



unesco

International Centre for
Technical and Vocational
Education and Training

World Youth Skills Day 2023

Empowering youth for a sustainable future



World Youth Skills Day 2023

Empowering youth for a sustainable future



UNESCO – a global leader in education

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.



The Global Education 2030 Agenda

UNESCO, as the United Nations' specialized agency for education, is entrusted to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 Agenda, which is part of a global movement to eradicate poverty through 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Education, essential to achieve all of these goals, has its own dedicated Goal 4, which aims to “*ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.*” The Education 2030 Framework for Action provides guidance for the implementation of this ambitious goal and commitments.



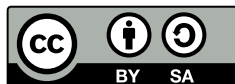
Published in 2023 by the

UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for TVET

Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1, 53113 Bonn,
Germany

© UNESCO

This publication is available in Open Access under the Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 IGO (CC-BY-SA 3.0 IGO) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/igo/>). By using the content of this publication, the users accept to be bound by the terms of use of the UNESCO Open Access Repository (<http://en.unesco.org/open-access/terms-use-ccbysa-en>).



The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNESCO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

The ideas and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors; they are not necessarily those of UNESCO and do not commit the Organization.

Contributor:



How to cite this document:

UNESCO-UNEVOC. 2023. *World Youth Skills Day 2023: Empowering youth for a sustainable future*. Bonn. Available online at <https://unevoc.unesco.org/i/883>.

Designed by UNESCO-UNEVOC/Aldrich Mejia

Cover images (left to right):

© UNESCO-UNEVOC/Ulrich Hanzig; © UNESCO-UNEVOC/Oluwatobi Oyebanji; © UNESCO-UNEVOC/ Enrique Blanco; © UNESCO-UNEVOC/Gabriela Alondra Montesinos; © UNESCO-UNEVOC/Helen Mbabazi; © UNESCO-UNEVOC/Prottoy Chowdhury. All images available under the CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 license.

Acknowledgements

This report is a compilation of inputs from various speakers and participants in the UNESCO-UNEVOC and WorldSkills hybrid event on 'Empowering youth for a sustainable future', which took place on 14 July 2023 to mark World Youth Skills Day. It was written by Priscilla Gatonye, Programme Officer for Inclusion and Youth, UNESCO-UNEVOC and Nickola Browne, Associate Communications Officer, UNESCO-UNEVOC.

Special thanks to the following:

Opening and closing speakers

- **Borhene Chakroun**, Director, Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems, UNESCO
- **Laurence Gates**, Board Member - Strategic Development, WorldSkills International
- **Friedrich Huebler**, Head of UNESCO-UNEVOC
- **Heike Kuhn**, Head of Division for Education, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

Youth focus group participants and multistakeholder panellists

- **Samira Bühner**, Policy Officer, European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE)
- **Mohamed-Amine Faiz**, Technical Advisor, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
- **Maike Füller**, Glazier Apprentice, Germany
- **Sonya Hill**, WorldSkills Champions Trust, Regional Representative for the Americas
- **Affero Ismail**, Associate Professor, Department of Engineering Education, Faculty of Technical and Vocational Education, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UNEVOC Centre)
- **Barry Mamadou**, Gastronomy Apprentice, Guinea
- **Rahman O. Mogaji**, Member, Ministerial Task Team on TVET, Federal Ministry of Education, Nigeria; National Project Manager, Nigeria Vocational and Enterprise Skills Development (VESD) Management System Project; Founder, Global Partnership for Development Cooperation in Africa
- **Aswatha Narayana**, WorldSkills Champion 2019 in Water Technology, India
- **Roman Steinhart**, EuroSkills Champion 2021 and WorldSkills Champion 2022 in IT Network Systems Administration, Germany
- **Stephanie Werth**, Head of Communication and Public Relations, WorldSkills Germany
- **Florian Zimmer**, EuroSkills Competitor 2023 in ICT Specialists, Germany

Global Skills Academy panellists

- **Francesco Anello**, Global Senior Vice-President of Education at Aleph Holding
- **Ira Gupta Tuteja**, Advisor, CSR Corporate Citizenship, KPMG India/Mentor
- **Donnet Hillaire**, Learner in the Digital Ad Certificate programme of Aleph Group, Inc.
- **Hervé Huot-Marchand**, Chief, Section of Youth, Literacy and Skills Development, UNESCO
- **Soledad Patiño**, Global Skills Academy Coordinator, UNESCO
- **Navya Rawal**, Former mentee, National Skill Development Corporation
- **Paramananda Santra**, Deputy General Manager, International Cooperation, National Skill Development Corporation (UNEVOC Centre)
- **Latoya Swaby-Anderson**, National Education Officer, UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean

We would also like to thank Giacomo Bosio, Lenny Martini and Sanskruti Ghosalkar (UNESCO-UNEVOC), Nina Tomimori Yamashita, Beatriz Goncalves Salgado and Emma Smith (UNESCO) and other colleagues for their invaluable contributions.

Contents

List of figures.....	6
Introduction.....	7
Key messages from the opening session.....	8
Results of the UNESCO-UNEVOC youth survey.....	10
Discussion outcomes on empowering youth for a sustainable future.....	15
Strengthening digital skills in education and embracing artificial intelligence.....	15
Industry collaboration and curriculum revisions.....	16
Towards inclusivity and equity in skills development.....	17
Environmental sustainability and climate change literacy	18
Mentorship and lifelong learning.....	19
Policy approaches.....	19
UNESCO's Global Skills Academy.....	20
Conclusion.....	21
World Youth Skills Day messages.....	22

List of figures

- Figure 1. World Youth Skills Day infographic.....7
- Figure 2. Disaggregated data, showing the distribution of participants based on gender and age range.....10
- Figure 3. Field of study, disaggregated by gender.....10
- Figure 4. Motivation behind enrolling in TVET programmes.....11
- Figure 5. Most important skills for young people.....11
- Figure 6. AI usage by gender.....12
- Figure 7. Youth career paths and aspirations.....12
- Figure 8. Biggest challenges faced during training.....13
- Figure 9. Major personal and societal issues of concern for young people.....13
- Figure 10. Summary representation of areas in need of improvement to enhance skills development: perspectives of youth.....14

Introduction

To mark the annual observance of World Youth Skills Day 2023, UNESCO-UNEVOC and WorldSkills International, in collaboration with WorldSkills Germany, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH came together to showcase the positive impact of youth skills development in a hybrid event titled **'Empowering youth for a sustainable future'**.

In 2014, the United Nations General Assembly declared 15 July as World Youth Skills Day, to celebrate the strategic importance of equipping young people with skills for employment, decent work and entrepreneurship.

Since then, World Youth Skills Day events have provided a unique platform for dialogue among young people, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions, businesses, employers' and workers' organizations, policymakers and development partners. The goal is to enhance skills development worldwide, particularly in the context of the global transition towards sustainable development.

Young people are a significant and vital asset, accounting for 15.5 per cent of the global population.¹ Today's youth are more connected and technologically savvy than ever, presenting a world of new careers and business opportunities. However, they also face immense challenges, such as high unemployment, social exclusion, mental health issues and life-threatening risks. Even those who have jobs often live in poverty or face long waiting periods to find stable or satisfactory employment. Additionally, girls and young women in many parts of the world face gender-specific barriers.

