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Institutional guide for gender transformation in TVET in South Sudan

Education
2030

Institutional guide for gender transformation in TVET in South Sudan

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Acronyms and abbreviations

CPD	Continuing professional development
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
GBV	Gender-based violence
Gender TF	Gender task force
GTP	Gender transformation plan
ILO	International Labour Organization
MSMEs	Micro, small and medium enterprises
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
PWDs	People with disabilities
SRH	Sexual and reproductive health
STEP	Skills and Technical Education Programme (UNESCO)
TC	Technical college
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VTC	Vocational training centre
WBL	Work-based learning

Foreword

As South Sudan pursues its goals of sustainable development, peace and economic resilience, strengthening the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector becomes crucial. In a country facing challenges such as high unemployment rates, environmental vulnerability and societal inequalities, TVET promises to address these issues by equipping individuals with practical skills and fostering inclusive economic growth.

This gender-transformative TVET guideline reflects UNESCO's commitment to an education system that not only equips learners with essential skills for the workforce but also empowers marginalized communities – particularly women and girls – through equitable and inclusive learning pathways. The guideline integrates gender-responsive strategies, enabling TVET centres in South Sudan to advance gender equality and climate resilience. By fostering education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), green entrepreneurship and gender-sensitive training, TVET institutions can offer valuable avenues for women and youth to contribute to both environmental sustainability and economic prosperity.

Developed as part of the UNESCO project on Strengthening TVET in South Sudan, this publication aims to support TVET educators, institutions and policymakers in South Sudan in addressing gender disparities, enhancing climate resilience and promoting transformative learning opportunities.

We invite all stakeholders to embrace these guidelines and work together toward a more resilient, empowered and inclusive future.

Acknowledgements

Introduction

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) serves as a vital link between education and employment, offering practical skills and knowledge essential for the jobs market and for sustainable living. It plays a crucial role in developing climate-resilient livelihoods and reducing gender disparities in training and employment opportunities.

TVET is not just about skills development; it is a powerful tool for promoting gender equality, empowering women and girls and challenging discriminatory social norms. This aligns with key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 and SDG 5, focused on quality education and gender equality, respectively.

However, many TVET systems face challenges in providing gender-inclusive education. In South Sudan, fewer than 33 per cent of TVET students are female (Ruforum, 2021) with representation even lower in STEM-related TVET courses. These comparatively low levels of access to TVET are attributable to the various impediments that young girls and women face, hindering their access to and participation in education and training. These barriers include poverty, early marriage and pregnancy, poor school infrastructure, conflict and instability, limited knowledge and/or confidence and unfavourable sociocultural norms that significantly influence their training preferences.

To address this, a gender-transformative TVET system aims to remove barriers to access, participation and completion for all genders. Gender-transformative TVET goes beyond policies, pedagogies and community engagement. It seeks to transform stereotypes, attitudes, norms and practices by challenging power relations, rethinking gender norms and binaries and raising deep understanding about the root causes of inequality and systems of oppression (UNICEF, 2021)

This guide serves as a starting point for institutional gender transformation and proposes strategies and approaches to initiate and strengthen gender transformation in TVET institutions.

Target Group

This institutional guide for gender transformation in TVET is designed to help TVET managers, instructors and trainers in implementing gender transformation in their day-to-day activities within their institutions. The guide is designed as a practical tool for formal, informal and non-formal TVET institutions.

Specifically, the guide is intended to be useful to TVET leaders/managers, administrators, teaching personnel, career guidance and liaison officers, teaching assistants and learners. Additionally, parents, the broader school community, local and national governments, NGOs, the private sector, including micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and trade unions can also benefit from this information, as they are instrumental to the successful implementation of gender transformation.

FIGURE 1 Initiating and strengthening gender transformation in TVET Institutions
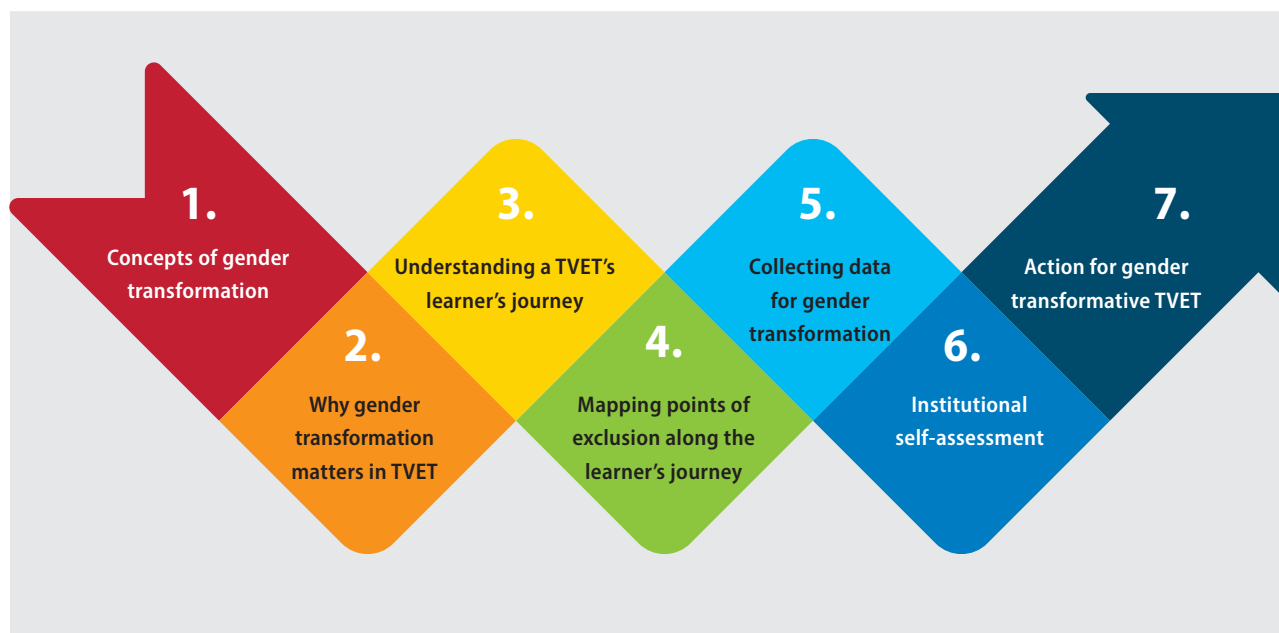
How to use this guide

This guide should be used alongside other developed policies on TVET in the education sector. It is divided into two parts:

SECTION 1:

Understanding basic concepts in gender transformation in TVET, which helps the user to gain a foundational understanding of key concepts in gender transformation. This section also summarizes the gender landscape in TVET in South Sudan.

SECTION 2:

Strategies for gender transformation in TVET, which discusses areas to consider when implementing gender transformation in TVET institutions, for example, adjusting the curriculum, teaching methods and materials to be gender responsive or modifying the TVET environment to be more inclusive. This section also outlines policy issues that can drive gender transformation and shape learner support services in order to foster gender participation. It also describes the process of gender transformation in TVET, detailing activities to help achieve it.

Users of this guide should read sections 1 and 2 and use the practice notes and case studies included.

Addressing the root causes of gender inequality requires a multi-faceted, multi-level, institution-wide, whole-system approach.

To gain the most out of this guide, TVET institutions should establish a gender task force (Gender TF) made up of all relevant stakeholders, including leadership team, teachers, administrators, learner support staff, industry representatives, government, NGOs and learners. This team ensures that gender-related concerns receive sustained attention and resources within the TVET institution, improving outcomes, reputation and satisfaction of both staff and learners.

SECTION 1

1. UNDERSTANDING BASIC CONCEPTS IN GENDER TRANSFORMATION IN TVET

Understanding fundamental concepts related to gender transformation in TVET is the starting point for building a shared commitment to addressing the root causes of gender barriers in TVET. These concepts build knowledge on the definition of terms, the benefits of implementing gender transformation, and the corresponding implications. They also help build an understanding of the TVET learner's journey, identify points of exclusion, and develop techniques for collecting important data that help determine the stage of gender equality within an institution and the subsequent actions needed to improve the current state.

1.1 Definition of key terms in gender transformation

The definitions below are assembled from various sources (UNICEF, 2021) (UNGEI, 2019).
More terms are accessible via
https://unevoc.unesco.org/home/TVETipedia+Glossary

TABLE 1 Gender related concepts	
Concept	**Examples**
Gender versus sex	**Gender:** Socially constructed roles and behaviours associated with being male or female (e.g. expectations for women to manage household chores). **Sex:** Biological differences between males and females (e.g. reproductive organs). Gender roles define the responsibilities of all individuals, as well as expectations about aspects of their identity. Gender roles vary between societies and within societies and can change over time. Individuals may experience stress because of the expectation to conform to gender roles in different situations.
Norms and stereotypes	**Norms:** Cultural expectations that dictate appropriate behaviours for men and women (e.g. women should pursue careers in nursing or teaching). Stereotypes: Oversimplified beliefs about gender roles (e.g. STEM fields are for men only).
Gender bias versus discrimination	**Bias:** A preference or prejudice for one gender over another that can lead to unfair treatment (e.g. favouring male students in classroom participation or leadership roles or assuming women are less capable in technical subjects). **Discrimination:** Unjust or prejudicial treatment based on an individual's gender, often resulting in unequal opportunities (e.g. employers refusing to hire women for certain jobs because of their gender, or women being paid less than men for the same work or being overlooked for promotions due to their gender).

Concept	Examples
Equality versus equity	**Equality:** Providing the same resources and opportunities to all individuals, regardless of gender (e.g. equal access to all courses in TVET). **Equity:** Recognizing different needs and providing resources accordingly to achieve fair outcomes (e.g. targeted support for female students in STEM).
Parity versus disparity	**Gender parity:** Achieving numerical balance in participation rates (e.g. aiming for equal numbers of male and female students in technical courses) and in other areas, such as by: • ensuring that women are represented equally in leadership positions within TVET institutions; • achieving equal enrolment of male and female students in TVET programmes; • achieving equal representation of women in technical roles within organizations. **Gender disparities:** Differences in women's and men's access to resources, status and well-being, which usually favour men and are often institutionalized through law, justice and social norms. For example: • For instance, only 33 percent of enrolled participants in TVET in South Sudan were female, highlighting a significant gender gap in vocational training opportunities.
Affirmative action versus gender mainstreaming	**Affirmative action:** A set of procedures to increase the representation of a disadvantaged group through active measures aimed at compensating historical and social disadvantages that prevent members of that particular group from operating on a level playing field, for example: • Implementing quotas for female enrolment in TVET programmes. • Actively recruiting female instructors in STEM fields to balance gender representation. **Gender mainstreaming:** A strategy to achieve equality between women and men. It involves the integration of gender perspectives into preparation and planning, and aims for systemic change across all policies and practices. For example: • Revising curricula in TVET to include gender-sensitive content that challenges stereotypes. • Ensuring that all educational policies consider the distinctive needs of both male and female students.
Gender-based violence	**Gender-based violence** (GBV) is violence directed against a person on the basis of sex and/or gender. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty, whether they occur in public or private life. Gender-based violence involves the abuse of power.

Gender identity is an individual's innate internal experience of gender, which may or may not correspond to their physiology, designated sex at birth or the social expectations of their sex.

Sexual orientation refers to a person's capacity for profound emotional and sexual attraction to, and intimate and sexual relations with, individuals of a different gender, the same gender or more than one gender.

Gender expression is how individuals present their gender externally and how society, culture, community and family perceive, interact and attempt to shape an individual's gender.

TABLE 2 Stages of gender transformation in TVET			
Concept	**Definition**	**Key Characteristics**	**Examples**
Gender transformation	A comprehensive approach aimed at changing societal norms and structures to achieve gender equality.	• Focuses on systemic change. • Challenges cultural norms and stereotypes. • Empowers marginalized genders.	• Implementing policies that promote equal representation in TVET. • Community engagement to change perceptions about women's roles.
Gender responsiveness	The ability to recognize and address the different needs and experiences of individuals based on their gender.	• Adapts programmes and policies to meet specific gender needs. • Ensures inclusivity in educational settings.	• Creating curricula that challenge gender stereotypes. • Providing targeted support for female students in STEM fields.
Gender sensitivity	Awareness of the differences between genders and the impact these differences have on individuals' experiences.	• Recognizes gender disparities. • Promotes inclusive language and practices. • Encourages equitable treatment.	• Training educators to use inclusive language in classrooms. • Developing materials that represent both genders equally.
Gender blindness	The failure to recognize and address gender differences, leading to policies or practices that do not consider specific gender needs.	• Ignores disparities between genders. • Results in one-size-fits-all approaches that overlook unique challenges faced by different genders.	• Designing educational programmes without considering the unique challenges faced by female students, such as safety concerns or family responsibilities. • Implementing policies that apply equally without recognizing differing impacts on genders.

Dimensions of gender

Integrating Gender Responsive Pedagogy into Higher Education: Our approach, a report from the International Network for Advancing Science and Policy (INASP 2021), outlines a comprehensive approach to integrating gender-responsive pedagogy into higher education institutions. It acknowledges the complexities and intersectionality of gender inequalities in education and advises educators to take into account the following dimensions- representation, equity, stereotypes, bias, interaction, and empowerment- in order to create a more inclusive and supportive educational experience for all students.

- **Gender as representation:** Promotional materials depicting male students or teachers can create the impression that certain fields are better-suited to men, which may discourage women from participating.

- **Gender as equality/equity:** This dimension explores the difference between the goal of gender equality and the prevailing situation in education, and highlights the need for fair approaches that address the specific challenges faced by different genders.

- **Gender as stereotypes:** This dimension focuses on biases – conscious and unconscious – that affect how we view male and female learners. For example, stereotypes such as 'boys are better at maths'.

- **Gender as internalized bias:** Internalized bias refers to how societal expectations about gender can impact individual performance and grades. For instance, girls might doubt their abilities in technical subjects because of societal messages about what girls can or cannot do.

- **Gender as interaction and space:** This dimension examines classroom dynamics, such as where students sit and who gets to speak more frequently. Often, boys dominate discussions, creating an imbalance in participation.

