

Final Evaluation of UNESCO's  
Technical and Vocational Education  
and Training Strategy

2016 - 2021

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Education is UNESCO's top priority because it is a basic human right and the foundation for peace and sustainable development. UNESCO is the United Nations' specialized agency for education, providing global and regional leadership to drive progress, strengthening the resilience and capacity of national systems to serve all learners. UNESCO also leads efforts to respond to contemporary global challenges through transformative learning, with special focus on gender equality and Africa across all actions.



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## Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AfDB	African Development Bank
BEAR	Better Education for Africa's Rise
BILT	Bridging Innovation and Learning in TVET
CAF	Andean Development Corporation
CapED	Capacity-building for Education for all
CESA	Continental Education Strategy for Africa
EAC	East African Community
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ETF	European Training Foundation
FO	Field Offices
GAP-ESD	Global Action Programme for Education for Sustainable Development
GEC	Global Education Coalition
GSA	Global Skills Academy
HQ	Head Quarters
IAG-TVET	Interagency Group for TVET
IAWG	Inter-Agency Working group
IBE	International Bureau of Education
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IIEP	UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning
ILO	International Labour Organization
LEG	Local Education Group
LLL	lifelong learning
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MTS	medium term strategy
NET-MED Youth	Networks of Mediterranean Youth project
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PEFOP	Platform of Expertise in Vocational Training (Plateforme d'expertise en formation professionnelle)
RO	Regional Offices
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small Islands Developing States
STEM	science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
STEP	Skills and Technical Education Programme
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UIL	UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre	UNESCO's specialized centre for technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Bonn, Germany
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WB	World Bank
YEM	Youth Employment in the Mediterranean
YLS	Section for Youth, Literacy and Skills Development

## Key highlights



Over the past six years, UNESCO's activities in TVET have supported **50 countries worldwide**



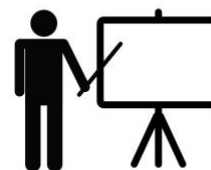
UNESCO has mobilized around **US\$ 72M for TVET**



**302 TVET institutions have benefited from UNESCO's work** through training, capacity development and the procurement of equipment



Around **5,000 TVET stakeholders were trained** (leaders, officials and experts from the private sector)



**More than 2,700 teaching staff were trained**

## Summary: overview of key conclusions

In terms of the summative assessment of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Strategy, the evaluation resulted in the following key findings.

### 1. Is the TVET Strategy based on a sound line of reasoning?

- The TVET Strategy's problem statement, overall objective and main line of reasoning remain broadly valid in 2021.
- In the implementation of the TVET Strategy 2016–2021, improvements can be seen in addressing the challenges outlined in the 2015 evaluation.
- The TVET Strategy could better guide the TVET community in stimulating TVET reforms within regions and countries.
- Institutional coordination is not part of the TVET Strategy but is regulated by each entity's mandate.

### 2. Is the TVET strategy still relevant in a changing context?

- The three topics are well embedded as key issues for TVET systems to focus on.
- The TVET strategy only loosely defines the priority areas. This ensured that the TVET Strategy remains valid for a longer timeframe.
- Important TVET topics that remain valid throughout the years and which are within UNESCO's scope, are only broadly addressed in the TVET Strategy (e.g., teachers, governance, qualifications).
- There are specific issues that should be included and emphasized in the current document, including:
  - i. Digitalization and technological developments
  - ii. Priority Africa
  - iii. TVET contribution to all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
  - iv. Excellence and innovation hubs
  - v. Migration
  - vi. Lifelong learning
  - vii. Micro/digital credentials, and
  - viii. COVID-19 and recovering strategies.

### 3. Does the UNESCO infrastructure have the capacity to implement the strategy?

- Cooperation within UNESCO improved, especially through the TVET community. However, the roles and responsibilities of different institutional players should be further defined.
- The TVET community could be strengthened by — among others — using more expertise within the TVET community; and implementing a mechanism that allows more knowledge exchange and peer learning.

- Stronger links could be established with other education sectors in UNESCO to tackle some of the educational and societal challenges (such as inclusion, mobility) and non-education sectors (culture and science).
- The partnerships, such as the TVET community, UNEVOC network and the IAG-TVET, show positive results in terms of cross-linkages, joint work, more impact.
- A clear partnership strategy would prove beneficial.
- The TVET Strategy would be stronger if there were dedicated core funding for its implementation.

#### **4. Do activities lead to the desired output, results, and impact?**

- UNESCO reaches its targets and the consultation of the 2015 Recommendation reports that many countries have made changes to their TVET policies and systems.
- Still more could be done to ensure that projects are more impactful, outside the countries directly benefitting from them.
- In order to make UNESCO outputs more usable and useful, more effort could be expended in turning outcomes into tested approaches, models, guidelines, and tools.
- The new TVET strategy could be more aligned with and supportive of the implementation of the 2015 Recommendation and better support countries in reaching the SDGs by 2030.
- In terms of formative assessment, the evaluation found the following considerations for a future TVET Strategy.

#### **1. TVET Strategy as operational document in support of with TVET Recommendation and the whole 2030 agenda**

- The new TVET Strategy key purpose is to clearly describe how UNESCO can work with Member States to advance the TVET agenda in order to comply with the 2015 TVET Recommendation and the 2030 SDGs — not only those actions related to attaining SDG 4 (specifically 4.3; 4.4; 4.5), but also other SDGs.

#### **2. TVET Strategy vision and objective: lifelong learning, inclusion, digital and greening**

- The new TVET Strategy could apply a lifelong learning perspective as a transformative, future-oriented, principle to TVET and education as a whole, stimulating flexible, modularized, personalized approaches based on quality assurance and recognition or prior learning.
- In strengthening TVET's lifelong learning focus and tackling inclusion issues, a whole system approach could be adopted. This means looking at TVET and adult learning vis-à-vis general education, higher education and society/economy, also focusing on informal TVET. It also means to looking at the societal role of TVET systems in preventing migration; disengagement with society; reduced democratic participation; violence, stemming from dissatisfaction about societal and economic developments and opportunities for young people to build a future.



- The need to work on the digital and green transformation, while already on the agenda for some time, increased in relevance even more as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- These key priorities need to be taken on board at system level but reflect also directly on individuals: every individual should have the opportunity and right to access quality TVET and develop skills that can support them in the life and work. This also suggests a key focus on more transversal skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, learning to learn, creativity, cultural awareness, and entrepreneurship.

### **3. Organizing principle of the TVET Strategy: TVET building blocks**

- In better operationalizing how UNESCO's actions support Member States in achieving the SDGs and the complying with the 2015 Recommendation, the TVET building blocks from policy to labour market integration could be used as an organizing principle to contribute to developing systems based on key priorities (lifelong learning, inclusiveness, greening and digital transformation). The set of TVET building blocks focuses broadly on governance/financing; employer engagement; labour market information and education management information systems (EMIS); occupational / qualification standards; TVET delivery; equipment and infrastructure; teachers and trainers; assessment; guidance; labour market entry and entrepreneurship; lifelong learning. Through working on the set of TVET building blocks, UNESCO can work with Member States on inclusion, greening, digital transformation, and lifelong learning.

### **4. Specific emphasis on COVID-19 pandemic recovery as a cross-cutting topic**

- UNESCO already adjusted its work to support Member States in the pandemic recovery through the Global Education Coalition; the Global Skills Academy; the adjusted UNEVOC leadership programme; and the knowledge development work. The recovery from the pandemic however requires a long-term perspective and even more coordinated action between international partners.

### **5. A TVET Strategy for the next seven years: working towards 2030.**

- Given the timeframe of the 2030 Agenda, it makes sense to consider the timeframe for a new TVET Strategy. The most pragmatic option would be to have a seven-year TVET Strategy (2022–2029) aligning the TVET strategy to the Medium-term Strategy 2022–2029, 41 C/4, followed by another TVET Strategy that goes beyond 2030.

### **6. A more structural approach to resource mobilization**

- The new TVET Strategy could include a resource mobilization approach in which proactively, project ideas could be described that seek funding.

## **7. A more regionally tailored approach: operationalizing Priority Africa.**

- In the TVET Strategy it could be foreseen to have included, or separately developed regional or sub-regional working plans, developed together with relevant development partners to formalize UNESCO's support in line with regional strategies.

## **8. Maintain current actions, but strengthen knowledge and tool development, flagship projects, peer learning and data provision.**

- Within the context of the new TVET Strategy, UNESCO can maintain its broad set of activities, related to its normative work; capacity building; policy advice; knowledge development; and project implementation. Within the general set of UNESCO activities and increased focus could be provided on knowledge and tool development; developing a flagship (research) project; peer, and policy learning; improving data availability on TVET.

## **9. Strengthen knowledge sharing and cooperation within UNESCO.**

- While there have been major improvements in cooperation, cooperation and knowledge sharing can be improved. A way is to establish a mechanism to improve the collection, sharing and analysis of insights, products, and tools across regions and organizations and support a more topic-related constructive sharing of insights and experiences.

## **10. Strengthen the UNEVOC network by adding more training institutions, stimulate peer learning and involvement at national level.**

- Within the new TVET Strategy, through peer learning, the UNEVOC network could — besides knowledge development — focus more on strengthening institutional capacities of the ministries, national bodies, training providers and research institutions in delivering TVET in support of the TVET Strategy, the TVET Recommendation and the SDGs. Furthermore, the network could be further expanded, especially with training providers, and especially in Africa. Finally, UNEVOC network members could be involved in national activities, consultations, and in piloting approaches/tools.

## **11. Further strengthen cooperation with other organizations, especially at regional and national levels**

- The IAG-TVET is largely successful in stimulating knowledge exchange between organizations active in TVET at a global level, as well as conducting and coordinating joint activities. The IAG-TVET model could be replicated at the regional level, for instance in Asia-Pacific or in Africa, involving the regional key partners and improve the coordination of TVET related work. Furthermore, an updated memorandum of understanding between UNESCO and ILO could be considered to work on TVET and skills development.

## 1. Objective of the evaluation and evaluation approach

### 1.1 Background of the review

The TVET Strategy 2016–2021<sup>1</sup> guides UNESCO's work in technical and vocational education and training. The strategy built on the 2010–2015<sup>2</sup> TVET Strategy and its evaluation conducted in 2015.<sup>3</sup> The **2015 evaluation** concluded (among other things) the following:

- UNESCO's work in TVET is highly relevant given the Organization's mandate, global economic and social developments, and national needs.
- UNESCO has shown global leadership in broadening concepts of TVET by bringing issues which are close to UNESCO's mandate, such as equity, social justice, lifelong learning, and sustainable development, into countries' TVET reforms.
- UNESCO has been successful in bringing together international organizations that are active in TVET and further expanded the global UNEVOC Network.
- UNESCO's provision of policy advice, its conceptual and normative work and its clearinghouse function are highly appreciated by different stakeholder groups.
- The evaluation mentioned challenges related to limited (human) resources; underuse of the potential of the TVET community; underuse of the global UNEVOC Network; absence of a longer-term strategic approach at country level; the missing out of (some) cooperation opportunities. Finally, the evaluation noted that the TVET Strategy document is mainly an internal document rather than a way of communicating the Organization's messages on TVET at the global, regional, and national levels.

The recommendations of the evaluation are aimed at overcoming the challenges and developing a well communicated new Strategy for TVET that consolidates UNESCO's visibility and role in the field of TVET by highlighting the Organization's unique vision for TVET, in the context of the post-2015 development agenda.

Partly based on the Evaluation of the TVET strategy in 2015, a new TVET Strategy was developed for the period 2016–2021. This **TVET strategy (2016–2021)** is structured around three priority areas:

- Priority area 1: fostering youth employment and entrepreneurship.
- Priority area 2: promoting equity and gender equality.
- Priority area 3: facilitating the transition to green economies and sustainable societies.

<sup>1</sup> UNESCO. 2016. Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), (2016–2021). <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245239>

<sup>2</sup> UNESCO. 2009. Report by the Director-General on the execution of the programme adopted by the General Conference: progress on the implementation of the strategy for technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and the revised version of the strategy. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000183317>

<sup>3</sup> Ockham IPS/ UNESCO IOS. 2015. The Evaluation of the UNESCO Thematic Area "TVET" (Technical and Vocational Education and Training).

A **mid-term review**<sup>4</sup> was conducted beginning of 2020 and recommended the following to still take on board in the final year of implementation:

1. There is no need to amend the TVET Strategy for the remaining period.
2. At an operational level, the coordination and cooperation within the TVET community could be strengthened.
3. To support the members of the TVET community, more effort could be made to ensure that the knowledge, models, guidelines, approaches, and tools developed within UNESCO-related work are more broadly available.
4. The mid-term review also provided recommendations for the post-2021 period. The mid-term review did not take into account the unfolding COVID-19 pandemic (as research work concluded end of 2019/beginning 2020).

The TVET Strategy 2016–2021 foresaw an evaluation during the last year of its implementation.

## 1.2 Objective of the evaluation

The evaluation covered UNESCO's work in the implementation of the TVET Strategy by the dedicated Headquarters TVET section (YLS), the UNESCO-UNEVOC, and by field offices. The focus was on activities carried out and results achieved during the period of the TVET Strategy and, to the extent possible, the expected activities and achievements by the end of 2021.

Based most notably on the final evaluation, UNESCO (Youth, Literacy and Skills Development, or YLS) will lead the **development of a new TVET Strategy up until early 2022**. The new Strategy will seek to further strengthen governance, financing, teachers and teaching, skills anticipation, digital skills development, greening education systems and societies and employer engagement in education.

The evaluation's specific purpose was twofold:

1. To assess progress achieved in the implementation of the TVET Strategy supported by UNESCO, and providing insights as to its relevance, the efficiency, and effectiveness of its different implementation modalities including the distribution of roles and responsibilities, as well as the sustainability of the results achieved so far.
2. To inform the proposal for a follow-up of the TVET Strategy in view of lessons learned and of the global, regional, and national debates around the 2030 development agenda.

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<sup>4</sup> Ockham IPS. 2020. Mid-term Evaluation of the "UNESCO Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), 2016- 2021"

The evaluation aimed to serve as an important learning exercise for managers and staff in UNESCO working in the field of TVET in the various entities with regards to the effectiveness of different implementation and cooperation modalities.

### 1.3 Approach and evaluation questions

The evaluation had both a summative and formative component. The emphasis in the evaluation was, however, on looking forward, in particular since a mid-term review was conducted at the start of 2020. The current evaluation took this mid-term review as a starting point and added developments, results and perspectives on UNESCO's work from the last year. In this obviously, the role of the COVID-19 pandemic was taken into account. Furthermore, a key topic was the connection between a new strategy and the SDG timeframe (2030).

