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Association for the
Development of
Education in
Africa

**MINISTRY OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION
AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING**

# The Education-Training Continuum

An analysis of the concept and its implications for education and training policies in Africa

Network for international policies
and cooperation in education and training

Réseau sur les politiques et la coopération
internationales en éducation et en formation

norrag

Hamidou Boukary (NORRAG)
With support from Robertine Sanvura (NORRAG)
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# Abbreviations and acronyms

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| AU | African Union |
| ADEA | Association for the Development of Education in Africa |
| AFD | Agence Française de Développement / French Development Agency |
| AfDB | African Development Bank |
| APE | Accreditation of prior experience |
| BEAP | Basic Education in Africa Programme |
| BREDA | Bureau Régional pour l'Education de Dakar / UNESCO Office in Dakar |
| CeVe | Community Education Validation and Endorsement (Scotland) |
| EFA | Education for All |
| ETF | European Training Foundation |
| GIZ | Deutsche Gesellschaff für Internationale Zusammenarbeit |
| ICQN | Inter-Country Quality Node |
| IIBCA | International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa |
| ILO | International Labour Organization |
| MBEC | Multilingual Basic Education Continuum |
| MDGs | Millennium Development Goals |
| MENA | Ministère de l'Éducation nationale et de l'alphabétisation / Burkina Faso Ministry of National Education and literacy |
| NORRAG | Network for international policies and cooperation in education and training |
| NQF | National Qualification Framework |
| OECD | Organisation for cooperation and economic development |
| SADC | South African Development Community |
| TVET | Technical and Vocational Education and Training |
| TVSD | Technical and Vocational Skills Development |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| WB | World Bank |

# INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Since 2010, the Inter-Country Quality Node on Technical and Vocational Skills Development (ICQN/TVSD) has been acting as a catalyst for the development of innovative policies and practices in the field of education and training in Africa. It does soin order to give political decision-makers and other stakeholders involved in implementing reforms in this area an opportunity to exchange experiences and knowledge on issues within the ICQN's remit. It has thus created a community for debate and practice-sharing and facilitated the pooling of research and analysis carried out at national, sub-regional and regional/continental level.

The overall objective of the ICQN/TVSD is to help African countries to identify ways to tackle endemic youth unemployment, which on average currently affects over 50% of the population in most countries. Millions of young Africans are jobless or excluded from the labour market, whether they have qualifications or have dropped out of formal education and training systems. This will ultimately threaten countries' socio-economic fabric by possibly destabilising institutions and having other negative consequences. The exclusion of young people also limits economic growth opportunities by depriving countries of a dynamic labour force, at a time when governments are seeking to develop medium and long-term economic development strategies. Young people account for roughly 60% of unemployed people in Africa, despite the long period of unprecedented economic growth over the last 10 years. This growth is non-inclusive as it does not create sufficient jobs to absorb large numbers of young jobseekers.

Since the first ministerial conference organised by the ICQN in 2010, the following specific commitments/objectives have been set out. We should:

1. *commit to doing our utmost to ensure that training and skills development for all Africans, and especially for young people, becomes **a strategic and operational priority** at the level of the whole continent;*
2. *take every possible measure to **forge, in a concerted manner, effective education and training systems that are responsive to economic and social development needs**;*
3. ***pool training and skills development schemes** in order to **develop, together and in conjunction with businesses and professionals, the best possible responses to the skills needs of a constantly changing world of work;***
4. *take full stock of the **shift from TVET to TVSD and develop education and training systems, taking into account and accrediting all knowledge, skills and qualifications irrespective of how they have been acquired.***

These ministerial commitments were repeated and taken forward in 2014 at the Third PQIP/DCTP Ministerial Conference in Abidjan on Youth Employment in Africa. In the resulting declaration and action plan, the ministers approved the Three-Year Action Plan (2015-2017), of which the three priority areas are to:

1. design and implement inter-country schemes and systems for helping young people into employment;

2. promote investment in the countries to support the acquisition of skills and qualifications by trainers and entrepreneurs;
3. promote efforts to bring about the education-training continuum.

These courses of action demonstrate how important it is to undertake studies and research focusing on real local practices, and to use the results in order to shape suitable policies and strategies at all levels.

In 2015, the ICQN/TVSD sought to implement the action plan by holding its Fourth Ministerial Conference on *Promoting Skills and Competencies Acquisition by Trainers and Entrepreneurs* in Kigali, at the invitation of the Rwandan authorities. In 2016, the Ministerial Conference will address the topic of the *Education-Training Continuum.* With this in mind, this concept paper has been drawn up to provide a basis for the preparatory analysis for the ICQN member countries.

## THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE CONCEPT OF THE EDUCATION CONTINUUM

### The first way to approach this concept: the need to tackle the lack of continuity between education and training[1]

What do we mean by the term "education-training continuum"? One way to answer this question is to ask another: why do we talk about a continuum in relation to education and training? We advocate the need for a continuum nowadays because a "lack of continuity" has been observed somewhere between education and training and there is a desire to restore the link. This lack of continuity has left a very large number of young people on the street at the end of the Education for All (EFA) cycle, without immediate access to training or the world of work. This therefore directly raises the issue of the purpose of education[2] as well as its structure and content in Africa.

These questions have attracted much attention because many African and Africanist thinkers[3] and experts who have addressed these issues believe that Africa must call into question the education model/system inherited from the colonial period in order to reject not just the origin and "mission" of the system itself but rather its inadequacy with regard to the role it should play in the socioeconomic development of new African states which aspire to social and economic modernity and welfare. We can also say that these two aspects of the issue are not mutually exclusive because the inadequacy of the current education system is to some extent the result of its origin and the way it is shaped.

**The lack of social, cultural and temporal continuity in the education and training system: a feature originally inherited from colonisation**

Early on in the post-independence era, Abdou Moumouni (1964) advocated the overhauling of the African education system in his book *Education in Africa*, which has

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[1] Education in its broadest sense of course includes training so some people believe it the term education-training is redundant. The debate remains open.

[2] This refers to all philosophers of education, from Socrates and his disciple Plato to John Dewey and contemporary thinkers of structural functionalism, modernisation and the development of human capital.

[3] Moumouni, Abdou (1964, 1968) ; Diop, Cheick Anta (1955, 1960), Nyerere, Mwalimu Julius (1975) ; Ki-Zerbo, Joseph (1990)

become a classic. Adopting what could be described as a "structural-functionalis t"approach, he used supporting figures to describe the structural and functional shortcomings inherent to the system that chiefly existed in francophone Africa. He believed that these shortcomings would prevent African countries from succeeding in their quest for social and economic development unless the system was completely reformed. He criticised the "lack of continuity" (or mismatch) between the school institution inherited from colonisation, and the culture, language and objectives of the traditional educational function in Africa, which does not separate the teaching of life skills from training for professions.

