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AFRICAN UNION DEVELOPMENT AGENCY



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“INNOVATIONS IN TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING” CONTINENTAL CONFERENCE AND TVET STUDY TOUR TO TUNISIA

CONCEPT NOTE

CONTEXT

Unemployment has become a critical problem in most African countries and has been severely aggravated by the spread of the coronavirus and the sanitary crisis barriers. According to the African Development Bank, regional economies collapsed and noted a 1.1% decline in 2020, exacerbating the challenges African countries were already facing.

In this world often marked by inequalities, TVET, which must become a professional insurance alternative, is one of the definite answers regarding youth employment to foster their inclusion and their contribution to economic growth.

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; these include:

- Fragmented structuring of TVET
- Unregulated traditional apprenticeship
- Growing importance of private TVET centers
- TVET systems are still supply-driven
- Mismatch between supply and demand for skills
- Low prestige and attractiveness of TVET
- Gender-based inequality of opportunity
- Geographic and economic disparities
- Low quality and ineffective training
- Insufficient funding
- Weak policy implementation structures
- Policy and legislation.

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. We therefore expect for the Conference to showcase these examples in terms of depth, demonstrable systemic change coupled with sustainability of the initiatives.



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In addition to the national initiatives being implemented, some organizations including the African Union and GIZ are setting up programs, such as SIFA, and taking initiatives to help overcome the existing challenges that call for innovation. It is in this context that the Innovation Education Expo is organized every year since 2018, with the aim of highlighting, promoting and recreating the innovations implemented in the context of education. The 2022 edition of the IEA Pitch will be held in Tunisia as part of the conference on innovation in the TVET sector, which will create a synergy and complementarity effect, capitalize on past and present learnings from the IEA, and guide the discussion towards possible scaling up innovations in the African TVET.

The conference will also include the pre launch of the EU SIFA Innovation Fund Window. The Innovation Fund Window is the third funding window of the EU-BMZ jointly funded, SIFA programme implemented by AUDA-NEPAD. FW3 Innovation awards grants that give impetus to innovation in youth and skills development, as a basis for transition to higher productivity and job promotion. It aims to attract high-quality and multi-dimensional projects, with particular emphasis on innovativeness. Grant recipients are envisaged to be professional TVET organisations, backed by the involvement of the private sector and/or employers; and organisations supporting entrepreneurship, enterprises, and entrepreneurial skills such as business incubators. In total, FW3 Innovation will invest EUR 9.5 million through approximately 40 (maximum) grant awards, with focus on three core themes: Digital skills to enhance employability; support to women, youth, and vulnerable groups to enhance employability and enterprise creation; and training innovation in informal sectors. FW3 Innovation will officially launch in December 2022.

Bringing together influential actors of the TVET system in Tunisia during a continental Conference on "Innovations in Technical and Vocational Training" is an opportunity to establish an exchange platform that will address:

- Promoting the alignment of the different country strategies with the TVET strategy of the African Union and the CESA 16-24 in order to create synergy and develop a common vision of the future of the TVET sector in Africa
- Increasing the skills of decision-makers and other stakeholders in the TVET system through the acquisition of knowledge about innovative mechanisms to optimize the functioning of the sector
- Sharing the good practices of innovative solutions that were successfully implemented and that may be replicated across the Continent.

This conference will be organized in Tunisia in November 2022 for **3 days: the 9th, 10th, and 11th of November 2022.**

PROPOSED THEMES

The conference will be an opportunity to present *innovative models* in vocational education and training capable of giving a new dynamic and reducing the difficulties faced by the TVET system.

Several topics could arouse the interest of the audience. Among which we propose:

1. Pedagogical innovation:

This theme aims to initiate an exchange but also to take advantage of innovative experiences in terms of pedagogy in the vocational education and training sector, innovations aimed at

improving the attractiveness of the sector but also the quality of training and education and facilitate learners' access to the labor market. New learning methodologies (e.g. blended learning, etc.) will be explored and discussed as part of the panel discussions.

2. Digitalization at the service of TVET:

The digitalization of the sector is a central theme when it comes to innovation. The theme will be approached from two points of view, on the one hand the digitalization of education which facilitates access to training and contributes to the improvement of its quality, as well as the digitalization of the sector thanks to the implementation digital tools facilitating sector planning.

