



## UNEVOC Forum

### Education for All (EFA) and TVET - Two sides of the same coin?

Potential synergies through integration  
and linkages for Southern Africa

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**T**his paper was initially prepared by Ms Fosen for the Norwegian National Commission in Norway and presented at a seminar in November 2002. There are six Education For All (EFA) goals. However, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) does not appear directly in these goals, although it relates most closely to goals three, four and six.

In this discussion paper, Ms Fosen examines the potential links between EFA and TVET from a UNESCO perspective. She looks specifically at some potential benefits of linkages when training for survival and development in Southern Africa. The paper has three purposes. Firstly, Ms Fosen outlines the EFA goals. Secondly, she looks at how TVET can contribute to meeting the EFA goals, as stated in the Dakar Framework for Action. And thirdly, she suggests some reasons why TVET might benefit from closer links to EFA.

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## B Background – EFA and The Dakar Summit

» What are the potential links between EFA and TVET? Are there ways of integrating TVET into EFA goals? Or, vice versa, would it be beneficial to integrate the EFA-goals when working with TVET? To what extent is this already done?

In April 2000, the World Education Forum was organised in Dakar, Senegal. At this forum the "Framework for Action, Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments" was adopted. This framework for action reaffirmed the vision of the World Declaration on Education for All, which was adopted ten years earlier, in Jomtien, Thailand, 1990.

There are six goals in the Framework for Action. These are listed below, some in full because the entire text is considered important for the discussion that will follow, some are cut short (where this does not influence the content for the purpose of this paper).

1. Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education.
2. Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.

3. Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programs.

4. Achieving a 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015.

5. Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015.

6. Improving every aspect of the quality of education, and ensuring their excellence so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

These goals are followed, in the Framework, by 12 strategies through which one aims to achieve the goals. Some key features of the strategies that are particularly relevant when

discussing EFA and TVET in Southern Africa include: mobilise a strong commitment to EFA, link EFA policies to poverty elimination and development strategies, implement education programs and actions to combat HIV/AIDS, harness new information and communication technologies to help achieve EFA goals and build on existing mechanisms. Also, part of the strategy includes the establishment of

- National EFA-Forums and
- National EFA-plans.

In addition to the global Framework for Action, there are regional frameworks for action. The one for Sub-Saharan Africa is of particular interest when looking at the link between EFA and TVET in Southern Africa, although the main topics are included in the global Framework.

### Definition of TVET

» The definition of TVET used in the UNESCO and ILO Recommendations on Technical and Vocational Education and Training for the Twenty-first Century, adopted by UNESCO's General Conference in 2001, is quite inclusive and broad: TVET is used "as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences, and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life." Is this a widely agreed upon definition outside UNESCO and ILO circles?

## H How could TVET strengthen the efforts to reach the EFA-goals?

» We have chosen to limit this discussion to EFA-goals three, four and six above. However, it is sometimes impossible not to cross over from one area to another as all levels and areas of education are quite a bit more integrated than we sometimes like to perceive of them in our attempt to break things down into more manageable com-

ponents. It seems clear, however, that it is in the area of relevance and quality that TVET can contribute the most to EFA.

The third EFA-goal is to *make sure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through access to appropriate learning and life skills programs*. A great variety

of programs for this target group – young people and adults – exist. Many are very good, but many also need improvement. Clearly, much of what is referred to as "life skills programs" entail TVET, or at least the vocational aspect of the acronym, if not so much the technical.

The fourth EFA goal is to *increase adult literacy rates by 50 percent by 2015*. Traditionally, there has been a tendency to think of literacy training in terms of the process of learning to read and write, without necessarily focusing on the content of that which is to be read and written. Recently, this has been changing, as it has become clear that motivating adults to learn to read through texts that are of little relevance to their every day life, can prove an enormous challenge, at best. By developing programs that incorporate literacy and numeracy as well as knowledge related to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life, the success rate of literacy programs, and of motivating individuals to join the programs, increase. A recent World Bank report, "Skills and Literacy Training for Better Livelihoods" indicates that this holds true for Africa. In the report, various approaches to adult education for better livelihoods are examined. They all have two components: literacy training and livelihood training. The philosophical difference lies in the mix and match of the two.

The sixth EFA goal is to *improve every aspect of the quality of education*. There has been a tendency to focus more on access to education than the quality of education in development cooperation projects, but this is

also changing. This was elaborated on in one of UNESCO's World Education Reports in the late 90's. While we must strive to provide education for a greater number of students, it is increasingly recognised that the content and methods in that education also must be such that students can learn once they find their way into schools/education/training. But we will always be seeking to improve that content and those methods because we live in an ever-changing world. In this search for both content and methods, it is wise to include expertise from various fields, of course also that of TVET.

Some key terms emerge from these three goals: **access**, **quality** and **relevance**. While TVET cannot necessarily contribute to increased access in terms of providing education for greater numbers, it certainly contributes to making education more accessible to teens, young adults and adults through the emphasis on skills they perceive they need in order to get a job in the near future rather than the more distant future. This ties in closely with relevance – an area in which TVET scores high. There are few, if any, references to TVET in the EFA documents. Hopefully, experts in TVET are involved in the EFA process throughout the world anyway.

