

► Meaningful Youth Engagement in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Africa

A Practical Guide



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First published 2026.



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ISBN: 9789220431238 (web PDF)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.54394/MOSR4779>

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Acronyms

AUDA	African Union Development Agency
CBT	Competency-Based Training
COTVET	Council for Technical and Vocational Education
CTVET	Commission for Technical and Vocational Education
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DSU	Disability Support Units
FCA	Finn Church Aid
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
GIZ	German Development Agency
GTS	Graduate Tracking System
GTVP	Ghana TVET Voucher Project
ILO	International Labour Organization
KII	Key Informant Interview
KYEOP	Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunities Project
LMIS	Labour Market Information System
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NYDA	National Youth Development Agency (NYDA)
MYE	Meaningful Youth Engagement
PSGP	Priority Skills Growth Programme
PYD	Positive Youth Development
TAMK	Tampere University of Applied Sciences
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

Acknowledgements

This Practical Guidance Tool on Meaningful Youth Engagement in TVET was jointly developed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) as part of their shared commitment to advancing skills development and promoting the active participation of young people in shaping Africa's Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) landscape.

The preparation of this guide was supported by Workforce Development International, a consultancy firm led by Dan Baffour-Awuah, with contributions from Peter Essien and John Kimotho, who served as the principal authors. Their diligent work in research, content development, and drafting was instrumental in producing this publication.

The development process was coordinated by Baye Sambou, Technical Officer at the ILO, under the overall guidance of Patrick Daru, Head of the Skills and Training Excellence Unit, and Christine Hofmann, Senior Regional Skills Specialist for Africa, based in Abidjan.

Valuable technical inputs and peer review were provided by colleagues from both ILO and AUDA-NEPAD, including, Christine Hofmann, Nqobile Zwane (Programme Officer, AUDA-NEPAD), Milagros Lazo Castro (Skills and Employability Specialist for Central Africa), Patrick Daru and Baye Sambou. Their contributions greatly enhanced the quality and relevance and applicability of this guidance tool.

The content was further enriched through an extensive literature review, case studies and consultations with stakeholders across various African countries. In addition, over 100 young people contributed insights during a participatory session on Meaningful Youth Engagement in TVET held at the ATUPA (Association of Technical Universities and Polytechnics in Africa) Annual Conference and Youth Forum in Durban, South Africa, in August 2025. Their reflections and lived experiences ensured that the guide captures the voices, aspirations, and realities of African youth.

ILO and AUDA-NEPAD express their sincere appreciation to all individuals and institutions whose contributions and commitment made this publication possible.

Foreword

Across Africa and the world, the world of work is evolving amid rapid technological, economic and demographic change. These transitions bring new opportunities but also deepen existing inequalities, particularly among young people who continue to face barriers in accessing decent employment. In this context, TVET plays a key role in equipping youth with the skills required for employment and entrepreneurship. Yet, to remain relevant and impactful, TVET systems must reflect the aspirations and agency of young people.

Young people are not simply recipients of training interventions; they are drivers of change in the world of work, actively seeking meaningful livelihoods that align with their values, ambitions, and vision for the future. Without deliberate efforts to understand and integrate these aspirations, training systems risk irrelevance leading to disengagement, early dropout, and poor employment outcomes.

Evidence from the AUDA-NEPAD Africa Skills Revolution, including its continental report, infographic, and policy brief, underscored the importance of systematically capturing and integrating young people's perspectives into skills development systems. These knowledge products highlighted young people's perceptions of TVET, the barriers they face in accessing and completing training, and the need for more responsive, inclusive, and youth-centred approaches. The findings reinforced the imperative for TVET systems to be informed by young people's aspirations in order to improve relevance, engagement, and outcomes.

Anchored in the ILO Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142), training policies and programmes should encourage and enable all persons, on an equal basis and without any discrimination, to develop and use their capabilities for work in their own best interests and in line with their aspirations. These policies must also take into account the needs of society.

The ILO Strategy on Skills and Lifelong Learning (2022) further calls for integrating learners' perspectives and feedback into skills development to enhance relevance, quality, and impact. Building on these principles, the ILO and AUDA-NEPAD have developed this guidance tool to help TVET providers institutionalize youth engagement across governance, training delivery, assessment, and feedback mechanisms.

The guidance tool proposes a step-by-step approach, starting with the systematic collection and integration of youth aspirations, and moving toward active engagement of young people as consulted actors, co-creators, and leaders within TVET systems. This includes involving young people in programme feedback and co-design processes, engaging them in peer support and mentoring initiatives, and creating space for youth representation in institutional decision-making.

As part of the broader collaboration between ILO and AUDA-NEPAD, this guidance tool contributes directly to ongoing continental efforts to enhance youth engagement in TVET, to strengthen young people's voice and increase attractiveness of learning technical and vocational skills.

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Introduction

Purpose of the manual

The ILO Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142), establishes the foundation for inclusive and balanced skills development. Article 1 of the Convention states that “policies and programmes shall encourage and enable all persons, on an equal basis and without any discrimination whatsoever, to develop and use their capabilities for work in their own best interests and in accordance with their own aspirations, account being taken of the needs of society.” This article highlights the ILO’s approach to human resources development, which considers individual aspirations and the needs of societies / markets. In practice, however, many training programmes remain narrowly focused on labour market demands. While responding to market needs is essential, this approach often sidelines the lived experiences, ambitions, and voices of young learners. As a result, training systems frequently fail to engage youth meaningfully in shaping their learning journeys and career pathways.

The disconnect between training design and youth aspirations weakens the overall impact of skills development initiatives. When learners feel excluded from decision-making processes, their motivation and sense of ownership decline. This limits the transformative potential of training programmes and results in missed opportunities to empower young people as active contributors to both their communities and the economy.

Addressing youth engagement alone will not make TVET more appealing without parallel structural reforms. The limited attractiveness of TVET stems from both weak youth engagement and systemic structural barriers. The perception of TVET as a less desirable pathway is not solely the result of insufficient youth participation. The absence of clear learning and career pathways, limited access to decent jobs, and weak prospects for professional advancement for graduates also shape youth engagement. While empowering young people to participate in defining TVET programmes is essential, these efforts must be complemented by broader measures to strengthen labour market linkages, expand education and career progression opportunities, and enhance the overall image and value of TVET in society. Only a comprehensive approach that tackles both participation and structure can sustainably transform the attractiveness of the TVET sector.

This Manual provides practical, step-by-step guidance to institutionalise meaningful youth engagement in TVET systems. It is designed to help stakeholders strengthen youth participation across all levels of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Africa. Beyond articulating broad principles and recommendations, the Manual provides concrete tools and actionable approaches that can be applied at various stages of the TVET programming cycle to ensure that youth engagement becomes a sustained and measurable practice, rather than a one-off activity.

The manual is grounded in empirical evidence drawn from a multi-country situational analysis on meaningful youth engagement in TVET. It builds on findings from the Situational Analysis Report on Meaningful Youth Engagement in TVET in Africa, commissioned by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the African Union Development Agency–NEPAD (AUDA-NEPAD). The study examined practices in Ghana and Kenya⁰ complemented by benchmarking insights from other regions, including Europe (e.g., ILO STED and CEDEFOP frameworks), Asia (e.g., ASEAN regional TVET reforms), and Latin America (e.g., youth participation mechanisms in Chile and Colombia).

Findings highlight a significant gap between youth consultation and their actual influence within TVET systems. While young people are often consulted across both formal and informal TVET structures, their views are not consistently translated into concrete influence or decision-making in programme design, policy formulation, or institutional governance. This limits the transformative potential of youth participation and perpetuates a top-down approach to skills development.

This Manual provides actionable, scalable solutions to strengthen youth participation across all levels of the TVET ecosystem. Building on tested approaches and global good practices, it offers adaptable frameworks, practical tools, and illustrative examples that policymakers, training providers, and social partners can use to embed youth

engagement in policy, institutional, and programmatic processes. The guidance ensures that young people are not only participants in TVET but also partners and leaders in shaping how skills development is planned, delivered, and improved within a holistic “TVET ecosystem” that connects every stage of the training and governance cycle.

While primarily intended for TVET practitioners and training institutions, the Manual also provides valuable guidance for policymakers, employers offering training or apprenticeships, development partners, and youth-led organisations committed to strengthening participatory and inclusive approaches in TVET. More specifically, the manual targets a broad range of stakeholders involved in skills development, including:

- ▶ TVET institutions and practitioners, responsible for integrating youth voices into training design and delivery;
- ▶ Policymakers and regulators, guiding reforms and shaping governance;
- ▶ Employers and industry partners, creating youth-inclusive work-based learning opportunities; and
- ▶ Youth-led organizations and networks, engaging as advocates, co-designers, and implementers of youth participation mechanisms.

What is meaningful youth engagement?

Meaningful Youth Engagement (MYE) represents a process of shared power and partnership in TVET systems.

It goes beyond participation in one-off activities or consultations to recognise young people as active agents of change in the design, delivery, and governance of skills development. Engagement becomes meaningful when youth are not only consulted but also given the space, support, and authority to influence decisions and take on leadership roles in shaping policies, programmes, and institutional practices. Meaningful Youth Engagement (MYE) is expected to enhance the attractiveness, relevance, and responsiveness of TVET by aligning training opportunities with young people’s aspirations and with labour market needs. In doing so, MYE helps bridge the gap between skills, jobs and people’s aspirations, ensuring that TVET remains both empowering and demand driven. In this approach, young people co-design initiatives, set priorities, and share responsibility for results, an approach that fosters sustainability, accountability, and long-term impact. By positioning youth as partners and innovators rather than passive learners, MYE becomes a driving force behind a TVET system that genuinely works for and with young people.

Engagement becomes meaningful when young people move from consultation to active partnership and co-leadership. Actual participation occurs when youth are not only given the space to share their views but also empowered to contribute, collaborate with institutions, and take ownership in co-leading initiatives that shape training design, delivery and governance. This level of engagement requires:

- ▶ **Agency:** Young women and men set their goals autonomously, make their own choices, pursue their aspirations, participate in consultations, and act as change-makers.
- ▶ **Voice and Influence:** Young women and men can express their views freely, and their inputs lead to tangible changes in decisions, policies, or programmes.
- ▶ **Inclusivity and Representativeness:** All groups of young people regardless of their background, especially women, persons with disabilities, and those from marginalised communities, have opportunities to engage.
- ▶ **Progression and Capacity:** Youth move from being consulted to contributing, to partnering, and ultimately to co-leading, supported by capacity-building and preparedness mechanisms that equip them for meaningful participation at higher levels of responsibility.

In practice, meaningful engagement can occur at different levels of the TVET system:

- ▶ **Programming level:** Learners contributing to curriculum design, lessons plans, assessment tools, or peer mentoring systems, providing feedback and inputs (e.g. preferred methods of learning such as online, in-person or hybrid).
- ▶ **Community and network level:** Youth organizations shaping outreach campaigns, career guidance, and advocacy.
- ▶ **Policy and Governance level:** Youth representatives participating in national skills councils, sector skills bodies, or policy dialogues.

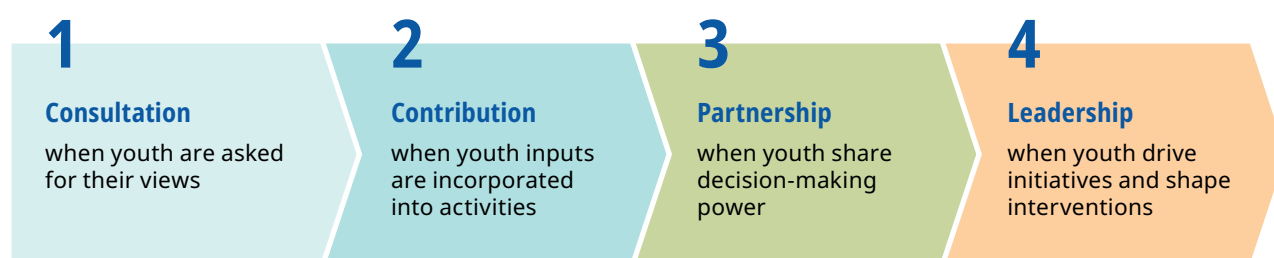
► **Table 1: Entry Points for Youth Engagement in TVET**

TVET Programming Cycle	How Engagement Happens	Meaningful Youth Engagement Entry Points
1. Capturing aspirations and future skills	Entry surveys, counselling sessions, tracer studies, forecasts,	Youth help design tools; peer-to-peer counselling; Youth foresight workshops; feedback on standards
2. Campaigns and recruitment	Youth ambassadors, social media, peer networks,	Youth lead outreach: roles formalized in campaigns
3. Inclusion by design	Quotas, accessible facilities, inclusion audits	Youth identify barriers; inclusion audits with learners
4. Teaching and learning	Learner-centered andragogy, Project-based and work based learning, digitalized courses,	Learning experience is shaped to fit learning modes of young people
5. Peer feedback and self-assessment	Study groups, mentoring, self-tracking	Formalised peer mentoring; youth undertake structured self-assessment
6. Feedback loops	Surveys, dashboards	Institutions “close the loop” with youth
7. Governance and leadership	Student councils, board seats	Youth contribute from within social partners or with a separate mandate, at all levels of governance

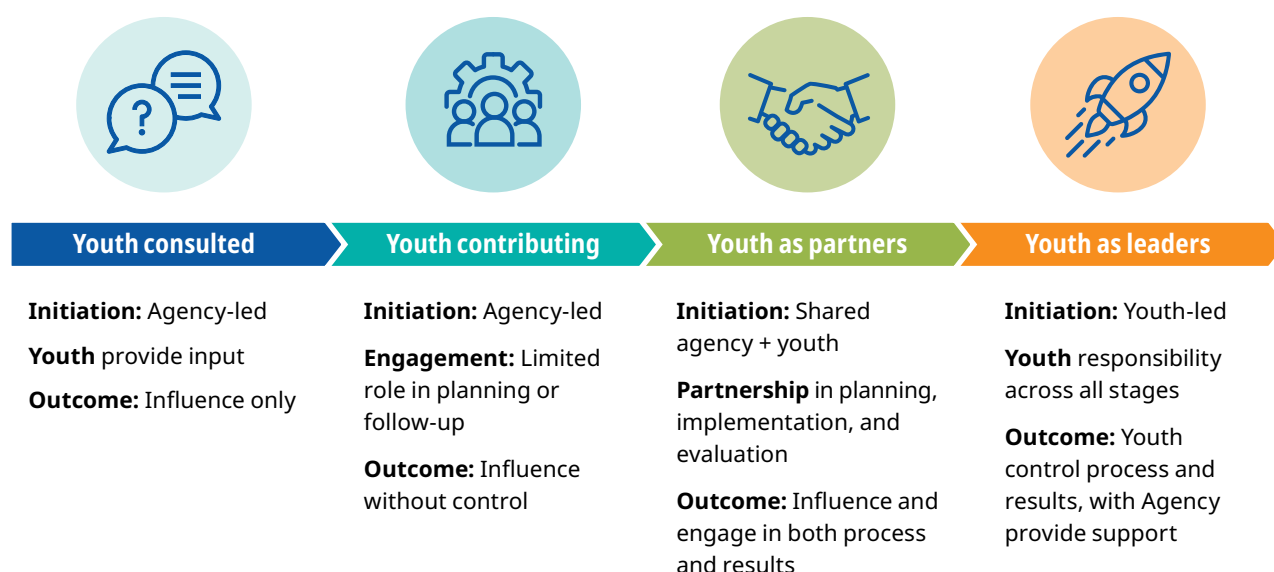
By defining engagement as a process of partnership and shared leadership, the Guide identifies where and how to involve young people more effectively underlining the principle that youth should be viewed as partners and leaders in building stronger, more inclusive, and more responsive TVET systems. It emphasizes that young people should not only be consulted but also meaningfully involved throughout the entire skills ecosystem, from anticipating labour market needs and defining lesson plans, to co-creating training materials, shaping delivery, participating in assessments, engaging in outreach and recruitment, and finally supporting career guidance and transitions from school-to-work.