TVET plays a crucial role in addressing the multifaceted demands of the economic, society and the environment. By helping youth and adults develop the necessary skills for employment, decent work and entrepreneurship, TVET promotes equitable, inclusive and sustainable economic growth. It also supports the transition to green economies and environmental sustainability.

At the World Youth Skills Day event, over **450 participants from more than 90 countries** gathered in person and online to acknowledge the potential of young people as catalysts for change. The majority of attendees were between the ages of 18 and 29, with most coming from the Asia-Pacific region (36%), followed by Africa (31%), Europe (21%), Arab States (9%) and Latin America and the Caribbean (3%).

[1] [UN World Youth Report, 2020](#)

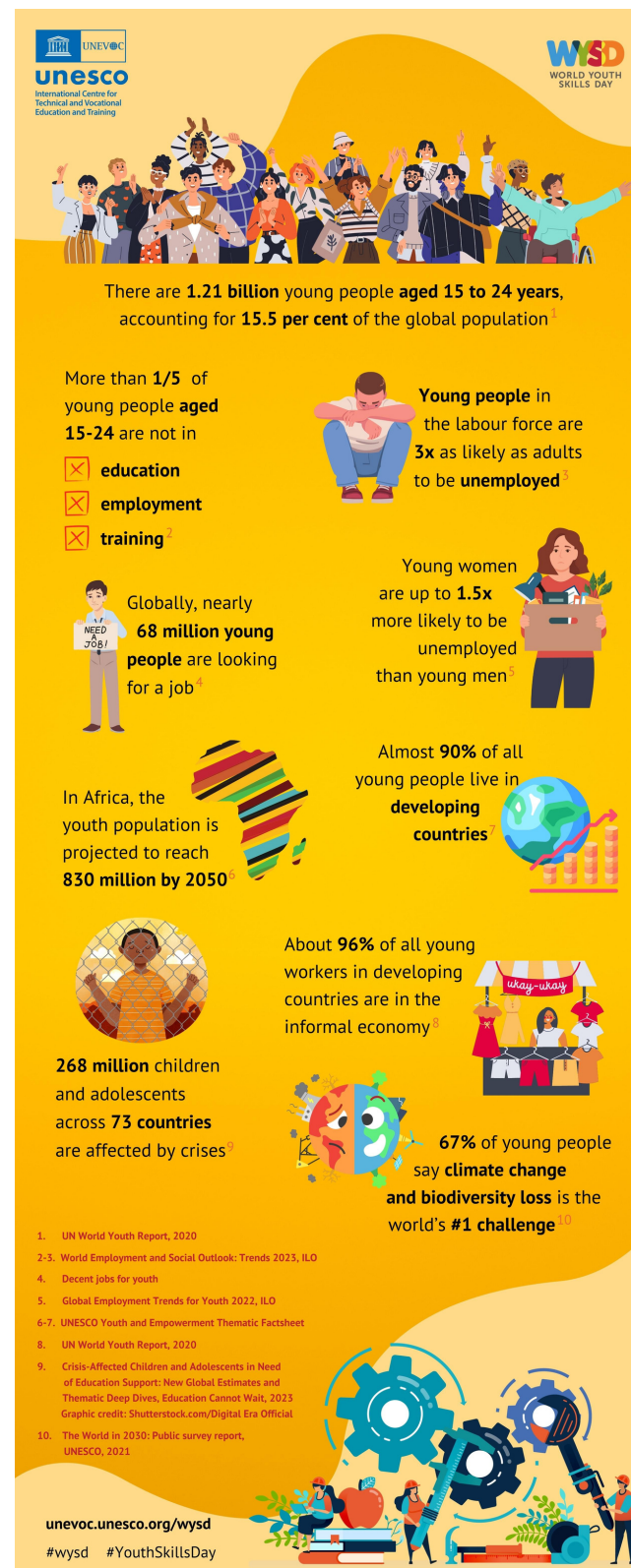


Figure 1: World Youth Skills Day infographic

Key messages from the opening session



Friedrich Huebler
Head of UNESCO-UNEVOC

Today's event focuses on 'Empowering youth for a sustainable future' and it is one of many global celebrations taking place to mark World Youth Skills Day. These activities all help to raise awareness of the positive impact of skills development on young people and highlight the immense potential and capabilities of the young minds that will shape our future.

We cannot overlook the challenges that youth are facing in acquiring and sharpening these much-needed skills. Access to quality education and training remains a significant barrier for many. Gender inequalities persist, especially in certain fields where young women are less likely to participate and succeed. Lack of infrastructure, limited resources and outdated curricula further exacerbate the divide between skills demanded by employers and those provided by educational institutions.

In the youth declaration presented during the United Nations Transforming Education Summit in 2022, young people called upon decision-makers to invest in future-proof skills development, technical and vocational training, apprenticeships and other relevant opportunities to ensure access to decent jobs for youth, especially members from vulnerable and marginalized communities.

UNESCO's new Strategy for TVET responds to this call by emphasizing the development of skills for individuals to learn, work and live, and to become champions for justice in their communities. To achieve this, we must foster an environment that encourages lifelong learning, creativity and entrepreneurship. We look forward to a collaborative exchange and to strengthening our commitment to invest in youth, nurture their talents and create a future where they can thrive.



Laurence Gates
Board Member –
Strategic Development,
WorldSkills International

I know I speak for all the organizations present here today when I say that developing skills in youth is essential to solving the main challenges facing our world.

We are all committed to helping you develop the skills you need for tomorrow because our world is becoming more turbulent and uncertain. Governments and industries are not responding quickly or effectively enough to prevent the climate breakdown. Young people do not have equal access to education because of economic, social, geographical or cultural circumstances. While skills have no gender, there is still an undeniable gender gap in vocational education and training.

Together, we need to explore new and equitable ways for young people to find out about skills and access world-class training so that they can become the best they can be. Governments, education and industry must work together to increase access and opportunities. WorldSkills initiatives like our capacity-building centre, social entrepreneur programmes and competitions around the world, with a particular focus now on skills development in Africa in partnership with the African Union, are all part of the solution to putting skills development on centre stage.

Thank you for including our WorldSkills Champions in this important conversation. They are the ideal representatives to remind everyone, including parents, families, teachers, mentors and others how fulfilling careers and skills can be. They show us that by investing in skills, we can help young people find happiness and confidence as well as be better prepared for the jobs of today and tomorrow.



Heike Kuhn
Head of Division for
Education, Federal
Ministry for Economic
Cooperation and
Development (BMZ)

On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, I would like to thank UNESCO-UNEVOC and WorldSkills for organizing this exchange. For me, it is as important to exchange among experts as it is to give young people an opportunity to raise their voice and become active agents of change.

We must adapt educational systems worldwide to help them face the challenges of our time and make them fit for the present age and for our future. TVET has to respond to challenges and at the same time become a driver of transformation. This includes a determined shift towards the use of renewable energies and the greening of traditional sectors, such as waste management, construction and transport. Therefore, TVET is and will remain a cornerstone of Germany's development cooperation, guided by the approach of lifelong learning and the principle of leaving no one behind.

