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# TVET in post-conflict and post-disaster situations

Report of the UNESCO-UNEVOC  
online conference

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Moderated by Karina Veal



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# Table of contents

Table of contents . . . . .	3
Foreword. . . . .	4
Introduction . . . . .	5
1. Differences between post-conflict and post-disaster. . . . .	6
2. TVET after tsunami/natural disaster. . . . .	7
3. Disaster Risk Reduction . . . . .	8
4. Reintegrating ex-combatants . . . . .	10
5. TVET for (post-conflict) employment. . . . .	10
6. TVET during unstable / emergency phase . . . . .	12
7. Components of skill programmes . . . . .	13
8. Personal recovery and resilience. . . . .	15
Conclusion . . . . .	16
Additional resources. . . . .	17
Annex . . . . .	19
Participation. . . . .	19
About the moderator . . . . .	19

# Foreword

As part of its mission to support the global development of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and fostering interaction and learning among TVET stakeholders from all over the world, UNESCO-UNEVOC hosts the UNEVOC e-Forum, a virtual community of TVET experts from around the world sharing information and knowledge about different aspects of TVET. In the e-Forum participants discuss issues of relevance to TVET policy-makers, researchers and practitioners as well as disseminate information on issues and events. To further promote focused debates on crucial themes in TVET, UNESCO-UNEVOC introduced the moderator-driven e-forum discussions. Through these discussions, UNESCO-UNEVOC aims to enhance awareness and encourage wider debate and understanding, including the sharing of ongoing practices and the formulation of new ideas in the field of strategy and policy development. The discussions, guided by an expert in the field, seek experiences, expertise and feedback and wishes to inspire people to take further action.

From 16 to 30 April 2012 a moderator-driven discussion was held on the topic of TVET in post-conflict and post-disaster settings. The conference attracted over 180 participants from more than 65 different countries. Whilst, internationally, there are many general TVET events and conferences held, there has so far been limited interest in the specific issues and challenges facing TVET in settings post-conflict or post-disaster. Similarly, whilst the area of post-conflict and post-disaster education has attracted considerable and growing interest in recent years, the emphasis seems to be mostly on school education rather than TVET.

Because TVET in post-conflict and post-disaster settings is an emerging issue the primary purpose of the online conference was to share ideas on the issue and to glean as much as possible about what is happening around the world. The purpose was not to develop policy options or analysis; rather

it was to provide an open an encouraging space for sharing of ideas and experiences. A number of topics were introduced to serve as a focus for discussion. Some were introduced by the guest moderator; others were introduced from amongst the participant group themselves. Four introductory videos were posted on the UNEVOC YouTube channel to provide background ideas for discussion.

The guest moderator for this online conference on TVET in post-conflict and post-emergency settings was Ms Karina Veal, an international TVET advisor with a special focus on post-conflict and fragile states. We thank her for not only for her expert knowledge but also for the open and engaging way the conference was run. Our special thanks, of course, go to those who so actively and openly shared their views on a number of topics.

Shyamal Majumdar  
Head of UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre

# Introduction

The enormous challenge of providing effective education and training to individuals in countries emerging from armed conflict or natural disaster has attracted more attention in recent years. There has been progress, but much more needs to be done.

Education for All (EFA) statistics confirm what many TVET practitioners and experts in the developing world already understood – that gains into 'mainstream' education and training have been made across the developing world but that large pockets of disadvantage and marginalization persist. Progress is stronger in settings where simple expansion of provision enables greater participation but remains weaker in settings where a multitude of intersecting issues constrain successful provision and participation. Reaching out effectively to individuals whose lives have been disrupted by conflict or disaster takes considerable time, resources and expertise. In addition, the conditions under which education and training is planned and undertaken are often extremely challenging for all concerned.

Various topics were introduced and discussed over the two-week period of this e-conference; they are listed below and provide the structure for this synthesis report:

- Differences between post-conflict and post-disaster situations;
- Lessons learned from establishing TVET after a Tsunami or other natural disaster;
- How to integrate Disaster Risk Reduction training into TVET;
- Reintegration of ex-combatants;
- TVET for (post-conflict) employment;
- Risks and benefits of providing TVET during unstable / emergency phases;
- Components of skills programmes;
- Personal recovery and resilience.

At the end of this report a number of resources are listed for those who wish to learn more.