► **Figure 1: Functional Entry Points for MYE across the TVET Programming Cycle**

Youth engagement in each of the above-mentioned entry points can range from basic information-sharing to full youth-led decision-making. Understanding these varying levels enables institutions and policymakers to assess their current stage and identify the necessary steps to advance toward more meaningful, inclusive, and youth-driven engagement. Youth engagement is defined here by the depth and influence of participation, along four progressive levels in line with the UN Framework for Meaningful Youth Engagement:

► **Figure 2: Youth Engagement as a Continuously Improving Process**

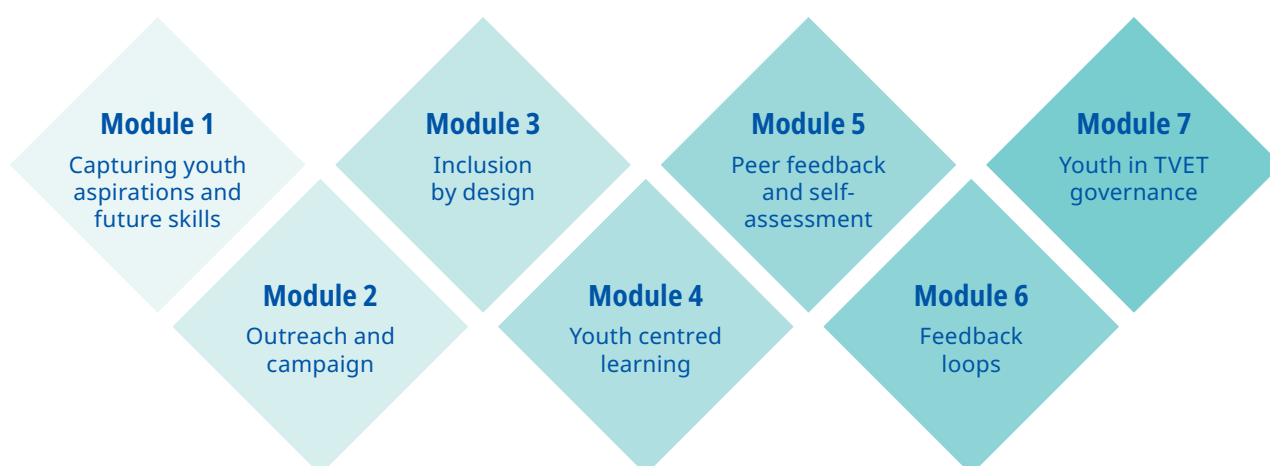
Many TVET systems remain at the consultation stage of youth engagement, limiting real influence. In such contexts, young people are asked for feedback but rarely see the impact of their input translated into action. This approach risks tokenism, leaving learners without genuine participation in shaping the systems that define their education and career pathways. The Guide encourages a shift from consultation to genuine partnership, co-creation and leadership. It guides stakeholders to move beyond one-off consultations toward approaches in which youth voices carry authority and youth participation is institutionalised across the TVET ecosystem. In doing so, it fosters a culture of shared ownership and accountability, empowering young people to act as co-designers, innovators, and leaders within TVET systems.

► **Figure 3: Levels of Meaningful Youth Engagement in TVET**

How to use this guide

This Guide is designed as a flexible, user-friendly modular tool that can be adapted to different contexts and roles within the TVET ecosystem. The Guide is organised into seven interconnected modules that help users navigate from initial consultation with young people to a full leadership approach. Each module of the Manual is designed to stand alone for ease of use and adaptability. Indeed, the Guide is not prescriptive – users may focus on the modules most relevant to their work and priorities. For instance, a TVET provider might start with Capturing Youth Aspirations before addressing Inclusion by Design. At the same time, a policymaker may prioritise strengthening participation of young people in Governance.

► Figure 4: Seven Modules of the Guide

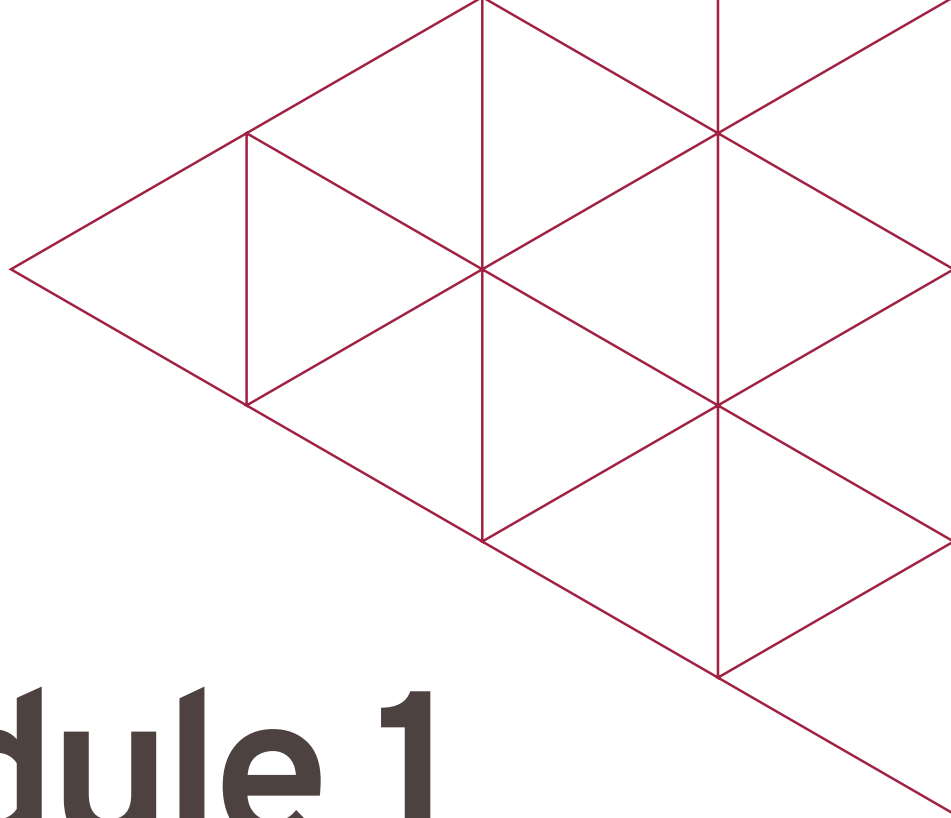


Concrete examples and case studies illustrate how meaningful youth engagement can be strengthened across diverse contexts. Throughout the Guide, practical experiences are presented to show how institutions and partners have applied participatory approaches in different settings. These examples are intended to inspire adaptation rather than replication, encouraging stakeholders to tailor strategies and tools to their unique environments.

Cross-cutting themes are integrated throughout the Manual - such as gender transformation, disability inclusion, digitalisation, and skills for green jobs. Users are encouraged to apply these considerations consistently, regardless of which step or module they are working on, to promote inclusive and future-ready TVET systems.

The Annexes provide practical tools and resources to support implementation. They include sample surveys, mentoring logbooks, governance charters, and feedback mechanisms that can be customised to fit specific institutional and country contexts.

Using this Guide enables stakeholders to move from ad-hoc initiatives to sustainable, institutionalised youth engagement in TVET. TVET practitioners, training providers, and their partners, including policymakers, employers, and youth organisations, can apply its tools and frameworks to embed meaningful youth participation systematically within programmes and institutions. In doing so, they help build resilient TVET systems that empower young people to be active partners in shaping the future of work and learning.



► Module 1

Capturing youth aspirations and future skills

Introduction

Recognising and integrating youth aspirations is therefore key to both improving retention among current learners and enhancing the overall attractiveness of TVET for prospective ones. Aspirations are the foundation of every TVET learner's journey. They shape programme choices, influence motivation, and affect how learners perceive the relevance of training. When TVET programmes align with learner goals, they are expected to improve satisfaction, retention, and better employment outcomes. Taking youth aspirations in consideration also elevates the image of TVET, positioning it as training pathway of choice rather than a secondary option. Conversely, when aspirations are overlooked, learners may feel disconnected from their courses, leading to low retention, poor performance, and weaker employment outcomes. If TVET opportunities are not aligned with young people's ambitions, many may choose not to enroll in the first place.

At the same time, qualifications need also to reflect the skills required by the labour market. Anticipating future skills needs is crucial to ensure TVET systems train youth for jobs of the future. Labour markets are rapidly changing due to digitalisation, green transitions, demographic shifts, and global value chain restructuring. Without proactive adequate anticipation of the skills that will be required in tomorrow's labour market, TVET providers risk graduates possessing skills that are already obsolete when they enter the workforce.

Engaging youth in foresight processes allows to source data and analysis on latest trends. Traditional skills forecasting relies heavily on employers, government labour market analysts, or donor-led studies. While helpful, these often overlook the lived experiences, creativity, and career ambitions of young people themselves. Youth are closest to emerging trends, such as gig-economy opportunities, new forms of digital entrepreneurship, and evolving cultural industries, that may not yet appear in formal projections. Curriculum development that integrates youth voices can yield training that feels more relevant and inclusive. When young people contribute to identify priority sectors and occupations, programmes may better reflect latest market trends.

Data-driven systems create a bridge between the skills that youth want, and those required by the market.

Labour Market Information Systems (LMIS), including tracer studies, and foresight exercises provide up to date insights on labour demand, employment outcomes, and emerging occupations. When young people share their goals and co-define programmes, they help shape the direction of training programmes and signal which skills and futures they have identified and value most. When these data sources are linked with youth aspiration surveys, they help curriculum development align with both economic priorities and learners' ambitions.

Recognizing youth aspirations and involving them in skills anticipation transforms learners from passive recipients into active partners in their own learning journeys. Youth engagement in identifying and anticipating current and future skills needs also builds agency and leadership. By moving from passive beneficiaries to active contributors in shaping future skills programmes, youth develop the capacity to express themselves and confidence in decision-making. This not only benefits TVET reform but also nurtures the next generation of leaders for national development. This approach can also strengthen learners' ownership of the resulting programme, support retention, and help graduates navigate the transition from school to work with greater confidence.

Aspirations and skills demand trends are dynamic and constantly evolving. A student who begins with an interest in fashion design, for instance, may later discover opportunities in entrepreneurship or digital innovation they want to follow, because of the exposure they may have gained on the labour market. Recognizing and responding to this evolution is essential to keeping training relevant, motivating, and aligning with learners' emerging interests. Institutions must therefore treat learners' priorities as a continuous source of insight, revisiting and updating it regularly to ensure that guidance, curricula, and opportunities are in tune with their realities. Continuous analysis of aspiration data enables the creation of flexible and responsive training pathways. By allowing learners to build on their interests, branch into related fields, and progress toward meaningful qualifications and careers, training providers can design adaptive systems that reflect both individual growth and evolving labour market needs.

Objective

By the end of this chapter, you will know how to engage young people meaningfully in skills anticipation and capture, interpret, and integrate youth aspirations systematically into TVET programmes. This process lays the foundation for meaningful youth engagement by ensuring that learners' goals, motivations, and ambitions inform the design and delivery of training, making TVET more relevant, responsive, and empowering for young people. More specifically, you will know how to:

- ▶ **Engage youth in skills anticipation and foresight exercises** - these exercises allow young people to actively participate in identifying emerging trades and occupations shaped by future market needs.
- ▶ **Conduct aspiration-mapping exercises at the point of entry to understand learners' goals and motivations** – how to engage instructors, counsellors, and youth facilitators in identifying learners' interests, aspirations, through surveys, counselling sessions, peer workshops, and digital tools.
- ▶ **Identify not only what but how learners want to be trained** – understand the methods, formats and environments that make learning effective for them, including delivery modes (in-person, online, blended, work- or class-based), learning styles (visual, practical, collaborative) and pace.
- ▶ **Analyse and interpret skills anticipation and aspiration data to guide inclusive and learner responsive TVET planning** - Disaggregate findings by gender and vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, refugees, rural youth, and learners from underprivileged backgrounds, and identify gaps between aspirations and employment opportunities for each group.
- ▶ **Integrate aspiration and skills anticipation findings into core programming processes** - Use the insights to inform curriculum planning, and career guidance, ensuring that youth perspectives shape programmes that target them.
- ▶ **Establish mechanisms to review and update learners' aspirations and market anticipation regularly** - Continuous reflection throughout the training journey ensures that aspirations remain relevant, realistic, and actionable, allowing institutions to adapt support and guidance as learners' goals evolve.

Applied Example – Learner Voice from Focus Group Discussion (FGD) - Ghana

Box 1: Learner Voice from FGD in Ghana

When I enrolled, they asked me what I wanted to achieve, but nobody checked again later. I felt like my dreams were recorded just for formality. If they had followed up and guided me along the way, I would have felt more supported to reach my goals.

► A learner from a Focus Group Discussion

This testimony highlights a common gap in how TVET systems manage learners' aspirations. In many institutions, aspirations are collected once, often at enrolment, but seldom revisited or used to inform continuous support. Treating aspirations as continuous source of insights can inform career guidance, programme design, and pathway development, keeping training relevant and responsive throughout the learner's journey.

How to capture youth aspirations and future skills

How to collect data on aspirations and future skills

Aspirations must be systematically collected, analysed, and integrated before they can shape TVET systems.

This process involves gathering data rigorously and ensuring that the findings inform planning, curriculum development, and decision-making. Through this, institutions ensure that learners' voices are not only heard but embedded within the structures that govern their education and training pathways.

Aspiration surveys provide a structured baseline for capturing learners' goals. Entry surveys provide the first structured opportunity to capture learners' goals and motivations. Administered during enrolment, these surveys enable institutions to gather systematic data on students' career ambitions, motivations, and expectations. Youth representatives or student associations can review and test survey questions to ensure the language and focus reflect learners lived experiences. Combining closed questions for comparability with open-ended ones provides richer insights. This baseline can serve as a reference point for tracking future progress throughout the learner's journey.

Sector-specific foresight workshops with young people help align training with real economic priorities. These sessions bring together TVET authorities, training centres, social partners, and youth representatives to anticipate future skills needs across priority sectors, including agriculture, construction, energy, and ICT. Within each sector, participants analyse how key drivers, digitalization, automation, and the green transition are reshaping occupations and competencies. Youth participation adds depth and innovation to the foresight process. As contributors, young people share insights on new job trends; as partners, they can co-facilitate foresight discussions or assist in analysing results; and as leaders, they can represent youth constituencies in national curriculum review bodies, presenting foresight findings for validation. This layered engagement ensures that foresight outcomes integrate both technical expertise and the lived experiences of young people.

Orientation and counselling sessions provide a supportive platform for learners to voice and explore their aspirations. Within TVET institutions, these sessions may take either a group-based or individual format, creating safe spaces where learners can reflect on their goals and engage in guided discussions about their futures. Group sessions also foster peer learning and motivation through shared reflection. They allow learners to exchange ideas, connect over common goals, and inspire one another through dialogue. In contrast, individual sessions enable counselors or mentors to offer personalised support, helping learners articulate their ambitions, identify barriers, and map clear training or career pathways.

Collaborative facilitation strengthens the impact and sustainability of group counselling sessions. When co-led by trained staff alongside youth leaders or alumni, the process becomes more relatable and participatory. Institutions can build on these sessions by establishing regular reflection meetings or mentorship check-ins that track how learners' aspirations evolve throughout their training journey. Learners often express themselves more freely with peers than with institutional staff. Training senior students or alumni to facilitate aspiration workshops helps reduce power gaps, encourages honest sharing, and builds a culture of mutual respect. Youth facilitators indeed play a vital role in making aspirations mapping a participatory and learner-driven process. By summarising key findings and presenting them to management, they reinforce their role as partners in institutional development rather than mere participants. This approach ensures that the process reflects learners' voices while promoting accountability between students and institutions.

Digital platforms enable continuous aspiration collection rather than a one-off approach. WhatsApp forms, SMS surveys, or online dashboards allow learners to update their aspirations as they evolve. These tools also provide institutions with real-time data to feed into counselling, and programme design. Youth can be trained to moderate these platforms, track response rates, and visualise trends, transforming digital tools into youth-led knowledge systems.

Sustaining trust requires visible feedback and transparency. Institutions should regularly demonstrate how learners' aspirations have influenced programme improvements, training content, or extracurricular activities. This can be achieved by sharing summaries of trends on noticeboards or digital dashboards, providing updates during assemblies, or integrating examples into mentorship sessions, all of which strengthen motivation and ongoing engagement.

How to interpret aspirations and skills demand data

Analysing aspiration data enables institutions to identify both collective trends and individual needs. Aggregating survey results and counselling session outcomes helps paint a comprehensive picture of common learner goals while also revealing unique niche interests that may require tailored responses. Using aspiration data strategically allows TVET providers to plan more effectively and promote inclusion. Institutions can adjust programme offerings, allocate resources more efficiently, and identify learners who may require reasonable accommodation, such as Persons with Disabilities, so that facilities, training materials, and teaching methods are adapted to ensure equal participation and learning outcomes.

Youth participation in data interpretation ensures findings reflect real experiences and priorities. Involving learners as co-analysts through student committees or validation workshops helps contextualise the results, ensuring that institutional conclusions and decisions are grounded in lived realities rather than external assumptions. Disaggregating aspirations by gender, disability, and socio-economic background reveals equity gaps. Young women, persons with disabilities, and learners from rural or low-income households often have distinct goals but face specific systemic barriers in pursuing them. By breaking down aspiration data across these categories, institutions can design targeted interventions that reduce inequalities.