Teachers and trainers play a key role in TVET. They provide youth with the knowledge, skills and values to prepare them for work and life. However, we are facing a global teacher shortage of 69 million. This includes TVET teachers. We must continuously attract, support and train TVET teachers. This means appreciation within our societies as well as attractive working conditions and salaries.

I would like to thank all the young participants who are joining in-person and online for sharing their perspectives on World Youth Skills Day. We need you at the table when we talk about future skills development.

Results of the UNESCO-UNEVOC youth survey

To gain a deeper understanding of what role each stakeholder can play in enhancing skills development for young people, UNESCO- UNEVOC conducted a survey to gather insights and perspectives from young people aged between 15-29 years on matters related to life, work and education.

The survey received responses from **3710 participants across 101 countries**, with a slightly higher number of female respondents compared to males.

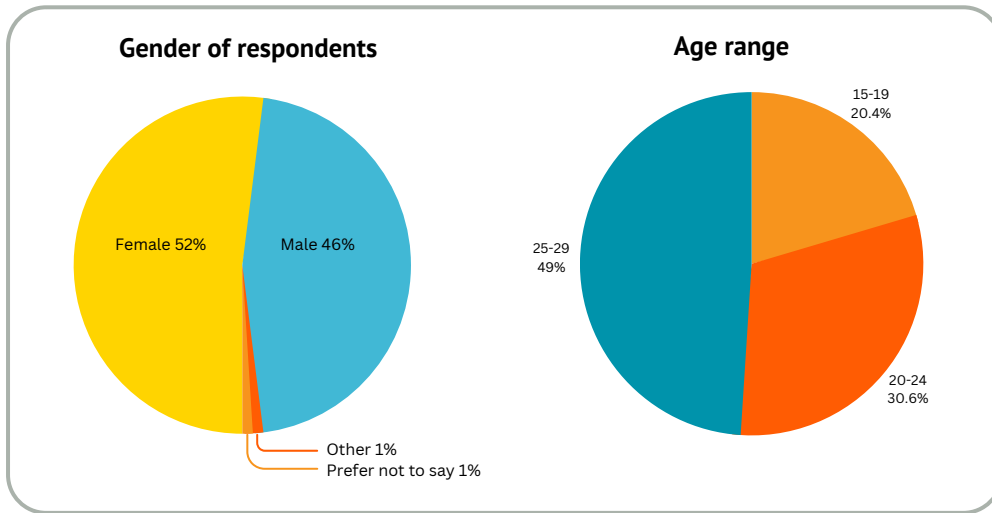


Figure 2
Disaggregated data, showing the distribution of participants based on gender and age range

It was observed that the majority of respondents pursuing TVET are in STEM-related courses, including engineering, manufacturing, construction and ICT.

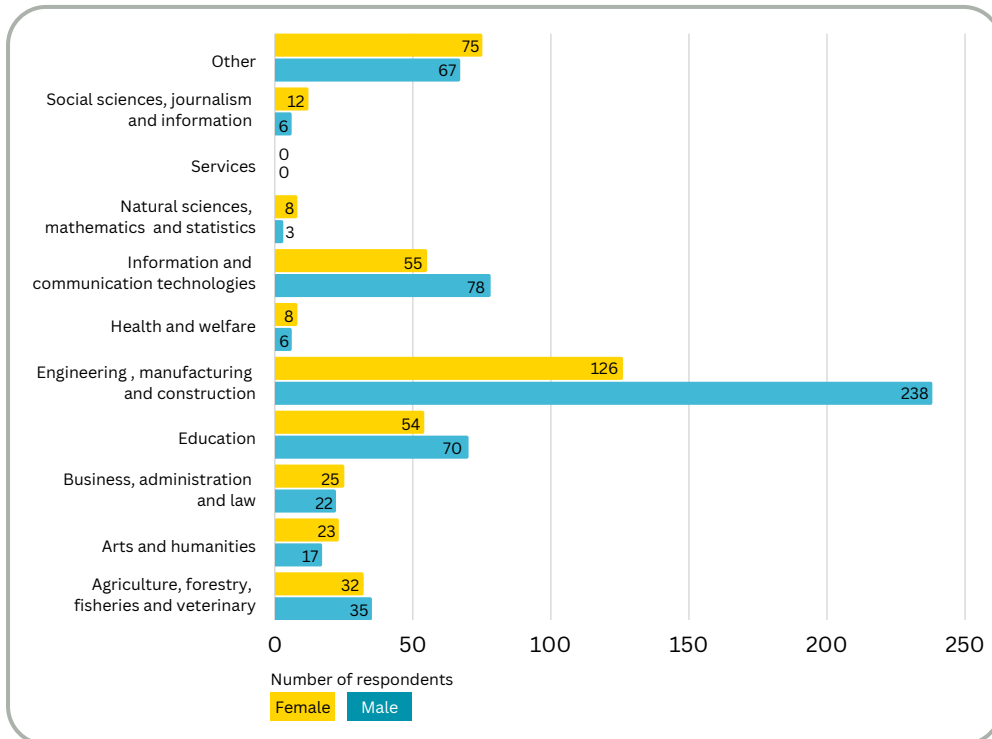


Figure 3
Field of study, disaggregated by gender

The motivation behind enrolling in TVET programmes was mainly driven by the potential job opportunities that follow training, as well as the desire for more practical training and industrial experience. It is important to highlight that parents play a crucial role in the decision-making process, providing advisory support and encouragement.

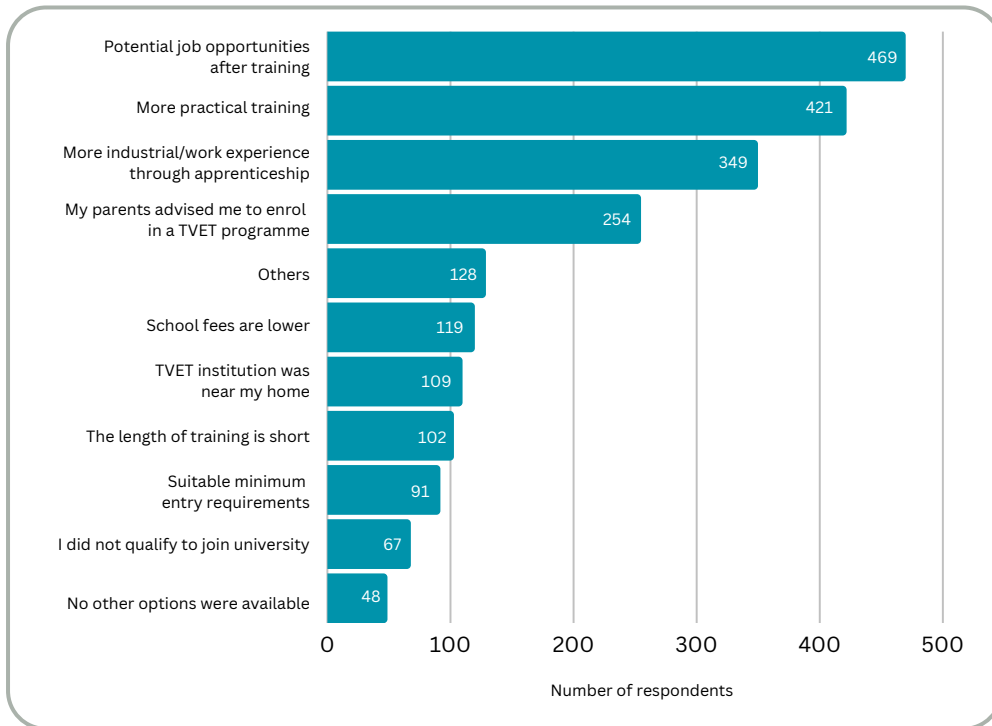


Figure 4
Motivation behind enrolling in TVET programmes

Interpersonal skills and communication were as important as technical skills to the young respondents, while critical thinking and problem solving, entrepreneurship skills and digital skills followed thereafter.

