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**The Current Major Practices and Challenges to Promote Continuing and
Lifelong Learning: the case of TVET Progression to
Private Higher Education**

By

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Abstract

The Ethiopian school systems differentiate between higher education entrance preparatory and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) routes or streams at the end of completion of grade 10. Accordingly, the best students prefer to join preparatory programmes for it subsequently lead them to university/higher education, while middle- or low-achievers are enrolled in TVET institutions/centers in which they are trained in various vocational fields but rare to enter to higher education. A low status of TVET vis-à-vis higher education entrance preparatory program is also unresolved issue in Ethiopia.

Meanwhile, it is recommended that TVET should be a part of general education and the system need to facilitate smooth continuing and lifelong learning and ensure continuous entry, exit and re-entry points and seamless pathways for learners to progress to higher education so that all citizens have access to lifelong learning(UNESCO & ILO, 2002:31). It is from this point of view that this study was designed with the purpose of assessing current major practices and challenges in implementing the principles of continuing and lifelong learning specifically with regard to TVET pathways to higher education.

The scope of the study was delimited to selected public TVET colleges and private higher education institutes that are currently working on TVET programs. The major sources of data for the study were officials, department heads, major courses and common courses-instructors of sample TVET colleges and private higher education institutes. Moreover, policy and strategy papers, official documents, statistical evidences, guidelines, instructional materials and manuals especially devoted to TVET and higher education programs were used as secondary sources of data.

The analysis and discussion was carried out in relation to Ethiopian National TVET Strategy, the recommendations put by UNESCO & ILO and contemporary and world-wide accepted theories, principles and practices with regard to TVET and continuing and lifelong learning. After analyzing and discussing the data systematically, finally the research has come out with findings, conclusions and recommendations

The findings revealed that the extent the TVET system has an exit pathways for TVET graduates to enter higher education was weak. The level of cooperation and dialogue made among the TVET and higher education sectors in the issue of TVET pathways to higher

education was also unsatisfactory. Accordingly, it was recommended that there should be straightforward and sound entry, exit and re-entry points for TVET programs. Hence, TVET and higher education sectors need to take numerous initiatives to solve the problems by making sure that TVET students are not barred from entering higher education. Some TVET major and common course instructors as well as TVET learners comprehend yet as if TVET programmes were for those who fail to join higher education entrance preparatory programs. MoE need to work on awareness creation with regard to these issues for the society in general, and for teachers as well as for students in particular.

Introduction

TVET is used as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences, and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life (UNESCO & ILO, 2002:7).

The Government of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has introduced the new Education and Training Policy (ETP) and Education Sector Strategy in 1994 that stipulate the provision of middle level technical and vocational training areas of different sectors to students that have completed general education (grade 10).

The strategic thinking behind the expansion of TVET sub-sector in Ethiopia is to meet the middle level human power required for the industry, service sector and commercial agriculture, which have become very essential to the overall development of the country.

The TVET strategy states that the TVET system will promote vertical and horizontal mobility and progression between different TVET occupations and different levels of qualification, but also between TVET and general higher education. The strategy also

stipulates the system to provide life-long learning opportunities people can continuously enhance their recognised qualifications (MoE, 2007:9).

UNESCO, on its part also strongly recommends that TVET should be a part of general education and the system need to facilitate smooth running and lifelong learning and ensure continuous entry, exit and re-entry points and seamless pathways for learners to progress to general and higher education so as to make all citizens have access to lifelong learning (UNESCO & ILO, 2002:31).

However the TVET strategy and UNESCO's recommendation in which the principles and theories to continuing and lifelong learning opportunities, could not be as such implemented specifically in the case of TVET progression to higher education.

Statement of the problem

The Ethiopian school system differentiates the routes or streams between general education and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) at the end of completion of grade 10. The issue of whether TVET streams are for those who fail to be selected for preparatory school has been controversial in Ethiopia.

In this regard, it is rarely seen when students with good performance in grade 10 national examination join TVET in Ethiopia. Merely the students with no alternative are obliged to join the stream.

A low status of TVET vis-à-vis general education is also on unresolved issue in Ethiopia. The initiative designed to reduce the gap between the two routes and achieve parity of social status (esteem) among the TVET and academic students is not satisfactory.