Secondly, he also showed that the system inherited was dysfunctional because it is inefficient and ineffective at both an internal and external level. It does not enable all children entering it to succeed. It produces individuals of little use to their society who are more likely to reject their cultural heritage in favour of another one, thus resulting in a waste of the State's resources. In addition, children disdain manual labour, which they associate with a lower social status. This therefore makes them incapable of generating wealth and establishing the modern economies required in order to lift their countries out of poverty and underdevelopment.

Moumouni thus described the education crisis in Africa as early as 1964. He accurately identified its symptoms, which include: deterioration of the quality of teaching due to the poor training of teachers and huge class sizes; non-mastery of the language of instruction by teachers and lack of teaching and learning resources; high drop-out rates at all levels of the system (primary to tertiary); lack of coherence and coordination between the curricula of the different levels; the limited range of options at secondary level and governments' neglect of technical education and vocational training (TVET); and the very limited resources devoted to the development of higher education.

The continuum concept proposed by Moumouni, of which various forms can still be found today, was to create a "unitary" general education system lasting 10 to 11years, with 5 years of primary education and 6 years of secondary school education; there would be no examinations interrupting the transition from one cycle to the next. He believed that the purpose of this unitary system would be to introduce children and then adolescents to various aspects of social and economic activity as a whole, and at the same time to provide the scientific, theoretical and technical foundations to enable them to gradually understand the nature and society and the role that they should play.[4]

To follow unitary general education, he proposed the creation of a 6-year post-primary education cycle to enable youngsters to acquire physical, manual, artistic, technical and scientific skills. This cycle would ultimately become the sub-system in which most middle and intermediate managers would be trained. Perceived as a pyramid, this system would have a very large base and middle and it would incorporate TVET and general education.

The higher education proposed would in many respects resemble the LMD (*"licence"*, master and doctorate) system currently being introduced in African universities,

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[4] Moumouni. A. (ed.1968*). Education in Africa.* Andre Deutsch, London. (p.208)

particularly francophone ones. This is similar to the Bologna process[5]in Europe, which is aimed at transforming universities by making their curricula more career-oriented while preserving their primary role as places of research and knowledge production. For his time, Moumouni went quite far in proposing a system of lifelong learning which incorporated evening classes (non-formal education) and correspondence courses (distance education) for the benefit of adults and all those wishing to continue their studies while continuing to work.

He also stressed the importance of using African languages as the languages of instruction in a linguistic transition process, with a view to reducing school failure due to non-mastery of European languages by both teachers and pupils. He was also shocked by the lack of policies and strategies for the development of pre-primary school education. He accordingly advocated the systematic development of this sub-sector, not only in urban centres as was provided and continues to be provided today, but especially in the rural areas where it could help increase women's productivity by freeing them from child careso they could work. It would also support children's cognitive development by preparing them for subsequent cycles of education. In addition to these benefits, he also mentioned the importance of learning about hygiene and access to balanced nutrition to facilitate children's psychomotor development.

**Proposals on how to put an end to the multidimensional lack of continuity between education and training**

The description of the education-training continuum as conceptualised by Moumouni (see diagram in the Appendix to this paper) was a foretaste of all the other proposals for a continuum to restore the broken link between education and training. For example, at its 2008 Biennale in Maputo, Mozambique, ADEA proposed the establishment of holistic, integrated and diversified education systems in which post-primary education is defined "not only about what follows after primary education, but also about the reconsideration of 'primary' education as it is currently structured."Two major paradigm shifts were proposed: (i) shifting from Universal Primary Education (UPE) to an extended and expanded 9-10 years Universal Basic Education (UBE) and (ii) shifting from post-primary education to post-basic education and training (PBET).[6]In the same vein, UNESCO has developed the Basic Education in Africa Programme (BEAP)[7], which targets children aged 0-15 years. In other words, as far as the education subsectors are concerned, it covers parental education/early childhood (0-3 years), pre-primary school (4-6 years) and the early years of middle school (7-15 years). BEAP gives priority to choice, attitudes and values on the one hand, and cultures and local knowledge on the other hand. As far as learning objectives are concerned, it focuses on the acquisition of life

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[5] The Bologna process is an agreement between 45 European countries to harmonize their higher education systems and create what is known as a European higher education area. It is a large and complex undertaking that has led to the complete restructuring of higher education in Europe. Francophone Africa is still unable to complete the implementation of the LMD: The description of such education and training continuum conceptualized by Moumouni (graphically represented in the annex) was one of the precursors of all the other proposals of a continuum that restores the link broken between education and training. reform.

[6] ADEA (2008). *Post-Primary Education in Africa: Challenges and Approaches for Expanding Learning Opportunities in Africa* Synthesis prepared for and lessons learned from the 2008 ADEA Biennale on Education in Africa (Maputo, Mozambique, May 5-9, 2008). By Wim Hoppers.

[7] The BEAP is managed and financed by the UNESCO's Regional Education Office in Africa (formerly BREDA) and its International Bureau of Education (IBE-UNESCO).

skills, entrepreneurship, and technical and vocational training to help young people enter the world of work. Until 2012, four countries had implemented the BEAP (the Gambia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia and Rwanda).

**What is important to remember?**

It is important to note that the continuum concept is defined differently depending on the angle/perspective of those that define it and the purposes for which they use it, whether ideological/political or pragmatic. However, as demonstrated in Moumouni's proposals as well as those of the BEAP and ADEA, 44 years on, **the heart of the continuum concept lies in the need to restructure and redefine education content in order to restore the inextricable link that should exist between formal academic education, on the one hand, and the acquisition of life skills and know-how that can help young people integrate their societies and the world of work on the other hand.** Clearly however, this is a difficult exercise because there are many obstacles of a political nature, since it would interfere with the status quo by changing the balance of power between different segments of population in our society.

## The second way to approach this concept: increasing access to a continuum of education and training at all stages of life

This effort to strike a new balance between education and training has resulted in several proposals for new or revised concepts. One example is the one outlined in the report to UNESCO of the International Commission chaired by Jacques Delors entitled *"Learning: The Treasure Within"*, which proposed that <u>learning throughout life</u> should be the "heartbeat of society" throughout the whole world, and the need for a fresh approach to the "stages and bridges of learning", while acknowledging how hard it will be to implement the required educational reforms.

The concept of lifelong learning has several definitions. In the Delors Commission report, it is defined as follows:

> *Learning throughout life is a continuous process to each human being of adding two and adapting his or her knowledge and skills, and his or her judgement and capacities for action. It must enable people to become aware of themselves and their environment, and play a central role at work and in the community at large. Knowledge, know-how, knowing how to live with other people and 'life skills' constitute for intimately late aspects of the same reality.*[8] (p.102)

For the European Commission (2001), lifelong learning is:

> *"all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competencies within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective."*[9]

For the French government (2014),

> *Lifelong learning is <u>a continuum</u> between initial, general and vocational training, and all situations in which skills are acquired, such as continuing training*

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[8]*Report to UNESCO of the International Commission chaired by Jacques Delors entitled "Learning: The Treasure Within".* (2nd edition, 1999) UNESCO.
http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/15_62.pdf
9 Communication from the Commission "Making the European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality" (2001).

