

Outcomes Article

Greening TVET and skills development to equip and capacitate future workforce for a just transition

PCCB Network: ILO and RES4AFRICA Foundation



Background

On 27th September 2023, [International Labour Organization \(ILO\)](#) jointly with [RES4AFRICA Foundation](#) and [UNFCCC](#) organised first panel discussion on “ **Greening TVET and skills development to equip and capacitate future workforce for a just transition**”. The event aimed to underscore the importance of skills development, technical and vocational education, and training (TVET) systems, in achieving a just transition to environmentally sustainable economies and societies. It also addressed the challenges and opportunities in greening the TVET sector. Hosted by the UNFCCC [Paris Committee on Capacity-Building \(PCCB\) Network](#), the event brought close to 70 (seventy) various stakeholders.

The high-level panel discussion featured experts from the ILO, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs, and Inclusion of the [European Commission](#), IOE (International Organization of Employers), ETUI (European Trade Union Institute), and RES4AFRICA Foundation, all possessing profound knowledge and expertise discussed how skills development can support preparing the current and future workforce for a sustainable, just, and inclusive transition. The high-level panellist included (in order of the agenda): Mr Moustapha Kamal Gueye, Director, Action Programmes on Just transitions towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies, ILO; Ms Hae Kyeong Chun, Technical Officer, ILO; Ms Manuela Geleng, Director for Jobs and Skills at the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Commission; Mr Wouter Zwysen, Senior Researcher, ETUI; Mr Robert Marinkovic, Advisor, IOE; Mr Roberto Vigotti, Secretary General, RES4AFRICA; and Ms Olga Strietska-Ilina, Senior Skills and Employability Specialist, ILO who moderated the panel-discussion.

The discussion provided valuable insights. With [COP28](#) on the horizon, it's evident that the global climate goals of the Paris Agreement are slipping from our grasp.



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The essence of climate ambition extends beyond numerical targets to encompass human capacity. Ambition entails fostering innovative enterprises, a skilled workforce, and adaptable communities. Skills development, particularly in TVET, plays a pivotal role in this transformation. Furthermore, the ecological transition will impact economies, societies, and labour markets in various ways, both positively and negatively. Maximizing gains and minimizing risks requires the right skills. The concept of a just transition is paramount, with skills development, especially in TVET, playing a crucial role. It also emphasizes the [latest IPCC assessment](#), which underscores the significance of equity, social justice, climate justice, and inclusion as catalysts for climate ambition. This shift in perspective challenges us to reconsider how climate action intersects with decent work and social policy.

The poll findings (see Annex 1) during the event highlighted significant challenges in greening TVET and skills development across multiple countries, including: a lack of investment and funding, weak private sector engagement, skills gaps, coordination issues, and the absence of a sustainable lifelong learning system. These challenges stressed the importance of private sector engagement, collaborative efforts involving training providers, employers, and workers, as well as investment in human resources, innovation, and financing. To enhance the relevance of TVET within a just transition framework, fostering close partnerships with youth, capacity building at various levels, and public-private-academia collaborations was considered essential. Moreover, aligning TVET with broader policy objectives, such as trade and investment, was identified as a crucial step forward.

ILO practical guidance tool on Greening TVET and skills development

The event emphasized the importance of the ILO's practical guidance tool, "[Greening TVET and Skills Development](#)," (published in 2022) which assists TVET stakeholders in systematically integrating green elements into the design of competency standards and curricula for the green transition, as well as in mainstreaming green practices throughout the entire system. The presentation highlighted that the green transition would impact all occupations, including low-skilled, medium-skilled, and high-skilled roles, emphasizing the crucial role of education and training at all levels. It further revealed a growing demand for higher-skilled occupations, particularly for medium-skilled occupations, which holds great implications for TVET programs. This underlines the critical role of greening TVET and skills development in addressing climate and environmental challenges. Additionally, it positions these initiatives as key drivers of the broader green transformation, empowering the workforce with the necessary skills, knowledge, and mindset to instigate positive changes in their workplaces, communities, and society at large.

Navigating TVET and Skills Development for a Just Transition

The panel discussion during the event offered valuable insights into the support required for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions to foster and adapt trainings to the green and just transition. While discussing the importance of equipping the workforce with appropriate technical skills, the conversation encompassed various global initiatives. These initiatives included the European Union's (EU) ambitious Green Deal, designed to create millions of new jobs by 2050. The EU's commitment to facilitating green and digital transitions within TVET was emphasized, with member states developing implementation plans for future vocational education and training reforms.

