

## Virtual Colloquium DTJET

Leaving no one behind by fostering Digital Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Africa

**How can people acquire the skills needed to digitize work to take on new tasks? What must Technical Vocational and Educational Training (TVET) strategies look like to bring technology closer to learners, teachers and managers? These and other questions were discussed on November 26 during the online colloquium on Digital Technical and Vocational Education and Training (DTJET) co-organized by the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) and Festo Didactic. Conclusion: Digital learning tools will be the key to unlock African youth's potential especially amid this COVID-19 pandemic. But learners and teachers need support from the private sector and the development partners.**

At the online colloquium, selected African countries (i.e. Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Rwanda, and Tunisia), regional and international development partners (i.e. the African Development Bank, UNESCO-UNEVOC, and GIZ), as well as TVET stakeholders and private sector representatives (i.e. SAP, Funzi, Digital Consulting, and Terre des Hommes) presented their experiences, challenges and best innovative solutions to support DTJET in Africa. ADEA also reported on the preliminary results of its two studies on the supply and demand of technical and vocational skills development. Festo Didactic presented its "e-skilling" concept as well as the FESTO Learning Experience (LX).

### Best practice examples

The central question of the webinar, which attracted over 200 online participants, was how vocational education systems can be reformed to make them more permeable and flexible. Particular attention was paid to the development of skills that enable people to adapt to rapidly changing labour market conditions. The speakers of the colloquium also discussed policy measures on how African countries can respond to the structural changes in the economy and labour market caused by digitization in order to create more and better jobs.

Indeed, in this framework, Martha Phiri, Director for Agriculture, Human and Social Development (AHVP) at the African Development Bank, mentioned that her institution is investing in impacting millions of learners by promoting the creation of more work opportunities for the youth through, for instance, the Jobs for Youth in Africa (JFYA) Strategy (2016-2025) and other projects.

"Future demand is for workers with a new type of set of skills to succeed in the world of work. Currently, that need is not being sufficiently met, especially for soft skills. In addition, COVID-19 has demonstrated the weaknesses of the TVET systems in many countries in sustaining delivery of training during the pandemic. That's why nowadays, it is key to develop or strengthen TVET policies and strategies to mainstream digitalization by also ensuring capacity and political commitment as well as strong strategic Public-Private-Partnerships," stated Mr. Albert Nsengiyumva, Executive Secretary of ADEA, during his presentation on the general status of TVET in Africa.

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## **Festo Learning Experience**

"Digital education is the change maker to provide education for all. A balance between sufficient 'knowing' and necessary 'doing' will create the basis for digital skills for employability," said Dr. Nader Imani, Executive Vice President Global Education Projects, at the colloquium. With the learning platform Festo Learning Experience (LX), Festo wants to support institutions in adapting their curriculum by creating individual learning paths according to the needs of students and trainees.

The learning portal Festo LX provides didactic learning resources for various technical training professions in small nuggets that can be individually compiled into courses and entire learning paths. A wide range of formats such as videos, animations, simulations, text units or small quizzes ensure that there is no room for boredom. Existing courses can be modified as desired. New content in text, image or video format can be easily added and assigned to the learners. This allows for an individualization of learning.

## **Digitization as a new way to support learning process**

All the presenters – from the private sector and development partners to the governments – reiterated with one voice that 'digitization is changing the way we learn'. A digital platform encourages information exchange and collaboration between learners. The platform should help to define the required competencies of students and the corresponding curricula. Intelligent classrooms represent the environment in which school-based digital learning takes place. In this context, learning today mainly takes place via a mobile device outside the classroom. However, for most learners this raises the issue of accessibility and inclusivity.

Therefore, digitization requires new learning methods, new profiles and skills of teachers in vocational education training. It is also necessary to train and prepare teachers for the new learning situations, but it is not enough. Learning must be taken to the next level through a more cooperative, multidisciplinary strategy. This requires a different way of thinking and approach. It must be direct and easy to visualize. Interdisciplinary approaches will help people to reflect critically on how technology can really add value to learning and retraining.

## **Avoiding skills mismatch**

Especially in Africa, as stressed by the Ministers and country representatives during the ministerial panel on "policies and practices in selected African countries", this educational approach is necessary to ensure that nobody is left behind. It is the only continent in the world with an exponential growth of the labour force, which is predicted to continue in the coming years. In parallel, youth unemployment, which is three times higher than adult unemployment (ILO, 2019), is a major concern in all African countries.

The mismatch between skills supply and demand is one of the main causes of youth unemployment. It is projected that by 2050 the youth population under 25 years of age will represent half of the total African population. It is therefore crucial that this young population benefits from artificial intelligence, cloud computing, the Internet of Things and wireless technologies in the same way as young people in the developed world as also reiterated by M. Albert Nsengiyumva.

This virtual colloquium was the first of several colloquia that will lead to the organization of the ADEA 2021 High-Level Policy Dialogue on TVET and the 4th Industrial Revolution (4IR).

## **Press Images**



#### **ADEA online Colloquium**

Online Colloquium on Digital Technical and Vocational Education and Training (DTVET) held on Nov. 26, 2020

#### **About Festo Didactic**

Festo Didactic is a leading provider of technical training and further education. The product and service portfolio offers customers integrated educational solutions in industrial automation topics. The wide range of products and services are aimed at vocational schools and universities, research centers and industrial customers. Festo Didactic is part of the globally oriented, independent family-owned company Festo with headquarters in Esslingen a. N., Germany. The 760 employees of Festo Didactic in 61 Festo national companies generated sales of EUR 140 million in 2022.