- **Gender as power/empowerment:** This dimension stresses the need for power and knowledge to be shared among all genders. Empowering women and marginalized groups means giving them opportunities to take on leadership roles in education, which helps challenge existing power structures and promotes a more equitable learning environment.

1.2
Why gender transformation matters in TVET

Gender equality and freedom from discrimination are human rights; human beings have the right to live free from discrimination and not be denied opportunities or rights on the basis of their race, sex, gender, socio-economic status, religion, ability or other social identity.

UNESCO defines TVET 'as comprising education, training and skills development relating to a wide range of occupational fields, production, services and livelihoods' (UNESCO 2016). This wide range of fields and occupations provides livelihoods, employment and decent jobs for many individuals, contributing to the social, political and economic development of a country. SDG 5 explicitly links gender equality to improved economic development and broader social and åpolitical changes.

Statistics reveal significant challenges faced by girls and women, especially in developing countries. One in three girls is married by the age of 18, and one in nine by age 15, with child marriage particularly prevalent in sub-Saharan Africa. Additionally, around 16 per cent of the world's adult population is illiterate, with nearly two-thirds of these individuals women, highlighting a stark gender disparity in education access. Furthermore, 70 per cent of the 130 million children out of school are girls, emphasizing the barriers they face in obtaining an education (Child marriage data portal 2024)

Women are vital to Africa's economy, particularly in agriculture, where they account for over 70 per cent of the labour force. By acquiring skills through TVET institutions, women can enhance their productivity and economic contributions. Moreover, among the world's poorest 1 billion people, three-fifths are women and girls, illustrating the intersection of gender and poverty in global development challenges. Therefore, including disadvantaged individuals and social groups in skills development programmes is essential in maximizing human capacity and improving economic competitiveness.

A report from the Philippines revealed that job segregation on gender contributed to worsening poverty conditions, suggesting that economies can benefit from a more diverse and skilled workforce that includes both men and women from various backgrounds (International Journal of Religion, 2024).

Promoting gender transformation ensures more women contribute to sectors traditionally dominated by men, such as technical fields, thus challenging and changing deep-rooted gender norms and stereotypes (GIZ 2019). In addition, gender transformation empowers women by providing them with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in various industries, ensuring that women's voices are heard and their challenges addressed. It also improves social cohesion and well-being by strengthening the participation of individuals in civil society, thereby improving their mental and physical health and social engagement.

In TVET institutions, gender transformation is linked to increased enrolment and retention, increased self-confidence and communication skills among girls, and greater participation of girls in STEM subjects. It also leads to the development of critical thinking about gender roles and norms, enhanced decision-making power for girls and women, more equitable relationships between genders, improved access to diverse career paths and increased economic independence for women, resulting in a greater contribution to overall economic development.

ACTIVITY 1   Creating the WHY for gender transformation

Creating a compelling case for gender transformation in TVET is essential for driving meaningful change and fostering an inclusive educational environment.

Importance of establishing the 'WHY'

1. **Foundation for strategies:** A clear rationale for gender transformation helps develop targeted strategies that align with broader societal goals, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
2. **Engaging Sstakeholders:** A compelling case encourages active participation from educators, policymakers, and students, fostering collaboration and overcoming resistance to change.
3. **Countering resistance:** By providing evidence-based arguments, a strong rationale can shift perceptions of gender initiatives from mere compliance to essential components of institutional success.

Leadership responsibility

Leaders play a critical role in driving gender transformation within TVET institutions:

- **Vision setting:** Articulate a clear vision for gender equality that resonates throughout the institution.
- **Resource allocation:** Prioritize resources to support gender initiatives and equitable access to opportunities.
- **Cultural change:** Model inclusive behaviors and promote policies that address discrimination.
- **Accountability:** Establish mechanisms to track progress towards gender equality goals.

Key questions for gender transformation

The Gender Task Force (Gender TF) should address the following questions to create a comprehensive rationale:

1. What is the current gender status along the TVET learner's journey?
2. When and where does gender exclusion occur?
3. What are the root causes of gender inequality?
4. How will gender transformation benefit various groups?
5. What is our vision for gender equality, and what are our goals?
6. How can we engage men, boys, and other stakeholders in this process?

1.3
Understanding a TVET learner's journey and mapping points of exclusion

Inclusion is a whole-system approach that requires: a commitment to the removal of barriers; a comprehensive and sustained effort to change policy at institutional and national levels; the implementation of inclusive practices; and the fostering of an inclusive culture within classrooms and throughout the entire educational system. (UN, Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [CRPD], 2016) UNESCO-UNEVOC's guide on inclusive TVET (UNESCO-UNEVOC 2024) advises TVET practitioners to adopt a holistic approach to building inclusive skills development ecosystems, by applying several practical strategies aimed at building collaboration among various stakeholders and promoting equitable access to skills training. The guide proposes paying particular attention to the critical interactions that occur between the learner, the TVET provider (managers and teachers, support staff, peer learners, etc.) and partners (employers and the broader TVET systems) in the learner's journey. Exclusion of some groups of learners in TVET can occur at multiple points in the learner's journey. It is therefore crucial to pinpoint when and where it might occur.

One way of doing this is to map exclusion in the learner journey by identifying:

a. Which learners are at risk of exclusion?
b. At what points in the learner journey might they be excluded?
c. What causes them to be excluded at that point in the learner journey?
d. What can be done to prevent them from being excluded?

Identifying when and where gender exclusion occurs

UNESCO-UNEVOC provides a framework analysing, at the personal, institutional and societal levels, the factors that influence women's participation in STEM-related TVET programmes (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2020). The personal level covers, for example, motives, skills and stereotypes of individual learners, as well as financial/educational circumstances in the family. The institutional level refers to the conditions within TVET institutions (teachers, material, equipment, etc.) and the working environment in labour market organizations. At the societal level, influencing factors are social norms and public policies within a society.

FIGURE 2   Key stages of a learner journey in inclusive TVET institutions

Equitable access and participation → Diverse delivery and assessment → Outcomes

Access, TVET programme selection and enrolment | Recognition of prior learning | Training delivery | Learner support | Assessment and certification | Transition to work or further education

TVET learner journey
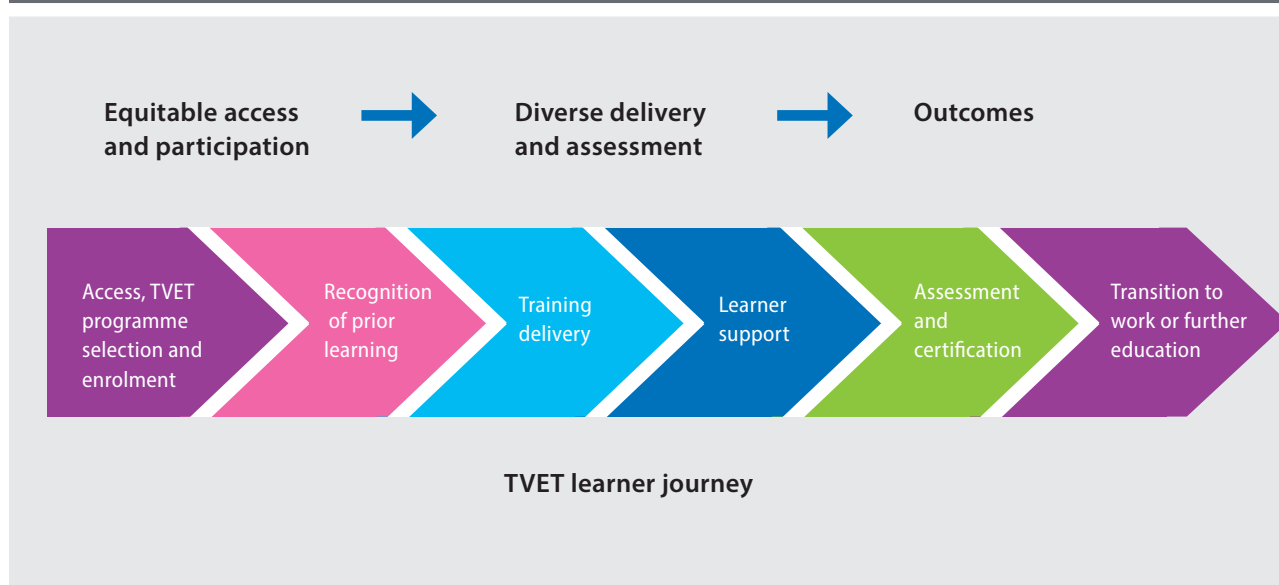
Source: UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2024

TABLE 3   Analytical framework of factors influencing female participation, achievement and progression in STEM-related TVET

Personal level	
Individual learner	**Family and peer**
• Biological language and spatial skills • Self-efficacy • Self-perception, stereotypes, and STEM identities • Interest, engagement, motivation, and enjoyment	• Peer relationships • Parental beliefs and expectations • Household financial assets • Family characteristics • A sense of 'belonging'

Institutional level	
TVET institute	**Labour market organization**
• STEM equipment, materials, and resources • Student-student interactions • Teachers' perceptions • Female teachers • Teaching quality and subject expertise • Teaching strategies • Physical & learning infrastructure • Assessments, procedures, and tools • Career awareness and information	• Workplace culture • Employees' profile (number of female colleagues in technical jobs) • Physical environment • Open and hidden employer bias • Perception of safety in the workplace

Societal level	
Social Norms	**Public Policy**
• Mass and social media • Societal and cultural norms • Gender equality • Inclusive social norms	• Equal pay legislation • Gender equality policies • Legislation and policies • Sex-disaggregated data for policymaking

Source : UNESCO-UNEVOC 2020

While the framework set out in Table 3 addresses girls' barriers to TVET, a UNESCO 2018 policy paper on achieving gender equality in education (UNESCO 2018) highlights several barriers that boys and men face in accessing education. The reasons for boys' educational disadvantages include poverty, easy access to unskilled jobs, gender norms that don't prioritize male education, child labour, seasonal migration, gang violence and lack of motivation due to perceived limited job opportunities after secondary school.

In addressing gender equality in TVET, it is important to focus on both girls' and boys' access to quality TVET. The UNESCO policy paper further advises that addressing boys' educational challenges can have positive

ripple effects, such as reducing violence, improving gender relations and enhancing child development outcomes when these boys become fathers. Further, boys' disengagement from education can have broad repercussions for gender equality throughout society.

To identify where and when gender exclusion occurs, TVET institutions can:

a. map the learner's journey against factors influencing girls' and boys' participation in TVET;
b. identify the root causes of these barriers and inequalities and craft strategies to remove them and boost progress towards social shifts.

FIGURE 3 Exclusion mapping framework for identifying when and where exclusion occurs along a learner's journey
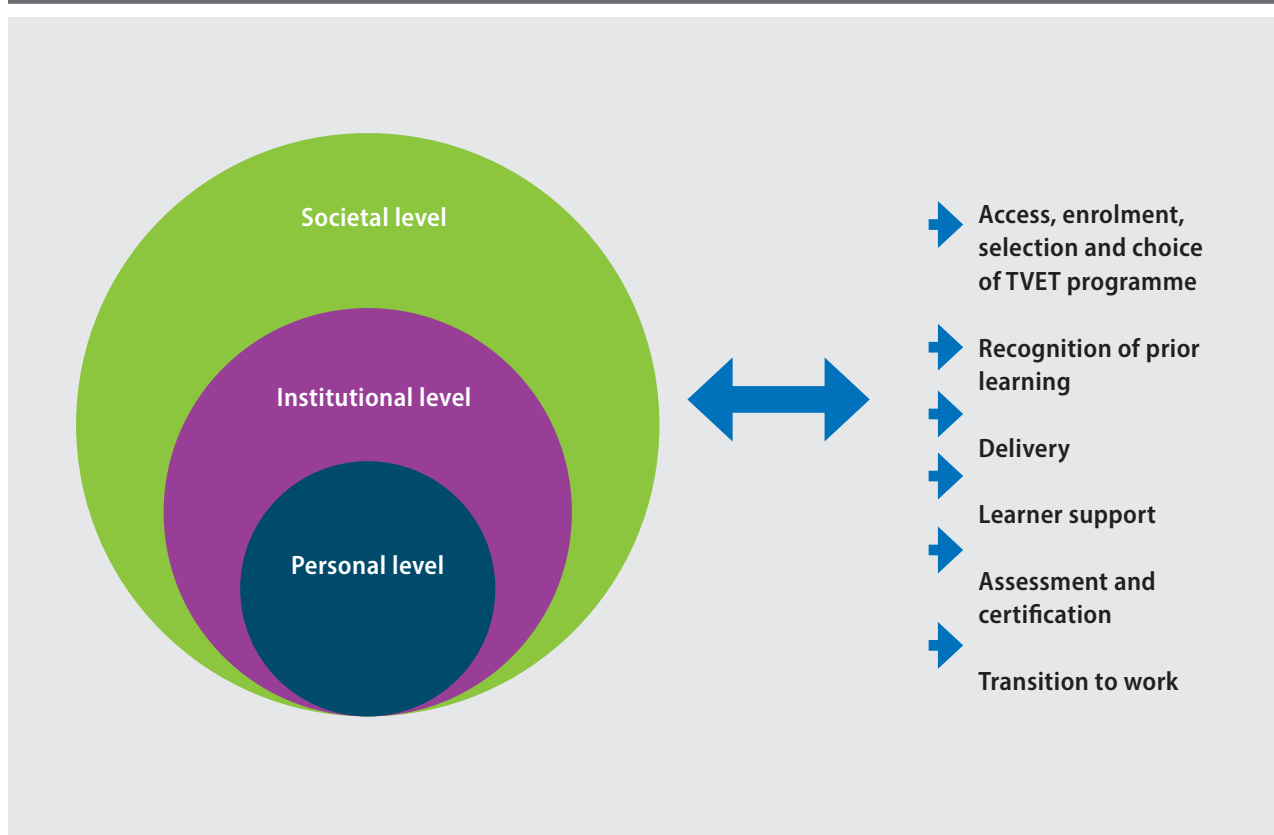
TABLE 4   Example of an exclusion map identifying when and where exclusion occurs along a learner's journey, featuring girls' barrier to STEM-related TVET