*schemes, working activities, involvement in associations and volunteering. It includes guidance, skills assessments, support for jobseekers, training and the accreditation of prior learning and experience.*[10]

In the United States, the continuum concept has been defined by a consultancy firm (2016) and a foundation (2010):

*The education continuum extends learning and professional development opportunities beyond K-16 (from pre-primary to high school), providing unique resources, ideas and innovation.*[11]

*[The aim is] to strengthen the education continuum by developing, cultivating and sustaining a solid, consistent and supportive education pathway from birth to career for area. Examples of desired outcomes include:*

- *increased number of students prepared to succeed in early childhood education opportunities;*
- *increased number of families with access to quality alternative educational programs and settings;*
- *substantially more young people graduate from high school and move on to college or vocational training;*
- *improved literacy rates.*[12]

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[10] http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid217/la-formation-tout-au-long-de-la-vie.html
[11] http://www.theeducationcontinuum.net/. The Education Continuum, Consulting firm, New York, USA
[12] The John R. Oishei Foundation is a private foundation with over $300 million in assets. http://www.oishei.org/index.php/about-us

## A third approach: forging a continuum by recognising all ways of acquiring knowledge and skills

This third approach concerns more specifically the lack of continuity and the divide that exists in the educational field between formal, non-formal and informal ways of acquiring knowledge and skills. It seeks to understand and implement the TVET to TVSD paradigm shift, which has been validated by several African and international organisations over the last decade.
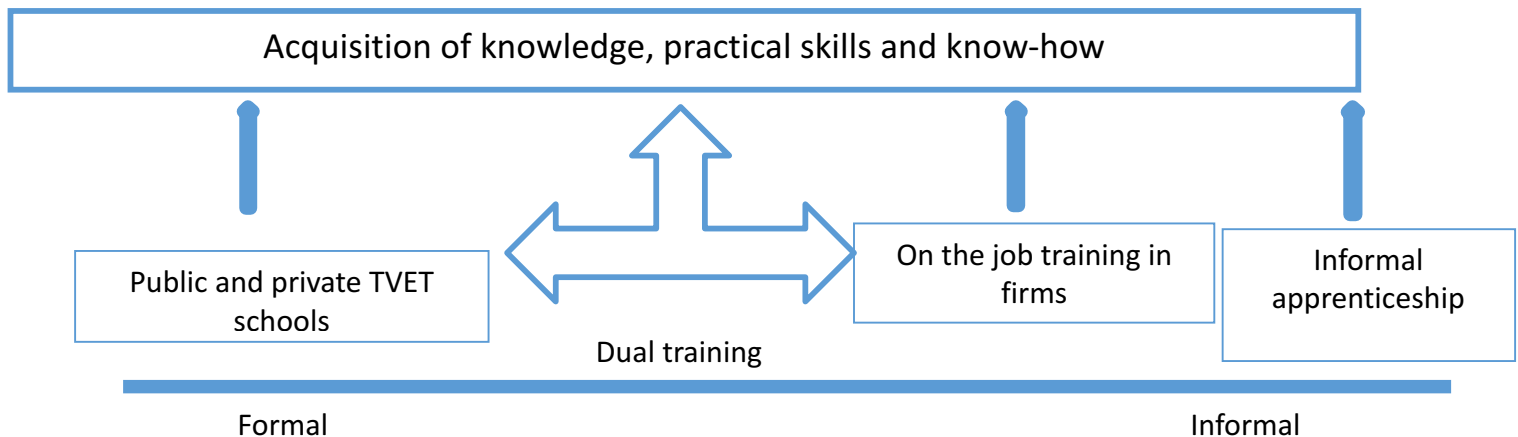
**What is technical and vocational skills development (TVSD)?**

The African Economic Outlook website[13] (2008) gives a fairly complete definition of TVSD.

> *The term technical and vocational skills development (TVSD) refers to the acquisition of knowledge, practical competencies, know-how and attitudes necessary to perform a certain trade or occupation in the labour market. For the scope of this report, TVSD corresponds to the broad UNESCO and ILO definition of technical and vocational education and training (TVET).*

> *Competencies can be acquired either through structured training in public or private TVET schools and centres, or through practical experience on the job in enterprises (work-place training in the formal sector and informal apprenticeship), or both (the so-called "dual" training, involving a combination of work-place and institution- based training).*

The same document includes the diagram below, which gives an overview of the key elements and pathways constituting TVSD as defined below:



Source :[14] African Development Bank and OECD (2008). **African Economic Outlook 2008.** Definition of technical and vocational skills development (TVSD). PowerPoint presentation.

ADEA, which has promoted the concept of TVSD and set up an Inter-Country Quality Node on the subject, has defined it as follows:

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[13] The *African Economic Outlook* (AEO) report provides an overview of Africa's economic and social development and offers a two-year forecast. It is jointly produced by three international partners: the African Development Bank (AfDB), the OECD Development Centre and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
[14] https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.afdb.org%2Ffileadmin%2Fuploads%2Fafdb%2FDocuments%2FPublications%2FAEO_2008_AfDB_fr_PerspectivesEconomiquesAfrique2008.ppt (French version)

*The acquisition of practical competencies, know-how and attitudes necessary to perform a trade or occupation in the labour market. Skills can be acquired either through formal public or private schools, institutions or centres, informal traditional appreticeships, or non-formal semi-structured training.*

These two definitions include the following key elements of the continuum concept: the purpose of the educational action which should ultimately help the individual integrate into society and the world of work; the diversity of the places where skills, know-how and knowledge should be acquired (schools, training centres, traditional crafts workshops, etc.); and the need to link the different sub-sectors into a coherent whole,for which the research and action programmes are tailored.

**The shift from TVET to TVSD: a paradigm shift to bring about a new education-training continuum**

To explain this shift, it is first necessary to explain criticism of TVET. It has many major limitations such as (and among other things): it only trains a tiny proportion of African young people in secondary education (5%), it trains them poorly because its content/programmes are too theoretical and out of date, failing to meet the needs of the labour market; it is expensive,[15]as recurrent costs are high because of the need to constantly open new training centres and acquire expensive equipment which must be continually renewed.

These observations about TVET have led vocational training experts such as Adubra and Afeti (2012) to recommend that African countries progress towards TVSD, which they claim has the following advantages.

*TVSD is more holistic, diverse and inclusive than TVET, which is more formal and similar to school: the reality of skills acquisition in Africa, where the informal sector predominates, requires a paradigm shift from the formal TVET system based on school towards the holistic and inclusive TVSD system.*[16]

It is important to dwell on an important aspect of the Afeti and Adubra position (2012) regarding the shift from TVET to TVSD: the paradox whereby education and training fail to meet the needs of the predominant sector in African economies, which is the informal sector (see table below showing informal employment as a percentage of total employment). As discussed below, the existence of this paradox will bring an additional and strong argument for the adoption of the continuum concept as part of the shift from TVET to TVSD.

