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Global
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Report



Virtual conference on inclusive TVET

Virtual conference report

UNESCO-UNEVOC TVeT Forum, 1 to 12 July 2019

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This virtual conference was held as a contribution to the 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report of UNESCO under preparation

Virtual conference report **AT A GLANCE**



The Salamanca Statement which was adopted at the World Conference on Special Needs Education in 1994 marked a watershed in the development of inclusive education. In addition, Sustainable Development Goal 4 on Education calls on Member States to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'. On the one hand, the international community, national governments, civil society organizations and regional bodies have been mobilizing efforts to ensure that the needs of all persons are met in education and training. Inclusive education, on the other hand, varies in policies and practices across and within countries due to different interpretations of it and feasibility of carrying it out. It is important to understand these differences and efforts being made towards inclusion in TVET.

The virtual conference on inclusive education was held from 1 to 12 July 2019. It was open to all members of the UNESCO-UNEVOC TVeT Forum, an online community with more than 6100 members. The conference provided a platform for participants to share their knowledge and experiences about inclusive TVET in their countries. In addition, it sought to gather information about the state of inclusive TVET in different contexts. The information is relevant for all stakeholders because the vision of inclusive education requires that TVET is organized differently to enhance access, participation and achievement of all persons that were previously excluded or at risk of being excluded. This includes altering existing policies and legislative instruments, learning environments, teacher training and attitudes towards inclusion.

It also aimed to contribute to the upcoming 2020 issue of UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring Report which focuses on inclusion in education.

Key reflections

Inclusive TVET is broadly defined in many countries

The definitions of inclusive TVET in participants' countries encompassed the participation of all persons regardless of background.

Poor legislation and inadequate resources to deliver inclusive TVET increase the risk of exclusion of vulnerable persons

While many countries are signatories to international conventions on the rights of persons to education, their implementation of these are hampered by inadequate funds, legislations and policies.

Accessible learning environments are needed to make TVET inclusive

This key reflection emerged from contributions that showed that the poor state of learning environment is a barrier to inclusive TVET.

Teachers need support to operate in inclusive environments

Teachers are important agents who need resources, skills and knowledge to be inclusive practitioners.

Partnerships are key to promoting inclusive TVET

This reflection explains the responsibility of everyone that is governments, associations, employers, parents, students and all members of society in the process towards inclusion.

Systemic solutions are required to aid transitions from TVET to work

The difficulties that graduates encounter in transitioning from education and training are rooted in many factors, ranging from inadequate relevant training to jobless growth economies.

Background

Article 26 of the Declaration of Human Rights. 'Everyone has the right to education'

Every young person and adult has the right to education and training – this has been well established and recognized in numerous international policy frameworks, including UNESCO's Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960). Inclusion also features prominently in Sustainable Development Goal 4 on Education, which calls on Member States to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'. The goals contain a number of targets under SDG4 relevant to technical and vocational education and training (TVET), including Target 4.3 that ensures 'equal access for all women and men to affordable quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university'. This is critical; due to its link to the labour market, TVET plays an important role in many countries as an enabler for social mobility, helping young people and adults' transition to employment and decent work.

Earlier discussions on inclusion in education and training, such as those that took place at the World Conference on Special Needs Education (1994) that culminated in the Salamanca Statement, focused on persons with disability or special education needs. However, more recent concepts of inclusion in education focus on all learners including groups that are excluded or at the risk of being marginalized. The upcoming UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report on 'Inclusion and Education' (2020) – UNESCO's flagship publication and comprehensive, analytical and authoritative reference for the global follow-up and review of education – puts particular focus on 'the poor and the most disadvantaged, including working children, remote rural dwellers and nomads, and ethnic and linguistic minorities, children, young people and adults affected by conflict, HIV/AIDS, hunger and poor health and those with special learning needs' (UNESCO, 2018, p.4).

This virtual conference focused on inclusion in TVET and provided an opportunity for the TVET community to discuss and share knowledge and experiences in this area. The conference enabled participants to understand different aspects of an inclusive system; from policies and strategies to learning environments and the role of stakeholders (as well as others).

Insights gained from the virtual conference will contribute to the preparation of the 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report on 'Inclusion and Education'.