All these challenges occurred for nothing but mainly due to the ignorance of the principles of continuing and lifelong learning, and thereby closing the path of the educations at all level and specifically, the path of TVET progression to higher education.

It is from this point and others that the researcher needs to investigate the major current practices and challenges to promote continuing and lifelong learning specifically in the case of TVET progression to private higher education.

Hypothesis of the study

The study is designed to assess the major challenges of implementing the principles of continuing and lifelong learning in the case of TVET progression to higher education in Addis Ababa.

The study therefore proves or disproves the following hypotheses:

- The Ethiopian TVET system is not free from the ‘front end’ model
- The principles of continuing and lifelong learning have not been widely practiced as guiding principles in TVET and higher education?
- There are very limited pathways for TVET graduates to enter higher education
- There exists disparity of esteem/social status among TVET learners and preparatory students
- The curriculum designed for TVET does not include sufficient general education elements/common courses that enable learner to progress to higher education

Objective of the Study

The general objective of the study is to assess the major challenges/problems in implementing principles of continuing and lifelong learning specifically in the case of

TVET progression to higher education in Addis Ababa. The main focus of the study here is to study to what extent the system really allows TVET students to progress to higher education. In other words, it aims to assess the extent to which TVET system promotes progression of TVET to higher education.

The study also has investigated the extent of vertical and horizontal mobility and progression between different TVET occupations and different qualification levels that affect TVET progression to higher education.

In light of these objectives, the specific objectives of this study are to:

1. Assess whether the common courses designed for TVET are sufficient in their contexts and contents so as to enable TVET graduates to join higher education;
2. Identify whether the entry, exit and re-entry points allow learners to have access to join higher education;
3. Identify constraints that challenge the TVET progression to higher education
4. Propose recommendations to improve practices in implementing continuing and lifelong principles in TVET and higher education systems

Significance of the Study

One of the key problems of TVET is the incapability of the TVET system to enable TVET graduates to join higher education institutions. In other words, the TVET should have been infused in the framework of continuing and lifelong learning.

Thus, the study is said to be significant for the following reasons.

1. The study presents policy makers and educational authorities what stakeholders and partners in general, private higher education institutes and

TVET colleges in particular, recommendation about continuing and lifelong learning in light of TVET progression to higher education;

2. The study shows policy makers and educational authorities what UNESCO has recommended and what has been put on the strategy and policy-papers and thereby see the existing gap between these principles and theories and what is being practiced;
3. The study has practical importance for its propositions serve the improvement of the TVET system and gives guidelines in the issue of TVET progression to higher education;
4. The study may serve as a stepping stone for further and in-depth studies about the issue of continuing and lifelong learning in general, and the issue of TVET progression to higher education in particular.

Scope of the Study

The aim of the study is not to criticize the outcome based TVET System- in which Ethiopia has embarked on a process of reforming its TVET-System. It is beyond the scope of this paper to present proposal for reforming the present TVET system of the country. The study has mainly focused on the current practices and major challenges in implementing the concepts and principles of continuing and lifelong learning specifically in the case of TVET progression to higher education.

Since numerous private higher education institutions are working on TVET and higher education programs, the scope of the study is delimited to selected TVET colleges and private higher education institutions that are currently working on TVET programs in Addis Ababa. The private higher education institutes are selected because there are numerous private higher education institutes as compared to that of government higher education institutions in Addis Ababa. These private higher educations are the ones

that are adversely affected by the limitation of TVET progression to higher education for most of them have set out in providing TVET programmes at both college and university levels.

Limitation of the Study

The researcher could not get studies that have already been carried out on the issue of lifelong learning in relation to TVET. Hence, absence of relevant materials could affect the study. Time constraint was also one of the major challenges for the researcher; to obtain data from both TVET colleges and higher education institutes, after all, takes a lot of time.

Because of time limitation, the TVET learners could not have been considered in the sample representative as sources of data. Therefore, some information from TVET learners that would contribute to the study could not be found.

