



الجمهورية التونسية
وزارة التشغيل والتكوين المهني



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INNOVATIONS IN TVET CONFERENCE

9-11
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2022

Lessons learning
for transforming
TVET practice

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Background

Technical education and vocational training systems in Africa are facing daunting challenges and, more than ever, require innovative, context-specific solutions that can ensure the resilience of the sector and its adaptability to the ever-changing market needs. For instance, given the rapid technological advances in the labor market during the last years, it has become essential to integrate flexibility, adaptability, and continuous learning into the training offer.

TVET should be a coherent system that aims to meet the continent's economic development demands in terms of a skilled workforce both in sufficient quantity and quality for collective social well-being. However, several challenges remain and need to be overcome. In this regard, the Continental Strategy for Technical Education and Training (TVET) of the African Union also draws up an inventory of current challenges faced by the TVET sector in Africa:

- **Fragmented structuring of TVET:** Generally, there are no common standards that cover the different delivery structures of TVET
- **Unregulated traditional apprenticeship:** In many countries, traditional apprenticeship remains the dominant pathway for skills acquisition among youth leaving school or dropping out
- **Growing importance of private TVET centers:** private providers give training for the informal sector, which is the more rapidly expanding labor market throughout Africa, while public institutions train mainly for the formal industrial sector, which is growing at a much slower rate
- **TVET systems are still supply-driven:** The development of off-target skills is a major weakness of the TVET system in many African countries. Training institutions do not follow the employment destination of their graduates
- **Mismatch between supply and demand for skills:** The phenomenon of “unemployed graduates” is widespread in Africa. This situation has highlighted the mismatch between training and labor market demand for skills
- **Low prestige and attractiveness of TVET:** In many countries, technical and vocational education is still considered by parents, the public at large, and even some politicians as a domain for less academically gifted students
- **Gender-based inequality of opportunity:** Continuing stereotyping and feminization of certain professions and vocations has meant that women and girls are still not adequately represented in key professional sectors which are traditionally considered reserved for males
- **Geographic and economic disparities:** In many African countries, children from lower social classes are unable to pay the fees charged by training institutions. Invariably, good technical



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- and vocational schools are mainly located in big cities (or with the highest urbanization rate)
- **Low quality and ineffective training:** Generally, TVET institutions mostly emphasize on theory and certification rather than on technical skills acquisition and aptitude tests
- **Insufficient funding:** Only a few African governments currently finance TVET at a level that can sustain quality training
- **Weak policy implementation structures:** duplication and segmentation of training, and the absence of a common platform for developing coherent policies and joint initiatives
- **Policy and legislation:** fragmented and uncoordinated training delivery. In many countries, TVET operates under the coordination of various ministries, governmental institutions, and different legislative instruments, instead of a unified policy and legal framework

There are, however, some promising initiatives at the regional level. The TVET landscape has gained increased attention with ongoing promising TVET policy reforms being developed in many countries. This is demonstrated by the active participation of the private sector in the National TVET system, the current resilience and renovation of the traditional apprenticeship system, the creation of national bodies with oversight function of training, and the enactment of laws to strengthen the education and training systems. It is in this context that the conference “Innovations in TVET” was organized, followed by a Study Tour of two Tunisian TVET centers. This event gave the opportunity to set up a continental dialogue and to highlight innovative initiatives and good practices put in place whether at the governmental level, by some international organizations or the private sector in approximately ten African countries.

Selected themes

Based on the findings related to the vocational training sector in Africa, three themes, addressing as many TVET issues as possible, were prioritized and addressed during the Conference, focusing on innovation in the sector.

1. Innovation in terms of pedagogy

This theme was selected in order to address the issues related both to the lack of adequacy between the skills acquired by learners and the real expectations of the labor market, to the lack of attractiveness from which the sector suffers but also to the lack of accessibility. Indeed, innovative methods in terms of pedagogy are based on a more practical side which allows learners to be better prepared for the world of work. The innovative techniques used, such as blended learning, also make it possible to give a modern image that is more attractive to young people and contribute to solving problems related to



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accessibility to vocational training centers, which is difficult in certain rural areas.

2. Digitalization of the sector

When we talk about innovation it is impossible not to mention technology. The dynamic that digitalization has brought to the sector is undeniable and this has been amply proven during the Covid-19 health crisis. The introduction of digital technologies has made it possible to contribute very effectively to improving access to vocational training.

3. New concepts of vocational training centers

The adequacy between the skills acquired by learners and the real expectations of the labor market is one of the major challenges of the TVET sector. The theme relating to new center concepts makes it possible to highlight centers that are much more focused on practice, or in which the private sector is very involved, which makes it possible to best prepare learners for the reality of the market.

Conference summary

The conference was held over two days in Tunisia, **November 9 and 10, 2022**, it was the subject of a strong mobilization whether in terms of physical or virtual presence.

