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GNLC/PASCAL Webinar: The challenge of developing the role of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), business learning and entrepreneurship in learning cities

UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning and PASCAL International Observatory

On 16 September 2020, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), together with the PASCAL Observatory, hosted the third webinar of the series entitled “Learning Cities’ COVID-19 recovery: from research to practice”. This session focused on the challenge of developing the role of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), business learning and entrepreneurship in learning cities.

A welcoming remark was given by UIL Programme Specialist Ms Marie Macauley, who acted as moderator. Ms Macauley pointed out that COVID-19 has challenged the traditional provision of educational services and that cities need to put in practice structural changes in such a way that learning continues, the well-being of citizens is preserved, and no one is left behind. The goal of this webinar was to emphasize the role of Technical and Vocational Education and Training for sustainable development in cities. With the participation of experts, city authorities, university networks and stakeholders, this session aimed to demonstrate the practical application of successful approaches in learning cities to address the challenge of TVET.

UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training

The webinar began with Programme Specialist **Ms Miki Nozawa** began by expressing the importance of the TVET sector in the world of labour markets as it is 1 of 6 thematic clusters defined by UIL with the participation of 36 cities across the world. She stated that the sector also needs to evolve focusing on innovation as the sanitary crisis continues to have significant impacts on the world’s economy. She highlighted that the development of entrepreneurial learning takes partnership at policy, institutional and classroom levels. She concluded affirming that TVET institutions themselves can become incubators of innovation and entrepreneurship in benefit of learning cities’ sustainable development.

PASCAL Learning Cities Network

The welcome talk was then given by Head of Strategic Regional Collaboration at Swansea University, **Ms Judith James**, who welcomed the participants, on behalf of Dr Michael Osborne PASCAL Director of Europe. Ms James indicated that during the world pandemic, society has shown more respect and consideration for professional sectors, something that can be used by city authorities as a form of leverage, as they are keys instruments for the implementation of policies oriented to promote TVET. Sustainable development is possible to be led by three main projects: 1) TVET, 2) Business learning and 3) Entrepreneurship. She mentioned that learning cities need to ‘manage the well-being of learners, trainers and educator; support additional skills for trainers and educator; reward professional training’.

European Training Foundation

Next, Senior Specialist in Human Capital Development, **Ms Olena Bekh**, focused her presentation on ‘Entrepreneurship key competence and enterprise skills’ in which she emphasised that there is a strong impetus for key competence development at EU level and in some partner countries, where critical importance on (Small and Medium-sized Enterprises) SME skills is placed. She defined entrepreneurial learning as ‘all forms of education and training, both formal and non-formal, which contribute to an

entrepreneurial spirit and behaviour'. As example of good practice in implementing TVET models, she shared the case of Georgia, where they are to develop national model comprising 7 pillars that include: supporting leaders with entrepreneurial competences; supporting teachers and educators helping them to transmit the impact of entrepreneurial learning on their students; building TVET networks; innovative teaching, learning and assessment; integration of technology; financing for VET; and reputation management.

City of Cotonou, Benin. PASCAL Learning Cities Network

Finally, **Mr Idowu Biao**, Professor of Lifelong Learning at the Université d'Abomey Calavi, contributed a presentation on behalf of Cotonou city in Benin. He mentioned that Cotonou is the commercial capital of Benin Republic, attracting many rural migrants constantly, a situation that has challenged the city authorities because these migrants are mainly illiterate and unskilled but desperate for work. In order to assist these migrants, the city has designed and implemented the "Faire Faire" Program, a work-oriented literacy program that teaches simultaneously literacy and numeracy skills and a technical skill for work (chosen individually by the students). The program is targeted to serve rural migrants in the city and between 2011 and 2018, the intervention has made literate and equipped with skills 120 participants.

Questions and Answers

The presentations were followed by a lively Q&A session, moderated by the UNESCO-PASCAL team, and included the following highlights from our presenters:

- OLENA: Teachers are regarded as coaches and must leave students to define their learning goals. Students must be involved centrally in entrepreneurial projects. We need to change several aspects of the learning process. But any framework should not be replicated as a whole; it is the teachers who should be able to choose relevant activity according to students' needs and demands.
- JUDITH: There has been a change of attitude with the pandemic particularly in the UK. Application of novel learning programs has increased. Respect for professional workers may have changed people's attitudes in different sectors in the labour market. Also, many people have lost their jobs across different sectors during the pandemic crisis which will demand a different approach to training in the TVET sector from governments.
- OLENA: In order to create different perceptions amongst learners, we need to change the content of TVET. There is a bridge between becoming different and seeing differently. We need to celebrate and share success. The TVET sector must be naturally attractive to students. This attitude is very important. Furthermore, students need to promote themselves through different available resources (e.g. social media).
- MIKI: It is very important to have role models in the entrepreneurial sector.
- IDOWU: Training is not highly viewed; people prefer to go to traditional universities. However, social changes and circumstances have elevated the kudos of vocational skills. Many more people who are now in vocational training are earning good salaries and it this changing situation within society that is promoting the relevance of vocational training. Currently a major trend is towards skill acquisition.

In conclusion, Ms Marie Macauley conducted the closing remarks by thanking the presenters and participants for their presence and presentations. She finished her participation highlighting the consequences of COVID-19 on the provision and future of TVET programs. She mentioned that 'learning gaps are likely to emerge as a result of closures, possibly even more for TVET than for general education', which suggests that promoting entrepreneurial skills and mind-sets contributes towards better equipping youth to access the world of work.

The summary was prepared Mr Konstantinos Pagratis, Coordination Team of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities; with support from Mr Sergio Hernandez Mendoza & Prof Catherine Lido, University of Glasgow/PASCAL Observatory.