

EI Position on the First Draft of the Revised Recommendation on Technical and Vocational Education and Training

Following the first revision, the original recommendation has been rewritten and significantly shortened. EI's concerns pertain to three broad areas: 1) the role of public authorities has been downplayed to the benefit of the private sector; 2) outcomes, assessments and performance indicators are emphasised as measures of "quality" at the expense of the necessary inputs, such as qualified teachers and supportive learning environments; and, 3) the section on financing needs to be significantly strengthened.

Education International is urging affiliates to raise the following specific suggested changes with their national governments.

I. Scope of this recommendation

Paragraph 1. The first paragraph has to specify that Technical and Vocational Education and Training refers to "all forms of education and learning that are technical and vocational in nature". Moreover, the Recommendation should recognise that TVET is part of the total educational process and is a right as described in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Paragraph 7. It should be stated more clearly that TVET contributes to the achievement of the societal goals of democracy and social, cultural and economic development, while at the same time developing the potential of all individuals.

II. Vision, aims and guiding principles

Paragraph 9. TVET should not adapt simply to the vagaries of short term labour market demands, but rather "abolish barriers between levels and areas of education, between education and the world of work, and between school and society through the appropriate integration of technical/vocational and general education at all levels, and the creation of open and flexible educational structures". Governments should work to ensure that TVET enjoys a comparable status to that of general education.

Paragraph 10. This paragraph on non-discrimination and inclusion is important but lacks recognition of tuition fees as a barrier to accessing TVET. An equitable TVET system is free from tuition fees and includes specific measures designed to support the access and participation of vulnerable and marginalised communities.

III. Policies and stakeholders' involvement

Paragraph 16. Delete "and/or TVET institutions". Emphasis should be on the role of governments to expand TVET and improve its quality within a broader framework of lifelong education.

Paragraph 21. Add new paragraph: "All technical and vocational education programmes, including those offered by private bodies, should be subject to approval by the public authorities and follow national standards"

Paragraph 20. This paragraph has to clearly state that "governments carry the primary responsibility for financing and ensuring the quality of TVET."

Paragraph 23. TVET teachers and staff need to be explicitly mentioned here.

Paragraph 29. This paragraph mixes both private and public actors and areas of involvement in a confusing way. It is the responsibility of public authorities to play the leading role in TVET system planning, governance, and regulation. The reference to skills forecasting should be deleted, or at least

included with a caveat about the uncertainty of any long term labour market forecasting, as it is not an accurate basis for development of TVET systems.

Paragraph 32. This paragraph has to focus on the role of the government as the primary funder and guarantor of TVET. It must be stated that it is the responsibility of governments primarily to ensure adequate and predictable funding for TVET. The reference to individual contributions in the form of tuition fees has to be deleted as it is not a sustainable financing model.

Paragraph 33. While agreeing with the need for sustainable funding, the references to incentives and performance-based financing models should be deleted. Evidence suggests that performance-based financing does not lead to improvements in delivery or effectiveness.

Paragraph 34. The responsibility for generating revenues cannot lie with individual TVET institutions but must lie with public authorities.

Paragraph 35. Add a new paragraph on the need for TVET to be free of tuition fees and for public authorities to reduce the indirect costs of participating in TVET, including providing for materials and tools necessary for completion of a course and program.

IV. Quality and relevance

Paragraph 41. Add new paragraph at very beginning of quality section: In order to ensure quality, public authorities should establish criteria and standards, subject to periodic review and evaluation, applying to all aspects of technical and vocational education and training, including for:

- (a) all forms of recognition of achievement and consequent qualification;
- (b) staff qualifications;
- (c) ratios of teaching and training staff to learners;
- (d) the quality of curricula and teaching materials;
- (e) safety precautions for all learning and training environments;
- (f) physical facilities, buildings, libraries, workshop layouts, quality and type of equipment.

Paragraph 42. Educational institutions at all levels must provide individuals with a range of knowledge and skills that allow them to not only pursue meaningful work, but also participate fully in all aspects of social life. There should be an appropriate balance between general subjects, and the theoretical and practical aspects of the occupational field. Premature and narrow specialization should be avoided; a period of common studies providing basic knowledge and generic skills should be required before any specialization.

Paragraph 46. There has to be an explicit commitment from public authorities to ensure the training, recruitment, retention and support of TVET teaching staff. In addition, there should be a distinction made between TVET teachers in general and those in technical programs, institutional and workplace settings, and teaching and administrative and support staff.

Paragraph 47. This paragraph, with references to the 1966 and 1997 recommendations, has to be retained. Quality TVET depends upon quality teachers who are recognized as professionals. TVET teachers in the higher education sector should enjoy academic freedom. All TVET teachers should enjoy security of employment and professional autonomy.

Paragraph 49. There is no mention of who is responsible for ensuring the right to continuous professional development. There should be an explicit reference that it is the responsibility of public authorities and employers to ensure continuous professional development, including its financing. Access to TVET and lifelong learning should be a basic right.

Paragraphs 55-56. Public authorities are responsible for the quality assurance of TVET.

Paragraph 68. Teacher unions should be explicitly mentioned as a key partner.