- Physical attendance: More than **150 people from 17 African countries:**

- | | | |
|------------|----------------|------------|
| - Cameroon | - Kenya | - Togo |
| - Egypt | - Mali | - Tunisia |
| - Eritrea | - Nigeria | - Uganda |
| - Ethiopia | - Rwanda | - Zambia |
| - Ghana | - South Africa | - Zimbabwe |
| - Guinea | - Tanzania | |

- Virtual attendance:

- **09-11-22:** 778 views - English and French streaming
- **10-11-22:** 838 views - English and French streaming

The official opening of the Conference was made by Mr Nasreddine Nsibi, Minister of Employment and Vocational Training in Tunisia. Dr. Monica Ebele Idinoba, Principal Scientific Officer from AU Department of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation (ESTI), Mr Fritz Jung, Head of German Cooperation and Mr Jean-



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Pierre Sacaze, Head of section “Social Inclusion and Economic Development” of the European Union also intervened to explain the relevance of the theme of innovation for the TVET sector and its importance for the African Continent.

The two days Conference was then punctuated by **four key moments**:

Member State round table which brought together the Tunisian Minister of Employment and Vocational Training, the Deputy Minister of Education in Ghana and the Chief of Staff of the Ministry of Primary, Secondary, Technical and Craft Education in Togo. A very rich discussion took place focusing on unemployment, the employability of young people and the lack of attractiveness from which the TVET sector suffers and which prevents it from being an adequate solution to unemployment. The need to develop strategies, to plan for the sector and this in a structured way was highlighted, as was the need to do it quickly and in an agile way to avoid being overwhelmed by the context. Some government initiatives were also discussed, including the shortcomings of the system they identified and the adjustments they allowed.

Experts panel made up of representatives of government structures, the private sector, international organizations, the vocational training system and the AUC.

This panel discussed:

- The role of Ministries and more specifically the innovative initiatives implemented in Tunisia to boost the sector and better meet the needs of professional branches
- The essential role of the private sector and the way in which it can intervene, in particular through the example of support units for training and employment as well as initiatives that are easily replicable
- The support role for member states that international organizations can play, such as the Pan-African initiative for the digital transformation of TVET, the key success factors which have been exposed
- The actions of the African Union in favor of the promotion of innovation on the Continent and the possibilities offered to stimulate innovation ecosystems in Africa
- The role of the vocational training system in driving innovation and maintaining quality TVET through the training of trainers.

Best practices sharing during which examples of initiatives and projects were presented for each selected theme. Each intervention presented the project in a synthetic way by explaining the innovative aspect, the way in which the project contributes to the resolution of problems facing the sector as well as the key success factors of the project, the difficulties encountered and the quantified results (if



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available) to assess the replicability of the initiative. In the end, between four and five interventions per theme were presented under the following themes:

Innovation in terms of pedagogy

- TAKWEEN Project - Network of Practice Enterprises, Swisscontact (Tunisia)
<https://www.swisscontact.org/en/news/network-of-practice-enterprises-in-tunisia-reet>
- Private Sector engagement in electricity training, Eranove Academy (Ivory Coast)
[Private sector engagement in electricity training | Aspyee](#)
- Developing offline alternative learning, Educlick (Cameroon)
[Educlick: Developing offline alternative learning methods. | Aspyee](#)
- The experience of the National Center for the Training of Trainers and Training Engineering (Tunisia)

Digitalization of the sector

- Maximizing Inclusive Access to Decent Work in the Digital Economy, ILO (Switzerland and South Africa)
- ANETI TKAWEN platform, ANETI (Tunisia)
https://www.emploi.nat.tn/formations/Formation_en_ligne.html
- Revolutionizing Ed Tech In Africa, BAG Innovation (Rwanda)
<https://aspyee.org/good-practice/bag-innovation-revolutionizing-ed-tech-africa>
- Bedaya Digital Platform, WFP (Egypt)
<https://www.wfp.org/news/ministry-emigration-egyptian-expatriate-affairs-and-wfp-launch-bedaya-digital-initiative>

New concepts of vocational training centers

- Key to successful TVET transformation – Public Private Partnerships, Cisco Corporate Affairs (South Africa)
<https://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/solutions/industries/education.html>
- The Installation, Repair and Maintenance Initiative - An accelerated approach to developing lower level technical skills, IRM (South Africa)
<https://aspyee.org/good-practice/installation-repair-and-maintenance-initiative-irm-accelerated-approach-developing>
- FIESP Project - Inter-Company Training Center, GIZ (Tunisia)
<https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/84768.html>



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- Financial empowerment of vocational training centers, Nabeul Sectoral Maintenance Training Center (Tunisia)
- Mobile training center, SBF (Tunisia)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-UZMdblyh4>

IEA Pitch which is an initiative of the African Union to identify, promote and support the systemic adoption and replication of education innovations in all aspects of education and training in Africa. The IEA Pitch made it possible to:

- Showcase innovative education and skills solutions from across the continent for possible support including further development and replication
- Provide a platform for partnerships and investments in promising education innovations developed in Africa

A total of fifteen innovators, selected from each AU region from fifty applications following a rigorous process, pitched their innovations to a panel of experts from AUC and partner organizations. At the end of the pitches, three innovations were rewarded, even if all the projects presented were innovative and relevant for the education and vocational training sector.