However, the challenges of skill mismatches, job quality, and effective engagement with social partners and skilled migrants must be addressed for a successful just transition. The discussions also emphasized the importance of business and private sector's engagement with TVET programs, pointing to national context and coordination mechanisms as critical factors for success.



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Initiatives for promoting collaboration between businesses, private sector and educational institutions was given importance. Lastly, supporting and involving young individuals in the just energy transition, capacity building, financing, innovation, and private sector involvement were identified as key enabling policies and factors. These discussions collectively provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities related to TVET, skills development, and just transition.

Elevating Climate Ambition and Fostering Skill Development

The event emphasized the need to raise **climate ambition** and recognized the pivotal role of skill development in achieving these goals. To this end, skills development programs for green transition should expand their reach, targeting both adults and young people. The ambition should extend to include training in entrepreneurship and innovation, acknowledging the youth's role as future agents of green transition policies.

The experts advocated for enhancing the quality and relevance of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs, and emphasized how **private sector partnerships, social dialogue, and policy coherence** play a key role in achieving a just transition. They underscored the importance of job quality standards, access to labour market information, capacity building, and soft and technical skills to drive future innovation as this multifaceted approach charts a path towards a greener and more sustainable future.

Relevant Links and publications:

- [Greening TVET and skills development: A practical guidance tool](#)
- [ILC.111/Record No. 7A. ILC 2023 Resolution and conclusions on a Just Transition](#)
- [Skills Development for a Just Transition](#)
- [Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all](#)
- [European Year on Skills, 2023](#)
- [Skills frameworks and policies for climate action: New IOE policy review](#)
- [Policy brief on the lacking social dimension in the EU's green transition](#)
- [Policy brief on labour vs skill shortages](#)

Meeting Organisers:

- Tahmina Mahmud, Programme Technical Officer, ILO
- Hae Kyeung Chun, Technical Officer, ILO
- Yanghaoyue Xiong, Communications & Planning Junior Officer, ILO
- Pankhury Harbansh, Junior Project Officer, ILO
- Maria Caterina Mattiolo, RES4Africa Foundation
- Eva Costas, PCCB Network Coordinator
- Tshering Ongmu Sherpa, PCCB Network Intern

To learn more about this event, head to the [webpage](#).



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Annex 1

1. What is the biggest challenge that your country face for greening TVET and skills development

Lack of focus on this task	Lack of funding	funding and lack of human capacity
funding, skills gap, coordination	Resources - expertise and funds	skills gap
scale up investment	Lack of a proper sustainable development policy and actions	lack of policy
Skill mismatch	skills gap and lack of private sector engagement	Long processes
lack of skills and interest from the TVET	No dedicated frameworks and systems approach, most jobs and activities are still conventional	lack of knowledge of the opportunities existing in the green transition
Lack of specific programs	Inconsistency with other policies such as trade and investment	Skill mismatch
skills gap and funding	lack of funding and ecosystem	funding and private sector engagement
investment	poverty	collaboration between public and private sector, social dialogue and coordination
Funding and sector engaging	Skills gap	No sustainable system for lifelong learning



2. What is your suggestion to increase the relevance of TVET in the context of just transition

Stronger alignment of TVET with other policy objectives (eg. trade and investment)	base it on accurate skills occupational change and skills forecasts, in full collaboration with private sectors. also, must address needs of women as they mostly stay away from VET paths	Create awareness, increase funding and make changes in TVET policies
Professional development of educators and upgrading of qualifications and curricula	Tailor to local socio-economic contexts and build on existing practices of just transition	Make needed skills publically known
need collaboration between administration/education institutions/private sector to make sure the opportunities are known, the education system offers the skills needed, awareness of companies'needs	creation of innovative labs	dedicated skills frameworks at national level which can guide action and sectoral approach
more resources should be allocated	engage private sector	Innovative engagements clearly sharing about greening TVETs and the impact
Establish learning and communicating communities, regions and countries in ONE sustainable World	capacity-building at the individual, institutional and systemic level	bringing training providers, employers and workers organizations together in greening TVET system with more innovation, financing and human investments with close collaboration with YOUTH!
public/private/academia partnership to eliminate skill gap	engage industry and workers	Understanding and commitment of stakeholders
Provide seed grants for startup		