**Figure 1[17]: Informal employment in the world**

| Continent/region | Informal employment as a percentage of total employment |
|---|---|
| **Western Asia and Northern Africa** | About 47% of non-agricultural employment |
| **Sub-Saharan Africa** | Between 70% and 90% |

[15] Walther, R., and Uhder, C., (2014).*The financing of Vocational Training In Africa: the roles and specificities of vocational training funds.* AFD

[16] - Afeti, G. & Adubra, A. L. (2012). *La qualification en Afrique : changement de paradigme vers le développement de compétences techniques et professionnelles.* ADEA.

[17]Source: OECD Development Centre Studies (2009), Is Informal Normal? Towards More and Better Jobs in Developing Countries

| Latin America | Above 50% |
|---|---|
| Southern and Southeastern Asia | About 70% [18] |

Source: OECD Development Centre Studies (2009), Is Informal Normal? Towards More and Better Jobs in Developing Countries

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To illustrate the shift from TVET to TVSD, Walther (2011)[19]produced the following diagram:
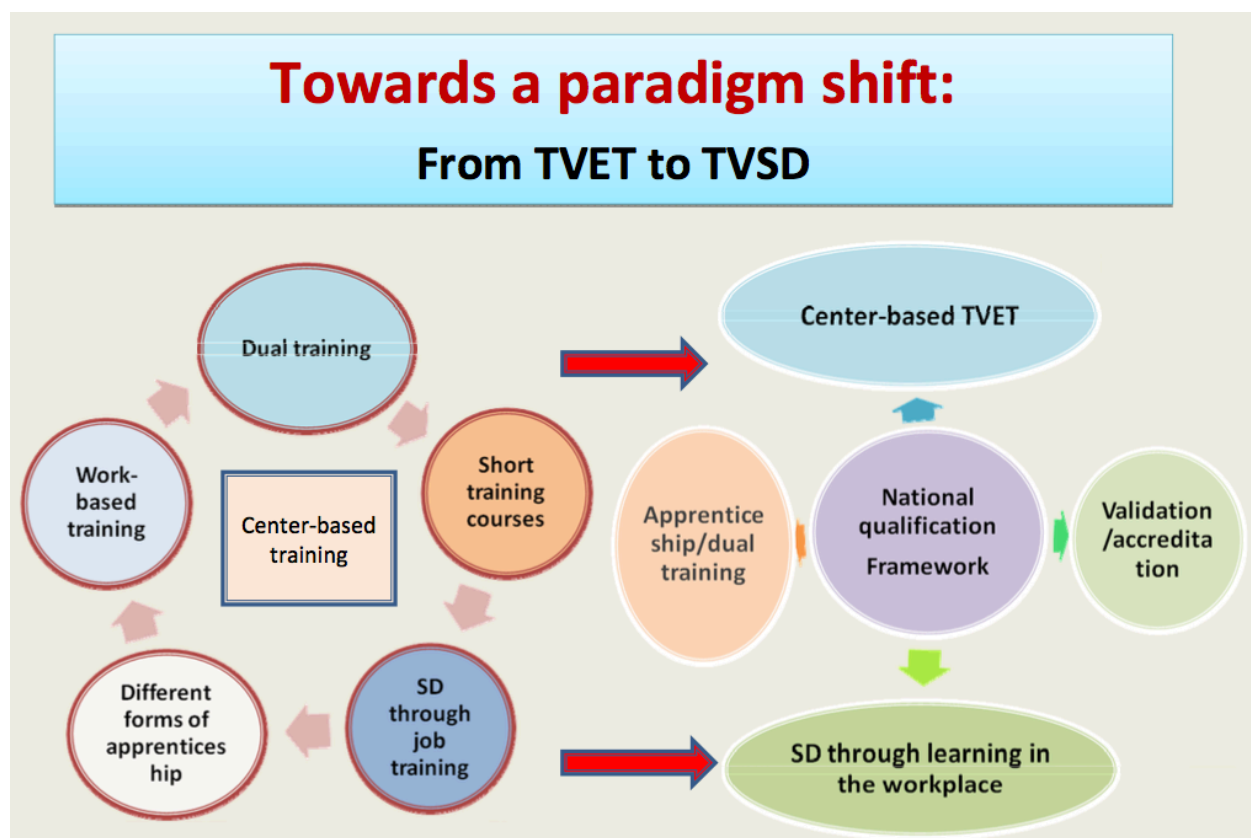


This diagram demonstrates that, with this paradigm shift, TVET becomes a component of the TVSD system. At the heart of the TVSD system lies a **national qualifications framework (NQF)**, which creates pathways between different types of training and education in the formal, non-formal and informal sectors.

Another vital process in this system, which is also explained by the diagram on TVSD above, is the mechanism for Recognising/**accrediting prior learning, experience and skills (RPL) within formal or informal training** (traditional or new apprenticeships). This mechanism is particularly important because it makes it possible to help people who have not received a formal basic education but who have proven expertise find work through training and apprenticeship. Accordingly, Walther (2016)[20]explained the

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[18] Countries such as India have informal employment rates as high as 90%

[19]*Presentation made at the informal meeting of DG Development (European Commission) on 25 January 2011*

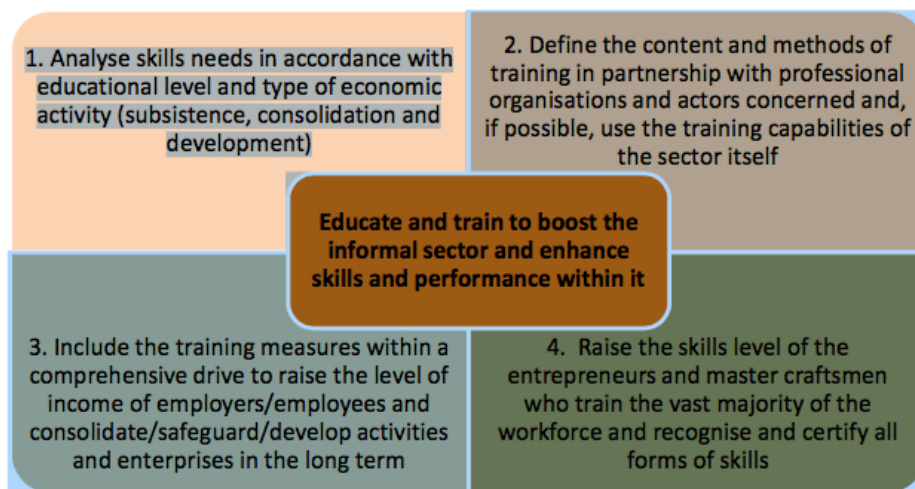[20]Presentation made at the African Forum for Science and Technology (Dakar, 22-24 February 2016) organised by the Groupement Inter-Académies (GID) entitled: "The need to work together to develop education-training and companies: training in the informal sector : a key means of boosting economic development and creating jobs." (translation)

opportunities afforded by RPL within the TVSD context. It enables a greater number of people in the informal sector to access both training opportunities and to acquire the formal basic education they have missed out on, or have failed to complete for various reasons. These opportunities entail:

1. *teaching all those who have dropped out of school or forgotten what they learnt at school to read and write*
2. *improving the level of education of the under-educated*
3. *giving all people access to a minimum set of core skills and knowledge (ADEA, OECD)*
4. *organise management training to help develop afiscal and social regulatory process*
5. *train people to do their job better, thereby increasing the quality of their outputs/products and services and boosting their income*

Walther proposes an overall strategy for bringing about the reforms required in the informal sector.