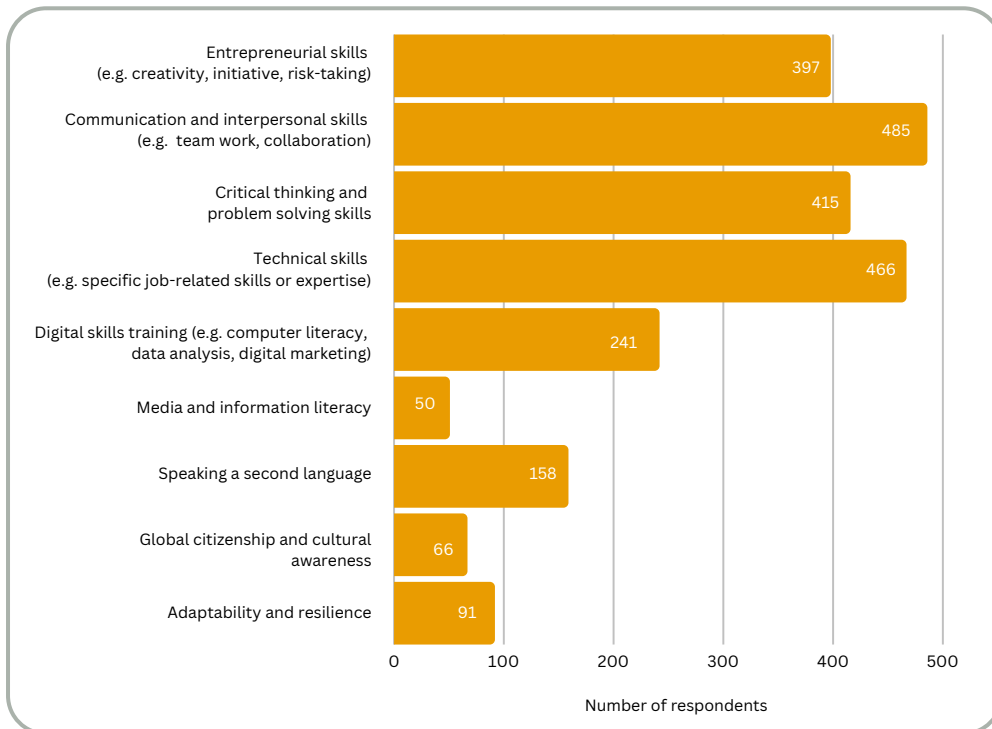


Figure 5
Most important skills for young people

In terms of digital skills, only 28% of respondents reported using Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools such as ChatGPT, Midjourney, SeaArt, Character.ai, Google Assistant, Bing AI and Bard. Young men showed slightly higher usage rates compared to young women. Many participants acknowledged using these platforms for homework completion, idea brainstorming, coding, gaming and grammar checking. However, what stood out to many was the ability of AI to support their understanding of course materials and concepts, as well as aiding in research and problem-solving. Respondents expressed that AI acts as a valuable partner, often pointing out errors and offering corrections.

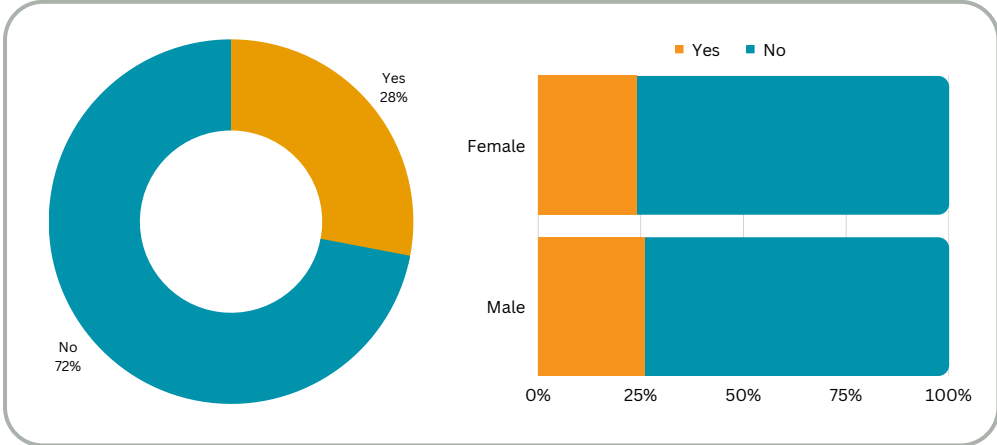


Figure 6
AI usage by gender

When considering career paths, pursuing higher education emerged as the most preferred choice among youth, followed by entrepreneurship and seeking formal employment. Additionally, young people aspire to achieve a good work-life balance, attain a high level of education, find highly satisfying occupations and make a positive impact on society.