3. New concepts of training centers:

Innovative concepts of training centers will be discussed in order to estimate their potential in improving access to the job market for learners as well as the quality of education, in particular through the involvement of the private sector.

CONFERENCE STRUCTURE AND APPROACH

Policy makers, private sector representatives, experts and other stakeholders involved in African TVET systems will meet to discuss "the innovation in vocational education and training".

The conference will be held in a **hybrid** format combining the physical presence of speakers and a targeted audience and broadcast simultaneously to an audience connected online. Much more than just a virtual broadcast; it will be a total alliance offering a degree of interaction, sharing of experience and content, identical to all participants.

SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR INTERVENTIONS

In order to effectively cover all the themes and give the Conference a continental span, the format of the Conference will be inspired by the "Education Innovations Expo" event organized by the African Union.

The conference will be structured in **6 moments**:

1. **Ministerial round table** in the first part to launch the event. During this round table, political figures and representatives of international organizations will intervene to shed light on the various strategies put in place and the resources allocated.

This round table will be led by a specialist capable of coordinating high-level interventions.

2. **Experts panel** to exchange studies, ideas, related to the 3 themes selected. This panel will be made up of specialists from the public and private sector with innovative experience.

This panel will be moderated by a technical moderator.

3. **Best practices sharing** to exchange, experiences and good practices implemented around one of the selected themes.

4. **EU SIFA Innovation Fund Window.** The Innovation Fund Window is the third funding window of the EU-BMZ jointly funded, SIFA programme implemented by AUDA-NEPAD and the pre launch will form part of the programme.

5. **IEA Pitch** where Five Innovators selected from each region of the AU will Pitch their innovations to a jury of experts from AUC and Partner Organizations.

6. **Study Tour** during which African delegations will visit two vocational training centers in Tunisia, learn about the innovations they put in place and how they are implemented continentally.

ATTENDEES

In order to be able to address a 360° panorama, the list of speakers at this international conference will include political decision-makers, key players from the public and private sectors, academics, representatives of technical and financial partners active in the field of technical and vocational education and training.

Added to this list of speakers, guests involved in the field will also be invited in order to allow interactive exchange and guarantee the appropriation of innovations by stakeholders (eg directors of agencies responsible for TVET and employment, directors of TVET centers, federations of different industrial sectors, companies active in training, international organizations working in the field, etc.)

In order to give a regional and international dimension to the event, other countries will participate in this Conference (face-to-face or remotely) both as speakers and as guests. The countries will be determined in consultation with the international SIFA program, AUC and AUDA-NEPAD according to their experiences in innovation in the field of technical training.

CONFERENCE OUTPUTS

At the end of the event, a final report of the conference will be written and shared with the SIFA team. This report will contain:

- The main takeaways emerging from the different interventions
- A list of recommendations for developing vocational training through innovation.

STUDY TOUR

1. Rationale

A study tour offers a deeper insight into the vocational education system in Africa. The participants/experts will gain insight, information, and a deeper understanding of the following topics:

- Good practice examples of the Vocational Education System on the continent including Cooperation between companies and vocational schools; TVET systems and policies; legal frameworks; and financing mechanisms
- Structures and Procedures of the Vocational Education System (development of occupations, training plans, apprenticeship contracts, assessment procedures etc.) in Africa.

Stakeholders, including private sector representatives, TVET practitioners and government representatives will visit two TVET institutions in Tunisia where their experiences and models will be shared. The visits will be complemented with a final workshop, where country representatives can share experiences and best practice, discuss the transferability prospects of examples shared and culminate in a report on future actions and interventions that can be planned.

2. Objectives



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Knowledge exchange between Africa member states about TVET systems, processes, challenges and best practices. Benchmarking of TVET in Africa with a view of possible replication.

3. Participants:

Participants from the 8 member states supported by SIFA (FC and TC) and interested partner programme representatives. This will include Private Sector representatives; TVET practitioners, intermediary organisations and government representatives.

4. Outputs

At the end of the study tour a report will be written and shared with the SIFA team and published on ASPYEE. The report will contain:

- The inputs and sharing's from the TVET centers visited
- The member state sharing's and illustrations of good practices per country
- A list of common obstacles, possible solutions and enablers identified by the participants
- A list of recommendations for further action and possible implementation during SIFA II.

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