UNESCO
International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training

New Qualifications and Competencies in TVET

TESDA Online Programme

Innovation and Learning Practice

Bridging Innovation and Learning in TVET (BILT) Project

Submitted by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, Philippines

In the Philippines, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) has leveraged the potential of information and communication technology (ICT) to increase the absorptive capacity for TVET delivery, shape future curricula in terms of social development and sustainability, and introduce new policies addressing inclusivity.

Start date: May 2012
Type of implementing institution: Training provider
Target group: TVET trainees, out-of-school youth, women, overseas Filipino workers

Education 2030

TESDA, Philippines

The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) aims to encourage the full participation and mobilization of industry, labour, local government units and TVET institutions in the skills development of the country's human resources. TESDA formulates resource and skills plans, sets appropriate skills standards and tests, coordinates and monitors policies and programmes, and provides policy directions and guidelines for resource allocation at TVET institutions.

Description of activities

The **TESDA Online Programme (TOP)** was designed and developed to provide accessible and flexible TVET that is aligned with national and global priorities towards social development. This includes skilling and upskilling for employment, improved livelihoods and lifelong learning.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, TOP was presented with a difficult challenge: how can the programme provide continuous, accessible and flexible TVET with the absorptive capacity that the sector needs for social development during a major social disruption?

Through innovations in TVET teaching and learning practices, TOP experienced remarkable growth during the height of the pandemic lockdowns in the Philippines. More importantly, the agency ensured that learners were provided with new qualifications and competencies, even as these experienced dramatic shifts due to the pandemic.

Relevance

How was TOP adapted in response to the pandemic?

TOP existed for years prior to the pandemic as a MOOC (massive open online course) platform that was open to the public. Given the challenges of the pandemic, TOP needed an increased degree of accessibility and flexibility that ensured continued TVET delivery and support for learners, trainers and institutions. This meant rapid changes to training modality and online or blended learning curricula, which were formalized with new institutional policies for flexible learning delivery. Digital delivery became a priority rather than an alternative.

How were changes in delivery supplemented by curricular changes?

Before the pandemic hit, TESDA led the development of the medium-term planning for the TVET sector (2018-2022 National Technical Education and Skills Development Plan). During this period, it also crafted the Philippine TVET 4.0 Framework which identified the country's TVET strategies in addressing the requirements of the Fourth Industrial Revolution that will make its TVET sector 4.0 ready. By 2020, when the Covid-19 pandemic hit the country, TESDA has created a plan to adapt to the post-pandemic world called the Operational Plan TESDA Abot Lahat: TVET Towards a New Normal. Its three phases (survival, transitional and structural) focus on developing relevant policies and programmes that utilize flexible and technology-based TVET arrangements, prioritize agriculture-related programmes and other nationally-identified priority sectors as well as reassess the responsiveness of TESDA's systems to future crises. In addition, TESDA implemented a new institutional policy for flexible learning delivery that specifically addressed inclusivity and sustainability.

Added value

How have institutional priorities shifted?

Prior to the pandemic and despite the identified interventions set in the Philippine TVET 4.0 Framework, there was complacency in prioritizing online delivery and flexible learning because of the already existing TOP. However, the need to maintain access to learning opportunities despite lockdown measures led to initiatives that go beyond digital delivery and target other relevant areas of TVET development, such as educator training and curricular development. These include:

- Customization of TOP for multi-regional use
- Continual upskilling of TVET trainers
- Development of additional eLearning courses
- Implementation of blended delivery TOP courses

How has the rapid shift in TOP delivery affected teaching and learning outreach?

By quickly on-boarding stakeholders such as TVET institutions, public and private organizations – who recognized the immediate need for online learning during the pandemic – and familiarizing them with the possibilities of TOP, the programme became known to a much broader group of people. During the first year of the pandemic, TOP saw an increase in the average number of registered users by 800 per cent.

What measures are in place to ensure TOP content is relevant in addition to being digitally accessible?

As TOP delivery was overhauled during the pandemic, TESDA used the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness and value of available learning materials, ensuring they met relevant TVET policy goals and included new qualifications and competencies. The modality of eLearning as offered by TESDA also establishes standards in online/digital learning delivery in the country, which are tied to competency-based training.

Transferability

What structures enabled the rapid changes to TVET delivery and curricula?

The key to rapid flexibility and agility was a high degree of stakeholder buy-in and engagement with TESDA, which makes coordinating and calibrating infrastructure changes, new training contexts, regulatory framework and industry support an easier task. TESDA had established strong ties with its stakeholders prior to the pandemic and was able to react quickly when a change of mindset ushered in a greater acceptance for flexible learning. This removed structural obstacles and paved the way for social development, environmental protection as well as gender-inclusivity measures that were better addressed through flexible and blended learning models.

What are ways to overcome institutional or structural resistance to unfamiliar TVET concepts?

In the context of increased eLearning in the TOP, it was important to make a business case that highlighted its benefits. The proof came at the end of 2020, when TOP recorded 1.3 million new users for the year. Additionally, taking a leadership position during periods of change and providing a roadmap – such as TESDA's New Normal Operational Plan – can provide a rallying point for various stakeholder groups who may share similar but not identical concerns.

The TESDA Online Programme is one of the BILT project's Innovation and Learning Practices that address systemic challenges within the five work streams of the project. Specifically, the TOP initiative addresses new qualifications and competencies in TVET:

New Qualifications and Competencies

- *Identifying new qualifications and competencies in a timely manner;*
- *Integrating them into appealing and flexible curricula and training regulations; and*
- *Implementing them in innovative training approaches*

Additional Innovation and Learning Practices cover the following areas:

Digitalization in TVET

Entrepreneurship in TVET

Greening TVET

Migration and TVET

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About the BILT Project

UNESCO-UNEVOC's Bridging Innovation and Learning in TVET (BILT) project is a reference point for innovation and learning in TVET. It utilizes the international UNEVOC Network to create opportunities for collaboration and a platform for bridging innovation and learning between Europe, Africa and the Asia-Pacific region. BILT complements developments at the national level in supporting innovative, market-oriented and attractive modes of learning and cooperation in TVET.

The BILT project explores the process of identifying, integrating and implementing new qualifications and competencies in TVET. This is known as the 'three I's process'. In addition to the broad focus on new qualifications and competencies, BILT addresses four complementary themes: Digitalization and TVET, Greening TVET, Entrepreneurship in TVET, and Migration and TVET.

For more information, please visit
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New Qualifications and Competencies in TVET

- **Identifying** new qualifications and competencies in a timely manner;
- **Integrating** them into appealing and flexible curricula and training regulations; and
- **Implementing** them in innovative training approaches

Entrepreneurship in TVET
Unlocking the potential of innovative entrepreneurial activities and fostering entrepreneurial culture

Greening TVET
Responding to new development paradigms for sustainability and reduced environmental impact

Digitalization in TVET
Providing response to new skills demands, as technology has permeatied the world of work and is changing the profile of jobs

Migration and TVET
Accelerating the integration of migrants into their host communities, and allowing them to become productive members of the workforce

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