



Association for the
Development of
Education in
Africa

LAUNCH CONFERENCE OF THE ADEA INTER-COUNTRY QUALITY NODE (ICQN) ON TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT (TVSD)

THEME: TVSD TRACKS AS FACTORS OF QUALIFICATION, WORKFORCE INTEGRATION, AND ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

CONCEPT NOTE

Reasons for creating the inter-country quality node

The Maputo Biennale clearly demonstrated the need to rise above the traditional, dichotomous vision in which general post-primary education is viewed as separate from technical and vocational education and training (TVET), and the TVET system as separate from alternative paths to technical and vocational skills development (TVSD). The purpose of the quality node is to develop a holistic vision of the education system while giving priority to the task of developing the TVSD concept. The reason is that this concept, more than that of TVET, encompasses all the vocational tracks and resources (formal, non-formal and informal) that are liable to enable the greatest number of youth and adults to acquire the knowledge and know-how they need to join the workforce while participating actively in the growth and development of their country, region, community or sector of activity. However, this transition from chiefly school-based and residential training to a vision that recognizes and values the diversity of the qualification and workforce integration tracks that have been developed, notably in partnership with the business world, will not happen automatically. It requires a paradigm shift both in terms of the bridges to be established between education and training and in terms of the stakeholders who should be involved in formulating policy, structuring the mechanisms to be promoted and linking them to the economic and social development of the country concerned. Such a paradigm shift is not easy to achieve. Consequently, it requires sub-regional or regional sharing of knowledge and experience regarding the best way to transform existing situations, both quantitatively and qualitatively, and to introduce policies apt to give the greatest possible number of young people qualifications that are in line with the economic and social challenges facing each country and the continent as a whole.

The launch of the ICQN on Technical and Vocational Skills Development is intended to give substance and reality to the conclusions of the Maputo Biennale. It is based on the reform processes initiated by the Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training (METFP) of Côte d'Ivoire, in partnership with businesses and other economic agents. It takes account of the synergies established between Côte d'Ivoire, the WAEMU countries and Cape Verde during Côte d'Ivoire's national seminar on TEVT reform, held in Abidjan from 21 to 23 October 2009. The launch of

the ICQN will extend these synergies to other countries in the region that have expressed their determination to build their future by prioritizing skills development for both young people and adults. The ICQN's immediate mission is to rally all its future members to work for real paradigm change in TVSD and to report on the results of its thinking, sharing of experience and interactions at the 2011 Triennale.

Rationale

1. The launch conference follows on from the meeting of the WAEMU countries and Cape Verde, at which, through the "Abidjan Declaration", the participating countries decided to set up a platform for discussion and collaboration with the aim of creating a dynamic forum and a conference of ministers in charge of TVET. Quite logically, the Abidjan meeting led to the Bamako conference of 26-28 April 2010, organized by Mali's Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training, in partnership with the WAEMU Commission, the ILO and the Kingdom of Denmark, with ADEA representatives attending. This conference, which concluded with the adoption of a permanent framework for consultation among countries, outlined the strategic and operational features of the future ICQN, demonstrated its complementarity with the process initiated at Bamako and began to identify the Francophone, Anglophone and Lusophone countries to be invited to become members of the ICQN. The node will create, at the continental level, a new forum for the sharing of experience, thoughts and analysis concerning TVSD among countries that have hitherto not had the opportunity to meet and work together on this subject.
2. The Abidjan launch conference will serve to identify and pool information, at the sub-regional and regional levels, on the training and qualification tracks that are most efficient in economic and social terms. It will thus make an initial diagnosis of which mechanisms and tracks should be encouraged, so as to enable:
 - a. both adolescents and adults to acquire the skills needed to join or remain in the workforce;
 - b. countries to implement skills development policies that can help them make the transition from a subsistence economy to a growth and value-added economy.
3. Invitations to the conference will be extended not only to political leaders but also to economic and business leaders of the countries concerned. The conference will thus provide an opportunity for dialogue among all parties interested in skills development and give substance to the conclusions of the Maputo Biennale concerning partnership-based management and monitoring of education, training and qualification policies and practices.
4. The conference will give all participants the opportunity to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of their national TVSD policies and practices, and thus to decide jointly which studies and analyses should be conducted through the ICQN in order to make their TVSD mechanisms and resources more effective and sustainable.
5. Lastly, through sharing of contextual situations, experiences and results, the conference will facilitate inter-learning between countries and thereby help to develop the capacities of the national, sub-regional and regional leaders and stakeholders involved in skills development policies and practices.

