

TVET GOVERNANCE
MARCH 2018

THE ROLE OF INSTITUTIONAL LEADERS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR POLICY MAKERS
CONCERNING TVET GOVERNANCE

Within this work a number of clear themes have emerged. We have observed increasing levels of devolution and institutional autonomy domestically and internationally. Furthermore, when we consider the specific aspects of devolution, as noted in earlier British Council research (2017), the availability of adequate and sustainable funding is a fundamental factor in achieving success in TVET development. Our survey has revealed that this is also the area where institutions perceive themselves to have the least freedom.

For policymakers looking to further devolve TVET Governance the following recommendations learned from UK experiences and modified from Randall and Casebourne (2016), seem particularly pertinent when it comes to supporting institutional leaders:

1. Timelines should allow sufficient opportunity for local partnership development
2. Assessment criteria must be clearly communicated and understood
3. The devolution process itself must be understood by all actors in the system
4. There must be a clear (and compelling) vision for what devolution will realise
5. Sufficient capacity must exist to deliver locally the devolved powers and functions
6. Central government actors need to have a clear understanding of what devolution is expected to achieve
7. Central government actors need to be willing and able to adapt their ways of working
8. The result should be a simpler system to navigate for citizens, businesses and service providers
9. The potential for innovation and experimentation within the system should be built in over time

Greater devolution of TVET Governance, done correctly, could strengthen the role of TVET providers by giving them an enhanced role in economic development and greater responsibility for meeting national, federal, regional and local objectives. Implemented well, devolution of powers should involve a combination of enhanced status for TVET, clear standards-based provision, specialist provision and enhanced relationships with employers.

Our survey has confirmed that there are some tensions between different levels of government. There can also be major disparities within countries – indeed sometimes the differences within a single

large country can be greater than those found between individual smaller countries. Globally we need to recognise that the TVET sector has a great many new initiatives and inevitably therefore, there can be some confusion over its new responsibilities and roles.

If successful, devolved TVET governance with decision-making located at the most appropriate levels should lead to a number of significant enhancements. This new work has sought to understand more clearly how institutional leaders in TVET interact with different levels of governance. Our survey has informed seven key recommendations for policy makers:

RECOMMENDATION 1: HELP TVET LEADERS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE INCREASING DEVOLUTION OF TVET GOVERNANCE

Clear survey majorities in each country believed that they had the flexibility to operate independently. Even so, whilst TVET leaders believed that they were able to operate independently, half said that they operated in a centrally controlled system with little scope for local decision-making. Interestingly, almost all (99%) said that they were able to innovate and undertake strategic planning/set local priorities (93%) suggesting that some have little idea of the kinds of flexibilities and independence seen elsewhere.

RECOMMENDATION 2: HELP TVET LEADERS TO PREPARE FOR GREATER INSTITUTIONAL AUTONOMY

One of the key findings of the survey is that 60% of respondents expect to gain more autonomy over the next five years. Clearly, with the extent of past change and future expectations of further autonomy, the research is timely. The new operating environment into which TVET is heading will bring new opportunities and challenges for TVET leaders requiring new forms of governance, capacity building and staff development. Key areas where the international TVET system is gaining more freedoms, in a marked change over the past five years, are employer partnerships and innovation. The extent of change towards greater autonomy was most marked in Vietnam and to a lesser extent, Kazakhstan.

RECOMMENDATION 3: SUPPORT TVET LEADERS WITH GREATER FREEDOMS AROUND FUNDING

The availability of adequate and sustainable funding is a fundamental factor in achieving success in TVET and this is an area where institutions have the least freedom. Leaders in Vietnam were least likely to have freedom to spend their budgets to achieve their objectives and to decide on the size of student enrolment. A significant majority of respondents from South Africa do not have autonomy over their curriculum content or freedoms to negotiate staff salaries.

RECOMMENDATION 4: PROVIDE LEADERSHIP TRAINING AND SUPPORT TO HELP TVET LEADERS (AND THEIR STAKEHOLDERS AND BOARDS) TO BE RESPONSIVE TO LOCAL NEEDS

In the main, respondents were positive when asked about whether there was a shared view across their region, but where this was not the case, the key areas for concern were; duplication, a lack of accountability, lack of synergy between funding and strategy and a lack of clarity. This tended to make learning less responsive to labour market needs. Capacity building in this area could therefore extend to stakeholders such as Board members and regional government. There will be a growing need for TVET leaders to accept responsibility for their new 'freedoms'. If TVET leaders were given greater responsibility they stated that they would particularly like more freedoms over:

- Curriculum design
- Investment in facilities and equipment
- Tackling public perceptions of TVET
- Monitoring and evaluation

If institutional leaders are to make their offer more responsive to demand then they would like the freedom to use their local knowledge and expertise to do so.

RECOMMENDATION 5: PROVIDE BOTH INCENTIVES AND PRACTICAL SUPPORT FOR BETTER PARTNERSHIP WORKING AT LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS

TVET partnerships are strongest with other local TVET institutions and with central government. More than 1 in 4 respondents stated that they have 'weak' partnerships with employer associations and this was

a particular feature of responses from Vietnam, where a majority held this view.

