



United Nations
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Recommendation concerning **Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)**

2015

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Foreword

Skills for work and life are very high on the policy agenda of UNESCO's Member States, in the context of rapid technological changes and rising concerns over youth employment, social inequalities and environmental sustainability.

The 2015 Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) was developed through intensive consultations with Member States, technical and legal experts and other stakeholders. The drafting of this Recommendation and the 2015 Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education proceeded in tandem. Their simultaneous adoption by UNESCO's General Conference in November 2015 reflects the priority given by Member States to the development of lifelong learning.

UNESCO's first Recommendation in the field of TVET was adopted in 1962 and it was also revised in 1974 and 2001. By comparison, the 2015 Recommendation uses a broader concept of TVET and has a stronger focus on lifelong learning and sustainable development. This is consistent with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4), 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'. Given that TVET is integral to SDG4-Education 2030 and can also strengthen capacities across the SDGs, this Recommendation is timely and important. It sets out general principles, goals and guidelines that each Member State should apply according to its context, governing structures and available resources.

In the area of TVET, UNESCO is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the 1989 Convention and the present 2015 Recommendation. Periodically, Member States will be consulted following the specific multi-stage procedure for the monitoring of the implementation of UNESCO Conventions and Recommendations for which no specific institutional mechanism is provided, as adopted by the Executive Board (196 EX/Decision 20).

It is our sincere hope that the vision, principles and specific provisions in this Recommendation will enable Member States to transform and expand their TVET systems to equip all youth and adults with relevant skills for employment, decent work, entrepreneurship and lifelong learning, and to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a whole.



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Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

Preamble

The General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), meeting in Paris from 3 to 18 November 2015, at its 38th session,

Recalling the principles set forth in Articles 23 and 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and in Articles 6.2 and 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) guaranteeing the right of everyone to work and to education, and the principles contained in the Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), the Convention on Technical and Vocational Education (1989), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006),

Conscious that technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is understood as being part of both the universal right to education and the right to work,

Recognizing that TVET meets the “aim of developing both individuals and societies” as stipulated in the Convention on Technical and Vocational Education (1989),

Recalling the provisions of the Recommendations adopted by UNESCO, notably the Recommendation against Discrimination in Education (1960), the Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966), the Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1974), the Recommendation on the Recognition of Studies and Qualifications in Higher Education (1993), the Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel (1997) and the Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (2015),

Recalling also the relevant instruments adopted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) including the 1975 Convention concerning Vocational Guidance and Vocational Training in the Development of Human Resources (No. 142) and the 2004 Recommendation concerning Human Resources Development: Education, Training and Lifelong Learning (No. 195),

Referring to the International Standard Classification of Education 2011,

Recognizing that TVET contributes towards the promotion of understanding and respect for human rights; inclusion and equity; gender equality and cultural diversity; and to the fostering of a desire and capacity for lifelong learning and learning to live together, all of which are essential to social and economic participation and to the realization of lasting peace, responsible citizenship, and sustainable development,

Bearing in mind the key role of TVET in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit (New York, September 2015) and noting the commitment of the international community to the promotion of sustained and inclusive economic growth, social development, environmental protection to benefit all, and the eradication of poverty and hunger,

In the light of the Incheon Declaration “Education 2030: Towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all” and the Education 2030 Framework for Action,

Taking into account the recommendations of the Bonn Declaration - Learning for Work, Citizenship and Sustainability (2004), the recommendations of the Third International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education and Training, “Transforming TVET: Building skills for work and life”, known as the Shanghai Consensus (2012) and the Aichi-Nagoya Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development (2014),

Having decided by means of 37 C/Resolution 17 that the 2001 Revised Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education should be revised to reflect the new trends and issues in technical and vocational education and training,

Considering that this Recommendation sets out general principles, goals and guidelines that each Member State should apply according to its socio-economic context, governing structures and available resources in a changing world, with a view also to transforming, expanding and enhancing TVET at national, regional and international levels,

Having examined document 38 C/32 and the draft Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education and Training annexed thereto,

1. Adopts the Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education and Training, which supersedes the 2001 Revised Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education, on this thirteenth day of November 2015;
2. Recommends that Member States apply the following provisions by taking appropriate steps, including whatever legislative or other steps may be required, in conformity with the constitutional practice and governing structures of each State, to give effect within their territories to the principles of this Recommendation;
3. Also recommends that Member States bring this Recommendation to the attention of the authorities and bodies responsible for TVET, and also of other stakeholders concerned with TVET;
4. Further recommends that Member States report to it, at such dates and in such manner as shall be determined by it, on the action taken by them in pursuance of this Recommendation.