Whilst the post-conflict and post-disaster context is certainly different and challenging, perhaps the strongest message throughout this conference is that the universal elements of good practice are important. Listening to people, involving local communities at all stages, ensuring connection to employers, placing emphasis on quality and relevance of training, and taking care to provide opportunities for all sectors of society – all these elements are crucial for successful TVET right across the world.

# 1. Differences between post-conflict and post-disaster

Communities post-conflict and communities post-disaster face a number of similar challenges but the differences between the actual circumstances of the disaster/ conflict can cover an enormous range of circumstances and specific differences need to be well accepted and understood. Further, natural disasters and emergencies are not synonymous with post-conflict situations.

This issue formed the focus of the first topic in the online conference.

Within the generic post-conflict and post-disaster label are a number of distinct

situations: emergency situations, chronic crisis, natural disasters, conflict disasters, early recovery, reconstruction phases, post-conflict transition, fragile states, failed states and so on. Armed conflicts most often occur in countries with low development indices, and as such the myriad challenges faced by least developed countries in general are often true, with the added overlay of conflict.

Major natural disasters often take people by surprise and the difference between the educational opportunities available between one week and the next may be stark. A few short minutes (earthquake) or a few days or weeks (floods) may be all it takes to destroy not only lives but also schools and homes and livelihoods. The destruction may be rapid yet it may take years to rebuild. A number of factors can constrain reconstruction of schools and TVET institutes and yet many



teachers and students remain committed to continuing their education in tents and in any other available structures.

Civil conflict is sometimes referred to as 'development in reverse' since over a period of some years social and economic development indicators often go backwards. Civil conflicts are usually less sudden, and the degree of destruction may vary greatly or even be very minimal. Differences in community attitudes after conflict can play out and certainly flow on to impact on education and training. State fragility after conflict also impacts on educational reconstruction.

One operational aspect both have in common is the speed at which interventions are planned and implemented, often to the detriment of the final result. In well-intentioned haste there may be the temptation to use off-the-shelf responses e.g. what has worked in country A will work in Country B but this may prove to be counter-productive. Another common constraint mentioned in the discussion is the lack of funds for TVET early on after conflict or disaster, with the perception that TVET is not as important as other basic services. Yet research has shown that enduring the continuance of education and training in uncertain situations can act, psychologically, as a normalizing situation, giving people a chance to recover from the trauma and regain familiar routines.

A number of participants contributed to this topic, giving examples from their own experiences and the consensus was clearly on the importance of taking good and close account of the conditions 'on the ground' which in turn determine the nature and extent of realistic interventions.

The strongest message: Local factors – which include the people and their cultural, social, religious and environmental outlook – must be well understood and must underpin all aspects of planning and delivery.

## 2. TVET after tsunami/natural disaster

An email detailing the redevelopment of TVET after the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami provided us all with some useful insights into the topic, and started further discussion.

The case-study provided was of a coastal community where a large amount of international funds had been donated to rebuild livelihoods. Boats were purchased and given to fishermen at highly subsidized rates to the extent that more fishermen than before the Tsunami were now able to own their own boat. Many NGOs came forward to skill people in making and repairing boats and on new approaches to fishing. There was a clear emphasis on using 'better' boats and utilizing technological sources of information and other techniques to increase fishing yield. In a highly gendered society where fishing is a male activity, women were separately trained to develop new markets for processing and selling dried fish. New schools and TVET programmes were established and, in short, the influx of funds and assistance led to overall development.

The participant reported that the programme was evaluated and elements of success for similar programmes were identified as:

- Need for adequate resource base (rebuilding communities and systems is costly)
- Innovative approaches to new 'improvements' (building back better)
- Build on existing skill sets and experiences (utilizing strengths)
- High degree of community engagement/ involvement (ensuring commitment)

Another participant shared information about the post-Tsunami experience in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the Indian Ocean and how the Indira Gandhi National Open University had enabled the speedy enrollment of over 7,000 young people in

higher and technical academic programmes to support economic development of the islands. A further point made is that in the case of the Tsunami affected coastal regions there was generally an existing high level of internal cohesion and security, and this generally makes rebuilding an easier task.

The Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004 was totally devastating and was estimated to have killed more than 230,000 people across 14 countries. International support for this disaster was immediate and very strong, and allowed those working to rebuild afterwards to access necessary funds. Not all natural disasters receive such strong international support, for example prolonged famines or prolonged floods tend not to reach the necessary targets. Nor do most conflict-affected areas.