Access, enrolment, and selection	Recognition of prior learning	Training delivery	Learner support	Assessment and certification	Work transition or higher learning	Throughout the journey
Family expectations and gender roles influencing girls' choices ↓ Peer pressure discouraging girls from entering male-dominated fields ↓ Lack of career awareness and information in educational institutes ↓ Financial barriers, especially in low- and middle-income contexts ↓ Stereotypes about STEM professions being "male-oriented" ↓ Lack of reasonable accommodation for females in entry eligibility (e.g., lower admission grades) ↓ Limited access to information about scholarships, especially for rural women ↓ Distance to TVET institutions and lack of boarding facilities ↓ Family and societal expectations discouraging women from pursuing TVET	Potential for bias in assessment of prior skills ↓ Absence of clear guidelines for RPL, disadvantaging women without formal education	Low number of female teachers in STEM-related TVET ↓ Gender stereotyping in course offerings (some viewed as masculine, others as feminine) ↓ Sexist comments from teachers and peers, especially in early years ↓ Perception of STEM-related TVET careers as harsh and unfeminine ↓ Lack of gender-sensitive curricula and learning materials ↓ Limited access to STEM equipment, materials, and resources	Lack of female role models in STEM-related TVET ↓ Insufficient career guidance and advice, and information in educational institutes ↓ Limited awareness of STEM opportunities among students and parents ↓ Peer influence affecting sense of belonging in STEM fields ↓ Lack of gender-sensitive student support services	Absence of alternative assessment methods ↓ Potential bias in assessment ↓ Girls feeling they must work harder than male peers to be recognized	Gender discrimination in job markets, with employers considering gender over merit in some careers ↓ Persistent stereotypes about STEM professions being male-oriented ↓ Perception of safety issues for women in certain STEM workplaces ↓ Employer biases in hiring practices ↓ Limited visibility of women in technical jobs ↓ Lack of career guidance tailored to women's needs and potential	Societal and cultural norms reinforcing gender stereotypes ↓ Media representation of STEM fields as male-dominated ↓ Self-efficacy and self-perception issues among girls in STEM subjects ↓ Lack of supportive policies for gender equality in STEM education and careers ↓ Financial constraints ↓ Unwelcoming or non-accommodating environments for female students ↓ Influence of family and peer expectations on girls' sense of belonging

CASE STUDY ANALYSIS   Gender disparities in TVET in South Sudan

South Sudan's economic growth faces significant challenges, including political instability, subnational violence, and climatic crises, which exacerbate high unemployment, particularly among youth, and hinder job creation for the growing working-age population. To address these challenges, the Government of South Sudan, in collaboration with UNESCO Juba and UNESCO-UNEVOC, is implementing the Strengthening Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in South Sudan project. As part of this initiative, a baseline study was conducted using a qualitative approach to assess the state of green and gender-transformative TVET. The study combined primary data, collected through focus group discussions (FGDs), questionnaires, and an online survey, with secondary data from previous studies and policy reviews. Stakeholder consultations included senior government officials from various ministries (e.g., General Education, Gender, and Agriculture), development partners (e.g., UNESCO, FAO, Save the Children), civil society, universities (e.g., University of Juba), TVET providers, and private sector representatives (e.g., Chamber of Commerce). The findings aim to inform improvements in TVET governance, curricula, instructor training, and private sector engagement to deliver inclusive, quality, and sustainable programmes.

Based on the findings of the 2024 baseline survey conducted for this publication, South Sudan faces significant challenges in achieving gender transformation in TVET. Key issues outlined include the following:

- Despite having a national gender policy, South Sudan lacks a specific policy for gender transformation in TVET, contributing to continued low female participation.

- Admission barriers: Unlike national universities, TVET institutions do not offer accommodations such as lower admission grades for females, limiting their access to these programmes.

- Societal constraints: Some husbands are reluctant to allow their wives to pursue training, fearing exposure to other men and potential relationship issues.

- Lack of recognition of prior learning (RPL): There are no clear guidelines for evaluating and admitting women without formal education into TVET programmes.

- Accessibility issues: Women face greater challenges in accessing TVET institutions due to household responsibilities and travel constraints.

- Information barriers: Limited access to scholarship information, often due to communication medium and language barriers.

- Infrastructure limitations: Rural areas lack TVET facilities, and the absence of boarding facilities makes it difficult for women to complete their courses.

- Gender stereotyping in courses: Training courses are often gendered, with certain fields perceived as masculine or feminine.

- Employment discrimination: The jobs market reflects these gender biases, with employers sometimes prioritizing gender over merit in recruitment.

Institutions that maintain gender roles and perpetuate unequal gender relations

1. **Educational institutions (schools and TVET centres):**

- Cultural norms and stereotypes within educational settings often prioritize traditional gender roles, discouraging girls from pursuing non-traditional fields such as STEM. For example, female students are frequently directed towards courses in subjects such as sewing and cosmetics, while male students are encouraged to pursue trades such as mechanics and electronics.

- The lack of female educators in STEM-related fields limits mentorship opportunities for girls, reinforcing the perception that these fields are more suited to men.

- Gender-biased curricula and teaching materials often depict women in traditional roles, further entrenching stereotypes.

2. **Family structures:**

- Families may prioritize early marriage for daughters over education, reinforcing the belief that women's primary responsibilities lie in domestic roles rather than professional aspirations.

- Parents often discourage daughters from pursuing higher education or vocational training in favour of traditional roles, leading to lower enrolment rates for girls in technical programmes.

3. **Religious institutions:**

- Some religious teachings may reinforce traditional gender roles, promoting the idea that women should focus on family and domestic duties rather than pursuing careers or education.

- Religious leaders can influence community perceptions about women's roles, which can either support or hinder gender equality initiatives.

4. **Cultural norms and community practices:**

- Societal expectations dictate that women should perform domestic chores and prioritize family responsibilities over career aspirations. This cultural pressure can lead to parental discouragement of daughters pursuing non-traditional careers.

- Practices such as child marriage limit girls' educational opportunities and reinforce the notion that women's value is linked to their domestic roles.

5. **Workplace environments:**

- Gender biases in hiring practices often favour male candidates over equally qualified female candidates, perpetuating disparities in employment opportunities.

- Workplaces may lack policies that support gender equality, such as flexible working arrangements or parental leave, making it difficult for women to balance work and family responsibilities.

6. **Legal and political institutions:**

- The absence of comprehensive legislation protecting women from discrimination in education and the workplace reinforces unequal gender relations. For instance, lack of enforcement of laws protecting women and girls from discrimination in education or sexual violence in educational settings.

- Limited representation of women in political decision-making positions hinders the development of policies that promote gender equality.

7. **Media and communication channels:**

- Media representations often reinforce traditional gender stereotypes by portraying women primarily in caregiving or domestic roles while depicting men in leadership or technical positions.

- Lack of visibility of women in non-traditional careers within media narratives can discourage young girls from aspiring to these professions.

ACTIVITY 2   Understand the root causes of gender inequality

Using the analytical framework, analyse different barriers at the personal, institutional and societal levels and fill out **Template 1 – Root cause analysis of gender inequality** (in the appendices section).

SECTION 2

2. STRATEGIES FOR GENDER TRANSFORMATION IN TVET

Once we have understood the concept of gender transformation in TVET, 'WHY' change is needed, and where, when and why some learners are excluded along their TVET journey, it is imperative to develop strategies to address and overcome these barriers.

Strategies for gender transformation aim to move beyond accommodative approaches to achieve deeper, more sustainable shifts in gender relations and equality. The outcomes of these strategies include the reduction of gender-based violence and early marriage, increased participation of women in the labour market, the promotion of gender equality, women's and girls' leadership in decision-making roles, and the empowerment of boys and men as actors in gender equality.

There are a number of promising approaches to gender transformation. UNICEF, for example, proposes the transformation of eight educational areas to make progress towards gender transformation. These include transforming policies and political engagement, pedagogy, the school environment, participation of children and young people, community leadership, stakeholder engagement and evidence generation (UNICEF 2021).

The Global Platform for Gender Equality and Girls' and Women's Empowerment in and through Education, (EGER, 2024) launched after the United Nations' Transforming Education Summit in 2022, on the other hand, monitors a number of key indicators, including:

- Gender-transformative education sector plans, budgets, policies and data systems;

- Gender parity and non-discrimination in all educational levels and subjects;

- Gender-transformative curricula, teaching and learning materials, and pedagogies;

- Gender-transformative and inclusive learning spaces;

- Cross-sectoral collaboration and meaningful integration of young people in decision-making;

- Investments that target the most marginalized learners.

The Gender Responsive Pedagogy in Higher Education Framework created by INASP 2021 outlines a comprehensive approach to integrating gender-responsive pedagogy into higher education institutions. Key areas include: teaching and learning methodologies and activities; teaching and learning materials; classroom interactions; classroom management and set up; language, learning spaces and campus life; and assessment.

While these approaches to gender transformation are relevant and can generally be applied to any education institution, in the context of TVET, several key aspects must be given adequate consideration. We summarize these key action areas based on the key features of an inclusive TVET institution outlined in UNESCO-UNEVOC's guide on inclusive TVET (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2024)

A gender-transformative TVET system aims to adopt a whole-system approach and considers, among other strategies, the key features set out in *Figure 4*:

FIGURE 4   Features of gender-transformative TVET
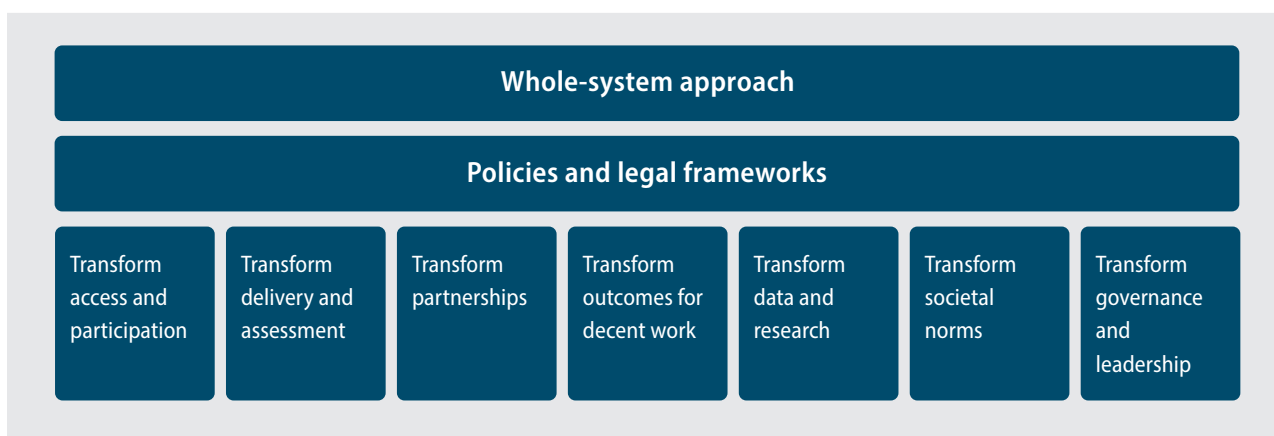
2.1.
Adopt a whole-system approach

To address the gender exclusion barriers identified along a learner's journey effectively, TVET institutions must adopt a whole-system approach. The responsibility of delivering inclusive TVET that is gender responsive requires collaboration, cooperation and coordination and must be shared by all actors within and outside the TVET institution. This involves working together to eliminate barriers and integrate gender-sensitive practices at every stage of the learner's journey, from access and enrolment to work transition or higher learning. It also involves working in multiple levels, including individual, household, community and institutional levels, to address both informal norms and formal policies and structures.

Identifying relevant actors for your TVET centre is crucial. These may include key actors integrated vertically across education or government levels or horizontally among government departments or between government and non-government actors, (UNESCO 2020) as presented in the conceptual mapping in *Figure 5*.

FIGURE 5   Conceptual mapping of partners needed for inclusive, whole-system TVET education
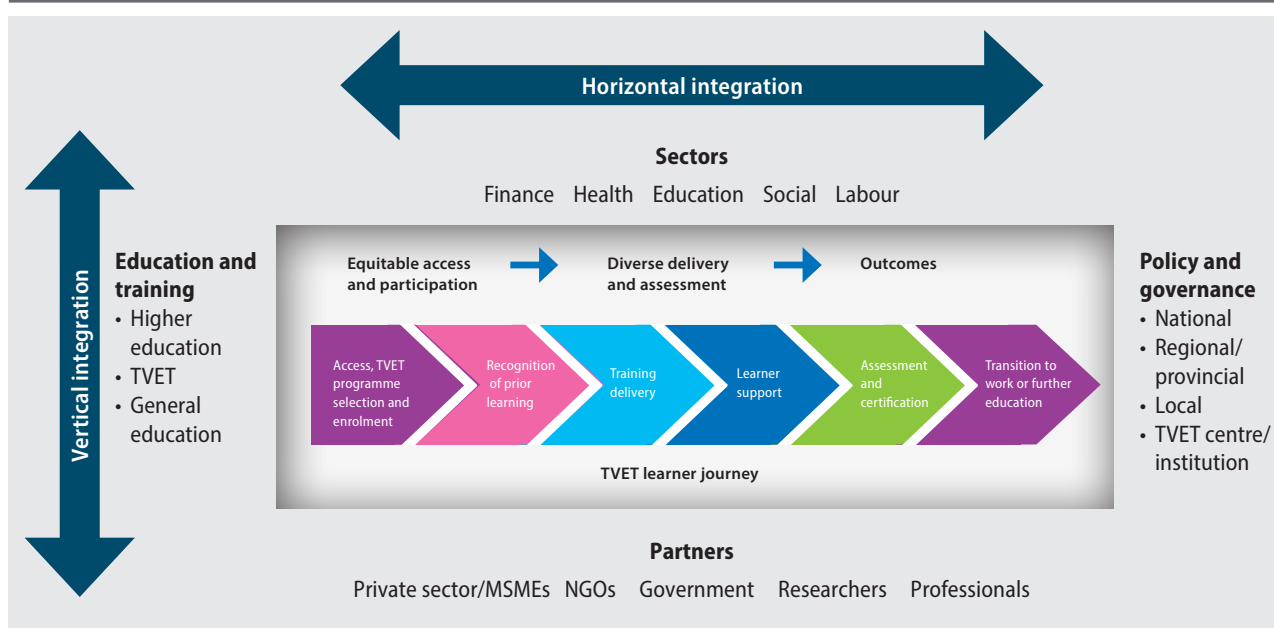
Source: UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2024

In adopting a whole-system approach, it is essential to enforce inclusive policies and legal frameworks. Policies play a crucial role in shaping a whole-system approach to gender transformation in TVET. Stakeholders should be guided by a framework for action outlining specific strategies to promote gender transformation in TVET centres. In developing institutional gender-transformative policies, TVET institutions must ensure that all the factors affecting equitable access and participation, diverse delivery and assessment, decent job outcomes and partners along the learner's journey are analysed and addressed.

