

Education News

Technical, vocational programs benefit Africa



Education and development are inextricably linked. "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world," noted Nelson Mandela. Where there is no education, there is no development.

Inversely, where there is no development, there is no education. In its reports, the World Economic Forum has observed that "obtaining a quality education is the foundation to creating sustainable development".

Globally, education is viewed as a human right that promotes gender equality and development. Within the international frameworks for action, the 2030 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals make providing quality education a high priority.

However, as a foundation of development, inclusive and equitable quality education needs to promote skills that are for work and life, and should enhance shared growth and sustainability. To meet this need, the Sustainable Development Goal 4 on quality education emphasizes ensuring equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including at university.

As a game changer before and since COVID-19 broke out, technical and vocational education and training, or TVET, programs have revolutionized the education sector in developing and underdeveloped countries.

In China, vocational and technical skills are considered paramount for meeting the nation's modernization goals. Knowing the fundamental importance of technical and vocational education, all provinces in China have established TVET programs that support long-term developments. (To be continued)



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Currently, TVET is introduced in China at the secondary education level to help initiate and train operations-oriented skilled workers, and then advanced at the tertiary education level to offer more developed skills that are needed in such areas as art and hospitality, industry and manufacturing, artificial intelligence, agriculture and infrastructure development. This has helped China build a workforce that does not rely on seeking employment but strives to create employment.

In retrospect, TVET has helped to bridge education inequality, propel economic growth and eradicate absolute poverty in China. Having successfully implemented TVET programs in China, Beijing - guided by the call to build a community with a shared future for all - has helped other countries establish technical and vocational education in their communities.

TVET is now a towering height of the Belt and Road Initiative and the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation regarding people-to-people connectivity. Furthermore, the establishment of TVET programs has become a key area of cooperation between Africa and Chinese corporations as part of their corporate social responsibility. For instance, in 2014, AVIC International Holding Corp, a Chinese global holding enterprise, launched the annual Africa Tech Challenge program. Under the initiative, AVIC provided full postgraduate scholarships to 12 winners in the contest to study at Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics.

In Kenya, AVIC has partnered with the Ministry of Education to support several projects aimed at upgrading the quality of vocational training in the country. According to a report released by the Africa Policy Institute titled "Shared Prosperity: Tracking the Belt and Road Initiative in Kenya, 2018-2021", AVIC aims to support 10 vocational training programs at 134 local colleges and universities, and train 1,500 teachers and 150,000 students. This partnership will help Kenya achieve the goals of its Vision 2030 blueprint as well as those of the African Union's Agenda 2063.

Furthermore, at the opening ceremony of the 2018 Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, President Xi Jinping announced that Luban Workshops would be set up in Africa to provide vocational skills training for young Africans.

True to his word, China has helped establish the workshops in Kenya, Djibouti, South Africa, Mali, Egypt, Nigeria, Uganda, Cote d'Ivoire and Ethiopia, among other countries. In Kenya, Machakos University became the host of the first Luban Workshop and the ninth in Africa. Launched in December 2019 with the support of Tianjin City Vocational College in China, the workshop offers world-class, innovative courses in cloud computing, artificial intelligence and software development skills. The workshop promotes connectivity through videoconferencing facilities amid COVID-19 preventive measures.

Indeed, Africa is benefiting from technical and vocational education and training programs initiated by China. These provide high-end professional and technical skills training to help students meet the requirements of the emerging global market.

However, more needs to be done in rural areas to bridge the gap of education inequalities to ensure that no child is left without an inclusive and equitable quality education.

Reference from: <https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202203/28/WS62410915a310fd2b29e53947.html>

Education Research

How Informatization Promotes the Equity of Basic Education Outcomes Based on the Data from the China Education Panel Survey



Equity in education is one of the core requirements of a powerful country in education. This study, based on the data from the China Education Panel Survey, aims to explore how informatization promotes the equity of basic education outcomes. An empirical verification of the positive effect of informatization on the equity of basic education outcomes proves that informatization can play a significant role in achieving the equity of educational outcomes when regional development is unbalanced.

In general, informatization helps significantly positively predict the equity of basic education outcomes, but the elements for informatization play different roles in the elements for the equity of basic education outcomes. Only when the basic facilities and resources of information are effectively used in information-based teaching can informatization have a positive effect on students' cognitive competence, average scores in specialties, and acceptance of specialties.

To promote the equity of basic education outcomes through informatization, we are supposed to make top-level designs as follows: establishing a system for the supply of educational resources to meet the diversified and individualized needs of teachers and students for educational resources, raise the efficiency in the allocation of educational resources by sharing them, and improve the efficiency in the use of educational resources; improving the mechanism for the coordinated development of urban and rural informatization through accurate support, regional equilibrium, and distinctive support; and developing an information-based model for teachers' intelligence-oriented resource by means of sharing, circulating and accurately matching teachers' intelligence-oriented resource, and raising the efficiency in its use.

