



UNESCO-UNEVOC Regional Forum

Europe and North America

Advancing TVET for youth employability

and sustainable development

28-30 October 2013, Moscow (Russian Federation)

Background note

Introduction

At UNESCO's Third International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) hosted by the Government of the People's Republic of China in Shanghai in May 2012, Member Countries requested the Director General of UNESCO to seek to implement the following actions through its TVET programmes and implementation units:

- *Collect and disseminate evidence demonstrating the multiple and diverse policy approaches for transforming and expanding TVET and skills development, using the global and regional UNEVOC Network and Centres.*
- *Expand and enhance the capacities of the UNEVOC Network to play a key role in developing the capacities of decision-makers and practitioners, and facilitate the involvement of all stakeholders in TVET transformation and development.*

(UNESCO 2012. [Shanghai Consensus](#))

In response to the recommendations made by the Member States, UNESCO and UNESCO-UNEVOC have conducted a number of activities over the past year since the Shanghai Congress. As well as adapting UNESCO's Strategy for TVET, UNESCO has started reinforcing the UNEVOC Network to make it a more dynamic platform for sharing innovative practices, and a real agent for change.

At the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Forum held in November 2012, UNEVOC Network members approved plans to redefine the roles of the international and national Centres. The Network has since been regrouped into five regional clusters: Africa; Arab States; Asia and the Pacific; Europe, CIS and North America; and Latin America and the Caribbean.

As an outcome of consultations with UNEVOC Network cluster leaders held from March to May 2013 with representatives from all regions, a new thematic direction for the year 2013 was decided:

- *youth employment*, with a special focus on school-to-work transition and entrepreneurship, and
- *green skills*, with a special focus on teacher training and curriculum development.
- UNEVOC Network members of the Europe, CIS and North America Region also identified *international cooperation* in itself as one of its main concerns and interests for TVET.



The UNEVOC Network is moving forward on making evidence the basis of sound policy by stepping up its work on gathering Promising Practices for transforming TVET on the topics of youth employment and green skills.

This Regional Forum is the next step in a sequence of activities that aim to further address the transformation of TVET through regional and international exchange of evidence-based policies and practices within the UNEVOC Network. The conference will provide a platform to showcase innovative regional initiatives that have taken place in the areas of youth employment and greening TVET. In addition, it will provide a platform for discussion on next steps in deepening international cooperation in TVET through the UNEVOC Network, and with international partners.

Representatives of business and industry, NGOs, and regional/international organizations will be part of the dialogue. The conference is organized in cooperation with the National Observatory on Vocational Education (Centre for VET Studies) and the Moscow Institute for the Development of Education.

Scope and aims

Youth employment

The 2012 EFA Global Monitoring Report on *Youth and skills* estimates that every dollar spent on educating a child will bring back between 10 and 15 dollars in economic growth during that child's working life as an adult. Investments in youth education are thus investments in progress and future growth. Conversely, low-quality education and training come with a high cost as mismatches between graduate youth's skills and labour-market demands translate into high youth unemployment.

In times of economic crisis, countries are now forced to turn to quality education instead of banking solely on quantity. Quality TVET can be an effective tool to tackle global youth unemployment. UNESCO-UNEVOC works closely with its partners to improve possibilities for youth to transition from education to employment and entrepreneurship skills. UNESCO-UNEVOC believes that a diverse skill set will enable youth to make a successful entry into the workplace. These should comprise a mix of:

- foundation skills, such as literacy and numeracy,
- transferable skills such as business skills and an entrepreneurial mindset,
- hard skills and specialist know-how, and
- green skills for a sustainable use of resources.

Challenges faced by the TVET systems – especially in Europe and North America – are very different from the challenges in most other countries in the world. An ageing workforce and declining birth rates are causing shortages in skilled labour force in many countries, especially in science and technology. While pro-age policies and possibilities for lifelong learning are important, more needs to be done to address predicted shortages of skilled labour force. TVET is at the heart of this challenge and can be a key agent of change for young people. Better recognition of foreign skills; the promotion of international exchange programmes for TVET students; higher permeability between levels of attainment; an enhanced image of vocational subjects; better accountability to prove a return on investment in TVET; and improved compatibility through international qualification frameworks are just some aspects that can help tackle these challenges and increase responsiveness to labour-market needs, especially in the green energy sector.



Green skills

TVET is not just a producer, but also a great consumer of resources and therefore has many concerns about sustainability. UNESCO is the lead agency for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014). Greening TVET is UNESCO-UNEVOC's essential and cross-cutting theme for sustainable development. Green skills are the foundation of a sustainable and sound economy, society and the environment, and are therefore one of the priorities of UNESCO-UNEVOC.

The changing nature of work, especially due to globalization, technological change and growing concerns about climate change and resource shortages, demands that TVET develop a skilled, committed and motivated workforce that understands how global changes impact upon local opportunities for business and industry and how these in turn have an influence on the quality of local social, economic and environmental conditions. TVET graduates play a crucial role in inventing and implementing practical solutions to problems such as environmental degradation, waste management, access to safe water and hygienic sanitation, and in overcoming poverty. Still, TVET in many countries focuses on productivity and efficiency for economic development with little concern for sustainability.