Policies in TVET not only work to reduce physical, financial, and social barriers but also support the allocation of resources to assist disadvantaged groups. They establish and implement measures to combat discriminatory practices and cultures, addressing issues of violence and potential backlash while promoting inclusive practices and learning environments that respect diverse backgrounds and experiences.

To develop a gender-responsive TVET institutional policy, TVET centres should do the following:

a) Review and analyse existing policies, strategies and plans and identify gender gaps and inequalities.
b) Develop gender-specific policy guidance aligned with the national gender strategy for TVET.

Policies should aim to:

- develop guidelines for gender-sensitive programming and resource allocation;

- eliminate all systemic barriers (physical, financial, social) along the learner's journey;

- enhance institutional capacity through teachers' development and provision of gender-responsive physical infrastructure and environments;

- systemically integrate and mainstream gender equality in all aspects of the TVET system, including in operations, staffing, management, curriculum design, programmes and budgetary processes;

- establish disaggregated data collection and analysis strategies;

- encourage partnerships and collaboration for gender equality;

SDG 5 sets out 5 targets to ensure gender equality

- Adopting and strengthening sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels

- Ending all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere

- Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Beijing Platform for Action.

- Eliminating all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation,

- Eliminating all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation

- align efforts with national and international standards;

- facilitate women's entry into non-traditional jobs in the workplace;

- provide reasonable accommodation and gender lens;

- promote a zero-tolerance policy for sexual harassment and introduce anti-discrimination measures and policies for the elimination of gender-based violence;

- enhance information sharing, feedback and reporting mechanisms for gender-based issues among learners;

- align with the principles of inclusion, including a rights-based approach for disadvantaged groups, a policy on equal access for rural populations to TVET, a policy for inclusion in the labour market, and RPL for informal economies (ILO, 2020)

Frameworks relevant to gender transformation

Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women:
- Promotes equality of women through national plans and policies
- Emphasizes equal rights in education, employment and pay
- Calls for sex-disaggregated data and indicators

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action:
- Addresses 12 critical areas, including poverty, education, health and violence against women
- Focuses on women's participation in decision-making and media representation
- Highlights environmental management and rights of girls

Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) gender policy:
- Aims to increase number of women in decision-making positions
- Focuses on reducing harmful traditional practices
- Targets 50/50 gender share in decision-making by 2030

African Union gender policy:
- Advocates for gender-responsive practices and mainstreaming
- Promotes guidelines against sexual and gender-based violence
- Supports access to resources, education, healthcare and legal rights for women

The following cases are useful in drawing inspiration from existing policies regarding gender transformation in TVET. The subsequent sub-sections will contain further consideration of policy that TVET centres can analyse and contextualize.

Towards inclusive and equitable TVET in South Sudan: Addressing gender disparities, structural challenges and policy gaps

While there is no gender policy that deals directly with the provision of TVET education, the National Gender Policy of 2015 aims to promote gender equality and women's empowerment across all sectors, including education and TVET. The Transitional Constitution of South Sudan (TCSS) 2011 states that women shall be accorded full and equal dignity of the person with men, have the right to equal pay for equal work and other related benefits with men and have the right to participate equally with men in public life. Women and girls in South Sudan are disadvantaged in customary law, and through the perpetuation of certain cultural traditions. The frequent application of customary law also can prevent women from accessing more formal systems of justice and other rights, including the right to education.

There is a need for a gender policy in TVET in South Sudan. Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) developed such a policy in 2018, setting out NPA's commitment to a world free from discrimination based on gender, where every human being can fulfil their potential unhindered by discriminating laws, and economic and social

structures. The policy addresses layers of discrimination (systematic discrimination) and women's democratic right to participation, and includes calls for more women in management positions and to promote gender balance, provide working conditions that suit the needs of women as well as men and promote a working culture of respect. Women should be free from sexual harassment, and not be subject to the sort of power and entitlement that creates a culture of abuse. The TVET environment must be inclusive and tolerant, accept the expression of individual gender identities and promote non-discrimination against those who do not conform to a gender binary.

In South Sudan, such a policy should include a focus on ensuring zero tolerance of gender-based violence in TVET, while a workplace gender policy should ensure non-discriminatory practices in the workplace.

South Sudan's 2014 Unified TVET Policy identified a lot of barriers in the provision of education and training in TVET (MoGEI, 2022). Such barriers include poor infrastructure and institutional capacity, fragmentation and policy incoherence, inadequate government funding for the TVET sector, limited and inequitable access to TVET, the absence of a quality development framework, and low relevance and cooperation with the labour market. The document makes several recommendations to solve the identified challenges concerning:

- Improving the coordination and governance of the TVET system.

- Ensuring an effective and sustainable funding system.

- Moving towards a more demand-driven approach, linking to growing sectors and rural development.

- Expanding access and addressing marginalization.

- Adopting an incremental approach for quality development (through recruitment and retention of well-qualified and competent teachers, aligning training opportunities with job opportunities, more rigorous examinations, and practical skills assessment with proficiency testing, etc.).

- Reinforcing monitoring, evaluation and information systems (of both TVET providers and supervisory bodies).

CASE STUDY **Empowering women in TVET: Institutional initiatives and policy measures in the Western Bank and Gaza**

In Western Bank Gaza, institutional policies and regulations among the institutes vary, however, all are committed to the integration and empowerment of female students and most have policies and regulations to improve women's access to TVET. Additional measures exist to improve women's access and experiences with vocational training centers (VTC), including adding new vocational training modules, ending segregation in entry requirements and adding measures to gender mainstreaming across all initiatives. To facilitate women's access to employment, TVET institutions have adopted Work-Based-Learning (WBL) and integrated employment units and support. Support for accessing employment is also provided through career guidance to students and graduates, and the availability of the TVET Portal with a dedicated career resource center.

Source: Technical And Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Gender Assessment: Full Findings Report USAID/West Bank and Gaza

CASE STUDY   Expanding TVET access and gender equity in Kenya

Kenya has implemented a number of policy interventions to increase TVET enrolment, including:

- Establishing a central admission service for government-sponsored TVET students.
- Expanding TVET facilities, targeting national priority sectors.
- Providing TVET training while ensuring affirmative action with respect to vulnerable groups, gender, and hard-to-reach minority and marginalized groups.
- Establishing at least one vocational training centre at constituency level and at least one technical college at county level to increase equity.
- Enhancing participation of women in TVET and gender mainstreaming through affirmative action.
- Providing career guidance and placement services to support students in career planning and guidance.
- Integrating aspects of vocational education and training at all levels.
- Enhancing the efficiency of industrial attachment.

The above measures have filtered opportunities available to marginalized learners. Trainee enrolment in TVET has more than tripled from 147,000 in 2014 to 498,326 in 2021. However, male students account for over one half (57.2 per cent) of the total enrolment in TVET institutions, meaning that female enrolment in TVET still lags.

Source: Republic of Kenya, 2023. Model Gender Mainstreaming Policy for the
Technical and Vocational Education & Training (TVET) Sector (With Elements of Inclusion)

2.2
Transforming access and participation to be more equitable

FIGURE 6   Learner's journey; equitable access and participation

Access → Participation → Achievement

- Access, TVET programme selection and enrolment
- Recognition of prior learning
- Training delivery
- Learner support
- Assessment and certification
- Transition to work or further education
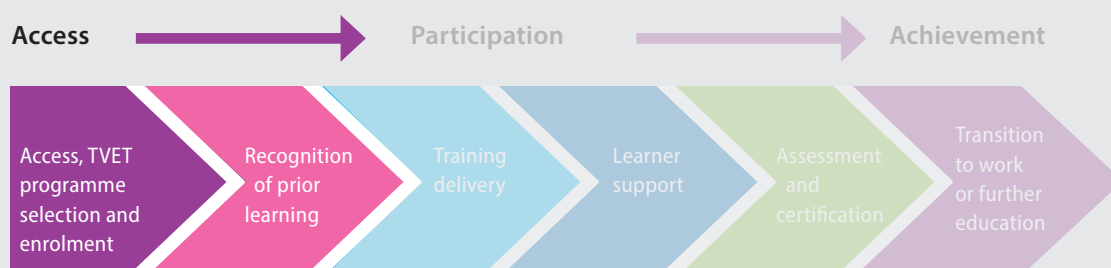
Making access and participation more equitable entails a commitment to identifying and addressing potential systemic barriers to skills development by eliminating or reducing any physical, financial or social barriers.

To transform access and participation TVET institutions should consider the following steps:

I. Conduct comprehensive assessment on the root causes of specific barriers faced by different groups. (Fill out **Template 1 – Root cause analysis of gender inequality** for this exercise.)

II. Engage stakeholders, including students, parents and community members, to gather insights on these challenges.

III. Implement strategies to address the identified barriers.

In the South Sudanese context, two key barriers to access and participation were identified through the baseline survey:

a) Cultural norms and stereotypes;
b) Low female participation in TVET.

Addressing cultural norms and stereotypes

Cultural norms and stereotypes significantly impact TVET systems, primarily by limiting female participation and reinforcing gender disparities. Key implications of this include:

- *Discouragement of female enrolment:* Cultural beliefs often prioritize domestic roles for women, leading to parental discouragement against pursuing vocational education. Women are frequently directed towards traditionally female-dominated fields such as sewing and cosmetics, while men are encouraged to enter trades such as mechanics and electronics.

- *Perception of TVET as inferior:* TVET is often viewed as a less prestigious option compared to higher education, which can deter all genders from enrolling. However, this stigma disproportionately affects women, who may feel additional societal pressure not to follow vocational paths.

- *Influence on career choices:* Stereotypes shape girls' confidence and attitudes towards non-traditional careers, limiting their aspirations in fields such as STEM. This has resulted in a low percentage of female students in STEM courses within TVET programmes.

- *Social expectations and domestic responsibilities:* The expectation for girls to perform domestic chores and the prevalence of child marriage further restrict their educational opportunities. These norms reinforce the belief that women should prioritize family over career aspirations.

- *Gender-based violence:* Cultural norms contribute to a high tolerance for gender-based violence, creating an unsafe environment for female students in TVET. The lack of reporting mechanisms exacerbates this issue, discouraging women from pursuing education due to fear of violence or harassment.

- *Bias in selection processes:* Gender stereotypes can influence biased selection criteria for vocational programmes, favouring male candidates and limiting opportunities for women.

- *Inadequate representation of female role models:* The underrepresentation of female instructors in TVET, especially in STEM courses, perpetuates stereotypes, as students lack relatable role models who can inspire them to pursue diverse career paths.

- *Limited awareness of opportunities:* Cultural norms also contribute to inadequate information about the benefits of vocational education for women, further hindering their enrolment in TVET programmes.

To address these challenges, it is essential to implement targeted initiatives that promote gender equality, challenge harmful stereotypes and create safe, supportive environments within TVET institutions.

Gender responsive information sharing

TVET centres should prioritize the implementation of community engagement initiatives to challenge harmful gender norms and promote awareness of gender equality and opportunities in TVET enrolment. This may include introducing targeted programmes that encourage female enrolment in non-traditional courses, such as STEM, through mentorship.

Awareness creation on gender transformation should be undertaken in conjunction with local government leaders who can help connect with the community in changing mindsets about cultural norms associated with women. Use a range of accessible formats, such as web, print and electronic, to ensure useful information is flexibly and optimally accessible by all learners. Special attention should be given to rural settings where most women rarely get information.

There are several ways in which information sharing can be implemented:

- **Mass and social media use:** Social media platforms, such as Facebook and WhatsApp, are increasingly being used to disseminate information about TVET opportunities. In areas with limited internet access, especially rural areas, print media, such as posters, or mass media, such as FM radios in local languages, should be used. The idea is to change the mindset of the communities towards empowering women and abandoning some detrimental cultural norms.

- **Use of influencers, such as female student mentors and student alumni:** Connect TVET graduates to alumni groups and other females involved in technical professions.

- **Community mobilization and engagement:** Information about TVET opportunities can be disseminated through public/social gatherings, community meetings and events. Women from economically disadvantaged backgrounds may be more likely to attend these meetings due to their social connections and community ties.

- **Simplified application processes:** Application processes that are simplified to reduce barriers to participation may encourage prospective female students and there should be student assistants to guide them through the application and enrolment process.

Providing information to learners prior to enrolment is crucial in helping them choose the most appropriate courses and in preparing them to meet course demands.

When designing an information package (QLD, 2018), it's useful to consider the following information:

I. **Course information**, including on course structure and assessment, core requirements of the course, delivery methods (such as distance and e-learning options, facilities and resources available to learners), industry licenses or professional association requirements relevant to the qualification, relevant legislation and occupational health and safety requirements for the industry area, as well as literacy and numeracy levels needed for the course.

II. **Reasonable adjustment information** for disadvantaged learners, which should explain the learner's responsibilities and how to access support services including scholarships, breastfeeding areas, flexible attendance schedules, etc.

III. **Suggestions about how the learner can disclose information** (about a disability, for example) including the confidentiality clause describing the school's responsibility to seek consent from the learners before sharing any of their disclosed information.

Implementing gender-responsive induction into TVET

The first few weeks of a learner's journey are very sensitive. Learners need to acclimatize to new environments, teachers and peers. Early attrition- where students discontinue their education before completing their programme - tends to happen early in students' academic programmes and it's as a result of the admission process, institutional resources, quality of instruction, race, gender, socio-economic status, motivation, coping skills and the mismatch between students' expectations and the programme itself.