Definition of Key Terms

- Lifelong learning, continuing learning and recurrent learning are some of those phrases that are banded about and tend to mean different things to different people. For some, it is about encouraging people to learn throughout their lives, often with an emphasis on the intrinsic value of education and learning. For others, it is about adult participation in the formal, non formal and informal education sector, or about retraining in mature life for an alternative occupation. Other emphases include an overarching rather than a sector specific approach. (<http://www.ics.uci.edu/~bork>)
- lifelong learning acknowledges essentially two inter-related facts:
 - ✓ That learning is lifelong (not confined to particular period in life) i.e., it therefore concerns everything from cradle to grave;

- ✓ That learning is lifewide (not confined to school and schooling) i.e., it is recognizing that learning occurs in many different settings; (D. Richard and R. Kjell, 2006)
- lifelong learning can be taken to cover the whole lifecycle, from womb to tomb (Skager and Dave 1978)
- **Continuing Learning**
 - ✓ Refers to the act of furthering ones education beyond a level that has already been achieved (e.g. continuing to study after finishing a universal degree)
 - ✓ It is one form of adult education, but not the only form of extension
 - ✓ It focuses primarily on individuals who live in rural and small town communities
 - ✓ It is usually vocational in nature
 - ✓ It includes continuing professional education (Skager and Dave 1978)

Organization of the Study

The study consists of five chapters. The first chapter deals with the problem and its approaches. It covers the back ground of the study, the statement of the problem, objective, delimitation and limitation of the study. The second chapter deals with research design and methods. In this chapter the methods and techniques used in executing the study are all described. The third chapter contains results and discussion of the problem. The researcher presents here analysis and discussion of the data. The summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study is presented in the fourth chapter. Finally, bibliography and other relevant documents are appended.

Research Design and Methods

Research Design

The method employed in this study was a descriptive study. Descriptive study was selected because the study attempts to show the existing concepts, practices and major challenges in implementing the principles of continuing and lifelong learning.

Sources of Data

The major sources of data for the study were officials, department heads, major course and common course lecturers/instructors of both TVET colleges and private higher education institutes.

Moreover, policy, strategies, official documents, statistical evidences, guidelines, instructional materials and manuals especially devoted to TVET and higher education programs were used as sources of data.

Population and Sampling

The populations of the study are private higher education institutes/university-colleges and government TVET colleges.

For the study, four private higher education institutes, namely, St. Mary's University College, Alpha University College, Admas University College and Rift Valley University College and three TVET colleges, namely, Addis Ababa Tegbared TVET College, Entoto TVET College and General Wingate TVET College are selected on the basis of purpose and convenience.

Instruments used for data collection

To secure adequate information, two basic instruments are used. These are questionnaire and document analysis. The questionnaire contained close-ended and open-ended items. Depending on the types of question items, choices and rating scales are used in the questionnaire. Moreover, relevant documents such as Education and Training Policy, and TVET strategy and UNESCO's publications are used so as to increase the reliability of the information. In addition to these, 11 and 12 grade-English, Mathematics and Civics text-books were analyzed to compare and contrast the units and contents as well as time allotted for TVET and preparatory programmes.

Method of data analysis

The data analysis tool involves content analysis of documents and responses to both close ended and open ended questions. Both qualitative and quantitative methods of analyzing data are used. The raw data that had been collected are tallied, organized and systematically framed with tables according to the similarities of issues raised in the questionnaire. The data analysis and discussion are carried out using percentage statistical methods. Percentage is used to analyze various characteristics of the sample representatives. Besides, narrative approach is wisely used to analyze and discuss the data obtained from the questionnaire and the documents. The discussion is carried in relation to recommendations put by UNESCO and the accepted theories and principles with regard to TVET and continuing and lifelong learning.

Table 1. Samples and respondents considered in the study

No	Location	TVET colleges and Private Higher education institutes							
		Higher education institutes				TVET colleges			
		University Colleges	MCI/L*	CCT**	Total	TVET College	MCI/L	CCT	Total
1	Addis Ababa	St. Mary	4	3	7	Tegbare-id	4	4	8
2	Addis Ababa	Alpha	3	2	5	Entoto	3	3	6
3	Addis Ababa	Admas	2	1	3	General Wingate	2	0	2
4	Addis Ababa	Rift Valley	2	1	3				
Total			11	7			9	7	16

MCI/L *=Major Course Instructors/Lecturers, CCT**=Common Course Teachers

Presentation and Analysis of Data

This chapter is concerned with the presentation and analysis of data collected and information obtained from the study of documents. The discussion is carried in relation to recommendations put by UNESCO and ILO and the contemporary and world wide accepted theories and principles with regard to TVET, continuing and lifelong learning.

