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# Skills development in the time of COVID-19: Taking stock of the initial responses in technical and vocational education and training

## *Report Key Findings*

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Date: Monday / 1 February / 2021

# Interagency Report

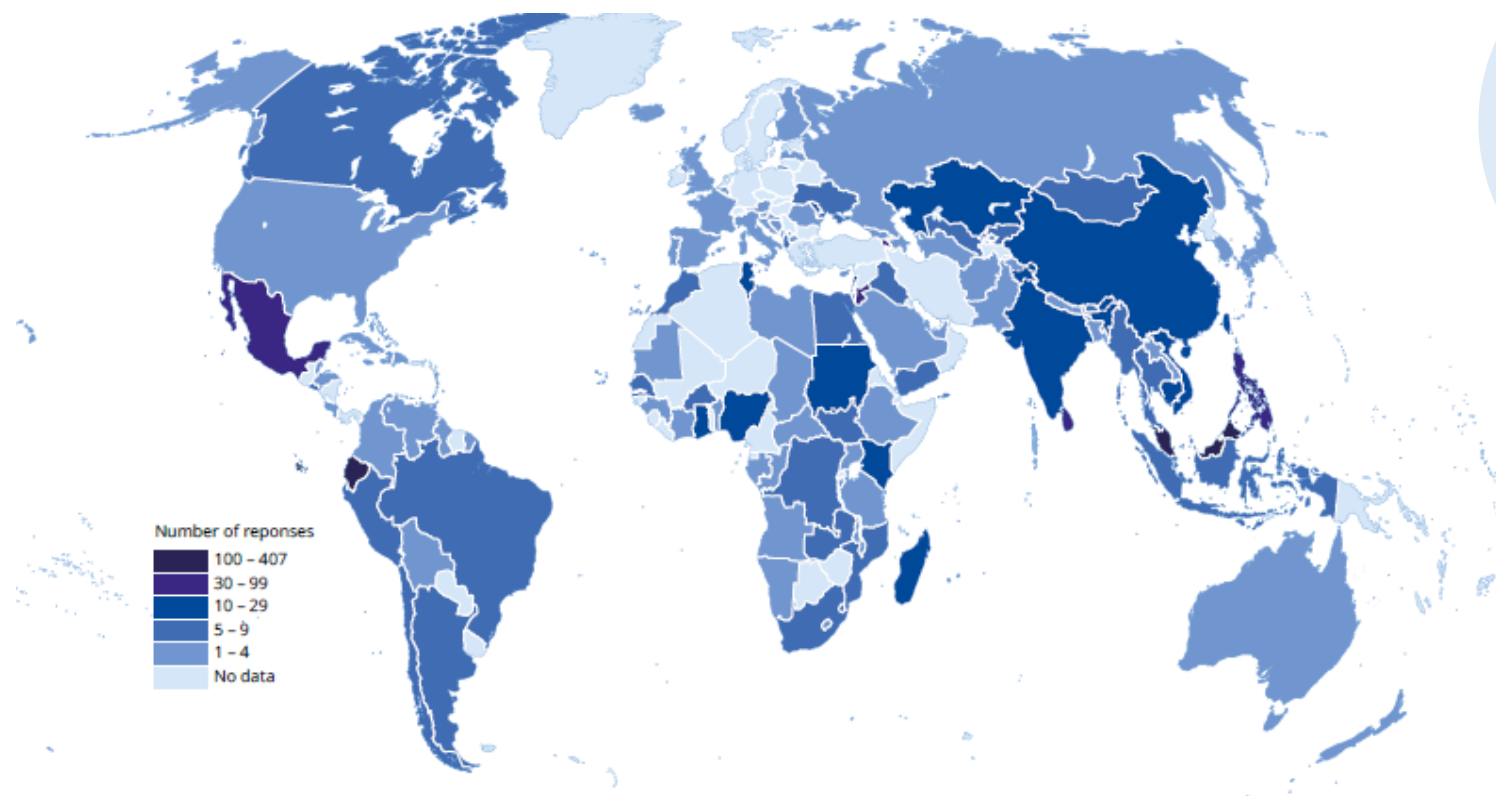
## ► Skills development in the time of COVID-19:

Taking stock of the initial responses in  
technical and vocational education and  
training



- ◆ The report was prepared by a joint team from the ILO, UNESCO and the World Bank. The core team of authors comprised
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- ◆ Hiromichi Katayama and Anahat Kaur (UNESCO);
- ◆ Margo Hoftijzer, Radhika Kapoor, Victoria Levin, Indhira Santos and Michael Weber (World Bank)