Another case was reported regarding TVET after the catastrophic earthquake in the north-east part of Pakistan (2005) and the huge floods of 2009 and 2010. Most of the survivors requested short-term livelihood courses for quick results, and successful programmes were concise, competency-based and flexible.

The participant reported how, after the 2005 earthquake, 'tented' vocational training centres were set up with an emphasis on building and construction skills, including earthquake resistant techniques. Women were trained in basic electrical work and in salvage work. Mobile training centres were also established to impart construction skills in remote areas underserved by training centres or where post-earthquake mobility was restricted.

The 2009 floods in Pakistan covered an enormous surface area and affected millions of people. Internally displaced people living in camps were offered skills training, and mostly short-courses were provided with emphasis given to establishing markets for the products generated during the programmes. Short courses in construction skills were also offered as soon as was possible, with participants receiving cash support whilst studying. In Sindh province, fully equipped training centres were available and were well utilized,

and training was particularly focused at including women. In addition to skills training, transportation from home to the training centre was provided (with at least one female staffer in each vehicle), business development planning was included, microfinance was included, business development groups set up and orientation sessions given to males to build commitment and support for women's economic activity. The details provided by this participant stress a crucial point: skills training in isolation will have limited affect; an integrated package will be far more successful.

These interesting examples provided by participants illustrate the concept of 'building back better'. After a major natural disaster such as a devastating earthquake or tsunami, whole towns and communities may be destroyed. Some see this as an opportunity as well as a disaster, given that whole new educational facilities need to be built, and many new teachers and administrators bought in. 'Building back better' introduces modernization and reform at the same time as rebuilding and reintroducing familiar skills and experiences.

### 3. Disaster Risk Reduction

Whilst in some circumstances disaster strikes without warning, there are other situations where prior experience suggests the possibility of further natural disasters. In these instances the introduction of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) can be very important. DRR can be provided in many settings – school, TVET, workplaces, communities etc.

One participant wrote in to tell us of her experiences in Namibia, a desert country with seasonal flooding, mainly in the northern parts. The 2009 flood was the worst in fifty years and after that experience UNESCO and UNICEF decided to assist the education sector prepare for the possibility of recurring experiences. DRR activities targeted the education sector as a whole – how to keep safe, ensure minimal disruption of schooling and to help learners and teachers themselves minimize the impact





of future disasters. The Government led the programme with an education-in-emergencies committee. A school manual on emergency preparedness was developed which included suggestions for responses by teachers and education managers. Educational DRR radio programmes were produced and a database disseminated to record disaster information. There was a strong emphasis on engaging the teachers - many had had experience with floods over the years. Use was made of the INEE standards and of lessons learned in other more complex emergencies.

In 2011 Namibia was affected again, and projections suggest flooding will continue to get worse as a result of climate change and the changing behaviour of nearby river deltas. Preparing all members of the education community in how to reduce the impact of emergencies also makes local and national authorities less dependent on

foreign aid, and prepares them for leadership positions if/ when disasters do recur.

From other participants we also learned that some TVET institutes in Kenya include DRR in their curriculum and some institutes even have departments of disaster management. And from Nepal we received detailed information about a course on DRR incorporated into health sector programmes. Despite some positive examples, it is not easy to persuade TVET personnel to include such units, since there is often a view that TVET curriculums are already very full with technical and vocational subjects.

Finally, for the sake of the communities in affected areas we must not rely on DRR in TVET but ensure that efforts be made to reach community members (in particular, women) not enrolled in TVET. In situations where short programmes have been developed for use in TVET courses, the TVET

sector could provide community leadership by offering the same (or similar) courses separately for those not enrolled in TVET.

## 4. Reintegrating ex-combatants

Even if ex-combatants have had prior technical skills before embracing military life, skill refreshment and psychological preparation are needed to support transition from combatants to civilian workers. This was the sentiment expressed by one participant to start the conversation on skills for post-conflict employment, and this view gained broad support amongst other contributors to the online Forum.

For some people the transition back to civilian life is neither fast nor easy. This may sound surprising; why would people not choose to reintegrate into civilian life as quickly as possible?

Military culture is strong and tends to emphasize particular values and activities. During armed conflicts, combatants frequently live in camps, constantly (even exclusively) in the company of comrades and units are usually characterized by an extreme group cohesion that overrides individualism. Former combatants are asked to leave the life they know for an uncertain future, often in societies with very few employment opportunities. In situations where they are hailed as heroes the

process may be much easier than in situations where community attitudes are not so positive.