Successful integration into academic and social environments is crucial for student retention and the admission and induction process is critical for setting the tone for inclusivity, raising awareness of available support systems, demystifying stereotypes and biases and addressing potential barriers.

Key strategies that TVET centres can use to implement a gender-responsive induction process include:

- Inform new students about gender-responsive facilities, such as safe accommodation, toilets and transportation systems.

- Emphasize the institution's zero-tolerance policy for sexual harassment and its commitment to respecting all participants and staff. Include information on gender equality policies, anti-discrimination measures and reporting mechanisms for gender-based issues.

- Introduce gender-specific support services, such as counselling, mentoring programmes and career guidance tailored to both male and female students, as well as childcare facilities or policies for student parents.

- Ensure all induction materials, including handbooks, presentations and activities, are free from gender stereotypes and use inclusive language.

- Highlight any special programmes designed for women in business or non-traditional fields.

- Invite successful alumni from diverse backgrounds, particularly women in non-traditional fields, to speak during induction week.

- Ensure a balanced representation of male and female staff members in induction activities.

- Inform students about job placement services and industry linkages that support gender equality.

- Introduce a gender-mainstreaming unit or gender focal points within the institution.

Other action to take in order to increase women's and girls' access, enrolment, participation and outcomes in TVET include:

a. Eliminating physical barriers

- Infrastructure improvements: Upgrade facilities to ensure they are safe and accessible (e.g. ramps, accessible restrooms).

- Child-friendly spaces: Create designated areas for mothers and children within TVET institutions.

- Geographic accessibility: Establish mobile training units to reach remote areas or provide transportation services.

- Information dissemination: Increase awareness of available programmes through community outreach and targeted marketing campaigns.

- Distance and boarding facilities: Provide safe and affordable boarding facilities for female students.

b. Reducing financial barriers

- Financial aid programmes: Develop scholarships, grants and low-interest loans specifically for disadvantaged groups.

- Tuition support: Implement sliding-scale tuition fees based on income or provide fee waivers for low-income students.

- Resource provision: Offer free or subsidized materials and equipment necessary for training.

- Targeted financial outreach: Partner with local organizations to reach out to potential female applicants in remote regions.

c. Overcoming social barriers

- Awareness campaigns: Launch initiatives to challenge harmful gender norms and stereotypes within communities.

- Family engagement: Conduct community outreach programmes to challenge traditional gender roles and engage parents through workshops highlighting the benefits of TVET for girls.

- Support networks: Establish mentoring programmes with female role models in STEM fields.

- Peer support initiatives: Create peer-support groups that encourage girls to pursue non-traditional fields.

d. Eliminating gender disparities in STEM-related TVET courses and occupations, where girls and women are globally significantly underrepresented (UNESCO-UNEVOC 2020)

- Targeted recruitment: Implement outreach programmes aimed at encouraging girls to enrol in STEM courses.

- Media campaigns: Launch campaigns showcasing successful women in STEM careers to counter stereotypes about these professions being 'male oriented'.

- Gender-sensitive curriculum: Develop curricula that highlight female role models in STEM fields and address biases.

e. Enabling recognition for prior learning (RPL)

- Assessment frameworks: Develop clear guidelines for recognizing skills gained through life and work experience.

- Training assessors: Train staff on how to evaluate prior learning effectively and inclusively.

- Awareness programmes: Inform potential learners about RPL opportunities through workshops and informational sessions.

f. Addressing the intersectional needs of disadvantaged youth, including girls and women, to increase access and retention in TVET (UNESCO-UNEVOC 2021)

- Tailored support services: Provide individualized support plans that consider the unique challenges faced by each learner.

- Inclusive policies: Ensure that policies explicitly address the needs of marginalized groups, including girls, women and individuals from low-income backgrounds.

- Community partnerships: Collaborate with local organizations to provide additional resources and support services.

g. Implementing retention strategies and support services for disadvantaged learners

- Support services: Establish tutoring, counselling, and mentoring programmes to assist disadvantaged learners.

- Flexible learning options: Offer part-time courses or online learning opportunities to accommodate various needs.

- Cultural support programmes: Create initiatives that respect diverse cultural backgrounds and provide relevant support.

Bridging the gaps: Addressing gender inequities and barriers to access, retention and inclusion in TVET in South Sudan

There are several gaps that must be addressed for gender transformation is to be achieved in South Sudan. Among the most common is unequal access to all levels of education between male and female genders, with females often facing discriminatory cultural norms, gender stereotypes and household responsibilities which curtail their study time, career options and advancement opportunities. This disparity in TVET enrolment persists.

Low enrolment and gender-based employment segregation are influenced by various factors, such as supply- and demand-side constraints and regulatory frameworks, as well as local contexts and social norms. These relate to childbearing, family care and household chores, and some females may require permission from their husbands to access TVET education, which may always not be granted. TVET courses are also gendered and most portray men as superior and better fitted to the more technically challenging courses. A review of materials is, thus, a requirement to make them gender responsive. Females face discrimination in accessing the labour market due to social inequalities and gender-specific career aspirations. The inclusion of women in male-dominated occupations can be perceived as a threat to masculinity, resulting in discrimination to preserve social power.

Curriculum and training materials tend to be gendered in such a way that males are featured more than females, and this can constitute a barrier to engagement. On the other hand, inclusive instruction approaches focused on language of instruction, classroom arrangement, receiving and giving feedback, assessment, evaluation and certification can all contribute to the retention of females in TVET. Access to scholarships, subsidies and grants may be limited for females as information is not always available, especially in rural areas. Finally, student support services are essential in increasing and retaining students in TVET. These include career counselling, mentorship, internship placement, supervision and evaluation on practical learning tasks.

Key issues
i.   Limited access to TVET opportunities, especially for female students from marginalized communities and those living with disabilities.
ii. Low enrolment among female students from marginalized communities.
iii. Inadequate recruitment of women trainers/instructors for STEM courses.
iv. Low levels of awareness among potential trainees.
v.   Inadequate efforts and strategies aimed at retaining and ensuring completion of female trainees and persons with disabilities.

vi.   Limited programmes aimed at ensuring successful trainee transition and placement.

vii. Limited resources to facilitate pedagogy and curriculum implementation.

viii. Inadequate mentorship and apprenticeship programmes.

ix.   Low numbers of women and girls enrolling for STEM courses.

x.   Most institutions are not yet modified to support and respond to the open and distance learning needs of trainees.

xi.   Absence of gender unit in TVET institutions and curriculum.

CASE STUDY   Mobile TVET in Uganda to expand access for refugee communities in Uganda

Both mobile Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET), which involves temporary satellite TVET centers, and mobile learning TVET, delivered through digital or mobile devices, can effectively eliminate, reduce, or alleviate the economic, social, and physical barriers that hinder many refugees from accessing traditional TVET opportunities. In contexts such as Uganda's refugee response, where digital inclusion and internet connectivity remain significant challenges, mobile TVET is often more applicable than mobile learning TVET.

In Uganda's refugee response, several mobile TVET initiatives have been successfully piloted. These include programmes by Africa Non-profit Chore (ANCHOR), Youth Alive, Caritas, and the Norwegian Refugee Council under the Support to Skilling Uganda Strategy project; by AVSI with its Kyangwali TVET programme; and by the World Bank-funded Uganda Skills Development in Refugee and Host Communities project under the Ministry of Education and Sports. Mobile, community-based, or outreach TVET aims to address various challenges in regular TVET programmes, such as costs, distance, and demographic or social status.

For effective implementation of mobile TVET, it is crucial to understand the needs and constraints of the target population while engaging local communities and authorities. Lessons learned from other implementers can help address identified challenges. Additionally, viewing mobile TVET as the beginning of a process rather than an endpoint is vital; addressing post-training employment opportunities is essential for enabling graduates to leverage their new skills for self-sufficiency.

However, mobile TVET remains, for the most part, poorly documented and thus poorly understood. What the few available documented examples show is that, despite different situations and locations resulting in different responses overall, the mobile aspect is consistently shown to improve access to TVET and the retention of TVET students.

Source: Mobile technical vocational education and training (TVET)
programming in the Uganda refugee response. UKAid, 2021

Enhancing gender inclusivity in Ghana's education system.

Ghana has made significant progress in adapting educational content to be more gender-friendly, aiming to create a comfortable and inclusive environment for girls in the educational process. Efforts have been directed toward introducing girls to non-traditional trades in schools, demonstrating that these fields are not exclusively for boys. Training women for technical occupations is essential for closing skills gaps and should be prioritized across government sectors and local district governments. This can be achieved through several strategies:

- **Managing perceptions:** A well-planned and aggressive campaign can reshape perceptions of women in non-traditional roles, similar to the initiative that increased girls' enrollment in Ghana's basic schools by 32 percent over four years.

- **Utilizing church gatherings:** With 87 percent of citizens attending church on Sunday mornings, these gatherings present an opportunity to disseminate information and promote women's participation in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), particularly in non-traditional trades.

- **Adjusting teaching content:** Modifying educational content has been effective in making girls feel more included and comfortable within the learning environment.

- **Providing student support services:** Organizing career fairs that showcase various occupations represented by women in non-traditional trades allows students to engage with role models and learn from their experiences. Additionally, promotional materials for TVET programmes should feature women alongside men to reflect diversity.

- **Launching national promotions:** A campaign aimed at sensitizing households about the importance of women in TVET could encourage parents to support their daughters' education.

- **Employing women as trainers:** There is a critical need for tailored training programmes for female trainers, especially in technical fields, to enhance the learning experience for female participants.

- **Addressing transportation challenges:** The costs associated with transportation to classes, labs, and internships can deter even the most determined women from participating in education.

- **Creating women-friendly amenities:** Providing adequate toilet facilities with running water and soap will facilitate uninterrupted attendance for women.

Source: Republic of Ghana, 2013: Women in TVET: Input into Ghana's COTVET. Gender Strategy Dialogue

ACTIVITY 3   Developing a gender-sensitive enrolment flyer (promotional materials)

In a group,

- research successful strategies used by other TVET institutions;

- evaluate current strategies and identify gaps;

- generate ideas for new enrolment strategies;

- develop an action plan involving engagement of key stakeholders;

- create a flyer for your institution providing enrolment information for a STEM-related course.
  In the flyer, apply reasonable accommodation strategies to enrol more girls in STEM.
  *Ensure the visibility of female students and people living with disabilities.

2.3
Transforming the delivery and assessment to be more diverse

FIGURE 7   Learner's journey; diverse delivery and assessment

Access → Participation → Achievement

Access, TVET programme selection and enrolment | Recognition of prior learning | Training delivery | Learner support | Assessment and certification | Transition to work or further education
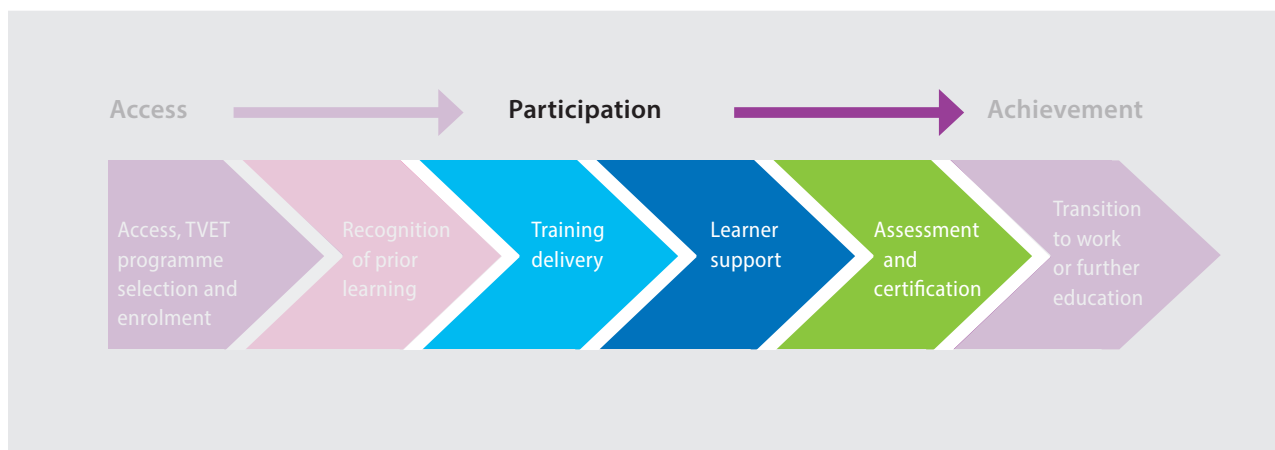
Fostering diversity concerns aspects such as delivery methods and pedagogies, assessment, curriculum and learning materials, learning environments, learner support services and teacher dynamics in TVET. Several challenges here are deeply intertwined with cultural norms and stereotypes that perpetuate gender disparities.

In the case of South Sudan, these include:

Delivery and pedagogies

- Gender stereotyping in course offerings (some viewed as masculine, others as feminine).

- Traditional teaching methods focusing predominantly on lecture-based approaches that usually fail to engage female learners effectively.

- Rigid training schedules that fail to accommodate the needs of female learners who have domestic responsibilities or other commitments.

Curriculum and learning materials

- Curricula often lack gender-sensitive materials and reinforce traditional roles through male-dominated examples. This discourages female students from pursuing diverse career paths.

- Insufficient representation where instructional materials frequently depict women in traditional roles and fail to challenge existing stereotypes or inspire female learners.

- Learning materials may not reflect current trends or the socio-economic realities of the community, limiting their relevance to students.

Environment

- High rates of gender-based violence creating an unsafe learning environment for female students. The lack of reporting mechanisms further silences victims and discourages participation.

- Inadequate facilities such as sanitary areas, which deters female students from attending due to privacy concerns.

Learner support

- Limited support systems and robust mentorship and career guidance programmes to address the unique challenges faced by female learners. Childcare support for students with children is often lacking.

- Lack of role models from industry and internal underrepresentation of female instructors limits mentorship opportunities for girls and reinforces the perception that certain fields are not suitable for women.

- Girls drop out due to lack of targeted support.

Assessment

- Absence of alternative assessment methods.