I. SCOPE OF THIS RECOMMENDATION

1. For the purpose of this Recommendation, 'technical and vocational education and training' (hereinafter "TVET") is understood as comprising education, training and skills development relating to a wide range of occupational fields, production, services and livelihoods.
2. TVET, as part of lifelong learning, can take place at secondary, post-secondary and tertiary levels and includes work-based learning and continuing training and professional development which may lead to qualifications. TVET also includes a wide range of skills development opportunities attuned to national and local contexts. Learning to learn, the development of literacy and numeracy skills, transversal skills and citizenship skills are integral components of TVET.
3. The application of the provisions of this Recommendation will depend upon the specific conditions, governing structures, and constitutional provisions existing in a given country.

II. VISION AND AIMS

Vision

4. TVET contributes to sustainable development by empowering individuals, organizations, enterprises and communities and fostering employment, decent work and lifelong learning so as to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth and competitiveness, social equity and environmental sustainability.

Aims

5. *To empower individuals and promote employment, decent work and lifelong learning.* TVET contributes to developing knowledge, skills and competencies of individuals for their employment, careers, livelihoods and lifelong learning. TVET helps individuals to make transitions between education and the world of work, to combine learning and working, to sustain their employability, to make informed choices and to fulfil their aspirations. TVET contributes to social cohesion by enabling individuals to access labour market, livelihood and lifelong learning opportunities.
6. *To promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth.* TVET contributes to the effectiveness of organizations, the competitiveness of enterprises and the development of communities. TVET is labour market-oriented, anticipates and facilitates changes in the nature and organization of work, including the emergence of new industries and occupations, and scientific and technological advances. Through promoting entrepreneurship, TVET supports self-employment and the growth of enterprises.

7. *To promote social equity.* TVET contributes to the equality of learning opportunities and socio-economic outcomes including gender equality. TVET creates attractive and relevant learning opportunities for populations of all social, economic and cultural backgrounds. TVET is inclusive and does not tolerate any form of discrimination. TVET contributes to developing knowledge, skills and competencies that promote responsible citizenship and democratic participation.
8. *To promote environmental sustainability.* TVET integrates principles of environmental sustainability and fosters environmental responsibility through the promotion of a critical understanding of the relations between society and the environment so as to promote sustainable consumption and production patterns. TVET contributes to the development of knowledge, skills and competencies for green occupations, economies and societies. TVET contributes to the development of innovations and technological solutions needed to address climate change and to preserve environmental integrity.

III. POLICIES AND GOVERNANCE

Policy development

9. Member States should, according to their specific conditions, governing structures and constitutional provisions, develop policies relating to TVET that are consistent with a broad range of policy fields, including education, employment and the overall strategic objectives of governments, in particular their economic, social and environmental objectives.
10. Member States should guide, recognize and promote TVET in all forms and settings through an overall lifelong learning framework that should be oriented to equipping all youth and adults with relevant knowledge, skills and competencies for work and life and producing better labour market and social outcomes.
11. Member States should raise the public profile and attractiveness of TVET among learners, families and all other stakeholders and inform them of the possibilities for progression, work, lifelong learning and self-fulfilment. Member States should address, according to their circumstances, the multidimensional issues influencing the attractiveness of TVET and promote measures such as improving the permeability and diversity of pathways and programmes, providing incentives and improving information and guidance.
12. Member States expanding TVET at secondary, post-secondary and tertiary levels as appropriate to their education and training systems and authorities should ensure that there is an institutional framework to engage labour market stakeholders, that qualifications and curricula are developed in consultation with relevant stakeholders, and that programmes and qualifications are transparent and quality assured.