RECOMMENDATION 6: ENHANCE THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION ON THE LABOUR MARKET AND ON THE IMPACTS OF TVET DELIVERY

If TVET provision is to be made more demand-led there is a need for more labour market intelligence both to help guide and inform provision and to identify what is working and what is not. The finding on a lack of sufficient funding for this area was universal across all of the countries surveyed.

RECOMMENDATION 7: IF SEEKING TO SUPPORT GREATER AUTONOMY THERE IS A NEED TO BOOST FINANCIAL AND STAFFING AUTONOMY

In line with the clear theme running through the survey responses, adequate financial and human resources were given the highest priority. Long term strategic planning was also very important – identified by two thirds – no doubt reflecting the difficulties caused by changes in governments and short term funding horizons.

Government and policymakers can support greater financial and human resource autonomy through a focus on improved collaboration and coordination between the national public authorities responsible for all aspects of the education and training system. They will also need to engage more deeply with the social partners and civil society (in particular the private sector) to better align TVET supply with labour market demand. Government and policymakers could also seek to involve teacher and trainers communities and TVET providers (including social partners) in qualification and curricular reform (Education and Training Foundation 2015).

Government can also seek a more purposeful allocation of resources and introduce more innovative approaches to finance to help meet the challenge of securing sufficient flexible TVET financing. It also has major role in creating a framework and culture for quality assurance and evaluation.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The British Council's work in skills *"aims to enhance the quality of skills systems by encouraging closer links between education, employers and policy makers in the UK and worldwide."* This important triple-helix is critical to achieving responsive and demand-led Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) provision and skills development. The British Council has recently been actively exploring the importance of governance and how its effectiveness can be maximised and has published the following reports, which underpin this research:

- International Reflections on Technical and Vocational Education and Training Governance, July 2016
- The role of TVET Governance at Sub-National Levels, June 2017

Within the UK, national devolution has led to an increasingly divergent TVET system across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Within England in particular, the evolving agenda has placed considerable emphasis on effective TVET governance within new structures such as city regions and Local Enterprise Partnership geographies. Some of these developments remain very new, notably the role of elected mayors and although England provides the longest-standing case of local democracy in Europe, the outcome of such changes has been mixed in terms of both success and acceptance by national political parties within municipalities (Kukovic et al 2015).

England is not alone in this system change and there is a marked move internationally to more regional, federal and devolved TVET and skills governance alongside the structures that support this such as local and regional labour market observatories (Larsen et al 2013) and funding structures, not to mention internal strategies and ambitions. Globalisation, digitalisation and the swiftly changing nature of work are driving change and make it imperative that TVET governance is able to swiftly respond to meet demand and to empower local stakeholders, particularly employers, to interact directly with the supply side actors (TVET institutions).

Kis and Park, (2012) found that many vocational systems globally suffer from fragmentation, reflecting a multiplicity of stakeholders, including different

government departments, employers and unions, competing programmes, qualifications and training providers. The end result of such fragmentation tends to cause disengagement by students and employers in the face of confusion. There is often a need to simplify systems and coordinate them better, without losing the dynamism and innovation yielded by autonomy. This is therefore an ideal time to be exploring TVET governance.

When describing autonomy within TVET institutions we are referring to the freedom to exercise greater control over factors such as delivery, borrowing powers, freedom to work in new sectors and build new partnerships and independent governance. In theory this should enable TVET institutions to make decisions as close as possible to where implementation happens allowing them to respond swiftly to the needs of employers and the labour market and perhaps even lead to more cohesive local planning.

AIMS AND PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

This third report in the suite of Governance reports seeks to build on the earlier research and to understand more clearly how institutional leaders in TVET interact with different levels of governance in a broad range of different systems. To this end, it aims to:

- Identify the benefits and challenges associated with the different models of governance and the relevance of any country context.
- Examine to what extent the English experience might be useful in supporting the reform agendas in countries where the British Council works and what lessons England might learn from the experience of other countries.
- Deliver a clear set of recommendations on how governing agencies can and should interact with institutional leaders in different contexts.

METHODOLOGY

The project took a mixed approach involving:

- A literature and background review examining previous research and relevant materials to extract key findings and areas of importance for institutional leaders in interacting with TVET governance.
- Interviews with international experts in TVET governance and organisations.
- An international online survey and follow up interviews with local TVET leaders.

The survey was undertaken during November to December 2017 with representatives from Columbia, England, India, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Africa and Vietnam generating 77 responses, with particular interest and engagement from respondents in England, Kazakhstan, South Africa and Vietnam, which make up the bulk of respondents. Subsequently, follow up interviews were undertaken in each of these four case study countries to add depth to the findings.

Separate analyses for each of these countries are included in the form of infographics within Chapter 6.

