

Global Dialogue Forum on Vocational Education and Training Geneva, 29–30 September 2010

Consensus points of the Forum

Introduction

1. Government, Employer and Worker representatives participated in the Global Dialogue Forum on Vocational Education and Training, held at the ILO, Geneva, on 29–30 September 2010. The Forum examined strategies and policies to help constituents in ILO member States to improve the provision of universally accessible and quality technical and vocational education and training (TVET) services for all citizens.
2. As one of its central tasks, the Forum exchanged a wide range of views and experiences on initial and further training needs, remuneration packages, and the teaching and working conditions of TVET teachers and trainers. It also considered measures to strengthen social dialogue mechanisms and processes involving all major actors in TVET reform decisions.
3. The Forum took into consideration the background report prepared by the Office: *Teachers and trainers for the future: technical and vocational education and training in a changing world*, and reaffirmed the importance of a number of international standards for policy work at this level of education, including the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers, 1966, and the UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel, 1997. It also had reference to the Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195), the Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization and the Global Jobs Pact, adopted by International Labour Conferences, as well as the Global Dialogue Forum on Strategies for Sectoral Training and Employment Security (March 2010).

Consensus points on challenges and the way forward

Challenges facing TVET and the roles of public and private providers

4. The impact of the continued economic and jobs crisis has been affecting countries and sectors and posed new challenges for TVET. In this context, the Forum underscores the need for policies and practices that provide a higher status and new esteem for TVET's importance in meeting these challenges, bringing together aspects of skills development for employability, as well as broader aspects of lifelong learning and general education for all citizens. To this end, public and private investment in TVET should be at levels that ensure universal access, training quality and relevant outcomes for all learners, supplemented where possible by mutually beneficial public–private collaboration.

5. TVET plays a critical role in social and economic development. To fully utilize the potential of TVET, countries require more up-to-date, where possible “real time”, information on present and future skills trends. International organizations such as the ILO, UNESCO and OECD and relevant regional organizations should assist constituents in member States to develop up-to-date information collection and analysis on skills demand and supply.
6. Governments, employers’ and workers’ organizations should engage in social dialogue on arrangements that encourage and allow workers to undergo TVET training that is equally employment-driven and builds up generic skills of TVET students as well as broader aspects of lifelong learning and general education for all citizens. Such generic skills include communication, problem solving, teamwork, language, entrepreneurial and other soft skills. Programmes that incorporate learning in both TVET schools and in the workplace (such as apprenticeships and internships) should be encouraged.
7. The Forum emphasized the need for introducing better collaboration between the social partners to effectively deliver and assess TVET outcomes.

Initial education and professional development of TVET teachers and trainers

8. Participants of the Forum agreed that TVET teachers and trainers should have qualifications as expert teachers – with both technical and pedagogical skills – and experience in industry and other workplace needs.
9. “Building bridges” between countries with effective TVET teacher training systems and those seeking to invest in new TVET teacher training structures is desirable. Increased international cooperation in conjunction with organizations such as the ILO, UNESCO and OECD can play an active role in facilitating collaboration between countries.

Employment in TVET

10. TVET faces continued shortages in qualified teachers and trainers in many countries. To improve recruitment and retention of adequate numbers of fully qualified TVET teachers and trainers a comprehensive package of high initial and continual training standards, competitive remuneration, attractive teaching conditions and the necessary infrastructure and equipment to support high learning outcomes are considered essential.
11. Bearing in mind the historical under-representation of women and minorities in TVET employment, while upholding the principle of appointment by merit, human resource policies of public and private TVET providers should actively seek to encourage employment of qualified women and minorities, especially in cutting edge sectors and in positions of responsibility. To achieve this objective, attention needs to be paid to breaking down cultural and institutional barriers to equality of opportunity and to promoting good role models for women and minority candidates.
12. Employment security and tenure are important factors underpinning quality service provision, job satisfaction, recruitment and retention, thereby avoiding teacher and trainer shortages. Excessive recourse to “casual” contractual and temporary teachers can undermine system and institutional objectives and high professional status. At the same

time, employment security cannot be absolutely guaranteed in all professional streams or sectors in constant evolution. Where teacher or trainer jobs are eliminated for financial or professional reasons, good human resource policies call for alternative training and placement measures.