13. Member States should develop pathways and facilitate transitions between secondary, post-secondary and tertiary education including flexible admission procedures and guidance, credit accumulation and transfer, bridging programmes and equivalency schemes that are recognized and accredited by relevant authorities. TVET institutions, and other education institutions and authorities, should collaborate for the implementation of such measures.
14. Member States, according to their specific conditions, governing structures and constitutional provisions, should support continuing training and professional development by promoting access and broadening participation by adult learners, including by encouraging enterprises, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises, to invest in their workers.

Governance and regulatory framework

15. Member States, assuming the primary responsibility for public policies, should consider defining or strengthening a regulatory framework for TVET to define the roles, rights, obligations and accountabilities of its public and private actors, and to encourage stakeholder participation and partnerships.
16. Member States should facilitate inter-ministerial coordination and strengthen the technical, administrative and institutional capacities for the governance, management and financing of TVET.
17. Member States, according to their governance structures, should consider establishing or strengthening governance models for TVET institutions involving relevant local stakeholders and cooperating, when relevant, with business associations in supporting work-based learning.

Social dialogue, private sector and other stakeholders' involvement

18. Member States should, as appropriate, foster social partners' participation in TVET according to agreed labour market, education, training and other regulations.
19. Increased private sector participation in TVET should be guided by key principles including alignment with public policies, support for social dialogue, responsibility, accountability and efficiency. When involving the private sector, TVET policies should recognize its diversity, including large, medium, small, micro and household enterprises engaged in all sectors of the economy.
20. To enhance policy development and governance Member States should also, as appropriate, engage with other stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations, and representatives of learners, TVET providers, staff, parents, youth, traditional leaders, indigenous people and others.

Financing

21. Member States should set up measures aiming at diversifying sources of funding and involving all stakeholders through a variety of partnerships, including public-private partnerships. Diversification should be considered by engaging enterprises, local authorities and individuals while respecting the principles of equity and inclusion. In addition to existing frameworks for public financing, innovative funding mechanisms such as partnerships and cost sharing, tax deduction and loans, can be explored to increase efficiency and accountability and to stimulate demand for TVET.
22. Various forms of incentives and accountability mechanisms should be established aiming at raising awareness and increasing investment in TVET by a broad range of actors and shifting the traditional input-based models of allocation and use of resources to more performance-based financing models.
23. TVET institutions, including at the secondary, post-secondary and tertiary levels, should have adequate funding for their operations, including infrastructure, equipment and their maintenance. TVET institutions should have appropriate levels of operational and financial autonomy to enable them to engage with their local contexts, to build new partnerships for improving the quality and relevance of TVET programmes, and to generate revenues.

Equity and access

24. Member States should take measures to ensure that all youth and adults have equal opportunities to learn, develop and enhance their knowledge, skills and competencies by transforming and expanding TVET in all its forms to address the great diversity of learning and training needs. Information and communication technologies should be considered as a means to widen access and participation, according to context.
25. Member States, according to their governing structures, should ensure quality basic education for all, and address the needs of out-of-school youth and low-skilled adults by developing basic literacy, numeracy and transversal skills, as a foundation for meaningful participation in TVET. Education and other stakeholders should create the conditions for TVET for all, so that it may be freely chosen.
26. Measures should be taken against all forms of discrimination, including gender-based discrimination. Member States should promote equal access and participation of females and males in quality TVET. All forms of TVET institutions, programmes, curricula, materials and work-based learning should avoid gender-based and other stereotyping, and should contribute to the achievement of gender equality. Member States should adopt innovative mechanisms to promote equity and access, such as financial incentives to influence admissions practices.

27. Member States should make TVET more accessible to all disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, including marginalized rural and remote populations, by providing targeted support to reduce the cost burden and to remove other obstacles. According to national contexts, Member States should give attention to learners with disabilities, indigenous people, nomadic populations, ethnic minority groups, socially-excluded groups, migrants, refugees, stateless people and populations affected by conflict or disaster, as well as to unemployed people and vulnerable workers.