FINDINGS:

EVIDENCE FROM THE LITERATURE

INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE REVIEW

Internationally, previous British Council work (British Council, 2016) has already identified some common themes within TVET Governance, such as:

- The role of strong central leadership in driving change and drawing in other policy support
- Identifying when it is most helpful to have centralised or more devolved skills policy
- Consideration of what difference a country's stage of development makes
- Consideration of what functions and responsibilities should be held centrally by the ministry responsible for skills policy, and what should be delegated to others
- The role of the central government ministry to ensure effective delivery when power and responsibility is delegated
- Consideration of whether it matters that citizens and employers are involved/aware of the processes

Subsequently, the British Council further explored the different ways in which TVET governance and planning are devolved to sub-national levels, and sought to inform debate about the benefits and challenges associated with different types and levels of devolution in different national contexts (British Council, 2017). This particular research identified that a complex mix of factors are at play in each country studied and that each of these factors can both support and stimulate successful devolution of TVET governance or hinder its progress. Critical factors include:

- Political factors (impetus, structure, coherence, party affiliations, power and its location)
- Financial factors (funding availability and stability, systems)
- Institutional factors (centralised vs devolved, independence vs state controlled, geography etc.)
- Cultural factors (leadership, barriers, people strategies)

The same report outlined a series of recommendations for three groups, policymakers, institutions, governments and international partners.

Our review confirms that devolution within TVET is now internationally widespread and its importance is supported within the literature. As Pike et al (2016) describe it:

Politicians and civil servants in national central government ... don't always know what's best for local, regional and urban areas. Pulling levers centrally in a top-down 'command and control'-style governance system doesn't necessarily deliver the goods, leaves local knowledge untapped and does not respond well to diverse needs and aspirations.

A TREND TOWARDS GREATER DEVOLUTION

Jonathan Barr from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (Local Economic and Employment Development Programme (OECD LEED)) interviewed as part of this study expects to see continued devolution of TVET governance. OECD LEED is concerned that skills mismatch is also a significant place-based problem and not just a person-based one. OECD LEED therefore emphasise the need to embrace TVET reform alongside tackling skills mismatches and meeting employer needs – both existing and the new ones that will be emerging over time. As an organisation OECD LEED are already active in looking at flexibilities in local skills and TVET systems – seeking to try and customise them to meet employer need. This linking of education to the economy and to the needs of business fits extremely well to the direction of travel and drivers for TVET devolution in many countries.

With greater devolution the European Training Foundation (ETF 2015) recognises that the challenge of developing new governance modes that ensure coordinated actions of stakeholders, transparency and accountability is still ahead. Currently, stakeholders' capacities to effectively engage in productive partnerships are still weak, coordination mechanisms are poorly functioning and key decisions on how to share responsibilities for a more effective system management are still being shaped.

Work by Larsen (in Larsen et al 2016) looked at the Importance of Governance in Regional Labour Market Monitoring and identified three associated Modes of Governance:

1. **Hierarchy** – Meaning a system of fixed roles and structures and applied in bureaucratic organisations. Characteristically a centralized top-down system.
2. **Market** – Steered more on the basis of competition and performance-based rewards. Often there is a significant role for the private sector.
3. **Network** – Sharing leadership internally and externally within collaborative structures of joint action, co-production and co-operation

Larsen (2013) describes the most typical combinations of modes in the implementation of regional TVET Governance with Central government usually acting as either a Hierarchy or a Network (normally in more Federal systems). Our work in the partner countries helps us map these to the following:

- Market embedded in Hierarchy (England and Kazakhstan)
- Network embedded in Hierarchy (Vietnam and South Africa)
- Market embedded in Network
- Hierarchy embedded in Network

For Networked and Market models to be successful they need a number of policy criteria:

- **Transparency** (awareness of all parties involved, and for Networked models awareness of the objectives of the network and expectations towards themselves)
- **Accountability** (common understanding of roles, functions, decision modes and rules of co-operation)
- **Participation** (do the members have sufficient knowledge on the issue, are they aware of the evidence, involvement of all relevant experts)
- **Integrity** (no corruption, equal participation for all members)
- **Capacity** (competence to understand the processes and structures, ability of articulation and communication related to the setting)

GOVERNANCE ISSUES POSED BY GREATER DEVOLUTION

The quality of governance becomes more important with both increased stakeholder engagement and increased devolution. Snelson and Deyes (2016) recognised that inadequate provider governance was a factor behind some weak performance in TVET:

Weak governance and a lack of expertise and management skills are likely to be among the causes of provider difficulties in terms of responsiveness to market conditions. In some cases ... leaders were not trained in how to manage such large 'businesses'. In a minority of cases there are also problems around the length of board tenures.

In this respect, the European Training Foundation (2015) has identified **quality assurance and financing** as priority areas needing reform. Improving the quality of vocational education and training implies tackling the **system as a whole** – from planning to evaluation. The emphasis should be on outcomes: adequacy of skills, dropout and completion rates, access and equity, employment rates and the types of jobs that graduates find. Diversifying funding and optimising allocation and management are also important areas for reform.

The importance of **support networks** was stressed by Dr Christa Larsen of Institut für Wirtschaft, Arbeit und Kultur at the University of Frankfurt-Goethe. For such networks to function properly they need to include representatives from government and funding bodies or they tend not to be perceived as having influence and stakeholders will not see a value in engaging.

Further, TVET institutions need to have flexibility to adjust but that they also need to ensure they have sufficient **capacity** to successfully devolve. A worry for policymakers is the emergence of major inequalities within system – between some TVET providers that will be able to link with employers and offer a strong demand appropriate qualification/skills offer against others that will not (Interview with Jonathan Barr, OECD LEED).