Objectives

General objective

The leading objective of the conference will be to enable a substantial number of countries that are currently reforming their TVET policies to benefit from the pooling of experiences, analyses and evaluations conducted in this field at the sub-regional, regional and continental levels. This sharing of experience is indispensable in order to enable each country significantly to improve the quality and relevance of its reform effort by learning from the results obtained and capitalized by all the countries participating in the ICQN.

Specific objectives

1. Each country will share its experiences of TVET reform and will produce a description and evaluation of them for partner countries in the ICQN.
2. The discussions among the conference participants will thus help to identify avenues to be pursued, both at country level and among the ICQN members, to support and promote the most efficient and sustainable TVSD practices.
3. Identification of topics for further exploration that are common to the countries involved will lead to the production of a document setting out the subjects for inter-country dialogue to be pursued within the ICQN, as well as priority areas for capitalization of their thinking and analyses for presentation at the 2011 Triennale.
4. More generally, the conference will result in the drafting of a work program designating the research studies that should be initiated, both at country level and across countries, to help the ICQN identify the challenges to be tackled and the desired results, and setting out the various steps involved in making the ICQN an effective catalyst for innovative, efficient and sustainable TVSD practices.

Expected outcomes

The three days of deliberations among the country delegations should lead to the following outcomes:

- a clear description of the main lines of each country's TVET reforms and of the strategic and operational priorities targeted by the reform to set up training and qualification tracks leading to qualification and workforce integration;
- joint identification by all participants of the TVSD-related topics and practices that will be examined in greater depth through the ICQN;
- production and validation of a document summarizing the points of convergence between countries where TVSD is concerned and the avenues to be explored in greater depth in order to increase the quality, relevance and sustainability of the TVET reforms in progress;
- finalization of a schedule for implementation of the work program adopted by the workshop (country and cross-country studies), specifying the tasks to be carried out in order to prepare for the discussions on TVSD at the 2011 Triennale.

Participants

Côte d'Ivoire's Minister of Technical Education and Vocational Training, who is responsible for establishing, steering and leading the ICQN on TVSD, will invite the

following countries to the Abidjan conference: the WAEMU and "Abidjan Declaration" countries (Benin, Bissau Guinea, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Togo and Cape Verde), and the countries identified as future members of the ICQN at the Bamako meeting. The latter include, in addition to the countries already mentioned, Algeria, Cameroon, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Libya, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Tunisia.

Each country delegation will be made up of the minister responsible for TVET or TVSD, a high-level official having responsibility for implementation of national policy and a representative of the economic and/or business world who is working in partnership with political leaders. Thus, each delegation will normally have three members, included a representative of the private sector.

Each country delegation will be requested to prepare a presentation in its area of expertise. Presentations should follow the same format across countries, and it would be preferable to have it in written form, so that it can be distributed to all the conference participants. The document attached to the letter of invitation provides an outline of this presentation.

A number of technical and financial partners of the countries concerned (AFD, GTZ, Swiss Cooperation Agency, Lux-Dev, Austrian Cooperation Agency, Danida, DG Dev, ILO, World Bank, etc.) will also be invited to participate, as will the WAEMU Commission and AFRISTAT.

Dates and location

The ICQN launch conference will take place from 19 to 21 July 2010 in Abidjan.

Outside experts and organization

The organizers will call on the services of a small group of consultants and a network of African experts that has been working on TVSD for a number of years. The working languages will be French, and English. Working documents will be available in French, and English.

Budget

The overhead costs of organizing the Abidjan launch conference will be borne by ADEA, in order give an initial impetus to the launch of the ICQN. The financing of other meetings will be decided according to ADEA's available budget resources and the resources that the participating countries agree to invest in the ICQN's operations up to 2011. Costs related to the accommodation and air travel of official delegates will be entirely covered by ADEA, which will also be responsible for costs related to outside experts, interpreting services and translation. The government of Côte d'Ivoire will bear the other costs of organizing the conference (meeting rooms, meals and transport within Abidjan).