Joining back into the labour market can be very threatening for people who have been away from mainstream civilian life for some years. Previous experiences may not fit or be out-of-date. In addition, chain of command decision-making is at odds with many of the qualities of autonomy and problem solving prized today. A number of soft skills / life skills need to be taught to encourage ex-combatants to adapt to new environments. We know that routines can help draw people back to more usual patterns of civilian existence. Sharing food, playing sport, working together in groups, helping others worse off - all these elements have been shown to contribute to community reintegration and such elements have shown to be successfully incorporated with TVET training (for example in Nepal).

Discussants on this topic also reminded us not to neglect non-combatants in conflict-affected communities. The impact of armed conflict is far-reaching, and even those who were not actively involved may feel the effects. TVET has the potential to help all members of conflict-affected communities repair the social fabric of communities as well as repair physical infrastructure and economic activity. When resources are scarce, tough decisions need to be made on priority areas. Discussants agree that the focus often given to youths is important, not only since young people represent such a high proportion of the populations of post-conflict societies but also because this is a time in their lives when they are very vulnerable due to the physical and emotional changes they experience in a fast changing world.

## 5. TVET for (post-conflict) employment

A related group of posts looked at the question of TVET for post-conflict employment. Agreement was strong on the need to see TVET as part of the solution but not



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the only solution. Jobs need to be available, and employers need to be willing to employ ex-combatants, a process requiring slow and sustained building of trust with employers.

But how realistic are such ideas in countries recently emerged from conflict?

Economic activity may have been substantially destroyed by the conflict, and there may be very few jobs available. Prolonged civil conflict promotes its own economic imperatives and then, afterwards, economies can easily become 'distorted' and out of step with their earlier or even later economic outlook. Employers may have moved away from the area and their businesses destroyed or key employers may have been killed. Business investment, including foreign investment, may have fled. There is often a general shift during wars away from varied economic activity and towards subsistence agriculture and the informal economy. Of course such generalizations may not always hold true; it all depends upon the severity and length of the conflict and on the type of local economic possibilities.

Rebuilding an economy is a slow and complex process of its own. How can TVET play a productive role? TVET has to be well targeted to whatever real job opportunities exist, and also be appropriate to foster self-employment so people can develop their own livelihood opportunities.

One participant from Afghanistan pointed out that much more than TVET is needed. There may be a strong need for basic skills and literacy in, for example, a country with very low levels of literacy amongst the rural population and without a base of educated citizens. A contribution from South Sudan made a similar point; all the technical workers busy now in developing the new country of South Sudan are foreign workers. The people of South Sudan had not been exposed to the advantages of good education or trade training and now too many lack the skills needed for development.

NGOs, INGOs, UN Agencies and others often step in quickly to run short skills courses. These first wave programmes may be of variable quality. Participants to the Forum argue that some are good but many of the immediate short-term trainings fall short of the ideal. It has to be acknowledged that everyone is working in such very difficult (and often insecure) conditions and under great pressure to 'get things moving' and to give ex-combatants some early, structured, activity.

The value of short-term courses drew various opinions during the online forum. A number of participants from various countries commented on the low value of these short courses, whilst others stated that short sharp interventions were of greatest use at this time.

Concurrently with this first phase may be planning for the second wave of skills development, with longer lead times. These are the programmes that are likely to have a greater and longer-term impact. Some of the techniques used successfully to orient TVET to jobs include well planned and executed close consultation with communities and employers, rapid labour market assessment studies, surveys of employers, dialogue with business groups, and dialogue with local officials. In terms of content, some successful examples combine skills training together with basic education, life skills and peace education. TVET work in post-conflict countries must be accompanied by market development and value chain analysis, group formation for savings, enterprise marketing and so on.

A very interesting idea was contributed from experience in northern Uganda. The participant explained how employers were contacted and encouraged to hire and provide on-the-job training to ex-combatants. In return, an international agency provided those businesses with an incentive – they were given free equipment and materials to allow them to expand their business. This is a fascinating example, and shows how



agencies can develop locally innovative ideas to support sustainable economic growth.

In conclusion, as one participant pointed out, success demands the active involvement of three main partners - government to set policy and regulations, training providers to do the actual training, and employers who will employ the training graduates. In the absence of strong involvement of any one of the three, TVET development and operation will have serious gaps.

