ICTs in TVSD: Promises and Challenges for Inclusive Development Reaching the Poorest Populations

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Ammachi Labs of Amrita University (India) is a multidisciplinary research center of Amrita University with a focus in technological innovation for social impact in the field of computer-human interaction, haptics, multimedia and virtual reality, with application areas in education, health care, defense and disaster preparedness. Ammachi Labs extends Amrita University’s unswerving focus on providing effective value-based education to include skill development at all levels and in all disciplines.

NORRAG Network for International Policies for Education and Training (Switzerland), whose offices are located at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID) in Geneva, is a multi-stakeholder network of researchers, policymakers, members of NGOs and the private sector seeking to inform, challenge and influence international education and training policies and cooperation. Technical and Vocational Skills Development is one of NORRAG’s main thematic areas of work.

Abstract

Technical and Vocational Skills Development-TVSD (defined as to the acquisition of knowledge, practical competencies, knowhow and attitudes necessary to perform a certain trade or occupation in the labour market) is making a come-back on the international development agenda (in particular in relation to SDG goal 4 and 8). One of the important drivers to this change have been the rapidly advancing ICTs that have transformed the world of work and demanded for new skills development, while offering at the same time new modes of training delivery. ICTs provides hope for equal opportunities and for marginalized groups to access TVSD, both in the formal and informal economic sectors, for instance through open educational resources, massive open online courses (MOOCs) or tablet-based training simulation for vocational training.

Nevertheless the promises of ICTs as a vector for training democratisation, of masses’ integration and poverty reduction have to be demonstrated contextually. Indeed, the impact of ICTs in TVSD depends on different contextual factors, such as the infrastructure available (ex. the access of electricity and internet), the quality and relevance of the TVSD programmes providers, the quality of the data collected and its utilization for policy development, the value of certification (formal and non-formal training), the recognition by employers of the skills acquired, the labour & economic markets characteristics (ex. dominance of the informal sector in many developing countries) etc.

In relation to the conference’s core thematic area “ICT for Development”, this event proposed by NORRAG (Geneva) & Ammachi Labs (Amrita University / India), aims to engage a critical debate and unpack the issue of the promise and challenges of ICTs in TVSD for inclusive development, by building both on the international policy debate and evidence around the topic, as well as the practical experience and insights gained in the Indian context.
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Description

Proposed discussion focus

NORRAG and Ammachi Labs will present a critical and applied analysis on ICTs in TVSD for inclusive development. The presentations and discussions will be focused on the following main questions: Where does the international policy debate stand, in particular in relation to TVSD in and for the informal sector? What are good practices and policies on ICTs in TVSD for inclusive development? What is their impact in terms of equal access to TVSD, masses’ skills development and integration and poverty reduction and what are challenges and the conditions for success? These questions will be shared with the audience to promote an interactive debate and to collect participants’ experience, knowledge and ideas on how to improve ICTs in TVSD for reaching the poorest populations.

Objectives

Justification and expected impact during and after the conference

The objectives of this event are: a) to present, share and build a critical analysis and knowledge and practical experience on how to improve ICTs in TVSD for inclusive development, b) to disseminate these analysis and knowledge through publications (ex. NORRAG News, Ammachi/Amrita publications), c) to start developing a joint project (research and policy dialogue) between NORRAG, Ammachi Labs and EPFL on “ICT in TVSD for inclusive development in the post 2015 era: The case of India (provisional title)”, d) to disseminate the results of such a joint project.

Target Audience

The target audience will be: researchers, students, practitioners, policymakers, members of NGOs, foundations and the private sector.

Proposed Program

To be finalized in January 2016.