



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Executive Board

Hundred and eighty-second session

182 EX/INF.5
PARIS, 3 August 2009
English & French only

Item 4 of the provisional agenda

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL ON THE EXECUTION OF THE PROGRAMME ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

PROGRESS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY FOR TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET) AND THE REVISED VERSION OF THE STRATEGY

SUMMARY

In accordance with 181 EX/Decision 8, the Director-General submits to the Executive Board a revised version of the strategy to support technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in the Member States in the next three biennia (2010-2015), approved at the 181st session of the Board.

1. At its 181st session, UNESCO's Executive Board approved the proposed strategy for supporting technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in 2010-2015. The Board further requested the Director-General to submit to it at its 182nd session a revised version of the strategy, taking into account the specific suggestions for revision made by delegations during the debate on the item. This revised version of the strategy is found below.
2. In a globalized world, education and training, as part of a process of lifelong learning, are central to reducing poverty and significantly increase the likelihood of finding decent work or of generating income through self-employment. In the current macro-economic and financial environment, investment in TVET is therefore an instrument to accelerate and sustain economic recovery. However, as TVET is generally very expensive in terms of cost per student, it is important to ensure that it is implemented in a cost-effective manner in line with labour market needs.
3. Within this context and with the overarching objective of working towards "attaining quality education for all and lifelong learning" (34 C/4), UNESCO will strengthen its assistance to Member States to improve their TVET systems and practices, in line with Education for All (EFA) goal 3 relating to "ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes". It will do so by promoting long-term solutions based on an inclusive and rights-based approach and in line with the UNESCO

Priority Gender Equality Action Plan for 2008-2013. In order to achieve this goal, UNESCO's work in the next three biennia (2010-2015) will be divided into three core areas:

1. provision of upstream policy advice and related capacity development;
2. conceptual clarification of skills development and improvement of monitoring; and
3. acting as a clearinghouse and informing the global TVET debate.

CORE AREA 1: Provide upstream policy advice and develop capacity at the country level

Develop and review comprehensive national TVET policies

4. Within core area 1, which will be the priority area in the implementation of this strategy, UNESCO will provide upstream policy advice focusing on the development of TVET policies according to national needs and priorities. Building the capacity of national decision-makers and personnel of relevant institutions to draft and review these policies will be an integral part of this action. Issues of particular concern include: the articulation between general and technical and vocational secondary education; curricular reform; entrepreneurship; qualifications frameworks for formal and non-formal TVET; links to the labour market; financing and cost-effectiveness; the training of trainers; equal opportunities for boys and girls; and new approaches to improving access to and the status of TVET, particularly for marginalized groups.

5. UNESCO's assistance will focus primarily on building national capacities to undertake sub-sector diagnosis and policy analysis, and to prepare comprehensive national TVET plans aligned with other parts of the national education system. UNESCO's comparative advantage lies with skills development falling under the ministry of education. Its programmatic interventions will therefore focus primarily on secondary and post-secondary TVET, as well as on non-formal TVET.

6. TVET must be an integrated part of a more comprehensive post-primary education sub-system. This requires the development of standards related to various types and levels of training, certification and quality assurance based on systematic monitoring and assessment. Private sector involvement is of great importance to ensure that there are appropriate linkages with the labour market and that training is relevant. TVET policy should provide for the targeting of vulnerable groups including women and girls, and pay adequate attention to the informal sector. Furthermore, TVET curricula should include basic entrepreneurship education in support of self-employment. UNESCO will promote TVET strategies that include arrangements for recruitment and retention, training and certification of teachers and trainers.

7. In 2010-2011, UNESCO's policy review and advice on TVET will be provided to some 15 to 20 countries across the world with a view to accelerating progress towards the EFA goals and in particular goal 3. These countries will be selected based on need, following an express request for assistance and with appropriate attention to geographical distribution. Some are likely to be among the 20 "target countries" of Major Programme I that will benefit from increased regular programme and extrabudgetary funding in 2010 and 2011. In future biennia, these interventions will be scaled up to include a greater number of countries.

Establish coherent and cooperative multilateral approaches

8. Many national TVET strategies are fragmented, with responsibilities being scattered among various ministries and other actors. Promoting a holistic approach to TVET will require harmonized interventions with key partners in countries, in line with the Paris Declaration and United Nations reform efforts. As a vital part of its strategy, UNESCO will therefore aim to establish systematic cooperation and improved coordination with agencies such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Bank (WB), the European Training Foundation (ETF), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and relevant regional bodies. As a first step,

UNESCO took the lead in organizing two inter-agency consultation meetings to discuss cooperation in TVET during the first semester of 2009.

9. UNESCO will also assist Member States to coordinate all in-country partners, including civil society and in particular the private sector, unions, and teacher and trainer organizations.

10. Using the existing UNESCO regional networks and the UNEVOC networks worldwide, regional cooperation as well as bilateral and trilateral institutional cooperation between national education ministries, including South-South, South-North and South-South-North cooperation, will be facilitated as a means of maximizing impact. Within the UNEVOC Network, more regional centres of excellence such as the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (Australia) and the Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training (Republic of Korea) will be identified.

CORE AREA 2: Facilitate conceptual clarification and improve the monitoring of TVET

Towards a joint definition of “skills”

11. There is an urgent need to improve national capacities and systems for monitoring and assessing progress in skills development in order to inform policy analysis and review. Addressing this challenge is a priority.