Also, in line with the mid-term review the following evaluation questions guided the evaluation:

1. Is the TVET strategy still based on a sound line of reasoning?
2. Is the TVET strategy still relevant in a changing context (in particular COVID-19)?
3. Is the UNESCO infrastructure (HQ, UNEVOC, UNEVOC centres, Member States representatives, institutes, category I and II centres, regional offices, and field offices) and the partnership arrangements with others (e.g., IAG-TVET) capable of implementing the strategy?
4. Are the activities in the framework of the TVET strategy well, and efficiently, implemented and do they lead to the envisaged outputs, results and (sustainable) impact (also in terms of the 2030 Agenda of leaving no one behind)? Are they of benefit for a wider TVET community and do they add value to the TVET strategy roll-out?
  - What are achievements and challenges in mainstreaming a human rights-based approach, gender equality and equity?
  - What did UNESCO not do in relation to the TVET recommendations from 2015?
5. What opportunities and recommendations exist for a new forward-looking strategy?
  - Emerging topics
  - Implementation mechanisms
  - Improved cooperation within the UNESCO TVET community and UNESCO-UNEVOC
  - Improved opportunities for cooperation and fundraising with external partners
  - Link to SDGs and looking towards a 2030 timeframe

The mid-term review included a **reconstruction of the Theory of Change (ToC)**. Given that the time of work UNESCO conducted did not radically change in the last year, this ToC can still be taken as starting point for the current evaluation.

In the context of the mid-term evaluation, relevant literature was gathered and explored, but this needed to be updated. Therefore, the **desk research** was conducted on the basis of the materials provided by UNESCO to the evaluator. It was enriched by consultations and

interviews with the UNESCO TVET community; external stakeholders and project implementors through online focus group meetings; interviews and discussion meetings (IAG-TVET Meeting: 16 June; Building Lifelong Learning Systems International Conference the Road Ahead: Accelerating System Change UNESCO session on the global TVET agenda: 25 June, 2021).

## 2. The TVET Strategy and UNESCO's work on TVET

### 2.1 2016-2021 TVET Strategy document:<sup>5</sup> Line of reasoning<sup>6</sup>

The 2016–2021 TVET Strategy built further on the lessons learned from the previous TVET Strategy and the findings of the evaluation. As a main difference, the previous TVET strategy was based on UNESCO functions while the new TVET strategy is developed on the basis of the desired results and impacts at the Member State level in alignment with different reference points. The new TVET strategy took as key reference point the Recommendation concerning TVET (2015).<sup>7</sup>

#### From problem statement to objective

As an overall problem statement, the TVET Strategy is based on the fact that countries will need support for achieving the ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this SDG context, skills and skills development are key and TVET is expected to address the multiple demands of an economic, social, and environmental nature. At the time of the development of the new TVET Strategy, the SDGs were recently adopted and especially objective 4 is important for TVET (Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all).<sup>8</sup> As highlighted in the TVET strategy (2015), countries face different challenges related to skills:<sup>9</sup>

1. At least 475 million new jobs need to be created over the next decade to absorb the 73 million youth currently unemployed and the 40 million new annual entrants to the labour market;
2. On average, for countries in which data is available, the wealthiest 10 per cent earn 30–40 per cent of the country's total income. By contrast, the poorest 10 per cent earn around 2 per cent of the total income. Too many people, in particular women, lack opportunities for skills development and decent work. As a result of wider gender inequalities and stereotypes, TVET programmes are often gender-biased, affecting the access to and participation of women in specific occupational areas.

<sup>5</sup> This section distils the line of reasoning behind the TVET Strategy and is based on a reconstruction of the Theory of Change. This reconstruction took place on the basis of desk research and consultations with the members of the TVET community. In line with Stein, D., Valters, C., (2012), Understanding 'Theory of Change' in international development: a review of existing knowledge (LSE), the reconstruction looked at: 1) the problem statement; 2) objective; 3) common actions and inputs; 4) line of reasoning and mechanism for change. In Section 2.3 the activities and the implementation of the TVET Strategy is discussed and Section 2.4 reports on the main results.

<sup>6</sup> This section is an update of the line of reasoning as presented in the mid-term review.

<sup>7</sup> UNESCO. 2015. Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), 2015: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245178>

<sup>8</sup> While also SDG 6, 8 and 13 relate to TVET as well.

<sup>9</sup> UNESCO. 2016. Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), (2016–2021), p. 6 and further.

3. Across all development sectors there are tremendous and dynamic skills needs. Climate change represents an urgent and potentially irreversible threat but could also generate additional jobs. Digital technologies have spread rapidly in much of the world impacting all positively and negatively through lack of access and skills.

In relation to these challenges, TVET can support improvements through:

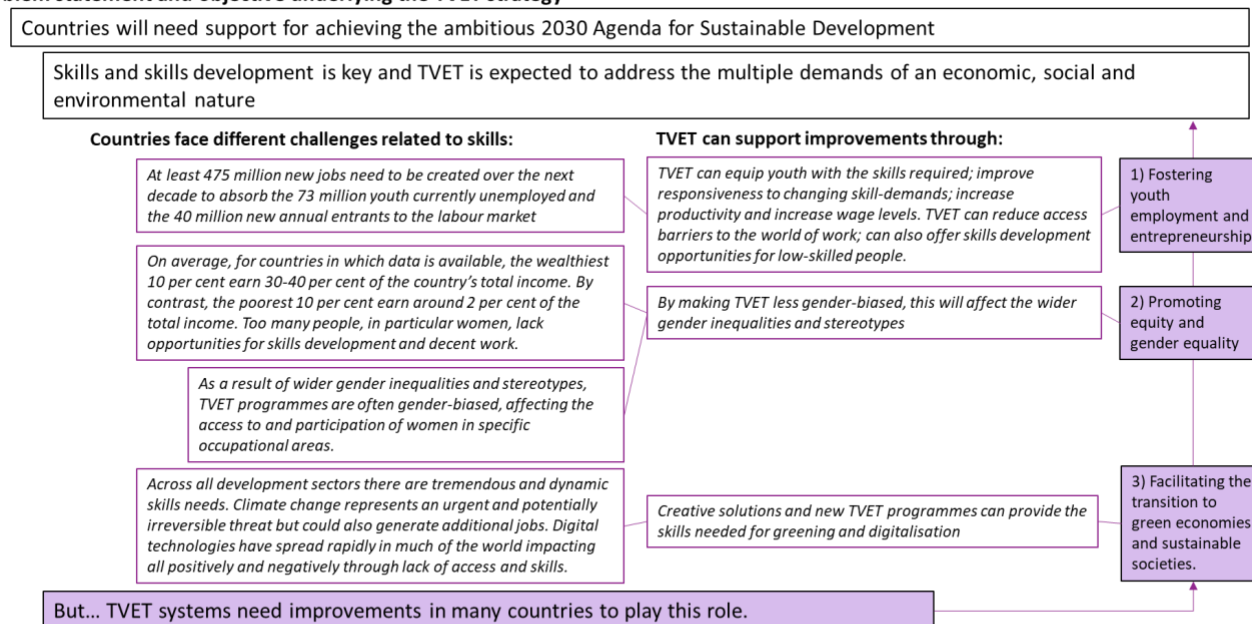
- I. Equipping youth with the skills required; improve responsiveness to changing skill-demands; increase productivity and increase wage levels. TVET can reduce access barriers to the world of work; can also offer skills development opportunities for low-skilled people. [-> **Priority area 1: fostering youth employment and entrepreneurship**]
- II. Making TVET less gender-biased, this will affect the wider gender inequalities and stereotypes. [-> **Priority area 2: promoting equity and gender equality**]
- III. Providing creative solutions and new TVET programmes can provide the skills needed for greening and digitalization. [-> **Priority area 3: facilitating the transition to green economies and sustainable societies**]

But for TVET systems to support countries in these priority areas, these systems need to see major improvements. UNESCO set itself the objective to *support the efforts of Member States to enhance the relevance of their TVET systems and to equip all youth and adults with the skills required for employment, decent work, entrepreneurship, and lifelong learning, and to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a whole.*

The line of reasoning is schematically presented in the following figure.

FIGURE 1: SCHEMATIC OVERVIEW LINKING PROBLEM STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVE

**Problem statement and objective underlying the TVET strategy**



**Aim:** to support the efforts of Member States to enhance the relevance of their TVET systems and to equip all youth and adults with the skills required for employment, decent work, entrepreneurship and lifelong learning, and to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a whole.

Source: Author.

**Actions and implementation**

The strategy provides an overview of types of interventions to be implemented in the context of the strategy. The following figure provides a schematic overview.



**FIGURE 2: OVERVIEW INTERVENTIONS UNDER THE STRATEGY**

1) Fostering youth employment and entrepreneurship	Providing evidence-based and impact-oriented advice for interventions at the national level, regional and global level
	Conduct TVET policy reviews and policy development and in-depth analysis of specific priority areas (including funding)
	Support capacity-building initiatives of national decision-makers and institutions responsible for the training of teaching of staff and managers
	Support the emergence of regional TVET agendas, peer learning and knowledge sharing.
	Encourage and support multilateral initiatives and collaborative activities that promote the transformation and attractiveness of TVET
2) Promoting equity and gender equality	Identify the most cost-effective policies to tackle inequalities.
	Support Member States to define appropriate policy measures to promote equity in and through TVET
	Develop guidelines and collect and share promising policy measures and solutions.
	Provide policy advice and capacity development to Member States to make TVET more accessible to all disadvantaged and vulnerable groups
	Work with concerned Member States in improving skills development in the informal sector and rural areas (incl learning in the workplace)
	Seek to fill knowledge gaps in understanding the issue in various economic and cultural contexts.
	Support Member States in mainstreaming gender equality when reviewing and developing TVET policies, strategies and activities
3) Facilitating the transition to green economies and sustainable societies	Foster cross-sectoral approaches that connect TVET and the other SDGs in order to support Member States in achieving a smooth transition to sustainable development.
	Develop practical tools to assist Member States in designing and implementing appropriate and effective strategies regarding the requirement, supply and use of skills.
	Support Member States to leverage digital technologies to ensure a lack of skills do not prevent countries advancing toward digital transformation
	Support countries in identifying the set of skills required
	Support Member States efforts in modernizing qualifications and curricula; training teaching staff; and reinforcing the learning and recognition of these skills in workplace settings
	Work with the ILO and other concerned United Nations Agencies to explore the complex interrelationships between the SDGs
	Support Member States in achieving a smooth transition to green economies
	Foster timely and targeted support to Member States by facilitating partnerships and synergies with different stakeholders for greening skills
	Support Member States in greening TVET by adopting a whole-institutional transformation
	UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre will develop appropriate training courses within its TVET leadership programme.
	Ensure knowledge development and sharing in the field of greening skills especially through the UNESCO-UNEVOC Network
	UNESCO-UNEVOC will strengthen cooperation with the (IAWG) on Greening TVET and Skills Development and will create opportunities for developing joint activities (GAP ESD)
	Cross-cutting interventions
Support Member States in creating national, regional and sectoral stakeholder platforms to facilitate private sector participation and communication between the world of education and the world of work.	
Conduct research and support Member States to collect and analyse data on TVET programmes' outcomes and harness the promise of the ICT revolution, including big data and open data.	
Develop guidelines for reporting on the implementation of the normative instruments.	
Strengthen international and regional cooperation and foster the UNEVOC Network and inter-agency collaboration.	
Facilitate the debate on cross-border recognition of qualifications	
5 types of common action	Support through advice and assistance
	Support through capacity building
	Support through research and monitoring
	Support through agenda setting and providing guidelines
	Support through networking and cooperation

Source: Adapted from Strategy for TVET (2016-2021), 2016.

The actions that UNESCO can take that affect the three key areas and the cross-cutting interventions are related to:

1. support through advice and assistance;
2. support through capacity-building;
3. support through research and monitoring;
4. support through agenda-setting and providing guidelines; and,
5. support through networking and cooperation.

The support is provided through policy reviews; developing guidelines; organizing conferences (regional/global meetings); providing country advise; conducting research; implementing projects; networking and organizing training workshops. Section 2.2 and 2.3 provide an overview of the key activities and achievements between 2016 and 2021.

The TVET Strategy and UNESCO activities are implemented through regular Programme budget; extrabudgetary programme budget and country contributions; the efforts of Category I institutes (and UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre and its global UNEVOC Network); the UNESCO infrastructure (HQ (Headquarters), RO (Regional Offices), FO (Field Offices), UNESCO Chairs); activities conducted by Member States; and the efforts of partners. Within UNESCO, a TVET community is established, consisting of all people within UNESCO and related institutions at global and regional levels that work on TVET. The TVET community exchanges ideas and informs each other on key developments. The main implementing bodies of the UNESCO TVET Strategy in the last three years are the following:

- **UNESCO Headquarters:** Section for Youth, Literacy and Skills Development (YLS); the Executive Office of the Education Sector for the implementation of the TVET component of the Capacity-building for Education for all (CapED) programme;
- Education Sector programme staff in UNESCO regional and national **Field Offices and Regional Offices** with a mandate in TVET as well as TVET-related project offices in other countries.
- **UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre in Bonn**<sup>10</sup>, which as a specialized Centre of the Education Sector has the status of a Section and is under the Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems just like the YLS Section at Headquarters;
- **UNESCO Category I Institutes:** UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL),<sup>11</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS),<sup>12</sup> UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP),<sup>13</sup> International Bureau of Education (IBE);<sup>14</sup>
- **IIEP–Pôle de Dakar** through the Platform of Expertise in Vocational Training (Plateforme d'expertise en formation professionnelle: PEFOP),<sup>15</sup> established in 2015, has strengthened specific expertise in vocational training in agricultural, rural, and informal sector training. As TVET is a major issue for African countries, the specific expertise related to this area will be reinforced to be able to intervene in a more substantial way on TVET analysis and planning phases.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> <https://unevoc.unesco.org/home/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://uil.unesco.org/>

<sup>12</sup> <http://uis.unesco.org/>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.iiep.unesco.org/en>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/en>

<sup>15</sup> <https://pefop.iiep.unesco.org/fr>

<sup>16</sup> IIEP. 2018. Stratégie de l'IIEP pour l'Afrique 2018/2021, p. 15.

Furthermore, UNESCO benefits from a variety of networks and partners to implement its work:

- **UNEVOC Network:** a global network of 228 TVET institutions in 149 countries (as of July 2021);<sup>17</sup>
- **UNESCO-UNEVOC TVET Forum:** an online TVET experts' community with more than 6,000 members from 180 countries (as of July 2021);<sup>18</sup>
- **Inter-Agency Group on TVET (IAG-TVET):** group of international organizations working in TVET which include UNESCO, International Labour Organization (ILO), World Bank, European Training Foundation (ETF), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), African Development Bank (AfDB), European Commission; and the respective Inter-Agency Working groups (IAWGs) on specific topics (such as on greening TVET or skills) represented by the same organizations.
- **UNESCO Chairs:** academic and research institutions and networks working on TVET.

