

## Entrepreneurship Education as a Tool to Support Self-Employment in Kenya

In recent years, flexibility, adaptability and lifelong learning have become major objectives of best practice, in addition to employability. The notion of “Best practice” was introduced in TVET institutions in Kenya in 1994 and continued to this day because there is a pool of qualified personnel to sustain the programme. Many TVET graduates become self-employed and apply the entrepreneurial skills they have acquired in technical training institutions in their businesses. The response of TVET institutions in Kenya to the continued training needs of business aligns training closer to the demands of the labour market. Kenya has a well-established system of involving enterprises in establishing the content of training, which makes it possible to **train young people more effectively for the workplace.**

Unemployment in Kenya, as in other developing countries, cannot be solved by simply providing training in technical skills. The need to link training to employment (self or paid) is at the base of the “best practice” strategy. Entrepreneurship is important in enabling TVET graduates to become involved in the mainstream of the economy. To this end, technical and entrepreneurial skills for enterprise development are an asset. The purpose of this research, therefore, is to harness, document and evaluate the best practices in TVET in Kenya. This method of harnessing best practices will be made available and accessible to all in TVET, including key stakeholders. The UNEVOC centres in the sub-regions of Africa will similarly be encouraged to contribute to the identification and documentation of best practices.

### Introduction

A “best practice” is a technique, method, process, activity, incentive or reward that is believed to become more effective at delivering a particular outcome than any other technique, method or process. The idea is that with proper processes, checks and testing, a desired outcome can be delivered with fewer problems and unforeseen complications.

A “best practice” can also be the most efficient (least amount of effort) and effective (best results) way of accomplishing a task; based on repeatable procedures that have proved themselves over time for a large number of people. Added to this is that there is a need to improve on those processes as times



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## Acknowledgements

The TVET Best Practice Project is the result of a decision made by the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training, to which a large measure of gratitude is due. This publication also benefited from co-operation and financial support from UNESCO-UNEVOC. The author acknowledges with gratitude the willing co-operation and assistance of Chris Chinien, Workforce Development Consulting, Montreal, Canada, and TVET Specialist at the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre and Efison Munjanganja, Officer-in-Charge and Head of UNEVOC Networks at the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre.

change and as procedures evolve. One key element in the identification of a best practice is exchange. A best practice in a particular area or field should be exchanged, just like any instructional capital, by any means. This requires some careful evaluation; for example, one person's or country's best practice is not necessarily the best for another person or country, yet it could still present viable lessons to be learned. Furthermore, chasing the wrong best practice can have a negative impact, so the context and the background for a best practice need to be carefully understood in advance.

Aspects of entrepreneurship education that make a difference when incorporated in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) are lumped together under what is called an entrepreneurial culture. The characteristics of an entrepreneurial culture include innovation, foresightedness and persistence, among others. Today, many TVET institutions in Kenya are related to small business centres (SBCs) through which consultancy is given to small-scale entrepreneurs. Many TVET institutions benefit from entrepreneurship in-service programmes introduced by universities and other institutions. The initiative to launch and promote entrepreneurship education in TVET institutions is promising as more young people than ever before now envisage self-employment. Trainees buy tools and

equipment through contracting jobs acquired with the help of instructors and also locate funds to support their training. Graduates of youth polytechnics, for example, form business groups bringing together various disciplines in order to generate funds, such as different construction trades to build houses. Once organized groups are formed and registered, they approach micro-credit financiers such as commercial banks and the Kenya Rural Enterprise Programme to receive sponsorship for their businesses.