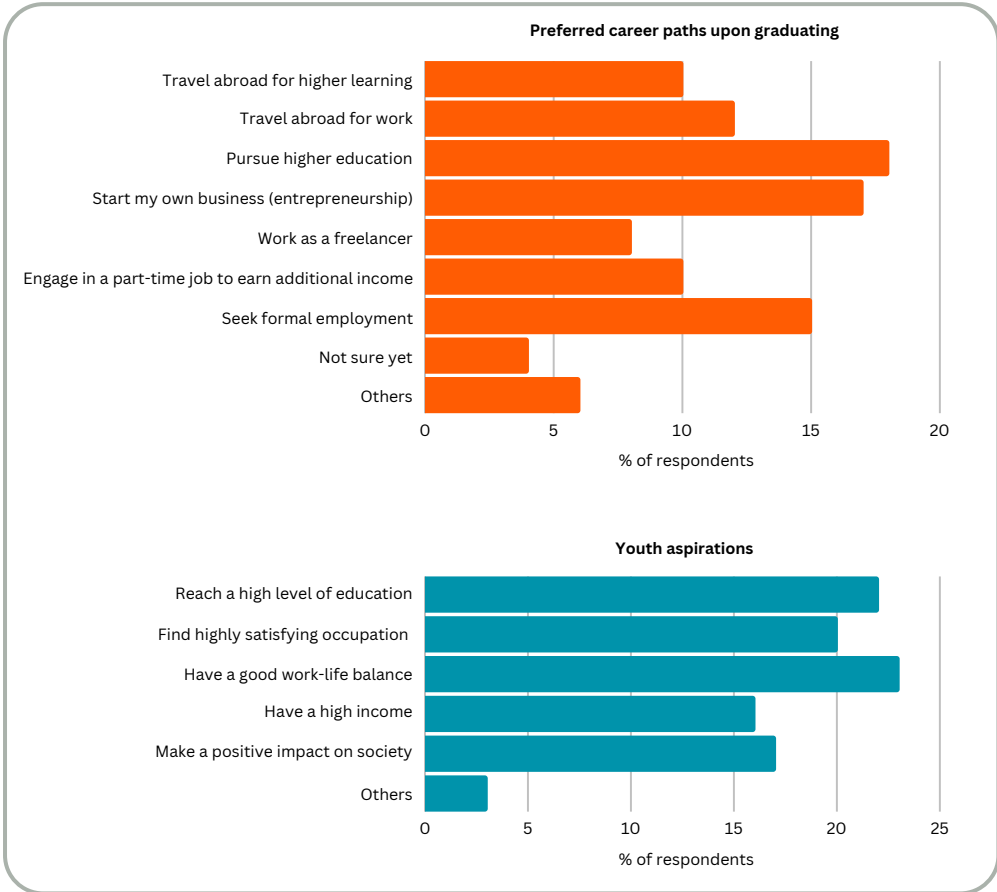


Figure 7
Youth career paths and aspirations

To fulfil these aspirations, it is crucial to address the barriers faced by young trainees, both at the training level and within personal and societal contexts. These challenges encompass financial constraints, difficulties in understanding training materials and concepts, family and relationship issues, personal growth and self-development, mental health and well-being, rising cost of living, access to lifelong learning opportunities, crime and safety concerns, as well as environmental sustainability and climate change.

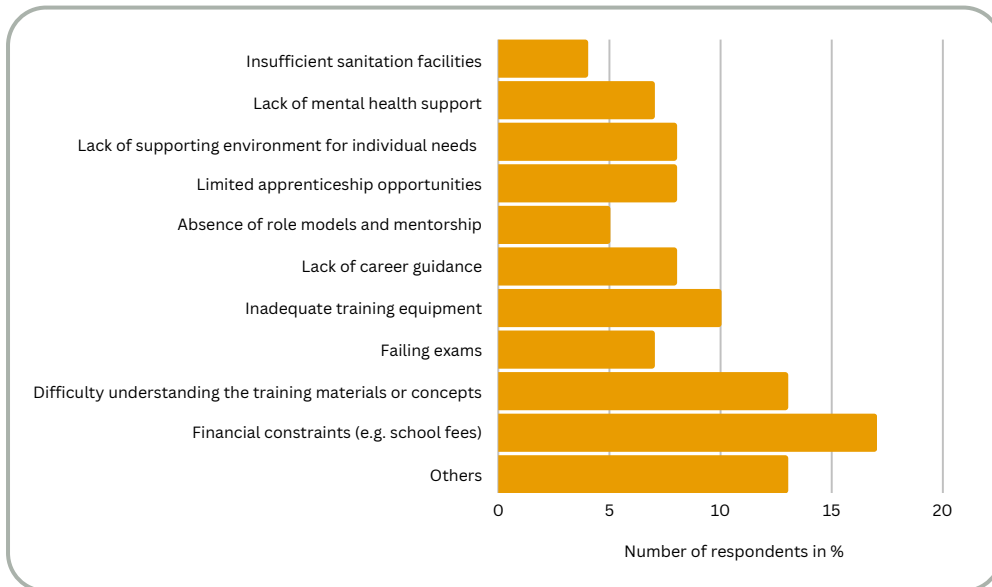


Figure 8
Biggest challenges faced during training

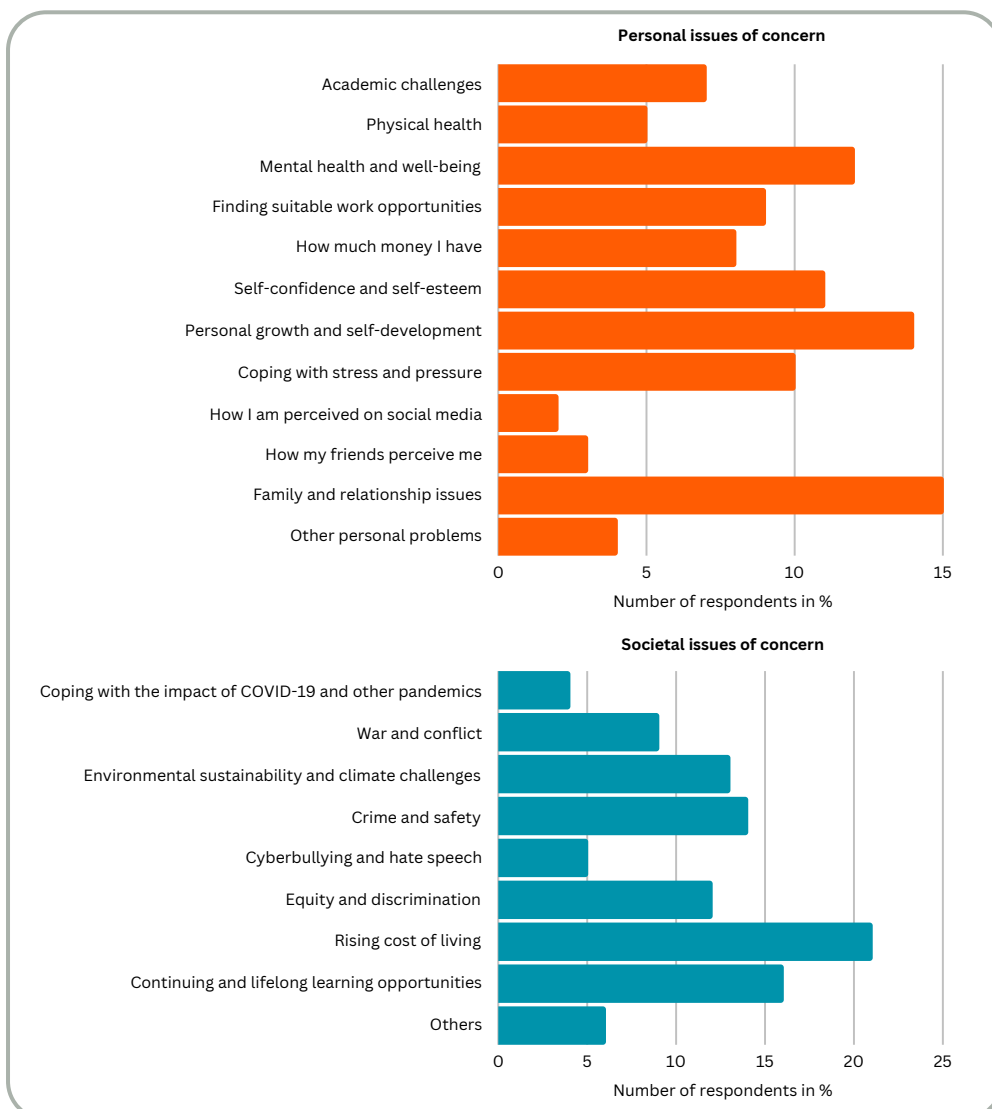


Figure 9
Major personal and societal issues of concern for young people

Finally, the survey respondents expressed the need for improvements in several areas to enhance their skills development. It is worth noting that these expectations and insights were confirmed by a group of five young TVET trainees and graduates who attended the WYSD event in person to share their aspirations, challenges and advice to both trainers and trainees in the field of skills development.