The responses of respondents are rated on five rating scale of very weak, weak, medium, strong and very strong. The results of the rating were converted into percentage.

Transformation and mobility between TVET occupations and qualification levels

The Ethiopian TVET strategy points out that the TVET system would promote vertical and horizontal mobility and progression between different TVET occupations and different qualification levels as well as between TVET and higher education (MoE, 2007: 9)

UNESCO & ILO also have recommended the following:

“TVET should begin with a broad base which facilitates horizontal and vertical articulation within the education system and between school and the world of work, thus contributing to the elimination of all forms of discrimination, and should be designed so that it allows transform from one field to another within TVET” (UNESCO & ILO, 2002: 9)

Table 1 Mobility between TVET occupation and qualification levels

No.	Items	Respon dents	Rating Scores					Total
			Very weak	Weak	Medium	Strong	Very strong	
1	The extent the TVET system allows transform from one field to another within TVET	MCI/L	12	4	2	1	-	19
		CCT	7	5	2	1	-	15
		Total	19	9	4	2	-	34
		%	55.9	26.4	11.7	5.9	-	100
2	The extent of existence of vertical mobility and progression between same TVET occupations and different qualification levels	MCI/L	3	8	4	4	-	19
		CCT	7	4	3	-	1	15
		Total	10	12	7	4	-	34
		%	29.4	35.3	20.6	11.7	2.9	100

MCI/L= Major Course Instructors/Lecturers, CCT=Common Course Teachers

Table 1 shows that 55.9 % and 26.4% respondents have indicated that the extent the TVET system allows to transform from one field to another within TVET are very weak and weak, respectively. Furthermore, 29.4% and 35.3% respondents, respectively, have indicated that the existence of vertical mobility and progression between same TVET occupations and different qualification levels are very weak and weak.

This shows that the TVET system does not allow as such transformation from one field to another within TVET nor does it allow vertical mobility and progression between TVET occupations and different levels. Hence, these problems could

adversely affect TVET learners to progress to higher education due to the narrowness of the pathways to higher education.

Progression of TVET to higher education and stakeholders' participation

With regard to the importance of partnership and networks among TVET and higher education, UNESCO & ILO have also recommended the following:

“TVET should develop close interfaces with all other sectors to facilitate seamless pathways for learners with an emphasis on articulation, accreditation and recognition of prior learning”
(UNESCO & ILO, 2002: 31)

The Ethiopian TVET strategy also puts that the TVET system would promote progression between TVET and higher education (MoE, 2007: 9)

With regard to this issue, the respondents were asked to rate the level of the existence of TVET progression to higher education and the interfaces between TVET and higher education institutes.

Table 2 TVET progression to higher education and stakeholders' participation

No.	Items	Respo ndents	Rating Scores					Total
			Very weak	Weak	Medium	Strong	Very strong	
1	The extent TVET has an exit pathway for TVET graduates to enter higher education	MCI/L	8	6	4	1	-	19
		CCT	8	5	1	-	1	15
		Total	16	11	5	1	1	34
		%	47.0	32.3	14.7	2.9	2.9	100
2	The extent TVET has developed close interfaces with higher education institutes to facilitate seamless pathways for learners to progress to higher education	MCI/L	9	6	4	-	-	19
		CCT	9	4	1	-	1	15
		Total	18	10	5	-	1	34
		%	52.9	29.4	14.7	-	2.9	100

As depicted in table 2, 47.0% and 32.3% of respondents have explained that the extent the TVET has an exit pathway for TVET graduate to admit higher education were

very weak and weak, respectively. In the same manner, 52.9% and 29.4% of respondents have indicated/rated that the interfaces of TVET with higher education to facilitate pathways for learners to progress to higher education were very poor/weak and weak respectively.