- Girls feeling they must work harder than their male peers to be recognized.

- Potential bias in assessment favouring male candidates and limiting opportunities for women. This bias is exacerbated by inadequate mechanisms for recognizing prior learning.

Teacher dynamics

- Limited training on gender-responsive teaching practices, which perpetuates biases in the classroom and can take the form of sexist comments from teachers and peers.

- Gender disparity among staff, with female teachers underrepresented in the TVET workforce and especially in STEM fields. This imbalance affects the learning environment and the availability of role models for female students.

Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that includes policy reforms, community engagement, gender-sensitive curricula development, robust support systems and continuous professional development for educators. Learners' interaction with teachers, peers and their environment during their journey can provide either a positive or negative experience and outcome.

When planning day-to-day activities, TVET educators should remember that learners learn differently and require different levels of learner support. Therefore, teaching methods, pedagogy, curriculum and assessment, and learner support must be adapted according to universal design for learning principles that allows for multiple means of representation, multiple means of action and expression, and multiple means of engagement.

Table 5 provides a number of possible solutions to consider.

TABLE 5   Strategies for promoting gender inclusivity in TVET

Domain	Possible solutions
Delivery methods and pedagogies	• Implement varied teaching methods such as visual, auditory, and practical learning approaches, incorporating technology and interactive activities to cater to diverse learning styles. • Encourage peer interaction collaborative learning through group projects, discussions, and role plays to foster teamwork and communication skills. • Engage learners applied learning in real-world tasks through internships, apprenticeships, and field trips that reflect the skills needed in their vocational fields. • Present information through multimodal training formats (text, images, video) to accommodate different learning preferences. • Apply gender responsive pedagogy techniques in the delivery of sessions
Assessment	• Diversify assessment techniques by Introducing a mix of written exams, oral presentations, practical demonstrations, and project-based assessments to provide a comprehensive evaluation of student learning. • Implement formative assessments such as quizzes, polls, and reflection exercises to offer continuous feedback and help learners monitor their progress. • Train assessors on recognizing biases in assessment practices and implement blind grading where feasible. • Regularly assess and modify assessments to eliminate gender bias.
Curriculum and learning materials	• Review and revise curricula to endure elimination of gender biases by promoting all courses as gender-neutral and ensuring representation of female professionals in images, textbooks and case studies. • Integrate gender-sensitive career counselling that challenges stereotypes and encourages both genders to explore diverse vocational paths. • Utilize assistive technologies and tools like screen readers and adaptive software to support learners with specific needs. • Integrate GBV awareness into TVET curricula.
Learning environments	• Improve classroom layouts and feedback methods to create a more inclusive learning environment. • Create safe learning environments that are free from gender-based violence (GBV) by establishing clear policies, reporting mechanisms and providing support services for victims. • Design classroom arrangements that promote active participation from all students regardless of gender or physical condition. This includes proper furniture sizing and mixed seating arrangements.
Learner support services	• Develop mentorship programmes that connect female students with role models in their fields. Provide guidance on navigating challenges related to gender stereotypes.
Teacher dynamics	• Offer flexible learning options such as evening or weekend classes, online training, or part-time programmes to accommodate students with family responsibilities. • Implement continuous professional development programmes focused Gender-Responsive Pedagogy, teaching methods, assessment tools, and inclusive teaching strategies that recognize and address biases. This includes training on inclusive gender-neutral language, teacher's body language, treating boys and girls equally during training sessions, and how to promote gender awareness among learners • Actively recruit female instructors in STEM fields to serve as role models for female students.

Enhancing quality assurance and assessment practices in South Sudan's TVET System: Insights from policy and practice

The Vocational Training and Skills Development Policy of South Sudan (2022) states that the assessment of trainees' performance is closely related to the curricula which provide the basis for the establishment of assessment criteria (MOL, 2023). The purpose of any assessment is to provide feedback to students and teachers as part of the learning process and, at the same time, to form the basis for certification of achievements. In simple terms, assessment is the process of finding out what a student has learned.

South Sudan's TVET Policy Review (UNESCO 2014) furthermore states: 'Students in technical secondary schools are prepared to write centralized final-year examinations which are common to all similar institutions. These examinations are national in character and are therefore regarded as a measure of the quality of teaching and learning at the expense of internal quality assurance mechanisms. Practical examinations are assessed not externally but internally by the teachers and instructors. As a result, the proficiency levels of the students and trainees may vary from institution to institution for the same disciplines. Because there are no effective internal quality assurance mechanisms in the institutions, it is impossible to take major decisions regarding curriculum orientation that should be informed by evidence from a rigorous quality assurance system. This situation does not allow for flexibility and innovation in curriculum design and delivery.'

Providing gender-friendly support services and learning environment

Implementing a learner-centered approach to TVET provision entails tailoring support to cater to the specific needs of all learners, especially those requiring additional support and accommodations in compliance.

Learner support activities vary depending on the barriers the support seeks to address. TVET centres should analyse what barriers need to be tackled through support. For example, girls drop out of school for a range of reasons, including poverty, early pregnancies and marriages, demanding family responsibilities, poor academic performance, lack of basic structures in school, safety concerns and experience of discrimination.

Examples of support services include:

- Gender-specific facilities, such as toilets and washrooms.
- Counselling, mentoring programmes and career guidance tailored to both male and female students.
- Childcare facilities or policies for student parents.
- Boarding facilities at TVET institutions.
- Transportation.

To understand what support systems they need to implement, TVET centres should ask the following questions:

- Which learners are at risk of exclusion?
- At what points in the learner journey might they be excluded?
- What causes them to be excluded at that point in the learner journey?
- What support services might they require to prevent them from being excluded?

ACTIVITY 4   Identifying and prioritizing support systems needed to address barriers for gender transformation in TVET

- Using the identified barriers from *Activity 1*, brainstorm potential support systems to address each barrier.

- Create a visual map linking barriers to potential support systems.

- Invite other stakeholders outside the taskforce to vote for the most critical support systems, using the dot method on the visualization, representing individual data points with dots within a defined area.

- Discuss the three top-ranked support activities and develop an action plan, including resources needed, partners, potential implementation challenges, timelines and success indicators.

CASE STUDY   Sanitary pads for girls in Malawi

A gender-responsive pedagogy (GRP) project was initiated in Malawi in August 2009, with funding from UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO). Karonga Teachers Training College was identified as a pilot college to provide GRP training for teachers and management staff. In 2010, in collaboration with the Department of Teacher Education and Development, the Forum for African Women Educationalists – Malawi (FAWEMA) rolled out the GRP training to all grant-aided teacher training colleges (TTCs) between October 2009 and June 2011. The GRP project impacts (2009–2013) were:

- The establishment of a gender committee and appointment of a gender focal person in all TTCs across the country.
- The establishment of a gender-balanced student council.
- The development of a gender policy at TTC level.
- The development of a gender-responsive orientation manual for TTC lectures.

In a bid to help adolescent schoolgirls overcome the challenge of managing menstruation issues, FAWEMA implemented a project titled 'Community Solutions to Gender Barriers in Malawi'. The goal of this project was to improve the academic performance, completion and retention of 1,500 girls through the provision of sanitary pads in Dowa district and to support the sustainable economic empowerment of women through income generation and empowerment with business and sewing skills. FAWEMA worked with mother groups that sew and sell sanitary pads for a profit and reinvest a portion into providing needy girls with the product. The model was tested at Liwonde Community Day Secondary School (CDSS), and there was a noticeable improvement in both the performance and retention of girls in school who had access to the re-usable sanitary pads.

Source: FAWE, 2018 website: https://fawemalawi.wordpress.com/programs (cited in FAWE, 2018:
Gender Responsive Pedagogy: A Toolkit for Teachers and Schools).

2.4
Transforming outcomes to lead to decent work and opportunities

TVET is closely linked to the labour market because of its emphasis on practical training in response to market demands. A gender-transformative TVET centre should lead to the establishment of skills, knowledge and attitudes that support all learners in attaining decent work opportunities. Structural change, especially at the institutional level, requires bold partnerships to review and reform processes that lead to gender-based exclusion (UNICEF 2021)

Establishing the barriers to school-to-work transition, especially using a gender focus, is a key strategy in addressing the needs of both genders. Some of the barriers to school-to-work transition include:

- Gender discrimination in jobs markets.

- Persistent stereotypes about STEM professions being male-oriented.

- Perception of safety issues for women in certain STEM workplaces.

- Employer bias in hiring practices.

- Limited visibility of women in technical jobs.

- Lack of career guidance tailored to women's needs and potential.

A commitment to establishing skills development programmes that support all learners in attaining decent work opportunities is essential. To facilitate a successful transition from school to work, TVET centres must assess whether they adequately prepare learners for the labour market. Key actions include:

Career support

- Ensure equal access to work-based learning, such as through internships and apprenticeships, for all students.

- Offer mentorship, career counselling and job-placement services.

- Provide seminars that equip women with skills related to career development, networking and entrepreneurship.

Promoting fair hiring practices

- Advocate for policies that encourage equitable hiring practices, ensuring that both men and women are considered equally for all positions.

- Conduct workshops to educate employers on the benefits of diversity and the importance of inclusive hiring practices. Provide training sessions to enable hiring managers to recognize and counteract their biases.

Developing essential competencies

- Address essential competencies and transversal skills such as communication, problem-solving and teamwork.

FIGURE 8   Learner's journey; decent jobs outcomes
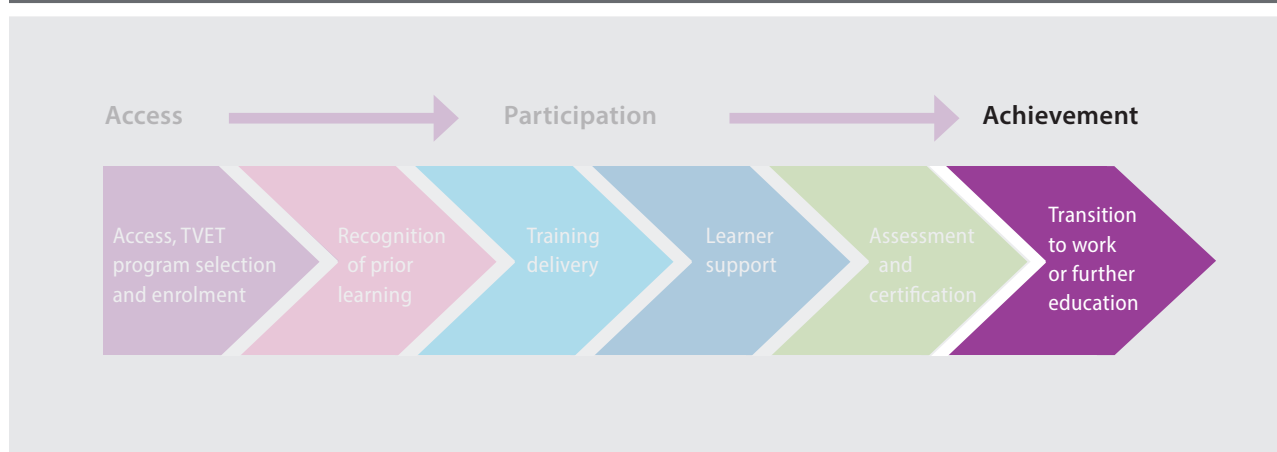
- Equip graduates with relevant skills in entrepreneurship, financial literacy, digital literacy and green skills to adapt to evolving market demands.

- Provide additional training on general life skills for out-of-school youth, focusing on self-protection, resource access and child rights.

Enhancing workplace safety

- Advocate for workplaces to adhere to safety regulations, creating a secure environment for all employees. Establish clear policies and procedures for reporting safety concerns to ensure that women feel safe and supported in their work environments..

Increasing visibility of women in technical roles

- Use media platforms to showcase women excelling in technical roles, encouraging young women to pursue similar careers.

- Motivate organizations to feature female employees in their marketing and recruitment materials to promote balanced representation.

Conducting labor market analyses

- Regularly analyse labour-market trends to identify in-demand skills in collaboration with private sector stakeholders, MSMEs and business associations.

Tailoring TVET programmes

- Develop training programmes specifically designed to meet the skills needs of MSME employees and owners.

- Integrate political education related to citizenship, political awareness and gender issues into the curriculum.

Assessing language training needs

- Evaluate the necessity for language training to reintegrate target groups into the workforce.

Inclusive learning approaches

- Implement varied teaching methods that incorporate visual, auditory and practical learning approaches.

- Create inclusive and unbiased learning materials that reflect diverse perspectives.

- Promote gender-responsive pedagogy by training teachers to recognize biases and encourage equal participation from all students.

- Diversify assessment techniques by using a combination of written exams, oral presentations, practical demonstrations and project-based assessments.

- Provide multiple pathways for learning through flexible options such as distance learning or short courses.

Supporting female students

- Encourage small class sizes for more personalized attention and support.

- Offer flexible training schedules to accommodate female students with family responsibilities.

- Utilize mobile training units to reach individuals in remote areas who cannot relocate to TVET centres.

- Establish role models and mentors who can guide female students.

2.5

Transforming partnerships to make them operational

This involves commitments to establishing operational partnerships and collaborations that enhance the skills development of both girls and boys and recognize and account for the gendered needs of learners.

The whole-system approach advocates establishing operational partnerships with key actors both vertically across education or government levels and horizontally among government departments or between government and non-government actors, as presented in *Figure 9*.