Kenya was among the first countries in Africa to introduce aspects of entrepreneurship education in its education and training systems. This has helped to raise awareness among TVET graduates about the demands of the modern employment sector. It was realized that vocational education alone without entrepreneurship would not generate jobs. The rationale was to create awareness in young people's minds of the existence of various options in the world of work. Equally, the new system of education introduced in 1985 had a technical and vocational (coined TIVET—technical, industrial and vocational entrepreneurship training) component to ensure that at the end of each level school-leavers, especially at primary and secondary levels or those who drop out of school for one reason or another, would have sufficient knowledge and skills to enter the labour market,



Craftsman in Kenya

**TABLE 1: Conceptual framework for conducting research on best practices related to entrepreneurship training in TVET in Kenya**

Target populations	Youth boys	Youth girls	Youth with special needs	Women	Male adults	Older workers
Policy	Enhance equity	Enhance equity	Enhance access	Enhance access	Enhance access	Retrain
Financing	Loans/grants	Loans/grants	Grants	Loans/grants	Loans/grants	In-house
Social partners	Private sector/NGOs	Private sector/NGOs	Private sector/NGOs	Private sector/NGOs	Private sector/NGOs	Private sector/NGOs
Providers	Govt/NGOs	Govt/NGOs	Govt/NGOs	Self/NGOs	Self/NGOs	Industry
Delivery mechanisms	Theory/practical	Theory/practical	Theory/practical	Theory/practical	Theory/practical	Theory/practical
Instructor competence	Trained	Trained	Trained	Trained	Trained	Trained
Programme development	KNEC/MOL	KNEC/MOL	KNEC/MOL Private	KNEC/MOL Private	KNEC/MOL Private	Industry/private
Student support	Loans/grants	Loans/grants	Loans/grants	Self/NGOs	Self/NGOs	Industry
Training methods	Theory/practical	Theory/practical	Theory/practical	Theory/practical	Theory/practical	Theory/practical
Assessment	CAT/GTT/NTE	CAT/GTT/NTE	CAT/GTT/NTE	CAT/GTT/NTE	CAT/GTT/NTE	In-house
Evaluation	Reports	Reports	Reports	Reports	Reports	Reports
Labour market outcomes	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal
	Employable	Employable	Employable	Employable	Employable	Employable

Note: The purpose of the framework is in order to cater for different target populations and various dimensions investigated.

including self-employment. The majority of trainees who have gone through the system to date have started small and medium enterprises. When businesses develop and expand, additional labour-market demands for TVET emerge, new job opportunities are created, more people get employed and the incidence of poverty declines. Entrepreneurship is one of the guiding principles considered as a major driving force for TVET in Kenya. The related theme of "best practice" is consistent with TVET, industrial and commercial and business partnerships.

Following the UNESCO-UNEVOC Conference on Developing and Reforming TVET in Southern and Eastern Africa held in Maputo, Mozambique, in July 2009, and the Sub-regional Seminar held in Mbabane, Swaziland, in September 2008, legitimate concerns were raised regarding the paucity of best practices for TVET,

particularly in the African region. It was also pointed out that people may not even be aware of existing best practices available and accessible to all those involved in TVET. There was unanimous agreement among the participants regarding the need to encourage the UNEVOC centres to contribute to the identification of best practices. The need to consider developing a best-practices clearing-house was thus identified. Data for the best practices was assembled from practitioners' opinions, policy-makers' reports, scholarly academic reviews and primary empirical research.

Table 1 presents a conceptual framework for conducting research on best practices related to entrepreneurship training in TVET in Kenya. The purpose of the framework is to highlight the different target populations and the various dimensions to be investigated.

## List of Abbreviations

CAT	Continuous assessment tests
Govt.	Government
GTT	Government trade tests
KNEC	Kenya National Examinations Council
MOL	Ministry of Labour
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
NTE	National technical examinations
SBC	Small Business Centres
TIVET	Technical, industrial, vocational and entrepreneurship training
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

## Objectives of the research

The objectives of the research were to identify information on existing and pertinent best practices and to document them for the benefit of all stakeholders in TVET:

1. To harness, document and evaluate the best practices in TVET in Kenya.
2. To make the best practices available and accessible to all in TVET, including key TVET stakeholders.
3. To encourage the UNEVOC centres in the sub-regions of Africa to contribute to the identification of best practices.

## Methodology

A literature review was conducted, including the Internet, library searches and information from key informants on best practices and innovations in knowledge management and transfer.