This shows that TVET lacks clear-cut pathways for TVET graduates to be admitted to higher education institutes. Besides, the existing partnership and network between TVET and higher education, in respect to this issue, is loose. This, in turn, could result in weakening the access of TVET progression to higher education

Common Courses and TVET

Common courses are not directly related to a specific occupation or occupational field, e.g. IT, Entrepreneurship etc. they encompass additional educational content - based on social demands (MoE, 2007: 26). Common courses are also vital to be a bridge to link TVET and higher education. There are no special common courses designed for TVET program. Text-books already prepared for preparatory classes have been used for TVET program too. These materials, which have been provided for both TVET and preparatory programmes, are grade 11 and 12 English, mathematics and Civics text books.

The common course materials prepared for TVET and preparatory programmes are similar, while the units and contents allowed to be covered in TVET programmes are not the same as those for preparatory classes.

With regard to whether the curriculum designed for TVET include sufficient common course/general education element that fit TVET learners to progress to higher education, the respondents were asked to rate their responses and the result was as follows:

Table 3 Common courses and their appropriateness

Item		Rating Scores					Total
		Very weak	Weak	Medium	Strong	Very strong	
The extent the curriculum designed for TVET include sufficient general/common courses education elements sufficiently so that they enable learner to progress to higher education	MCI/L	3	2	8	4	2	19
	CCT	6	1	1	5	2	15
	Total	9	3	9	9	4	34
	%	26.4	8.8	26.4	26.4	11.8	100

As indicated in Table 3, 26.4% and 8.8% respondents have rated that the common courses designed for TVET are not sufficient, while 26.4% and 11.8% of the respondents have confirmed that the common course designed were enough and suitable to fit for the TVET learners to allow them to enter university. According to the open-ended questions forwarded for respondents, most respondents, once again, have supported the idea that the common courses prepared mainly for preparatory classes were so far enough and fit to TVET learners. Meanwhile, some of the respondents argued that the common courses for the TVET learners need to be separable from preparatory class for the educational goals and aims are different. Others also have still argued that the time allotted for the common courses for the TVET program are not enough as such to complete the courses when compared to the time allotted for preparatory. Furthermore, some respondents have suggested that in order TVET common courses to be fully fledged to enable TVET graduates join higher education, some courses like Physics and Chemistry courses need to be included in the programs specifically for industrial and construction TVET programmes.

Table 4. The course & time allotted for common courses and TVET programmes

Subjects	Preparatory class		TVET Class
	Units covered for Grade 11	Units covered (for Grade 12)	Units not covered in TVET common courses (Levels I – IV/V)
English	1 -14 (All units)	1 -9 (All units)	7,8,9 (from grade 12)
Mathematics	1 – 9 (All units)	1 – 7 (All units)	7,8,9 (from grade 11) 6,7 (from grade 12)
Civics	All units	All units	-

As already explained, the common courses designed for preparatory and TVET classes are similar. As depicted in Table 4, the preparatory classes need to cover all the contents in the text books while the TVET learners should not. That is, there are some units that are never covered in TVET programmes. These are units-7, 8,9 from English for grade 12; units-7,8, 9 and units-6 & 7 from Mathematics for grade 11 and for grade 12 consecutively. Despite the slight difference in units covered between the two classes, there is significant difference between the time allotment for preparatory and for that of TVET classes.

Entry, exit and Re-entry issues

With regard to the curriculum designed for TVET programmes so as to facilitate smooth continuing and lifelong learning and ensure continuous entry, exit and re-entry points, UNESCO has to put the following:

“In addition to permitting adults to make up deficiencies in general or vocational education, which has often been its sole objective, continuing education should now offer possibilities for personal development and professional advancement by providing flexibility in programme administration and curriculum design to facilitate smooth lifelong learning and ensure continuous entry, exit and re-entry points” (UNESCO & ILO, 2002: 31)

Table 5 Entry, re-entry and exit points for TVET

Items	respon dents	Rating Scores					Total
		Very weak	Weak	Medium	strong	Very strong	
The extent the curriculum designed for TVET facilitates smooth continuing and lifelong learning and ensure continuous entry, exit and re-entry points so that TVET learners have access to the pathways of continuing and lifelong learning	MCI/L	6	6	3	3	1	19
	CCT	4	6	3	2		15
	Total	10	12	6	5	1	34
	%	29.4	35.3	17.6	14.7	2.9	100

