and development in their country or territory. The presentations were prepared in advance, mostly during the last part of the last session of Day 4. Participants were very successful in identifying very succinctly the steps that needed to be followed for the development or review of the TVET policy in their jurisdiction and the last session of the training seminar provided an opportunity for them to reflect and use the knowledge and skills they had acquired during the course, and to develop a concrete output that they could use once they resumed their normal working lives after the course. It was also an excellent opportunity for all countries and territories voices to be heard and for participants to learn from each other. All presentations were collected by one focal point for circulation at a later date.

Before the end of the course and the closing ceremony, evaluation sheets were handed out, prepared by the ILT-ILO (for information on the results see below section on Outcomes and future action). Certificates of attendance were also awarded to all participants who successfully completed the course.

## 5. Outcomes and future action

The seminar broadly achieved its aims of strengthening capacity of regional policy makers and other TVET professionals in the analysis of policy challenges and the formulation of action plans for developing new or reformed TVET and skills development policies. As demonstrated by the final presentations, all participants acquired a great amount of new knowledge that they were also able to put into use by the end of the seminar. Informal feedback acquired during and after the event suggested that participants appreciated the event and gained much from it.

In addition, the formal evaluation conducted anonymously at the end of the seminar showed very positive results. For example, 94% of the participants who responded to the questionnaire replied 'mostly' or 'fully' to the question: 'To what extent were the activity's objectives achieved?' and 100% replied 'yes' or 'absolutely' to the question: 'Are you satisfied with the quality of this activity?'. More evaluation results are presented in Appendix 3.



From the point of view of UNESCO-UNEVOC, the seminar also provided excellent opportunities for engagement with policy makers in the sub-region. Firstly, it was a good opportunity to obtain up-to-date information on some of the UNEVOC centres and contacts in the region. Although only one UNEVOC centre was actually represented at the event (Ministry of Education, St Lucia), some of the participants were able to provide information on contacts in their own country and this information has been fed back to the UNEVOC Network team in Bonn. More importantly, the event provided an opportunity for UNESCO-UNEVOC to rekindle activities in the sub-region, and it is regarded as a first in a series of capacity development activities to take place in the Caribbean in the near future. Most of these will be directly linked to the policy reviews that will be conducted by the TVET Sector at Headquarters in the next few months. The aim is for UNESCO-UNEVOC to provide development in areas identified by the policy reviews as needing

Finally, a TVET policy conference in the Caribbean is currently being organised by the UNESCO Kingston cluster office and the University of the West Indies on 7-9 March 2012. UNESCO-UNEVOC has of course been invited to support and participate and staff are currently liaising with colleagues from the Kingston office and the UWI, regarding possible ways of cooperation and to provide input on the planning of the conference (eg potential keynote speakers).

## Appendix 1

### List of participants

*NB: Participants marked with a \* were directly sponsored by UNESCO-UNEVOC funds*

Name of Participant	Address	Telephone/email	Status
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# Promoting effective skills policies and systems