Remuneration and the teaching and learning environment

13. Remuneration levels of TVET teachers and trainers often do not reflect the importance of work in this increasingly vital education sector, and may not be competitive either in comparison to teaching at other education levels or with comparable private sector jobs. Current remuneration packages in a large number of countries, especially developing countries, are not sufficient to attract sufficient numbers of able young teacher/trainer candidates, nor to retain experienced serving staff, many of whom leave for private enterprise or jobs in other countries. Low salaries also impact on pension benefits, a further disincentive to a teaching job.
14. Workload in TVET should be defined with reference to the full range and variety of teacher and trainer responsibilities, including instructional and preparation time, project work and workplace exchanges. It is vital that employers, public and private, ensure a safe and healthy teaching and learning environment.
15. A well-financed TVET infrastructure with up-to-date training equipment is critical to learning quality and relevance. Governments/public education authorities have the primary responsibility for ensuring the necessary investments to achieve this goal, but public/private collaboration is an important means of supplementing and supporting TVET institutions. Good practices include:
 - integrated training centres in which public authorities finance training costs (teacher salaries and benefits and student financial support) and employers or enterprises offering training equipment;
 - a shared training package in which public authorities cover school-based training and private enterprise in workplace based training, taking account of respective institutional constraints and needs.

Social dialogue in TVET

16. There is a general consensus that social dialogue – all forms of information sharing, consultation and negotiation between representatives of governments, employers and workers on issues of common interest relating to economic and social policy – is vital to healthy TVET policy formulation and implementation. Social dialogue should operate both on the broader policy and operational issues of TVET by engaging the social partners, and within TVET systems and institutions between employers, national or institutional such as school boards, and trade unions representing teachers and trainers.
17. The diversity of national experiences implies diversity in the frameworks or processes for social dialogue in TVET. Sectoral social dialogue is increasingly crucial to align TVET operations with national or local labour market needs. Positive examples of national, subnational or sectoral bodies for social dialogue on TVET policy and practice are numerous and include:

- tripartite advisory councils/commissions on TVET strategies, policies, qualification, assessment and training standards and curricula;
- industrial training boards or skills councils/commissions to identify and advise on workforce development and skills needs; and
- tripartite councils/commissions to manage training funds, advise on government tax incentives or develop targeted labour market intervention tools, notably for youth and economically or socially disadvantaged population groups.

Such bodies are built around tripartite social dialogue and in many cases are funded by governments and fully engage social partners in their policy advisory or operational functions.

18. Effective social dialogue depends on recognition of its importance by all concerned parties, respect for rights and principles of freedom of association, organization and participation in decision-making for the social partners as set out in international labour standards¹ and in the international standards on teachers,² adequately funded and supported institutional frameworks or processes, and assistance where necessary to build and sustain the capacity of TVET stakeholders to meaningfully engage in social dialogue.
19. Where social dialogue institutions or frameworks are effectively embedded in the institutional culture of a country, they may provide stability in policies and practices on TVET issues that transcend short-term political changes and/or assist in the management of difficult economic conditions created by structural adjustment measures for example. International information exchanges, financial and technical assistance can contribute to more sustainable social dialogue institutions and frameworks within small and developing nations in particular.

Related issues not covered by the ILO report – Workplace and informal learning

20. There is a need for improving collection and use of data on current and future trends and developments in TVET, in both developed and developing countries, and for greater international information exchange and collaborative work on these issues.
21. In addition to formal provision of TVET through training institutions and that provided by teachers and trainers in the formal TVET system, greater attention needs to be given to recognizing and developing links with workplace and lifelong learning; this includes:
 - working to establish formal apprenticeship programmes using mechanisms of social dialogue;

¹ The Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), the Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151), and the Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981 (No. 154).

² The ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers, 1966; and the UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel, 1997.

- informal apprenticeship programmes, particularly in developing countries, should be upgraded or linked to formal programmes, whenever possible;
- increasing the use of information and communication technology as an instrument in the delivery of training.

These programmes should respect the accreditation, recognition and quality assurance requirements and procedures established by the relevant authorities.

22. Recognition of prior learning (RPL), both in formal, but particularly in informal learning, needs to become more flexible through:

- recognition of acquired competencies;
- recognizing technical competencies and generic skills important for specific job profiles;
- providing specific sector frameworks.

These measures should respect the accreditation, recognition and quality assurance requirements and procedures established by the relevant authorities.

23. The ILO is encouraged to apply the consensus points made here in current and future ILO programmes.