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SHANGHAI UPDATE

Editorial



In this second issue of the Shanghai Update, we share with the global technical and vocational education and training (TVET) community ongoing international and regional actions. These include cooperation on youth transitions, world reference levels, shaping the post-2015 agenda on education and skills development, and UNESCO-UNEVOC's regional forums and online conferences.

More and more people see TVET and the broader idea of skills development as critical elements for addressing employability, youth unemployment and promoting more inclusive and sustainable forms of development. Governments around the world are looking for more integrated and lifelong approaches to education, skills development and employment. The Third International TVET Congress in Shanghai called for profound transformations in the way TVET is designed, delivered, governed and funded to effectively respond to demands on it.

Congress participants in Shanghai asked UNESCO to review the **2001 Revised Recommendation** concerning Technical and Vocational Education. These revisions were to fully integrate TVET into the education sector within a lifelong learning framework, acknowledge the critical role of non-formal and informal TVET, and respond to increasing student and worker mobility. It should refer to recent approaches such as qualifications frameworks, new takes on learning outcomes, quality assurance and the importance of an inter-sectoral approach. TVET should also take serious cognizance of social inclusion, especially by gender and disabilities, they said.

Things have moved on since Shanghai. A **preliminary study** on technical and legal aspects relating to the desirability of revising the 2001 Revised Recommendation was presented to UNESCO's Executive Board. In November 2013 the 37th Session of UNESCO's General Conference decided that the 2001 Revised Recommendation should be revised once more to reflect the new trends and issues in TVET. Over the next year, in consultation with Member States and other stakeholders, UNESCO will coordinate the preparation of a revised draft for discussion in the 38th Session of the General Conference in 2015.

The timing could not be better. 2015 promises to be a significant year in the push toward the transformation of TVET. This is the year when the international community adopts a new set of development goals, in which TVET and skills for work and life should feature more prominently than ever before. In this context, networking and partnerships within and beyond the global TVET community can help strengthen the foundations of lasting peace and sustainable development.


I hope you find this newsletter interesting. Please keep in touch with UNESCO's and UNEVOC's work on TVET via our websites. We appreciate your collaboration.

Dr Mmantsetsa Marope, Director, Division for Basic Learning and Skills Development, UNESCO

Follow-up on the UNESCO Third International TVET Congress

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Transforming
Technical and Vocational Education and Training



International organizations working together to fill gaps in TVET knowledge

Youth transitions to the world of work and the post-2015 targets for skills development were high on the agenda when representatives of six international organizations came to Paris for the Inter-Agency Group on TVET (IAG-TVET) on 30 September 2013.

This twice yearly meeting acts as a platform bringing together significant development partners working in TVET – the European Commission, the European Training Foundation, the International Labour Organization, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, UNESCO and the World Bank. *"It is a platform for co-ordination but also for sharing expertise and filling in gaps in knowledge in the field"*, said Borhene Chakroun, Chief of UNESCO's TVET Section. The group also acts as an advocate on these issues further afield.

At the Paris meeting, IAG-TVET members updated each other on their key initiatives. Ongoing activities on young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs), apprenticeships, internships, and an action plan for youth showed that although different approaches exist, boosting young people's employability and easing their transition from school to work is a shared concern.

"For me the value is in bringing different perspectives to skills development", said Chakroun, *"It is about checking whether we are all pushing in the same direction or not. And if we are not, how can we complement each other?"*

The European Commission will host the next IAG-TVET meeting in Brussels in the spring. In the meantime work will continue on plans to launch new working groups, such as one on skills anticipation, to complement existing working groups on indicators for the monitoring and evaluation of TVET, and on greening TVET and skills development.

Blue sky thinking on world reference levels

Is it possible to develop a set of reference levels that could be used to translate TVET qualifications for the whole world? And if so, how do we go about doing this? These were just some of the difficult questions put to a group of experts in the recognition of qualifications at an informal workshop organized by the European Commission and UNESCO in Brussels on 25 and 27 September last year.

This workshop launched the follow-up to one of the recommendations of the Shanghai Consensus. UNESCO's Director-General had been asked to look into setting up an international task force which could identify a set of reference levels that would be valid around the world.