## Geographical distribution of respondents



Source: ILO-UNESCO-World Bank online survey, 2020

**1,353**  
respondents,  
representing  
**126 countries**  
and **territories**

**74%** of the  
respondents were  
representatives of  
**TVET providers,**  
**17%** were  
**policymakers**

other  
respondents  
included **social**  
**partners, career**  
**counselling** and  
**employment**  
**services**

## Disruption to TVET programmes due to COVID-19



90%

of respondents reported **complete closure of TVET centres** in their countries

In 114 countries (out of 126), complete closure was reported by the majority of the respondents



98%

of respondents across regions reported **disruption of work-based learning** due to closure of enterprises

In most TVET programmes, **practical training is a critical dimension** and not easily delivered through remote modalities for many occupations



78%

of respondents reported that **certifying exams and assessments were postponed** for TVET trainees and students and in some cases even cancelled

### Obstacles

to ensure continuity in the provision of training to TVET

- ❖ Lack of general and technological infrastructure
- ❖ Lack of effective and familiar distance learning platforms
- ❖ Lack of staff capacity to support distance learning through quality pedagogical resources
- ❖ Financial resource constraints

# Consequences of COVID-19 on learning and teaching in TVET



**Difficulty with TVET student engagement and quality assurance in the remote learning format**

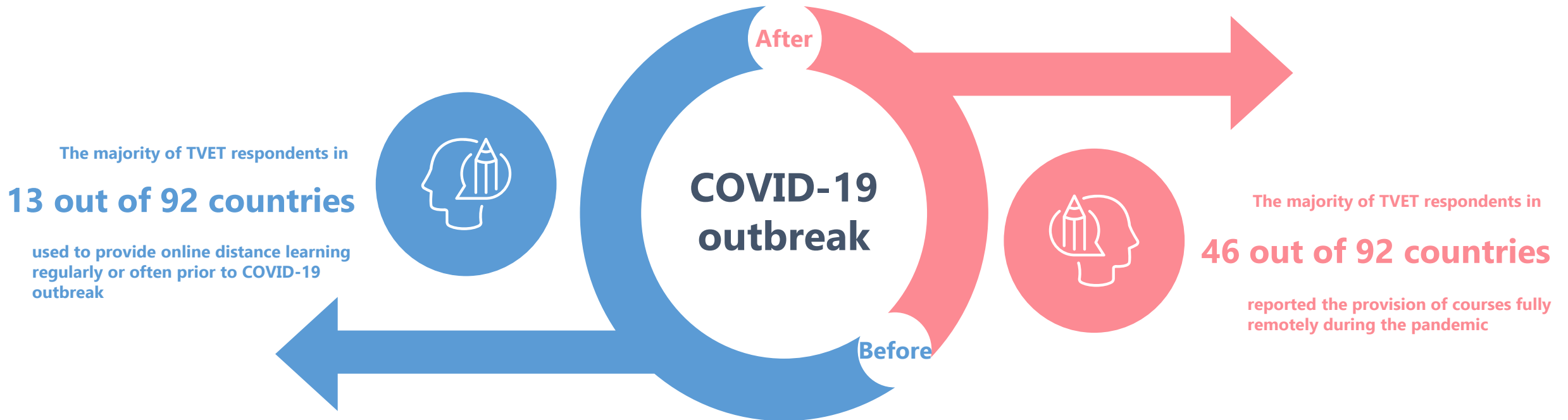
**Drop in access to and affordability of TVET programmes during the crisis**