- **Winning project:** Zeraki Learning Application - **LiteMore Limited**
<https://learning.zeraki.co.ke/#/login>
- **Second place:** Tangible Africa Project - **Fathers House Leva Foundation**
<https://tangible.levafoundation.org/>
- **Third place:** Magoé Education Application - **Magoé Technology**
<https://magoie.fr/>

Study Tour

Following the conference's two days rich exchanges, a study tour was organized on November 11. The participants were able to visit two vocational training centers in Tunisia:

- (i) the first, a public training center of excellence in the construction sector, in the great area of Tunis. The public run training center of Ibn Sina is known for the quality of the partnerships it sets up and which allows it to provide up-to-date quality training, and to ensure a certain financial autonomy;
<https://docplayer.fr/10791183-Centre-sectoriel-de-formation-en-batiment.html>
- (ii) the second, Bisertex, a private training center, in the textile sector, based in the city of Bizerte,



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is an integrated center of the Van Laack company which aims to help the professional retraining of people in precarious situations to enable them to work in the textile sector.

<https://www.bisertex.com/fr>

Attendance to the study tour: 30 people including:

- Deputy Minister of Education of Ghana
- Chief of Staff of the Ministry of Primary, Secondary, Technical and Craft Education of Togo

Workshop

The visits ended with a workshop during which an exchange was initiated around the social responsibility of the private sector as a key stakeholder in the vocational training sector. Always in the spirit of the replicability of initiatives and the pooling of knowledge, the participants were asked to answer two questions summarizing the three days to which they were invited:

- What are the major issues facing the TVET sector in your country?
- What good practices discovered during these three days would you like to see replicated in your country?

Main lessons

The two-day conference, as well as the subsequent study tour and workshop, highlighted good practices that can help solving certain problems faced by the vocational training sector on the Continent.



- **The encouragement of public-private partnership** as a solution to the existing gaps between the skills acquired by learners and the real needs of the labor market. The private sector must invest both in the reception of learners and the provision of quality supervision allowing a rapid increase in skills and in the design and curriculum development of training programs which can lead to joint public-certifications. Private sector, guaranteeing the quality of training and a lever for employability, the challenge also being that TVET be demand-driven.



- **Training focused on practice** through the acquisition of equipment allowing learning through real-life scenarios or the establishment of training companies.

- **The financial empowerment of training centers** to minimize the impact of the lack of



financing of the sector thanks to the granting of the possibility for the centers to offer their services to the private sector and by involving the learners in maintenance activities for the sectors concerned. Autonomy allows centers to acquire the new equipment necessary to provide adequate training given the rapid changes in the market.

- **Support to Governments in the design and deployment of digital strategies**, strategies necessary in view of the changing global environment in which we operate and which call for a rapid digitalization of the sector to:



- Adapt to the context of the changing world of work
- Overcome issues relating to lack of accessibility
- Anticipate, plan and manage skills development
- Improve access to skills development and the labor market
- Allow the connection between learners, centers and employers.



- **The establishment of mobile training centers** for the sectors that lend themselves to it in order to allow learners to be in a real work situation and to facilitate access to training in marginalized areas.



- **The establishment of short-term training programs** for professionals allowing them to quickly acquire complementary skills which will improve their employability prospects, but also for initial training and job seekers, to introduce them to specific jobs that do not require long-term in-depth education and a specific professional background. Trainees of short-term training are usually meant to be trained in the company once recruited.



- **Initiate the implementation of alternative learning methods** taking into account infrastructure and accessibility issues such as the use of unstructured additional service data (USSD system) to allow users to access their program or even blended learning which adapts to learners' situations by giving them the possibility of following their training according to a hybrid format.



- **Promoting the sector through its use as a lever for social inclusion** by encouraging professional retraining to enable people in precarious employment or in the informal sector to find viable alternatives.



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Conclusion

After stimulating presentations and exchanges around visionary projects, carried out both by Member States, the private sector, international organizations and even entrepreneurs, what ultimately emerged from this event is that the secret of success in the evolution for the vocational training sector lies in adaptation and agility. Adapting to the environment in which we operate, adapting to technological advances, labor market expectations, limited resources, the mindset of younger generations etc. Innovation depends on the context, what is innovative in South Africa is not necessarily so in Switzerland, however, our challenges on the Continent are the same, and the shared experiences were born and developed in African countries, for Africans and with the specificities of our Continent, which is why this Continental Conference was planned and held. It has made it possible to inspire, to pool knowledge, to share each other's experiences, to build bridges between project leaders, to create partnerships but also and above all to inspire African youth and increase employability prospects.

Maintaining the dynamic

In order to maintain the momentum created by the conference and strengthen the framework for exchange that it has given rise to, we are proposing:

- Centralizing the good practices presented as well as the pitched innovations on ASPYEE
- Organize webinars and online workshops by innovation themes and invite the participants of the Conference to continue the dialogue
- Approach Member States and introduce them to ASPYEE and the good practices that emerged from the Conference while maintaining dialogue with government representatives present at the event
- Launch an online inventory of participants' interests in relation to the good practices presented and put them in touch with the appropriate networks and people
- Maintain the synergy with the IEA Pitch and make the whole event recurring in a hybrid format