- More role models and mentorship
- Mental health support for students and learning meaningful content
- Teachers explaining better
- Less workload
- Length of study to be reduced
- More exposure in the use of equipment and tools
- Ensuring that all the machines are available in workshops
- Increasing practical skills
- Networking
- Changes and development in agricultural technology
- More complex and niche paths and their connections
- Using artificial intelligence as study partners
- Promotion of skills in digital technology and artificial intelligence
- Physical health, self-confidence and self-esteem
- Creative uses of the material taught
- Communication
- Accessible information about training in all levels
- Increased job opportunities
- Updated curriculum and more specializations
- Better understanding and patience because each person learns differently
- Skills for the current job market
- Change in curriculum strategies and updated syllabi
- Improved teaching skills and also practicals
- Improvement in financial systems
- Laboratories
- Adequate training equipment and financial support from the government
- Integration of digital literacy and technological skills
- Better engagement of the government and non-governmental organizations

*Figure 10
Summary representation
of areas in need of
improvement to enhance
skills development:
perspectives of youth*

Discussion outcomes on empowering youth for a sustainable future

To address the concerns and aspirations of young people, UNESCO-UNEVOC organized a multi-stakeholder panel discussion comprising of representatives from a TVET institution, employers' association, ministry of education, international development agency and a recent graduate working in the renewable energy sector. The panel aimed to draw conclusions and recommendations for enhancing skills development among youth.

Strengthening digital skills in education and embracing artificial intelligence

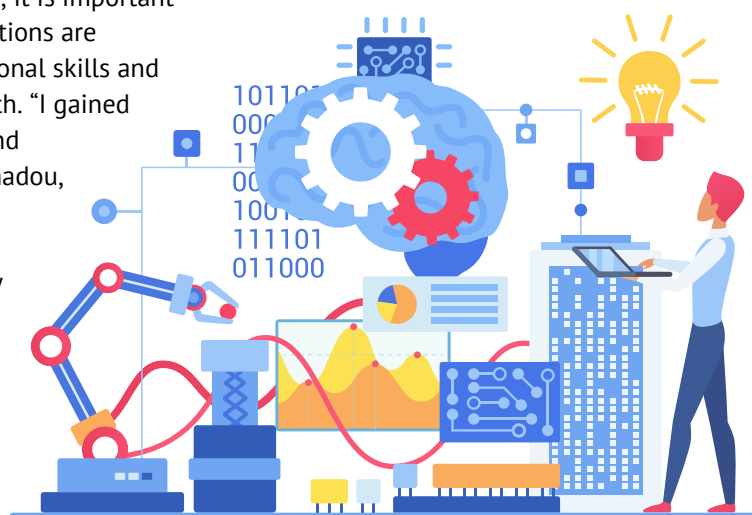
The need to tap into a diverse skill set in this fast-evolving world is paramount – skills are not limited to academic excellence alone. They encompass a broad spectrum, ranging from technical expertise to interpersonal abilities, from entrepreneurial flair to critical thinking prowess, from digital literacy to sustainability literacy. Training teachers in skills that respond to the in-demand skills of the labour market is essential for developing the relevant skills in youth and in turn reducing the youth unemployment rate.

In today's rapidly evolving educational landscape, educators encounter numerous challenges when it comes to delivering their curriculum, especially when faced with the tech-savvy Generation Z and Alpha cohorts. A study conducted in 2021 by Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UNEVOC Centre) across six countries, revealed that educators have expressed a strong need for specialized ICT training, specifically in areas such as creating digital learning materials and fostering entrepreneurship skills. Equipping educators with ICT skills is of utmost importance as it enables them to manage their classrooms more effectively and efficiently, ultimately benefiting their students' educational journeys. "We believe that educators should receive training within real business environments, enabling them to enhance their professional development and effectively support their students," said Affero Ismail, Associate Professor, Department of Engineering Education, Faculty of Technical and Vocational Education, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia.

Therefore, teachers not only need to possess basic ICT skills such as using a tablet, the internet and Microsoft Office applications but also need to develop advanced programming abilities in languages such as Python, VB, Java, and the ability to create high-level digital learning materials such as Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR), as well as engage with big data and cloud computing.

While technology can enhance teaching sessions, it is important to remember that human interaction and connections are irreplaceable. The survey revealed that interpersonal skills and communication are highly valued by today's youth. "I gained technical skills working in a kitchen, but I still find communication is a challenge," noted Barry Mamadou, a Gastronomy Apprentice in Germany.

Values such as ethics, morality and empathy play a critical role in fostering engagement and creating a conducive learning environment. These elements contribute to the holistic development of students and should not be overlooked even as technology becomes more prevalent in classrooms.



The Ministry of Education in Malaysia is actively revising the teacher training curriculum to ensure that new teachers receive relevant and up-to-date information. The revised curriculum includes a strong digital component to address the changing educational landscape. The Experiential Learning and Competency-Based Education Landscape (EXCEL) framework is a concept implemented towards this strategy. Furthermore, the ministry has introduced the practice of hiring industry trainers to teach at educational institutions. This collaboration between academia and industry helps bridge the gap between theory and practice, providing teachers with firsthand knowledge and industry insights.

The rapidly evolving field of Artificial Intelligence technologies addresses various challenges faced by educators and learners alike. “AI is one of the digital tools that has changed the way I learn; the trick is in mastering it. AI is a teacher who always has time for you,” said Florian Zimmer, EuroSkills Competitor 2023 in ICT Specialists, Germany. Teachers need to embrace AI and integrate it into education systems as soon as possible to provide learners with more effective, efficient and personalized learning experiences.

Industry collaboration and curriculum revisions



The high youth unemployment rate is exacerbated by the lack of practical work experience, work-based learning or apprenticeship opportunities to respond to fast-evolving labour market needs.

To bridge the gap between TVET institutions and industry, and to help young people in the transition from school to the labour force, TVET institutions should regularly revise their curriculum and invest in modern tools and equipment that are in line with current demands. They should also partner with organizations in the private sector in granting students opportunities to learn about industry-specific technologies through practical training and internships in order to facilitate quick adaptation into their professions.

“Lack of practical experience and exposure to technologies used within the industry, was a huge hindrance when it came to the school-to-work transition,” noted Sonya Hill, a recent engineering graduate and a WorldSkills Champion in Robotics from Jamaica.

These sentiments were backed up by Mohamed-Amine Faiz, Technical Advisor, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, who reported that the magic words to enhance practical work experience are “private sector engagement”. GIZ’s Tamheen II project in Morocco is in partnership with the Ministry of Economic Inclusion, Small Enterprises, Employment and Skills, and is working to increase the number of young people undergoing dual TVET programmes. Concretely, this involves integrating the private sector at all levels, to help in anticipating skills and conducting sectoral studies that define future skills and professions to manage establishments through public-private partnerships with sector associations, and involving the private sector in the training process by encouraging them to host apprentices who are treated as regular employees and actively participate in the daily life of the company. “We have seen great successes in the automotive, aerospace and textile sectors, with a 90% employment rate in the job market,” he explained. GIZ has created purely private support structures for managing the operational relationship between schools and businesses.