As indicated in Table 5, the majority (29.4% and 35.3%) of the respondents have indicated that the level of the TVET to facilitate smooth continuing and lifelong learning and the extent it ensures continuous entry, exit and re-entry points is very weak and weak, respectively. In this regard, the Ethiopian TVET sector has designed various entry and exit requirements. The TVET Curriculum Development Guideline has put the following statement:

“No special target group is assigned for TVET programme. To enter the programme, a candidate shall at least successfully complete 10th grade general education” (MoE, 2007: 49).

In its reform, the TVET system has currently transformed the 10+1, 10+2 and 10+3 TVET programs to occupational levels-I, II, III, IV and V programs, Based on this transformation, the entry requirements/points for TVET programmes have been put as the following:

- Those students who sat for the Ethiopian General Secondary School Certificate Examination (EGSCE) are allowed to be admitted to level III TVET programs;
- Those who score 2.0 and above in EGSCE can join level IV TVET programs;

- Those who score 2.0 and above in EGSCE and pass the level III/IV Occupational Assessment can be admitted to level V TVET programs.

(Source: Official Notice Letter - 4/1-355/11667/35, Date 26-01-2001 E.C.)

In connection with the progression of TVET graduates to higher education, one should fulfill all the following requirements:

- score 2.0 and above in EGSCE
- pass the level III/IV Occupational Assessment
- pass university entrance
- have 2 years service

With regard to this, a respondent has said, “This is equivalent to providing one with raw meat but prohibiting a knife”.

Preference of TVET and preparatory programmes

It is known that the Ethiopian school systems differentiate between general education and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) routes or streams at the end of completion of grade 10. Accordingly, students are allowed to choose either of the two programmes. The respondents were asked which of the two routes/streams (TVET or preparatory) they do prefer first. Table 6 shows their response.

Table 6 Preference of students to TVET/preparatory programmes

Item	Alternatives	Responses	
		No.	%
Which of the following routes/streams do the 10 th grade complete students you think prefer first?	TVET class	-	-
	Preparatory class	34	100

According to Table 6, all (100%) of the respondents indicated that preparatory classes are preferred to TVET programs. The respondents identified the following main reasons for preferring preparatory program to TVET:

- The opportunity of higher learning progression of preparatory students to higher education.
- The students and their parents assume that degree holder through preparatory is more earning and more prospect than TVET graduate;
- The learners do not want to be middle level professionals for lifelong
- Misconceptions on TVET in Ethiopia

The issue of disparity of status

The respondents were also asked if there existed disparity of social status/esteem among the TVET learners and preparatory students. Their response is indicated in Table 7, below.

Table 7. Disparity of esteem

Item	Responses			
	Yes		No	
	Number	%	Number	%
Do you think that there exists disparity of social status/esteem among TVET and preparatory students?	32	94.1	2	5.9

According to Table 8, 94% of respondents have indicated that there existed disparity of social status among TVET and preparatory students. The respondents have put forward the following reason for the disparity:

- Most of the TVET learners are hopeless because their chance to continue their higher learning/education is much limited;

- Certificate graduates are not demanded in the labor market
- TVET students are low achievers and they look down on themselves in succeeding in their studies. Therefore, the outstanding students do not want to join this group;
- The trainees consider themselves as if they were failures and have no opportunities to promote themselves within the TVET system;
- It is because preparatory students are said to be elite, literate etc, undermining TVET students

The common course-teachers are also asked whether the common courses they are providing TVET learners are sufficient in its contents so as to enable TVET graduates pursue further higher education. Table 9 shows their responses:

Table 8 Adequacy of Common courses

Item	Responses			
	Yes		No	
	No.	%	No.	%
Do you think common course that you are currently teaching, sufficient enough in its contents for cadet TVET learners to progress to higher education?	8	53.3	7	46.7

According to Table 9, 53% of the respondents have approved that common courses designed for TVET programme are sufficient and adequate for TVET learners to join higher education. The rest respondent, (46.7), argued that the common courses designed for TVET programme are not as such adequate for TVET learners to enable them join higher education. They have put the following justification for their argument:

- It is not prepared for TVET learners. It is irrelevant to TVET subject they are supposed to major;

- The course is not designed for TVET learners. They have been taught with grade 11 and 12 text books. There should be another text designed for them like college English, college Mathematics;
- Its contents and time allotted hardly allow them to be competitive as compared to preparatory students.
- The common courses given to TVET trainees are part of what the preparatory students take. Because of this, it can bring a negative impact on TVET trainees when they pursue their further education

Finally respondents are asked as to what initiatives to be taken by policy-makers to solve the disparity of social status/esteem among the TVET and preparatory students.