### Overarching line of reasoning

The line of reasoning that underlies the TVET strategy 2016–2021 can be reconstructed as follows: *In order to work towards the SDGs and solving (future) skills-related challenges, UNESCO supports countries to enhance the relevance and effectiveness of their TVET systems through building capacities (i.e. providing advice and assistance, build human capacities, provide information and insight, provide guidelines and support networking and cooperation).*<sup>19</sup> The mechanism for change is to equip and support “agents of change” (i.e., TVET stakeholders and institutional infrastructure in targeted countries) with tools (guidelines), capacity-building, information, assistance, and networks so that they are better equipped to initiate and continue working on improvements in TVET systems leading to impact on the three priority areas. Through these support measures, countries are expected to improve their TVET systems that lead to results related to the identified priority areas. In this, priority area 1 (fostering youth employment) is considered the main area for action through which results in priority area 2 (equity) and area 3 (green economies) are facilitated.

## 2.2 UNESCO TVET activities in 2016–2021: Implementation

In the previous section, the types of planned actions and activities were briefly listed. In this section, we provide an overview of the types of activities that were conducted, as well as best practices and the key results UNESCO's work on TVET in 2016–2021.

In terms of the implementation of activities, UNESCO *provided upstream policy advice* in countries (through projects and policy reviews); *published* on ICT, qualifications frameworks, youth unemployment (clearinghouse); conducted *monitoring* activities (such as on the 2015 recommendation); and finally, implemented *fund-in-trust-projects* (BEAR I, BEAR II,

<sup>17</sup> [Explore the Network \(unesco.org\)](https://unesco.org)

<sup>18</sup> [About the TVET Forum \(unesco.org\)](https://unesco.org)

<sup>19</sup> See as well 38 C/5 ER 3: *Capacities of Member States strengthened to design and implement policies aiming at transforming TVET/ 39 C/5 ER2 Equitable and responsive TVET systems established to equitably equip youth and adults, both women and men, with relevant skills for employment, decent work, and entrepreneurship.*

Innovation-entrepreneur, policy design, transforming TVET, YEM, Yemen, CapED). The sections below describe more fully some key activities and outputs.

## Project implementation

UNESCO is leading a number of projects related to TVET. These are described briefly in the box below.

### CapED programme<sup>20</sup>

The objective of the CapED programme is to provide technical assistance to Member States on policy development for the creation of lifelong learning (LLL) systems and the effective delivery of relevant TVET, literacy and foundational skills programmes. Each year, decisions are taken for countries to focus on. In 2018, seven countries are supported on TVET policy reforms.<sup>21</sup> In 2019, twelve countries are supported in TVET-related capacity development.<sup>22</sup>

### Networks of Mediterranean Youth project (NET-MED Youth)<sup>23</sup>

This project was funded by the European Union (EU) and, led by UNESCO between 2014 and 2018, implemented in eight countries of the Southern Mediterranean region. The project worked with youth organizations and national institutions in beneficiary countries to help empower young women and men and help them obtain necessary skills, tools, and capacities – through enabling environments – to share experiences and knowledge and to be active citizens in their societies. The project is evaluated in 2018. The evaluation found that, overall, the NET-MED Youth Project was a successful initiative and created a momentum for Youth empowerment in the respective beneficiary countries.<sup>24</sup>

### Youth Employment in the Mediterranean (YEM)<sup>25</sup>

The YEM project is three-year regional initiative funded by the EU that UNESCO supports in seven countries, aiming to support youth employment through improved skills anticipation and assessment systems. YEM is a follow-up project of the NET-MED Youth project, building upon the achievements and further strengthen national capacities in skills assessment and anticipation in the beneficiary countries. The YEM project also established a dedicated knowledge platform: <https://unevoc.unesco.org/yem/>

### Better Education for Africa's Rise (BEAR)<sup>26</sup>

The BEAR project was implemented between 2011 and 2017 in five SADC countries with the objective to contribute to the promotion of a TVET system that is relevant to the needs of the labour market and of individuals. The BEAR project is supported by the Republic of South Korea. BEAR is positively evaluated in 2017, despite some challenges, the project led to sustainable impact in the countries.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>20</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/themes/education/caped>

<sup>21</sup> UNESCO. 2019. Annual Report 2018 The CapED Programme: Afghanistan, Benin, Liberia, Madagascar, Sudan, South Sudan, and Togo.

<sup>22</sup> UNESCO. 2020. Annual Report 2019 The CapED Programme: Mauritania, Senegal, Liberia, Togo, Benin, Chad, Sudan, South Sudan, Mozambique, Madagascar, Afghanistan, Nepal.

<sup>23</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/project/netmedyouth>

<sup>24</sup> UNESCO IOS. 2019. Evaluation of the Networks of Mediterranean Youth (NET-MED Youth) Project (2014–2018). See as well UNESCO IOS (2019), UNESCO evaluation insights. 20, Evaluation of the Networks of Mediterranean Youth (NET-MED Youth) Project.

<sup>25</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/themes/skills-work-and-life/yem>

<sup>26</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/themes/skills-work-and-life/bear>

<sup>27</sup> Ockham IPS. 2017. Final independent external evaluation of UNESCO's Better Education for Africa's Rise (BEAR) project. An overview of key achievements can be found in UNESCO (2016), Better Education for Africa's Rise THE BEAR PROJECT PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS: [https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245980\\_eng](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245980_eng)

**Better Education for Africa's Rise II (BEAR II)<sup>28</sup>**

Also supported by South Korea, the second phase was formulated in 2017 and is being implemented from 2018 to 2021. The aim of BEAR II is to strengthen access to decent employment and generate self-employment for young people, by improving the quality, relevance, and perception of the national TVET systems in the five countries (in East Africa). The mid-term evaluation in 2020 concluded that the project is highly relevant and well designed, but that it was facing implementation challenges. Despite those challenges, it seems likely that several deliverables are sustainably integrated by national stakeholders, such as revised occupational standards or curricula.<sup>29</sup>

**Skills and Technical Education Programme (STEP) Malawi<sup>30</sup>**

The objective of STEP is to empower the Technical, Entrepreneurial, Vocational Education and Training (TEVET) sector and its capacity to satisfy the economy's need for professionals through improvement of equitable and gender-balanced TEVET in Malawi. STEP is a four-years project, running from 2016 to 2020. The total budget for the programme is 32.6 million EUR. It is fully funded by the European Union. STEP is being partially implemented by UNESCO (9 million EUR) and partially by the Government of Malawi and grant beneficiaries.<sup>31</sup> The 2021 narrative report from April 2021 indicates that most results were achieved, while challenges were experienced in capacity-building for — and implementation of — guidance and counselling systems; assessing students against new standards (as a result of delays in curriculum development); having a continuous professional training strategy adopted by 2020; and approving ten entrepreneurship programmes.<sup>32</sup>

**Skills Development for Employability in Rural Areas of Uzbekistan<sup>33</sup>**

The aim of this project is to support the development of relevant skills of women and men for sustainable, diversified, and modernized agriculture in Uzbekistan. The project is funded by the European Commission (9.6 M Euro), started on September 1, 2020, and end date is August 31, 2024.

**Youth Empowerment through Technical and Vocational Education and Training in The Gambia<sup>34</sup>**

This KOICA-funded project seeks to promote and support an improved TVET system in The Gambia to give young people a better chance of finding decent employment or to create self-employment and lifelong learning opportunities to acquire skills relevant to labour market needs. The project was launched in 2019 and has a duration of four years and has a budget of roughly US\$ 2.6 million.

**Reforming TVET in Iraq I (2015–2020)<sup>35</sup>**

The aim of the project was to make TVET a key driver for Iraq's economic development by increasing the competitiveness and relevance of TVET in line with the international standards so that it can deliver quality education to young people to prepare them for wage and self-employment. The project was funded by the European Union (more than US\$ 5 million).<sup>36</sup>

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/nairobi/education/better-education-for-africas-rise-project-bear-ii/>

<sup>29</sup> Ockham IPS. 2020. External midterm evaluation (2017-2019) of the Better Education for Africa's Rise II (BEAR) II project 2017-2021, May 2020.

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.stepmalawi.com/>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.stepmalawi.com/about-step/>

<sup>32</sup> UNESCO. 2021. UNESCO STEP Narrative report: June 1, 2019 – April 30, 2021.

<sup>33</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/fieldoffice/tashkent/tvetuz>

<sup>34</sup> UNESCO Dakar — Multisectoral Regional Office for West Africa (Sahel). 2021. Progress Report for KOICA: Youth Empowerment through Technical and Vocational Education and Training in The Gambia; December 2020.

<sup>35</sup> Heikkilä, Eila. 2020. End of Project Evaluation Project: Reforming Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Iraq Reference IRQ/CFP/19/21

<sup>36</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/fieldoffice/baghdad/tvet>

Besides the projects that are either overseen by UNESCO HQ or Ros, also the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre implements specific projects. Examples are the ongoing i-hubs project and the Bridging Innovation and Learning in TVET (BILT) project (see box).

#### The i-hubs initiative<sup>37</sup>

Skills for innovation Hubs (i-hubs) was a global initiative<sup>38</sup> aimed at supporting TVET institutions to consolidate their contribution to the innovation of skills and to skills and services for innovation. The i-hubs initiative was an 18-month project (October 2018 to March 2020) started in October 2018. The defining characteristic of an i-hub (TVET institution) was its capacity to:

Lead, embed, act, and communicate sustainable institution-wide culture and capacity for innovation;

Engage strategically and actively with key stakeholders and assets from its skills and innovation ecosystem addressing the needs and opportunities for the institution to contribute to innovation;

Empower teachers and trainers to develop and deliver innovative training and learning products and processes;

Apply innovative ideas and products in the institution and in the skills and innovation ecosystem;

Draw on state of the art approaches to skills needs and innovation from an international network of i-hubs. UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre invited ten TVET institutions from across Asia-Pacific, Africa, and Europe, based on their proven experience and commitment to innovation in particular in the fields of entrepreneurship, digitalization and/or greening, to take part in the initiative.

For more information: see <https://unevoc.unesco.org/i-hubs/>

#### Bridging Innovation and Learning in TVET (BILT)<sup>39</sup>

The ambition of the BILT project is to enable exchange of experiences and peer learning across the UNEVOC Network in the thematic areas of greening, digitalization/industry 4.0, entrepreneurship and migration and new careers and qualifications. The focus is on identification, formalization and implementation of new qualifications and competencies with the objective to develop practically oriented guides for use by TVET stakeholders. The project began in March 2019 and will be finalized by the end of 2021 with the BILT learning forum and dissemination of practical guides.

For more information: see <https://unevoc.unesco.org//bilt/BILT+--+New+qualifications+and+competencies>

## Monitoring and advocacy activities

UNESCO is responsible for **monitoring education in the SDGs**. The main custodian organization to provide the data on the indicators developed in UNESCO's Institute of Statistics (UIS). Furthermore, UNESCO is monitoring the **2015 TVET Recommendation**. In 2018–2019, UNESCO launched the first consultation of the 2015 TVET Recommendation, covering the period 2015–2019.<sup>40</sup> Member States were invited to report on the steps taken

<sup>37</sup> Source: <https://unevoc.unesco.org/i-hubs/i-hubs+--+Home> and UNESCO-UNEVOC (no date), Skills for Innovation Hubs.

<sup>38</sup> Which is led by UNESCO-UNEVOC and supported by the Beijing Caofeidian International Vocational Education City (BCEC), with contributions from the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

<sup>39</sup> [www.unevoc.unesco.org/bilt](http://www.unevoc.unesco.org/bilt)

<sup>40</sup> UNESCO. 2020. UNESCO Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education and Training (2015): Results of the First Consultation of Member States conducted in 2019 on the Implementation of the Recommendation.

during this period to implement the Recommendation's principles and provisions. More specifically, Member States were invited to respond to a questionnaire, to be submitted to UNESCO, covering all the provisions of the 2015 Recommendation. This included reporting on the following:

- The scope, vision and aims of TVET in their country;
- TVET policies and strategies, focusing in particular on issues related to governance, regulatory frameworks, financing, stakeholder involvement, equity, and access;
- The quality and relevance of the TVET system, including the learning processes, TVET teachers, trainers and managers, qualification systems and learning pathways, quality assurance mechanisms and processes, and career guidance;
- Monitoring and evaluating of TVET;
- TVET-related research and knowledge management;
- international cooperation.

Aligned with the UNESCO TVET Strategy, associated institutions have their own TVET-related Strategy, such as UNESCO-UNEVOC and IIEP Pôle de Dakar.<sup>41</sup> The **UNESCO-UNEVOC MTS II (medium-term strategy)**<sup>42</sup> for 2018–2020 is thematically aligned with the UNESCO TVET Strategy. As programmatic interventions, the MTS II includes the following:

1. Developing capacity of TVET leaders
2. Supporting leaders and institutions in implementing TVET strategies
3. Generating new knowledge and developing knowledge resources
4. Strengthening network collaboration and partnerships

The review of the MTS II revealed that the implementation led to increased collaboration within the TVET community and the UNEVOC TVET Leadership Programme was instrumental in developing the capacities of TVET leaders while contributing to the overall strengthening of the UNEVOC Network. As evidenced during the evaluation process, the UNEVOC Network continues to be UNESCO-UNEVOC's greatest asset.<sup>43</sup>

The **UNESCO-UNEVOC MTS III**<sup>44</sup> for 2021–2023 built further on the previous MTS and focused on the following key programme and operational areas:

- Supporting TVET staff for a digitalized world
- Supporting TVET institutions undertaking concrete actions to address climate change
- Inclusive TVET for migrants and disadvantaged youth
- Private sector engagement
- UNEVOC Network
- Knowledge management
- Special COVID-19 response project

As the UNESCO TVET Strategy and the UNESCO-UNEVOC MTS II /MTS III are aligned, when comparing the content of the UNESCO TVET Strategy and the UNESCO-UNEVOC MTS II/MTS III, the UNESCO-UNEVOC strategies are operational in the sense that it is more targeted and

<sup>41</sup> <https://poledakar.iiep.unesco.org/fr>: IIEP (2018), Stratégie de l'IIEP pour l'Afrique 2018/2021

<sup>42</sup> UNESCO-UNEVOC. 2017. Medium-term Strategy II (MTS-II) Strategic Plan 2018–2020

<sup>43</sup> UNESCO-UNEVOC. 2020. Medium-term Strategy for 2021–2023, p. 9.

<sup>44</sup> UNESCO-UNEVOC. 2020. Medium-term Strategy for 2021–2023.

aimed towards capacitating TVET leaders in countries and institutions to improve TVET. Also, the shorter duration of the UNESCO-UNEVOC strategies make it easier to include emerging topics and address within the strategy a response to COVID-19 related TVET challenges. The UNESCO-UNEVOC MTS therefore provide an important contribution to the achievement of the overall TVET Strategy.