## 6. TVET during unstable / emergency phase

Of course everyone wants to see education and training options available for all, but one has to be fully cognizant of the risks associated with any action. It is generally acknowledged that it is harder to put together a TVET programme in conflict-affected or conflict-prone communities

than in post-natural emergency settings. The key difference is that in addition to destruction is the presence of hostile armed groups, or hostilities between citizens.

In an unstable security situation the risks are multiple, for example:

- There may be attacks on educational facilities for the very reason that they are educational facilities (as had happened to girls schools in some parts of Afghanistan and Pakistan)
- There may be attacks on teachers for the very reason that teachers may be community leaders and / or partisan (as had happened in Rwanda and in Cambodia)
- There may be dangers to students and teachers simply through general insecurity (as happened in Iraq when simple the act of travelling the streets to attend educational facilities was fraught with random danger).

Most participants in this special online Forum agree TVET requires a minimum level

of community stability and security before educational facilities can be established and operated, although what level constitutes 'minimum' is interpreted differently by various governments and international agencies. When the situation does allow the establishment of education and training opportunities there must be appropriate support for teachers as well as students. The Inter Agency Network on Education in Emergencies (INEE) has developed a series of minimum standards to cover a wide range of situations for education in emergencies and these can be very useful in many settings. INEE remind us that even experienced teachers (and other education personnel) may find themselves overwhelmed by crisis events and may experience distress. The ability of teachers to provide for learners depends on their own well-being and available support.

Nonetheless, several participants advocate for early intervention. One participant pointed out that here are many positive roles TVET play during violent conflicts; these roles include; diverting attention of active combatants or militias, providing basic skills to displaced individuals as a means of alternative livelihoods. During unstable situations attention should focus on the individual and not the system given that the system is prone to rapid changes. In Somalia for example the Danish Refugee Council is implementing a project called 'Turning the Tide' which targets youth aged 16-30 who are potential recruits for violent extremist groups in the country. The project aim is to engage this age category into productive ventures so that their attention is diverted from extremism. Results have been positive and as yet the scale is small, nonetheless, as at March 2012 more than 80 new group businesses were established across Somalia following a period of training programmes.

This particular discussion thread attracted strong responses from those who have been actively involved in TVET during /immediately after conflict. In summary one can see that two important themes emerged:

- The importance of security. Whilst providing education and training options early after conflict is desirable, and can play an important social role (education as a peace dividend), Forum participants agree that a certain level of security is mandatory. Not only is the protection of students, teachers and other staff of huge importance, but the actual educational benefit is compromised until the situation is sufficiently stable.
- TVET for ex-combatants. Forum participants appreciate the potential TVET can play in the reintegration of ex-combatants, and indeed of the role it can play in diverting young people away from re-engaging with conflict related activities, but remind us of the importance of ensuring that local conditions, including the situation of the conflict itself, are taken well into account.

Several useful handbooks on the subject of reintegration of ex-combatants have been published in recent years, particularly by the International Labour Organization (ILO), and they are recommended to Forum participants in these situations in addition to the considerable resources available through [www.ineesite.org](http://www.ineesite.org).

## 7. Components of skill programmes

To what extent should mainstream TVET programmes be altered to accommodate the particular needs of young people who have come through conflict or disaster? Contemporary approaches to TVET stress the need to adapt and adjust training programmes to best meet the needs of their client group, and in this regard young people from post-conflict and post-disaster settings can be seen as a special, albeit diverse, client group.

It appears that young people from any marginalized situation gain most when programmes are comprehensive and include

non-vocational components. Rather than have a vocational programme plus optional add-ons, it is more effective to include extra components into the core programming.

Key elements comprise:

- Vocational skills geared to labour market realities. This topic is dealt with in some detail in section 5 above and must be at the core of any TVET programme. No young person wishes to waste time in TVET courses that do not increase his/her chances of employment or self-employment.
- Life-skills. In developed countries it is very common to provide a number of life-skill options alongside vocational skills yet in developing countries too often the TVET programmes remain narrowly focused on the vocational skill component alone. Peace-building well as more common skills such as problem-solving, team-work and communication can be fostered and incorporated into programmes. Indeed life-skills can be incorporated into the core vocational parts of the programme to a large extent, for example where students are set group learning activities.
- Entrepreneurial skills. In tight labour markets and in economies that have been severely disrupted by conflict or disaster it is important to recognize that the formal labour market cannot absorb all training graduates. Preparing people for self-employment by including basic entrepreneurial and micro-business skills is very useful even if only at a 'taster' level.
- Catch-up learning. War and disaster causes significant upheaval in peoples' lives and education is often disrupted to some extent. Special programmes will be required for those whose education has been severely disrupted, but for all young people post-conflict and post-disaster there should be the opportunity for catch-up literacy, numeracy and general education.