In exploring how the British Council can interact and work with other countries in the area of TVET governance Iain Mackinnon (Mackinnon Associates) pointed out that some elements of English delivery which are popular internationally – such as Sector Skills Councils – are not at the heart of more recent policy directions and implementation. Therefore there is a need to **simplify and codify** the UK/English model as something to present – looking at it in a broad way and not getting lost in the detail.

In the same interview Mackinnon noted that it is also important to recognise that devolution is not all or nothing and this may be important in selling it to the central government its agencies. Ministries maintain the functions that make sense to be centralised – often like qualifications and curricula and apprenticeships policy – so they have the control they need. There are always some national levers.

The reforms underway place greater pressure on leadership and recent research (Ruiz-Valenzuela et al, 2017) stresses the impact of **Principals** in their ability to enable students to progress. The researchers recognise that it is important to invest time and resources in improving the quality of leadership amongst Further Education Principals and to attract and retain high quality principals to Further Education colleges. Their findings show that whereas the recruitment of a new high-performing teacher affects some students, the recruitment/training of a high performing principal impacts on thousands of students in a college. The study concludes that effective ways of improving the quality of college principals could be cost-effective.

Notwithstanding the challenges posed by devolution, Jonathan Barr in his interview for this research recognised that some countries are making significant improvements in TVET, citing in particular, Malaysia and Thailand, both countries are very focussed on progressive changes and the latter has boosted the role of industry within schools and is having some success with this – certainly in terms of getting people into work. In the Philippines the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) have projects with corporate partners – such as the Jobstart Philippines Program which seeks to enhance the employability of “at-risk youth,” to improve their integration into productive employment.

FINDINGS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL SURVEY

INTRODUCTION

In this substantive chapter, the findings from the online survey and follow up interviews are outlined. Given the relatively small sample size, findings should be treated with caution, nevertheless the results provide a useful overview of the impact of change on TVET leaders, and a number of clear themes emerge.

The Survey started by exploring how the leaders of TVET institutions perceived their operating environment. Very often there were mixed responses to the question from within a country, no doubt reflecting the different types of institutions involved – and hence their individual freedoms – as well as differing types of sub-national governance. Within England, for instance, as noted in Chapter 2, there are varying degrees of local discretion and control over the detailed design of what is delivered for whom, and a Further Education College in a rural area could experience very different strictures than one in a devolved city region. Even so, the direction of travel is clearly one of increasing levels of devolution and institutional autonomy internationally.

INCREASING DEVOLUTION AND INSTITUTIONAL AUTONOMY

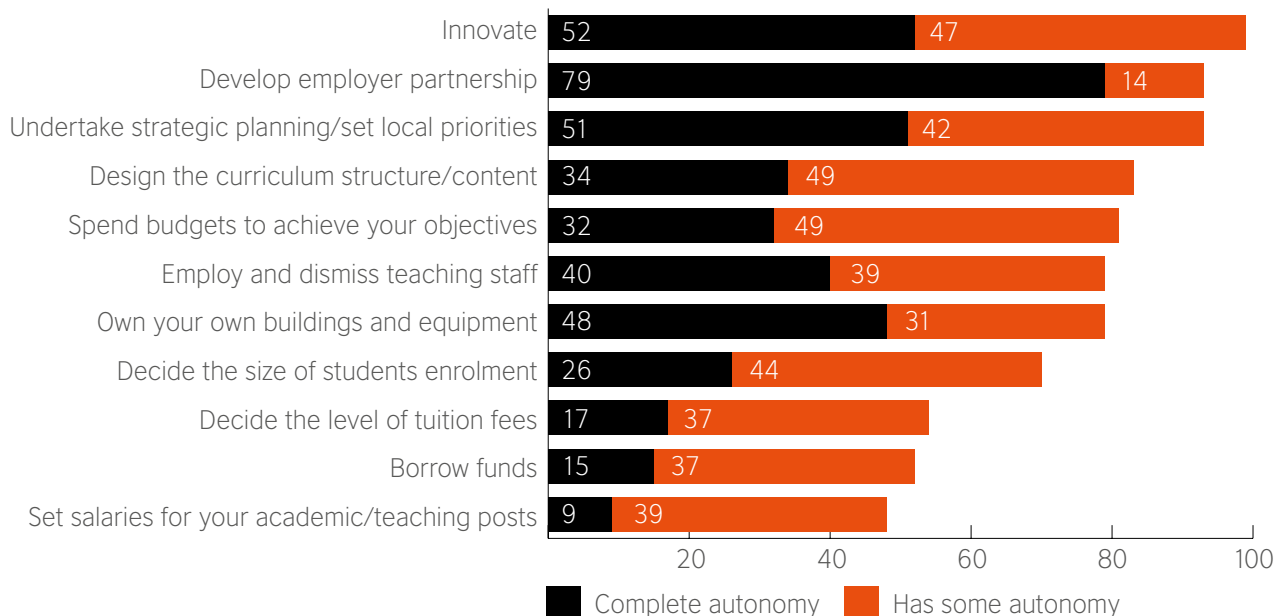
Asked whether they had the flexibility to operate independently within a clear national/regional structure almost 8 out of 10 TVET leaders agreed that they did. 7 out of 10 further said that the operating system within which they worked has a good balance between local independence and accountability. In all, clear majorities in each country believed that they had the flexibility to operate independently.