Cross-checking aspirations against labour-market intelligence ensures realism and relevance. Learner ambitions should be assessed not only in relation to labour market information and employer demand, but also in terms of preferred learning modes. Aspirations encompass

- ▶ the subjects learners wish to study and the related qualifications and jobs to be cross checked against employers demand;
- ▶ their preferred learning methods - whether through practical work, digital or blended approaches, apprenticeships, or classroom-based instruction;
- ▶ their preferred learning modes – reading, hearing, looking at demonstrations, practicing etc.

Considering all these dimensions helps providers develop training that is relevant, inclusive, and engaging, while aligning with real employment opportunities.

Sharing interpreted results with learners builds trust and strengthens guidance. When institutions feed findings back into career counselling sessions, learners can refine their expectations and pathways. This feedback loop also signals that their input is valued and acted upon, which enhances motivation and ownership of their learning journey.

How to integrate aspirations and skills demand into training

Aggregated data from entry surveys and counseling sessions can inform TVET programmes to become learner-centred. Presenting learners' goals and emerging trends in curriculum review committees, and strategic planning sessions ensures that youth perspectives shape programme design, resource allocation, and institutional priorities. Including youth representatives in these structures can further enhance participation and accountability – as it brings lived experience into formal decision-making spaces.

Formal curriculum and qualifications frameworks often require validation workshops. Including youth representatives in these committees ensures their perspectives shape the design of competencies, learning outcomes, and assessment methods. Youth representatives serving on these committees play leadership roles in ensuring that the competencies defined align not only with labour market realities but also with the aspirations of young men and women entering the workforce.

Tracer studies can be enriched by linking outcomes to initial aspirations. By comparing what learners aimed for at entry with what they achieved after graduation, institutions gain insights into whether training pathways are helping youth reach their goals. Equally important, tracer studies can explore how training experiences have shaped or refined those aspirations, revealing whether learners adapted their career goals to new opportunities, constraints, or changing labour market needs. This evidence provides a deeper understanding of training and guidance effectiveness and can inform further curriculum adjustments and policy reforms.

Transparent feedback mechanisms reinforce trust and close the engagement loop. Regularly sharing “you said → we did” updates with learners shows how their aspirations have influenced institutional actions, fostering accountability, ownership, and sustained engagement across the TVET community. Digital dashboards can also strengthen two-way accountability between learners and institutions. Mobile apps, online surveys, and interactive dashboards enable youth to share their views in real-time on both the relevance of training and the learning environment. Feedback can highlight emerging skill needs to guide curriculum updates, as well as issues related to teaching quality, accessibility, or harassment. Integrating these tools into institutional systems transforms one-off consultations into a continuous dialogue, enabling TVET providers to act quickly and adjust programmes based on real learner experiences.

National policy can integrate youth aspirations into skills planning and investment decisions. Ministries and TVET agencies can use synthesised aspiration data to complement labour market forecasts, making national TVET systems more responsive to both youth ambitions and economic priorities, in line with ILO Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142). Aligning aspirations with workforce development strategies reinforces the legitimacy of TVET as a pathway that serves both young people and national growth.

The ILO-supported Upgrading Informal Apprenticeships in Jordan's Car Garages project offers a practical example of this integration. By recognising and supporting the aspirations of young people already engaged in informal technical trades, the initiative informed national dialogue on apprenticeship reform and skills recognition, thereby bridging the gap between informal learning and formal systems. Evidence from the project influenced policy reform and system-level investment.

► **Table 2: Levels of Youth Engagement in Identifying Future Skills**

Areas	Level of MYE	Youth Role	Value Added
Skills Forecasting & Foresight	Consulted → Partner	Participate in foresight workshops, share sector insights, and co-facilitate exercises.	Captures youth perspectives on emerging occupations
Data Interpretation & Validation	Partner	Contribute to analysing LMIS and tracer data, and validate findings	Links labour data to youth aspirations
Curriculum Review & Reform	Leader	Serve on curriculum committees and standards panels	Ensures curricula align with both labour demand and youth ambitions

Box 2: Upgrading Informal Apprenticeships and Elevating Youth Aspirations in Jordan

In many developing economies, large numbers of young people acquire skills through informal apprenticeships rather than formal TVET systems. These apprenticeships often reflect the aspirations of youth seeking livelihoods, dignity, and a sense of belonging. Still, they face barriers such as poverty, limited access to formal education, and social bias against vocational careers. The International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Upgrading Informal Apprenticeships in Jordan's Car Garages project demonstrates how recognising and nurturing such aspirations can transform both individual trajectories and national training systems.

Implemented jointly with the Ministry of Labour and local employer associations, the programme targeted small and micro enterprises (SMEs) in the automotive repair sector. In this field, many young people, especially from low-income or migrant backgrounds, aspired to learn a trade but lacked structured training opportunities. Before the project, apprentices typically worked in unregulated garage environments, learning through observation or on-the-job learning by doing activities, without certification, safety standards, or career advancement pathways. These conditions limited their potential to convert aspiration into achievement. The ILO's upgrading model acknowledged youths' existing aspirations rather than attempting to replace them. It built on what young people were already doing (learning informally) and enhanced it through structure, mentorship, and certification. The project combined training for master craftspersons (garage owners) with competency-based skills assessment and formal recognition of acquired skills. Apprentices received coaching in technical, safety, and life skills, while mentors were trained to provide inclusive, gender-sensitive supervision.

Crucially, mentorship became a platform for dialogue on aspirations. Apprentices were encouraged to articulate their long-term goals — such as owning a garage, advancing to a career in diagnostic technology, or pursuing entrepreneurship — while mentors helped them understand labour market dynamics and adapt their ambitions accordingly. In this way, the programme shifted aspirations from short-term survival employment toward sustainable career development pathway. This engagement broadened social recognition of vocational aspirations, helping dismantle the stigma often attached to manual trades and legitimising young people's choices in the eyes of their families and communities.

The outcomes were transformative. Apprentices in upgraded garages reported stronger motivation, clearer career plans, and greater confidence in their prospects. Employers noted improved performance and reduced turnover, while local communities observed safer, more professional work environments. At the system level, the initiative informed Jordan's national dialogue on formalising informal apprenticeships and inspired the integration of recognition-of-prior-learning (RPL) mechanisms into national TVET reforms. This case illustrates that when youth aspirations are acknowledged, supported, and linked to structured learning and certification systems, they become a powerful engine for transformation. By starting from what young people hope for, not just what the labour market demands, and creating enabling conditions through mentorship, policy reform, and social inclusion, the Jordanian model demonstrates how informal learning can evolve into a credible, aspirational pathway within the national TVET framework.

Youth engagement levels in capturing aspirations

Meaningful youth engagement during aspiration mapping requires that learners are not merely respondents but active participants, shaping how information is collected, interpreted, and used. Through this approach, aspiration mapping becomes a collaborative exercise rather than a top-down assessment. Youth act as co-researchers, facilitators, and advocates, strengthening ownership and ensuring that institutional responses reflect their lived experiences and priorities. Peer mentor facilitation can equip senior students or alumni with structured discussion prompts, role-play activities, and facilitation techniques. Institutions can create peer-led workshops that foster a comfortable environment for learners to express their ambitions.

► **Table 3: Levels of Youth Engagement in Capturing Aspirations**

Areas	Youth Role	Level of Engagement	Example in Practice
Aspiration Surveys	Youth contribute to designing survey questions and testing the tool for relevance and accessibility before rollout. They also participate in validating key findings.	Consulted → Contributing	Youth representatives co-develop entry survey questions with counselors to ensure that the language and examples resonate with learners' realities.
Counselling and Orientation Sessions	Youth provide feedback on session formats and help refine guidance content based on their lived experiences.	Consulted	Learners suggest discussion themes and scenarios used in orientation exercises.
Peer-to-Peer Mapping Workshops	Youth act as facilitators, co-trainers, or rapporteurs in sessions designed to collectively map aspirations.	Partnering → Leading	Senior students or alumni co-lead group discussions, collect insights, and share findings with staff.
Data Interpretation and Feedback	Youth representatives participate in review meetings or feedback validation sessions, interpreting trends and proposing actions.	Contributing → Partnering	A youth committee reviews anonymised aspiration data and recommends improvements to the curriculum or mentorship.
Communication of Findings	Youth lead dissemination of results through student newsletters, dashboards, or assemblies.	Leading	Learners co-present findings to peers and administrators to close the "you said → we did" feedback loop.
Data Interpretation & Validation	Partner	Contribute to analysing LMIS and tracer data, and validate findings	Links labour data to youth aspirations
Curriculum Review & Reform	Leader	Serve on curriculum committees and standards panels	Ensures curricula align with both labour demand and youth ambitions

Checklist for action

- **Participatory foresight workshops are organised** - to bring together TVET authorities and training centres, together with social partners and youth networks, to identify emerging skills needs. They complement youth aspirations surveys to ensure alignment of qualifications with the needs of the market and aspirations of young women and men.
- **Youth representatives are included** - in curriculum design committees, in panels analysing and validating aspiration and skills anticipation data.
- **An entry aspiration survey is conducted for all new learners in TVET institutions** - disaggregated by gender, disability, and socio-economic background, with both structured and open-ended questions.
- Results of aspiration surveys are cross-checked against available jobs and included in the training programme and vocational guidance.
- **Data on the way that youth want to be trained is analysed and feed into didactic approaches** - integrating findings on delivery modes (in-person, online, blended), learning styles (visual, practical, collaborative), and reasonable accommodation of needs into instructional design.

- ▶ **Youth facilitators are trained and equipped** with facilitation guides to support aspiration workshops and meetings.
- ▶ **Findings of all exercises are shared back with learners** - reinforcing trust through a “you said → we did” feedback loop.
- ▶ Continuous guidance to learners, both group-based and individual - to capture evolving aspirations and gather feedback.
- ▶ **Tracer studies are carried out** - to evaluate the extent to which the training programme effectively addressed youth aspirations and learning methods / modes.
- ▶ **Aspiration mapping is treated as living data** - revisited at key stages of the learning journey.
- ▶ Policy frameworks guarantee that youth participation in skills anticipation and curriculum development is regular, structured, and monitored.

Box 3: Kenya – Youth Participation in TVET Curriculum Design

Kenya’s TVET system has long faced persistent gaps between training content and the realities of the labour market. Curricula were traditionally designed in a top-down fashion, with limited opportunities for young people to express their aspirations or question the relevance of the skills taught. This often led to programmes that were outdated or disconnected from growth sectors such as ICT, agro-processing, and manufacturing.

To address these challenges, Kenya initiated a major reform towards Competency-Based Education and Training (CBET). The reform process was deliberately designed to include youth as active participants. The TVET Authority (TVETA), in collaboration with Tampere University of Applied Sciences (TAMK) and Finn Church Aid (FCA), organised national policy roundtables and regional curriculum co-design workshops. Young people from diverse counties, including beneficiaries of the Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunities Project (KYEOP) and students from local polytechnics, contributed to the development of occupational standards and curricula.

During consultations, youth highlighted the importance of embedding core work skills such as teamwork, entrepreneurship, and adaptability, competencies they felt were critical for employability but often overlooked in traditional training. Their contributions shaped revisions to occupational standards in several trades, including welding and electrical installation.

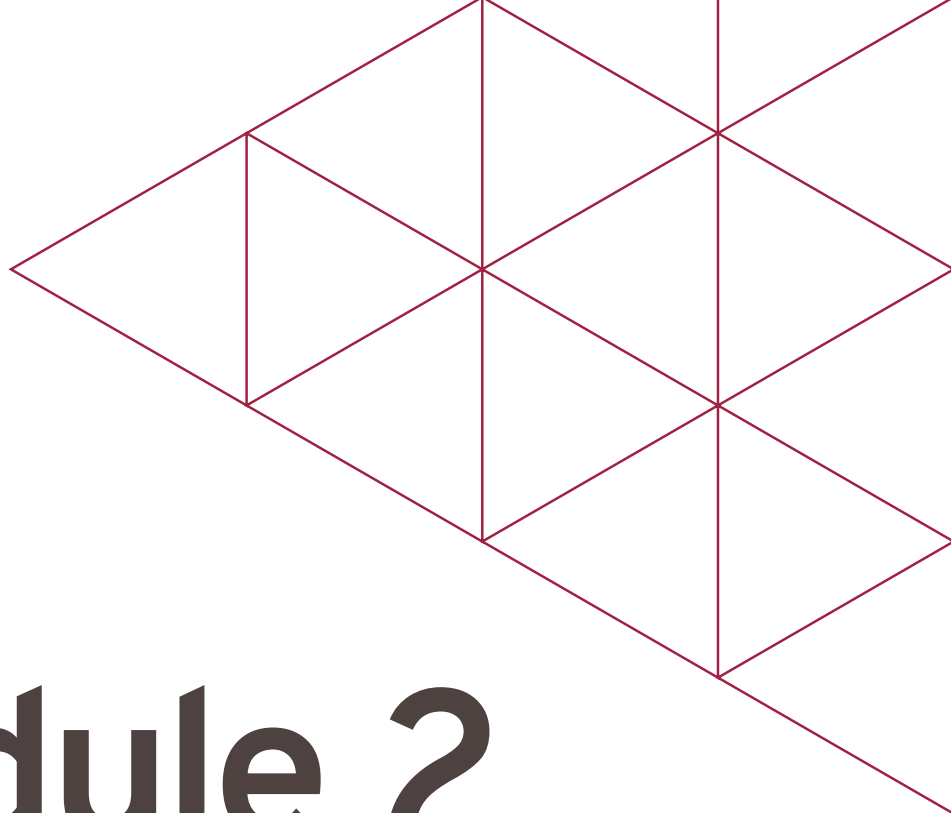
To maintain accountability, the Ministry of Education and TVETA also established structured feedback forums where recent graduates could discuss skills gaps, training deficiencies, and workplace expectations. Feedback collected through TVETA, FCA, and KYEOP indicated that employers began noticing improvements in graduate preparedness, particularly in communication, teamwork, and practical problem-solving.

Learners involved in pilot programmes also reported feeling more motivated and confident, as their feedback was visibly incorporated into curriculum revisions. While these findings stem from early stakeholder assessments rather than large-scale evaluations, they signal progress toward a more responsive and learner-centred TVET system.

Kenya’s CBET reform demonstrates that by creating structured opportunities for young people to contribute to the development of occupational standards, Kenya has strengthened the relevance and accessibility of its TVET system. Four lessons stand out:

Youth participation in curriculum design is both feasible and transformative.

- ▶ Youth voices can identify blind spots, such as the need for soft skills, often missed by technical experts.
- ▶ Feedback loops must be institutionalised, not ad hoc, if engagement is to influence reforms consistently.
- ▶ Multi-stakeholder partnerships (between government, development partners, and youth networks) provide the credibility and resources needed to scale participatory curriculum reform.



► Module 2

Outreach and campaign

Introduction

Outreach and Campaign serve as critical entry points for publicising the programme and recruiting learners. In the TVET context, a campaign refers to coordinated awareness and engagement activities led by training providers, ministries, employers, and youth networks to raise interest and promote a training programme. Outreach then transforms this interest into active participation by supporting learners through registration and placement processes.

Effective campaigns build awareness and inclusion. They go beyond marketing to address existing barriers, such as cost, gender bias, or stigma, and position the programme in focus as a *first-choice* pathway to decent work. When designed around youth aspirations, campaigns help young people see vocational training as a source of empowerment rather than a last chance option for low achievers.

Youth already lead assertive informal outreach. Across many settings, young people use messaging groups, video platforms, school clubs, and word of mouth to reach their peers. These networks are highly effective in reaching marginalised and out-of-school youth, yet they often remain invisible and unsupported within formal campaigns.

Co-designing a campaign with youth strengthens ownership, trust and relevance. Partnering with youth ambassadors and networks allows TVET institutions and employers to reach broader audiences and build credibility. Campaigns that are co-designed and co-delivered, whether school-based, community-driven, or digital, speak the language of young people and make vocational pathways relatable and aspirational.

Objective

By the end of this chapter, you will be equipped to design and implement youth-led outreach initiatives. These approaches recognise and formalise the vital role young people play in mobilisation and awareness-raising, ensuring that outreach efforts are inclusive, authentic, and driven by youth leadership.