## Define an overall strategy for intervention



1. Analyse skills needs in accordance with educational level and type of economic activity (subsistence, consolidation and development)

2. Define the content and methods of training in partnership with professional organisations and actors concerned and, if possible, use the training capabilities of the sector itself

Educate and train to boost the informal sector and enhance skills and performance within it

3. Include the training measures within a comprehensive drive to raise the level of income of employers/employees and consolidate/safeguard/develop activities and enterprises in the long term

4. Raise the skills level of the entrepreneurs and master craftsmen who train the vast majority of the workforce and recognise and certify all forms of skills

The points above show **the links that exist between the concepts of *lifelong learning, the paradigm shift from TVET to TVS D*and the education-training continuum.** They also show that instruments/mechanisms such as NQFs and RPLwhich on the surface seem to be based on a different approach, are actually both **tools for bringing about the education-training continuum**.

**TVSD and RPL: the way to develop a new education-training continuum for all those excluded from formal skills development and learning systems**

The education-training continuum also links with education and training concepts underpinning functional literacy for adults, including women and men, young and old, who, for various reasons, have not had the chance to access basic education or modern vocational training. For example, since the end of the Second World War, governments and multilateral/bilateral[21] development agencies, including the UN, have made literacy and adult education outside the formal system a fully-fledged development priority.

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[21] The first International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA 1) was organised by UNESCO in Elsinore, Denmark in 1949.

Literacy education is a response to the elitism of the modern education system which has not always guaranteed access for all to basic education and the subsequent cycles of education up to university. This elitism has left millions of people on the margins of the literate world and modern economy and it has also contributed to their impoverishment. To redress this injustice, the UNhas made education, and as a direct consequence literacy education, an inalienable human right.[22]In sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), this right is still not effective for millions of Africans, and the numbers are unfortunately not decreasing, as the 2015 Global Monitoring Report on EFA points out.

> *Sub-Saharan Africa records the highest adult illiteracy rate, 41%, and the lowest progress. According to estimates, about 187 million adults lacked basic literacy skills in 2012, of which 61% were women. Despite the increase in adult literacy rate, the number of adults who are illiterate increased from 134 million in 1990 to about 157 million in 2000 and is projected to reach 197 million in 2015, due to the region's continuing population growth. It is expected that in 2015, sub-Saharan Africa will account for 26% of the global number of adult illiterates, up from 20% in 2000. [23](p.5)*

Conceptually, however, literacy is not the same thing as adult education. Indeed, it is considered to be a key competence (reading, writing and numeracy skills) which is necessary in order to access education or apprenticeships. Adult learning as defined by the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education in 1997

> *"encompasses both <u>formal and continuing education, non-formal learning and the spectrum of informal and incidental learning available in a multicultural learning society</u>, where theory- and practice-based approaches are recognized."*
> *(*Hamburg Declaration, *UNESCO,1997, p. 1)[24]*

However, the definition given by UNESCO in 1976[25]is clearer and closer to the continuum concept in that it brings together all other aspects of the education and training system.

> *The expression 'Adult education' denotes <u>the entire body of organised educational processes, whatever the content, level and method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges and universities as well as in apprenticeship,</u> whereby persons regarded as adult by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge improve their technical or professional qualifications or turn them in a new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behaviour in twofold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development, <u>adult education, however, must not be considered as an entity in itself, it is a sub-division, and an integral part of, a global scheme for life-long education and learning. (</u>underlining added by the author).*

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[22] Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf
[23] UNESCO (2015). Global Monitoring Report: *Regional Overview: Sub-Saharan Africa*. UNESCO.
[24]*Quoted in* UNESCO-UIL (2010). *UNESCO's Global Report on Adult Learning and Education /UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning. Hamburg* (p.13).
[25] UNESCO-UIL (2010). *UNESCO's Global Report on Adult Learning and Education/UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning. Hamburg* (p.13).

The concept of continuing education here does not differ from that of lifelong learning as set out in the Delors Report. It is a description that was just made before the previous one, insofar UNESCO notes that:

> the expression 'lifelong education and training' denotes <u>an overall scheme aimed both at restructuring the existing education system and at developing the entire educational potential outside the education system</u> in such a scheme men and women are the agents of their own education, through continual interaction between their thoughts and actions; <u>education and learning, far from being limited to a period of attendance at school, should extend throughout life, include all skills and branches of knowledge, use all possible means, and give opportunity to all people for full development of the personality;</u> the educational and learning processes in which children, young people and adults of all ages are involved in the course of their lives, in whatever form, should be considered as a whole.[26] (underlining added by the author)

This flexible interpretation of the concept of adult education has made it possible to combine it with several other concepts. Thus, **non-formal education** is used as a generic term to indicate *"any organized, systematic, educational activity carried outside the framework of the formal system to provide selected types of learning to particular subgroups in the population, adults as well as children. Thus defined, non-formal education includes, for example, agricultural extension and family training programs, adult literacy programs, occupational skill training given outside the formal system, youth clubs, and various community programs of instruction in health nutrition, family planning, cooperatives, and the like."*(Coombs and Ahmed, 1974, p. 8).[27]

Another concept is that of **community education,** which uses non-formal education as a means of organisation and which is defined as being:

> A process designed to enrich the lives of individuals and groups by engaging with people living within a geographical area, or sharing a common interest, to develop voluntarily a range of learning, action and reflection opportunities, determined by their personal, social, economic and political needs. (CeVe[28] 1990: 2)[29]

UIL is promoting the concept of **Learning Cities,**[30] which urges cities to mobilise their resources to:

1. promote inclusive learning from basic to higher education;
2. re-vitalise learning in families and communities;
3. facilitate learning for and in the workplace;
4. extend the use of modern learning technologies;
5. enhance quality and excellence in learning; and
6. nurture a culture of learning throughout life.

The main objective of Learning Cities is to strengthen individual empowerment, social cohesion, economic and cultural prosperity and sustainable development. Given the massive development of major African cities, most of which have a population over 1

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[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Community Education Validation and Endorsement (CeVe), the organisation responsible for establishing and maintaining community education training standards in Scotland.

[29] Smith, K. Martin (1996 and 2014). Community Education. Infed.org. http://www.infed.org/community/b-comed.htm#Theorzing.

[30] http://learningcities.uil.unesco.org/about-us/learning-cities

million with a dozen approaching 10 million, this concept becomes highly relevant when it comes to bringing about the continuum.

