



TORINO PROCESS: LEARNING FROM EVIDENCE

NEWSLETTER

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Education and training: the backbone of social transformation

'We must recognise that the education must be the backbone of the transformation of governance,' said Saïd Aïdi, Tunisia's Minister of Vocational Training and Employment, at the opening of the ETF 'Learning from evidence' conference in Turin.



The event gathered some 200 top policymakers and experts from countries surrounding the EU to discuss how to make better education and employment policies based on evidence.

The conference was an opportunity to present the results of the Torino Process: a policy review initiative, during which ETF experts, and their counterparts in twenty seven countries, looked at the situation in vocational education and training, and the links between business and education.

The research presented at the conference provided wealth of data and analysis for decision-makers. The findings have potential to help countries reform their education and employment policies, and also make EU external assistance better tailored to countries' needs.

Philippe Brunet, Head of Cabinet of Commissioner Vassiliou, Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, European Commission said that the EU was about to adopt new neighbourhood policy in the following days, which would give an important role to education and culture.

'In the recent enlargement of the EU, we saw that the investment in your neighbourhood pays off, said Mr Brunet. 'The same investment must be now done in the countries surrounding the EU. And this investment will benefit the investor.'



'The Torino Process is a comparative study in education, in which we can learn and take what is best from other countries; we have a lot of difference between us, but also lot of commonalities, and shared interests,'

Pierre Mairesse, Directorate General for Education and Culture, European Commission



'The best way to predict future is to invent it. If you have a vision then you are inventing the future of your country and together with your people you are going to make it. It's important to maintain a long-term perspective 10-20 years, while understanding the pressures of politics and media that require short-term solutions.'

Madlen Serban, Director, ETF

The Torino Process 'can help create win-win situation for both Egypt and Europe'.

Ahmad Hassan El Borai, Egypt's Minister of Manpower



'It would be a historic error to sweep away ten past years of work in education because of regime change. They were very positive changes. We must recognise that the education must be the backbone of the transformation of governance in this region. We must build confidence among citizens, between citizens and government, and citizens and the world of business.'

Saïd Aïdi, Minister of Vocational Training and Employment of Tunisia

EGYPT’S LEARNING REVOLUTION

Education has a key role to play in helping ensure the stability and longevity of Egypt’s ‘people power’ revolution, says Ahmad Hassan El Borai, the country’s manpower minister.

“The focus in the past has been on economic development, not human capital development. Now education has an important role to play and in Cairo we have set our key objective as equality. We want to use vocational education and training as the means to eliminate the gap between the market and demands of the workplace.”

The Torino Process can help drive that change and ensure the correct policies are put in place to reduce unemployment and increase social stability.

Financial and logistical support to help implement the process are important factors, the minister stressed.

Reducing Egypt’s high level of unemployment – particularly among young people – could create a “win-win situation for both Egypt and Europe,” El Borai said.



“Eliminating unemployment would help Egypt and help Europe by curbing illegal migration.”

El Borai does not under-estimate the challenge his country faces: over the next ten years Egypt needs to create 800,000 jobs if it is address current levels of unemployment.

He is confident Egypt’s new leadership will rise to the challenge.

“The revolutionary leadership wants to decrease theoretical education and increase vocational training in order to succeed and overcome this challenge.”

HARD FACTS CAN HELP DRIVE POLICY REFORM – SAY MINISTERS

Hard facts are the driving force for training reforms in regions as diverse as Central Asia and the Middle East. Developing VET in Kyrgyzstan is crucial to economic development in areas that include gold and other precious metal extraction, energy, tourism, agriculture and industry, Kanat Sadykov, the Minister of Education and Science said.

Understanding the importance of evidence in creating the partnerships necessary to building a dynamic and transparent new system structure, is essential to the process.

“These developments reflect those in the European Union; our long-term strategy is a new, modern system of education,” Sadykov said.

A better educated, economically successful population has a greater stake in stability too, says Lamis Alami, the Minister of Education and

Higher Education in the occupied Palestinian territory.

“When people are better off, usually they do not want to lose a house or a car. Their direction is geared toward economic and social status.

“I am sure if more employment opportunities are created in Palestine – particularly in Gaza where the situation is much worse than in the West Bank – this is going to contribute to the peace process.”



EASTERN APPROACHES: VET RISING UP THE AGENDA BUT EVIDENCE THIN IN SOME AREAS

Political support for vocational education and training is increasing across Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Western Balkans and Turkey, but better fact-gathering could improve policy making, stakeholders from the regions say.

Better understanding of the relevance of skills to economic growth, improved business and education links, and moves towards more tightly targeted qualifications are all helping to improve the awareness and attractiveness of training.

Growth is hampered by a lack of a strong evidence base and a more cohesive approach to data collection in some countries, participants in roundtables on setting and validating regional policy priorities.

Addressing those issues is essential in territories where economic and social growth suffer from a brain drain of the better qualified and educated people, continuing vocational training and lifelong learning are undeveloped and VET continues to be dogged by a low status.

Stakeholders however, are fighting back: some countries in the region are introducing applied bachelors to increase the competitiveness of VET with higher education and, Central Asia, Kazakhstan is championing human capital development as the long-term economic answer beyond peak oil in the next decade.

“This is the way to achieve the increase labour mobility needed for Kazakhstan as part of the modern international economy,” said Serik Irsaliev, the country’s deputy minister of education and science.

Others see youth as their key resource. “The biggest asset of my country is youth. We want to make sure it doesn’t become our biggest problem,” said Rame Buje, Kosovo’s* Minister of Education and Science. “The Torino Process was a great support to us in this endeavour.”

In the southern and eastern Mediterranean the low status of VET is hampering efforts to tackle low youth employment.

“VET needs to find its spurs,” said Said Aidi, Tunisia’s VET and employment minister.

* Under UNSCR 1244/1999



THE BEST DISCUSSIONS HAPPEN IN THE KITCHEN

Oliver Zischek, Development advisor for Leadership Programmes at UniManagement, Unicredit Group, talks about the unique conference venue and the spirit of the place.

‘People learn when they are treated as equals, when they are on the same level, without hierarchies, in an informal place.’

‘We tried to create a place that is stimulating and activating for knowledge-sharing and for discussions in this 19th century building. Open, flexible space’

‘There are no classrooms here, no teachers; we believe that people who come here bring all the solutions. We just put them in an environment to share them.’

‘We have “energy rooms” for brainstorming, “reflection rooms” for reading. We also have several kitchens in the building. We call them “conversation rooms”, where we organise sessions. We think the best discussions take place in kitchens.’