Whilst TVET leaders believed that they were able to operate independently, half said that they operated in a centrally controlled system with little scope for local decision-making. This was the most common response in Columbia, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Pakistan, South Africa and Vietnam. 100% of respondents from England and Nigeria said this was not the case, reflecting the localism agenda in England and the introduction of Innovation Enterprise Institutions and Vocational Enterprise Institutions and on-going progress towards devolution in Nigeria. Asked to identify the areas in which they had autonomy, respondents were most likely to say that they had:

- Complete autonomy to develop employer partnerships (79%), with 93% having ‘complete’ or ‘some’ autonomy.
- Interestingly, almost all (99%) said that they were able to innovate and undertake strategic planning/set local priorities (93%).
- The most limited autonomy was around funding and finance with only around half having any autonomy over borrowing (52%) and/or ability to set salaries for their academic staff (48%). Very few have complete autonomy over fees or the size of student enrolments.

As noted in earlier British Council research (2017), the availability of adequate and sustainable funding is a fundamental factor in achieving success in TVET development and this is an area where institutions have least freedom.

FIGURE 1. CURRENT LEVELS OF AUTONOMY



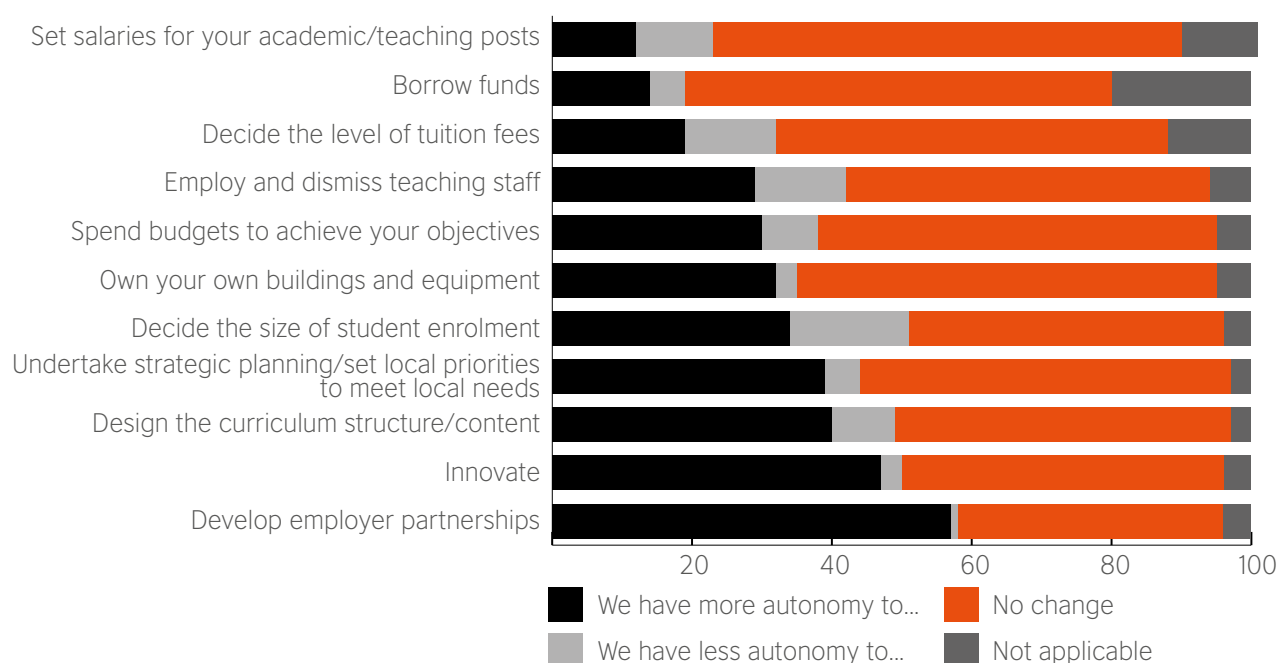
Given the small sample sizes by individual country it is difficult to draw out findings with statistical accuracy but the survey suggested that:

- Leaders in Vietnam were least likely to have freedom to spend their budgets to achieve their objectives and to decide on the size of student enrolment.
- A significant majority of respondents from South Africa do not have autonomy over their curriculum content or to set staff salaries.
- TVET leaders from England were most likely to have autonomy over the full range of factors listed, suggesting that there is useful and relevant experience which can be shared internationally.