It is now important to note, as the 2015 Global Monitoring Report did, that sub-Saharan Africa has made very little progress in the development of literacy, which is the key competence enabling people to participate in regular education and adult education as defined above.

One of the factors explaining this lack of progress and even decline lies in education policies, which generally fail to make literacy education adult education a national priority. This is reflected in the small share received by non-formal education (which covers literacy education and other schemes) in the budgets allocated to the education sector: barely 1%[31]on average in sub-Saharan Africa. More worrying still, with a few exceptions, literacy education and adult education are not part of a coherent strategic approach to education and training as proposed by the continuum concept.

**Which aspects should we retain?**

As outlined above, the growing number of concepts combining formal school education with training to acquire know-how and life skills to promote an "ideal" level of integration within society illustrates how complex it is to define the continuum in just a few words.
The present desk study, which is of course limited in scope, has not identified a universally accepted definition of the continuum. The concept has been used in three ways although it has not really been possible to select a definition.

In Burkina Faso, one of few African countries to have succeeded in developing a conceptual framework for the holistic education system currently being developed, the continuum is defined as follows:

> *… far from being a <u>mere juxtaposition of different levels of education</u> involving the perpetuation of past customs, [the continuum] represents <u>a consolidation of the achievements of various levels of education complemented by key reforms</u>, which will ensure better educational continuity and a consequent improvement of the quality of teaching and learning[32]*. (Underlining added)

However, this definition is insufficient bearing in mind what has been described previously. While its focus on greater quality reasserts the need to reorganise the formal education system into a more coherent and better-coordinated whole, it does not include other alternative forms of education and the creation of pathways between different subsystems. Neither does it say that this is a political process/project which seeks to democratise education and training in order to create a better society.

A single definition linking all of these elements into a single definition could be as follows:

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[31] UNESCO-BREDA (2011). *Info Sheet on LIFE*
2011.http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/Dakar/pdf/Info%20sheet%20LIFE%20in%20Africa%202011.pdf

[32] ADEA (2015). *Burkina Faso : améliorer la qualité de l'éducation de base en lien avec les choix stratégiques du PDSB, de la décentralisation et du Continuum*. ADEA peer review.

*The education-training continuum is a strategic approach that is part of a political project to democratise education and training. This entails the structural and functional reform of the whole formal education system linked by pathways to and from all other alternative forms of education for groups of the population who have not been to school and/or for those who are outside so-called modern vocational training. The continuum must ultimately seek to improve the system's internal/external effectiveness and reduce the social divide resulting from unequal access to education and apprenticeships in order to promote better integration into society and the world of work. The continuum incorporates the concept of lifelong learning.*

## SOME CASES WHERE THE EDUCATION-TRAINING CONTINUUM CONCEPT HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED IN AFRICA AND ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD

As in other regions of the world, most African countries have everything they need (education systems and training schemes) in order to implement the continuum as defined above. How this happens varies in different contexts.

### The cases of Europe and Korea

In developed countries, particularly in the EU, the continuum is well-established. This is reflected in the introduction of national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) and formal accreditation of prior experience (RPL). The EU has even established the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) almost across the whole continent. It is used to facilitate the comparison of training and qualifications. As described on Wikipedia, *the EQF applies to all types of education, training and qualifications, from school education to academic, professional and vocational training.*[33] EU countries are being urged to bring their NQFs into line with the EQF.

A very relevant experience for Africa is that of South Korea. 60 years ago Korea had a level of economic and social development that was lower than certain African countries at the end of the colonial era in the 1960s. Japanese colonisation and occupation by the US Army after the war between the two Koreas had left the country in a very poor state of repair after independence in 1948. What makes the Korean experience relevant to

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[33] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Qualifications_Framework

Africa is not the country's meteoric economic success starting from scratch, but rather how education has been used to achieve today's success.

Bum Mo Chung (2010)[34] informs foreign readers interested in the Korean success story that the holistic approach, in relation to other dimensions, has contributed to the country's development. Starting from the premise that people are holistic beings and as a consequence society is also holistic, Korea understood that the need, and above all, the desire to rise up out of poverty through development would come about through the holistic development of the Korean people at an intellectual, emotional, moral and psycho-physical level. Education should therefore play a role in efforts to acquire these attributes. Unless these holistic aspects are supported through policies, the results will be limited. What does this actually entail in practice?

It must be stressed that Korea adopted the concept of lifelong learning very early on, two years after its independence in 1950. Un-sil Choi (2012)[35] explained that the history of the development of lifelong learning is made up of four distinct periods. During a first stage, the decolonisation period (1950-60), an emphasis was placed on eradicating illiteracy, which was considered to be the main cause and driver of poverty. From 1960 to 1970, the focus was on social education to promote community development and intellectual awareness. From 1970 to 1989, faster economic development and the eradication of poverty reflected the need to support the country's industrialisation. Education policy thus focused on the development of lifelong learning by supporting community education and mass literacy campaigns, with programmes such as those organised by the Saemaul Undong community movement. The fourth phase began in the early 1990s, with the country focusing on political and social democratisation by supporting self-education and lifelong training programmes.

Korea and several other Asian countries have entered a fifth phase, focusing on education to promote citizen's happiness, which is part of the Learning Cities[36] concept.

## Cases in Africa

Among African countries, post-apartheid South Africa has been working since 1995 to establish a type of continuum by introducing a national qualification framework. The first of its kind in Africa, it was designed to facilitate the socio-economic integration of black people after decades of exclusion. The South African NQF[37] provides the vision, philosophical base and organisational structure for a qualifications system. It represents a national effort aimed at integrating education and training into a unified structure of recognised qualifications. It has five main objectives:
1. To create an integrated national framework for learning achievements;
2. To facilitate access to, and mobility and progression within education, training and career paths;
3. To enhance the quality of education and training;
4. To accelerate the redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities;
5. To contribute to the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the nation at large.

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[34] Bum Mo Chung (2010). Development and Education: A Critical Appraisal of the Korean Case. SNUPRESS.
[35] ADEA (2012). *Report of the Korea-Africa Day*. ADEA (non-published report).
[36] UNESCO-UIL (2013). *Final Report. International Conference on Learning Cities.* Beijing, China
[37] https://www.eaab.org.za/download.php?data_id=159

As such, the NQF is a set of principles and guidelines which makes it possible to track learners' skills and know-how so that these can be recognised at national level. It provides an integrated system which encourages continuous learning. It consists of 10 levels divided into three bands, as described in the table below:

| NQF levels | Categories | Types of qualification | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | Higher education and training | Postdoctoral research and training | |
| 9 | | Doctorates | |
| 8 | | Master's degree | |
| 7 | | Bachelor's degree, Advanced Diploma | |
| 6 | | National Diploma, Advanced Certificates | |
| 5 | | Higher Certificates and Advanced National (vocational) Certificate | |
| **Intermediate qualifications** | | | |
| 4 | Intermediate-level courses | National Certificates | |
| 3 | | | |
| 2 | | | |
| **Basic qualifications** | | | |
| 1 | Basic education and training | 9 years of basic general education | Basic Adult Education Certificate |
| | | National Certificates | |
| Source : adaptedfrom Taryn (2006) "NQF Overview"and the author's Wikipedia entry (2015) onthe South African Qualifications Authority | | | |

Even though it facilitates access, mobility and the progression of learners within education and training systems, the South African NQF as it is described does not fully correspond to the continuum as we defined above. In 2005, the OECD[38]noted that non-formal education was insufficiently covered by it. In other words, the NQF puts much more emphasis on pathways between formal parts of the system than on pathways that would allow the huge numbers of illiterate people and others excluded from the system with skills and expertise acquired outside the formal systems to access education and basic training within an integrated NQF. For this reason, in 2007, and with support from the OECD,a study[39]on the recognition and validation of skills acquired through non-formal and informal education was launched in the country to correct this shortcoming. However, the desk study failed to identify any empirical evidence to demonstrate that these pathways have been created and are effective.