More specifically, you will know how to:

- ▶ **Map existing youth-led outreach channels** - Identify platforms and networks where young people already connect, such as ambassadors, social media campaigns, WhatsApp groups, TikTok challenges, and community clubs.
- ▶ **Design outreach strategies co-led by youth** - Engage youth in planning and delivery to ensure campaigns are authentic, relevant, and resonate with their peers.
- ▶ **Integrate inclusion principles into outreach** - Ensure marginalised groups, including young women, learners with disabilities, and rural youth, are reached through accessible formats, gender-sensitive messaging, and targeted approaches.
- ▶ **Build partnerships with youth networks** - Collaborate with youth-led organisations to expand peer-led outreach and recruitment initiatives, pooling resources for greater impact.
- ▶ **Establish monitoring systems for outreach effectiveness** - Develop participatory monitoring tools to track campaign reach and impact using both quantitative and qualitative data, disaggregated by gender and vulnerability types, and involve youth in analysing and refining strategies.

Box 4: Learner Voice from FGD (Kenya)

▶ I joined because a friend posted about the course on our WhatsApp group. It wasn't the school that convinced me, it was hearing from someone my age who had already tried it. If schools worked with us to spread the word, many more young people would come.

▶ A learner from a Focus Group Discussion

Peer-to-peer outreach is a powerful yet often informal driver of TVET enrolment. The key challenge is to recognise these existing practices, provide them with structure and resources, and align them with institutional priorities for inclusive and sustained outreach.

How to design and implement campaigns

How to amplify ALL youth voices on youth channels

Mapping existing youth-led outreach uncovers hidden strengths. Training providers should begin by identifying the channels through which young people already reach their peers, such as messaging groups, video exchange platforms, local youth clubs, or community events. These informal networks often achieve wider and faster reach than official campaigns, making them a vital starting point for any outreach strategy. Mapping should also capture the institutions and organisations that can reinforce youth outreach, including public institutions, training centres, career guidance services, and employers' and workers' associations. A Digital Campaign Playbook can guide the creation of engaging content for TikTok, Instagram, and WhatsApp, as well as strategies to boost visibility and counter misinformation.

Partnerships strengthen and amplify youth-led communication. Campaigns should be co-created with young people who understand the language, platforms, and narratives that resonate with their peers. Hence, involving youth representatives in planning workshops helps avoid top-down messaging and makes campaigns more engaging. At the same time, linking informal, youth-driven initiatives with formal systems strengthens the sustainability of the actions as collaboration between TVET institutions, employers' and workers' organisations, civil society organisations, and youth networks allows campaigns to pool resources, and extend their reach.

Outreach drives should intentionally target marginalised groups, including young women, learners with disabilities, and rural youth. Embedding inclusion principles in the selection of these campaigns is also expected to expand the depth of the campaign's reach. Co-designing inclusion audits with young people enables institutions to identify who is being left out and develop targeted actions for engagement. Inclusive mapping ensures that

no group is left behind. The process should specifically identify underrepresented groups, such as persons with disabilities, young women, and rural youth, along with their preferred modes of communication. Understanding how these groups connect and interact helps tailor campaigns that are relevant, accessible, and equitable.

How to establish Youth Ambassadors

Formalising youth ambassador programmes brings visibility and structure. Many TVET providers already rely on informal ambassadors – often their alumni. By assigning clear responsibilities, providing training, and offering recognition (such as certificates or stipends), institutions can transform informal efforts into sustainable outreach mechanisms. A Youth Ambassador Toolkit can outline roles, responsibilities, and activities for youth ambassadors, ensuring they are trained, supported, and recognised for their contributions. It can include sample scripts, social media guidelines, and reporting templates.

How to include families and communities in the campaign

Community and family engagement situate learners' aspirations within their broader social and economic contexts. Family expectations, financial pressures, and cultural norms may strongly influence young people's training choices and career trajectories. Engaging parents, caregivers, and local community leaders from the start — during outreach, entry consultations, or orientation sessions, helps training providers better understand these factors and provide targeted support where needed.

Involving young people as co-presenters in community sensitisation sessions strengthens ownership and inclusion. When youth speak alongside parents, employers, and local leaders, their voices are recognised as central to shaping decisions about education and work. This participatory approach bridges intergenerational perspectives and reinforces shared responsibility for learners' success. Inclusive engagement creates an enabling ecosystem for meaningful youth participation in TVET. For example, in Jordan's programme on upgrading informal apprenticeship, collaboration with small-enterprise employers and communities helped align youth training pathways with real-world opportunities and build trust of families in the process. By embedding aspirations within community relationships, norms, and opportunities, institutions ensure that training remains both relevant and socially grounded.

Box 5: Upgrading Informal Apprenticeship in Jordan's Car Garages

▶ In Jordan, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) piloted a project to upgrade informal apprenticeships in car-service micro-enterprises. The initiative helped young apprentices gain recognised credentials, improved their transition from apprentice to employees (from around five years in typical informal settings to less than one year), and boosted enterprise productivity through better-trained apprentices and enhanced employer practices. The project also involved community engagement and employer-mentor roles, showing how broader contextual actors supported youth aspirations and pathways.

▶ Case Snippet

How to monitor inclusion and effectiveness of the campaign

An Inclusion Audit Checklist ensures campaigns reach marginalised groups. This tool helps institutions and youth partners assess whether women, rural youth, refugees, and other forcefully displaced persons, as well as learners with disabilities, are represented in outreach activities. It also offers practical steps for closing identified gaps.

The Campaign Monitoring Form tracks effectiveness and outcomes. Simple survey forms or digital dashboards enable institutions to capture how new entrants learned about programmes, what messages influenced them, and which recruitment channels proved most effective. Select the monitoring method based on scale, connectivity, and user access requirements. Digital monitoring, using Google Forms, KoboToolbox, or mobile dashboards, works best when targeting large or geographically dispersed audiences, or when institutions want real-time analytics and automatic data visualisation. It also supports rapid feedback through SMS or WhatsApp-based follow-ups. Face-to-face tracking remains essential in low-connectivity or community-based contexts. In rural areas or informal training settings, staff or youth volunteers can administer short paper forms or tablet-assisted surveys during enrolment drives, open days, or orientation sessions. Combining both approaches provides a complete picture, balancing quantitative data with personal feedback on outreach effectiveness.

Monitoring and frequent feedback loops ensure campaigns remain effective. Institutions should establish systems to track how learners hear about programmes, which messages resonate, and which groups remain left out. Feedback loops involving youth participants, especially the most vulnerable, offer valuable insights for adapting campaigns over time.

Box 6: Youth Ambassadors in TVET Recruitment

In Ghana, outreach and campaign into TVET have historically been dominated by institutional open days, radio announcements, and government-led campaigns. While these methods provided visibility, they often failed to connect with young people in ways that felt relatable or trustworthy. Many potential learners continued to view TVET as a second-choice pathway, shaped by stigma and limited awareness of the opportunities it provides.

To respond to these challenges, the Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED), with support from the Mastercard Foundation's *Young Africa Works* programme, introduced a **Youth Ambassador initiative**. The model trained young women who had completed TVET courses to serve as ambassadors in schools, communities, and online platforms. These ambassadors used peer-to-peer interactions, storytelling, and mentoring to demystify TVET and present it as a positive career pathway. Outreach activities included visiting junior high schools, running interactive clubs, and producing digital content that showcased real success stories. The results were striking. Recruitment into selected trades increased, particularly among young women entering male-dominated fields such as construction and welding. Learners reported that hearing directly from their peers gave them the confidence to explore vocational options they had previously dismissed. Communities also began to shift their perceptions, recognising TVET as a pathway to dignified work rather than a fallback option. Two lessons stand out from Ghana's experience:

- ▶ First, peer-to-peer outreach is very effective when youth receive training, resources, and recognition.
- ▶ Second, embedding ambassadors within a broader ecosystem of schools, community leaders, and digital platforms helps campaigns achieve both reach and credibility.

► Figure 5: TVET Outreach and Campaigns

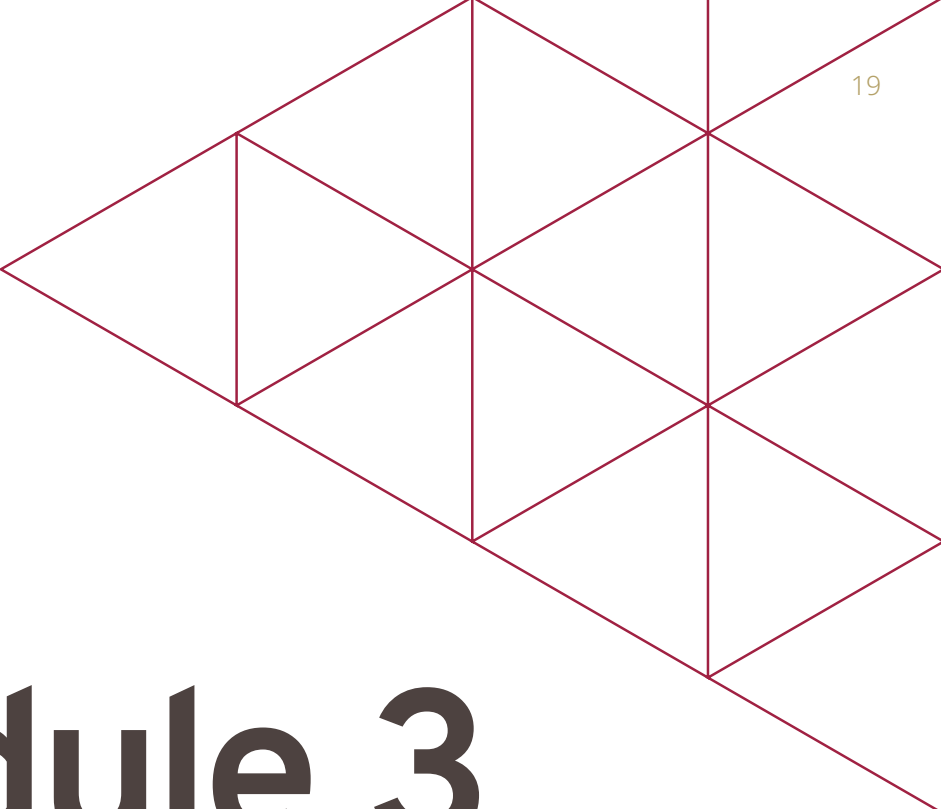


Checklist for action

- ▶ A mapping exercise of youth-led outreach channels is conducted to identify existing informal practices and the key youth actors, networks, or institutional partners already engaged in outreach efforts.
- ▶ Youth co-design workshops are organised to shape outreach strategies and campaign messages.
- ▶ A formal youth ambassador programme is established, with clear roles, training, and recognition for participants.
- ▶ An inclusion audit is carried out to ensure outreach reaches women, rural youth, and learners with disabilities.
- ▶ Partnerships are developed between TVET institutions, social partners, CSOs, and youth networks to scale recruitment.
- ▶ Monitoring systems are put in place to track campaign effectiveness and adapt strategies over time.

▶ **Table 4: Levels of Youth Engagement in TVET Outreach and Campaigns**

Areas	Level of MYE	Youth Role	Value Added
Audience Research & Messaging	Consulted → Partner	Provide insights on youth information habits, trusted channels, and motivators	Co-identify barriers to TVET uptake (perception, stigma, access). Contribute to crafting messages that resonate with diverse youth groups and Increases authenticity as well as relevance of TVET messaging
Campaign Co-Design	Partner	Co-create campaign concepts, slogans, hashtags, and visual identity	Develop youth-friendly content formats (short videos, infographics, stories, testimonials) Campaigns become more creative, relatable, and inclusive
Content Creation	Leader	Produce videos, photos, blogs, podcasts, and social media content	Develop peer-to-peer messages targeting underrepresented youth. Enhances reach, participation, and campaign impact
Dissemination & Channel Strategy	Partner	Support dissemination through youth networks, digital platforms, and community spaces	Advise on the best channels (TikTok, Instagram, WhatsApp, radio, local events). Help segment messaging for young women, rural youth, youth with disabilities, etc.
Recruitment Campaigns	Partner	Participate in designing recruitment drives for TVET programmes	Engage peers through community outreach, school visits, fairs, and youth clubs. Increases enrolment, especially among underserved groups and Address myths and stigma around TVET



► Module 3

Inclusion by design

Introduction

Inclusion by design is both a moral and quality imperative for TVET. A system that fails to include all learners leaves out diverse talents and perspectives that impact in turn its quality. Inclusion ensures that TVET systems serve *all youth* by purposeful design. Inclusive TVET also passes on to young people behaviours and values that support an inclusive society.

Barriers to inclusion are multidimensional and often invisible. Young women, learners with disabilities, and rural youth face obstacles ranging from long distances to the training centre to inaccessible facilities and cultural stereotypes, financial constraints and a lack of role models. Other forms of exclusion emerge when women are discouraged from entering male-dominated sectors, when informal workers have no access to certificates to validate their competencies, when discrimination patterns already exist at the learning stage of individuals careers, or when harassment in the training centre prevents specific groups to apply.

Inclusive design must therefore address all points access, retention, and representation. Scholarships, quotas, and affirmative action policies open doors, but inclusion must extend to *who stays in the programme, graduates and successfully transition to the labour market*. Representativeness is equally vital, ensuring that participants reflect the diversity of learners – at least in terms of sex, disability, socio-economic status, and geographic origin. TVET institutions can reach and engage marginalised youth by partnering with community-based organisations, youth networks, offering information in accessible formats and local languages, providing transport support or stipends, and integrating assistive technologies. These actions reduce structural barriers and signal that inclusion is intentional, not incidental.

Designing for inclusion means embedding equity in every phase of the TVET journey. Purposeful targeting, when linked to quality improvement, strengthens outcomes for all learners. It requires adapting infrastructure, pedagogy, and support services so that learners not only enrol but thrive, from outreach and recruitment to assessment and employment. Monitoring should therefore occur throughout the learner lifecycle: at entry, during learning, at assessment, and in the transition to work. Youth participation ensures inclusion is grounded in lived

experiences. When young people from marginalised backgrounds participate in identifying barriers through 360-degree assessments and co-creating solutions, institutions gain insights that external experts often overlook. This participatory process ensures that inclusion policies are responsive to *real constraints and aspirations*, not assumptions.

Applied example – learner voice from FGD (Ghana)

Box 7: Learner Voice from FGD (Ghana)

▶ The school gave me admission, but the washrooms were not accessible. Every day was a struggle. They said they cared about inclusion, but they didn't ask us what we really needed.

▶ A learner from a Focus Group Discussion

This learner's voice highlights a key lesson for advancing inclusion in TVET systems. Inclusion solutions must address both structural and practical barriers and be embedded into the everyday systems, facilities, and practices that shape learners' experiences.

Objective

By the end of this chapter, you will understand how to embed inclusion throughout the design and delivery of TVET programmes. The focus is on ensuring that no learner is left behind by actively engaging young people from diverse backgrounds at every stage of the process - from diagnosis and planning to implementation and monitoring. More specifically, you will learn how to:

- ▶ **Conduct inclusion audits** to identify structural and hidden barriers faced by women, learners with disabilities, and other marginalised groups, using participatory methods such as accessibility walks, focus groups, and photo diaries to capture real learner experiences.
- ▶ **Co-design solutions with youth representatives** from diverse backgrounds to ensure responses are practical and relevant, through workshops and collaborative sessions where learners propose adjustments like childcare facilities, adaptive technologies, or gender-sensitive practices.
- ▶ **Adapt facilities, curricula, and support services to improve accessibility and participation**, including infrastructure upgrades (ramps, accessible washrooms), universal design for learning, and assistive technologies that enable equitable engagement in classrooms and workshops.
- ▶ **Strengthen policies and institutional frameworks** to promote equity in admission, retention, and progression, embedding inclusion into governance structures, budget allocations, and quality assurance systems, while ensuring accountability through measurable indicators.
- ▶ **Monitor inclusion processes at every step of the learning journey, as well as employment outcomes to verify that commitments translate into real improvements for learners**, using disaggregated data dashboards, participatory reviews, and feedback loops that involve youth in analysing progress and recommending next steps.

How to embed inclusion by design

Inclusion audits identify barriers and set priorities for action. Institutions should begin by conducting systematic reviews of their facilities, curricula, and policies to determine where exclusion occurs. These audits must involve youth from diverse backgrounds to capture the lived realities of women, learners with disabilities, and rural youth.

Meaningful youth participation makes audits more accurate and inclusive. Youth from various backgrounds can act as *co-auditors* by conducting accessibility walks around campus to assess mobility challenges, participating in focus group validations to review audit findings, or documenting their experiences through photo or video diaries that illustrate barriers from their perspective. Involving young people directly in identifying issues fosters

ownership, enhances credibility, and ensures that proposed actions reflect genuine needs rather than assumptions. An inclusion Audit Checklist can guide institutions through a systematic review of facilities, curricula, and policies, with a focus on gender, disability, and socioeconomic accessibility. It helps identify gaps that might otherwise be overlooked.