Various conference participants made reference to the need to add these components to existing programmes, speaking of their own experiences in Nepal, Mozambique, Afghanistan, Malaysia and elsewhere. This discussion thread was a short one but those who contributed gave useful ideas and the topic is important and worth including here in this report.

Contributions included examples of how to encourage 'learning by doing' and including activities alongside structured learning. Asking students to self-organize into groups to undertake social and community activities, for example, is an effective way to build trust amongst a group and to learn life-skills.

The issue of support for TVET students was not actively canvassed by participants in the online conference but is relevant here and thus briefly mentioned. Such support can be broken down into three parts, relating to before, during and after training.

Before the TVET programme commences, students (plus parents and guardians if interested) should receive career counselling to ensure that the prospective student is interested and suited to the programme. This should include realistic discussions of job opportunities and discussion of any expected on-the-job components of the training.

During the training programme itself support should be on regular student counselling and mentoring, and ensuring that the course provides regular contact with employers and quality on-the-job experiences, since these elements will certainly increase employability.

As training draws to a close, the emphasis of student support shifts to group counselling on labour market opportunities, orientation to employers, and support in finding jobs. There may also be a need to level the expectations of job-seekers and guide them into entry-level opportunities.

## 8. Personal recovery and resilience

Resilience was the theme of the final new thread of the discussion, and is discussed here alongside an earlier set of posts on the topic of how conflict and disaster affect individuals.

After armed conflict or disaster affected individuals may have reduced physical and emotional health and also reduced status. Families and communities may disperse or separate and there is an increased burden on available services and infrastructure. Disruption increases stress on family structures and discipline, and children may have witnessed events for which they lack maturity to understand. In the case of conflict there may also be disruption to previously more homogenous belief systems of a community, and intergenerational tensions (between young rebels and older traditionalists) may be exacerbated.

Support for recovery and resilience can be offered on different levels, for example, individual, family and group counselling, community awareness raising and community activities (football matches, youth groups, drama and story-telling etc.). Rather than focusing on individuals' emotional wounds, recovery and resilience programmes should aim to support healing processes and re-establish a sense of normalcy. Modern approaches do not shy away from exploring an individual's experience with violence and the impact it has had, since this exploration is important to the process of healing and recovery.

Resilience is the capacity to rise above difficult circumstances, allowing us to exist and thrive in this less-than-perfect world.

What might some of the issues be here to foster and encourage resilience in individuals and communities, and to incorporate those strategies alongside skills training in countries more likely to face natural disasters, or

in settings post-conflict and disaster?

At a personal level, resilience allows us to cope in adverse or difficult circumstances and to move forward with optimism and confidence. Not only individuals who have experienced (directly or indirectly) conflict and disaster are affected psychologically as well as in more obvious ways, but the same goes for communities. At a community level, resilience allows groups to better withstand, recover from and respond positively to crisis or adversity and encourages quick return and reconstruction. We have all seen images on televisions of some communities suffering disasters who seem to bounce right back whereas others seem overwhelmed by how to start. The reasons are complex, but 'resilience' is increasingly being seen as one important component.

Resilience is crucial, and new thinking suggests it can be 'taught'. It is suggested that resilience can be fostered by supporting individuals and groups in positive and mutual ways (building trust), by encouraging inner strengths of confidence, self-esteem and responsibility (increasing autonomy and strong sense of individual and community identity) and by acquiring interpersonal, problem solving and action skills (strengthening initiative and industry).

Teaching resilience means building emotional intelligence skills, building relationship skills, and recognizing and utilizing core strengths. At the core of fostering resilience is a commitment to identify and strengthen 'protective factors' (e.g. opportunities to help others, exposure to challenges, strong family and community support, a sense of achievement etc.) and to reduce exposure and impact of negative 'risk factors' (e.g. war, extreme poverty, severe illness, exclusion from a group etc.). One participant wrote in to suggest TVET personnel contact colleagues who work on HIV/AIDS prevention, since they are likely to well understand these processes.