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[38]OECD (2005). The role of national qualifications frameworks in promoting lifelong learning. Reports from the thematic groups. Unpublished.

[39]SAQA (2007). The recognition of non-formal and informal learning in South Africa: Country Background Report prepared for the OECD Thematic Review on Recognition of Non-Formal and Informal Learning.

The other members of the South African Development Community (SADC) countries have followed South Africa's example and introduced NQFs, the most successful of which is in Mauritius.[40]

Under the Basic Education in Africa Programme (BEAP), four countries (Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Gambia, Rwanda) have tried to introduce a holistic education system as suggested by UNESCO; Their characteristics are described in the diagram[41] below:
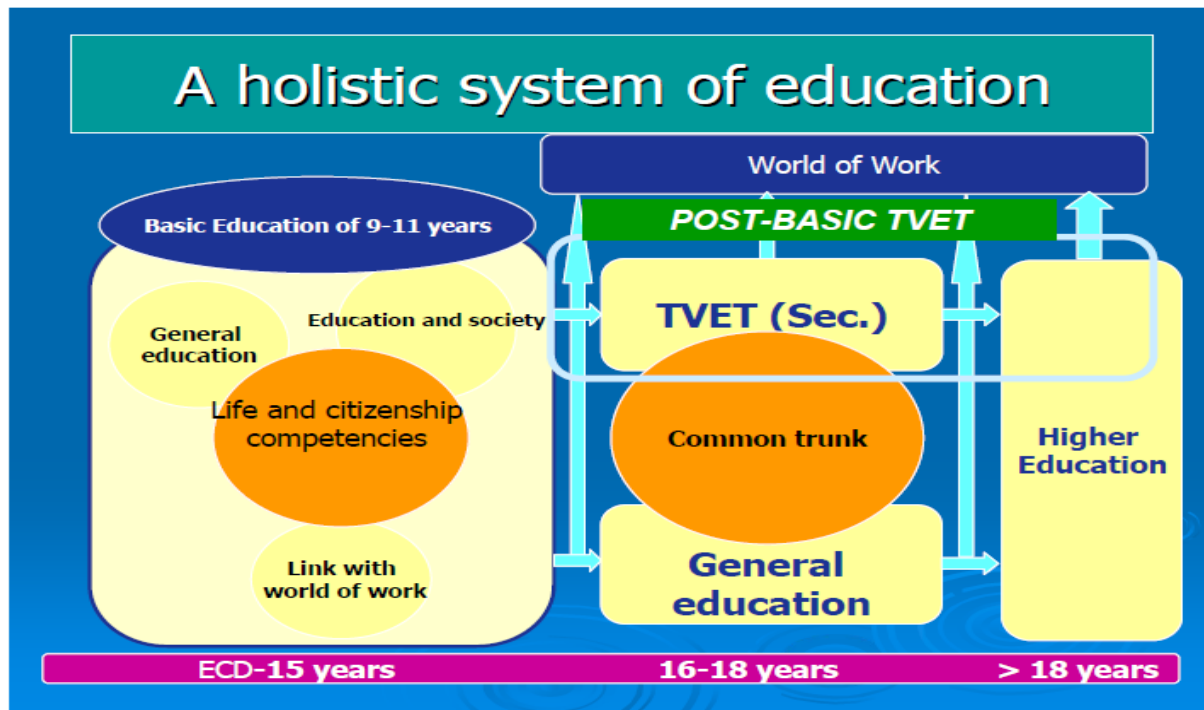


However, the roll-out of the BEAP has slowed down and very little progress has been made since 2012.

There have been many attempts to introduce the continuum in different African countries, but few have been successful. Examples of relatively successful reforms including: (i) *"l'école fondamentale"* (basic school) in Mali, which was first established in 1962. This system has reorganised basic education for 6 to 9 year-olds and introduced national languages as languages of instruction. Its impact on the quality and external efficiency (relevance) of the system has been less than hoped for. Interaction between these schools and other subsystems (pre-primary, secondary, technical and higher education) has not been successful.

## The specific case of the Multilingual Basic Education Continuum (MBEC) in Burkina Faso

This programme was launched in 1994 by a Swiss NGO, Solidar Suisse (previously known as Oeuvre suisse d'entraide ouvrière -OSEO) and taken over by the government in 2007. It consists of three complementary and interlinked levels: three years of pre-school education organised in educational discovery areas, primary education in

[40]ADEA (2013*). The ICQN/TVSD Inter-Country Seminar on National Qualification Frameworks (NQFs). Seminar report*
[41] UNESCO (2010). *The Launch of Basic Education in Africa Programme (BEAP) in Mauritius: ECCE as entry point.* Presentation PowerPoint IBE-BREDA

bilingual primary schools and four years of post-primary education in specific multilingual secondary schools.

The pre-school education level has the following objectives:

- *to help overcome inadequacies regarding childcare, hygiene, nutrition and psychomotor development provided by the family;*

- *to prepare young children psychologically, physically and mentally for the first cycle of primary school;*

- *to promote early childhood or infant education in rural, urban and outer-city areas;*

- *to free mothers and girls from caring for smaller children for a period of time, in order to give them the possibility to participate in educational programmes (literacy schemes, training, and socio-economic and cultural activities;*

- *to help children aged 3 to 6 become bilingual (French/national language) from an early age.*

This level is organised into three sections: lower section, middle section and upper section. It caters for children aged 3 to 6 years old.

The bilingual primary schools level consists in:

1. *using the national language mastered by the learner as a learning medium alongside of French.*
2. *integrating the most important elements of local cultures and values into curricula;*
3. *combining the act of learning with the act of producing;*
4. *respecting gender equality;*
5. *building bridges between the formal and non-formal education systems;*
6. *ensuring the active participation of communities;*
7. *reducing the length of primary education.*

Of the three levels, this level best demonstrates the divergence from the traditional French-inspired system. The use of the national language mastered by the learner as a medium alongside French is very important in educational terms and can improve learning quality. The results obtained in the national examinations by bilingual primary school schoolchildren are significantly better than those achieved by those in mainstream schools. One of the successes has been the reduction of the duration of primary school from six years to five, which explains why it is favoured by families and the government.