A TREND TOWARDS GREATER AUTONOMY IN SOME AREAS

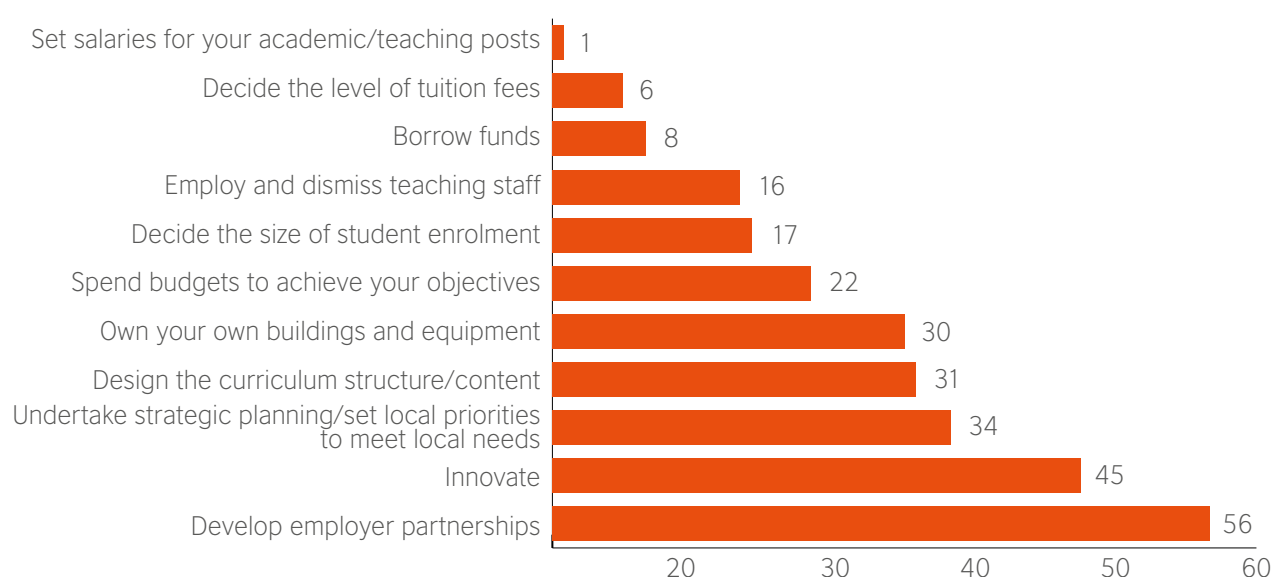
Asked how their levels of autonomy had changed in the past 5 years, the responses indicated a clear trend towards greater autonomy. As can be seen, in around half to two thirds of cases there has been no change in the autonomy TVET leaders have, but in all areas there has been some change and in every case it has been a trend towards greater autonomy rather than less.

FIGURE 2. CHANGE IN AUTONOMY IN PAST FIVE YEARS



The direction of travel can be seen more clearly by taking the difference between those who stated that they had greater autonomy and those who said that they had less autonomy to identify the net balance of responses. Figure 3 shows graphically the areas where the international TVET system is gaining more freedoms and illustrates a marked change over the past five years especially in the areas of employer partnerships and innovation:

FIGURE 3. THE NET POSITIVE BALANCE SHOWING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THOSE HAVING GREATER AUTONOMY AND THOSE WITH LESS AUTONOMY OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS %

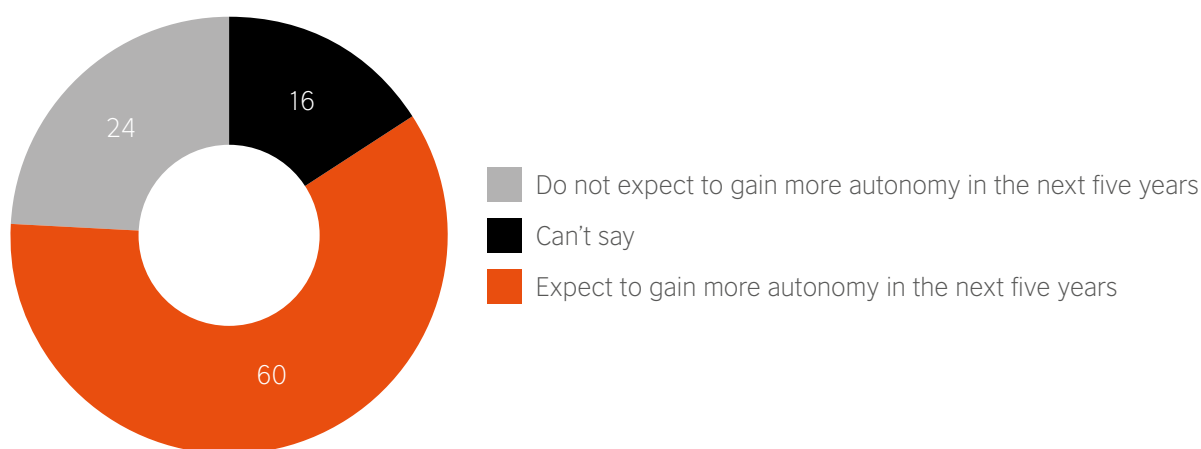


The data also shows that in areas relating to funding, TVET leaders are least likely to have gained greater autonomy. The extent of change towards greater autonomy was most marked in Vietnam and to a lesser extent, Kazakhstan. In Vietnam, follow up interviews attributed this largely to the introduction of a Law on Vocational Education in 2014 which is seen as having unified the TVET system and provided greater autonomy for colleges in a number of areas, for example, increased flexibility in the training system through the introduction of module and credit based qualifications; full and part time models of training; autonomy to develop the curriculum based on occupational standards and to determine the scale of student admissions.

EXPECTATIONS OF STILL GREATER AUTONOMY IN THE YEARS AHEAD

One of the key findings of the survey is that 60% of respondents expect to gain more autonomy over the next five years. This is a majority view across all countries in the survey, with the exception of TVET leaders in England (11%) and South Africa (31%). Of the four case study countries, those from Vietnam (92%) are most likely to expect change. In Kazakhstan only a slight majority (55%) expected greater autonomy.

