



UNESCO-UNEVOC

United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
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Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Vocational Education and Training: A Come-back to the Development Agenda?

Technical and vocational education and training has fuelled extraordinary economic growth in some countries but has fallen short of expectations in others. Phenomena such as globalization and major problems associated with youth unemployment have prompted governments to take a renewed interest in TVET policy and practice as an important part of the development agenda.

TVET has a special role in providing knowledge and skills that enable people to improve the quality of their daily lives. Linked with adequate employment opportunities, TVET can assist people in expanding their skills, raising their productivity and increasing their personal incomes, thereby leading to overall raised living standards and stronger, more competitive economies. Approached holistically, TVET policies and practices can assist with the all-round development of individuals and prepare them for more active participation in society, paving the way for greater stability, harmony and inclusiveness.

Empowering individuals

Especially since the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, in April 2000, there has been extensive consultation and rethinking about what is involved in achieving a basic education that prepares for work and life. Skills development for the world of work has become much more visible on the development agendas of international agencies and national governments. As more children, youth and adults achieve basic education, it is important for them to achieve functional literacy and skills development for employability that enables them to attain decent work, supporting themselves and their families as well as being respected and effective members of their communities.

High levels of youth unemployment in many parts of the world, which is partly related to inadequate education and training for the workforce, demonstrates the importance of skills development for employability. But obtaining skills is no guarantee of employment in today's economies, and the overarching goal of holistic skills programmes for the world of work should include teaching students to adapt to changing working conditions, instead of locking them into a specific job and a narrow range of skills.

Supporting economic growth

Another factor that has led to the growing importance of TVET on the development agenda is its relevance to a nation's success in today's globalized world. Major forces driving changes in the world of work, such as the knowledge economy and rapid advances in technology, have important implications for skills demand and human resource development and training. The use of new technologies, especially ICTs, new manufacturing



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processes and new modes of work organisation have led to skills intensification and an increase in the demand for higher order skills. Countries such as India and China have already invested heavily in TVET to address these demands, thereby enabling a shift, for example, of qualified employment from the USA and Europe to their countries, so laying a major plank in their economic foundations.

How UNESCO-UNEVOC contributes to strengthening TVET worldwide

The UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training is UNESCO's specialised centre for TVET and particularly focuses on contributing to the overarching UNESCO goals in TVET. These are to assist member states improve and integrate TVET as part of the global Education for All movement, to assist the alignment of TVET with the tenets of sustainable development, and to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

UNESCO-UNEVOC is the hub of a worldwide network of over 270 key organisations and institutions specialising in TVET in 166 countries. The UNEVOC Network includes government ministries, research facilities, planning and training institutions. The Network serves as a platform for information sharing and bringing people together in meetings and workshops as a means of improving TVET in different regions of the world through human resource development.

The UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training was established in 2000 and inaugurated in Bonn in 2002. It currently has 12 full-time staff. In addition, UNEVOC regularly involves experts from various fields as consultants, as well as interns, to contribute to the work of the Centre.



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