Malaysia has also implemented several strategies in this regard. One such initiative is an industry attachment programme, which offers reskilling and upskilling opportunities in collaboration with various industries. This programme is open to all educators and plays a crucial role in equipping them with the relevant skills aligned with industry demands.

“A real-world practical approach towards the implementation of knowledge is needed and bridging this gap can be done through apprentice training and competition,” said Aswatha Narayana, WorldSkills Champion 2019 in Water Technology, India.

Towards inclusivity and equity in skills development

Ensuring equal access to skill-building opportunities for young people from diverse backgrounds is crucial for promoting social and economic equity. Financial constraints, difficulty understanding training materials/concepts, inadequate training equipment, lack of supportive environment for individual needs, limited apprenticeship opportunities and lack of mental health support were cited as the biggest challenges faced during training among survey respondents. “Some lessons don’t reach all students and teachers appear to lose them. Those classes should be individualized to reach more trainees,” said Roman Steinhart, EuroSkills Champion 2021 and WorldSkills Champion 2022 in IT Network Systems Administration, Germany.



As a first step, institutions should identify and address the systemic barriers that prevent young people from diverse backgrounds from accessing skill-building opportunities. This may involve examining factors such as socioeconomic status, race, gender, disability and geographic location to understand the unique challenges faced by different groups and to fight the TVET stigma through image shaping communication about technical jobs and their contribution to development. “In Morocco, for example, we have a huge drop-out rate of young girls in rural areas due to the lack of public transport. With a special shuttle bus, and free meals, rural and community schools managed to significantly decrease the drop-out rate,” noted Mr Faiz.

Secondly, institutions should connect young people from diverse backgrounds with role models who can provide guidance, support and inspiration. Role models can help navigate the skill-building process, provide career advice and offer insights into the industry or field of interest. It is important to ensure that role models come from diverse backgrounds and can relate to the experiences of young people. For example, Duoc UC, Chile (UNEVOC Centre) has managed to increase the number of girls and women entering its ICT programmes by 49% over the past five years through its '[Más mujeres en las TICs](#)' initiative. The programme trains female ICT students in leadership, communication and mentoring skills in order to transform them into peer leaders and role models for girls and women interested in pursuing studies in that field.

There is also the need to address financial constraints, which would require the establishment of a transparent, accessible and merit-based platform. The Skillscard Empowerment and Education Transformation (SEET) Agenda of Vocational and Enterprise Skills Development (VESD) Management System is one of those systems being implemented in Nigeria. VESD is a smart skillscard with a digital fund instrument powered by blockchain technology, which effectively tackles school fees and training costs constraints by decentralizing the funding pool from individuals and organizations who contribute towards this course in small tokens. Smart contracts and merit-based fund disbursement and allocation are used to provide assistance for education and skills development to individuals in economically disadvantaged regions. “Institutions can leverage AI and digital platforms to access up-to-date equipment through virtual simulations and encourage collaborative learning environments where multiple trainees can interact with each other and virtual equipment simultaneously,” said Rahman O. Mogaji, Member of the Ministerial Task Team on TVET, Federal Ministry of Education, Nigeria and National Project Manager of the (VESD) Management System Project.

Policies on inclusion should be based on three pillars: monitoring through the collection of solid data on school drop-outs, underperformance and other factors; preventative measures through adapting fundamental components such as curricula, teacher education, pedagogies and learning environments in accordance with the needs of students, especially those belonging to the disadvantaged groups; and lastly through intervention, which involves encouraging dialogue in the school eco-system and between education institutions and external actors. Samira Bühler, Policy Officer, European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE) provided some examples of these policies in the European context, namely 'EU CONVINCe – EU Common Values Inclusive Education', 'European Sectoral Social Partners in Education promoting effective integration of migrants and refugees in education' and 'e-Speed – European Social Partners in Education Embracing Digitalization: Challenges and opportunities for European Trade Unions and Employer Organizations in the digital era'.

Environmental sustainability and climate change literacy



Environmental sustainability and climate change are not only youth concerns, but global ones. Ensuring environmental sustainability starts with acknowledging that there is an issue, and letting people feel the gravity of the situation.

Training programmes in TVET should emphasize sustainable methods and practices within their own operations. This includes waste reduction strategies such as recycling, conserving energy and water and adopting eco-friendly technologies such as

technologies powered by renewable energy. "TVET institutions act as role models for students and businesses, emphasizing the importance of sustainability within the industry and equipping future professionals with the knowledge and motivation to make a positive impact on the environment," explained Ms Hill, who shared her experience of working in the renewable energy sector.

"Green skills should not just be an add-on subject but instead appear as a multi-disciplinary subject within curricula in order to foster transversal skills, understanding and innovative thinking. This requires a restructuring of the school timetable," added Ms Bühler.

Green jobs are employment opportunities that directly contribute to the development, implementation and maintenance of green technologies and practices. "A bus driver can be considered a green job when the focus is on minimizing emissions generated," advised Mr Ismail.

Ensuring environmental sustainability will also require strengthening dialogue and cooperation between education employers and providers. For instance, at EU level there are the Education for Climate Coalition, the Digital Education Hub and the European Social Partners in Education promoting environmental sustainability in school learning, teaching and management aimed at fostering upskilling opportunities with regard to green skills.

**Every job today is
and has to be green.**

Borhene Chakroun
Director, Division for Policies and Lifelong
Learning Systems, UNESCO

Mentorship and lifelong learning

“Mentorship played an important role in my journey as a WorldSkills Champion and as an emerging engineer. Mentors have continuously helped me to navigate the challenges and opportunities within the industry by sharing their own insights and expectations based on the experiences they have gained. Moreover, my mentors have significantly contributed to my personal and professional development by guiding me in areas in need of improvement such as public speaking, networking or anything related to my work within the renewable energy sector and mobile robotics,” said Ms Hill.



Mentorship and lifelong learning are two essential components that play a crucial role in personal and professional development, enabling individuals to thrive in an ever-changing world. To foster continuous knowledge and skills development throughout life, it is imperative that information on in-demand jobs, and career paths is made available to young people. “Support or sharing information on existing TVET careers would have made it easier for me to decide on what course to enrol in TVET. I wanted to pursue a hands-on profession and applied to carpentry before I found out about glazier,” noted Maïke Füller, a Glazier Apprentice in Germany.

Policy approaches

To empower young people for a sustainable future, policies should adopt a holistic approach that considers not only technical skills but also incorporates essential skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, communication and digital literacy. Policies should also help to identify emerging skills requirements and ensure that TVET programmes are designed to meet those demands. Furthermore, they should allow for flexible, inclusive and responsive programme design and delivery, while encouraging the integration of work-based learning opportunities and lifelong learning, and fostering entrepreneurship and innovation among youth.