It is anticipated that the PEFOP will continue to develop and strengthen within the framework of the **IIEP Pôle de Dakar strategy**.<sup>45</sup> In this, the IIEP Strategy is in line with the UNESCO TVET Strategy, aimed to deliver on the same aspects in the African context.

### **TVET studies and publications (clearinghouse)**

Studies are conducted at global level through UNESCO HQ or UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre, but as well within (regional) projects and as regional level, initiated by Regional Offices.

UNESCO published newsletters on the follow-up of the Shanghai Congress (2013–2020). Furthermore, UNESCO published the following Global and regional reviews (see box). Besides the global and regional level studies and reports published by UNESCO HQ (also in cooperation with other UN organizations), UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre also conducted studies and compiled inventories on TVET.

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<sup>45</sup> <https://poledakar.iiep.unesco.org/fr>: IIEP (2018), Stratégie de l'IIEP pour l'Afrique 2018/2021



[Skilling, upskilling and reskilling of employees, apprentices & interns during the COVID-19 pandemic, 2021 \(published by ILO\)](#)

[Perspectives on policy and practice. Tapping into the potential of big data for skills policy, 2021 \(in the context of the IAG-TVET\)](#)

[Skills development in the time of COVID-19 Taking stock of the initial responses in technical and vocational education and training, 2021 \(published by ILO\)](#)

[Case study on Finnish TVET: a resilient model of training during COVID-19, 2021](#)

Synthesis report OECD-UNESCO Joint Webinar in partnership with the World Bank, ETF, and ILO Industry experience of TVET teachers in time of crisis, 2020

[Quality assurance and recognition of distance higher education and TVET, 2020](#)

[Global Education Monitoring Report 2020: Inclusion and education: All means all, 2020](#)

[UNESCO COVID 19 Education Response — TVET systems and labour markets, 2020](#)

[World reference levels, 2019](#)

[Investing in career guidance, 2019 \(in the context of the IAG-TVET\)](#)

[Global inventory of regional and national qualifications frameworks 2019, volume I: thematic chapters, UNESCO-UIL, ETF, CEDEFOP, 2019](#)

[Global inventory of regional and national qualifications frameworks 2019, volume II: national and regional cases, UNESCO-UIL, ETF, CEDEFOP, 2019](#)

[Global education monitoring report 2019. Gender report: Building bridges for gender equality, 2019](#)

[Artificial intelligence in education: challenges and opportunities for sustainable development, 2019](#)

[Reviewing Work-Based Learning Programmes for Young People in the Arab Region, UNESCO/ UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2019](#)

[Pathways of progression: linking technical and vocational education and training with post-secondary education, 2018](#)

[Digital credentialing: implications for the recognition of learning across borders, 2018](#)

[Discussion paper: making learning visible: representing skills, competencies and qualifications, 2018](#)

[Funding skills development: The private sector contribution, UNESCO, 2018](#)

[Global Education Monitoring Report, Education for people and planet: Creating sustainable futures for all, UNESCO, 2016](#)

[Global Inventory of National and Regional Frameworks 2017, Volume I: Thematic chapters, UNESCO-UIL, ETF, CEDEFOP, 2017](#)

[Global Inventory of National and Regional Frameworks 2017, Volume II: National and regional cases, UNESCO-UIL, ETF, CEDEFOP, 2017](#)

[Community-based Lifelong Learning and Adult Education, Adult Skills and Competencies for Lifelong Learning, UNESCO, 2016](#)

#### **Specifically on green skills:**

[Education for sustainable development: a roadmap, 2020](#)

[Learning knowledge and skills for agriculture to improve rural livelihoods, UNESCO – IFAD, 2016](#)

[YouthXchange Green Skills and Lifestyles Guidebook, UNESCO and UNEP, 2016](#)

#### **Specifically on digital skills:**

[Policy brief: using digital credentials to keep the promises of TVET; Technical and Vocational Education and Training, 2020, \(UNESCO New Delhi Office\)](#)

[Digital credentialing: implications for the recognition of learning across borders, 2018](#)

[Managing tomorrow's digital skills: what conclusions can we draw from international comparative indicators?, UNESCO, 2018](#)

[Working Group on Education: Digital skills for life and work, UNESCO, Intel, 2017](#)

[Using ICTs and Blended Learning in Transforming TVET, UNESCO and Commonwealth of Learning, 2017](#)

**UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre publications (selection):**

[Understanding the impact of artificial intelligence on skills development, 2021](#)

[Skills development and climate change action plans, 2021](#)

[Strengthening the Responsiveness, Agility and Resilience of TVET Institutions for the Post-COVID-19 Era, 2021](#)

[Boosting gender equality in science and technology: A challenge for TVET programmes and careers, 2020](#)

[Entrepreneurial learning for TVET institutions: a practical guide, 2020](#)

[Trends in New Qualifications and Competencies for TVET — Perspectives of the European UNEVOC Network, 2020](#)

TVET Country Profiles<sup>46</sup>

[Discussion paper on entrepreneurial learning in TVET, UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2019](#)

[Guidelines on the development of open educational resources policies, UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2019](#)

[Trends mapping - Innovation in TVET, UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2019](#)

[UNEVOC Network Collaborative research: Community engagement in TVET, UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2019](#)

[UNEVOC Network Collaborative research: Work-based Learning as a Pathway to Competence-based Education, UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2019](#)

[Greening TVET – a practical guide for institutions, UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2017](#)

A framework to better measure the return on investment from TVET, UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2017<sup>47</sup>

Below are two descriptions of UNESCO publications.

UNESCO has been leading the **World Reference Level (WRL)** expert group collaborating with Cedefop, UIL and ETF and also leads the production of the next edition of the **Global Inventory of National and Regional Qualification Frameworks**. The prototype WRL tool<sup>48</sup> the recognition of skills and qualifications was refined and a synthesis report on the pilot outcomes was prepared. UNESCO jointed efforts with the WHO Learning Academy on development of WRL to support its Learner Achievement and Recognition System and contributed to the development of the action plan of Global Partnership Skills on Migration.

UNESCO, together with the ILO and the World Bank conducted a study on **Skills development in the time of COVID-19**. The study consisted of a survey of providers of initial and continuing technical and vocational education and training, policy-makers, and social partners from around the world. The survey was launched in April 2020 and collected data from 1,353 respondents, representing 126 countries from all over the world. At a regular basis intermediate findings were published while the main report was made available in January 2021.<sup>49</sup> The key findings of the study were that while countries were largely unprepared and the switch to remote learning has been a process of learning by doing; the pandemic accelerated many changes already under way in training systems and labour markets, such as digitalization and the pandemic provided the impetus to create or strengthen public-private partnerships and collaboration in TVET. The study is an example of

<sup>46</sup> <https://unevoc.unesco.org/go.php?q=fwd2World+TVET+Database>

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/a-framework-to-better-measure-the-return-on-investment-from-tvet>

<sup>48</sup> [Pilot World Reference Levels - v.2.4 \(alchemer.eu\)](#)

<sup>49</sup> ILO, UNESCO, World Bank. 2021. Skills development in the time of COVID-19: Taking stock of the initial responses in technical and vocational education and training: [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/---ifp\\_skills/documents/publication/wcms\\_766557.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_766557.pdf)

collaboration with other organizations and swift adaptation of the organization to changing needs.

### Policy advice, country-specific support, and training activities

UNESCO provides bilateral ad hoc support to countries, but also provides systematic policy advice and training activities to stakeholders in countries. Furthermore, UNESCO supports systematic **national policy reviews**. In the 2016–2021 period, UNESCO conducted eleven reviews (see box). These reviews aim at mapping the national contexts and TVET policies in the countries. Often, they prepare the way for donors and development partners to invest in TVET systems. Furthermore, these reviews contribute to the overall knowledge base within UNESCO on TVET (and on identifying emerging issues).

#### National policy reviews 2016-2019:

Benin TVET policy review, UNESCO — 2018 (update of the 2013 policy review, funding through CapED).

[Eswatini TVET policy review](#), UNESCO — 2020

Madagascar, TVET Policy Review, UNESCO — forthcoming

Sudan, TVET Policy Review, UNESCO — forthcoming

[Grenada TVET policy review](#), UNESCO — 2020

[Kingdom of Eswatini TVET policy review](#), UNESCO — 2020

[Mongolia, TVET policy review](#), UNESCO — 2020, also available in [Mongolian](#)

[Malawi, TEVET policy review](#), UNESCO — 2019

[Uzbekistan, TVET policy review](#), UNESCO — 2019

[Zimbabwe, TVET Policy Review](#), UNESCO — 2018

[Togo, TVET Policy Review](#), UNESCO — 2017

[Saint Lucia, TVET Policy Review](#), UNESCO — 2017

[Namibia, TVET Higher Education and Innovation Policy Review](#), UNESCO — 2016

At national level, IIEP-Pôle de Dakar through the PEFOP<sup>50</sup> supports reforms in TVET in Africa to promote growth and employment. It does this through analyzing TVET policies, planning TVET strategies, supporting TVET reform implementation, building TVET stakeholder capacities, generating knowledge, sharing experiences.

In the context of different projects, workshops and training activities are implemented. Examples can be found for instance in the Arab Region where three Training of Trainers (ToT) workshops on “Youth Advocacy and Campaigning for Reducing Youth Unemployment in Lebanon” were conducted within the YEM project. This workshop aimed to promote youth participation in public policy-making by providing tools for ways to gain more influence and advocate for matters in the public arena — especially within issues of youth employment and skills development, advocate for youth employment policies, empower youth and provide them with the skills to find jobs. It targeted about 80 participants (70 per cent females), from all over Lebanon.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>50</sup> <https://pefop.iiep.unesco.org/fr>

<sup>51</sup> See for testimonials: <http://un.org.lb/english/latest-news/unesco-beirut-empowers-young-entrepreneurs-in-lebanon-success-stories-from-tot-on-youth-advocacy-for-unemployment>

The UNEVOC **TVET Leadership Programme** addresses the leadership bottleneck perceived in the change processes as supported through UNESCO.<sup>52</sup> The UNEVOC TVET Leadership Programme is a UNESCO Flagship Programme, which UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre rolls out since 2016 at three levels:

- A) Global level: ten-day programme, once a year in Bonn with max. 24 mid- to senior-level TVET experts, selected from a highly competitive application process.
- B) Regional level: five-day programme, typically two per year.
- C) National level: [Management Capacity Development Training in Malawi](#), slightly different nature and focused on school leaders and principals (in partnership with UNESCO STEP).

Participants can either be members of the UNEVOC Network (with the opportunity of sponsorship on a needs basis) or from outside of the Network (self-sponsored). The box below presents outcomes and potential results of the programme.

#### Descriptions of (potential) results

- The Alumni of the UNEVOC TVET Leadership Programme have become important actors in the UNEVOC Network. They have themselves served as experts delivering modules in regional UNEVOC TVET Leadership Programmes, they have taken a lead role in conceptualizing and implementing capacity development activities together with other UNEVOC Centres, contributing significantly to the lateral collaboration we seek to accomplish with the UNEVOC Network.
- The Alumni cohorts have developed into a peer support group. They are still actively connected and support each other with feedback to concrete requests such as curriculum development and policy-related questions.
- Potential: The alumni are change agents in their TVET institutions, who have been trained on the SDGs and the themes of UNESCO's TVET strategy. They are assets for the action of field offices in TVET though it is unclear yet to which extent they have been "utilized."

Since 2016, **204** leaders from **100** countries benefited from the programme:

- **85** attended our global programmes in Bonn (four sessions)
- **119** attended our regional programmes (five sessions: for Francophone Africa, for Eastern and Southern Africa, for Latin America, for the Caribbean, and for Asia and the Pacific)
- **23 out of 32 countries targeted by UNESCO's policy support benefited from the programme.**

For more information: see <https://unevoc.unesco.org/home/TVET+Leadership+Programme>

Some examples of the Programme's achievement over the years:

- **In 2017**, two capacity development programmes were implemented by alumni of the UNEVOC TVET Leadership Programmes, impacting North America, the Caribbean and Anglophone Africa.
- **In 2018**, an institutional memorandum of understanding has been concluded between UNEVOC Centres in the Seychelles and Sri Lanka, under the leadership of alumni in the respective institutions.
- **In 2019**, one-third of the modules of the UNEVOC TVET Leadership Programme for the Caribbean were delivered by Alumni, showing our success in transmitting a certain "spirit to move to action" over the years.

For more information: see <https://unevoc.unesco.org/home/TVET+Leadership+Programme>

<sup>52</sup> Background information on the Programme is available from [www.unevoc.unesco.org/tvetleadership](http://www.unevoc.unesco.org/tvetleadership)

The TVET leadership programme also facilitates cross-linkages and cooperation with the members of the IAG-TVET (such as OECD, ETF, Cedefop, European Commission) and other bilateral partners (such as GIZ) to contribute lectures and knowledge in several thematic areas that are not fully covered by UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre (e.g., financial through OECD or ETF; WBL by ETF; GIZ on proposal development). Furthermore, regional partnerships are sought to further roll-out the TVET leadership programme within specific regions.

In 2020, the leadership programme could not take place due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead of organizing the programme, UNESCO-UNEVOC worked with the alumni of the programme to implement a COVID-19 response. In 2021, the leadership programme is being organized in a new format. The new TVET Leadership Programme will be delivered online over a series of webinars and will focus on one thematic area (Skills for the digital transformation: How TVET institutions can respond to future demands).<sup>53</sup>

Another important development in providing training is the establishment of the Global Skills Academy (GSA).<sup>54</sup> This initiative, launched by UNESCO in July 2020 and supported by the Global Education Coalition aims to equip one million youth and adults with employability and digital skills. By March 2021, the Academy has mobilized more than 150 TVET institutions across 56 countries and access to the GSA's contributions has effectively been granted to around 67,000 individuals in 23 countries.<sup>55</sup> Also UNESCO-UNEVOC played an important role in matching TVET institutions and learners to the GSA trainings offered. Many UNEVOC Centres are beneficiaries of the GSA.

## Networking and communication

Already in 2008, UNESCO established an **Inter-Agency Group on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (IAG-TVET)** to promote knowledge-sharing and a common understanding of key matters on TVET and to ensure effective coordination of activities by international organizations involved in policy advice, programmes, and research.<sup>56</sup> The Members meet regularly (often back-to-back with global/regional conferences) and exchange on what each organization is working on in terms of TVET. Furthermore, besides knowledge exchange, the group jointly produced leaflets on work-based learning;<sup>57</sup> on career guidance;<sup>58</sup> and on big data for skills policy.<sup>59</sup> These publications, as they are

<sup>53</sup> [UNESCO-UNEVOC TVET Leadership Programme](#)

<sup>54</sup> <https://globaleducationcoalition.unesco.org/global-skills-academy>

<sup>55</sup> UNESCO. 2021. The Global Skills Academy Partners' meeting 17 March 2021: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000377256>: 23 Countries; 10 Africa; 2 SIDS; 3 MENA (Bangladesh, Benin, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Ghana, Grenada, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jamaica, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, The Philippines, Togo, Tunisia, United Republic of Tanzania)

<sup>56</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/themes/skills-work-and-life/interagency-cooperation>

<sup>57</sup> Inter-agency Group on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (2018), Investing in work-based learning. Translated in Arabic, French, and Spanish. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000260677>

<sup>58</sup> Inter-agency Group on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (2019), Investing in career guidance. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000371414>

<sup>59</sup> Inter-agency Group on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (2021), Perspectives on policy and practice. Tapping into the potential of big data for skills policy.

supported and promoted by a large group of global key stakeholders in TVET have a significant value for promoting TVET and clarifying key concepts.