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Overview

The aim of the virtual conference was to:

- Discuss where TVET systems stand when it comes to ensuring inclusiveness, with special focus on particularly vulnerable groups
- Deepen understanding of issues and identify suitable measures to support inclusive TVET
- Gather insights and evidence from the international TVET community to contribute to the UNESCO's 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report under preparation

The following topics were opened for discussion during the virtual conference:

Thread 1: What is understood by inclusive TVET?

What is meant by inclusion in TVET? While discussions in this virtual conference were guided by the definitions used for the forthcoming 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report, countries may have different understandings of inclusive education and training for various reasons. This thread was used to understand how inclusive TVET is conceptualized in different contexts. Participants were asked the following questions:

- How is inclusive education and training defined in your country?
- What different groups are particularly vulnerable?
- Are there any groups of people that are prioritized and if so, could you explain why?

Thread 2: National legal frameworks and policies/strategies for inclusive TVET

Laws, policies, and strategies are very important for ensuring inclusive TVET. They demonstrate governments' commitments while also providing the framework within which actions can be taken and followed through by stakeholders. The aim of this thread was to understand how the legal and policy frameworks in place at national levels promote inclusive TVET. This was explored through the leading questions below:

- How is inclusive and equitable education addressed in legal frameworks and policies?
- Is there a specific legal framework or national strategy that aims to make TVET inclusive?
- Which stakeholders are involved in the development and implementation of such legal frameworks and policies/strategies?

Thread 3: Inclusive learning environments – learning environment, curricula and learning materials and assessment

While policies and strategies can provide a framework, access to and full participation and achievement in education and training depends on the extent to which learning environments cater to the needs of each learner. This includes the provision of infrastructure, curricula and learning materials that accommodate the needs of learners, but also assessment taking into account such needs. This thread was used to gather participants' views on learning environments in their countries:

- Are TVET programmes in your country inclusive?
- What are the different approaches (mainstreaming/specific targeted interventions)?
- What are the obstacles to the implementation of programmes to make TVET more inclusive?

Thread 4: Teachers and trainers

In addition to ensuring inclusive learning environments (in terms of infrastructure, school policies, curricula and training materials, etc.), training institutions also need to equip teachers and trainers with the skills, knowledge and attitudes to deal with diversity effectively. Participants were asked to share their views on the following leading questions:

- What skills, knowledge and attitudes are important for TVET teachers and trainers to have to operate in inclusive learning environments?
- How is inclusion addressed in pre- and in-service training for teachers and trainers?
- How can teachers be prepared to address the diverse needs of learners?

Thread 5: Communities, parents and students

Stakeholder partnerships have always been central to the delivery of TVET. While the involvement of all TVET stakeholders is important, there is little evidence on the role of communities, parents and learners in promoting inclusive TVET systems. The aim of this thread was to gather evidence regarding the involvement of parents, communities and learners in the decision making and delivery of inclusive TVET in participants' countries:

- What are the roles of communities, parents and students in the implementation of programmes that aim to make TVET more inclusive?
- How are the different stakeholders approached and included in such initiatives?
- What are the obstacles to reaching out and including such stakeholders?

Thread 6: Monitoring and evaluation

Inclusion is a process but records of progress made help to identify successes and challenges that can be worked on. Data and monitoring frameworks are very important to assess the needs and respond effectively to those. This thread sought to gather information from participants regarding the extent to which inclusive policies and programmes are monitored and evaluated. They were asked to contribute to the leading questions below:

- Are policy and programme interventions in inclusive TVET being monitored and assessed?
- How are policy and programme interventions monitored and evaluated? What data is collected?
- How is the presence, participation and achievement of learners from particularly vulnerable groups documented?

Thread 7: Transition to the labour market

While ensuring equal access to quality education and training increases graduates' chances of gaining access to decent employment, the transition from training to employment is sometimes challenging, especially for some groups of people such as ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, and forced migrants. This thread was used to seek participants' views regarding the experiences of graduates in transitioning from training to the labour market:

- What are the opportunities and obstacles when it comes to young and adult learners' transition to the labour market?
- Are there any support systems that facilitate graduates' transition to the labour market (at the school and system level)?
- Is the private sector involved in the development and implementation of policies/strategies and programmes that aim to make the labour market more inclusive? If yes, how are they approached and what is their role?