Co-Design workshops enable meaningful youth participation. A structured facilitation allows institutions to convene learners from marginalised groups to identify barriers and propose solutions. It includes discussion prompts, participatory exercises, and reporting templates. Youth facilitators or peer representatives can co-lead sessions, helping design discussion prompts and ensuring that diverse learner perspectives are reflected in both the process and the outcomes.

Co-designing solutions with marginalised learners ensures that interventions are both relevant and empowering. Young people themselves are best positioned to understand the adjustments needed to make TVET provision more inclusive. Through structured workshops, focus groups, and feedback sessions, they move from being contributors who share experiences to partners who design, test, and help implement practical improvements, from childcare facilities for young mothers to adaptive technologies for learners with disabilities. Inclusion becomes most effective when young people shape and drive the solutions themselves. By taking on leadership roles, facilitating sessions, or coordinating follow-up actions, youth demonstrate that their direct involvement enhances ownership, accountability, and the long-term sustainability of inclusive practices.

Adapting infrastructure makes institutions more accessible and supportive. Inclusive design includes ensuring accessible classrooms, washrooms, and transport options, alongside affordable housing and safe environments. These changes alleviate daily struggles that would otherwise deter learners from staying in the system. While these changes may involve important financial investments beyond the capacity of the training provider, low-cost improvements can be prioritised, in consultation with the concerned groups, while resource mobilisation efforts can focus on larger, more expensive improvements.

Accessibility Standards benchmarks for infrastructure. They outline minimum requirements for disability-friendly facilities, safe washrooms, inclusive housing (for residential TVET), and accessible learning environments. These benchmarks help align institutional practices with national and international standards. Inclusive infrastructure extends beyond buildings. Changes in infrastructure and processes should consider the entire experience of learners with disabilities, from the moment they leave home through access to transport, campus navigation, and participation in workshops or labs. In the case of work-based learning, reasonable accommodation should also be ensured at the workplace, including adaptive tools, flexible schedules, and accessible supervision.

Gender-sensitive approaches also create environments where young women can express themselves and lead. Integrating mentoring systems, women's leadership clubs, peer-support groups, and confidence-building activities into training programmes helps female learners develop voice, agency, and a sense of belonging in sectors where they are traditionally underrepresented.

Policy frameworks anchor inclusion at institutional and national levels. Admission policies, retention support schemes, flexible learning pathways, and results-based funding linked to inclusion indicators make equity a measurable outcome. Governments and TVET providers should also track progress with disaggregated data to ensure reforms reach those most in need. Translating policy into practice requires human-centred approaches. Staff sensitisation on gender and disability inclusion, peer-support systems that promote solidarity among learners, and inclusive classroom practices that accommodate diverse needs ensure that equity principles are not only written into policy but reflected in daily teaching and learning experiences.

Equity Monitoring Dashboard can track progress over time. A digital tool or template enables institutions to disaggregate enrolment, retention, completion, graduation, and transition-to-work data by gender, disability, displacement, and socio-economic status, ensuring accountability for inclusion commitments. Involving youth representatives in analysing and presenting this data strengthens transparency, reinforces institutional learning, and builds shared accountability for results.

Box 8: South Africa – Institutional Disability Support Services in Public TVET Colleges

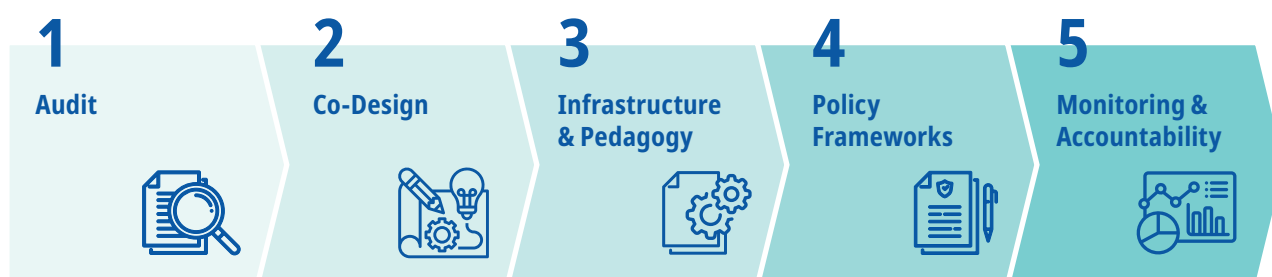
For years, young people with disabilities in South Africa faced significant barriers when attempting to access and succeed in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Most public colleges were not designed with accessibility in mind: classrooms and washrooms lacked ramps, signage was inadequate, and assistive technologies were rare. Academic staff often had little or no training in inclusive pedagogy, and support for students with special needs was inconsistent across institutions. These shortcomings left many students isolated, under-supported, and at higher risk of dropping out, undermining equity commitments in the national skills strategy.

Recognising these systemic challenges, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) launched a nationwide review of disability services in TVET colleges. Based on its findings, the DHET issued a reform roadmap requiring colleges to establish or strengthen Disability Support Units (DSUs) as core institutional entities, rather than adding them as add-on services. These units were tasked with coordinating accessibility audits, implementing infrastructure upgrades (such as ramps, accessible bathrooms, and signage), procuring assistive technologies (screen readers, hearing loops, and adapted software), and providing counselling and referrals. At the same time, staff capacity building was rolled out, focusing on inclusive teaching practices and reasonable accommodation in assessments. The reforms were supported by budget provisions, with institutions expected to allocate funds for disability inclusion as part of their operational planning.

The establishment of DSUs has led to concrete improvements. Colleges reported higher enrolment of students with disabilities, particularly on urban campuses where infrastructure upgrades were prioritised. Learners noted easier access to facilities, more consistent exam accommodations, and greater visibility of support services. A qualitative study of Gauteng colleges highlighted a reduction in stigma and an increase in participation among learners with disabilities, while lecturers acknowledged gaining confidence in adapting their teaching methods. Though progress has been uneven, institutions that embraced DSUs as integral parts of their management structures have seen improved retention and stronger pathways into the labour market for learners with disabilities.

South Africa's experience demonstrates that inclusion requires institution-wide, holistic reform, not piecemeal fixes. Infrastructure upgrades must be paired with changes in pedagogy, support services, and policy frameworks to create lasting impact. Dedicated Disability Support Units help embed accountability and ensure that inclusion is budgeted for, monitored, and sustained over time. Crucially, the process also showed that learners with disabilities must be actively engaged in co-designing reforms, as their life experiences provide the most reliable guide to what real inclusion requires.

► **Figure 6: TVET Inclusiveness**



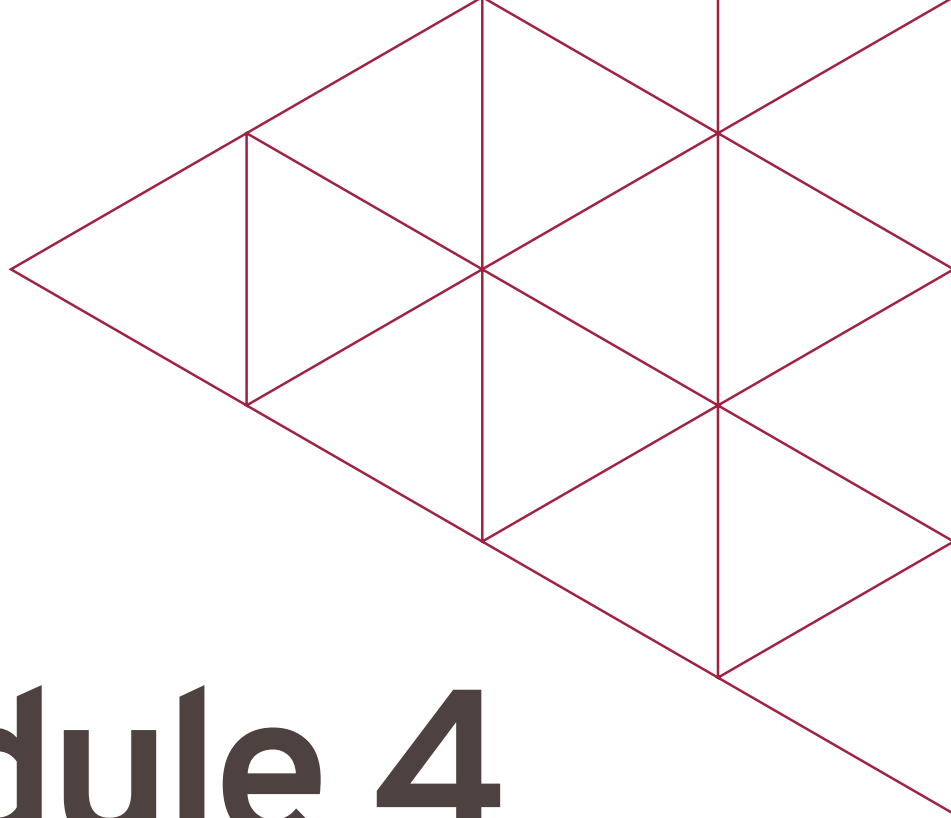
Checklist for action

- **Implementation of an inclusion audit** - An inclusion audit is conducted with marginalised learners to identify structural and hidden barriers across facilities, curricula, and policies.
- **Co-design workshops for inclusive solutions** - Learners from marginalized groups are also actively involved in co-design workshops to propose relevant solutions.

- ▶ **More accessible infrastructure for ALL** - Infrastructure upgrades (ramps, accessible washrooms, signage, transport) are implemented to ensure physical accessibility, and additional resources are generated to constantly improve user friendliness for all groups.
- ▶ **Establishment of disability support units** - Disability Support Units (DSUs) or equivalent structures are established and resourced within institutions.
- ▶ **Inclusion is adequately resourced** - Policy frameworks include inclusive targets and related budget lines.

▶ **Table 5: Levels of Youth Engagement across the Inclusion Process**

Areas	Youth Role	Level of Engagement (MYE Framework)	Example Activities
Inclusion audits	Youth identify accessibility barriers and share lived experiences	Contributors	Conduct accessibility walks, document barriers via photo diaries, and validate findings
Co-design of solutions	Youth collaborate to create and test practical adjustments	Partners	Participate in design workshops, propose childcare or adaptive-technology solutions.
Implementation & support	Youth assist in rolling out inclusive initiatives	Partners / Emerging Leaders	Mentor peers, help deliver awareness sessions, and monitor inclusion practices.
Monitoring & accountability	Youth review progress and contribute to institutional reporting	Leaders	Co-analyse dashboard data, present results, and recommend next-step actions
Governance & policy dialogue	Youth shape institutional priorities and advise on reform	Leaders	Serve on inclusion committees, represent learners in policy consultations



► Module 4

Youth centred learning

Introduction

The quality of teaching and the richness of the learning experience are decisive factors in shaping learners' employability. Even the most advanced curricula, delivered by technically skilled trainers, will fall short if instruction remains rigid, lecture-based, or disconnected from real-world work contexts. The pedagogical and andragogical capacity of teachers is critical - ensuring they facilitate learning by building on what learners already know, guiding them to lead their own individualized learning experience, adapting to their pace, and accommodating diverse learning styles.

Peer learning leverages learners' collective strengths to deepen understanding and build confidence. In many TVET settings, youth naturally form study groups, exchange notes, and support each other through informal mentoring. These practices reduce isolation, promote collaboration, and create a culture of shared problem-solving. When structured and resourced, peer learning can evolve from spontaneous support to a powerful institutional tool that strengthens both academic achievement and employability skills.

Youth consistently value participatory, practical, and digital approaches to learning over traditional rote instruction. Young people learn best when they are actively engaged, through projects, simulations, problem-solving exercises, and real-world applications. Digital platforms and blended learning approaches expand access, enabling learners to acquire skills flexibly and at their own pace. This learner-centred paradigm positions young people as active agents in the learning process, fostering autonomy, motivation, and self-direction.

The instructor's role shifts from teaching to facilitating learning. Rather than delivering content passively, teachers create meaningful learning situations, design relevant projects, and provide constructive feedback. The same principle applies to in-company trainers, supervisors, and mentors, who play a pivotal role in helping learners connect theory to practice during work-based learning placements. By guiding apprentices through real-world tasks, providing on-the-job coaching, and modelling professional behaviour, enterprise mentors reinforce classroom learning and strengthen employability outcomes.

Inclusive teaching practices ensure no learner is left behind. Gender-sensitive pedagogy, reasonable accommodation of impairments, and socio-economic supports are not add-ons but essential features of equitable learning environments. These principles also extend to the workplace, where in-company trainers must ensure that women, persons with disabilities, and vulnerable youth can participate safely in practical assignments.

Strong teaching and learning practices cultivate critical soft skills that employers demand. Communication, teamwork, creativity, and adaptability are increasingly important. Embedding these competencies in both school-based and work-based training fosters employability, entrepreneurship, and resilience. When youth are meaningfully engaged in identifying learning challenges and co-designing solutions, whether in classrooms or on factory floors, they develop agency, ownership, and leadership skills, moving from being consulted to actively influencing how learning happens.

Objective

By the end of this module, you will be able to embed meaningful youth engagement within participatory and inclusive teaching and learning practices. More specifically, you will know how to:

- ▶ **Adopt participatory pedagogies that involve learners** - as co-creators of knowledge rather than passive recipients.
- ▶ **Adapt training approaches the various learning styles of the youths** – and ensure inclusive classroom practices that account for gender, disability, and socio-economic diversity.
- ▶ **Embed project-based and experiential learning** - that mirrors real-world challenges and builds problem-solving skills.
- ▶ **Design structured peer learning mechanisms** - such as mentoring schemes, study circles, and collaborative projects that build on informal learner practices.
- ▶ **Leverage digital and blended learning approaches** - that expand access, flexibility, and enable youth to co-create or curate digital training content, promoting innovation in TVET delivery.
- ▶ **Create structured opportunities for youth feedback on teaching methods** - enabling continuous improvement of instructional quality.
- ▶ **Mainstream core skills for life and work** – including communication, teamwork, problem-solving, critical and creative thinking, adaptability, digital literacy, and environmental awareness, within technical training modules, in line with the ILO Global Framework on Core Skills for the 21st Century.¹

Box 9: Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) and Safe Learning Environments

Peer learning and self-assessment are valuable approaches for building confidence and reflective practice. However, they must not substitute for qualified supervision in occupational safety and health (OSH) contexts. Learners should not perform, assess, or demonstrate tasks involving hazardous tools, machinery, electrical systems, or chemicals without the oversight of certified trainers or in-company supervisors.

A safe school and training environment is equally essential to effective learning. Institutions should ensure that classrooms, workshops, and dormitories meet safety, accessibility, and well-being standards, including adequate lighting, ventilation, sanitation, and psychosocial support mechanisms. Promoting both OSH compliance and safe learning spaces helps protect learners' physical and emotional well-being while reinforcing a culture of responsibility and care across TVET systems.

¹ International Labour Organization (ILO). Global Framework on Core Skills for Life and Work in the 21st Century. Geneva: ILO, July 2021. Accessible: https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40ed_emp/%40emp_ent/documents/publication/wcms_813222.pdf

How to strengthen youth centred learning

Adopt learner-centred pedagogy/andragogy.

Encourage a shift from teacher-centred lecturing toward learner-centred engagement. Participatory teaching empowers instructors to design lessons that actively engage learners. Through group work, simulations, and co-facilitation, youth move from passive recipients of information to active contributors in the learning process. These approaches help shift mindsets from “teaching as telling” to “teaching as engaging”, fostering more profound understanding and ownership of learning outcomes. When youth participate as co-creators of knowledge through group discussions, role-plays, simulations, and peer-to-peer exchanges, they build confidence, enhance retention, and develop critical thinking skills. These interactive approaches foster curiosity and a stronger sense of ownership in the learning process.

Embed work-based, project-based, and experiential learning.

In TVET, work-based learning connects classroom instruction with real work environments. Learners acquire and apply competencies through hands-on activities that bring together theory and practice. These experiences strengthen technical and soft skills, ensuring that training remains directly relevant to workplace requirements. Structured templates support instructors in integrating experiential learning into course design. By outlining objectives, milestones, reflection points, and assessment criteria, these tools help embed project-based approaches within training programmes. They promote consistency and quality across institutions while still allowing space for creativity, contextual adaptation, and innovation.

Leverage digital and blended approaches.