All Involved UNESCO-related institutions (HQ, Section on Youth, Literacy and Skills), UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre, IIEP have in place communication strategies, dedicated communication channels and websites to engage and inform key stakeholders. Examples are the UNESCO Youth, Literacy and Skills websites<sup>60</sup> and the UNEVOC Network Portal (see box).

#### **UNEVOC Network Portal**

This portal provides an overview and access to the UNEVOC Network. In 2019, a centrally managed database was established. In this database, Network members can manage their key information through an online dashboard, including an institutional self-profiling. For the first time, UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre offers an advanced search which allows identifying UNEVOC Centres according to thematic or collaboration interests, for example, which allows for much easier way to identify potential partners or collaborators.

In the past, collaboration with UNEVOC Centres had to be initiated based on the (sometimes limited) knowledge of individuals, which led to overemphasizing collaboration with Centres that were already in contact. While personal knowledge of UNEVOC Centres is still an important factor, better knowledge of the UNEVOC Centres' profile has increased the potential for fruitful collaboration. This is also a resource that UNESCO colleagues could use more.

For more information: see [www.unevoc.unesco.org/portal](http://www.unevoc.unesco.org/portal)

Furthermore, as part of networking, but also developing new knowledge, put on the table new issues and anticipate (future) debates on TVET, UNESCO and its partners organize **global and regional conferences** allowing broad groups of stakeholders to share ideas, learn and network. Examples are:

- UNESCO-ETF (with the collaboration of the ILO, EBRD and UNICEF) Building lifelong learning systems: skills for green and inclusive societies in the digital era 21–25 June 2021 (UNESCO).<sup>61</sup>
- BILT Online conference on Bridging Africa and Europe: New Qualifications and Competencies in TVET 15–16 June 2021 (UNESCO-UNEVOC).<sup>62</sup>
- UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development 17–19 May 2021 (UNESCO).<sup>63</sup>
- BILT Online conference on Bridging Asia-Pacific and Europe: New Qualifications and Competencies in TVET 27–28 April 2021 (UNESCO-UNEVOC).<sup>64</sup>

<sup>60</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/themes/skills-work-and-life>

<sup>61</sup> [Building lifelong learning systems: skills for green and inclusive societies in the digital era | ETF \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>62</sup> [Online conference on Bridging Africa and Europe: New Qualifications and Competencies in TVET \(unesco.org\)](#)

<sup>63</sup> [UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development](#)

<sup>64</sup> [Online conference on Bridging Asia-Pacific and Europe: New Qualifications and Competencies in TVET \(unesco.org\)](#)

- UNESCO-UNEVOC Virtual Conference on Skills for a resilient Youth 6–14 July 2020 (UNESCO-UNEVOC).<sup>65</sup>
- UNEVOC Virtual conference on New Qualifications and Competencies in TVET 1–12 June 2020 online (UNESCO-UNEVOC).<sup>66</sup>
- UNESCO-UNEVOC Global Forum: Advancing Learning and Innovation in TVET 2–3 December 2019 in Bonn, Germany (UNESCO-UNEVOC).<sup>67</sup>
- UNEVOC TVET Learning Forum on managing Skills in a time of disruption 24–25 May 2018 in Bonn, Germany (UNESCO-UNEVOC).<sup>68</sup>
- International conference on Technical and Vocational Education and Training. Skills on the move: global trends, local resonances: 4–6 July 2017 in Tangshan, People's Republic of China (UNESCO).<sup>69</sup>

### 2.3 Results of UNESCO's work on TVET

As presented in Section 2.2, UNESCO's work in the context of the TVET Strategy 2016–2021 resulted in many publications, projects, reviews, training workshops, and conferences. In this section, we look at whether this all contributed to the objective of the TVET strategy (results and impact). In looking at the results and impact, we first focus on the number of people and institutions that benefited from UNESCO interventions (selection); then we assess the achievements in relation to the TVET strategy and action plan; this is followed by an assessment of the achievements in relation to the UNESCO overall objectives; then, we look at how UNESCO's work under the TVET strategy relates to wider results and impact; and finally, the achievements in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic are discussed.

#### Achievements in relation to specific projects and approaches

To shed light on how many individuals and institutions benefited from UNESCO's support, in this section, the number of beneficiaries of some of the UNESCO and UNESCO-UNEVOC projects and training programmes is presented:

- The **BEAR I and BEAR II** projects reached the following results between 2011 and 2021:
  - Number of TVET teachers trained: 861 (BEAR I); 713 (BEAR II).
  - Number of TVET institutions supported (training, capacity development, equipment): 13 (BEAR I); 51 (BEAR II).
  - Number of other TVET stakeholders (leaders, officials, private sector) trained/supported: 613 (BEAR I); 720 (BEAR II).

<sup>65</sup> [Virtual conference on skills for a resilient youth \(unesco.org\)](https://unesco.org)

<sup>66</sup> [Virtual Conference on New Qualifications and Competencies in TVET \(unesco.org\)](https://unesco.org)

<sup>67</sup> [UNESCO-UNEVOC Global Forum: Advancing Learning and Innovation in TVET](https://unesco.org)

<sup>68</sup> [UNESCO-UNEVOC TVET Learning Forum: Managing TVET in a time of disruption](https://unesco.org)

<sup>69</sup> [International conference on Technical and Vocational Education and Training. Skills on the move: global trends, local resonances \(unesco.org\)](https://unesco.org)

- The **CapED programme** (selected projects on TVET) reached the following results between 2016–2020:
  - Number of national stakeholders involved in, and with the knowledge and skills for, evidence-based TVET policy development: 1,325.
  - Number of stakeholders trained on the collection, processing and analysis of comprehensive and data on TVET: 1,021.
  - Number of TVET institutions with quality assessment frameworks and improvement plans: 62.
  - Number of TVET stakeholders trained for the development and revision of up-to-date, gender-sensitive and context-specific curricula and learning materials that include foundational, vocational and entrepreneurial skills: 744.
  - Number of TVET teaching staff including trainers, master-craftsmen and tutors in companies trained in the delivery of relevant quality TVET programmes: 608.
  - Number of learners, and percentage of girls and women among them, with access to skills development opportunities that incorporate foundational skills and relevant labour market oriented skills: 4,437.
  
- The **YEM project** provided capacity-building to at least:
  - Teachers: 180
  - Students: 14,400
  
- The **TVET Leadership Programmes** reached the following number of beneficiaries since 2016:
  - Number of leaders/ managers/ TVET staff trained under various TLP approaches (combined): 592 TVET leaders/managers/TVET staff, from 95 countries.
  - Number of UNEVOC centres benefited through training: 89.
  
- The **UNEVOC Thematic workshops and consultations** reached the following results between 2017 and 2020:
  - Number of TVET staff engaged/ sensitised: 200.
  - Number of institutions / UNEVOC Centres participated: 87.

As a rough estimate, only referring to these projects and training initiatives, UNESCO provided training to **at least 7,577 teachers and other TVET stakeholders; 18,837 learners; and 302 TVET institutions.**

### **Achievements in relation to the plan of action for the implementation of the TVET strategy**

The plan of action for the implementation of the TVET strategy identified expected results and related targets. These are mentioned in Table 1.



TABLE 1: PLAN OF ACTION TVET STRATEGY — EXPECTED RESULTS AND TARGETS.

	Expected results	Targets
A. Fostering youth employment and entrepreneurship	Youth and adults in Member States are equipped with the skills required for employment, decent work, entrepreneurship, and lifelong learning	At least 30 Member States have benefited from UNESCO's support
	Member States' stakeholder capacities have been strengthened and result in more responsive TVET systems	At least 20 Member States have benefited from UNESCO's capacity development support and 100 stakeholders benefited from UNEVOC TVET leadership programme.
	Enhanced regional cooperation in TVET through UNESCO facilitation and coordination with Regional Economic Communities and other regional bodies	At least 6 regional entities supported by UNESCO
	Increased exchange of information and experience among Member States engaged in TVET reform, facilitated by UNESCO, including through UNEVOC Network	At least 100 UNEVOC centres have benefited from UNESCO-UNEVOC's Clearinghouse and Knowledge Management Programme and network engagement.
B. Promoting equity and gender equality.	Disadvantaged groups have better access to TVET	At least ten Member States have benefited from UNESCO's targeted support
	Member States' stakeholder capacities have been strengthened and result in progress towards gender equality in TVET	At least ten Member States have benefited from UNESCO's support in mainstreaming gender equality in TVET
C. Facilitating the transition to green economies and sustainable societies.	Skills development strategies that support the transition to green economies and sustainable societies have been developed by Member States	At least 10 Member States have benefited from UNESCO's support
	Member States' stakeholder capacities, including leaders, teaching staff, social partners and civil society have been strengthened	100 TVET leaders and stakeholders have benefited from capacity building support
	Member States' stakeholder capacities have been strengthened in leveraging digital technologies for skills development, employment, and entrepreneurship	At least 10 Member States have benefited from UNESCO's support

A more specific monitoring mechanism should have been put in place to provide information on the achievements in relation to the expected results and targets. There is more aggregated information about the number of countries supported and UNEVOC Centres established, as indicated in relation to C/5.

### Achievements in relation to C/5

The TVET Strategy 2016–2021 is linked to UNESCO's monitoring and reporting system (SISTER). For the period **2016–2017** (37/38 C/5), the TVET Strategy was linked to Expected Result (ER) 3: *Capacities of Member States strengthened to design and implement policies aiming at transforming TVET*. As of end of 2017, during the four-year period (2014–2017),

UNESCO supported policy reviews, development, and implementation through regular programme and extrabudgetary funded programmes. As indicated in SISTER, overall, 1,000 TVET leaders and teaching staff benefited from UNESCO's capacity development interventions and 29 countries benefited from this support, including 20 African countries and two SIDS countries. In addition, UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre created professional development and capacity building opportunities for key TVET actors and provided trainings to 44 TVET leaders from 19 countries.

For the period 2018–2021 (39/40 C/5), the TVET Strategy is linked to ER2: *Equitable and responsive TVET systems established to equip youth and adults, both women and men, with relevant skills for employment, decent work, entrepreneurship, and lifelong learning*. In relation to this expected result at global level indicators are formulated together with target values. The table below provides an overview of the implementation by end of 2021. As can be concluded, UNESCO performs well on all performance indicators, reaching higher achievement values than targets for 2020–21.

TABLE 2: RESULT MATRIX C/5 2018-2019 EXPECTED RESULTS 2

Performance indicators	Baseline as stated in 39 C/5	Targets 19 (39 C/5)	Targets 20/21 (40 C/5)	Achievements January 2020	Achievements December 2020
Number of countries with policies revised to equip youth and adults, women, and men, with the skills required for employment, decent work, entrepreneurship, and lifelong learning, in line with the 2015 TVET recommendation.	8 countries (of which 5 in Africa and 1 SIDS) Note: The TVET strategy (2016–2021) foresees 30 countries, with 10 countries per biennium.	30 countries (of which 15 in Africa and 3 SIDS)	15 countries (of which 7 in Africa and 2 SIDS)	30 countries (of which 14 in Africa and 2 SIDS)	42 COUNTRIES - 18 countries in Africa: (10 BEAR beneficiaries: 5 in Eastern Africa and Southern Africa, respectively), Liberia, Togo, Benin, Chad, Sudan, South Sudan, Eswatini, Zimbabwe. - 11 SIDS (Grenada, St. Lucia, Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Niue, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Federated States of Micronesia, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands).
Number of countries which have taken measures to ensure greater access to TVET for disadvantaged groups and mainstream gender equality in TVET.	8 countries (of which 5 in Africa and 1 SIDS)	10 countries (of which 4 in Africa and 1 SIDS)	10 countries (of which 5 in Africa and 2 SIDS)	10 countries (of which 4 in Africa and 1 SIDS)	- 8 MENA countries (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Israel). - 5 other countries (Afghanistan, Iraq, Uzbekistan, Myanmar, Mongolia)
Number of countries with capacities strengthened and skills development strategies developed to facilitate the transition to green economies.	8 countries (of which 3 in Africa and 1 SIDS)	10 countries (of which 5 in Africa and 2 SIDS)	10 countries (of which 5 in Africa and 2 SIDS)	10 countries (of which 4 in Africa and 1 SIDS)	
Number of UNEVOC Centres benefitting from TVET programme and enhancing knowledge sharing and learning among Member States.	22 UNEVOC Centres (of which 5 in Africa and 2 SIDS) Note: The TVET strategy (2016–2021) foresees 100 UNEVOC Centres, with about 30 per biennium.	100 UNEVOC Centres (of which 30 in Africa and 10 SIDS)	120 UNEVOC Centres (of which 30 in Africa and 10 SIDS)	134 UNEVOC Centres (of which 16 in Africa and 13 in SIDS).	229 UNEVOC Centres (of which 59 in Africa and 28 in SIDS). <sup>70f</sup>

Source: System of Information on Strategies, Tasks and the Evaluation of Results (SISTER), UNESCO, 2021.

<sup>70</sup> As of June 2021: [Explore the Network \(unesco.org\)](https://unesco.org)

## Wider results and impact

As the TVET Strategy aims to *support the efforts of Member States to enhance the relevance of their TVET systems and to equip all youth and adults with the skills required for employment, decent work, entrepreneurship, and lifelong learning, and to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a whole*, whether UNESCO succeeded in this depends on whether countries indeed implemented reforms to their TVET systems. The 2019 consultation on the 2015 TVET recommendation reports that the majority of states (89 countries responded to the consultation) reported changes, especially related to governance (74 per cent of states), learning sites (64 per cent), educational levels (60 per cent) and lifelong learning (58 per cent). Just under two-thirds (64 per cent) of States reported that the 2015 TVET Recommendation is reflected in their TVET legislation, policies, and strategies to a moderate or full extent.<sup>71</sup>

Although it is difficult to provide conclusive evidence that UNESCO's work directly caused countries to work on TVET reform (this always takes place in the complex interplay with governments, developing partners and others), larger UNESCO interventions in for instance Malawi (BEAR I, CapED, policy review, STEP) suggest that UNESCO heavily contributed to the effort. Furthermore, the external evaluations of UNESCO projects that cover TVET-related projects are generally positive about the effectiveness, impact, and sustainability: the projects contributed to developments in the benefitting countries; supported capacity-building and establishment of networks. The box below presents indications from external evaluation reports on UNESCO projects' effectiveness and impact.