Intended outcomes

It was intended that at the end of this virtual conference, participants would be able to:

- Understand what is meant by inclusive TVET and identify different groups that are particularly vulnerable
- Explore the role of national legal frameworks and policies/strategies that promote the development of an inclusive TVET system
- Appreciate different approaches (mainstreaming/specific targeted interventions) to making TVET programmes inclusive (including in curricula and learning materials and assessment; pedagogical approaches; campus infrastructure; school policies; and career guidance and counselling)
- Identify obstacles to the implementation of programmes to make TVET more inclusive
- Discuss the roles of different stakeholders (teachers, trainers, communities, parents and students) in making TVET programmes inclusive
- Understand the role inclusive TVET can play to facilitate graduates' transition to the world of work

Key reflection

Inclusive TVET is broadly defined in many countries

Definitions of inclusive TVET in most of the countries from which participants contributed reflect a broad understanding of inclusion. With a few exceptions, inclusive TVET was defined as a system that meets the needs of all learners, regardless of their social background, gender, level of achievement, ethnicity, disability, migration status, etc. The exceptions were when inclusive TVET focused only on access, participation and achievement of learners with special education needs and disabilities. Some of the definitions provided by participants which reflect different understandings of inclusion are presented below:

'In Trinidad and Tobago, inclusive TVET is seen as ensuring everyone has access to TVET. There is a thrust in enhancing TVET so that individuals are given equal opportunity to access TVET, like the anthem says "Every creed and race finds an equal place"'

'Here in Brazil, inclusive education is related to education for disabled people, called here: special education'

'For Vanuatu, inclusive TVET does not limit only to people with disability. Since our country is made up of small islands, inclusive means everyone which includes youth, adults, male and female, those living in the remote areas, marginalized, etc. Making TVET inclusive for us is TVET training accessible to anyone who needs it to achieve his/her personal ambitions'

'In Tanzania, inclusive education is understood as a system of education in which all children, youths and adults are enrolled, actively participate and achieve in regular schools and other educational programmes regardless of their diverse backgrounds and abilities, without discrimination, through minimization of barriers and maximization of resources'

Inherent in the definition of inclusive TVET is the need to remove all barriers to the effective participation of learners. However, these barriers are higher for some groups or individuals than others. Participants of the virtual conference listed groups that are perceived to be vulnerable in their countries as follows:

- Persons with disabilities (PWDs) and special education needs
- Refugees, asylum seekers, nomads, internally displaced people
- Care leavers (young persons who have been in care such as residential or foster homes for at least 13 weeks)
- Ethnic minorities
- Rural populations (e.g. people who live in the highlands or in the rain forest far from the cities)
- People not in employment, education and training (NEET)
- Orphans, juveniles, returnees and ex-detainees
- People living in extreme poverty
- Females

The Djibouti declaration and the call for action for its implementation in Addis Ababa (December 2018) recognizes TVET among its five key strategies for the education of migrants and refugees. It is important to mention that there were commonalities in the groups that participants listed, but some of the factors that contribute to their vulnerabilities differ across countries. These stem from differences in, amongst others, national policies, regulations and learning environments, and will be discussed throughout this report in different reflections. The vulnerability of the groups listed above emanates mainly from external factors that constrain their access, participation and achievement in TVET. However, some of the vulnerabilities are intersectional.

Key reflection

Poor legislation and inadequate resources to deliver inclusive TVET increase the risk of exclusion of vulnerable persons

There are many international laws and conventions – such as UNESCO's 1989 Convention on Technical and Vocational Education¹ – that guarantees the right of each person to TVET. The right to TVET means that TVET provided at all levels should be accessible to each person regardless of his/her background, including financial or economic status.

At the domestic level, not all countries have enshrined in their legal documents and policies or strategies, the right of each person to inclusive TVET. Guarantees are made regarding the right to free basic education, for both adults and children, while they work progressively towards making TVET accessible to all regardless of their financial status. This is because of the scope of TVET, the majority of which is provided beyond lower secondary education and in workplaces. As a result, the extent to which states make TVET accessible to all largely depends on their resources. This leads to differences in achievement of inclusion and raises the risk of exclusion of many learners, especially adult learners who cannot afford the cost of continuing vocational education. Participants of the virtual conference expressed concerns about this and the lack of legislation on inclusive TVET in their countries (please see box).