12. At the international level, further conceptual clarification is needed to produce comparative data and indicators. Terms such as “competency”, “skill”, “life skills”, “TVET”, “technical and vocational education” (TVE) and “technical and vocational skills development” (TVSD) are used differently across the world and in different languages and contexts. The complex landscape of skills development, with its diverse learning environments (school- or work-based, formal or non-formal) and widely varying national systems, has rendered virtually impossible the monitoring of TVET for international comparison.

13. As an intergovernmental knowledge organization, UNESCO is uniquely placed to re-conceptualize the changing domain of skills and TVET and to propose interpretations of these concepts. UNESCO, including through its UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), will therefore establish a technical advisory mechanism to define different categories of skills, as a starting point for identifying indicators for measuring processes. This mechanism will involve experts from the different regions, as well as key partners such as ILO, OECD, ETF and the World Bank. The process will focus on defining a shared conceptual framework, which could lead to a joint position paper among key partners. This task should be completed in the short term (2010-2011).

Identify TVET indicators

14. Key indicators will be identified and national statistical capacities developed in close cooperation with UIS and other main partners. In a first phase, UNESCO will undertake the work on conceptual clarification outlined above and review existing indicators. This will build on ongoing cooperation in this area between the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre and UIS. The planned review of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) makes this reflection particularly timely. Furthermore, the Organization will draw on the expertise it has already acquired in developing a framework of indicators to monitor non-formal education and the Non-Formal Education Management Information System (NFE-MIS). Building on this work, UNESCO will subsequently step up its technical assistance to Member States and develop their capacity to collect and analyse sex-disaggregated data on skills. This work will not have policy implications for individual countries' choices of TVET systems; it will, however, allow the collection of internationally comparable data, which will significantly facilitate monitoring of progress towards Education for All goal 3 at both the national and global levels.

Assess and monitor the normative instruments

15. UNESCO is responsible for two normative instruments in the field of TVET: the Convention on Technical and Vocational Education (1989), and the Revised Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education (2001), which aim to provide policy-makers with advice on improving their national TVET policies and systems. In order to ensure that these instruments remain useful tools for Member States, the Organization will carry out a number of activities.

16. In accordance with 34 C/Resolution 87 and 177 EX/Decision 35, UNESCO will formally monitor the implementation of the two normative instruments on TVET in 2012. As a preliminary step, the Education Sector will commission an independent study on the impact of the instruments, examining in particular why only 17 Member States have ratified the Convention. Based on this study, the Organization may choose to update the Recommendation, decide on the future of the Convention, or prepare a new normative instrument on skills and competencies across the education and training sector.

CORE AREA 3: act as a clearinghouse and inform the global TVET debate

17. UNESCO will continue to serve as a clearinghouse for TVET. In particular, it will revamp the global UNEVOC networks, which are composed of government ministries and research and training institutions, to serve as a useful platform for cooperation and information-sharing to improve TVET across the world. UNESCO's Regional Education Bureaux will collect and disseminate standardized information on different national TVET systems. This will enable decision-makers undertaking policy reviews to weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of different models, while also facilitating the scaling up of South-South cooperation between countries faced with similar challenges. Moreover, the information collected could later become a world databank on TVET systems as part of UNESCO's knowledge management system. In cooperation with other partners such as ILO, OECD and the World Bank, a web portal for information and tools covering the various aspects of TVET will also be envisaged.

18. Moving beyond its clearinghouse function, UNESCO will support the generation of knowledge by stimulating and commissioning thematic reviews and research on specific TVET issues of high interest, such as TVET and gender, TVET and marginalized groups and TVET and sustainable development. Furthermore, if extrabudgetary resources are mobilized, UNESCO will prepare a state-of-the-art publication on world trends and issues in TVET.

19. UNESCO will use its convening power to promote global awareness of the importance of TVET. To mobilize stakeholders and explore the possibility of introducing regular mid-term progress reviews on the global development of TVET, it will seek to organize, with key partners, the Third International Congress on TVET. This will be undertaken towards the end of the period covered by this strategy.

Administrative and financial implications

20. Implementing this strategy will require strengthening UNESCO's capacity in the area of TVET and adjusting the division of labour within the Organization. Currently, some 10 staff have full or partial TVET portfolios. However, they serve in different locations (field offices, Headquarters, the institutes and the UNEVOC International Centre) and there is a lack of coherence in their programmatic approach. Several steps will therefore be taken to build up stronger internal capacity in TVET. In particular, the expertise in this field of the four Regional Bureaux for Education, which backstop capacity development at the national level, will be reinforced. In addition, the hierarchical attachment of the UNEVOC International Centre to the Headquarters unit in charge of TVET, secondary and science education will be reviewed to improve synergies between the Centre and all Headquarters Divisions. The TVET Unit at Headquarters will be strengthened to lead the implementation of this strategy, with UNEVOC functioning as a resource centre. While awaiting the implementation of these adjustments, the

current lack of a critical mass of experts will lead UNESCO to seek assistance from external experts, possibly via extrabudgetary funding and secondments, and to strengthen partnerships and networking.

21. The successful implementation of UNESCO's TVET strategy will rely on the zero real growth (ZRG) scenario proposed by the Director-General. TVET (or "skills for the world of work") is one of four top priorities for Major Programme I in document 35 C/5, with the total budget for these four top priorities constituting over 50% of the total funding allocated to regular programme activities under Major Programme I. In addition, increased extrabudgetary funding will be sought for TVET in the next biennium.