Digital tools are expanding opportunities for flexible and inclusive learning. E-learning platforms, virtual simulations, and blended delivery models that combine in-person and online components are increasingly used to reach learners in remote or marginalised areas. These approaches create greater flexibility for working youth and naturally build digital literacy as an essential employability skill within TVET systems. Digital platforms expand opportunities for blended and flexible learning in TVET. Tools such as Rise 360, Moodle, Google Classroom, or national e-learning portals provide structured spaces for combining online and face-to-face instruction. Simulation software and mobile learning apps further extend training beyond the classroom, particularly in practical fields such as ICT, mechanics, and hospitality.

Ensure inclusive practices in the classroom.

Curriculum and pedagogy must reflect inclusive practices. Gender-sensitive teaching materials and universal design for learning are essential to ensure diversity is fully recognised in the classroom. Instructors should receive training to avoid stereotypes and provide equitable support to all learners – as per their needs. Understanding how each student learns, at what pace, and with what type of assistance, is critical for delivering an individualised learning experience. This approach accommodates different learning modes and positions the trainer as a facilitator of learning rather than a top-down instructor delivering rigid, pre-defined modules.

Adapting pedagogy to support diverse learners enhances inclusion and learning outcomes. Gender-sensitive teaching approaches, universal design for learning, and the use of assistive technologies create environments where learners with disabilities, young mothers, and those from disadvantaged backgrounds can participate fully and equitably. Practical guides support instructors in implementing inclusive and gender-sensitive teaching practices. Toolkits on gender-responsive pedagogy, universal design for learning, and disability-inclusive classroom methods often include case examples, checklists, and teaching aids - such as sign language interpretation guidelines and adapted learning materials—to promote equity and participation in every classroom.

Inclusive pedagogy is central to ensuring equal learning opportunities for all. Teaching and learning practices should be grounded in universal design principles that accommodate diverse learning styles and abilities. Instructors must be trained in differentiated instruction, assistive technologies, and inclusive classroom management to meet the needs of every learner.

An inclusive curriculum and pedagogy framework strengthens teaching practice. It can guide the creation of gender-sensitive content, the implementation of Universal Design for Learning, and the use of adaptive and learner-centred training methods. It ensures instructors are equipped to meet the needs of diverse learners.

Establish youth feedback loops on teaching quality.

Feedback mechanisms are essential for creating responsive and inclusive learning environments. Tools such as learner satisfaction surveys, suggestion boxes, and focus group reviews should be embedded within the teaching and learning cycle. What makes the difference is “closing the loop”, showing learners how their input leads to tangible changes in lesson design or classroom practices, thereby fostering trust, accountability, and continuous improvement. Digital and participatory tools enable continuous feedback on teaching quality while strengthening youth engagement. Digital dashboards, mobile apps, and structured focus group protocols allow institutions to collect regular learner input. To ensure transparency and accountability, tools should include feedback reporting mechanisms that show how learner input informs change. Involving students in designing feedback tools and reviewing results further reinforces ownership and meaningful participation in improving learning quality.

Structure peer mentoring programmes.

Informal peer support can be institutionalised into structured mentoring systems within TVET institutions. By assigning roles, providing orientation, and formally recognising mentors through certificates or credits, institutions can ensure that experienced learners effectively guide newcomers. This approach values peer contributions, strengthens learning communities, and promotes a culture of collaboration and shared responsibility.

Facilitate study circles and collaborative projects.

Small-group learning fosters teamwork, collaboration, and shared responsibility among young people. Through study circles, lab teams, and peer-led workshops, learners develop a sense of collective accountability for results. Projects may include joint problem-solving exercises, applied technical challenges, or community-based assignments that simulate real workplace conditions—such as designing a solar-powered device, developing a sanitation prototype, running a simulated business venture, or troubleshooting equipment faults. Collaborative learning environments nurture youth leadership and communication skills. As learners take on facilitative roles, leading discussions, coordinating group tasks, and mentoring peers, they transition from participants to active facilitators. This process builds confidence, strengthens interpersonal skills, and fosters the mindset needed for leadership and teamwork in professional settings. Group facilitation guides help learners organise practical peer-led study sessions. These templates enable small groups to structure meetings around shared learning objectives, rotating leadership, and collaborative assignments, providing a consistent and organised framework for collective learning.

Box 10: South Africa – Project-Based Teaching and Learning for Electrical & Plumbing TVET Lecturers

In South Africa, many TVET lecturers in trades such as electrical installation and plumbing had been teaching primarily through traditional lecture-based methods. While these approaches conveyed technical knowledge, they often failed to build the problem-solving, teamwork, and practical application skills that employers demanded. At the same time, the rapid growth of digital tools in training created new opportunities but also revealed gaps in instructors' ability to integrate technology into participatory and inclusive classroom practices.

To address these gaps, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), in partnership with the German Development Agency (GIZ), piloted a capacity-building programme for in-service TVET lecturers. The programme trained lecturers in project-based teaching methods, designing lessons around real-world challenges rather than abstract theory, and provided exposure to inclusive digital approaches, such as online simulations and blended delivery models. The training combined workshops, peer exchanges, and practical assignments where lecturers restructured modules into projects that mirrored workplace scenarios in plumbing and electrical trades.

Lecturers reported greater confidence in designing participatory, hands-on lessons that placed learners at the centre of the learning process. Students responded positively, noting stronger engagement, improved teamwork, and better opportunities to practice problem-solving in realistic contexts. The integration of digital tools further enhanced flexibility, allowing learners to revisit materials online and instructors to assess progress through interactive platforms. Early evaluations suggested that learners trained under the project-based approach demonstrated improved workplace readiness, particularly in applying technical knowledge to practical problems.

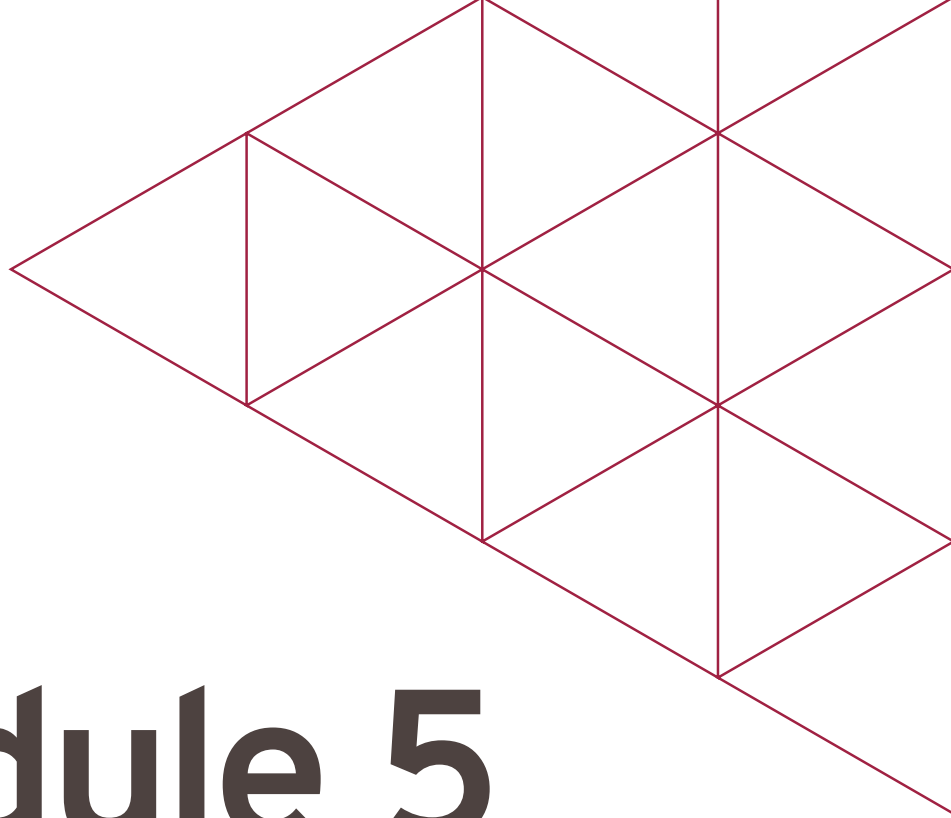
In line with ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966), this case demonstrates that enhancing teaching quality starts with empowering teachers. Project-based methods require training, peer support, and institutional backing to be adequately mainstreamed. Combining pedagogical reform with digital capacity-building helps lecturers modernise their delivery and reach diverse learners, including those who may struggle in traditional classrooms. The South African experience also highlights the importance of scaling such reforms. When introduced across trades and campuses, project-based learning can shift TVET from knowledge transfer to skills application and innovation.

Checklist for action

- ▶ **Participatory pedagogy training** - Lecturers are trained in participatory pedagogy, including group work, problem-solving exercises, and simulations.
- ▶ **Integration of work-based and project-based learning** - Work-based and project-based learning modules are introduced, linking theory to real-world applications in trades and sectors.
- ▶ **Adoption of digital tools and blended platforms** - Digital tools and blended platforms are adopted to complement classroom learning, extend reach, and facilitate access.
- ▶ **Standardisation of inclusive teaching practices** - Inclusive teaching practices are standardised, ensuring gender-sensitive pedagogy and accommodations for learners with disabilities.
- ▶ **Mainstreaming core skills for life and work** - Communication, teamwork, problem-solving, critical and creative thinking, adaptability, digital literacy, and environmental awareness are embedded within technical training modules, in line with the ILO Global Framework on Core Skills for the 21st Century.
- ▶ **Establishment of feedback systems** - Feedback systems are established for learners to assess teaching quality, with results informing adjustments to pedagogy.
- ▶ **Institutional support for pedagogical reforms** - Institutional support mechanisms (policies, training schedules, budgets) sustain pedagogical reforms and prevent backsliding.

► **Table 6: Levels of Youth Engagement in Youth-Centred Approaches to Training Delivery in TVET**

Areas	Level of MYE	Youth Role	Value Added
Training design & planning	Consulted → Partner	Co-design training modules and delivery schedules	Identify preferred learning methods (digital, blended, practical, peer learning). Provide insights on barriers affecting participation (transport, timing, fees etc.)
Teaching & learning methods	Partner	Provide regular feedback on teaching approaches and trainer performance	Suggest approaches that support different learning styles Improve teaching effectiveness and learner engagement
Learning resources & tools	Consulted → Partner	Advise on the types of resources needed (equipment, digital platforms, practical materials)	Ensure resources are relevant, up-to-date, and responsive to diverse learner needs. Flag gaps that disadvantage certain groups (e.g., lack of assistive devices)
Training delivery environment	Partner	Assess training conditions (safety, accessibility, infrastructure, digital access)	Create safer, more inclusive, and motivating learning environments. Enhances learner wellbeing and performance
Support services & learner welfare	Partner	Provide feedback on counselling, career guidance, and support services	Co-design peer-support or mentorship initiatives Reduce barriers that affect completion and transition to work
Work-based learning & transition support	Consulted → Partner	Inform design of apprenticeships, internships, and workplace exposure programmes	Provide feedback on transition pathways to decent work Improves employability and transition outcomes



► Module 5

Peer feedback and self-assessment

Introduction

Self-assessment fosters agency and reflective practice among learners. By tracking their own progress through journals, portfolios, or digital dashboards, students develop critical awareness of their strengths and weaknesses. This habit of reflection enhances self-directed learning, strengthens meta-cognitive skills, helps learners adapt to diverse workplace demands, and builds lifelong learning skills essential in rapidly evolving job markets.

Peer feedback and mentoring are important for creating inclusive and collaborative learning environments in TVET systems. They strengthen collaboration, nurture social responsibility, enhance mentors' ability to demonstrate skills, and create dynamic learning environments through triangular interactions between instructors and peers. These practices foster inclusive support networks that respond effectively to the diverse needs of learners.

Formalising these practices ensures equity, recognition, and sustainability. While peer feedback and self-assessment already exist informally, they often remain invisible to teachers. Formalising them can potentially empower all learners in their journeys. When young people are trusted as co-assessors and co-mentors, TVET systems move beyond one-directional teaching. This builds not only technical competence but also soft skills such as teamwork, leadership, and accountability, capabilities highly valued in the labour market.

Peer feedback should be managed carefully to emphasise areas of potential growth rather than focusing on shortcomings. This approach helps maintain learner motivation, fosters a positive learning environment, and encourages continuous improvement. By framing feedback around progress and actionable steps, institutions can transform assessments into constructive tools that build confidence and support skill development, rather than creating feelings of failure or discouragement.

Objective

By the end of this step, you will understand how to institutionalise peer feedback and self-assessment as core youth engagement practices within TVET systems. More specifically, you will learn how to:

- ▶ **Integrate self-assessment tools** - e-portfolios, logbooks, reflection journals, that help youth track their own progress and identify growth areas.
- ▶ **Provide guidance and training for both learners and instructors** - to ensure peer feedback and self-assessment are effectively implemented; this includes equipping trainers and in-company trainers (in case of apprenticeships for instance) with practical tools and strategies to promote self-assessment and peer feedback.
- ▶ **Embed peer feedback and self-assessment into learning sessions** - so that they are recognized and valued, rather than remaining informal or ad-hoc.
- ▶ **Link peer and self-assessment to overall feedback loops** - that inform teaching quality and institutional decision-making.

How to strengthen peer feedback and self-assessment

Introduce self-assessment tools.

Structured self-assessment tools help learners track their progress and growth over time against defined competencies. Instruments such as reflection journals, e-portfolios, or logbooks enable students to document achievements, monitor competencies, and set personal learning goals. They encourage students to document what they have learned, the challenges they have encountered, and the strategies they have developed for improvement. Competency-based logbooks are especially valuable in apprenticeships and work-based learning settings, where multiple trainers validate the process and need a shared record of learner progress. Competency specific checklists or rating scales also help students reflect on their technical, soft, and employability skills, allowing them to identify strengths, address gaps, and take greater ownership of their learning journey.

Youth engagement in self-assessment deepens ownership and accountability for learning. Learners can move from simply using tracking tools to co-developing reflection frameworks or leading peer-review sessions that validate self-assessment outcomes. This participatory approach builds confidence, critical thinking, and a culture of continuous improvement.

Self-assessment's effectiveness depends on validation by trainers. In-company trainers and instructors serve as key validators, reviewing self-assessment records to ensure accuracy and acknowledge achievements in acquiring new competencies. This validation process reinforces the credibility of self-assessment, motivates learners by recognising their efforts, and provides constructive feedback to guide further improvement. By linking self-assessment with trainer validation, institutions create a balanced approach that combines learner autonomy with professional oversight, ensuring that progress is both self-driven and aligned with industry standards.

Introduce peer mentoring frameworks.

Structured mentoring programmes connect experienced learners with new entrants to strengthen learning continuity. These frameworks often include orientation guides, mentor-mentee agreements, and recognition mechanisms—such as certificates, credits, or stipends—to formalise roles and acknowledge contributions.

Introduce E-portfolios and digital dashboards.

Digital tools are transforming how learners document, track, and showcase their competencies in TVET systems. Online platforms and interactive dashboards enable students to monitor their progress, visualise achievements, and link learning outcomes to institutional systems for certification, counselling, and job placement. Tools such as Moodle, Google Classroom, and other specialised EdTech solutions enable learners to co-evaluate assignments, provide collaborative annotations, and participate in peer grading processes that strengthen reflection and collective learning.

These tools enhance transparency, promote self-assessment, and foster reflection, building a stronger sense of ownership over the learning journey. Kenya's TVET Management Information System (TVET-MIS) illustrates the potential of digital integration in strengthening system responsiveness. By linking learner and institutional data on enrolment, assessments, and competencies to national databases such as the Labour Market Information System (LMIS) and the Higher Education Loans Board (HELB)². The platform enables real-time tracking of learner performance, supports certification and career guidance, and promotes accountability across the TVET ecosystem.

Train instructors to guide and support.

Teachers and trainers are central to legitimising and sustaining peer learning and self-assessment. Equipping instructors to facilitate group dynamics, provide constructive feedback, and foster reflective practices ensures that these approaches are practical, equitable, and integrated into everyday teaching and learning processes.

Embed peer feedback and self-assessment into learning sessions.

Institutionalising peer learning and self-assessment enhances their legitimacy and long-term impact. When peer reviews, mentoring contributions, and reflective logs are embedded into course requirements, learners view them as essential components of the learning process rather than optional activities. This integration strengthens accountability and ensures sustainability within the TVET system.

Link to institutional feedback loops.

Insights from peer mentoring and self-assessment can inform institutional improvement and system-wide learning. By aggregating this information, institutions can identify recurring gaps, strengthen teaching quality, and refine curricula—thereby closing the loop between learner experience and institutional reform.