The quotes show differences in the extent to which the right to TVET is legislated in some countries and accessible to all regardless of their age and financial status. Whereas cost is one of the main barriers to access for many, the lack of clear stipulations can lead to the discrimination of groups such as migrants and refugees. For example, a study was conducted by the British Council in 2018 on the inclusion of refugees in the TVET systems of five countries namely South Africa, the United Kingdom, Pakistan, Jordan and Ethiopia. The study reports that except for Ethiopia, the refugee or migrant policies of the other four countries studied do not necessarily prevent refugees' access to TVET. On the other hand, there are no stipulations that make it obligatory for host country governments to provide TVET to refugees. The lack of national legal regulations regarding the provision of TVET for refugees results in the arbitrary implementation of existing policies by TVET institutions and officers. This example shows the importance of legal regulations although discrimination can still occur in practice through many administrative processes that migrants are required to undergo to access education in host countries (UNESCO, 2018).

¹ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000084696.locale=en>

- 'In Botswana, the technical/vocational education system is virtual 'closed' for adults - they are excluded, due to their age, from education. Private institution offering courses come at a price ticket and are frequently not officially accredited' (Participant from Botswana)
- 'In terms of policy... adults have not been deemed as a positive return on investment. [They are] absent in TVET strategies - which is surprising as adults are working longer in jobs which are rapidly transforming technologically, therefore policy and strategy need to focus on TVET across the life course' (Participant from the United Kingdom)
- 'There is no functional legislation on inclusive education in TVET. The kind of laws that existed are mainly that of grants-in-aid. Some of the laws in some states are now moribund. What exists now are policies which must be backed by legislation... ' (Participant from Nigeria)
- 'Although we respect all of our students and try to provide the best education to them, there is no federal legislation ensuring inclusiveness in our institutions. I believe it happens, but it is not safeguarded by legislation' (Participant from Canada)
- 'In Botswana, we experience the same scenarios experienced in Nigeria. Even a TVET policy is not in place which could be aligned to other broad policies' (Another participant from Botswana)

Key reflection

Accessible learning environments are needed to make TVET inclusive

Most participants acknowledged that to make TVET inclusive, policies and legal regulations need to be accompanied by investment in learning environments. However, contributions from participants showed that in their countries, little has been done to change learning environments to make TVET inclusive. The need to improve the physical infrastructure of schools emerged as one of the most important actions that need to be taken in the progressive shift towards inclusion. The quotes below show the views of participants regarding this.

- ‘Refugees in Kenya are not fully included in TVET mainly because access is limited due to lack of TVET institutions in their vicinity. While every effort has been made to provide access to primary and secondary education within the refugees’ camps, there is little vocational and technical training happening within the camps. Technical and vocational training is expensive because of the infrastructures, equipment and trainers. This could explain the absence of TVET in these campus’ (Participant from Kenya)
- ‘Inclusive learning environments take care of the learning needs of all learners considering talents and disabilities. It is difficult to come by any government learning facilities that are PWDs friendly. There are no curriculum materials such as braille reading and writing, low vision aids and devices, binocular, camera for visually impaired people. There are no PWDs friendly toilets and buildings; no hearing aid for learners with hearing impairments; and so on’ (Participant from Nigeria)
- ‘The facilities were designed without consideration for inclusiveness [for PWDs] except for only two institutions which offer Diploma programmes. The others do what we call makeshift [improvised and low quality] provision ... which is not effective’ (A participant from Botswana)
- ‘A real and effective personalization requires specialized staff (tutors) and a huge amount of work. Public funding is not enough and a fund-raising strategy needs to be implemented’ (Participant from Italy)
- ‘[Policy on inclusive education] ... is mainly a 'vision' to work towards -but currently [apart from initiatives by individual teachers and a few schools] this vision is far from being realised. TVET is still mainly NOT inclusive in practice as the environment [physical, psychological, learning material, assessment procedure] is not yet prepared to receive learners with physical/mental challenges’ (Participant from Botswana)