IV. QUALITY AND RELEVANCE

Learning processes

28. Member States should, according to their specific conditions, governing structures and constitutional provisions, encourage a variety of learning opportunities, whether in public and private TVET institutions, workplaces, homes, or other settings. Informal learning, whether self-directed, peer-to-peer or through other forms of social learning, should be encouraged and, if appropriate, made visible through recognition and validation mechanisms.
29. In addition to knowledge, skills and competencies relating to occupational fields, learning processes should build on foundation skills and further deepen understandings of the scientific, technological, social, cultural, environmental, economic and other aspects of societies. TVET should be holistic and develop transversal and entrepreneurial skills, skills for health and work safety, cultural development, responsible citizenship and sustainable development, as well as knowledge of labour rights.
30. Work-based learning in its various forms, including in-service training, attachments, apprenticeships and internships, should be promoted. The quality of work-based learning should be enhanced and when relevant be complemented by institution-based or other forms of learning.
31. Public policies should foster and facilitate quality apprenticeships composed of work and institution-based learning through social dialogue and public-private partnerships to help youth to develop their knowledge, skills and competencies and gain work experience.
32. TVET in the informal economy should be promoted, including through quality traditional apprenticeships in small, micro and household enterprises by engaging stakeholders in rural and urban areas.
33. The potential of information and communication technologies should be fully exploited in TVET. The Internet, mobile technologies and social media should be utilized to promote distance and online delivery, including through blended models and the development and use of open educational resources.

34. Effective and appropriate assessment systems for generating and using information on learners' achievements should be established. Evaluation of teaching and learning processes, including formative assessment, should be undertaken with the participation of all stakeholders, notably teachers and trainers, representatives of the occupational fields concerned, supervisors and learners. Learners' overall performance should be assessed using diversified methods of assessment, including self and peer assessment as appropriate.

TVET staff

35. Policies and frameworks should be developed to ensure qualified and high-quality TVET staff, including teachers, instructors, trainers, tutors, managers, administrators, extension agents, guidance staff and others.

36. The provisions of the Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966) are applicable, especially with regard to the provisions on preparation for the profession; further education for teachers; employment and career; the rights and responsibilities of teachers; conditions for effective teaching and learning; teachers' salaries and social security. The Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel (1997) is also applicable.

37. Given the growing consideration of work-based learning and TVET in other settings including community-based, distance and online, Member States need to more systematically support and acknowledge the emerging roles and learning needs of trainers, tutors and other facilitators, by considering the development or strengthening of policies and frameworks concerning their status, recruitment and professional development. TVET staff should have decent working conditions and adequate remuneration, as well as career and professional development opportunities.

38. TVET staff in educational institutions and the workplace should have the capacities required to make TVET responsive to the economic, social, cultural and environmental contexts of the communities and societies they serve and to contribute to the transformation and expansion of TVET. In particular, TVET staff require initial preparation, as well as continuing training and professional development, including experience working in enterprises, and support to enable them to reflect on their practices and to adapt to change. The initial and continuing professional development of TVET staff should include training on guidance and gender equality.

Qualifications systems and learning pathways

39. Well-articulated outcome-based qualifications frameworks or systems based on learning outcomes and relating to a set of agreed standards should be established, in consultation with stakeholders, based on identified needs including occupational standards.
40. Policy or regulatory mechanisms supporting horizontal and vertical progression should be established and include flexible learning pathways, modularization, the recognition of prior learning, accumulation and credit transfer. Special attention should be given to encouraging low-skilled and unskilled individuals to gain certification for access to further learning and decent work.
41. Systems for the recognition, validation and accreditation of knowledge, skills and competencies acquired through non-formal and informal learning should be promoted with the tripartite involvement, when relevant, of workers' representatives, employers' representatives and public authorities. Reliable assessment procedures and quality assured certification should be established in cooperation with relevant stakeholders.
42. Member States should promote the mutual recognition of qualifications at national, regional and international levels, in relation to the mobility of learners and workers.