In Brussels experts from organizations including ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), the Mauritius Qualifications Authority and the Population Reference Bureau of Indonesia took part in a brainstorming session which produced new insights on the purpose and feasibility of such a task.

According to the original thinking at Shanghai, developing a set of reference levels for the world would be useful for facilitating the recognition of qualifications no matter where you go. But the experts in Brussels found other possible uses for this construct; it could act as a common language to help translating qualifications between different systems and frameworks. It could also be a powerful way of advocating for the shift to learning outcomes and lifelong learning in TVET in general.

They highlighted some of the key issues that would need addressing – whether the lifelong learning perspective could be applied or how the possible world reference levels could cover non-formal and informal learning as well as their formal cousin.

Borhene Chakroun, Chief of UNESCO's Section for TVET, explained how the process of developing the levels might work, outlining four stages including technical review, design, and consultation, followed by the political process of getting them accepted and implemented.

Defining the post-2015 agenda on education and skills development

Since 2012, UNESCO has been facilitating a global debate on the place of education in the post-2015 agenda.

As part of a major UN consultation process on post-2015, UNESCO led together with UNICEF the [Global Thematic Consultation on Education](#) which included a series of events such as multi-stakeholder regional and civil society meetings, online education discussions where more than 21,000 people from over 100 countries have participated, and an international meeting in Dakar with over 100 delegates. It aimed to review progress and identify what still needs doing to meet the Millennium Development Goals relating to education and the broader Education for All goals and set a course for post 2015.



**THE WORLD
WE WANT
2015**



UNESCO 37th General Conference opening ceremony, 5 November 2013 © UNESCO

What has already emerged from the consultation is clear recognition that education matters – by February 2014 almost 70% of the 1,465,000 participants in the **My World UN Global Survey** had ranked education as their first priority. In fact education has been no. 1 of the 16 priorities ever since the survey was launched. But exactly how education will feature in the post-2015 international development agenda is still up for debate.

UNESCO presented at its General Conference in November 2013 a **Concept Note** on the Post-2015 Education agenda and proposed that to “Ensure equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030” could serve as an overarching goal. This could be translated into five global priority areas – basic education; post-basic education including tertiary education; quality and relevant teaching and learning; youth and adult literacy and finally developing skills for life and work. If the global community agrees, these could be used to define measurable targets to which countries could then commit and be held accountable to.

UNESCO's work to define a framework for action and to facilitate the participation of Member States, civil society and other relevant stakeholders in the debate will culminate in the World Education Forum 2015 to be hosted by the Republic of Korea in May 2015 where specific recommendations for the future education agenda will be adopted.

Regional forums take the spirit of Shanghai around the world

UNESCO-UNEVOC organized forums on **Advancing TVET for Youth Employability and Sustainable Development** in each of the five regions between August and November 2013 as part of the follow-up to Shanghai. The regional forums were aimed at facilitating the involvement of all stakeholders in the process of transforming TVET in line with the Shanghai Consensus, as well as enabling regional exchange and knowledge-sharing.

First off in August was the forum for Latin America and Caribbean, held in San José, Costa Rica, where delegates discussed promising practices for greening TVET and fighting youth unemployment such as a competency-based modular programme for secondary TVET being introduced in Guyana. In early September participants at the Asia and Pacific forum

in Seoul, Republic of Korea, were treated to a presentation of eight promising practices ranging from ICT-enabled career guidance to eco-entrepreneurship and discussed how regional and international organizations can help shape global policies for TVET. September also saw 150 people from 15 countries gather in Abuja, Nigeria for the Africa forum where they shared regional trends in promoting jobs and new skills for young people and national initiatives on greening TVET.

Over 100 delegates from Europe and North America travelled to Moscow, Russian Federation, to attend a fourth regional forum at the end of October where they discussed projects on youth skills, employability and transitions to the workplace as well as ways of integrating sustainable development in training. “*We are now living in a world where international contacts and exchanges such as this conference are of unprecedented importance and value,*” said Olga Oleynikova, Head of the National Observatory on Vocational Education, a UNEVOC Centre based in Moscow.