### **Evaluation of Capacity Development for Education for All (CapEFA) Programme:**

"There is evidence that the programme has fostered conditions enabling an increased level of national ownership by further rolling out policies and strategic plans, or by scaling up pilot projects using other national or external funding. [...] CapEFA has established effective and functional linkages within the education sector, such that outputs are managed and used for the education system by education actors at national and local level."<sup>72</sup>

### **Final independent external evaluation of UNESCO's Better Education for Africa's Rise (BEAR) project:**

"The BEAR project led to sustainable impact in all counties. It supported reforms in curriculum development, introduced skills competitions, improved access to TVET and supported the development of MIS. Results are mainstreamed in regular policy, or there are plans to scale up the approach."<sup>73</sup>

### **Evaluation of the Networks of Mediterranean Youth (NET-MED Youth):**

"At the outcome level, the achievement of the expected results has contributed to realising the objectives of the Project, namely improving access and effective participation of youth in developing and implementing national strategies and policies affecting young women and men in ENP South countries through improved capacities of youth and the government counterpart

<sup>71</sup> UNESCO. 2019. Results of the 1st First Consultation of Member States on the Implementation of the UNESCO Recommendation on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (2015) (draft, provided by UNESCO HQ).

<sup>72</sup> ICON Institut. 2016. Evaluation of UNESCO's Capacity Development for Education for All (CapEFA) Programme ED/EO/SPM/bm/14/19, p. 52–53.

<sup>73</sup> Ockham IPS. 2017. Final independent external evaluation of UNESCO's Better Education for Africa's Rise (BEAR) project, p. 38

(although to a lesser extent), the development of networks, effective interaction with the media and use of ICT platforms. The Project has also made effective contribution to reducing the fragmentation of efforts and harnessed the potential of youth in affecting democratic transitions towards active citizenship, political participation, economic contribution and social inclusion.”<sup>74</sup>

**External midterm evaluation of the Better Education for Africa's Rise II (BEAR) II project 2017-2021**

“Midway through the implementation, it seems likely that several deliverables are sustainably integrated by national stakeholders, such as revised occupational standards or curricula. In arriving at these deliverables, in line with conclusion 5, BEAR II could do more to contribute to building institutional capacities of stakeholders to produce such outputs by themselves after the project implementation.”<sup>75</sup>

Finally, in general, UNESCO's efforts over the last years have resulted in an increased awareness of the importance of TVET and the need for additional developing partners and governments to work in this area. This hints to the idea that indeed UNESCO's work has been instrumental to support the efforts of Member States to enhance the relevance of the TVET systems.

### **Adaptation to COVID-19 and support to countries**

Confronted with a global education crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and associated school closures, UNESCO was able to redirect its activities to providing support to Member States. Furthermore, activities, also within projects, were continued in online modality to the extent possible. One of the most noticeable actions of UNESCO is the launched the Global Education Coalition, bringing together more than 175 members from the UN family, civil society, academia, and the private sector working on three flagships, namely connectivity, teachers, and gender.<sup>76</sup> The Global Skills Academy (GSA) is also linked to this initiative. Furthermore, the UNEVOC TVET Leadership Programme managed to adapt its approach and through digital means was able to reach out to a wider group of medium-level TVET leaders and offer them capacity building. In terms of knowledge production, UNESCO, together with ILO and the World Bank launched the study on Skills development in the time of COVID-19, improving the data situation on the impact of the pandemic on skills development.

<sup>74</sup> UNESCO IOS. 2019. Evaluation of the Networks of Mediterranean Youth (NET-MED Youth) Project (2014–2018), p. 52.

<sup>75</sup> Ockham IPS. 2020. External midterm evaluation of the Better Education for Africa's Rise II (BEAR) II project 2017–2021, p. 6.

<sup>76</sup> [Global Education Coalition \(unesco.org\)](https://unesco.org)

### 3. Summative assessment

#### 3.1 Is the TVET Strategy based on a sound line of reasoning?

In this section, we reflect on whether the TVET Strategy is based on a sound line of reasoning and whether the Theory of Change is still valid. For this, the links between the problem statement, overall objective, mechanism for change, actors, inputs, and results are examined (as described in Chapter 2). These reflections are based on the discussions during the TVET community workshops in Bonn (December 2019) in the context of the mid-term review; additional interviews and online consultations with stakeholders in June 2021; and a critical review of the related documentation.

- The TVET Strategy's problem statement, overall objective and main line of reasoning remain broadly valid in 2021. TVET increasingly became seen as an important mechanism for national developments and innovation. UNESCO has been able through its work on TVET to support countries in developing better TVET systems that respond to the challenges. The combination of knowledge development (and dissemination), advocacy, national interventions, networking, and cooperation, allows UNESCO to be a key global player in TVET and at the same time work directly with countries, stakeholders and developing partners to support TVET developments in countries.
- The TVET Strategy is in the first place an UNESCO-internal programmatic document and supports UNESCO and related institutions (the TVET community) to focus on TVET and within it, on the specific priority areas. While priority areas 1 (youth employment) is the driver for the other areas (equity, greening), also in terms of the activities implemented, priority areas 2 and 3 remind the TVET community that these aspects need to be taken into account when working on reforming TVET systems. The TVET Strategy could provide more guidance in aligning non-TVET sections (adult learning; higher education) and non-education sections within UNESCO that touch upon TVET (science, culture).
- While the TVET Strategy is a clear reference document for the TVET community that is complementary to other programmatic documents (such as the C5 documents), it could better guide the TVET community in stimulating TVET reforms within the regions and countries. The document should be more operational for this specific purpose and would need contextualization to regional or national challenges. One could consider whether this should be the purpose of a global TVET Strategy, but there is clearly a need for a regional level interpretation of what the global strategy means at regional level (e.g., a regional level working document).
- Institutional coordination (between UNESCO HQ, RO, FO, UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre, IIEP etc.) is not included in the TVET Strategy but is regulated by the mandate of each entity. This regulation through the mandate could be operationally supported by including institutional coordination in the TVET Strategy.

Currently, the strategy does not indicate roles and responsibilities and how the members in the TVET community work together towards a common goal. In terms of institutional coordination between different levels, between UNESCO at all levels (including FO) and the UNEVOC Network improvements could be made that benefit the implementation of the strategy and related activities.

- In terms of products and outputs, UNESCO could do more in translating knowledge into tools and guidelines that can be used by stakeholders, but members of the TVET community as well. Also, in terms of updating the website with recent publications and events further efforts could be made.
- The 2015 evaluation of the previous TVET Strategy mentioned challenges related to limited (human) resources; underusing the potential of the TVET community; underusing the global UNEVOC Network; absence of a longer-term strategic approach at country level; missing out on (some) cooperation opportunities; the TVET Strategy document is mainly an internal document rather than a way of communicating the Organization's messages on TVET at the global, regional, and national levels. In the implementation of the TVET Strategy 2016–2021, main improvements can be seen related to the challenges mentioned in the 2015 evaluation, such as the improved coordination within the TVET community; the use of the global UNEVOC Network and that the TVET Strategy is more a guiding document for the Member States compared to the previous TVET Strategy. Nonetheless, these challenges could still be considered when designing a new post-2021 strategy.

### 3.2 Is the TVET strategy still relevant in a changing context?

In this section, a reflection is provided on the relevance of the TVET Strategy in a changing context. This relates to assessing whether the topics addressed by the TVET Strategy are still valid and whether there are topics that are important, but not captured in the strategy. These reflections are based on the discussions during the TVET community workshops in Bonn (December 2019) in the context of the mid-term review; additional interviews and online consultations with stakeholders in June 2021; and a critical review of the related documentation.

- The TVET Strategy priorities on fostering youth employment and entrepreneurship; promoting equity and gender equality; facilitating the transition to green economies and sustainable societies, reflect the aims of TVET as stated in the 2015 Recommendation concerning TVET.<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, it is aligned to the analytical lenses for transformative TVET systems as described in the UNESCO key publication *Unleashing the Potential: Transforming Technical and Vocational Education and*

<sup>77</sup> UNESCO. 2016. Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) 2015.

*Training*,<sup>78</sup> namely the economic growth lens; the social equity lens; and the sustainability lens. The three topics are well embedded as key topics for TVET systems to focus on.

- The TVET strategy only loosely defines the priority areas (youth employment, equity, and greening) and leaves sufficient room to define more concrete topics to work on. This ensured that the TVET Strategy remains valid for a longer time period but has as downside that the TVET Strategy cannot be used as a guiding document for TVET reforms. It could be considered to take — in line with the 2015 Recommendation — the three topics as objectives of TVET systems (cross-cutting themes) and to base a future TVET strategy more on the value-chain of TVET systems: policies; employer engagement; labour market information; occupational/qualification standards; TVET delivery; TVET assessment; guidance and labour market entry; lifelong learning.
- Important TVET topics that remain valid throughout years are not specifically addressed in the TVET Strategy, such as TVET teachers, governance, qualifications, employer engagement in TVET, and quality. The actual work UNESCO is doing on these important TVET topics should be further reflected in the TVET Strategy text.
- While the line of reasoning behind the TVET Strategy is still valid, specific aspects should be further included in the current document. These topics either were already important but came more to the foreground (for instance digitalization, priority Africa, lifelong learning), or became more important in the period 2016–2021 (for instance migration, distance learning, and resilience of TVET systems). An overview of topics that should have received more attention in the strategy includes:
  - 1) Digitalization and technological developments:** while this is mentioned in the document, the extent to which digitalization impacts on TVET delivery, both offering opportunities and challenges, should be further addressed in the TVET Strategy. Within UNESCO's activities however, digitalization and for instance digital credentials (in relation to qualifications) are addressed.
  - 2) Priority Africa:** The UNESCO priority on Africa is not explicitly addressed and operationalized in the TVET Strategy document. The reason for this is that the TVET Strategy is a global strategy and therefore does not explicitly refer to regional approaches. In terms of activities implemented however, the Priority Africa is clearly visible (for instance in project work, national reviews, and the institutional organization by creating PEFOP in Pôle de Dakar).
  - 3) Excellence and innovation hubs:** An emerging topic in recent years is the contribution of TVET to innovation and excellence. In recent years, policy initiatives have been undertaken to establish Centres of Vocational Excellence

<sup>78</sup> UNESCO. 2015. Unleashing the Potential: Transforming Technical and Vocational Education and Training.



and to better acknowledge how TVET institutions can contribute to innovation instead of only training craftsmen.<sup>79</sup>

- 4) **Migration:** This topic dominated political debates between 2015–2019 and TVET surely has a role to play in dealing with migration-related issues. TVET might offer better job prospects (reduce need to migrate); and systems could be put in place to value and validate TVET qualifications across borders. While migration was not explicitly included in the TVET Strategy document, this did not prevent UNESCO from working on the issue.
  - 5) **Lifelong learning:** TVET and skills development are not only relevant for young people, but for older learners and workers as well. While this is acknowledged within UNESCO (for instance at UIL), lifelong learning and CVET could benefit from more attention in project work and policy support.
  - 6) **Micro- and digital credentials:** The education and training landscape is changing, and one specific factor is the emergence of alternative credentials, but offered by the formal TVET providers, but by other organizations, often linked to the tech sector. These digital credentials are part of a wider development towards more modular, flexible, and small-scale training linked to some form of recognised credentials. Micro-credentials put a new perspective on how to deal with qualification frameworks and how to integrate them in skills development systems in a useful manner.<sup>80</sup>
- COVID-19 pandemic recovery: The TVET Strategy from 2015 did not — obviously — address the COVID-19 pandemic; UNESCO's work however did. UNESCO was able to quickly re-orient its work to better understand what was going on in TVET systems around the world; what are the main challenges and what could be done in terms of recovery. UNESCO makes a strong plea to investing more recovery funding into education and training.
  - While there is a strong link between the TVET Strategy and the 2030 agenda, the role of TVET in achieving all SDGs could be better thematized; not only linking the Strategy to SDG 4, but also making substantive links to SDG 5, 8, 9, 11 and 12.

### 3.3 Is the UNESCO infrastructure capable of implementing the strategy?

In this section, a reflection is provided on the capacity of the UNESCO infrastructure to implement the TVET Strategy. The assessment is related to whether the UNESCO infrastructure (HQ, UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre, UNEVOC Network, Member States representatives, institutes, category I and II centres, regional offices, and field offices) and the partnership arrangements with others (e.g., IAG-TVET) is capable of implementing the strategy. These reflections are based on the discussions during the TVET community workshops in Bonn (December 2019) in the context of the mid-term review, as well as

<sup>79</sup> See for instance the European Commission initiative on Centres of Vocational Excellence (in Erasmus plus): [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/actions/centres-of-vocational-excellence\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/actions/centres-of-vocational-excellence_en); UNESCO-UNEVOC launch of the Skills for Innovation Hubs project: [https://unevoc.unesco.org/i-hubs/hubs\\_launch\\_2019](https://unevoc.unesco.org/i-hubs/hubs_launch_2019)

<sup>80</sup> See as well: UNESCO. 2018. Digital Credentialing: Implications for the recognition of learning across borders.

additional interviews and online consultations with stakeholders in June 2021, and a critical review of the related documentation.

- Within the context of the TVET Strategy and in recent years, the cooperation within UNESCO improved, especially throughout the TVET community. There is a group of persons in different UNESCO related organizations with expertise in TVET that are fully aware of the organizations' TVET Strategy and the respective roles and responsibilities. Compared to the outcomes of the previous evaluation, the human resources working on TVET in UNESCO have improved, both quantitatively and qualitatively.
- As indicated in the context of the line of reasoning of the TVET Strategy, the roles and responsibilities of different institutional players should be outlined more clearly. Furthermore, there is a need for more regional level coordination. An internal coordination mechanism within the TVET community could be helpful to define roles and responsibilities and better coordinate efforts at the regional and national level (also bringing together UNESCO FOs and UNEVOC network partners). However, the infrastructure for implementing the TVET Strategy is not static and should allow flexibility and capacity-building on existing and emerging expertise.
- The TVET community could be strengthened by using more expertise within the TVET community (before hiring external consultants); having regular (i.e., monthly) calls to coordinate TVET-related work; having a database or other format to store solutions to different national challenges (guidelines, tools, models, etc.); and implementing a mechanism that allows more thematic-wise knowledge exchange and peer learning.
- Related to the institutional coordination, the TVET Strategy would be stronger if there was dedicated core funding for the TVET Strategy implementation. Currently, there is only regular budget and extrabudgetary funding that is earmarked for specific activities. There should be non-earmarked extrabudgetary funding that can support the coordination of the Strategy implementation. This lack of regular budget funding creates challenges in implementing the activities; ensuring availability of TVET expertise in the field; organizing knowledge exchange and learning within the organization; and challenges UNESCO's ability to respond to emerging challenges and (funding) opportunities.
- With the growing awareness of the importance of TVET for national economies and societies, also the demand for support of UNESCO to countries increased. This increased demand calls for a similar increase in financial resources. Although other developing partners stepped in the TVET area as well, there is still a mismatch between demand and possibilities for support, especially when it comes to supporting more upstream policy advice.
- Stronger links could be established with other education sectors in UNESCO to tackle some of the education- and society-wide challenges (such as inclusion, mobility) and links can also be established with non-education sectors (culture and science; sustainability and peace education) as TVET also relates to culture (values, craft,

heritage, inclusion), and science (greening, innovation). Linking TVET to these other areas can make TVET more relevant in the 2030 perspective and could support resource mobilization.