FIGURE 9   Conceptual mapping of partners needed for inclusive, whole-system TVET education
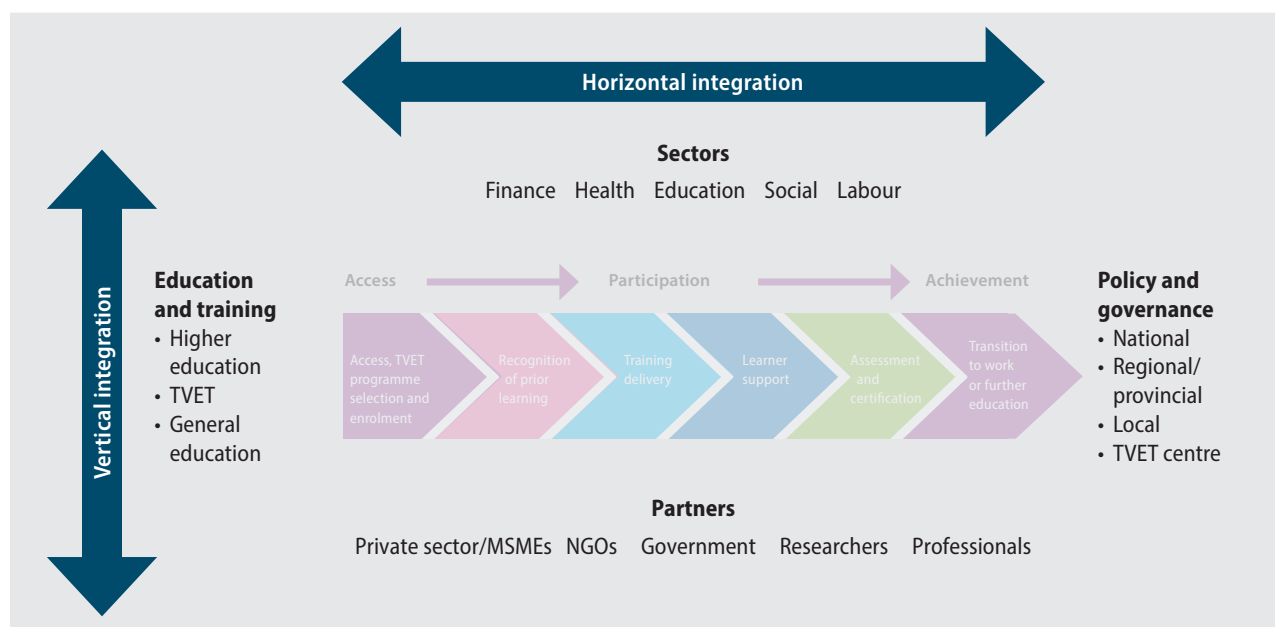
Source: UNESCO-UNEVOC and adapted from the UNESCO 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report: Inclusion and Education

These partners can serve as an advisory group for gender transformation in TVET, provide key insights about gender issues on the ground and collaborate on implementing strategies to address sensitive and emerging issues.

TVET centres should consider:

a. Working with the private sector, including employers and small and medium enterprises (SMEs), government entities, media and other stakeholders to promote gender equality, influence policy and resource allocation, and promote gender-sensitive information and positive storytelling.

b. Encouraging community involvement (local leaders and parents) and working with NGOs and service providers to leverage support, resources, expertise and funding to advance quality and eliminate gender stereotypes and biases relevance of inclusive TVET programmes.

c. Working with other education institutions, including primary and secondary schools (general education), TVET institutions, universities and research centres, for peer learning, exchange and sharing of resources.

d. Developing strategic partnerships to support learners' needs, for example:

- linking disadvantaged learners with services beyond the TVET system;
- implementing on-the-job learning opportunities (site visits, work placements and apprenticeships);
- providing career guidance, role modelling and identifying work opportunities;
- offering social safety nets and active labour market programmes.

The gender task force can initiate a mapping exercise to identify all key stakeholders and thereafter narrow this down to operational partners who cab actively shape the goal of gender transformation. One way of doing this is by conducting a stakeholder analysis.

A stakeholders analysis helps TVET centres identify the people and groups, or stakeholders, that can affect or may be affected by any changes or reforms to institute policies and practices. To identify operational partners, it is imperative to list all stakeholders and identify their influence level. Stakeholders who can enable or block a gender-transformative initiative should be involved, while those with lower impact can either be informed or consulted.

ACTIVITY 5   Stakeholder analysis

In your task force, conduct an analysis of the stakeholders who would be involved in any efforts to improve gender responsive practices in your institution. Record the process using the following template

Stakeholder analysis record sheet

Stakeholder	Potential role	Interest / issues level	Support level	Impact / influence level	Engagement strategy	Frequency	Benefits

Engaging local NGOs for advancing gender transformation in TVET in South Sudan

In South Sudan, the national non-governmental organization Help Restore Youth has implemented several skills-building projects in Aweil County aimed at enhancing vocational training and empowering youth and women. Key initiatives include:

• Skills development training: In June 2023, a collaboration with Welthungerhilfe (WHH) provided training in masonry, motorbike repair and maintenance, blacksmithing, and tailoring.

• Vocational skills training: In April 2023, 40 youths and women participated in training on making reusable sanitary pads and laundry soap at the Aweil Vocational Centre, funded by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

• Entrepreneurial Skills Training: In August 2022, vocational and entrepreneurial skills training was provided to 45 women and young men.

• Carpentry and bakery training: A programme offering vocational and business skills training for young men and women in carpentry and bakery was also funded by UNMISS.

- Skilled vocational training: The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been involved in providing skilled vocational training for unemployed women and youth.

Source : https://unmiss.unmissions.org/aweil-youth-graduate-soap-making-training-funded-unmiss

2.6
Transforming governance and leadership

Governance and leadership in TVET often suffer from entrenched biases that limit women's representation in decision-making roles, perpetuating unfair policies that hinder female participation in TVET programmes. Strong governance and leadership in promoting gender equality within TVET systems is needed to drive all the activities within the institution. The importance leaders accord to this topic will be reflected in the level of importance accorded it by the rest of the team. Governance and leadership can hinder gender transformation in TVET by limiting policy effectiveness, underrepresenting women in leadership positions, and preventing gender-sensitive training for leaders. Weak accountability mechanisms and insufficient budget allocations further restrict the impact of gender-equity initiatives, while inadequate partnerships and engagement with gender-focused stakeholders prevent broader institutional change. Additionally, entrenched institutional norms, ineffective advocacy, and limited communication strategies create environments that perpetuate gender stereotypes, discouraging female participation and hindering the development of inclusive, supportive learning environments.

It is important, therefore, that TVET leaders and the governance system is geared towards transformation, and that this is exemplified by leaders, from senior managers and departmental heads to school student leaders, class-level leaders and those representing different clubs and societies.

In South Sudan, there is notable resistance from community members, families and employers to change harmful gender norms. This resistance complicates efforts to promote gender equality within TVET institutions.

To address these challenges, comprehensive strategies must be implemented that promote equal representation in leadership positions and actively engage stakeholders in revising unfair policies. Such strategies must:

- Promote equal representation in decision-making positions.

- Change unfair policies and rules in TVET institutions ensuring that policies are not only inclusive but also reflective of the diverse needs of all genders.

- Analyse the impact of policies and gender transformation.

- Address issues of violence and potential backlash.

- Align with international and national frameworks for gender equality and mainstreaming.

Governance and leadership are essential in addressing cultural barriers, engaging community leaders, implementing supportive policies, ensuring safe learning environments and providing adequate training for educators to foster an inclusive educational landscape for all learners.

2.7
Transforming societal norms

Societal norms are deeply rooted in traditional views that reinforce negative stereotypes about gender roles, creating barriers for women pursuing non-traditional fields. They are intertwined with several other barriers, especially in limiting access and participation in TVET, as earlier discussed.

TVET programmes should focus on dismantling harmful stereotypes and fostering an environment of respect and equal treatment across all levels of education and employment, through mainstreaming gender equality into every aspect of TVET interventions.

There are a number of things TVET institutions can do to change harmful cultural and societal norms. For example, they can create a more inclusive culture that empowers women and challenges existing power imbalances. Some possible interventions include:

a) Launch public awareness campaigns to challenge gender stereotypes in TVET and employment.

b) Use media to promote the success stories of women in technical and non-traditional fields.

c) Engage community leaders to support girls and women in pursuing TVET and technical careers.

This, however, goes beyond teaching technical and vocational skills. To change societal views on gender, provision must:

- Question and change negative gender stereotypes.

- Address unfair power imbalances in TVET systems.

- Mainstream gender equality in all TVET interventions.

- Aim to normalize gender equality in everyday life.

- Fix unfair practices in schools and workplaces.

- Encourage respect and equal treatment for all gender.

Conduct institutional self-assessment

Identify current stage for gender transformation

Developing strategies based on assessment results

2.8
Transforming data and research to be gender responsive

To transform data and research into gender-responsive practices within TVET, centres must focus on the following:

a) Establishing systems for the regular collection of sex-disaggregated data across all TVET institutions, including tracking progress on gender parity in TVET and employment outcomes.

b) Conducting and publishing research on gender gaps, challenges and progress in TVET.

c) Utilizing data to inform change in policy and practices.

Collecting disaggregated data for gender transformation

In many countries, the collection of data on gender is hindered by factors such as underreporting due to cultural and societal norms, the lack of robust data-management systems capable of capturing gender-specific information and the lack of supportive policies that mandate the collection of gender-disaggregated data, as well as low technical skills among those responsible for data collection and analysis.

This results in a failure to prioritize female participation in resources, budgets, intervention programmes and policy development, as well as increased disparities in gender equality. Gender-transformative TVET centres prioritize systematic data collection, analysis and management as a driver for shifting cultural perspectives and leading to more equitable opportunities for all genders.

TVET centres should work collaboratively in collecting data and sharing resources, best practices and methodologies.

Disaggregated data on gender may be gathered by TVET institutes from a variety of sources, comprising both quantitative data in numerical form and qualitative data in descriptive form.

Data collected along the learner's journey includes enrolment and participation rates, rate of course selection by gender, the number of teachers and their capacities, all the way to data on school-to-work transition. Institutions should use tools such as surveys, interviews, records and documentation, and use the data they collect to identify trends and areas of improvement.

Monitoring and evaluation of gender transformation progress should measure not only learning outcomes, but also changes in gender norms and attitudes in schools and the community (UNICEF 2021) It should be dynamic and aim to collect feedback, voices and experiences from staff, students, managers, parents, partners and other stakeholders on the extent to which their attitudes on gender transformation have changed, alongside the literacy rates and looking beyond gender parity.

The Accountability for Gender Equality in Education (AGEE) Framework is designed to evaluate educational inequalities and promote gender equality (AGEE 2023). It identifies six interconnected domains that focus on both the outcomes achieved (known as functionings) and the opportunities available, highlighting the importance of equipping individuals with the capabilities needed to reach their full potential. The six domains are:

1. Resources: This domain addresses the availability and equitable distribution of essential resources for education, such as financial support, learning materials, and infrastructure.

2. **Values:** This area emphasizes the cultural and societal values that shape perceptions of gender roles and educational opportunities. It aims to create an environment that supports gender equality in education.

3. **Opportunities:** This domain examines how accessible educational opportunities are for all genders, identifying and addressing barriers that may prevent individuals from participating in education.

4. **Participation in Education:** This area assesses the level of engagement individuals have in educational activities, stressing the need for inclusive practices that encourage participation from everyone.

5. **Knowledge, Understanding, and Skills:** This domain evaluates the content of education and the teaching methods used, ensuring they are relevant and sensitive to gender differences.

6. **Outcomes:** Finally, this domain measures individuals' achievements in terms of educational attainment and personal development, focusing on how education contributes to their overall well-being and empowerment.

The AGEE Framework employs a rights-based approach to gender equality, which includes three key aspects: the right to education, the right to participate in education, and the right to benefit from education.

Table 6 provides an example of indicators and various sources to consider for each of the key features of gender transformative TVET.

TABLE 6 Gender transformation in TVET domain and indicators		
Features	**Indicators**	**Sources**
Transforming access and participation	• Enrolment rates by gender, programme type (e.g. technical, vocational), age group, ethnicity, disability status, rural vs. urban, and socio-economic background. • Application and selection rates: Number of applications received by gender, selection criteria and their potential impact on gender balance, data on accepted vs. rejected applications by gender, data on recognition of prior learning by gender. • Financial support data on scholarship applications and awards by gender. • Attendance rates by gender, by semester/term and by programme type. • Drop-out rates by gender, year of study, programme type and reason for drop-out (e.g. early/adolescent pregnancy or drop-out due to domestic work). • Progression (over-aged, repetition, drop-out) by gender and level of education. • Attainment/learning outcomes by gender and level of education. • Completion rates by gender and programme type and duration of study. • Recognition of prior learning data by gender. • Availability of gender-specific facilities, e.g. restrooms, changing areas. • Access to STEM equipment and resources by gender. • Existing safe and enabling learning environments free of school-related gender-based violence.	• Persona map records, • enrolment records, • application and selection records • surveys, • financial aid records, • teacher and staff records, • training records on gender sensitivity and inclusion

Features	Indicators	Sources
	• Budget allocation per gender. • Participation by gender and level of education. • Participation in STEM fields: Enrolment in specific STEM fields (e.g. engineering, IT) and comparison with non-STEM fields.	
Transforming delivery and assessment	• Curriculum and course material reviews: Analysis of gender sensitivity in learning materials, evaluation of course offerings and potential gender biases. • Learners' skills in greening/ ICT/entrepreneurship skills by gender. • Assessment: Comparison of assessment methods and results by gender. • Learning outcomes across subjects by gender, scores in theoretical exams, practical skills assessments and project work. • Critical thinking and problem-solving abilities: Evaluation through assessments and feedback from employers. • Qualifications and experience of female vs. male teachers. • Gender balance among teaching staff, especially in STEM fields. • Number of teachers trained on gender/inclusion in TVET by gender. • Teacher qualification and training. • Teaching conditions and pay. • Academic performance: Subject-specific performance gaps and trends over time.	• Reports on diversity and inclusion initiatives • Teacher and staff records • Assessment records • External evaluations and audit records • Incident reports • Facilities and resources inventory • Extracurricular activity records
Transforming partnerships	• Data on internship and apprenticeship placements by gender. • Information on employer perceptions and hiring practices. • Availability and participation rates by gender in mentorship programmes for female students. • Resources per partner.	• Student support services data • Alumni records • Employment records • Feedback from industry partners
Transforming outcomes for decent work	• Transition rates by gender to different sectors (e.g. industry-specific jobs, further education). • Representation in various sectors of employment. • Job placement rates for graduates by gender, industry sector and job type. • Wage equality: Average starting salaries of female graduates compared to male graduates. • Career advancement opportunities: Percentage rate by gender and time taken for female graduates' career advancement compared to male counterparts. • Access to the labour market by gender. • Conditions of employment by gender. • Access to resources by gender. • Women's autonomy and empowerment (e.g. outside mobility, domestic violence).	• Alumni records • Employment records • Feedback from industry partners