26 – 30 September 2011, Activity: A 525796



Port-of-Spain



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



LANGUAGE: English VENUE: Bridgetown, Barbados

	Monday, 26.09. 2011	Tuesday, 27.09. 2011	Wednesday, 28.09. 2011	Thursday, 29.09. 2011	Friday, 30.09. 2011
09:00 - 10:30	8:30 Registration 9:00 Opening ceremony (until 10:00)	<b>Topic 2: Development of Skills Strategy for the OECS</b> <i>Marcellus Albertin (OECS Secretariat)</i> <b>Topic 3: CVQ: Quality Assurance for implementing CVQs</b> <i>Caribbean Examinations Council HQ Barbados</i>	<b>Topic 5: Teachers' training and professional development</b>  <i>John Ritz Consultant</i>	<b>Topic 7</b> 9:00 Vocational guidance <i>Donna Koeltz, ILO (VC)</i>  <b>Topic 8</b> 9:45 CDB's work on TVET in the Region <i>Dr. Idamay Denny, CDB</i>	Participants' presentation on outcomes and actions for the future development of TVET policies  <i>Participants</i>
Coffee break					
11:00 - 12:30	10:30: Introduction exercise <i>Alessandra Molz, ITC-ILO</i> 11:15 ILO framework for skills dev. <i>Chris Evans-Klock, ILO)</i> 11:55 UNESCO-UNEVOC <i>Katerina Ananiadou UNESCO-UNEVOC</i>	<b>Group activity on regional integration and the implications for TVET</b>	<b>Topic 5 (contd.)</b>  <i>John Ritz Consultant</i>	<b>Topic 9</b> 12:30 Financing Training <i>Hassan Ndahi ILO Port-of Spain</i>	<b>Presentations of learning results</b>  11:30 Course evaluation  11:50 Closure
Lunch break					
13:30 - 15:00	<b>Topic 1: Elements of comprehensive Skills and TVET Policies</b> <i>Keith Holmes, UNESCO Katerina Ananiadou, UNESCO-UNEVOC</i>	<b>Topic 4: Identification of skills needs</b>  <i>Alessandra Molz ITC-ILO</i>	<b>Topic 6: Youth and social Inclusion / Exclusion</b> Introduction <i>A. Molz, ITC_ILO</i>  <b>Disadvantaged youth, inclusion and equity</b> <i>Keith Holmes, UNESCO</i>	<b>Topic 10</b> <b>Developing national skills and TVET policies</b> <i>Keith Holmes, UNESCO Katerina Ananiadou, UNESCO-UNEVOC Hassan Ndahi, ILO</i>	
Coffee break					
15:30 - 17:00	<b>Topic 1 (contd.)</b> <i>Keith Holmes, UNESCO Katerina Ananiadou, UNESCO-UNEVOC</i>	<b>Topic 4: Identification of skills needs</b>  <i>Alessandra Molz ITC-ILO</i>	<b>Topic 6 (contd.)</b>  <b>Youth Employment Training Strategies</b>  <i>Hassan Ndahi, ILO</i>	<b>Topic 10 (contd.)</b>  <i>Keith Holmes, UNESCO Katerina Ananiadou, UNESCO-UNEVOC Hassan Ndahi, ILO</i>	

## Appendix 3

### Event evaluation

Questions	aver.	% 4 & 5	ref	dev	answers. received
Before participating in this activity, were you clear about its objectives, contents and methods?	3.97	79%	3.60	0.90	33
Having participated, are you now clear about the objectives of the activity?	4.89	100%	4.48	0.32	35
To what extent were the activity's objectives achieved?	4.43	94%	4.21	0.60	35
Given the activity's objectives, how appropriate were the activity's contents?	4.54	97%	4.27	0.55	35
Given your level of prior learning and knowledge, how appropriate were the activity's contents?	4.49	100%	4.21	0.50	35
Have gender issues been adequately integrated in the training?	3.94	73%	3.86	0.85	33
Were the learning methods used generally appropriate?	4.34	94%	4.29	0.58	35
How would you judge the resource persons' overall contribution?	4.54	97%	4.43	0.55	35
Did the group of participants with whom you attended the activity contribute to your learning?	4.71	97%	4.28	0.52	34
Were the materials/media used during the activity appropriate?	4.43	97%	4.36	0.65	35
Would you say that the activity was well organized?	4.54	100%	4.48	0.50	35
Would you call the Secretariat efficient?	4.48	94%	4.52	0.61	33
Are you satisfied with the quality of the activity?	4.43	100%	4.42	0.49	35
How likely is it that you will apply some of what you have learned?	4.66	100%	4.40	0.47	35
How likely is it that your institution/employer will benefit from your participation in this activity?	4.74	100%	4.46	0.44	35
Average	4.48	95%	4.28		

Source: ITC-ILO

A252796 - Promoting effective skills policies and systems  
Activity Evaluation Main Results