Quality and quality assurance

43. Member States should foster an environment for high-quality TVET, according to their specific conditions, governing structures and constitutional provisions. Special attention should be given to building the necessary capacities for quality enhancement.
44. Member States should establish a system for quality assurance in TVET based on participation by all relevant stakeholders. Quality assurance systems should include clear and measurable objectives and standards, guidelines for implementation, and feedback mechanisms and widely accessible evaluation results. Quality assurance should include both external and self-assessment, through which system performance and outcomes can be continuously monitored and improved.
45. Member States should seek to improve the leadership and management of TVET institutions. Quality and quality assurance in TVET should engage the entire staff of educational institutions and other relevant stakeholders.
46. Member States should establish, according to their constitutional provisions, an appropriate legal framework for the regulation, registration and monitoring of private TVET providers with the protection of learners as a core guiding principle.

Relevance to labour markets and the world of work

47. Member States, in line with their specific conditions, governing structures and constitutional provisions, should support and facilitate transitions from education to the world of work, employment and/or self-employment. Linkages between TVET institutions, employment agencies and employers should be strengthened and support should be given to entrepreneurship and the creation of new businesses, for example by integrating entrepreneurial skills in curricula, by organizing extra-curricular activities and by setting up business incubators and partnerships with business and technology transfer centres.
48. Member States should establish TVET and labour market information systems, using open data when relevant, and build institutional capacities in order to ensure the relevance of TVET to current and evolving needs in the world of work, nationally, regionally and internationally, including those implied by the transitions to green occupations, economies and societies.
49. Public-private partnerships arrangements could be used to identify and anticipate skills needed, for example through prospective studies, observatories or sector skills councils. Furthermore, data collection and analyses of changing contexts and the systematic monitoring and evaluation of implementation and results should inform efforts to enhance the relevance of TVET.

Information and guidance

50. Member States should facilitate, in cooperation with relevant stakeholders, the development and regulation of public and private information and guidance services, in order to provide up-to-date and reliable support in relation to education, continuing training and professional development, and work opportunities at national, regional and international levels.
51. Information and guidance should be offered continuously and directed towards aiding and supporting all individuals in more complex and diversified careers and working lives, giving particular attention to promoting equality of opportunity in all its dimensions, including gender equality, so as to address social inequalities in education, the world of work and wider society.
52. Information and guidance services should support learners in their decision-making through information and communications technologies, including mobile technologies, social networks and multimedia platforms and tools.

V. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

53. Member States should, according to their specific conditions, governing structures and constitutional provisions, evaluate TVET policies and programmes. Evaluations could include studies of the impacts and outcomes of TVET policies and programmes and investigation of the costs and benefits of TVET for a broad range of public and private actors including individuals, enterprises and communities.
54. Appropriate tools and indicators should be developed for measuring the effectiveness and efficiency of TVET policies against agreed standards, priorities and targets, including specific targets for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. This could involve evaluations of public and private institutions, providers and programmes, including self-evaluations, as well as tracer studies and the development of sets of indicators including on access, completion rates and the employment status of graduates. Data collection and processing should be conducted in accordance with legislation on data protection.
55. Institutional capacities for data collection and the use of information from monitoring and evaluation to inform TVET strategies and programmes, standards and curricula, or to adjust learning methods, should be strengthened. Coherence between national data collection on TVET and international standards and initiatives should be enhanced.
56. Processes for monitoring and evaluating TVET should ensure broad participation of relevant stakeholders, with a view to improving learning processes and strengthening the connections between findings, decision-making, transparency and accountability for results.

VI. RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

57. Member States should deepen the knowledge base for TVET through sustained investment in interdisciplinary research so as to develop new methodologies and understandings of TVET in its broad context and to inform TVET policies and decision-making.
58. Stakeholders, as appropriate, should be involved in commissioning, using and evaluating research, as well as in the development of strategies and systems for knowledge management. The research capacities of tertiary education institutions, TVET providers, social partners and other relevant stakeholders should be utilized and developed according to contexts. Research findings should be widely disseminated through publications and electronic means.

VII. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

59. Member States should consider sharing knowledge, experiences and promising practices, reinforce international TVET data collection and make use of international and regional networks, conferences, and other fora. The UNEVOC Network is a strategic resource available to Member States for mutual learning and advancing international cooperation in TVET.
60. Member States should associate entities of the United Nations system, regional bodies, including regional economic communities, relevant public and private stakeholders, civil society organizations and research networks in promoting cooperation, increasing mutual and cooperative assistance and building capacities.



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