- Partnership is a key word in the TVET Strategy implementation. No organization alone can make a sustainable impact on TVET systems in countries. There is a need to work in partnership within UNESCO and outside UNESCO. The TVET community, UNEVOC Network, and the IAG-TVET are built on this idea. These partnerships show positive results in terms of cross-linkages, joint work, more impact. The box below showcases two examples of cross-linkages between organizations.

#### **Cross-linkages between institutional partners**

A good practice where cross-linkages among UNESCO entities are used to reach results could be the **Youth and Employment Mediterranean project**, funded by the EU and implemented by UNESCO (HQ's YSL section and UNESCO Beirut). UNESCO-UNEVOC's role to establish and manage a new regional Knowledge Platform and involvement of the UNEVOC Centres in the project in the YEM project participating countries were embedded in the project design (Component 3) and the project is indeed contributing to strengthening collaboration among HQ, Regional Bureau and UNESCO-UNEVOC.

For more information: see <https://unevoc.unesco.org/yem/>

Other cross-linkages between UNESCO entities can be found in the **UNEVOC Leadership programme**. For the global UNEVOC TVET Leadership Programme application information is routed to UNESCO Regional and Field Offices to allow them to make high-potential individuals these offices aware of the programme. Several participants have already been identified this way, e.g., from Iraq. Furthermore, during the UNEVOC TVET Leadership Programme, some key modules of the programme are delivered by UNESCO colleagues from HQ, allowing them to mainstream their most important focus areas with the participants. These include modules on TVET policy review and policy building blocks, but also Artificial Intelligence/Digitalization. UNESCO-UNEVOC covers other key aspects, such as Greening TVET. Finally, after the Programme, the list of alumni is shared with the UNESCO Regional and Field Offices, inviting them to involve the trained participants in their activities. For the regional UNEVOC TVET Leadership Programme all regional UNEVOC TVET Leadership Programmes are carried out on request of UNESCO Regional or Field offices, are co-developed and co-funded. Furthermore, while UNESCO-UNEVOC provides the general framework of the UNEVOC TVET Leadership Programme, each regional UNEVOC TVET Leadership Programme is custom tailored to the needs in the region as articulated by the partnering Regional or Field office. The modules are selected in close collaboration with the regional or field offices to tackle the most relevant regional challenges. For the national Programme in Malawi, it provided UNESCO-UNEVOC with an opportunity to collaborate closely with UNESCO STEP at the national level.

For more information: see <https://unevoc.unesco.org/home/TVET+Leadership+Programme>

- While partnership is key for the TVET Strategy implementation, a clear partnership strategy should be established. UNESCO is working with many stakeholders at the national, regional, and global level. A partnership strategy could better describe what the roles and responsibilities are of UNESCO related organizations; what expectations are of other stakeholders (for instance within the UN family); and finally, how

different types of stakeholders could contribute to implementing the TVET Strategy. Within the IAG-TVET, first steps have been taken to review the TVET interagency coordination. At the local level, UNESCO could support the Local Education Group (LEG) and the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) mechanisms and enhance Member States donors' coordination capacities, where necessary.

### 3.4 Do activities lead to the expected output, results, and impact?

In this section, a reflection is provided on the activities implemented under the TVET Strategy. It assesses whether the activities in the framework of the TVET strategy are well implemented and whether they lead to the expected outputs, results, and impact. Furthermore, reflections are provided on whether they are of benefit for a wider TVET community and whether they add value to the TVET strategy roll-out. Chapter 2 presented the activities and results (Section 2.2. and 2.3). These reflections are based on the discussions during the TVET community workshops in Bonn (December 2019) in the context of the mid-term review, additional interviews and online consultations with stakeholders in June 2021, and a critical review of the related documentation.

- As evidenced in Section 2.2, UNESCO is involved in a broad range of activities. These activities are implemented by different UNESCO-related organizations. According to available data (Section 2.3), UNESCO has reached its targets and the consultation of the 2015 Recommendation reports that many countries have made changes to their TVET policies and systems.
- While there is broad consensus that with limited resources, UNESCO is able to deliver, there is also concern that activities and organizations should be linked further as more can be achieved when cross-linkages are sought. There are positive examples to learn from, such as the UNEVOC TVET leadership programme and the YEM project.
- A large part of UNESCO's budget for working on TVET is linked to specific projects (CapED, BEAR I/II, YEM, Net-Med Youth, STEP, Uzbekistan, Reforming TVET in Iraq). It is within these projects that substantial work can be done in terms of knowledge development (guidelines, models, tools); capacity-building; networking etc.) that should be of benefit to an audience outside the direct beneficiary countries. While this is successful in some projects, still more could be done to ensure that projects lead to greater impact. For example, this might involve emphasizing further country buy-in; having a clear idea of concrete next steps after a pilot approach is implemented (does it inform policy development; can it be scaled up?), but also increasing the involvement of the UNEVOC centres, Chairs, and other UNESCO-related organizations, to establish cross-linkages and mainstream project results.
- In terms of results, there is a general consensus that UNESCO's work on TVET supported TVET developments in countries. With limited resources, UNESCO appears to be able to provide a conducive environment for TVET policies to be improved. This relates to providing knowledge, tools, and guidelines; providing advice, building capacity, implementing projects, and finally stimulating developing partners to invest

in TVET in countries. Regarding the latter, the policy reviews are seen as a solid basis for other developing partners to invest in countries (see for instance the example of Malawi, Uzbekistan).

- The monitoring and evaluation frameworks allow insights in the results and impact of the individual UNESCO activities and link them to the TVET Strategy implementation, C/5 programming documents and SDGs. However, this monitoring framework should enable countries in monitoring the contribution of TVET to achieving the SDGs.
- In order to make UNESCO outputs more usable and used, additional efforts could be put into turning outcomes into tested approaches, models, guidelines, and tools. These approaches could be applied by the members of the TVET community, and by other stakeholders as well.
- The new TVET strategy could be more aligned and supportive to the implementation of the 2015 Recommendation and support countries better in reaching the SDGs by 2030. The new TVET strategy does not have to be a normative document as the normative aspect is already clearly covered by the Recommendation and SDGs; the TVET strategy could be the operational vehicle for UNESCO to support countries in reaching the state objectives.

## 4. Considerations for a new TVET Strategy

Based on the summative assessment and the reflections gathered on the forward-looking aspects in the consultation among UNESCO staff members and external experts, the following considerations are provided for a new TVET Strategy.

### TVET Strategy as operational document in support of with TVET Recommendation and the whole 2030 agenda

- The new TVET Strategy key purpose is to **clearly describe how UNESCO can work with Member States to advance the TVET agenda in order to comply with the 2015 TVET Recommendation and achieve the SDGs in 2030**. The TVET Strategy is not a blueprint for reform, or in itself a normative instrument, but an operational document that identifies priority areas for UNESCO to support Member States and indicates what kind of actions can be expected by UNESCO to support Member States.
- The TVET Strategy should be clearly positioned within the SDG agenda. This means that not only the actions in TVET related to reaching SDG 4 (specifically 4.3; 4.4; 4.5), but also the **contribution of TVET to other SDGs besides SDG 4**, for instance when it comes to promote sustainable agriculture (SDG 2); promoting productive employment and decent work (SDG 8); promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation (SDG 9).

### TVET Strategy vision and objective: lifelong learning, inclusion, digital and greening

- The three key topics as included in the 2016–2021 TVET Strategy remain broadly valid. These are based on the key publication “Unleashing the Potential: Transforming Technical and Vocational Education and Training,”<sup>81</sup> namely the economic growth lens; the social equity lens; and the sustainability lens; and also echo the 2015 TVET Recommendation objectives. In this context, the new TVET Strategy could **apply a lifelong learning perspective as a transformative, future-oriented, principle to TVET and education as a whole, stimulating flexible, modularized, personalized approaches based on quality assurance and recognition of prior learning**. Society and economy require continuous skills development, upskilling, and reskilling. TVET systems, and wider skills development systems need to take this principle into account in rethinking their systems: are our policies, qualifications, way of TVET delivery still aligned to what is needed in society and economy? In operational terms this means that qualifications, credentials, and world reference levels should be positioned as key topic given on the one hand the relevance of the topic (related to migration; telework; lifelong learning); and on the other hand, the unique position of UNESCO covering the whole education sector.

<sup>81</sup> UNESCO. 2015. Unleashing the Potential: Transforming Technical and Vocational Education and Training

- In **strengthening the lifelong learning orientation to TVET and supporting tackling inclusion issues, a whole-system approach could be adopted.** This means looking at the position of TVET and adult learning vis-à-vis general education; higher education and society/economy, also focusing on informal TVET. It also means looking at the societal role of TVET systems in preventing migration; disengagement with society; reduced democratic participation; violence, stemming from dissatisfaction about societal and economic developments and opportunities for young people to build a future.
- The need to work on the **digital and green transformation**, while already on the agenda for some time, increased in relevance even more as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic showed that the use of digital tools for learning is an essential aspect in any learning context. Furthermore, greening, and sustainable development are changing the way of working and learning and TVET systems should fully incorporate this perspective to prepare (future) workers for a green economy and society, contributing to a sustainability-oriented mindset and behaviour of learners.
- These key priorities need to be taken on board at the system level but also reflect directly on individuals: **every individual should have the opportunity and right to access quality TVET** and develop skills that can support them in both life and work. In this context, these key priorities determine what individual learners need to be equipped with through TVET. Besides the occupational-oriented skills and competences, the skills, and attitudes to maintain agility and flexibility, and ability to adjust to changing work and society circumstances are at the centre of TVET skills development. This suggests a key focus on more **transversal skills** such as critical thinking, problem solving, learning to learn, creativity, cultural awareness, and entrepreneurship.
- The orientation on key priorities can be taken as objectives of good TVET systems and be covered as cross-cutting topics within the TVET Strategy. In this way, the TVET strategy can provide a clear link to the 2015 TVET Recommendation (see box), while going a step further in operationalizing how UNESCO works with Member States to reach these objectives.

#### Recommendation concerning TVET 2015

##### Vision

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

##### Aims

5. To empower individuals and promote employment, decent work, and lifelong learning. TVET contributes to developing knowledge, skills, and competencies of individuals for their employment, careers, livelihoods, and lifelong learning. TVET helps individuals to make

transitions between education and the world of work, to combine learning and working, to sustain their employability, to make informed choices and to fulfil their aspirations. TVET contributes to social cohesion by enabling individuals to access labour market, livelihood, and lifelong learning opportunities.

6. To promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth. TVET contributes to the effectiveness of organizations, the competitiveness of enterprises and the development of communities. TVET is labour market-oriented, anticipates and facilitates changes in the nature and organization of work, including the emergence of new industries and occupations, and scientific and technological advances. Through promoting entrepreneurship, TVET supports self-employment and the growth of enterprises.

7. To promote social equity. TVET contributes to the equality of learning opportunities and socioeconomic outcomes including gender equality. TVET creates attractive and relevant learning opportunities for populations of all social, economic, and cultural backgrounds. TVET is inclusive and does not tolerate any form of discrimination. TVET contributes to developing knowledge, skills and competencies that promote responsible citizenship and democratic participation.

8. To promote environmental sustainability. TVET integrates principles of environmental sustainability and fosters environmental responsibility through the promotion of a critical understanding of the relations between economy, society and the environment so as to promote sustainable consumption and production patterns. TVET contributes to the development of knowledge, skills and competencies for green occupations, economies, and societies. TVET contributes to the development of innovations and technological solutions needed to address climate change and to preserve environmental integrity.

### Organizing principle of the TVET Strategy: TVET building blocks

- In better operationalizing how UNESCO's actions support MS in achieving the SDGs and the complying with the 2015 Recommendation, the **TVET building blocks from policy to labour market integration could be used as organizing principle to contribute to developments towards systems based on key priorities (lifelong learning, inclusiveness, greening and digital transformation)**. While working on these priorities through the set of TVET building blocks, many still unresolved issues for Member States' TVET systems can be taken on board. Furthermore, given changing contexts, TVET systems need to continuously reflect on the set of TVET building blocks to see whether the system is still fit for purpose.
- After stating the objective and vision of the TVET strategy (including the cross-cutting priorities), the organizing principle of the TVET strategy should allow better recognition of expertise and ongoing development within UNESCO but also allow better recognition of what UNESCO is working on by countries and development partners. While working on these priorities, many still unresolved issues for Member States' TVET can be taken on board (such as private sector engagement), but on the other hand, emerging topics can be taken on board as well. The set of TVET building blocks focuses broadly on the following elements as presented in the box.



**TVET building blocks**

- **Governance/financing:** A TVET system needs the supporting legislative and financial frameworks to work effectively. This can relate to adjusting legal framework to better support TVET developments; but also reforming (financial) frameworks to stimulate lifelong learning (for instance in supporting individual entitlements to learning, or individual learning accounts).
- **Employer engagement:** A TVET system requires the engagement of the private sector. This not only in the take up of graduates or indicate labour market needs; but also, in the development of qualification standards; delivery of TVET (work-based learning) and developing TVET policies.
- **Labour market information and education management information systems:** Information, data, and analysis of the TVET system, society and the labour market is essential to improve it and to respond to emerging needs and challenges. Information about labour market demands need to be used to inform the development of occupational / qualification standards and curricula.
- **Occupational/qualification standards:** Qualifications will have to be developed and renewed based on the involvement of all stakeholders and on up-to-date information on needs. Furthermore, the role of qualifications might need rethinking in the context of developments related to lifelong learning and digital-, and micro-credentials. Work on qualifications is also closely linked to procedures related to quality assurance and recognition of prior learning and experience.
- **TVET delivery:** Teaching, training, and learning are obviously key the TVET and more and more makes use of blended learning modalities, combining school-based and work-based learning; and combining offline and online learning. Furthermore, TVET delivery can look at the learning pathway, being more modularized, balancing formal, non-formal and informal learning.
- **Equipment and infrastructure:** For TVET delivery, the infrastructure needs to be in place. This relates for instance to workshops in schools; making infrastructure available in companies; and digital infrastructures.
- **Teachers and trainers:** Teachers and trainers are key to quality TVET delivery, and their skills and competences need continuous updating and development to ensure quality TVET. This does not only involve pedagogy, didactics, and the use of new digital tools, but also understanding changes and developments in the occupational context.
- **Assessment:** TVET delivery leads to assessments that should lead to qualifications that are trusted in society and the labour market. This means that the assessments need to be able to assess the learning outcomes achieved.
- **Guidance:** This relates to guidance and counselling while learners, but also relates to the orientation on the labour market. Guidance is important in better preparing TVET learners for the labour market and also in preventing drop-out from learning.
- **Labour market entry and entrepreneurship:** TVET should lead to job insertion or entrepreneurship so that TVET graduates have the opportunity to build their future and contribute to developing society and the economy. This also relates to supporting rural areas and the informal economies in large parts of the world.
- **Lifelong learning:** TVET graduates will need re- and upskilling throughout life and requiring TVET systems to be opened up to adults, allowing moving in and out of education systems throughout life.