The outcome resulting from this research is that, although it is arguable that entrepreneurship lies in cultures, education is often believed to be a key instrument in fostering an entrepreneurial spirit among young people. Hence, many countries, regardless of their level of development, have introduced entrepreneurship education in their education and training systems. The approach chosen varies from country to country. Sometimes programmes on entrepreneurship/enterprise education are introduced at a very early age in basic education. The rationale here is to create awareness in children's minds of the existence of various options in the world of work. English-speaking countries are much more advanced in this direction, as illustrated by cases such as Starting and Managing Your Own Business, the Automotive Trades Training College, Spring's College with the conversion of Far East Rand Hospital as a centre for

enterprise development, and the Informal Sector Training and Resource Network (ISTARN) for increasing employment opportunities, including self-employment for Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe respectively. Another "best practice" is Botswana's initiative of integrating HIV/AIDS education in TVET programmes (<[www.bota.org.bw/index.shtml](http://www.bota.org.bw/index.shtml)>).

The government policy framework on the Entrepreneurship Investment Programme intends to enhance skills development for increased productivity in order to stimulate economic growth and employment creation. The investment programme is managed by a steering committee under the chairmanship of the Director of Technical Education. The government continues to support the investment programme in entrepreneurship. For example, the investment programme over a five-year period is shown in Table 2.



Kenya, female students

Because of entrepreneurship initiatives, over 40% of TVET graduates in primary and secondary schools who have passed through the training become self-employed and over 20% of those who enter salaried employment also start their own businesses, hence creating jobs for others. The most popular trades are carpentry and joinery, masonry, electricity, electronics, automotive mechanics, automotive-electric, tailoring, sign-writing and dress-making, among others. This initiative has reduced the number of educated but unemployed graduates and enhanced the status and attractiveness of TVET. Furthermore, more young people than ever before envisage self-employment. This is because the prospects for employment creation in Kenya have become limited due to the sluggish annual real growth-rate that has remained at 2% during the last two decades. Poor economic performance has led to rising poverty levels.

Kenya has also experienced high population growth where approximately 40% of the total population lies within the primary and secondary education age bracket. This has implications on the provision of education and training with respect to services and employment opportunities. The formal sector has not met the challenges of employment creation. Growth in wage employment decreased from 2.1% in 1988 to *negative* 2% in 2008. About 500,000 young people join the labour force each year following national initiatives for free primary education, among other factors. A number of African countries that have had similar experiences in their economies may replicate this best practice.

Entrepreneurship was integrated into TVET education and training as part of the curriculum so that trainees could be taught business techniques, such as costing, pricing, preparing financial statements, keeping business records, marketing, preparing business plans and the like. This knowledge has helped practitioners manage their businesses, including managing the loans acquired from financiers.

The response of TVET institutions in Kenya to the continued training needs of business enterprises brings training closer

**TABLE 2: Total cost for the Entrepreneurship Investment Programme for a five-year period (millions of shillings)<sup>1</sup>**

Investment programme	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	Total
Development of a National Skills Strategy	100	85	-	-	-	185
Revitalizing artisan programmes	20	75	200	200	200	695
Enhancing access and quality in centres of excellence	50	50	350	350	350	1,150
Skills enhancement for automation and computer integration	40	45	50	50	55	240
Bursary awards	50	75	100	125	125	475
Industrial incubators (previously technology development transfer for self-employment)	20	75	105	115	125	440
Equipment	185	0	-	-	-	185
<b>Total</b>	<b>465</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>805</b>	<b>840</b>	<b>855</b>	<b>3,370</b>

<sup>1</sup> 100 Kenya shillings are equivalent to US\$1.25 (July 2010)

to the demands of the labour market. Kenya has a well-established system of involving enterprises in determining the content of training so as to make the training that young people receive more pertinent for the workplace. Unemployment in Kenya cannot be solved by training in technical skills alone. The need to link training to employment (self or paid) is at the base of the best practice and strategy. Entrepreneurship is important in enabling TVET graduates to become involved in the mainstream of the economy. Technical and entrepreneurial skills for enterprise development are thus an asset.

The following were involved in the identification of the best practices:

- > The Government of Kenya through the then Ministry of Science and Technology.
- > The Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) responsible for developing the curriculum for education and training in Kenya.
- > Industry.