Identifying a person's core strengths is also essential for success and engagement. People

(students and professionals) who have been exposed to or involved in emergency situations do bring extraordinary experiences and stories with them. Many of these experiences are about resiliency and it is important that schools and training providers take time to ask individuals about their experiences and their advice for others. Participants offering experiences from Mozambique, Somalia and elsewhere stress this point. Two other participants wrote in to express their views that TVET programmes should be viewed as one part of the broader strategy of recovery, peace-building and resilience as attendance at a TVET programme reestablishes a sense of normalcy in a positive way and aids protection, recovery and integration of individuals who have been exposed to harmful situations.

Building resilience will become an issue of increasing importance in education, and not only in post disaster / post-conflict situations, and it is hoped that Forum participants will have the opportunity to follow, and implement, this trend.

## Conclusion

The UNESCO-UNEVOC online conference provided focus and space for practitioners and experts alike to explore aspects of the topic "TVET in post-conflict and post-disaster situations". From a dedicated space within the UNEVOC e-Forum site participants posted views and experiences, and emails of all new postings were sent to all participants. Guest moderator Ms Karina Veal introduced new discussion threads with background and introductory comments and videos, and provided feedback and synthesis as discussions unfolded.

The format of the online conference and the open-ended questions posed were aimed at maximising contributions from those with direct experience and expertise in the issue. However, the number of e-Forum members who have this experience is low, and therefore less than 50 individuals put forward their views or shared their experiences. This is much like

any 'real world' conference whereby a small number of individuals with knowledge and confidence to share may 'speak' but where everyone gains value from participation.

Sharing views amongst colleagues helped consolidate views such as the following:

- After a major natural disaster whole towns and communities may be destroyed. Some advocate for 'build back better' to introduce modernization and reform at the same time as rebuilding whilst others prefer to quickly re-establish TVET along familiar lines.
- When re-establishing TVET greater emphasis must be given to full consultation and participation of local affected communities.
- Whilst we normally expect quality, responsive TVET to be in tune with real employment opportunities, underpinned by labour market analysis, conference participants acknowledged that this is considerably harder when communities, and economies, have been severely disrupted. Nonetheless, employment-relevance must remain a key consideration in all settings.
- Important though education and training are, there was concern to ensure sufficient stability and security before TVET is established.
- There was also acknowledgement that there may be different 'waves' of TVET over the months and first years post-disaster / post-conflict.
- Younger ex-combatants are likely to have conflict-interrupted education, and may need 'catch-up' education as well as vocational training.
- Individuals who have experienced conflict and disaster are affected psychologically as well as in more obvious ways. Resilience is crucial, and new thinking suggests it can be 'taught'. Greater effort could be seen in resilience building incorporated alongside skills training.



This UNESCO-UNEVOC online conference was a useful step in raising awareness and sharing views and experiences. There are certainly some lessons to be learned from international experiences in recent years, but it is important not to rely on 'off the shelf' responses but to genuinely give leadership to local people who understand the local context and situation.

TVET has the potential to impact profoundly on people's lives, giving them skills and knowledge to navigate the world of work and to become active citizens. Let us renew our efforts to ensure that people who have already suffered so much after conflict or disaster have access to quality, relevant TVET with which to help rebuild their lives and their communities.

Good luck to all engaged in these endeavors!

## Additional resources

A number of resources were listed as preparatory reading for the moderated online discussion and more were added during the discussion period. Of course there are many other resources on the topic, but this list is restricted to those that were referred to as part of the Forum.