A last comment in this section relates particularly to the sixth goal about quality, but also to the discussion about links between TVET and EFA in the areas of access and relevance. While it seems obvious that TVET could improve the quality of adult education (also basic education provided to adults), and TVET-related programs in secondary education and higher education, it is not so clear to what extent TVET could / should have a place in primary education. In a country in which five years of primary education is all a child might get, at what point is or should that child be introduced to life skills, or skills that can be beneficial for future employment in the informal sector? To what extent is it incorporated into the curriculum? Does TVET at all encompass this level? And are those working with TVET at "higher" levels involved in developing the most relevant curriculum for the primary level, or is it left to "general" educators/ curriculum developers?

Above, we have examined some ways in which TVET might prove helpful in reaching the EFA-goals. It seems logical to argue that TVET should be an integral part of EFA-strategies. **What must happen in order for that to become a reality?**

## romoting TVET through closer cooperation with EFA

»» Some challenges in the TVET area that the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre in Bonn focuses on, have some features of similarity with some of the EFA goals. They include the *quality of school based learning, access to TVET throughout life, enhancing the status and relevance of TVET and improving the link between curricula and work requirements*. At the World Congress on Technical and Vocational Education in Seoul in 1999 it became clear that these (and a number of other issues) were concerns all over the world.

Some incentives for linking the EFA process to the field of TVET from a TVET point of view might include:

- Motivation for going into technical and vocational areas might increase if TVET were included at an earlier stage in the students' education. Point 7 in the UNESCO revised

»» UNESCO has established a long-term program to work on meeting the needs expressed at the Seoul congress. The objectives of this program are organised under three main headings:

- Strengthening TVET as an integral component of lifelong learning
- Orienting TVET for sustainable development
- Providing TVET for all

recommendations on TVE states that "TVE should be designed so that it is an integral part of everyone's basic general education in the form of initiation to technology, the world of work, and human values and standards for responsible citizenship." If this is agreed upon among experts in TVET, cooperation with EFA that emphasizes basic education, should clearly be desirable.

- Many developing nations struggle with technical and vocational professions having a low status, making recruiting difficult. EFA is a high priority worldwide. If TVET was an integral part of the modalities for reaching some of the EFA goals, perhaps it would also enhance the status of TVET.

- Funding for TVET programs are scarce. A broad commitment to EFA exists. As an example, the World Bank decreased fund-

ing for TVET by 40% from the 80's to the 90's. (For the Africa Region that means a cut from US\$215 million to US\$125 million). It is not only the World Bank that has reallocated funding into basic education. Connecting TVET to EFA goals could perhaps also enhance funding possibilities for TVET. It might be argued that that is a pragmatic at best, cynical at worst, reason for

doing something, but looking at the reports from the Seoul Congress on TVE it is very clear that funding is not an issue that can be ignored. In fact, UNESCO encourages partnership building in various ways in order to increase funding to education. Tying one aspect of education to another might be seen as another kind of partnership.

## Challenges and concerns to be considered when dealing with TVET and EFA

>> The above discussion focuses strictly on the relationship between TVET and EFA. Numerous surrounding issues are also important, but outside the scope of this discussion paper. Yet, the following are some considerations that cannot be left out any time one discusses any area of education and Africa. It seems also that the nature and importance of these issues might be an additional factor encouraging closer links between EFA and TVET.

### HIV/AIDS

When talking about EFA goals or strategies for TVET, it is impossible to get around HIV/AIDS and the tragic impact it has on Southern Africa. The epidemic might mean a reduced life expectancy by 40 years in some countries. That has a tremendous impact on the labour force. The younger generation might be in more of a hurry to start working than ever before because their parents are gone. Also, because of the reduced life expectancy, the younger generation might lack motivation to join more extensive training programs.

### Promoting TVET for girls and women

In many UNESCO documents, the issue of making TVET accessible to girls and women is emphasized. Progress in this area is slow in many parts of the world. On the other hand, there is no mention about the reverse

situation. If areas like the training of health personnel (such as nurses), qualify as TVET, why is there no mention of making these areas more attractive to men? Women's professions have traditionally been remunerated less than typical male professions, so it would seem appropriate in the effort to raise the status of fields dominated by women to encourage boys/men to enter these fields. Is it because technical and vocational education and training (TVET) relates to the more technical professions that only the issue of access for women is raised? If so, in what category does training in other, less technical areas, fit in? (This question relates a bit to the question of the definition of TVET.)

## Learning to Live Together

>> Part V of the Final Report from the World Education Forum in Dakar deals with promoting education for democracy and citizenship. And although it is not explicit in the Dakar Framework for Action, the dimension of Learning to Live Together is certainly a vital and fundamental educational issue, not only for UNESCO, but for anyone involved in education. It relates to the fundamental question: What is the purpose of education? When discussing Southern Africa, we obviously talk about development, making a livelihood, increasing the standard of living, sustainable development. Yet, we MUST also talk about what it takes to Learn to Live Together - in peace. Elements of peace education are an absolute necessity. Without peace, the other things will not happen. There are some 5 million displaced people because of armed conflicts in Southern Africa according to UNHCR. A majority of these are out of jobs. In addition, many of those who are not refugees, are not able to make a livelihood, or be involved in income-generating activities, because of armed conflicts. Without peace, there will be little training of any sorts at all.



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