Through working on set of TVET building blocks, UNESCO can work with Member States on inclusion, greening, digital transformation, and lifelong learning. For instance, inclusion needs to be addressed in all elements of the TVET building blocks; it relates for instance to obtaining the right information to identify underserved groups and to developing gender sensitive qualifications and curricula.

### Specific emphasis on COVID-19 pandemic recovery as cross-cutting topic

- UNESCO already adjusted its work to support Member States in the pandemic recovery through the Global Education Coalition; the Global Skills Academy; the adjusted UNEVOC leadership programme; and the knowledge development work. The recovery from the pandemic however requires a long-term perspective and even more coordinated action between international partners. It also creates momentum to solve unresolved challenges and to stimulate reforms of TVET systems. For this reason, a specific emphasis should be given in the TVET Strategy to the COVID-19 pandemic recovery and resilience of TVET systems.

### A TVET Strategy for the next seven years: working towards 2030

- Given the timeframe of the 2030 Agenda, it makes sense to **consider the timeframe for a new TVET Strategy**. There are different options: firstly, to have a short-term TVET Strategy focusing on the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and preparing the ground for a final push to 2030 (2022–2025). This shorter TVET Strategy can then be followed up with a Strategy towards 2030. Secondly, the Strategy could cover a longer period towards 2030 with specific work plans and a mid-term review to adjust the work plans. Thirdly, there is the option to consider a seven-year TVET Strategy (2022–2029), followed by another TVET Strategy that goes beyond 2030. While 2030 is the key reference point now, TVET developments will continue afterwards and an overflow into the post-2030 period could support Member States in the transition into the post-2030 period. Given these three options, the most pragmatic option would be the third. This allows sufficient time to implement the TVET Strategy, while maintaining momentum working on TVET and allowing timely adjustments to changing circumstances. It also aligns the timeframe of the TVET Strategy to the Medium-term Strategy 2022–2029, 41 C/4. The new TVET Strategy (2022–2029) should include an emphasis on the recovery from the pandemic. The following strategy could focus also in the post-2030 period and identify new priorities and directions for this period.

### A more structural approach to resource mobilization

- UNESCO's financial resources are limited, especially when it comes to its regular budget for implementing the TVET Strategy, hampering UNESCO's coordinating abilities and prominence at the global and regional level. It also hampers UNESCO's ability to be agile and to quickly adapt to changing circumstances. A specific budget allocated to the implementation of the TVET Strategy would be desirable. Inspiration could be taken from the Global Action Programme for Education for Sustainable

Development (GAP-ESD) approach, where a Japanese fund-in-trust supports the implementation of the Global Action Programme for Education for Sustainable Development.<sup>82</sup> Furthermore, the new TVET strategy could be more operational and could refer to a resource mobilization plan or a description of projects UNESCO seeks funding for. This could for instance, already providing two or three descriptions of potential projects clearly indicating why UNESCO would like to implement these projects; how it benefits the countries involved and what is the benefit at the regional/global level. Furthermore, positioning TVET more as a driver to reach many of the SDGs and work on cross-cutting issues could support the mobilization of extrabudgetary funds.

### A more regionally tailored approach: operationalizing Priority Africa

- While the UNESCO TVET Strategy is in the first place an operational document guiding UNESCO's work with Member States, it presents a global approach that could be better fitting with regional approaches and priorities. In the TVET Strategy it could be foreseen to **have included, or separately developed regional or sub-regional working plans, developed together with relevant development partners**, to formalize UNESCO's support in line with regional strategies. In any case, a specific approach could be provided for Africa, indicating how UNESCO works with countries in achieving the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA); the Continental Strategy for TVET to Foster Youth Employment;<sup>83</sup> the Mahe Process;<sup>84</sup> and the Agenda 2063. Each region can have its own relevant set of regional and global level partners to cooperate with. This also requires further strengthening of the UNESCO infrastructure in Africa with more TVET expertise; better coordination between the active UNESCO entities; and further strengthening of the UNESCO-UNEVOC network in Africa by including more TVET institutions and even more support them to integrate new developments in TVET. Furthermore, in Africa, UNESCO could develop stronger regional level partnerships with key stakeholders, such as the African Union, African Development Bank, ECOWAS, EAC, SADC, but also the ILO.

### Maintain current actions, but strengthen knowledge and tool development, flagship projects, peer learning and data provision

- Within the context of the new TVET Strategy, UNESCO can maintain its broad set of activities, related to its normative work; capacity building; policy advice; knowledge development; and project implementation. Many initiatives can be continued and even further strengthened such as capacity-building and providing training through the UNESCO-UNEVOC centre, but also the Global Skills Academy. Within the general set of UNESCO activities an increased focus could be provided for:
  - 1) **Knowledge and tool development:** this involves making better use of the in-house expertise through more thematic, practically oriented knowledge

<sup>82</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/gap>

<sup>83</sup> AU. 2018. Continental Strategy for Technical and Vocational Educational and Training (TVET) to Foster Youth Employment

<sup>84</sup> [http://www.unesco.org/new/en/member-states/single-view/news/the\\_mahe\\_process\\_on\\_the\\_roll\\_eastern\\_africa\\_is\\_uniting/](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/member-states/single-view/news/the_mahe_process_on_the_roll_eastern_africa_is_uniting/)

gathering throughout UNESCO with the aim of developing targeted tools, based on good practice, for countries to solve practical challenges. This can also involve joint work with other partners, for instance within the IAG-TVET, but also at regional/local level.

- 2) **Developing a flagship (research) project.** This project could focus more on the future of TVET, also to look beyond 2030 already preparing for the post-2030 period. A potential topic could be on making TVET future-proof: what needs to change to make TVET adjustable to changing demographics (mobility, migration), technological and environmental changes and serving people in lifelong learning? This could include thematic work on, for instance, World Reference Levels; inclusion; and informal TVET.
- 3) **Peer and policy learning.** While UNESCO is strong in supporting policy reviews and has the convening power to bring countries together, this capacity should be fully explored to facilitate peer review, peer learning and policy exchange between countries. While this is facilitated in the context of projects, this could be further strengthened within and outside projects, while also involving the UNESCO-UNEVOC network.
- 4) **Improving data availability on TVET.** To understand developments and to be able to support Member States, it is key to further improve data situation to track developments in countries on key topics and support monitoring towards the SDGs.

While implementing activities, UNESCO needs to maintain agility in taking up externally funded projects. These projects should respect the UNESCO principles and focus in TVET and should lead to results that support the implementation of the UNESCO TVET Strategy and supports other countries as well as the directly benefitting countries. **Within project implementation, UNESCO could secure countries' buy-in even more and improve clarity about next steps of piloted approaches:** does it provide input for policy development/reform, or does it require upscaling within a region/country? If the latter, clarify what is the commitment of the country, UNESCO, and the donor, when a pilot approach is successful.

### Strengthen knowledge-sharing and cooperation within UNESCO

- As concluded, through the establishment of the TVET community, the cooperation and knowledge exchange between UNESCO HQ, the regional offices and field offices, the UNESCO-UNEVOC international centre in Bonn; UNESCO Category I Institutes, and IIEP-Pôle de Dakar improved. Still, cooperation and knowledge-sharing can continue to be improved. One way would be to **establish a mechanism to improve the collection; sharing and analysis of insights, products and tools across regions and organizations and support a more topic-related constructive sharing of insights and experiences.** In this again, the set of TVET building blocks could be used: policy; employer engagement; labour market information; occupational/qualification standards; TVET delivery; equipment; teachers and trainers; assessment; guidance; labour market entry; and lifelong learning. It is possible that within the TVET

community, different working groups could be established that focus on one or two of these issues and ensure that information is consistently gathered and streamlined.

### **Strengthen the UNEVOC network by adding more training institutions, stimulate peer learning and involvement at national level**

- By many interviewees, the UNEVOC network is mentioned as a big asset as it allows UNESCO to work directly in a large range of countries with institutions involved in TVET. In reality however, the network activities are highly dependent on a small number of strong and active centres. Within the new TVET Strategy **the UNEVOC network could — besides knowledge development — through peer learning, focus more on strengthening the institutional capacity** of ministries, national bodies, training providers and research institutions in delivering TVET in support of the TVET Strategy, the TVET Recommendation and the SDGs. Furthermore, the network could be further expanded, especially with training providers, and especially in Africa. This to create a more homogeneous group of centres and increase the potential for mutual learning and peer review. Finally, UNEVOC network members could be involved in national activities; consultations and in piloting approaches/tools.

### **Further strengthen cooperation with other organizations, especially at the regional and national levels**

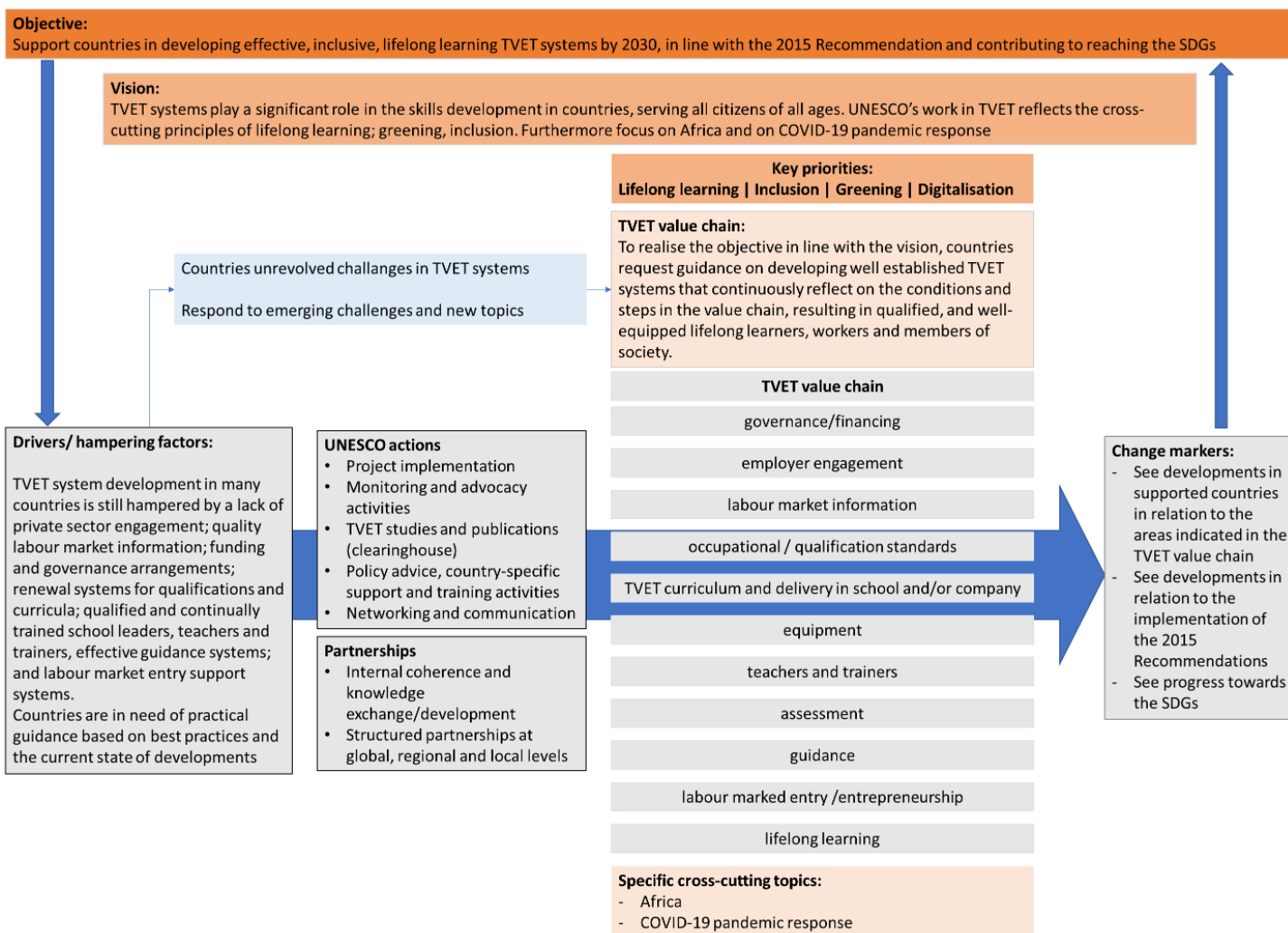
- The IAG-TVET is largely successful in stimulating knowledge exchange between organizations active in TVET at a global level and coordinating activities. The model of **the IAG-TVET could be replicated at the regional level**, for instance in Asia-Pacific or in Africa, involving the regional key partners and improve the coordination of TVET-related work. It is also recommended that it explore other, regionally focused, cooperation mechanisms with key partners such as the ADB, CAF, IDB and the AfDB.

Furthermore, consideration could be given to an updated memorandum of understanding between UNESCO and ILO in working on TVET and skills development and involving each other in regional and local work. The role of the UNEVOC centres in this cooperation should also be considered.

### **Summative overview of potential key elements of the new TVET Strategy**

The figure below provides a schematic overview of the potential key elements of a new TVET Strategy in line with the provided considerations.

**FIGURE 3: POTENTIAL ELEMENTS OF A NEW TVET STRATEGY**



Source: Author.

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# Final Evaluation of UNESCO's Technical and Vocational Education and Training Strategy

This evaluation reviewed the implementation of the TVET Strategy 2016-2021 that guided UNESCO's work in technical and vocational education and training. Based on desk research and consultations with more than 60 peoples, the evaluation concluded that the strategy remained relevant, was capable to adjust to changing circumstances (COVID-19) and led to results in terms of countries improving their VET systems. A next strategy could learn from some of the weaknesses of the current one, amongst others focussing more on lifelong learning, inclusion, digital and greening, better operationalising how UNESCO's actions support Member States in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the complying with the 2015 Recommendation, and strengthen knowledge sharing and cooperation within UNESCO.

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