The examples participants cited demonstrate that learning environments are not accessible, and this makes it difficult for learners with disabilities and special education needs to participate in TVET. In the case of migrants, the issue may not relate to how disability-friendly the environment is, but rather a restrictive policy or legal regime that constrain their mobility in host countries. As rightly noted by the participant in Kenya, it might be more expensive establishing TVET institutions in refugee camps than making arrangement for them to access nearby TVET institutions. Their inclusion in mainstream education and training will be beneficial for them and their host countries and needs to be encouraged. It is important to highlight that the cost involved in making TVET inclusive is one of the reasons why many countries are lagging behind in their efforts to achieve inclusion. As a result, financing for TVET is an important means to achieving inclusion.



A case study of Cometa

Cometa began in 1987 as an association of families that provided support to vulnerable children and adults in Como, Italy. It grew to provide other services such as education and training in 2003. The education and training unit is known as Cometa Formazione. Cometa’s mission is to foster a full expression of the abilities and talents of each one through study, knowledge and experience. It also works to prevent the difficulties of growth and counter school drop-out by offering a stimulating and creative context, where everyone feels valued, gains self-confidence and learns a trade.

To further its goals, Cometa employs a range of innovative pedagogical approaches and activities to promote inclusion. One of them is reality-based learning which is the involvement of students in real tasks both in the classroom and in school-enterprises. Through a strong personalized project on every single student and involving them in a real job experience in its internal school-enterprises, Cometa has developed the Liceo del Lavoro (High School for Job), one of the programmes promoted for early school leavers. The socio-emotional learning of those with high risk of exclusion such as migrants and early school leavers are strengthened through innovative practices such as the work-based guidance model.

Cometa has established a social enterprise that employs persons with disabilities. This project emerged from observation of the discrimination of persons with disabilities in the labour market.

Key reflection

Teachers and trainers need support to operate in inclusive environments

Teachers and trainers are important agents in the process of inclusion and their skills, knowledge and attitudes enhance their agency to ensure that learning environments are inclusive. Participants' contributions pointed to three developments that can help teachers to operate in inclusive environments. The first is external support that grants them autonomy in their practice. The second is quality in-service and continuing professional development. The third is personal qualities or attitudes required for the job. These three areas of development, which are central to inclusive practices, are interdependent and reinforce each other.

External support refers to policy and infrastructural provisions that need to be put in place by education and training providers and authorities with oversight responsibility over education. These help teachers and trainers to be inclusive practitioners.

- 'Access to teaching, teaching resources, materials, training videos and specialist advisors help teachers to prepare for the diverse needs of learners' (Participant from the United Kingdom)
- 'Managers of TVET institutions should think how to mainstream inclusion into TVET during admission, training and curriculum and instruction designs. This will enable trained TVET teachers to have an inclusive environment to practice' (Participant from Nigeria)
- 'Personnel who are skilled or professionals in the area of needs [of learners] can be deployed to TVET institutions to support the teachers or trainers' (Participant from Nigeria)
- 'Offer teachers an opportunity to develop their own lessons, curate content' (Participant from Germany)
- 'Access and training to technology tools that simplify and improve the quality of teaching is highly desirable. Many vocational schools have started using simulators and other technology-driven didactic tools (insulators, 3D printers, virtual classrooms) to improve the learning experience and retention. These tools can be very useful in a general environment. Imagine using these in inclusive environments' (Participant from Germany)

Quality pre-service and continuing professional development refers to training that teachers and trainers need for their practice:

- 'As is the case in many developed countries, the teachers and trainers have to be oriented towards the specific psychological needs and challenges of learners during their pre-service training. This could be done in two ways: through a module/course part of the overall curriculum or offering it as a specialization. In both cases, this exposure could go a long way in orienting teachers about the special needs of the learners' (Participant from Finland)
- 'Many, if not all Canadian institutions have a faculty development department that offers programs that new hires are obligated to take as part of their term of employment and it addresses topics like principles of adult learning, curriculum development, diversity in the classroom, teaching/learning styles, using the learning platform, etc. Many institutions also have drop-in teaching and learning "hubs" where faculty (both new and seasoned) can discuss challenges, new approaches to teaching, classroom management, etc.' (Participant from Canada)
- 'Not much attention is paid to inclusion during in-service training of TVET teachers. This is because the environments are not inclusive and there is no will power to implement policy and legal frameworks on inclusion. However, there is a need for continuing professional development in the area of inclusion. This will help TVET teachers to continue to grow in competence and apply what they learn' (Participant from Nigeria)
- 'When I trained to be a TVET teacher a long time ago (25 years!!), there was very little emphasis on inclusion, inclusive practices or specialist training. However, during this time I have engaged in plentiful in-service training which has developed my knowledge and understanding of best practices for inclusion. It is essential that pre-service training gives the foundations which ensure that inclusive practices are second nature and part of TVET teachers planning' (Participant from the United Kingdom)

- ‘... at least in Italy, teacher education is not yet update to such changes [inclusion]. First of all, we need to renovate their training, including a stronger learning-by-doing. Then, investment in their professional development is paramount’ (Participant from Italy)

Personal characteristics refer to features that are either innate or learnt and useful in enabling teachers and trainers to deliver inclusive education:

- ‘Attitudes applicable to any classroom situation as all learners are unique individuals - patience, respect for all learners, empathy, acceptance of each individual learner, creativity to meet individual needs of learners and a good sense of humour might help’ (Participant from Botswana)
- ‘Teachers need to be open-minded and reflective so that they can challenge and extend their taken for granted views. The most inclusive TVET teachers I have worked with or observed tend to be flexible enough to adapt to the needs of individual students effortlessly, as well as a commitment to ensuring that the learners achieve to their full potential’ (Participant from the United Kingdom)
- ‘Knowledge of the characteristics of different vulnerable groups in their learning environments. This will help in their identification and inclusion in learning. This involves having the knowledge of different impairments and children at risks’ (Participant from Nigeria)
- ‘Teachers who are self-motivated, they can care and protect the learners’ (Participant from Tanzania)

The contributions of participants show the diverse needs and ways in which teachers can be supported to play their meaningful role in the process towards inclusion.

Key reflection

Partnerships are key to promoting inclusive TVET

In all the discussion threads, participants consistently mentioned the importance of partnerships in inclusive education. It is the core of inclusion as it shows how different stakeholders work together in the process towards inclusion. A participant from Botswana likened it to the African philosophy of Ubuntu which means that ‘I am because we are’. Ubuntu represents the responsibility of each person towards the well-being of all in society. It is an important philosophy that needs to be nurtured through education and awareness creation. Many participants mentioned that education and awareness creation that the other is like us could help to change negative attitudes and foster inclusion in education and training. This was also perceived as important for the equal involvement of all in initiatives or programmes that seek to address exclusion. Participants highlighted that often parents of children with special education needs or disabilities actively advocate for inclusion, but their efforts need to be complemented with positive attitudes from other parents and members of society. A participant from Botswana shared that ‘during interviews for admittance in an English medium primary school [known for accepting children with autism, Down syndrome, etc.], one of the parents said “If my child is admitted I don’t want it to be in a class with children with Down syndrome”’. This observation has been made in some studies on inclusion in education and it highlights the need for awareness creation about the role of each person in fostering inclusion (Torgbenu et al., 2018).

Participants from developing countries expressed a strong need for their governments to own inclusive policies and engage all stakeholders as equal partners in implementation. A participant was concerned that often inclusion is driven externally or implemented using a top-down approach. He stated that:

‘The policies formulated in many countries are formulated by [external] experts/consultants and not by the teachers/trainers that are daily involved in training/facilitating of learning. The formulated ‘country’ policies [by external experts] follow the international correct jargon - if not they will not receive donor support/ loans to ‘change’ their education system...’ (Participant from Botswana)

Another participant added that the lack of local ownership creates little commitment from stakeholders who are reluctant to engage without incentives. The following quote captures his experience on a donor-funded inclusive skills development project:

'Some stakeholders would always be concerned with what they will get by participating in any programme. The interest may be financial gain or recognition. But if their interest is/are not meant, they stop supporting the programme. These might be religious, political or community leaders and even employers. Employers, for example, would consider how their support for any programme will affect their business either positively or negatively' (Participant from Nigeria)