The link between education and production at this level stems from the need to link the act of learning with the act of producing, as well as education with the world of work. This is an economic imperative, to prepare children for their future role as producers and drivers of development. The active participation of communities in the preparation, planning and implementation of activities helps integrate the school into the community, hence the slogan: "the school is the village's business, and the village's development is the school's business."

The special multilingual secondary education level was designed to provide post-primary education for youngsters up to the age of 16. The specific objectives are as follows:

1. *to teach the full mainstream secondary education curriculum from the sixth to the third grade;*
2. *to teach specific content concerning production and culture in national languages, organised:*
   a. *to promote functional multilingualism (i.e. by using French as the language of instruction, by studying a second widely-used national language and by studying functional English with a focus on communication skills);*
   b. *combine the act of learning with the act of producing;*
   c. *promote positive cultural values and positive citizenship education.*

## Implications of the Multilingual Basic Education Continuum (MBEC) for education and training policies in Africa

A number of lessons applicable to other African countries can be drawn from the Burkina Faso experience.

**The political and organisational steps for implementing the MBEC: opportunities and challenges**

These steps have been set out as follows:

1. <u>*At a political level:*</u>
   a. Preparation by the National Assembly of education reform legislation which accepts the principle of using of national languages in education.
   b. Implementation of appropriate <u>institutional reforms,</u> for example the decision to merge ministries involved in the continuum (pre-primary and secondary) into the Ministry of National Education and literacy (MENA). It should be noted that non-formal education in Burkina Faso comes under the responsibility the MENA. In addition to the other two sub-sectors, a fourth concerning MBEC is therefore already attached to the MENA.
   c. Substantial contributions from the state budget to the development of the MBEC.

   a. The creation of the MBEC Directorate within the MENA.
   b. The incorporation of bilingual education modules into teacher training.
   c. Advocacy and social mobilisation.

On the political level, it is important to stress that four factors can ensure the successful implementation of the continuum: first, an innovation such as the continuum must have proven its relevance and viability; second, this innovation must also be applied at the highest political level. Third, all sections of the population must take this innovation on board and be committed to it. Fourth, the innovation must primarily be funded at local level.

For governments, three things are essential: stick to policy choices, plan implementation and mobilise resources.

At the technical level, complex issues are raised by the diversity of groups of learners, the diversity of learning situations, and the diversity of classes and courses that will have to be coordinated together. Burkina Faso has not set up national qualifications framework to manage this complexity. Neither has it established a mechanism for accrediting prior experience. It is not very clear how the three levels of MBEC are coordinated with TVET and the MENA has no strategy. For example, there is no specific strategy for pre-vocational skills training, which must be developed within MBEC.

## CONCLUSION

It will not be easy to implement the continuum because it requires reforms which go beyond the education and training sector and which would affect the very essence of the national policy and philosophy underlying a country's national development, as shown by South Korea's experience. Indeed, the continuum concept as defined entails the fair redistribution of equality and opportunity in society. Among other things, education systems in Africa have contributed to the creation of huge social divides, whose consequences have a negative effect on Africa's economic and social development by entrenching poverty and the social conflicts that arise from it.
This paper seeks to make a proactive contribution to encourage the debate on the reforms Africa requires in order to tackle the highly unenviable quality of its education and lack of responsiveness to social and economic development needs. Africa is once more at a crossroads of options and choices and it should be hoped that this key period of high and sustained economic growth will be used to instigate reforms to address the structural causes of the endemic poverty, which is holding back the continent in its march towards sustainable development.

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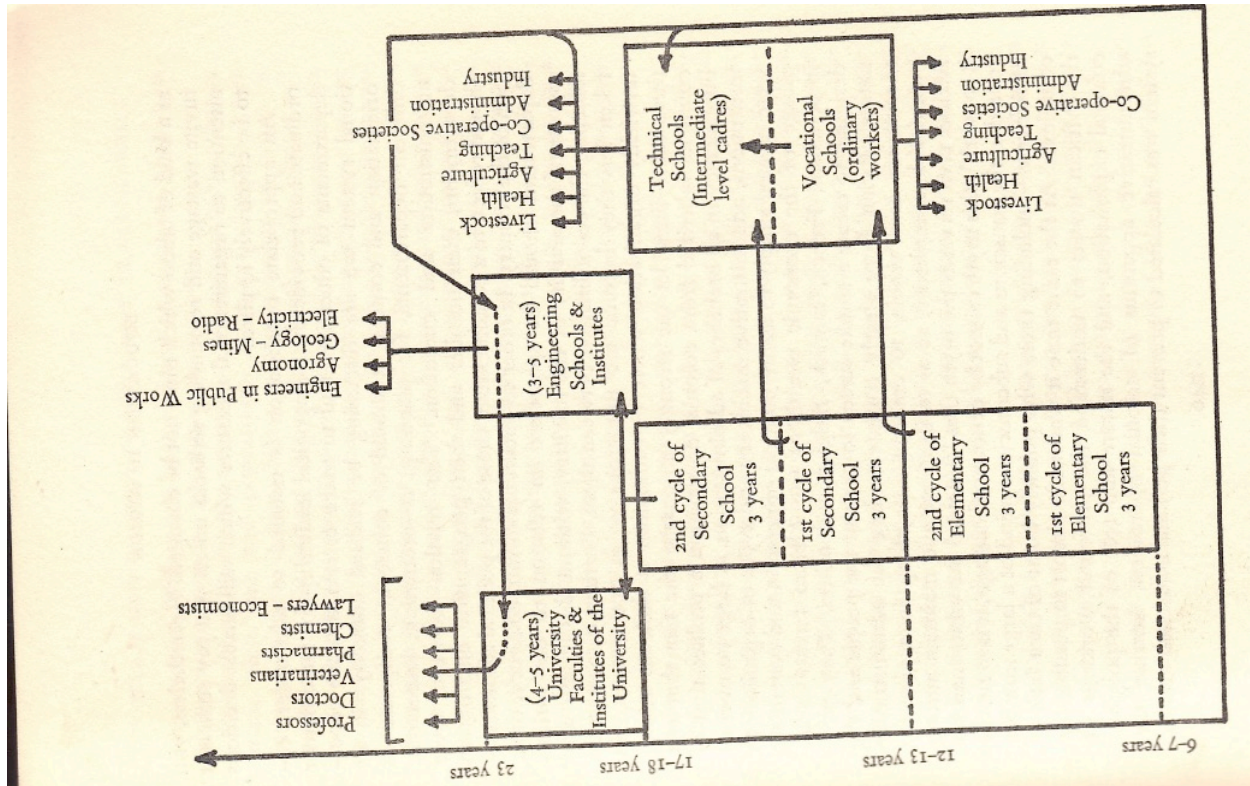
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## APPENDIX: The education-training continuum concept as described by Moumouni



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