UNESCO's Global Skills Academy

The second panel focused on the topic of 'Global Skills Academy – Delivering youth skills for employability, entrepreneurship and resilience'. World Youth Skills Day marked the third anniversary of UNESCO's [Global Skills Academy \(GSA\)](#) and the event was an opportunity to reflect on the progress made since it was launched by UNESCO's Global Education Coalition (GEC) in 2020 as an emergency response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2022, the initiative entered a new phase, aligning its approach and implementation with the recently introduced UNESCO strategy for TVET (2022-2029). This shift involves scaling up efforts and adopting a demand-driven approach. The initiative has made a significant impact, supporting over 839,000 learners globally. With a strong commitment to continued growth, the GSA aims to support 10 million learners by 2029.



Several examples of the Global Skills Academy initiatives were presented during the event. KPMG's new mentorship initiative launched in 2023 supports young graduates entering the labour market in India. Participating staff were paired up with 100 young people from the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) of India to help get them 'job ready'.

"The programme improved my practical skills, like resume building, email writing and communication proficiency," said Navya Rawal, who joined as a mentee. "My mentor helped me in identifying my skills, my strengths, my weaknesses – allowing me to focus on areas for improvement. She has played a crucial role in boosting my confidence."

Ms Rawal credits the programme with helping her land her current role at NSDC. "I believe that the success of any nation lies in the hands of youth, however, young people today face challenges in securing employment opportunities because they lack practical skills," she said.

Other examples include the Digital Ad Expert, a social initiative of Aleph Group, Inc., which launched a Digital Ad Certificate programme in June 2023 for the first cohort in Grenada. The programme offers a series of customized modules and virtual sessions where students can meet online and access a wide range of online resources to enhance their learning experience. Over the next three months, approximately 200 students from Grenada are expected to benefit from the programme.

Donnet Hillaire, a small business owner and entrepreneur, who joined the programme, shared the value of the training.

"Everything is digital [now and] being a business professional and an aspiring entrepreneur, [this training] can really put me in a position where I can really market myself," she said, adding that she now feels more able to compete on a global scale with her business.

Conclusion

Investing in a sustainable future for young people requires a collaborative approach that prioritizes skills development to promote employability, entrepreneurship and personal development. The survey conducted by UNESCO-UNEVOC sheds light on the critical role of skills development in shaping the lives of young individuals. The data reflect a growing interest in STEM-related TVET courses, indicating a positive shift towards embracing technical and vocational education and training. However, gender disparities persist in enrolment, warranting further efforts to encourage and empower young women to pursue careers in these fields.

The significance of digital skills cannot be understated, with Artificial Intelligence emerging as a valuable tool to support learning and problem-solving. Enhancing teachers' ICT competencies is essential in providing effective and relevant education in this changing digital landscape.

The career aspirations shared by young people in the survey and throughout the event emphasize the importance of continuous learning and the desire to make meaningful contributions to society. Addressing the barriers they face, such as financial constraints, mental health concerns and access to lifelong learning opportunities, is paramount to enabling their success.

To achieve these goals, policy reforms and collaboration among stakeholders are crucial. Parents, educators, governments and international agencies must work together to create an inclusive and supportive environment for skills development. Stakeholders need to work on strengthening digital skills in education and integrating the use of AI technology; fostering private sector engagement and collaboration; updating the curriculum; fostering inclusivity and equity in skills development; and encouraging and facilitating environmental sustainability and climate change literacy, as well as corporate mentorship and lifelong learning.

In his closing remarks, Borhene Chakroun, Director of the UNESCO Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems, advised stakeholders to work on three things: a coalition of partners, youth agency articulation and representation, and developing programmes to meet emerging demands through knowledge sharing. "That's what UNESCO-UNEVOC does through the Network, through knowledge sharing, cooperation and solidarity ... and also what the Global Skills Academy is doing by having this combination of different stakeholders," Mr Chakroun said.

The event ended with a message from WorldSkills Champion Aswatha Narayana, who encouraged fellow young people to pursue skills training, take up challenges and be the driving force in the change for a sustainable future.

The full event recording can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/WgYrwdezXHI>.

World Youth Skills Day messages

The World Youth Skills Day event included online and in-person participants sharing words of advice and encouragement for young people on their skills development journey.

Here are a few of the messages:

- Be open to new ideas, dare to ask questions that no one has asked yet.
- Take advantage of the opportunities available in skills development – “Jitume” meaning “send yourself.”
- Ensure that you are skilled to do the jobs that exist today.
- Embrace lifelong learning.

In answering the question on how skills development has made a difference in their lives, the participants shared their personal and professional stories:

- **Abdul Razzaq, Pakistan:** It helped me to remain relevant in the sector and harness opportunities in the sector.
- **Choyang, Bhutan:** Not only do I have personal development as I develop new skills, but I also increase my professional competency in my chosen field. And I am more resilient and adaptable to new trends and global change.
- **Jay Deitchman, New York:** Learning new skills has opened doors, that in some cases, I did not know existed.
- **Jeric Joseph Leonon, Philippines:** Learning new skills opened many opportunities in school for me. The more skills I learned, the more leadership positions I was able to acquire.
- **Abraham, Zambia:** Learning new skills has given me the level of confidence that I never had initially, it is reassuring to learn that we never stop learning.
- **David, Mexico:** Education and learning has given me the opportunity to overcome some historical disadvantages that my community (Black/Afro-Mexicans) and family faced in our country. I’ve been the second generation of a peasant family that has come into education. The sacrifice of my ancestors allowed me to have a better present, so I feel the commitment to continue helping my community and people.
- **Pwint, Myanmar:** Learning new skills is an essential part of our lives. As learning is a never-ending process, it is necessary not to stop learning for any reason. Every knowledge is precious, and we must value every skill as we never know whether it can be useful later. The most important thing is to adapt continual learning or lifelong learning.
- **Eszter, Hungary:** We are learning new skills nearly every day, it helps us to adapt, to be resilient and mobile.
- **Jeremy, Canada:** Learning new skills (competencies) has and continues to give me the knowledge, skills and behaviours that have assisted me in transforming the TVET sector in Canada.
- **Joanna Slattery, London:** Learning the skills of dialogue has made me more confident in speaking with people and better at collaborating with others to reach common goals.

Pursuing skills, taking up challenges and responsibilities will pave the way for a better future.

Aswatha Narayana
WorldSkills Champion 2019
in Water Technology, India

World Youth Skills Day 2023

Empowering youth for a sustainable future

Technological advancements and shifting labour market dynamics increasingly call for agile and adaptable skillsets. It is crucial that we empower young people to navigate these changes effectively. Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is well placed to meet these demands by reducing access barriers to the world of work, ensuring that skills gained are relevant, recognized and certified, promoting green skills and practices and offering skills development opportunities for youth who are not in education, employment and training.

To celebrate World Youth Skills Day 2023, UNESCO-UNEVOC and WorldSkills International, in collaboration with WorldSkills Germany, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, came together to showcase the positive impact of youth skills development in an event titled 'Empowering youth for a sustainable future'. This report is a compilation of inputs from various speakers and participants at the hybrid event.

Stay in touch



unevoc@unesco.org



unevoc.unesco.org



[@unevoc](#)



linkedin.com/company/unevoc

UNESCO-UNEVOC

International Centre for TVET

UN Campus

Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1

53113 Bonn

Germany