- > Other stakeholders include TVET trainers and researchers, NGOs, policy-makers, the Kenya Federation of Employers, the Kenya Association of Manufacturers and the Central Organization of Trade Unions.

Rigour in the measurement of the results of best practices is achieved through performance indicators in the sector-wide approach programme (SWAP) and the inspectorate wing and Quality Assurance Department of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology. These units conduct regular and annual auditing and the preparation of reports from baseline surveys regarding best practice. The Kenya Education Sector Support Programme (KESSP) is the basis upon which the government, individuals, communities, the private sector, NGOs and development partners jointly support the education and training sector. KESSP has an inbuilt comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan with field-level officers and management bodies.

The inspectorate and quality assurance reports are measured against the performance indicators and means of verification stipulated in the log-frame provided. The reporting of the evidence was carried out by quality assurance officers in the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology and researchers in TVET.

The media used for reporting the best practice were conferences, seminars and workshop papers and reports in TVET. The source of the best practice was the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. Full bibliographical citation(s) of best practices can be found in the following citations:

- > UNESCO (2002). *Revisiting technical and vocational education and training in sub-Saharan Africa*. Paris: UNESCO.

- > Republic of Kenya (2005). *Kenya Education Sector Support Programme: delivering quality education and training*. Nairobi: Government Printer.
- > Republic of Kenya (2005). *Sessional paper no. 1, 2005*. Nairobi: Government Printer.
- > Simiyu, J. (2004). *Technology, entrepreneurship and education: African development perspective*. (A paper presented to the International Conference of the Association of Third World Studies, Baraton University, Kenya, 12–14 September 2004).

Publications, including some by UNESCO and IIEP, reporting studies carried out in sub-Saharan Africa and other series have given vivid accounts of this initiative from Kenya, as in other African countries. Various African countries have emulated

the success stories in TVET in Kenya in general and entrepreneurship education in particular, especially the one embedded in the informal sector, commonly called *Jua Kali*.

The potential benefits of best practices for TVET include:

- > The employability (both self and salaried) of graduates improved;
- > Partnerships with the private sector and industry enhanced;
- > Publicity and marketability of TVET programmes improved;
- > The status of TVET enhanced.



Woman exporter in Kenya

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#### Published by

UNESCO-UNEVOC International  
Centre for Technical and Vocational  
Education and Training

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Documents in the TVET Best Practice  
Clearinghouse can be accessed from  
[www.unevoc.unesco.org/publications](http://www.unevoc.unesco.org/publications)

#### Design

Green Communication Design inc.  
[www.greencom.ca](http://www.greencom.ca)

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ISBN: 978-92-95071-14-8

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## Conclusion

A number of lessons have been learned from the “best practice” initiative. The first lesson is that there are best practices being used in TVET that remain unknown to many people. Secondly, there is a need to start harnessing rigorous information on existing best practices and to have it documented for the benefit of all stakeholders in TVET.

There are a number of barriers to the implementation of best practices that include:

- > Self-employment, which is still viewed as a “last resort” since it is not considered as a secure way of earning a livelihood.
- > Financial restrictions: setting up small and medium enterprises requires some capital which is not readily forthcoming for those starting businesses directly after leaving school.
- > Lack of initiative and self-confidence.

It must be noted that lack of political commitment to the revitalization of entrepreneurship effort in TVET can contribute to a lack of its success.

The most obvious elements contributing to the success of best practices include:

- > The government policy in place to revitalize entrepreneurship and TVET.
- > Positive attitudes by all stakeholders: trainees, instructors, government and industry.
- > The economic status of the country.

Best practice can be implemented in TVET with ease through the following avenues:

- > The quality of the training being offered;
- > Effective partnerships with all stakeholders concerned;
- > Commitment by the government to create a conducive environment;
- > The willingness of trainees to adopt a positive attitude towards self-employment.

Best practice is affordable and, from the evidence alluded to here, the cost of its implementation is minimal. The reason why the cost is minimal is because, once the entrepreneur commences his/her own business, the system supports itself with all other variables being constant or conducive.