Vision 2020: Global Partnerships

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The internationalization of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is underpinned by the growing importance of technical and vocational skills in achieving global and regional integration, raising the quality of TVET for improved job skills for the youth and in buttressing sustainable economic growth. Policy learning on internationalization of TVET in the education and skills policy agenda and making it adaptable to the needs of an ever-changing labour market have attracted the interest of many countries. Governments strive to take this phenomenal development forward and benefit from the rich promises it holds. TVET-oriented priorities are being set and the development of key technical and vocational skills are becoming integral to framing national priorities.

Following the EFA Global Monitoring Report and the Third International Congress on TVET in 2012, there has been a great interest in examining how skills development programmes can improve young people’s opportunities for decent jobs and better life. Corollary to this, the post-2015 international education and development agenda has guided today’s discussions in terms of re-thinking education and training to ensure that all young people and adults have equitable opportunities to access and complete formal and non-formal technical and vocational education and training relevant to the world of work, as well as lifelong learning opportunities to guarantee that all the young people and adults have equitable access to learning opportunities for professional and personal development.

In this context, technical and vocational institutes, colleges, polytechnics and higher education institutions offering TVET programmes have an important role to play in demonstrating successful VET internationalization and transforming the traditional course of TVET, particularly in countries where TVET is regarded as a second-class option. In close coordination with government institutions, they should facilitate various pathways to learning corresponding learners’ needs and should play a key role in the recognition and certification of learning outcomes acquired by learners through formal, non-formal and informal learning settings.

At the heart of this is creating enabling conditions for Global Partnerships to adapt to development needs. The UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development agenda stressed the need to reorient such partnerships to the changed context to make relevant links with global development
frameworks and agenda, including the post-2015 scenario. As a challenge and an opportunity, the post-2015 UN development agenda on sustainable development, the report says, is expected to influence the construction of global partnerships, their goals and scope. For one, such partnerships need to include North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation. Issues such as migration flows and their contributions to the creation of wealth, trade, jobs and social empowerment, the report further says, should also be taken into account.

Similarly, the anticipated increase in labour mobility in the midst of the flourishing ASEAN Economic Community is another phenomenon that has implications to shaping partnerships, particularly in VET. The free flow of skilled workers is considered vital in facilitating regional economic integration. However, such could only occur if skills are portable, labour force mobile and qualifications are recognized across borders. This trend has its own repercussions that need to be addressed through improved cross-sector synergy and trans-national opportunities.

For this reason, global partnerships in VET need to reflect global response to global challenges. They need to be linked to global education and development frameworks, such as the post-2015 international development agenda and relevant to the changing needs of the societies, economies and the environment.

There are three aspects to consider in framing global partnerships in VET:

First, the goals of partnerships should be anchored to lifelong learning principles and global citizenship education agenda. Not only should education and training enable learners to acquire diverse and relevant knowledge and skills for professional and personal development, it should also develop competencies to understand global issues and trends, acquire cross-cultural understanding, knowledge of key universal values, develop cognitive and non-cognitive skills and behavioural capacities to launch and engage in proactive actions. Anchoring TVET partnerships to these principles could open the opportunities to link informal sector and economies into the traditionally formal TVET workforce development process and enhance mainstream labour market participants and results.

Second, global partnership programmes should facilitate effective youth transitions to the world or work and/or employment, and ensure that such transitions are backed by effective labour mobility to contribute to regional and global skill demands. Enhancing the quality and delivery of training programmes as well as investments in TVET are critical aspects to bolster effective youth transitions and ensure that they stay for a longer period in gainful employment. In the case of global partnerships between developed and developing countries with high youth bulge, programmes
need to be adapted to providing skills that can be adapted to broader work contexts and be
developed to make the local labour market attractive to international trainees could stimulate a win-
win solution, taking the full advantage of the demographic dividend, addressing the ageing society in
smaller countries with advanced economies and providing employment to youth population that
cannot be absorbed in the local labour market of the sending countries.

Also vital to this is addressing the key issues faced by the young people in securing decent and better
quality employment both in the formal and informal sectors. Young people need to be prepared for
work while addressing the growing stigma that youth come out of education systems unprepared or
lacking of adequate skills sought by the employers. Providing them with adequate skills needed in a
globalized “world of work” and globally-oriented work-based training to gain practical experiences
are crucial to secure young people with jobs and further learning and development pathways. Tracing the skills performance and employability of students / workers is also complementary to
enhanced youth transitions if institutions have well-informed data to further improve and transform
VET programmes and delivery. One of the ways to achieve this is linked to the third aspect, which is
fostering networking and cooperation.

The internationalization of the labour market places TVET in the challenging situation of increasing
its quality, relevance and skills diversity. As a third aspect, Networks should be created and utilized
to foster synergy to increase institutional capacities to overcome these challenges. Within such
cooperation framework, coordination and collaboration with industries and employers need to be
broadened. The foregoing issues of youth unemployment and unsustainable development are
manifestations of disconnect in linking priorities of multiple stakeholders and across sectors as well
as global policy discourses. Networking and collaboration has been advocated by UNESCO-UNEVOC
to promote and advance TVET in the post 2015 international development and education discourses
Transnational networking and collaboration holds the promise of cross-border diffusion of
‘promising practices’ in innovation and equality management in TVET.

References:

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