The Lebanese capital Beirut played host to the fifth forum in November where delegates discussed common challenges such as growing youth unemployment, which remains a major concern in the Arab States. But there was also room for optimism as people shared success stories and promising initiatives and declared a common interest in sharing experiences on entrepreneurship education.

An international conference is planned for 14 to 17 October this year in Bonn, Germany to discuss the post-2015 agenda for TVET and to showcase the cream of the promising practices from the five regional forums.

UNEVOC online forums lead debate on youth unemployment and greening TVET

How to tackle youth unemployment and how to green TVET were the subjects of two **online conferences** organized last year by UNESCO-UNEVOC in Bonn.

Held over two weeks, these virtual events are a way of raising awareness on important issues and launching new debates. “*They help us to capture the wealth of knowledge and expertise of UNEVOC Network members more systematically, to synthesize it and draw conclusions we can refer back to,*” says Shyamal Majumdar, Head of UNESCO-UNEVOC.



Study visit to College of Automation and IT #20 during UNEVOC regional forum in Moscow: Photography students © UNESCO-UNEVOC

More than 300 people from 80 countries took part in the online debate on youth unemployment. TVET was seen as having a major role to play in tackling the skills mismatch. Participants concluded that TVET institutions must engage with the private sector and improve their understanding of labour-market needs. They should also offer more career guidance and on-the-job and soft skills training as well as building more diverse partnerships.

The virtual conference on greening TVET focused on strategies for making the greening agenda an integral part of TVET reforms, and the roles that actors such as teachers, students, employers and politicians could play.

In consultation with Network members, UNESCO-UNEVOC chose these topics as two of the most challenging issues facing TVET. *"Improving young people's chances for meaningful employment and making jobs more environmentally sustainable are actually not separate issues – young people are our future and green skills can contribute to safeguarding this future for the next generations,"* says Majumdar.

A more detailed account of the debate on [youth unemployment](#) is available for download, and the report of the debate on greening TVET will be published shortly. These activities are part of UNESCO-UNEVOC's role as a clearinghouse for useful information and expertise on TVET. Other ongoing examples include the [World TVET Database](#), which provides reliable information on TVET systems around the world, and the [TVET glossary](#) which aims to become a common reference source for TVET professionals everywhere.

Upcoming activities and events

Global Education & Skills Forum

15–17 March 2014 Dubai, United Arab Emirates

This Forum addresses the global priority to put education first. It aims to strengthen the ties between the public and private sector in the field of education. It is co-organized by UNESCO in support of the United Nations Secretary-General's Global Education First Initiative.

<https://educationandskillsforum.org/>

Expert Meeting on the Recommendations concerning Adult Education and Technical and Vocational Education

14–15 May 2014 Hamburg, Germany

Experts will meet in Hamburg to take forward the work on the proposed revisions to the 2001 Revised Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education and proposed revisions to the 1976 Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education.

Skills for Work and Life Post-2015. UNESCO-UNEVOC Global Forum

14–17 October 2014, Bonn, Germany

This international conference will build on the five regional forums of 2013 to define a set of recommendations and showcase promising practices from around the world.

www.unevoc.unesco.org

UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development – Learning Today for a Sustainable Future

10–12 November 2014, Nagoya, Japan

Marking the end of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, this World Conference will celebrate the achievements of the past ten years in promoting sustainable development practices through education.

www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco-world-conference-on-esd-2014/

Virtual conferences on the UNEVOC e-forum

UNESCO-UNEVOC will launch the following moderated virtual conferences on the e-Forum, a virtual community of over 2,300 experts in TVET from around the world. It hosts debates on the global issues in TVET development and acts as an information resource on new publications, policy matters and international conferences and workshops. To keep up-to-date with upcoming activities and events, sign up for a UNEVOC account at www.unevoc.unesco.org/subscribe

- Normative instruments for TVET – 2nd quarter 2014
- Vocational pedagogy – 2nd quarter 2014
- Skills in creative industries – 3rd quarter 2014
- Entrepreneurship education – 3rd/4th quarter 2014

Recently published

UNESCO (2013) [Revisiting global trends in TVET. Reflections on theory and practice](#)

UNESCO (2013) TVET Policy Reviews: [Cambodia](#), [Lao PDR](#), [Zanzibar](#)

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