**Increased opportunity cost of completing TVET programmes during the crisis**

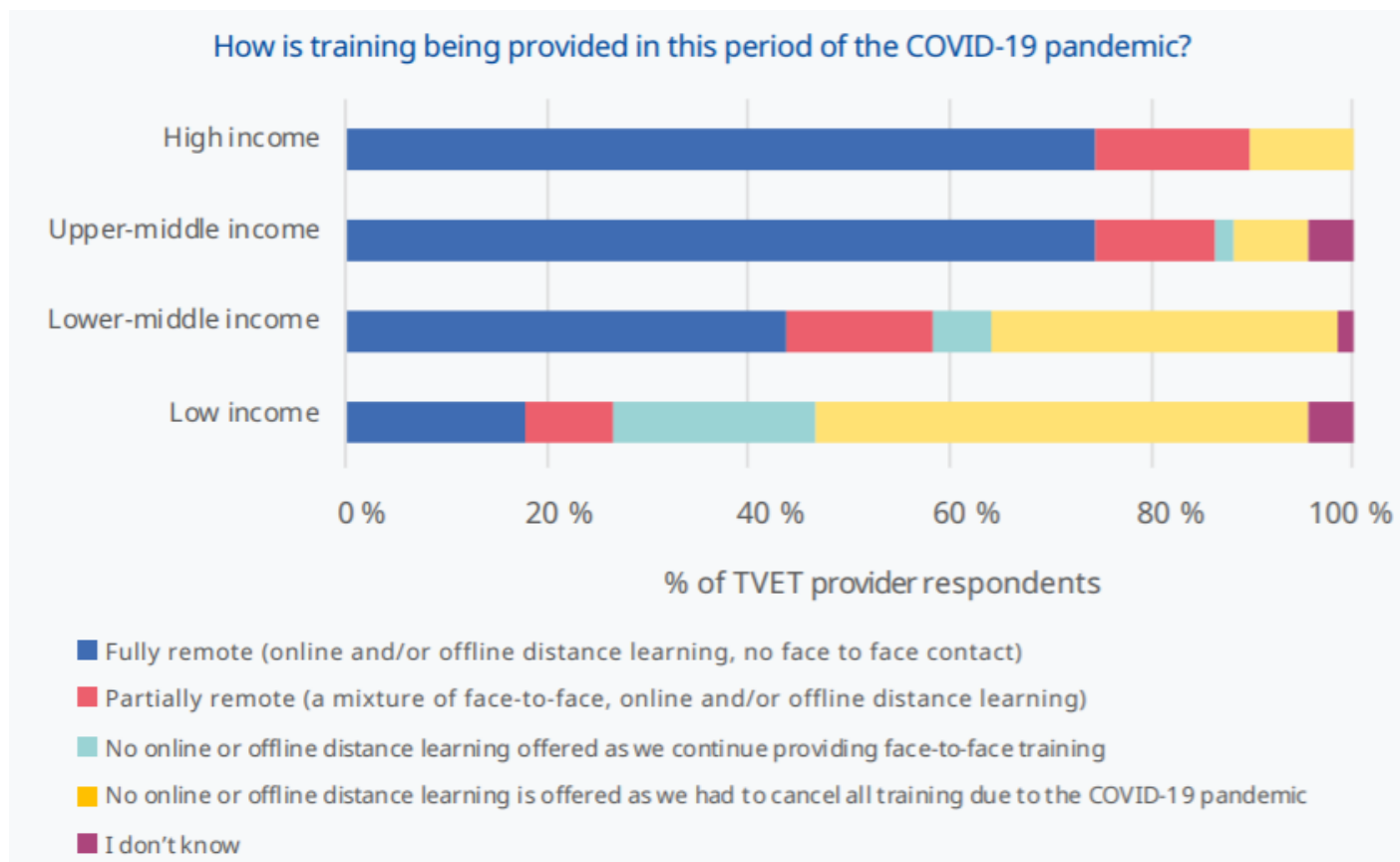
**Lack of motivation among teachers and students and a rise in the dropout rate**

# Transition to alternative modes of training and assessment

▶ Despite challenges, the findings of this survey show that the **uptake of distance learning solutions has accelerated** since the COVID-19 outbreak in TVET



## How training is provided by countries' income level



Source: ILO-UNESCO-World Bank online survey, 2020

▶ While the crisis has triggered a rapid transition to distance education and training in the delivery of TVET, it has also **revealed the wide learning gap between countries and societies**

▶ While in HI countries more than two thirds of TVET providers reported that they were delivering training entirely by remote methods during the pandemic, **very few in low-income countries were able to make that transition**

## Distance learning modalities



### face-to-face training and assessment

with precautionary measures - social distancing, wearing a face mask, staggering class break times and limiting the number of students on site at the same time



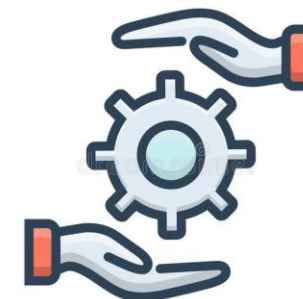
### Use of online platforms and tools

was reported, particularly the use of existing online platforms and tools such as MOOCs and MOODLE, video tutorials, live video conferences and simulators where possible



### Use of offline platforms

like national television, distribution of written resources such as self-paced learning guides and learner notes were reported, particularly in many developing countries



### Alternative solutions to practical skills training and assessments

such as implementing practical tasks at home and uploading images or video footage for assessment, or using portfolios with past work for assessment - submitted online



## TVET institutional responses to COVID-19

▶ The pandemic has created an **opportunity to promote and further mobilize human and financial resources** for expanding distance learning at a global level



**Half of TVET providers** reported that **additional resources had been committed** in their organizations for the creation of new materials, deployment of new technologies and expanded use of online and offline distance learning.



**Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)** in TVET were promptly established as part of response measures to the crisis caused by the pandemic



**Many training programmes, actions and resources** have been developed as an immediate response to the COVID-19 pandemic **for the sectors in shortage of labour and skills**

## Support measures for teachers, trainers and learners

▶ In most countries, measures were put in place to support **teachers and trainers** during the pandemic

- ▶ moral support,
- ▶ internet access and, sometimes, the provision of ICT or camera equipment,
- ▶ capacity-building (most frequently cited type of support) to help teachers and trainers provide remote training,
- ▶ the provision of resources, technical support or help desks.

▶ Different mechanisms to acquaint **learners** with existing learning solutions and support them in choosing options were reported

- ▶ the use of television,
- ▶ social media,
- ▶ websites,
- ▶ webinars,
- ▶ directly contacting individual learners to offer support

## Implementation of pre-existing crisis-response strategy

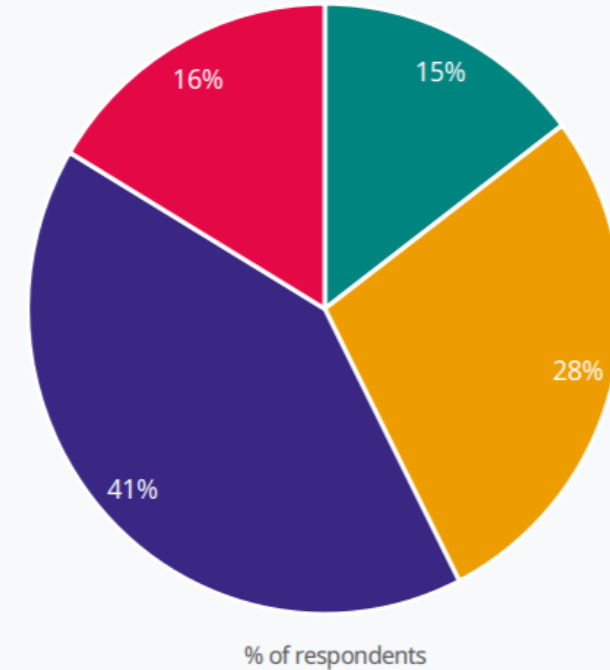
▶ Most countries appear to **have lacked a crisis response strategy for TVET** prior to the COVID-19 crisis

▶ Reported strategies to prevent the spread of the pandemic most often related to measures that **are not specific to the education sector.**

▶ One of the very few respondents who referred to a formal crisis response strategy:

▶ Australian network of public technical and further education (TAFE) institutes highlighted that all registered training organizations in the country were **legally required** to have a critical incident policy and procedure in place and available on their website.

Had the strategies currently being implemented by your organization to respond to a public health crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic been designed previously?



Source: ILO-UNESCO-World Bank online survey, 2020

Note: number of responses: 1,350 (out of 1,353 responses), raw percentages (unweighted).

## Report lessons learned from the COVID-19 response

▶ **Importance of remote learning**, including for the acquisition of practical skills, and preconditions for its high-quality provision

▶ Need for a rapid response to school closures has substantially increased the understanding of distance learning, appreciation of its benefits, and awareness of its challenges.

▶ Various respondents highlighted their experience of blended learning, noting its potential value beyond the crisis

▶ **Importance of specific socio-emotional skills** and behaviour that are essential to people if they are to weather and rebound from crises

▶ Respondents pointed to specific socio-emotional skills, behaviour and values, such as teamwork, mutual respect and openness to change, that had been of particular assistance in the crisis response.

▶ **Preparedness for future shocks**

▶ There was widespread recognition that development of detailed and realistic contingency plans can make TVET providers and the overall system better able to weather and rebound from future crises.

# Policy recommendations

## Increase crisis -response readiness

- ✓ **Invest in the development of adequate crisis-response plans** for the education sector, from the national down to the provider level.
- ✓ **Develop and reinforce capacities of TVET teachers and learners, and of the managers of TVET institutions** to adjust to constantly evolving circumstances

## Enhance access to education and training

- ✓ **Improve internet infrastructure** and ensure affordable connectivity.
- ✓ **Invest in developing and maintaining easy access to distance learning platforms** and learning spaces for TVET.
- ✓ **Collaborate with private entities** in the education technology sector at the national level.
- ✓ **Emphasize equality and inclusiveness** to ensure that people have broad access to training opportunities throughout their working life.

## Deliver relevant training and skills to build back better

- ✓ **Adapt to the changing situation in the economy, the labour market and society at large** in a timely manner and train young people and adults to meet current and future skills needs.
- ✓ **Mainstream successful emerging innovations** in new training programmes, learning platforms and resources into the TVET system.
- ✓ **Strengthen systems for the validation and recognition of all forms of learning.**
- ✓ **Increase efforts to reskill and upskill workers**, with a view to rebuilding back better and achieving full employment.



▶ **THANK YOU!**



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