They pointed as follows:

- Courses for the TVET program should have equal standard to preparatory program;
- TVET students should have pathway to higher education like that of preparatory students;
- Every TVET course should be designed for a semester;
- Awareness about TVET should be created;
- Instead of assigning a student who achieve low grade to TVET program, the students should be allowed to choose to join either TVET or preparatory based on their interest;
- The way for competent TVET graduates should be free of preconditions (like-giving service, taking occupational assessment, etc). Let only universities provide entrance exams for their candidates;

- The government needs to assign not only students who failed but also those individuals who have interest and fulfill the requirements to join TVET

Respondents are also asked to indicate the major challenges and constraints that hamper TVET progression to higher education and the solution they think ought to be. They pointed out as follows:

- There should be consistent and uniform rules and regulations in the country, for instance, regional public institutions admit 10+3 students to a degree program despite their being prohibited by the MoE policy;
- The grading system in TVET program should be changed to letter grading system or higher education grading to number grading system;
- Major and common courses should be designed in a way they are able to facilitate pathways and be accepted by higher education in the same stream;
- Each course should be completed within one semester;
- Give enough training at TVET institution to make the trainees competent at higher education;
- Academic subjects should be given due attention;
- There should be a bridge course for TVET learners before they sit for higher education entrance in order to join higher learning institution;
- There should be immediate program of entering to the higher education for TVET students;
- Review the Education policy in line with lifelong education;
- The policy should allow TVET learners to continue their education by dismantling unnecessary barriers;

- Vertical integration between TVET and higher education should be strengthened;
- The grading system should be in line with the higher education system;
- The entry requirements should be somewhat close to that of the preparatory. There should not be a significant difference;
- Let the TVET learners also take grade 12 national exam that would enable them join higher education;

Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter presents concluding remarks and forwards recommendations on the basis of the findings of the study.

Conclusions

One of the central debates about Ethiopian TVET is concerned with participation. The question of whether TVET streams are for those who fail to be selected for preparatory school has a decade history in Ethiopia. Regarding enrolment of the 10th grade complete students, the best students prefer preparatory high schools for they subsequently lead them to university/higher education, while middle- or low-achievers are enrolled in TVET institutions/centers in which they are trained in various vocational fields but rarely do they enter higher education. In other words, the students with good achievements in 10th grade National Examination that enables or leads them to join higher education seldom aspire to join TVET programmes.

One of the reasons why students with good achievement do not join TVET is the incapability of the TVET system to be free from the “front end” model and the non-existence of stable, clear-cut and straightforward directions that provide guarantee for TVET learners to have opportunities to continue and lifelong learn after completing

their TVET programmes. It could also be noted that the weakness of the vertical and horizontal mobility and progression between different TVET occupations and different qualification levels by itself could negatively affect TVET progression to higher education. This in return, could result in disparity of esteem/status between TVET learners and preparatory students. In this connection, the study investigated that the extent of vertical and horizontal mobility and progression between different TVET occupations and different qualification levels is weak and thus it could affect TVET progression to higher education.

The content of the common courses in both programmes have similarity. The difference relies on the methodology (the way of providing the course). The preparatory students are considered as high school students and so the way the teachers present the lesson might not be different from the other grades. But, the teachers may not be strict in providing them lessons to TVET learners because they themselves think that TVET learners are not the ones who would pursue their further education.

Furthermore, preparatory students follow the courses with the feeling that they are going to use them for their future career (college education). At TVET level, however, students consider these courses as imposed by MoE or college managers. They feel that some of them are irrelevant for the courses (majors) they are pursuing. They attend classes for the sake of attendance since they do not think that these common courses would help them pursue their further education. It requires a great effort from the instructors, family members to convince them that the courses are relevant and useful.