Other participants also shared examples of how awareness creation about inclusion followed by efforts to draw on services and resources in communities are very instrumental for inclusion in TVET:

'In my own experience in the UK, I have noticed a positive shift in the partnerships between state VET colleges (Further Education) and their local community organizations. This is particularly prevalent within the refugee community groups, but also in partnerships between mental health, women's services and addiction user groups. In the best examples, Further Education colleges work with these community groups to provide pathways that are nurturing and inclusive to those who are most marginalized in society' (Participant from the UK)

A participant from Nigeria stated that in implementing an inclusive project, it was difficult accessing persons with disabilities but with the support of the Association of Persons with Disabilities and a ministry in charge of the affairs of persons with disabilities beneficiaries were located and supported through the project. In other countries, some employers of companies such as Gee (a gaming company in Japan) and Lemon tree (a hotel chain in India) are contributing towards inclusion by employing persons with disabilities (a participant from Germany). All these examples demonstrate the importance of partnerships amongst stakeholders in efforts towards inclusion. The discussion shows that stakeholders or partners are all persons in society and seeing it this way helps everyone to know that their actions are important no matter how small they are.



A case study of Youthworx

Youthworx is a Melbourne-based project created in 2008 by Youth Development Association (YDA), a non-profit organization in Australia. Its mission is to support marginalized young people disengaged from education and training to develop skills that will enhance their participation in society. The project operates through partnership with the education and training sector, non-profit organizations, community media and government agencies (Podkalicka et al., 2013). Its partners include the Salvation Army, Northern Melbourne Institute of Technology and Further Education (NMIT), SYN media (a community radio station and media production organization) and Swinburne University Institute for Social Research (Hopkins, 2010). This multi-stakeholder approach is adopted in order to meet the social and educational needs of the marginalized youths.

Many of the young people who participate in the project live in peri-urban areas in Melbourne and their transportation to the project site in the mornings are taken care of by Salvation Army (Hopkins, 2011). The media staff at SYN support the training of those interested in radio broadcasting and offer them traineeships at their establishment. Youthworx works in collaboration with NMIT to offer lessons and accredited courses to its students. However, students are also encouraged to enrol in creative or other vocational courses in other institutions such as Swinburne Technical and Further Education (TAFE). Social welfare services such as counselling and guidance are made available to the students. This ensures that their mental and physical needs are taken care of to enable them to engage effectively with their training. The engagement of the youths with the programme, their opinions about the delivery of the programme, progress after they complete their programme as well as the project's objectives are monitored and evaluated by researchers from Swinburne Institute for Social Research. Feedback from their evaluations inform the project's direction and reform. The Victorian and Commonwealth government supports the project with some funding which supplements what is obtained through the projects social enterprise called Youthworx Productions (Podkalicka et al., 2013). YouthWorx is an example of how multi-stakeholder partnership can work to support the education and training and inclusion of marginalized youths in society.

Key reflection

Systemic solutions are required to aid transitions from TVET to work

Participants acknowledged that graduates need support to transition from TVET to the labour market. They cited examples of support schemes in place in their countries to aid graduates' transition to work. Examples include the Student Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) and the National Youth service corps in Nigeria. A participant added that in Botswana there are training programmes and funding for self-employment from the Citizen Entrepreneurial Agency and Youth Development Fund. Government-sponsored apprenticeships in the United Kingdom was also cited as successful in enabling people to gain work experience.

All these initiatives are instrumental for graduates' transition from training to work, although participants mentioned that there is still high graduate unemployment and underemployment. In relation to this, they expressed broader concerns about skills mismatches, economies that are not creating enough decent jobs, saturated labour markets, changes in the nature of work and increased informality and precarity of existing jobs. Participants felt that these issues needed to be tackled, in addition to available support schemes. Their views about the causes of the challenges that graduates face are presented below. This is followed by some suggestions they offered regarding the way forward (please see the box).