Especially in fast-emerging economies with high productivity and a low-cost labour force, environmental and social considerations are often neglected in favour of rapid growth. In industrialized countries, sustainability is often more integrated in learning and production processes. But everywhere, the working population remains a largely untapped resource to achieve the transition to green economies and societies.

There is increasing recognition of the critical role of education in promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns in order to change attitudes and behaviour of people as individuals, including as producers and consumers, and as citizens.

Education for sustainability has therefore become central to international policy, where education has evolved to incorporate the growing recognition of the complex relationship between social, economic and environmental issues. Critical to this evolution is the way in which environmental knowledge and understanding is used in the development of practical skills.

Through capacity development, networking and knowledge sharing, UNESCO-UNEVOC promotes and supports the increase of greening skills, and the technical and institutional capacities for the education and training of technicians. It also supports educational leaders in addressing the challenges of a green economy, provides opportunities to discuss education for sustainable development (ESD) and shows how to integrate it into TVET curricula, learning materials and activities.

International cooperation

UNEVOC Centres not only generously make their time and expertise available to UNESCO-UNEVOC and the UNEVOC Network. Through their active participation, UNEVOC Centres also contribute to an empowering environment where TVET experts from all over the world can mutually support one another through the exchange of good practices and information, through regular meetings and conferences and via UNESCO-UNEVOC's publications and online services, notably its online discussion forum. This willingness to always keep learning from others indicates that building successful TVET systems is never an accomplished task. It is a process that constantly needs to adapt to the rapidly changing demands and



realities of learners, the workplace, society and the environment. It also implies that, in a globalized world, countries are never alone in providing their people with the skills they need to fulfil their potential. Increasingly, every country needs to rely on international partnership in order to support the workforce it needs to grow in the global economy.

This is why UNESCO-UNEVOC facilitates and encourages interaction, north-south-south cooperation and the exchange of expertise. It addresses the need to tackle common challenges through its activities, its online services and publications. This way, UNESCO-UNEVOC is providing a platform for collaboration between interested parties where good ideas can be tested, verified and contextualized, and where learning always goes two ways. Unlike donor-recipient relationships it offers peer consultation, networking and learning from each other among industrialized, developing and least-developed countries.

Not least, UNESCO-UNEVOC can help donor countries enhance the effectiveness and relevance of their international and bilateral development policies and programmes by facilitating and complementing the cooperation among interested institutions and agencies, with an aim to reduce fragmentation, which is a major obstacle to the successful implementation and delivery of skills policies and programmes in many countries.

Those UNEVOC Centres that have (international) cooperation mechanisms in place will get an opportunity to present their regional or thematic focus for international partnership, in order to identify how the UNEVOC Network can be utilized as a platform for the extension of technical assistance and expert know-how and financial support, and the possible contributions from the present UNEVOC Centres.

Objectives

The forum will:

- provide a platform to showcase innovative and evidence-based regional promising practices in the fields of youth employment and green skills
- address the topics of youth employment and green skills through high-level international and regional expertise and panel discussions
- reinforce and extend regional networks and partnerships for the advancement of TVET transformation towards regional harmonization and resource mobilization;
- strengthen the UNEVOC Network consolidation process in the region.

Expected results

- Strengthened multi-stakeholders partnerships and cooperation
- Importance of regional harmonization as a means to streamline regional TVET priorities is recognized and promoted
- Participating countries are enabled to better measure and act on TVET development issues in priority areas



- Contribution(s) to strengthen regional cooperation with focus on selected thematic priority areas between UNEVOC Centres in Europe and North America within the Global UNEVOC Network

Outputs

- a regional forum report including recommendations
- Compilation of promising practices from the region

Organizers

- UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training
- UNEVOC Centre: CVETS National Observatory on Vocational Education/Centre for VET Studies

With the support of

Moscow Institute for the Development of Education

Venue

Izmailovo Kremlin, Conference-hall “Khokhloma”, Izmailovskoe Shosse, 73Zh, Moscow.

Metro “Partizanskaya”

Participants

UNEVOC Network Members, industry, international agencies, regional partners and networks.

Background information

[UNESCO Strategy on TVET](#)

[Shanghai Consensus](#)

[UNESCO-UNEVOC International Forum \(November 2012\)](#)

[Promising Practices submission form](#)

[UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report: Youth and Skills: Putting Education to Work](#)

Languages

The languages to be used during the TVET Expert Meeting are Russian and English, with interpretation between the two languages.

Contact addresses

For further information on the meeting, you can contact one of the following:

CVETS National Observatory on Vocational Education/Centre for VET Studies

Olga Oleynikova, Director
National Observatory on Vocational Education (Centre for VET Studies)
Semyonovskaya Sq. 4, Office 202-203
105318 Moscow
Russian Federation
Tel: [+7] (495) 915-72-54, +7 495 972-35-90
observatory@cvets.ru

UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre

UN Campus
Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1
53113 Bonn
Germany
Tel: +49 228 815 0108
Fax: +49 228815 0199
E-mail: Alix Wurdak, contact for Europe, CIS and North America:
a.wurdak@unesco.org; unevoc@unesco.org
Website: www.unevoc.unesco.org