FIGURE 4. EXPECTATIONS FOR AUTONOMY IN FIVE YEARS



Clearly, with the extent of past change and future expectations of further autonomy, the research is timely. The new operating environment into which TVET is heading will bring new opportunities and challenges for TVET leaders requiring new forms of governance, capacity building and staff development.

THE ROLE OF DIFFERENT PARTNERS IN MEETING LOCAL NEEDS

One area of interest was the extent to which there was a shared political view about what an institution should deliver. In the main, respondents were positive – around half (51%–54%) considered there was a shared view and around one third (30%–37%) considered that there was in some respects. There was no significant difference in views between different levels of government:

TABLE 1. ASSESSMENTS AS TO THE EXTENT OF SHARED VIEWS BETWEEN DIFFERENT LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT

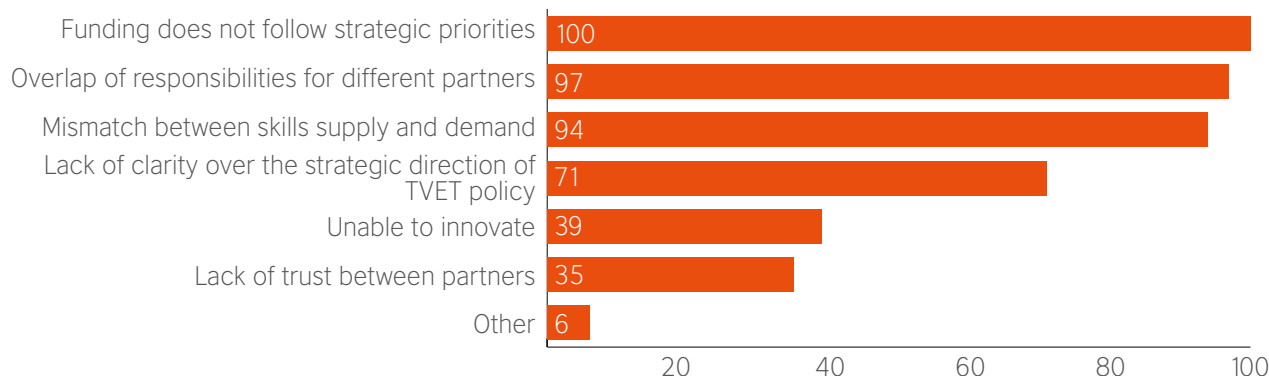
Those who responded 'between some but not all' and 'no, there is not a shared view' were asked what the impact was on their institution.

%	Yes there is a shared view	Between some but not all	No there is not a shared view	Don't know	Total
There is a shared view of what TVET should deliver between ...					
Different central government ministries	54	34	9	3	100
Central and local government	53	30	11	7	100
My institution and central government	51	37	4	8	100
My institution and local government	54	34	8	4	100

DUPLICATION, A LACK OF ACCOUNTABILITY, LACK OF SYNERGY BETWEEN FUNDING AND STRATEGY AND A LACK OF CLARITY

The main issues identified related to a lack of synergy between funding and strategy, duplication, a lack of accountability, and a lack of clarity. This in turn impacts on an institution's ability to provide learning that responds to demands and needs:

FIGURE 5. THE IMPACT ON INSTITUTIONS OF A LACK OF A SHARED VIEW AS TO WHAT TVET SHOULD DELIVER



Follow up interviews in South Africa particularly emphasised a lack of funding which means that providers do not have the up to date equipment to provide modern day skills and lack essential facilities. For example, one provider said that their library had to serve 7 campuses of which one was 120 km away, another reported that their building was designed for 5,000 students but was accommodating 10,000. Funding for students via bursaries can also cause difficulties through delays, contributing to drop out rates and creating financial difficulties for providers who effectively subsidise their students until their funding comes through, sometimes months later.

These findings support the analysis in the British Council research in 2017 which identified a number of systemic factors which can support or hinder the devolution of TVET. These were:

- **Political factors:** the 2017 research showed that clear political direction is necessary to provide the spur to devolution, but conflict can arise between national and provincial governments about the direction of TVET policy, especially where provinces are governed by a different political party. Where it is absent or weak, the impact – as shown here – has a number of knock-on effects, particularly around whether funding is aligned to strategic priorities. In Vietnam, leaders were clear that the law had been significant in driving change and transforming the system.
- **Legislative issues:** These include whether the importance of sub national governance of TVET is clearly stated in law, whether there is a coherent body of law for the TVET system which helps