Box 11: APTE-Senegal – Peer Learning and Self-Assessment for Youth Work Readiness

The Amélioration des Performances de Travail et d'Entreprenariat (APTE-Senegal) programme, implemented by the Education Development Centre (EDC) with support from the Mastercard Foundation, seeks to bridge the gap between education and employment by equipping young people with essential work-readiness and entrepreneurship skills. Operating across lower-secondary schools and TVET institutions, the programme responds to Senegal's growing youth unemployment challenge by integrating transferable life and work skills into existing curricula. It promotes an active learning culture that shifts instruction from routine memorisation to experiential, collaborative, and reflective learning.

At the core of the APTE-Senegal model is peer learning. Students form small study groups, youth clubs, and entrepreneurship teams where they learn together, exchange experiences, and co-design projects such as savings initiatives, community service actions, and small-scale business ventures. These activities simulate real-world challenges, build problem-solving skills, and foster teamwork and communication abilities. More experienced learners are encouraged to mentor others, strengthening mutual accountability and fostering a supportive environment where learning is both social and participatory.

The programme also integrates self-assessment as a structured part of the learning process. Learners maintain journals, portfolios, and personal action plans to track their progress, identify strengths and weaknesses, and set learning goals. Teachers serve as facilitators, providing guidance and feedback while encouraging students to reflect critically on their performance. This approach empowers learners to take ownership of their personal and professional development, reinforcing lifelong learning habits.

Key takeaways:

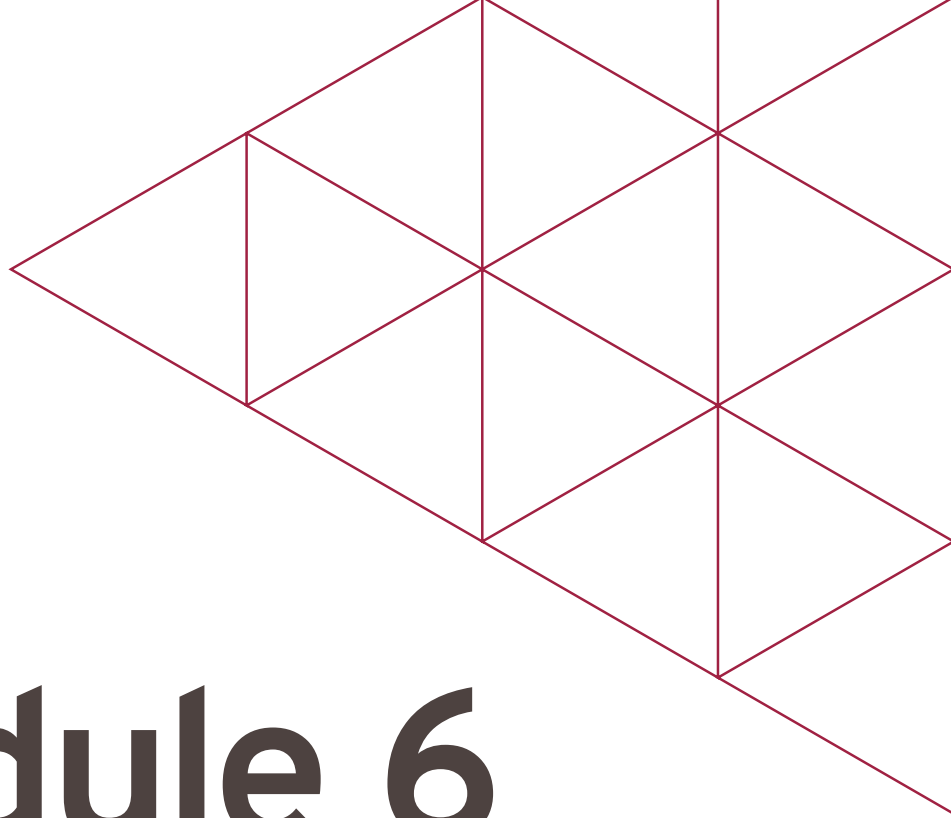
APTE-Senegal demonstrates that combining peer learning and self-assessment has significantly enhanced youth confidence, teamwork, and leadership skills. Participants report increased motivation, enhanced communication skills, and improved employability outcomes. The initiative demonstrates how structured peer collaboration and reflective self-assessment can make TVET systems more inclusive, engaging, and effective in preparing young people for the world of work.

► **Table 7: Levels of Meaningful Youth Engagement in Peer Learning and Self-Assessment**

Areas	Level of MYE	Youth Role	Value Added
Peer mentoring	Consulted → Partner → Leader	Provide feedback on mentoring design (consulted); co-facilitate mentoring sessions and help shape mentoring content (partner); coordinate mentoring networks or serve as lead mentors (leader).	Builds learner ownership, strengthens mentoring systems, and promotes sustainability.
Self-assessment & reflection	Consulted → Partner	Pilot self-assessment tools, co-design reflection rubrics, and lead peer-review sessions validating progress.	Fosters accountability, self-awareness, and continuous improvement in learning.
Institutional feedback & governance	Partner → Leader	Represent learners in academic boards or inclusion committees, presenting insights from peer and self-assessment.	Ensures learner perspectives inform teaching quality, inclusion, and institutional decision-making.

Checklist for action

- **Introduce structured self-assessment tools** - Use reflection journals, e-portfolios, logbooks, and competency-based checklists to help learners track progress, identify strengths, and set personal goals.
- **Establish peer mentoring frameworks** - Formalise mentoring through orientation guides, mentor-mentee agreements, and recognition mechanisms (certificates, credits, stipends) to strengthen learning continuity.
- **Adopt digital platforms for tracking** - Implement dashboards (e.g., Moodle, Google Classroom) to monitor progress, enable peer grading, and link learning outcomes to certification and career guidance.
- **Train instructors to facilitate and validate** - Equip trainers to guide group dynamics, provide constructive feedback, and validate self-assessments to ensure credibility and alignment with industry standards.
- **Embed practices into courses and feedback loops** - Integrate peer reviews, mentoring contributions, and reflective logs into course requirements, and link insights to institutional feedback systems for continuous improvement.



▶ Module 6

Feedback loops

Introduction

Feedback loops transform learner inputs into institutional change, building trust and accountability. In many TVET systems, learners are regularly asked to complete surveys, attend focus groups, or provide feedback on teaching and training. However, when responses disappear into reports without visible change, young people lose confidence in the process and disengage. Closing the loop by showing learners how their feedback has shaped decisions builds credibility and sustains participation.

Effective feedback loops enhance the relevance of teaching, curriculum, and policy. When systematically gathered and analysed, learner perspectives reveal where programmes are succeeding and where gaps exist. For example, when learners and graduates highlight outdated or irrelevant curricula that do not align with enterprise needs, or when they report inaccessible facilities.

Institutions that integrate feedback into curriculum reviews and accreditation cycles ensure continuous improvement that reflects real learners needs. Inclusive feedback systems amplify marginalised voices. Young women, learners with disabilities, and rural youth often experience barriers that go unnoticed in generic evaluations. This aligns TVET systems with broader commitments to inclusion and the principle of Leave No One Behind (LNOB).

Feedback loops build youth agency and policy literacy. Meaningful youth engagement is central to building effective and empowering feedback systems. When learners see that their input matters, they gain confidence as contributors to management processes. In this way, feedback loops are not just about accountability; they are about cultivating the next generation of informed and engaged decision-makers. Young people can evolve from being survey respondents to becoming co-facilitators of data collection, co-analysts interpreting results, and advocates communicating findings to peers and institutional leaders. This progression transforms feedback loops into participatory, youth-driven processes that foster ownership, accountability, and continuous improvement. Embedding such mechanisms in TVET governance, at training centre level, within sector skill bodies or training centre boards, helps young people see how their feedback shapes tangible changes. This prepares them not only to benefit from TVET but also to lead future change management processes.

Objective

By the end of this module, you will understand how to design and institutionalise feedback systems that promote meaningful youth engagement in TVET. These systems ensure that young learners are not only respondents but active partners in gathering, analysing, and acting on feedback. More specifically, you will learn how to:

- ▶ **Develop mechanisms with youth participation** - surveys, digital dashboards, focus groups, to collect feedback from learners systematically.
- ▶ Analyse and synthesise feedback in collaboration with youth representatives - ensuring it informs decision-making at institutional and policy levels.
- ▶ Communicate back to learners through “you said → we did” mechanisms - reinforcing trust and accountability.
- ▶ **Ensure inclusivity in feedback collection** - capturing the voices of women, persons with disabilities, and rural youth.
- ▶ **Integrate feedback into oversight of training programmes** - linking it to curriculum reviews, accreditation processes, and quality assurance frameworks.
- ▶ **Monitor the credibility and responsiveness of feedback loops over time** - to ensure they remain trusted by learners.

How to strengthen feedback loops

Collect feedback systematically

Feedback should be collected at multiple stages of the learner journey to ensure continuous improvement.

Institutions can utilise mid-course surveys, focus groups, and digital dashboards to identify issues in real-time. To maximise participation, feedback tools should be short, accessible, and available in local languages. Engaging youth as enumerators or digital ambassadors in survey and dashboard management enhances both credibility and reach among learners.

Short, structured surveys are the most common and practical tools for collecting learner feedback. They can be administered digitally—through platforms such as Google Forms, KoboToolbox, or institutional learning management systems—or on paper, depending on context. Well-designed surveys combine closed questions for comparability with open-ended ones that capture deeper insights and lived experiences.

Tracer study should link initial aspirations to outcomes. These studies enable TVET institutions to compare learners’ entry-level goals with their actual employment or education pathways after graduation. By aligning aspiration data with tracer studies, providers and learners themselves can assess whether their programmes meet learner expectations and identify areas for improvement.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) provide a safe and interactive space for learners to share their experiences. Facilitated by neutral moderators and youth themselves, FGDs encourage open dialogue and deeper reflection. They are particularly effective for exploring sensitive issues, such as gender barriers or discrimination, that may not surface through formal surveys.

EdTech solutions enable real-time monitoring and analysis of learner feedback. Digital dashboards can display live trends in course satisfaction, instructor performance, and facility usage, giving institutions timely insights for decision-making. Mobile applications further enhance accessibility, allowing learners in remote areas to share feedback and stay connected to institutional improvement processes.

Low-connectivity solutions expand access to feedback systems in underserved regions. In contexts where internet penetration is limited, SMS-based tools or Unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD) codes enable learners to share opinions quickly and anonymously. These mechanisms are particularly effective for reaching youth in rural and low-connectivity areas, ensuring that their voices are included in institutional improvement processes.

Low-tech feedback tools remain valuable for promoting inclusivity in diverse learning environments. Simple mechanisms such as physical suggestion boxes or town hall-style open forums are effective in contexts where digital literacy varies. To ensure credibility and action, these tools must be supported by clear procedures for reviewing inputs, providing responses, and communicating outcomes to learners.

Learner feedback systems and alumni networks extend engagement beyond graduation, thereby strengthening TVET relevance. They establish ongoing channels for gathering post-training insights, tracking graduate outcomes, and fostering relationships between institutions and their former students. By linking employability and labour market outcomes back into curriculum design, these mechanisms ensure that training remains responsive to the evolving needs of both industry and learners.

Analyse feedback inclusively

Disaggregating feedback data helps uncover hidden inequalities and strengthen inclusion. Breaking down results by gender, disability, and socio-economic background ensures that aggregate statistics do not mask disparities. Mixed-methods analysis, which combines quantitative trends with qualitative narratives, enables institutions to capture both the scale and depth of challenges. Triangulating and co-analysing data enhances accuracy and relevance. Cross-checking findings with employer surveys, trainers' reports, and assessment results provides a more comprehensive picture of performance and the relevance of skills. Involving youth representatives in reviewing data trends and identifying priority issues ensures that interpretations reflect the lived realities of learners and promote shared accountability.

Integrate feedback into decision-making.

Feedback must be embedded into institutional systems rather than treated as isolated reports. Learner perspectives should inform curriculum reviews, accreditation processes, and instructor evaluations. Linking feedback directly to institutional planning cycles ensures that insights translate into continuous improvement and systemic reform. Formal youth participation strengthens accountability and action. Including youth representatives in curriculum review or quality assurance committees institutionalises their role in transforming feedback into tangible change, ensuring that learner voices are consistently reflected in decision-making processes.

Communicate back to learners (“you said → we did”)

Closing the feedback loop is essential for transparency and trust. Learners should receive clear and accessible updates on actions taken in response to their input. Depending on the context, this can be achieved through noticeboards, SMS updates, newsletters, or short videos that communicate progress and institutional responses. Co-designing communication formats with youth enhances relevance and engagement. Involving young people in creating updates, such as short videos, infographics, or digital stories, makes information more relatable and accessible to their peers, fostering accountability and sustained participation in feedback processes.

Monitor and evaluate the feedback system itself.

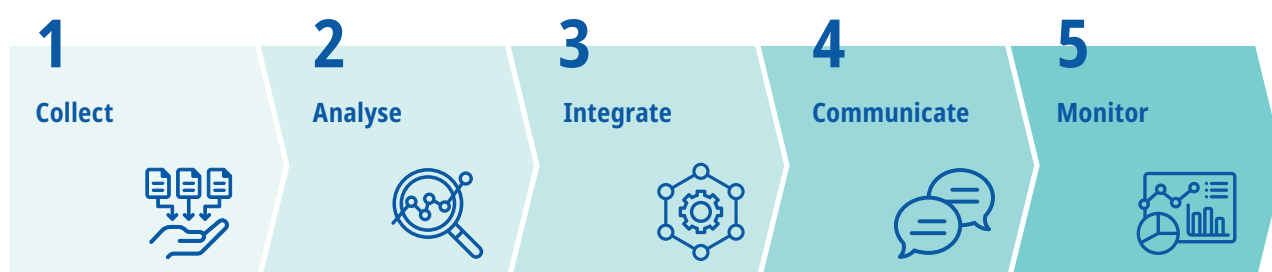
Evaluating the credibility and impact of feedback systems ensures their continuous improvement. Institutions should assess whether learners perceive the process as trustworthy and responsive. Regular audits, examining response rates, timeliness of actions, and satisfaction with follow-up, help identify weaknesses and refine mechanisms for greater effectiveness and accountability.

Checklist for action

- ▶ **Collect feedback at multiple stages** - Use mid-course surveys, focus groups, and digital dashboards to capture real-time insights. Ensure tools are short, accessible, and available in local languages. Engage youth as enumerators or digital ambassadors to boost credibility and reach.
- ▶ **Diversify feedback channels** - Combine digital tools (Google Forms, KoboToolbox, dashboards) with low-connectivity options (SMS, USSD) and low-tech methods (suggestion boxes, town halls) to ensure inclusivity across contexts.
- ▶ **Analyse feedback inclusively** - Disaggregate data by gender, disability, and socio-economic background. Use mixed-methods analysis and triangulate findings with employer surveys and trainer reports. Involve youth representatives in validation to ensure interpretations reflect lived realities.
- ▶ **Integrate feedback into decision-making** - Embed learner perspectives into curriculum reviews, accreditation processes, and instructor evaluations. Include youth in governance committees to institutionalize accountability and action.

- ▶ **Close the loop with learners** - Communicate actions taken through “You said → We did” updates via noticeboards, SMS, newsletters, or co-designed digital content (videos, infographics).
- ▶ **Monitor and evaluate feedback systems** - Conduct regular audits to assess credibility, responsiveness, and learner trust. Track response rates, timeliness of actions, and satisfaction with follow-up to refine mechanisms continuously.

▶ **Figure 7: Feedback Loops**



Box 12: Ghana – Tracer Studies under the TVET Voucher Project (GTVP)

The **Ghana TVET Voucher Project (GTVP)**, funded by the German Government through KfW and implemented by the Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (COTVET, now CTVET), aimed to strengthen skills training for master craftspersons, apprentices, and informal sector workers. Beyond providing vouchers for training access, the project emphasised systematising feedback mechanisms through tracer studies. These tracer studies tracked graduates’ employment pathways, income levels, and satisfaction with training, providing policymakers with a structured tool to assess whether TVET provision was meeting labour-market needs. By integrating learner feedback tools into the programme’s monitoring and evaluation framework, the GTVP shifted from ad hoc consultations to a consistent, evidence-based feedback system.