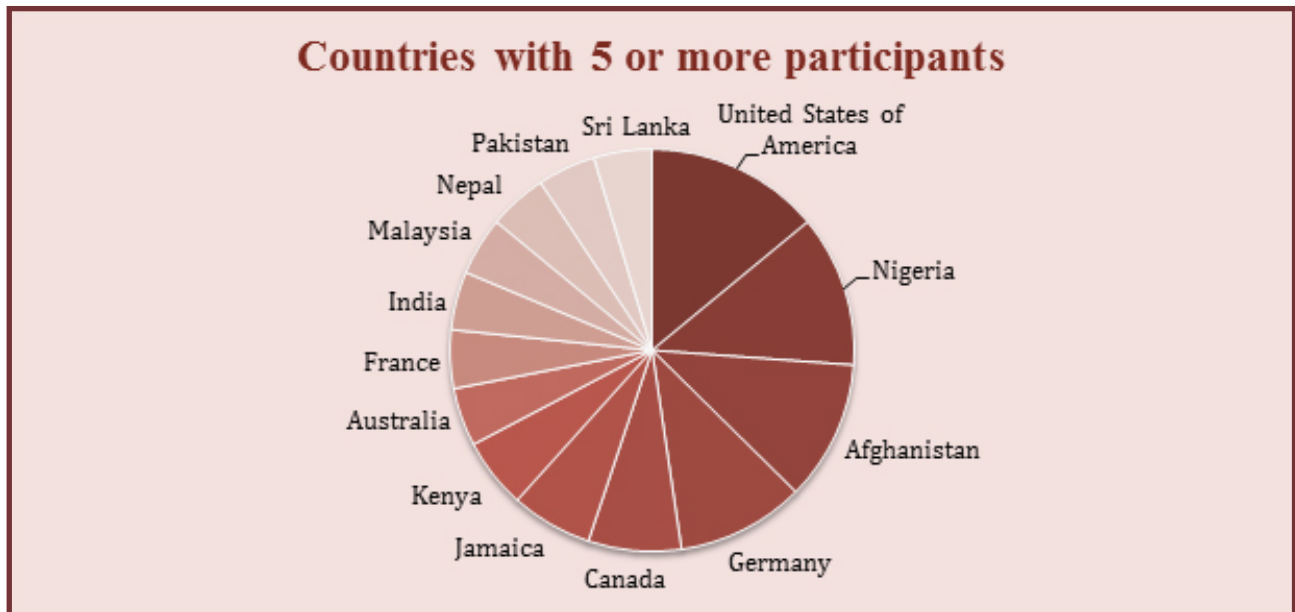
- [Once were warriors: Reintegrating ex-combatants \(UNESCO-UNEVOC\)](#)
- [Education for livelihoods and civic participation in post-conflict countries \(UNESCO-UNEVOC\)](#)
- [Education and Opportunity: Post-Primary and Income Growth \(Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies, INEE\)](#)
- ['How-to' guide on economic re-integration for children formerly associated with armed forces and groups \(ILO\)](#)
- [Co-ordinating education during emergencies and reconstruction: challenges and responsibilities \(UNESCO-IIEP\)](#)
- [Building back better: post-earthquake responses and educational challenges in Pakistan \(UNESCO-IIEP\)](#)
- [Rebuilding education after the tsunami - some impressions \(Blog by OECD\)](#)
- [INEE Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery](#)
- ["Market Assessment Toolkit for Vocational Training Providers and Youth" \(Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children\)](#)
- [Learning Lessons from Disaster Recovery: The Case of Mozambique \(World Bank\)](#)
- [School Manual on Emergency Preparedness and Response](#)
- [Article on women's participation in society UN News Centre](#)
- [The new TVET training system in Timor-Leste \(ILO\)](#)
- [The Role of Skills Development in Overcoming Social Disadvantage by Arvil V. Adams](#)
- [Eight Proposals for a Strengthened Focus on Technical and Vocational Education and Training \(TVET\) in the Education for All \(EFA\) Agenda by Kenneth King](#)
- [Building Skills in the Informal Sector by Richard Walther](#)

- [Case Study on "National Policies Linking TVET with Economic Expansion: Lessons from Singapore" by Law Song Seng](#)
- [USAID security manual for schools \(in Spanish\)](#)
- [Introduction by Karina Veal, 16 April 2012](#)
- [Labour market responsive TVET by Karina Veal, 18 April 2012](#)
- [Learner centred TVET by Karina Veal, 20 April 2012](#)
- [TVET institutions by Karina Veal, 20 April 2012](#)

# Annex

## Participation

- Number of participants: 182
- Number of countries from which participants came: 47
- Number of active contributors: 65



## About the moderator



**M**s Karina Veal has over 20 years of experience in the TVET sector and has worked within Australia in senior leadership and advisory roles

with national and state authorities and internationally with multilateral and bilateral agencies. The overall focus of Ms Veal's work is on increasing the relevance, quality and efficiency of skills development in both formal

and non-formal settings – with a special interest in the challenges faced by post-conflict / post-disaster countries. From 2003 to 2008 Ms Veal was based in Europe as a senior TVET consultant to UNESCO, after which she established a Melbourne-based independent practice in education for development and now provides professional services to ILO, UNESCO, UN Women, GIZ and AusAID. Her most recent assignment has been to support improvements to TVET in Nepal to aid the re-integration of young ex-Maoist combatants.

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