Participants' concerns regarding the effects of the changing nature of work on graduates' transitions were two-fold. On the one hand, increased technology and automation of some forms of work were seen to provide opportunities for persons with disabilities to operate in areas that were previously inaccessible. On the other hand, many sectors where persons with disability work were seen to be at risk of technological changes in work. Examples include retail, food service and administrative tasks (Kanady, 2018). In addition to these points, most employment opportunities in many developing countries with large informal economies are in the informal sector (Alla-Mensah, n.d.). To be self-employed in the informal sector, one requires capital and graduates find it difficult securing the capital needed. Furthermore, work in the informal sector is characterized by precariousness and low income, making the vulnerable who work in that sector less well off compared to others who have decent jobs in the formal sector. In relation to migrants, work done by the UNEVOC Centre at the University of Nottingham shows that restrictions on their mobility, the lack of recognition of their qualifications and prior learning, lack of information, advice and guidance and local work experience make transitioning into the labour markets of host countries particularly challenging (Alla-Mensah et al., 2019). These factors,

- 'Employers need skilled workers, but they cannot be found and job seekers, on the other hand, need the job/employment but do not have the skills needed by the employers. So, there is a skills gap between what the industry needs and what the training providers are giving out. This gap makes it difficult for transition from school to work/labour market' (Participant from Nigeria)
- 'One important aspect to take into consideration when discussing transition to the labour market, particularly for people with disabilities, is the rapidly changing nature of work (particularly as a result of greater automation and use of new technologies) and the implications of these changes for these groups of people' (Participant from France)
- 'Government does encourage [and has some support programmes] graduates to be 'self-employed'. That is nice - but in a market that isn't growing, businesses are closing and hundreds do try to do their own 'small business' most attempts fail - the areas graduates try are already over-represented in the market and turn out not to be sustainable' (Participant from Botswana)
- 'Transitions into the labour market are affected by the availability of jobs that are secure and which provide an income that they can live off. In my own research, the adult learners most affected by poor and precarious transitions into the labour market are migrants, lone parents, women, those with disabilities and those who have children with disabilities' (Participant from the United Kingdom)

in addition to others such as gender bias, mistrust of employers towards migrants and other vulnerable groups such as female adults, persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities and rural populations affect their transitions into employment. For example, Cedefop (2011) reports that in Europe, ethnic minorities are more likely to be undereducated. In all, the discussion points to issues at the level of economy or labour market and TVET institutions that need to be systematically tackled to help graduates transition smoothly from education and training into decent work. Regarding the way forward, some participants mentioned that increased engagement between employers and TVET institutions is one way to tackle skills mismatch (Ghana, Canada, Botswana and Nigeria). Another stated that functional Labour Market Information Systems (LMIS) can help solve skills mismatch (Participant from Nigeria). Other solutions suggested include serious consideration of adult learners in TVET strategies (Suart, 2019), support for graduates to acquire capital for self-employment and guidance for graduates to operate in sustainable and lucrative ventures (Participant from Botswana). Supporting migrants' access to information, advice and guidance, local work experience and recognizing their skills and qualifications will contribute to reducing skills gap. Compared to natives or migrants and this affects their employment and contributes to skills gap for this group.

Discussions in this virtual conference around national and international definitions of inclusive TVET, national legal frameworks and policies, inclusive learning environments, the role of teachers and trainers, communities, parents and students in the process of inclusion in TVET, monitoring and evaluation of inclusion and transition to the labour market have implications for all – policy-makers, education and training providers, teachers, learners, communities, parents, and employers. Thank very much to those who took the time to participate and follow this conference. It has provided us with the opportunity to learn more about inclusion in TVET.

Shared resources and learning materials

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Videos

Cometa (2019, July). Cometa Formazion: Liceo del Lavoro. Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/2QXjco8UIOs>

This video is about the education and training school of Cometa. In the video, the personalized nature of programmes for each individual's need is explained, together with student testimonies of how their lives and changed due to the training are acquiring at Cometa.

Cometa (2019, July). Anagramma: a social enterprise. Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/R8rcyacdDNY>

This video is about Cometa's social enterprise called Anagramma. It is a bar bistrot, which was established to give persons with disabilities the opportunity to work.

Mannan A.M., (2018, October). TVET Tutorial 09: What is Inclusive TVET? Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6SWef029wS0>

This video gives an overview of inclusive TVET.

About the moderator



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