Hence, unless these restraining problems are solved, society may believe that TVET is for low achievers.

In general, limited opportunities for TVET learners' progression to higher education makes students become reluctant to enroll in the sector and leads society to assume that TVET learners are not as equal as preparatory students in terms of prestige.

All these holdbacks implicitly and explicitly hurt the TVET system and may gradually disable the country's middle and high level man power.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and the conclusions drawn, the researcher recommends the following.

Most problems with regard to TVET progression to higher education do not lie on the strategies formulated and developed because the strategy takes lifelong learning and permeability as guiding principles to TVET. Nevertheless, it could not be seen implemented due to vague guidelines. Therefore, the guidelines need to put clear vertical and horizontal mobility and progression between different TVET occupations and different qualification levels. There should be also straightforward and sound entry, exit and re-entry points/requirements for TVET programme. In regard to this issue, forcing a TVET graduate for 2 years before applying to a university and presenting the results of occupational assessment as entry requirements for higher education seems unacceptable, since it is not only a strong impediment for one to get to higher education, but also a wastage of time and equivalent to punishment for the graduate and discouragement to training institutes. Therefore, there should be linkage /articulation between Middle level TVET program and tertiary level (higher education). In other words, education should begin education so that those students

who have completed middle level program need to have access to join tertiary level studies.

One of the means to ensure sustainability of education is that there should be systematic vertically and horizontally interrelated curriculum components between consecutive grades. Hence, there should be a kind of bridge or smooth transfer from one form to another. In other words, there should be linkage articulation within a subject among consecutive grades. One of the means to perform this is to have bridge courses that are nearly common. There are common courses in the Ethiopian TVET, but they are somewhat different from the academic ones in their context/content as well as in their depth and length.

Most causes for non enrolment of students with good achievement to higher education, is the misconception about who is to participate. One of the most important initiatives needed to be taken by the government is, to solve this problem by making sure that the TVET could accommodate a good composition of slow, medium and fast learner students in terms of academic performance/achievement.

In order TVET common courses to be fully fledged to enable TVET graduates join higher education, some essential bridge courses need to be developed; for instance, Physics and Chemistry courses should be included in industrial and construction TVET programmes. Furthermore, the time allotment for each bridge/common course needs to be justified correctly.

With regard to the existing disparity among the TVET and preparatory students, numerous initiatives need to be designed to reduce the gap between the two routes and achieve parity of social status/esteem among them. One of the most necessary initiatives need to be taken by policy makers is, to solve this problem by making sure

that TVET students are not barred from entering higher education. Clear progression opportunities must, therefore, be offered to TVET graduates to create continuity and make TVET more attractive to students. The final objective need to ensure that TVET route enables students to achieve the highest levels of qualification.

There should be standardized secondary school leaving examinations for TVET learners, which could be used as a benchmark for university admission. In order to do this, there should not be significance differences in quality among TVET institutes/colleges and the capacity of university to accommodate TVET.

The community and society in general, the students and TVET teachers understand TVET programmes are meant only for those who fail to join preparatory programmes. Therefore, the government needs to work on awareness creation in this aspect so that the students, parents and teachers need to comprehend this is a misconception.

In order to plan and implement the TVET programmes effectively, government agencies, NGOs and other stakeholders in general, and TVET and higher education sectors in particular should work together. Actually, the existing partnership and network among the TVET and higher education are weak. The non-existence of partnership among the stakeholders and beneficiaries could also pose threat to experience sharing among them. Therefore, TVET sector should develop close interfaces with higher education institutes to work together, specifically in designing and developing bridge courses so as to facilitate seamless pathways for learners to progress to higher education

Finally, the government needs to develop an explicit policy of lifelong and continuing education in general, and for TVET in particular that introduces:

- a culture of continuing and lifelong learning in Ethiopia;

- Reducing barriers to existing education and training opportunities for citizens;
- Developing a linkage of TVET with the higher learning so as to enable one join higher education as a lifelong learning;
- Ensuring availability and sustainability of TVET at all stages from low to high level as far as possible.

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