Skills development in the time of COVID-19: Taking stock of the initial responses in technical and vocational education and training

Report Key Findings

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The report was prepared by a joint team from the ILO, UNESCO and the World Bank. The core team of authors comprised:

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- Hiromichi Katayama and Anahat Kaur (UNESCO);
- Margo Hofijzer, Radhika Kapoor, Victoria Levin, Indhira Santos and Michael Weber (World Bank)
Geographical distribution of respondents

1,353 respondents, representing 126 countries and territories

74% of the respondents were representatives of TVET providers, 17% were policymakers

other respondents included social partners, career counselling and employment services

Source: ILO-UNESCO-World Bank online survey, 2020
Disruption to TVET programmes due to COVID-19

90% of respondents reported complete closure of TVET centres in their countries.

In 114 countries (out of 126), complete closure was reported by the majority of the respondents.

98% of respondents across regions reported disruption of work-based learning due to closure of enterprises.

In most TVET programmes, practical training is a critical dimension and not easily delivered through remote modalities for many occupations.

78% of respondents reported that certifying exams and assessments were postponed for TVET trainees and students and in some cases even cancelled.

Obstacles to ensure continuity in the provision of training to TVET:

- Lack of general and technological infrastructure
- Lack of effective and familiar distance learning platforms
- Lack of staff capacity to support distance learning through quality pedagogical resources
- Financial resource constraints
# Consequences of COVID-19 on learning and teaching in TVET

| Difficulty with TVET student engagement and quality assurance in the remote learning format |
| Drop in access to and affordability of TVET programmes during the crisis |
| Increased opportunity cost of completing TVET programmes during the crisis |
| Lack of motivation among teachers and students and a rise in the dropout rate |

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**ILO** International Labour Organization

**The World Bank**

**UNESCO** United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

[ilo.org](https://ilo.org)
Transition to alternative modes of training and assessment

 Despite challenges, the findings of this survey show that the uptake of distance learning solutions has accelerated since the COVID-19 outbreak in TVET.

The majority of TVET respondents in 13 out of 92 countries used to provide online distance learning regularly or often prior to COVID-19 outbreak.

The majority of TVET respondents in 46 out of 92 countries reported the provision of courses fully remotely during the pandemic.

Source: ILO-UNESCO-World Bank online survey, 2020
How training is provided by countries' income level

While the crisis has triggered a rapid transition to distance education and training in the delivery of TVET, it has also revealed the wide learning gap between countries and societies.

While in HI countries more than two thirds of TVET providers reported that they were delivering training entirely by remote methods during the pandemic, very few in low-income countries were able to make that transition.

Source: ILO-UNESCO-World Bank online survey, 2020
Distance learning modalities

**face-to-face training and assessment**
with precautionary measures - social distancing, wearing a face mask, staggering class break times and limiting the number of students on site at the same time

**Use of online platforms and tools**
was reported, particularly the use of existing online platforms and tools such as MOOCs and MOODLE, video tutorials, live video conferences and simulators where possible

**Use of offline platforms**
like national television, distribution of written resources such as self-paced learning guides and learner notes were reported, particularly in many developing countries

**Alternative solutions to practical skills training and assessments**
such as implementing practical tasks at home and uploading images or video footage for assessment, or using portfolios with past work for assessment - submitted online
TVET institutional responses to COVID-19

- The pandemic has created an opportunity to promote and further mobilize human and financial resources for expanding distance learning at a global level.

Half of TVET providers reported that additional resources had been committed in their organizations for the creation of new materials, deployment of new technologies and expanded use of online and offline distance learning.

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in TVET were promptly established as part of response measures to the crisis caused by the pandemic.

Many training programmes, actions and resources have been developed as an immediate response to the COVID-19 pandemic for the sectors in shortage of labour and skills.
Support measures for teachers, trainers and learners

- In most countries, measures were put in place to support teachers and trainers during the pandemic:
  - moral support,
  - internet access and, sometimes, the provision of ICT or camera equipment,
  - capacity-building (most frequently cited type of support) to help teachers and trainers provide remote training,
  - the provision of resources, technical support or help desks.

- Different mechanisms to acquaint learners with existing learning solutions and support them in choosing options were reported:
  - the use of television,
  - social media,
  - websites,
  - webinars,
  - directly contacting individual learners to offer support.
Implementation of pre-existing crisis-response strategy

- Most countries appear to have lacked a crisis response strategy for TVET prior to the COVID-19 crisis.

- Reported strategies to prevent the spread of the pandemic most often related to measures that are not specific to the education sector.

- One of the very few respondents who referred to a formal crisis response strategy:
  - Australian network of public technical and further education (TAFE) institutes highlighted that all registered training organizations in the country were legally required to have a critical incident policy and procedure in place and available on their website.

Source: ILO-UNESCO-World Bank online survey, 2020
Note: number of responses: 1,350 (out of 1,353 responses), raw percentages (unweighted).
Report lessons learned from the COVID-19 response

- **Importance of remote learning**, including for the acquisition of practical skills, and preconditions for its high-quality provision

  - Need for a rapid response to school closures has substantially increased the understanding of distance learning, appreciation of its benefits, and awareness of its challenges.
  
  - Various respondents highlighted their experience of blended learning, noting its potential value beyond the crisis.

- **Importance of specific socio-emotional skills** and behaviour that are essential to people if they are to weather and rebound from crises

  - Respondents pointed to specific socio-emotional skills, behaviour and values, such as teamwork, mutual respect and openness to change, that had been of particular assistance in the crisis response.

- **Preparedness for future shocks**

  - There was widespread recognition that development of detailed and realistic contingency plans can make TVET providers and the overall system better able to weather and rebound from future crises.
Policy recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Increase crisis response readiness</th>
<th>Enhance access to education and training</th>
<th>Deliver relevant training and skills to build back better</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Invest in the development of adequate crisis-response plans for the education sector, from the national down to the provider level.</td>
<td>✓ Improve internet infrastructure and ensure affordable connectivity.</td>
<td>✓ Adapt to the changing situation in the economy, the labour market and society at large in a timely manner and train young people and adults to meet current and future skills needs.</td>
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<td>✓ Develop and reinforce capacities of TVET teachers and learners, and of the managers of TVET institutions to adjust to constantly evolving circumstances</td>
<td>✓ Invest in developing and maintaining easy access to distance learning platforms and learning spaces for TVET.</td>
<td>✓ Mainstream successful emerging innovations in new training programmes, learning platforms and resources into the TVET system.</td>
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<td>✓ Collaborate with private entities in the education technology sector at the national level.</td>
<td>✓ Strengthen systems for the validation and recognition of all forms of learning.</td>
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<td>✓ Emphasize equality and inclusiveness to ensure that people have broad access to training opportunities throughout their working life.</td>
<td>✓ Increase efforts to reskill and upskill workers, with a view to rebuilding back better and achieving full employment.</td>
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THANK YOU!

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