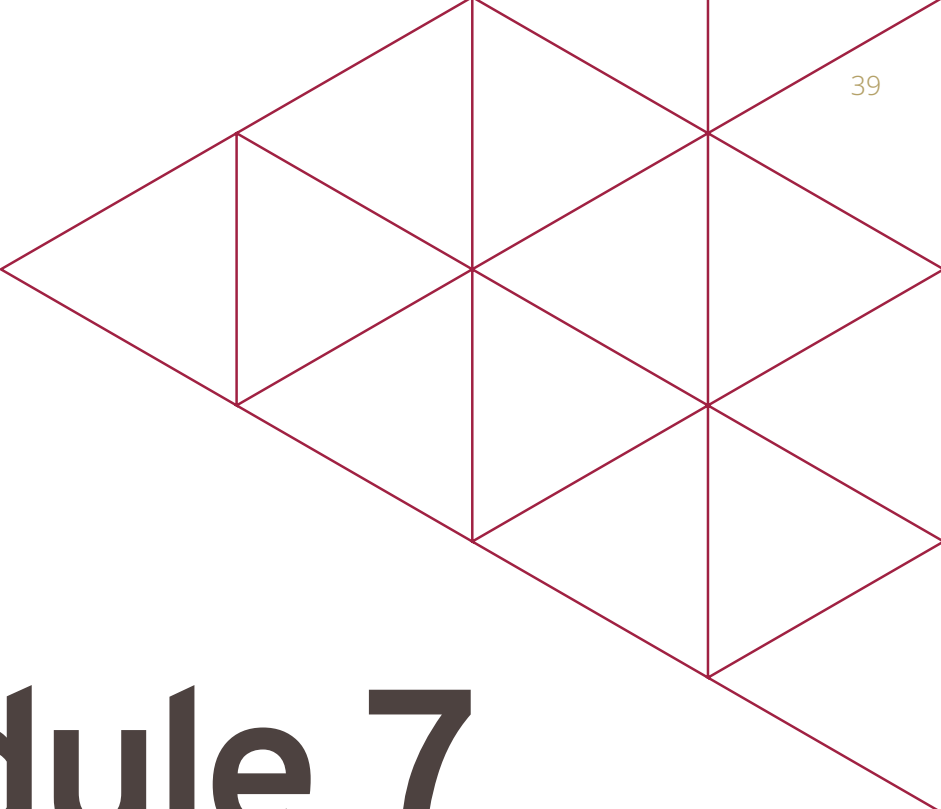
The learner feedback analysis revealed apparent mismatches between training delivery and labour market demand, particularly in electrical installation, welding, and garment-making. Findings were integrated into programme reviews, leading to adjustments in apprenticeship curricula and occupational standards. Importantly, disaggregated data highlighted persistent gender imbalances: women were highly concentrated in trades such as catering and hairdressing, while underrepresented in technical fields. These evidence-informed strategies to encourage female participation in male-dominated trades include awareness campaigns and targeted incentives. Overall, the project demonstrated that structured learner feedback could be used to both refine training relevance and promote equity.

Lessons learned

- ▶ Feedback loops need to be embedded, not episodic. Tracer studies generated rich insights but were not always conducted on an annual basis, leaving gaps in continuity and limiting their transformative potential.
- ▶ Gender-sensitive data improves equity outcomes. Disaggregated feedback illuminated structural barriers faced by women, enabling more targeted interventions in recruitment and retention.
- ▶ Institutional uptake is key. While findings were disseminated, many training providers did not fully integrate tracer results into their curriculum reform, underscoring the need for stronger accountability and incentive systems.

► **Table 8: Levels of Youth Engagement in Feedback Loops**

Areas	Level of MYE	Youth Role	Value Added
Feedback collection	Consulted → Partner	Co-design survey tools, act as peer enumerators or digital ambassadors	Increases participation and data reliability
Feedback analysis	Partner	Participate in data interpretation workshops and validation meetings	Grounded analysis in real learner experience
Decision-making & action	Partner → Leader	Serve on curriculum review or quality-assurance committees	Ensures learner perspectives shape reform
Communication & advocacy	Leader	Co-create “You said → We did” messages and lead peer dissemination	Builds trust, transparency, and youth ownership



► Module 7

Youth in TVET governance

Introduction

Youth engagement in governance transforms TVET from being provider-driven to learner-responsive. When young people are included in TVET-specific governance spaces, such as national training authorities, accreditation boards, sector skills bodies, and institutional management committees, their perspectives help shape decisions on curricula, resource allocation, and institutional priorities. This ensures that training systems remain responsive to learners' needs, as well as labour market realities.

Lack of clarity on mandate weakens credibility and trust. In several African TVET systems, youth are given seats in governance structures without clear mandates, authority, or capacity-building. As a result, their participation often becomes symbolic rather than substantive, limiting their ability to influence decisions or hold institutions accountable. Strong youth leadership enhances accountability, innovation, and the legitimacy of governance processes. Youth representatives bring lived experiences, creativity, and insights into emerging trends, such as digitalisation and green jobs, that older stakeholders may overlook. When entrusted with real mandates, they bring fresh thinking to policy debates and institutional reforms, thereby strengthening both credibility and relevance.

A tripartite approach remains essential for accountability and coherence in skills development. Bringing together government, employers, and workers' organisations strengthens coordination, ensures shared ownership, and builds consensus around TVET priorities and reforms. Amplifying youth voices within trade unions and employer organisations reinforces social dialogue and inclusivity. Targeted advocacy and capacity-building help young members in these spaces contribute meaningfully to decision-making. This extends youth representation beyond education systems into the broader world of work, embedding their influence across the full spectrum of governance and labour market institutions.

Meaningful participation requires deliberate investment in youth capacity. Structured training, mentorship, and orientation programmes equip young representatives with the knowledge and confidence to understand governance processes, engage as equals, and contribute effectively to decision-making. While young people may be consulted through classrooms or surveys, governance structures, such as boards, regulatory councils, and accreditation bodies,

are the formal spaces where decisions are made. Ensuring meaningful youth participation in these spaces embeds engagement within the architecture of TVET systems rather than leaving it as an ad hoc practice.

Diversity and representativeness are essential for credible youth participation in governance. Youth representatives should reflect the diversity of the TVET learner population, including gender balance, disability inclusion, and representation from rural and urban areas. This inclusivity ensures that governance decisions capture the full range of learner experiences, needs, and perspectives. Youth participation in governance should be embedded across all levels of the TVET ecosystem. Engagement must occur not only at the training provider level but also within sectoral bodies and national policy platforms. This vertical alignment ensures coherence between institutional realities and national reforms, allowing youth perspectives to inform decision-making at every stage.

Objective

By the end of this module, you will understand how to strengthen youth participation in governance and leadership structures within TVET systems. The focus is on ensuring that young people are not only represented but meaningfully engaged in shaping decisions and reforms. More specifically, you will know how to:

- ▶ **Map existing governance structures and identify entry points for youth participation** – in boards, councils, sector skills bodies.
- ▶ **Clarify mandates and decision-making powers of youth representatives** – to empower youths, provide them with real opportunities and avoid tokenism.
- ▶ **Build youth leadership capacity** – through training in governance, negotiation, and policy advocacy.
- ▶ **Institutionalise accountability mechanisms** – so youth voices are not only heard but acted upon in decision-making forums.
- ▶ **Integrate youth leadership pathways into broader national TVET reforms** – linking student councils, apprentices' associations, and youth networks to trade unions and policymaking spaces.

How to strengthen youth voice in governance

Youth participation in governance must enable progression across levels of meaningful engagement. Consistent with the Guide's overall objective, young people should not only be represented in governance structures but also empowered to move from being consulted to contributing, partnering, and ultimately leading within TVET governance processes. Institutional and national frameworks should therefore be designed to support this progression by combining representation with mentoring, gradually increased decision-making authority, and leadership development opportunities.

Map existing governance structures.

Mapping governance structures is the first step toward strengthening youth participation in decision-making. Institutions should identify all spaces where decisions affecting learners are made—such as school boards, curriculum committees, accreditation councils, and national TVET authorities. This mapping process helps pinpoint entry points for youth engagement and reveals where representation is currently missing or underdeveloped.

Work with Trade Unions and Employers' Organisations to strengthen youth engagement

A forward-looking skills tripartite governance must make space for the employers and workers of tomorrow. For this approach to truly reflect perspectives of tomorrow's workers' and employers', youth voices must be amplified within trade unions and employers' organisations. This may include raising awareness of the importance of youth engagement in shaping training standards, occupational profiles, and workplace learning conditions; encouraging workers and employers organisations to nominate young people as part of the delegation representing them at all levels of governance; building capacity to equip these young members with skills in negotiation, policy advocacy, and governance, enabling them to contribute meaningfully to decision-making; promoting youth leadership pathways

within unions and employer organisations, ensuring intergenerational continuity and innovation in social dialogue; establishing feedback and accountability mechanisms that allow youth representatives to report back to their peers, reinforcing transparency and trust.

Define clear frameworks and mandates for youth engagement

There could also be youth representatives independent from social partners, with clear well-defined mandates.

In this case, institutions should issue clear terms of reference that define the roles, possible voting rights, and responsibilities of youth representatives. Clearly defined roles make youth participation structured, credible, and impactful. For example, youth representatives on sector skills bodies can review and comment on new training standards before they are approved - or help identify priority occupations and competencies. Youth members of training providers' boards can contribute to evaluating the quality, inclusiveness, and welfare of learners.

Clear frameworks for youth participation in governance promote consistency and accountability across TVET systems. Institutional or national guidelines should specify the number of seats reserved for youth within boards, councils, and sector skills bodies, along with transparent processes for their election or selection and the scope of their powers.

Build youth leadership capacity.

Representation without adequate preparation can undermine the credibility and impact of youth participation.

Training in governance, policy advocacy, negotiation, and leadership equips youth representatives with the skills to engage confidently and effectively with senior policymakers, employers, and educators. Peer-learning models, mentorship, and exchange programmes further strengthen these competencies, ensuring that young representatives contribute as informed and capable partners in decision-making.

Capacity-building initiatives equip youth representatives with the skills needed for effective governance participation. Workshops on policy analysis, negotiation, leadership, and advocacy strengthen their ability to contribute meaningfully to decision-making processes. Regional or international exchange programmes further expose youth representatives to successful models of governance, fostering peer learning and innovation.

Establish accountability and feedback channels.

Youth representatives play a vital role as a bridge between governance structures and the wider learner community. Mechanisms such as regular constituency meetings, surveys, and “you said → we did” updates help ensure that representatives remain accountable to their peers as well as to institutional leadership, strengthening transparency and trust within the governance process.

Constituency feedback mechanisms strengthen accountability and transparency in youth representation.

Student councils, apprentice associations, and youth networks can use town halls, online surveys, WhatsApp polls, or digital suggestion boxes to gather opinions and proposals from their peers. Youth representatives should also maintain clear reporting obligations, such as sharing meeting summaries or feedback reports after governance sessions, to ensure their inputs reflect collective perspectives, not individual ones. This two-way communication process builds trust between representatives and their constituencies, making youth participation more transparent, democratic, and evidence-based.

Accountability dashboards enhance transparency and follow-up in governance processes. Institutions can use dashboards or reporting templates to track decisions made during governance meetings and document subsequent actions. This visibility allows students and apprentices to monitor progress, assess responsiveness, and advocate for continuous improvement within the TVET system.

Integrate youth leadership into systems at all levels.

Linking institutional youth leadership structures to national policymaking strengthens coherence and influence. Student councils, apprentice associations, and youth networks can be formally connected to national-level TVET decision-making spaces to ensure that institutional experiences inform broader reforms and strategies.

Similarly, youth chapters within employers' and workers' organisations can act as vital bridges between training and labour market institutions, amplifying the voices of young people in social dialogue and aligning skills development with decent work priorities.

Incentivise and recognise youth leadership.

Recognising and rewarding youth participation sustains motivation and strengthens leadership development.

Since engagement in governance can be time-intensive, providing stipends, leadership certificates, or academic credits encourages active participation while positioning governance as a valuable form of experiential learning and professional growth.

Mentorship and leadership pathways strengthen intergenerational collaboration and continuity in youth governance. Pairing youth representatives with senior leaders, such as principals, board chairs, or policymakers, creates mentorship opportunities that build confidence and institutional knowledge. Linking institutional roles, such as student councils, to national youth platforms and policy dialogues ensures that leadership pathways are continuous, coordinated, and aligned with broader TVET reforms.

Recognition and incentives reinforce the value of youth participation in governance. Providing certificates, stipends, or academic credits for governance roles motivates young people to engage actively and encourages a broader pool of learners to take up leadership positions within TVET institutions.

Box 13: South Africa – Youth in Governance through NYDA

In South Africa, the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) plays a prominent role in bringing youth perspectives into national education and skills policy dialogues. The NYDA nominates young people to sit on advisory committees linked to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), providing a formal avenue for youth voices in decision-making spaces that affect TVET reform and skills development. These committees serve as platforms where government, employers, unions, and other stakeholders deliberate on strategies for improving training relevance and access, with youth representatives expected to highlight learner priorities and aspirations.

Representation without authority risks tokenism. The presence of youth alone does not guarantee influence. Without voting rights or formalised roles, youth representatives struggle to shift outcomes.

Capacity-building is essential for meaningful participation. Young appointees require training in policy advocacy, negotiation, and governance to engage effectively with seasoned policymakers.

Institutional design determines effectiveness. Governance frameworks must embed youth participation as a structural requirement, ensuring clarity of roles, rights, and responsibilities.

Checklist for action

- ▶ **Governance structures are mapped** - to identify where youth participation already exists and where gaps remain.
- ▶ **Youth representatives have clear mandates** - voting rights, terms of reference, defined responsibilities - to ensure participation is substantive, not symbolic.
- ▶ **Capacity-building programmes are in place** - to equip youth with skills in policy advocacy, negotiation, and governance.
- ▶ **Feedback and accountability channels are established** - ensuring youth representatives report back to their peers regularly.
- ▶ **Youth participation in TVET governance is institutionalised** - through formal frameworks that link student councils and apprentice associations to national policymaking bodies, supported by defined reporting and feedback channels to ensure regular and representative input.

- **Incentives and recognition mechanisms exist** - stipends, credits, certificates to sustain motivation and value youth leadership roles.
- **Monitoring mechanisms track the effectiveness of youth participation** - assessing whether their inputs influence decisions and reforms.

► **Table 9: Levels of Youth Engagement in TVET Governance**

Areas	Level of MYE	Youth Role	Value Added
National & sectoral tvet steering bodies	Partner → Leader	Represent youth on national TVET councils, skills authorities, and sector skills committees	Contribute to national TVET strategies, sector skills plans, and policy reforms. Influence decisions on funding priorities, quality assurance, and system direction Improves alignment between reforms and youth employment realities
Institutional governance (tvete centre boards & committees)	Partner	Serve on management boards, student affairs committees, and quality assurance groups	Contribute to decisions on schedules, facilities, rules, and support services. Supports early identification of learning and welfare challenges
Curriculum & qualifications governance	Leader	Serve as members of curriculum review panels and qualification standard-setting committees	Review assessment methods and propose improvements. Enhances attractiveness and relevance of TVET programmes and supports innovation in pedagogy and assessment
Accountability, monitoring & evaluation mechanisms	Partner	Participate in M&E committees and oversight missions	Contribute to tracer studies, satisfaction surveys, and performance reviews. Enable rapid responsiveness to quality gaps affecting learners
Policy development & institutional procedures	Consulted → Partner	Engage in consultations and policy dialogues	Co-design policies on safety, inclusion, gender equality, and digital access. Build trust and ownership among young people
Strategic partnerships & advocacy platforms	Partner	Participate in youth-led networks, alliances, and advocacy initiatives	Partner with employers and training providers on joint actions Strengthens multi-stakeholder collaboration

Conclusion and way forward

Conclusion

Youth engagement in TVET is a structural necessity for building systems that are inclusive, relevant, and future-oriented. The modules of this Guide cover a wide spectrum of mutually reinforcing interventions, ranging from capturing aspirations at entry to embedding youth in governance, providing a practical roadmap for institutions, governments, and development partners to move from symbolic consultation to genuine partnership and leadership.

The way forward requires institutional commitment and policy alignment. For these practices to take root, institutions must embed youth engagement into their operational routines, rather than treating it as a project-driven initiative. Governments should formalise youth participation within national TVET strategies, accreditation frameworks, and labour market information systems. Development partners can reinforce this by tying funding and technical assistance to demonstrable outcomes of youth engagement.

This manual is a living resource that aims to contribute to a continental shift towards participatory, youth-centred TVET. Just as youth aspirations evolve, so too must the methods for involving them. Institutions are encouraged to adapt, test, and refine the steps presented here, sharing lessons across borders and contexts. Further editions of the Guide are also expected to reflect on new case studies and good practices. Taking these steps ensures that young people are not just ready for the labour market but also empowered to shape it, creating TVET systems that are resilient, inclusive, and capable of meeting the challenges of the 21st century.

Annexes

Toolkit 1: Capturing aspirations and entry support

Toolkit 2: Outreach and enrolment

Toolkit 3: Skills anticipation and curriculum development

Toolkit 4: Teaching and learning

Toolkit 5: Peer learning and self-assessment

Toolkit 6: Feedback loops

Toolkit 7: Governance and leadership



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