

Restructuring TVET: Current Approaches

The delivery patterns of Technical and Vocational Education and Training worldwide are characterized traditionally by a great variety of approaches, ranging from school-based provision to non-formal training arrangements, or any combination. In response to the global economy, a market-oriented approach towards education is favoured by more and more actors, also in TVET. Skills are required to respond flexibly to rapidly changing demands in a combination of traditional and new fields of technical and vocational work, dominated by the knowledge paradigm of the Information Age. Knowledge-intensive work invades traditional work environments and causes a demand for life skills adaptable to new evolving contexts.

A combination between education and training, knowledge and skills is representative for the concept of TVET itself. Skills development can best meet the demands, if the fields of education and labour are organised and analysed in a coordinated and market-oriented way.

The restructuring of TVET systems worldwide shows the following trends:

1. Generally a policy shift from input-based to output-based activities is favoured.
2. Exclusively government-controlled TVET systems are opening up to a linkage with private TVET institutions and skills development providers (including company-based training), sometimes co-financed from national budgets.
3. Entrepreneurship in TVET and skills development is encouraged through micro financing.
4. Greater autonomy is being granted to TVET institutions.
5. The involvement of all partners in the field in political decision-making is favoured.
6. New financing as well as certification mechanisms are envisaged at national, regional and international levels to assure quality.
7. The curricula for the training of trainers and apprenticeship schemes are being revised.
8. Dual forms of training are promoted.

Since the 1990s, policies of Agencies for International Cooperation move more and more towards Programme Based Approaches (PBAs). The purpose is to avoid fragmentation of development assistance, to achieve enhanced coordination of financial means and better cooperation. Also the ownership of development programmes of recipient countries and the support of partners' institutional development are strongly emphasized, which could not be achieved to a satisfactory degree by the project-based approach:

"[A] multiplicity of donor organizations pursued "their own" interventions, paying insufficient attention to intra- and intersectoral issues and to recipient country needs and preferences." This does not mean that there is no support for projects anymore, but rather the embedding of the project approach has changed: "It is the notion of who is leading and who 'owns' the development agenda [...]".^[2]

The most important approach of programme-based assistance is the Sector-Wide Approach (SWAP). It is characterized by various forms and definitions according to the multiple agencies involved in international cooperation, which also name these approaches in slightly different ways. Individual interpretations by the various donors are mentioned in the respective sections of this guide.

A Sector-Wide Approach (SWAP) is

"[...] a process in which funding for the sector - whether internal or from donors - supports a single policy and expenditure programme, under government leadership, and adopting common approaches across the sector. It is generally accompanied by efforts to strengthen government procedures for disbursement and accountability. A SWAP should ideally involve broad

stakeholder consultation in the design of a coherent sector programme at micro, meso and macro levels, and strong co-ordination among donors and between donors and government."

Most Agencies for International Cooperation favour programme-based approaches. They are in different stages of adaptation of their respective policies to this modality though.

Agencies for International Cooperation vary in the interpretation of the concept of "ownership". The definitions of "ownership" ranges from (central) government ownership, over the inclusion of local government and/or key elements of civil society to "everyone involved in a given sector". Together with the idea of SWAP-like approaches goes the concept of Basket Funding (BF), which means joint funding by several donors. It may or it may not be provided in the form of budget support to the recipient government. The budget support (or cash transfer) in turn can be provided either as support to the budget as a whole or as part of a programme or sector.

Prerequisites for the receipt of development assistance under the new aid paradigm are national policy frameworks of good governance and decentralization that have been implemented or are in the process of being implemented.

The outlined trends in international cooperation - Programme-Based Approaches and Basket Funding -, adopted to work towards the fulfilment of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, have the following implications for the support of TVET and Skills Development:

1. There is little investment in TVET and skills development projects as such. This means that TVET and skills development initiatives have to be set in the framework of the agencies' defined priorities, oriented towards the [Millennium Development Goals](#) (other than for example primary education, TVET and Skills Development are not mentioned explicitly).
2. Poverty Reduction Strategies, based on the first principle of the [Millennium Development Goals](#) - Poverty Alleviation -, are the dominant paradigm to fulfil this first development goal. The aim of poverty alleviation is thought to be reachable by giving emphases on crosscutting priorities, the Millennium Development goals and targets. Likewise TVET and skills development initiatives need to be shown in their connection to poverty alleviation and its crosscutting priorities.
3. There is still funding available for projects after the orientation towards Programme Based Approaches. There is the will to embed projects in the local government's programmes considered worthy to be supported due to their relevance in the context of the [Millennium Development Goals](#).

Source: UNESCO