Authors : Hu Qintai, Party Secretary and Professor of Guangdong University of Technology; Lin Xiaofan, Associate Professor of South China Normal University; Zhang Yan, Doctoral Candidate of South China Normal University

Reference from Education Research, 2021 (9)

Education Research

The Educational Reform in "Risk Society" : The Case of the UNESCO's Educational Response to COVID-19

Risk society, which is a new term outlining the essence of modern society, and a profound reflection on modernity, provides a new perspective for our grasp of modernity and social development. Currently, the world is speedily stepping into a highly complex and uncertain "risk society", where social risks arise frequently, and education faces an unprecedented crisis.

Risk society spurs new demands for the reform and development of education, and urges the international community to reconsider the future of education, adopt innovative methods to accelerate educational reform, enhance the resilience of the educational system, and improve the ability to cope with the unknown risks and challenges in the future.



In the context of the global COVID-19 pandemic, it is particularly important to improve the ability to prevent risks through educational reform so as to effectively cope with social risks and uncertainties. An important driving force in global humanities and educational governance, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) seeks to transform the risk of the pandemic into a driving force for educational reform, arouse social attention to the risks by reflecting on the connotations of education, reshaping the educational system, enhancing risk awareness, and promoting global educational cooperation, build an educational barrier against global risks, and establish a global educational community for sustainable development.

At present and in the future, China is supposed to take an active part in global governance and educational reform advocated by the UNESCO so as to adapt to the development of risk society, increase the international supply of education-related public goods, and build a community with a shared future for mankind.

Authors : Kan Yue, Executive Vice Dean and professor of the College of Education, Zhejiang University ; Xu Bingna, doctoral candidate of the College of Education, Zhejiang University

Reference from Education Research, 2022 (3)

Education Opinions

Students Need Real Lives to Aid Growth

In 2020, I interviewed two online tutors who could each make more than 2 million yuan (\$315, 000) a year. At the time, I questioned my career choice because their salary was more than 10 times higher than mine. As someone with a master's in English interpretation, I thought I would also be qualified to tutor high school students in the language.

The same year, the annual China Central Television Spring Festival Gala, the country's most-watched TV program on Chinese New Year's Eve, was filled with ads for online tutoring companies. The ads were also online and on TV, at bus and subway stations and along elevators in residential areas.

"If you do not send your child to our tutoring courses, we will tutor your child's competitors," said one of the catchiest ads.



Education seemed a promising industry back then. After all, no parent wants their child to fall behind their peers, and as students still have to achieve high exam scores to gain entry to good schools, they remain motivated to attend tutoring courses.

Also, due to the COVID-19 epidemic, students were used to taking online courses, so internet-based education was one of the business opportunities most coveted by investors, domestic and foreign.

For example, online education provider Yuanfudao raised \$3.5 billion in three rounds of funding in 2020, while rival Zuoyebang raised \$2.35 billion in two rounds.

That year, the value of the online tutoring business in China grew rapidly as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. It reached 257 billion yuan, a year-on-year rise of 35.5 percent, according to iResearch, a market consultancy in Shanghai, which predicted that the figure would reach 490 billion yuan by 2024. (To be continued.)

Everything looked perfect for tutoring companies and their investors. However, they underestimated the government's determination to provide high-quality education equally for all students, and the nonprofit nature of education in China.

The government has long attached great importance to children's education. Last year, the outlay on education totaled about 4.3 trillion yuan, up 7.2 percent year-on-year and equal to 4.2 percent of national GDP. It was the ninth consecutive year that the figure had exceeded 4 percent of GDP.

The exam-oriented academic tutoring industry, which has led to a rat race among parents and students and placed a heavy financial burden on families, was bound to face strong government scrutiny.

In July, the central authorities introduced the "double reduction" policy, aiming to reduce the burdens that excessive homework and tuition imposed on young students.

By December, more than 80 percent of tutoring companies had either closed or changed focus, the Ministry of Education said.

All the remaining players have become nonprofit entities who need to follow much lower guidance fee standards for tutoring courses.

It is sad that so many people have given up careers, and also to see the lives of tens of thousands of teachers and other employees upended by the policy. However, many former tutors I interviewed said they felt

something was going wrong when too many students were motivated to take tutoring courses.

When all students take such courses, it just raises the bar of school enrollment higher, while some children are too exhausted from academic study to have hobbies or do physical exercise. Psychological problems can also arise from too much academic pressure.

As the old saying goes, "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy."

Young students need to free themselves from intense academic tuition and experience healthy growth, both mentally and physically.

Author: Zou Shuo

Reference from: <https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202203/29/WS62425871a310fd2b29e53ccf.html>