Features	Indicators	Sources
	• Degree of decision-making over household expenditure. • Participation in public life and decision-making (including political participation).	
Transforming governance and leadership	• Gender policies in TVET institutions, existence and implementation. • Gender representation in leadership positions. • Decision-making processes and inclusion of diverse voices. • Leadership opportunities for female students: Number of leadership positions held by female students and participation in student governance. • Gender balance in leadership positions. • Values and attitudes towards girls and women, boys and men in education.	• Mission and vision statements • Strategic plans and policies • External evaluations and audit records • Leadership and staff composition by gender
Transforming societal norms	• Values and attitudes towards economic and social roles of men and women. • Gender values concerning choice of field of study. • Attitudes of students and staff towards gender equality. • Prevalence of gender stereotypes in curriculum and teaching materials. • Frequency of stereotypical representations and efforts to revise materials. • Awareness of gender issues among students and staff. • Participation in awareness programmes and knowledge retention rates. • Inclusivity in school culture and practices. • Student satisfaction surveys and incidence of gender-based issues. • Self-efficacy and confidence measures. • Early/adolescent pregnancies. • Sexual and reproductive health knowledge and use of contraception.	• Focus groups and interviews • Feedback forms • Legal and regulatory standards compliance records • Case studies and good practices
Transforming data and research	• Number and frequency of gender sensitivity training for staff and students. • Training on gender-responsive data collection by staff by gender. • Feedback mechanisms for reporting gender-related issues. • Number of reports received, resolution rates, and student satisfaction with the feedback process. • Frequency of gender-disaggregated data collection. • Number of research initiatives conducted on gender issues in TVET. • Accuracy of analysis of gender transformation initiatives. • Number of policies and practices informed through data.	• Student information systems, academic records, research and publications

Self-assessment tool

To identify the stage of Gender Equality in your TVET center. The Gender equality Task force can collaboratively conduct an assessment using the template provided in the appendices section(Template 2- Gender equality self-assessment tool) This is a template that allows TVET centers to conduct a self-assessment of gender-transformative strategies across different indicators, using a 5-point rating scale: Upon filling out the template the team will be able to identify the average score for their institution and match with the Gender equality marker.

TVET centres can use the Gender Equality Marker (GEM) – a tool used to assess, monitor, and promote gender equality within programmes and practices. It is based on a four-point scale where GEM 0 refers to activities with no contribution to gender equality, GEM 1 refers to activities that are gender-sensitive, GEM 2 are activities that are gender-responsive while GEM 3 refers to activities that are gender-transformative.

The gender task forces can initiate the assessment process and establish which phase from GEM 0 to GEM 3 they fall under by using Table 5 below (Stages for gender transformative TVET) as a guide.

FIGURE 10   Gender equality marker

Gender transformative (GE3)
GE/EWG is the principal objective of the innovative solution and testing

Gender responsive (GE2)
GE/EWG is a significant objective of the innovative solution and testing

Gender sensitive (GE1)
There is limited consideration of GE/EWG in the innovative solution and testing

Gender blind (GE0)
There is no consideration of GE/EWG in the innovative solution and testing

GE: Gender equality
EWG: Empowering women and girls

Source: UNSDG-GEM 2024

Assessing the level of gender transformation in a TVET institution is useful in identifying the baseline against which strategies to address gender inequality can be measured and in establishing a starting point. This assesses process policies, strategies and procedures in place to ensure gender transformation.

TVET institutions can identify areas for improvement and develop targeted interventions to promote gender equality in education.

Once agreed, strategies are employed to reduce barriers and overcome the challenges identified. Use Template 4 (Gender-transformation monitoring), included in the appendices, to track progress and initiate continuous improvement strategies.

TABLE 7 Stages for gender transformative TVET			
Gender blind (GEM 0) *Gender considerations are entirely absent.*	**Gender sensitive (GEM 1)** *Acknowledges inequalities but does not address them*	**Gender responsive (GEM 2)** *Includes evidence-based gender analysis and specific policies*	**Gender transformative (GEM 3)** *Addresses underlying causes of gender inequalities and formulates policies for radical change*
1. No gender-specific policies, strategies or plans in place • Absence of implemented gender policies (enrolment, application and selection) • Lack of gender-balanced leadership • No regular gender-sensitivity training 2. Access and participation Facilities and infrastructure not designed with gender considerations in mind • Lack of adequate gender-specific facilities • Unequal access to resources and equipment 3. No financial support or scholarships targeting gender equality 4. Gender norms and stereotypes perpetuated in the learning environment • High prevalence of gender stereotypes in materials • Unaddressed biases in admission policies 5. Knowledge, understanding and skills No awareness of gender-specific information or needs • Lack of comprehensive sexual and reproductive health knowledge	1. Basic gender-related policies exist but not fully implemented • Partially implemented gender policies • Some gender balance in leadership positions 2. Some consideration for safe facilities, but not comprehensive 3. Limited financial support for underrepresented genders 4. Awareness of gender norms, but no active measures to address them 5. Some gender-specific information available, but not widely disseminated 6. Traditional teaching methods with minimal gender considerations 7. Limited industry collaborations, not focused on gender equality 8. Basic career services available, but not tailored to gender-specific	1. Comprehensive gender policies and strategies in place • Fully implemented gender policies • Gender-balanced leadership • Regular gender-sensitivity training 2. Safe and accessible facilities for all genders • Adequate gender-specific facilities • Equal access to resources and equipment 3. Targeted scholarships and financial support for underrepresented genders 4. Active measures to challenge gender norms and stereotypes • Low prevalence of gender stereotypes in materials • Unbiased admission policies 5. Inclusive learning environments promoted • Safe learning environment free from gender-based violence	1. Fully integrated gender transformation policies across all aspects of TVET • Comprehensive gender policies with regular monitoring and evaluation • Inclusive decision-making processes 2. State-of-the-art facilities designed for gender inclusivity and accessibility • Exemplary gender-specific facilities • Full and equal access to all resources and equipment 3. Comprehensive financial support system eliminating gender-based barriers • Fully equitable financial support distribution 4. Proactive measures to transform gender norms and eliminate discriminatory practices • Positive attitudes towards gender equality in economic and social roles • Proactive measures to transform gender norms and eliminate discriminatory practices • Supportive attitudes towards education for all genders

Gender blind (GEM 0)	Gender sensitive (GEM 1)	Gender responsive (GEM 2)	Gender transformative (GEM 3)
6. Diverse training and assessment Teaching methods and materials not considerate of gender differences 7. Partnership No industry or community partnerships addressing gender issues, e.g. gender-balanced internship/ apprenticeship placements 8. Outcomes and employment No specific career/mentorship support services for underrepresented genders		• High self-efficacy measures across genders 6. Varied teaching methods and inclusive learning materials implemented • Gender-sensitive curriculum and course materials • Reasonable accommodation in assessment methods and results • Equal learning outcomes across genders • No significant gender gaps in academic performance 7. Gender-responsive pedagogy training for educators • Teachers trained on gender/inclusion in TVET 8. Partnerships with industry and community organizations to promote gender equality • Gender-balanced internship/apprenticeship placements • Positive employer perceptions of all genders 9. Career counselling and guidance services with gender considerations • Effective mentorship programmes • Leadership opportunities for female students	• Unbiased attitudes towards STEM field of study choices 5. Multiple pathways of learning to accommodate diverse needs • Equal participation in STEM fields • Equitable acquisition of ICT/green/ entrepreneurship skills 6. Curriculum and teaching materials actively challenging gender stereotypes • Gender-transformative curriculum and course materials • High awareness of gender issues among students and staff 7. Strong industry partnerships promoting gender equality in workplace learning and job placement. Balanced representation across employment sectors • Equal job placement rates • Wage equality for graduates • Equal career advancement opportunities 8. Engagement with media for positive representation of all genders in TVET • Inclusive school culture and practices 9. Comprehensive career-support services, including mentorship programmes and role models • Robust feedback mechanisms for gender issues • Equitable transition rates to employment/further education 10. Regular monitoring and evaluation of gender transformation progress with community involvement • Continuous assessment and improvement of all gender-related indicators

APPENDICES

Identifying and addressing root causes of barriers in TVET

- Conduct comprehensive assessments to identify specific barriers faced by different groups.

- Engage stakeholders, including students, parents, and community members, to gather insights on challenges.

- Implement regular reviews of policies and practices to ensure they address identified barriers.

Template 1 – Root cause analysis of gender inequality table

In your Gender TF,

- Fill out the table mapping out where and when gender-related exclusion occurs in your TVET institution

- Identify which barrier are personal level, Institutional or societal level

- identify possible solutions to address these points of exclusion at each stage of the learner's journey.

TEMPLATE 1	Root cause analysis of gender inequality table		
	Access, Enrolment, and Selection and RPL		**Possible solutions**
1	**Personal Level**	**Individual learner**	
		Family and Peer	
	Institutional level	**TVET Institute**	
		Labour market organization	
	Societal level	**Societal norms**	
		Public policy	

	Training delivery		**Possible solutions**
2	**Personal Level**	**Individual learner**	
		Family and peer	
	Institutional level	**TVET institute**	
		Labour market organization	
	Societal level	**Societal norms**	
		Public policy	

Learner Support			Possible solutions
3	Personal Level	Individual learner	
		Family and peer	
	Institutional level	TVET institute	
		Labour market organization	
	Societal level	Societal norms	
		Public policy	

Assessment and Certification			Possible solutions
4	Personal Level	Individual learner	
		Family and peer	
	Institutional level	TVET institute	
		Labour market organization	
	Societal level	Societal norms	
		Public policy	

Transition to work			Possible solutions
5	Personal Level	Individual learner	
		Family and peer	
	Institutional level	TVET institute	
		Labour market organization	
	Societal level	Societal norms	
		Public policy	

Template 2: Gender equality self-assessment tool

This is a template that allows TVET centers to conduct a self-assessment of gender-transformative strategies across different indicators, using a 5-point rating scale:

Instructions: Rate your institution on a scale of 1-5 for each indicator.

1 = Not implemented/Poor

2 = Partially implemented/Fair

3 = Moderately implemented/Good

4 = Mostly implemented/Very Good

5 = Fully implemented/Excellent

TEMPLATE 2   Gender equality self-assessment tool

Transforming access and participation	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
Enrollment rates by gender, programme type, age,						
Application and selection rates by gender						
Financial support data by gender						
Attendance rates by gender and programme type						
Dropout rates by gender and reason						
Progression data (over-aged, repetition, dropout) by gender						
Attainment/learning outcomes by gender						
Completion rates by gender and programme type						
Recognition of prior learning data by gender						
Availability of gender-specific facilities						
Access to STEM equipment/resources by gender						
Safe and enabling learning environments free of SRGBV						
Budget allocation by gender						
Participation in STEM fields by gender						
Curriculum and course material gender-sensitivity						
Learners' skills in greening/ICT/entrepreneurship by gender						
Assessment methods and results by gender						
Critical thinking and problem-solving abilities by gender						
Gender balance among teaching staff, especially in STEM						
Number of teachers trained on gender/inclusion by gender						
Fair assessment methods and results						

Transforming partnerships	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
Data on internship/apprenticeship placements by gender						
Information on employer perceptions and hiring practices						
Availability/participation in mentorship programmes for female students						

Transforming outcomes for decent work	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
Transition rates to employment sectors by gender						
Representation in various employment sectors by gender						
Job placement rates for graduates by gender						
Wage equality for female vs. male graduates						
Career advancement opportunities by gender						
Women's autonomy and empowerment						
Equitable acquisition of ICT/entrepreneurship skills						

Transforming governance and leadership	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
Existence and implementation of gender policies in TVET institutions						
Gender representation in leadership positions						
Decision-making processes and inclusion of diverse voices						
Implemented gender policies						
Unbiased admission policies						
Leadership opportunities for female students						

Transforming societal norms	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
Values and attitudes towards gender equality in education and employment						
Prevalence of gender stereotypes in curriculum and teaching materials						
Awareness of gender issues among students and staff						
Robust feedback mechanisms for gender issues						
Positive attitudes towards gender equality in economic and social roles						
Supportive attitudes towards education for all genders						
Unbiased attitudes towards field of study choices						
Low prevalence of gender stereotypes in materials						
High awareness of gender issues among students and staff						
Inclusive school culture and practices						

Transforming data and research	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
Frequency of gender sensitivity training for staff and students						
Training on gender-responsive data collection						
Feedback mechanisms for gender-related issues						
Frequency of gender-disaggregated data collection						
Number of gender-focused research initiatives						

How to determine your GEM Stage:

1. Rate your institution on each indicator using the provided scale (1-5).
2. Calculate average score
3. Identify predominant GEM stage

GEM 0 (Gender Blind):	Average scores predominantly in the 1,2 range.
GEM 1 (Gender Sensitive):	Average scores predominantly in the 2,3 range.
GEM 2 (Gender Responsive):	Average scores predominantly in the 3,4 range.
GEM 3 (Gender Transformative):	Average scores predominantly in the 4,5 range.

4. Identify specific areas where scores are lower and require improvement.
5. Create a detailed action plan to address identified gaps and move towards a higher GEM stage.
See Template 3 for action planning.
6. Periodically reassess to track progress and make necessary adjustments.

TEMPLATE 3 Action plan for TVET institutions							
S/N	Mainstreaming activity	Target Dept. / Course	Timeframe	Responsible	Expected outcomes	Timeline	Remarks

TEMPLATE 4   Gender-transformation monitoring

Objective	Indicators	Targets	Observed progress/date	Means of verification
Access and participation				
For example, development of policy on gender transformation in TVET including addressing gender-based violence	Policy document developed by TVET centre on gender transformation	Within three months, a draft of institution-based policy on gender transformation is developed	By six months, a final version of gender transformation policy is developed and ready for use	Copies of gender transformation policy
Transforming delivery and assessment				
Transforming partnerships				
Transforming outcomes for decent work				

Transforming governance and leadership

Transforming societal norms

Transforming data and research

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