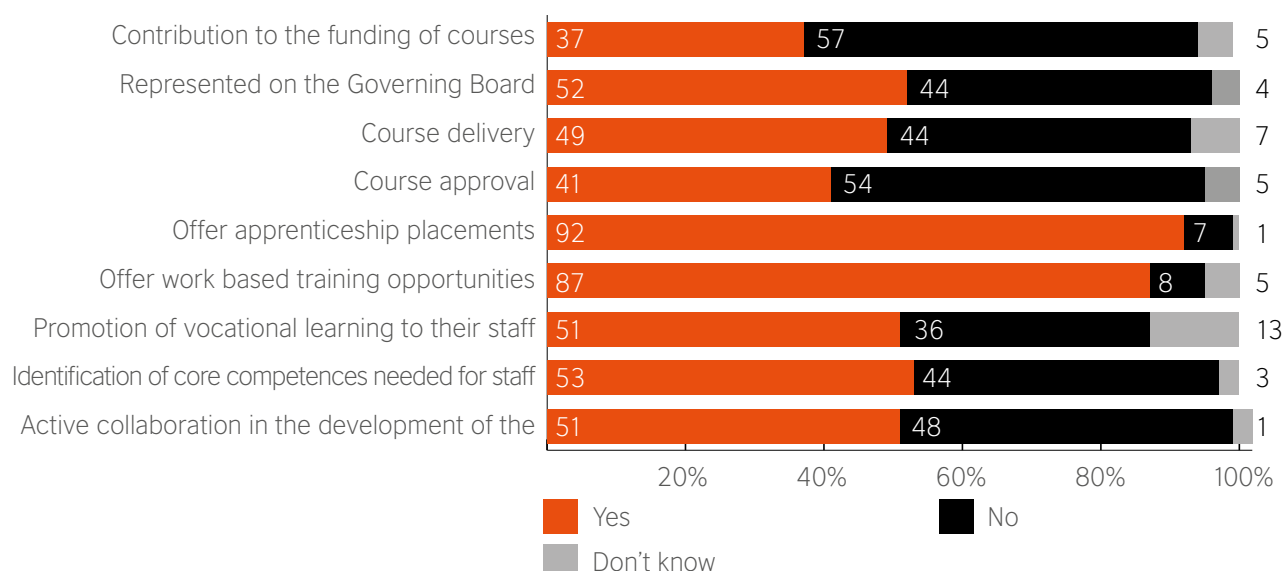
to clarify the respective roles of national and provincial governments and whether the law is narrow and prescriptive or acts as a broad enabling framework to allow innovation in delivery. The absence of such factors can lead to duplication of responsibility, identified by 97% of respondents who believed there was not a wholly shared view between different levels of government, leading to a mismatch between skills supply and demand (94%)

- **Funding and economic factors:** The availability of adequate and sustainable funding is a fundamental factor in achieving success in TVET development. Devolution is unlikely to be successful unless money follows the requested changes to institutional structure and new policy drive and that there is coherence between how national and provincial funds are spent. 100% of respondents who identified limited or absent shared political views said that the impact was a lack of fit between funding and policy. This was also notable in comments from England and South Africa.
- **Cultural factors:** This is about the intangibles, the “way things are really done” rather than how they are set down in policy. Perhaps the most important issues identified here related to communications and coordination between national and provincial players in the TVET system. In our survey, this is manifest in a lack of trust identified by 35% and a lack of clarity over the policy intent (71%).

EMPLOYER RELATIONSHIPS

A question on the role employers play in their institution, either directly or through representative bodies indicates that employers' main role is largely confined to the conventional one of supplying placements and work-based training opportunities. Responses from leaders in England demonstrated far greater integration with TVET than elsewhere, particularly in relation to board representation and collaboration on the curriculum:

FIGURE 6. EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT WITH TVET INSTITUTIONS



As can be seen, employers were least likely to be involved in the funding of courses and in course approval; areas where the English experience of apprenticeships is instructive. In follow up discussions in England the importance of 'speaking the same language' was highlighted, with SSCs proving to be effective intermediaries as they are led by industry, *"The Government gets frustrated because industry doesn't do what it wants them to do, at the same time employers say that the Government doesn't listen."* Sharing a common language is important, as is the role of a facilitator.

Follow up interviews showed that international providers share the same difficulties as providers in England in engaging with employers. In Vietnam for example, TVET providers would like to improve collaboration and employer involvement but are hampered by *"poor relationships"* and the *"skills and capacity of the teachers and managers"*, saying *"Employers tend not to invest in human resources but want to recruit qualified labour."* In the words of one provider, *"The relationship between the college and employers currently remains loose. The college faces difficulty in engaging employers in vocational training projects; not many employers are willing to take part in training as part of their CSR. Therefore the college has just piloted training in employer engagement in some faculties."* Another Vietnamese college leader

said, *"There is a lack of mechanism and policies to encourage and even 'force' employers to be involved in training."*

In South Africa, interviewees commented that industry does not understand the new qualifications system and there is a need to develop their understanding. Providers in more rural areas suffer from a lack of major employers, with small employers less interested in providing training or work experience.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

The strength of partnership working will vary by system, institution, and capacity, starting points and personal connections so the typical response to a question on partnerships reflected this complexity and elicited a majority of views stating that the strength of partnerships was 'mixed'. In the table below, the two most common responses in each column are highlighted, it shows that:

- Partnership is strongest with other local TVET institutions and central government. In respect of partnerships with other institutions this is most likely to generate a 'mixed' view, suggesting that as well as strong partnerships with some providers there will be competition with others – this was particularly the case in England.

- Institutions are most likely to have ‘mixed’ partnerships with individual employers, which as noted above, are most likely to revolve around work placements/apprenticeships. In Vietnam, moves to improve this were seen as vital: *“The college has to expand the relationship with employers by calling for their participation in training”*
- 29% have weak partnerships with NGOs, with a further 23% having no real partnership working with NGOs. This is important, since earlier research (British Council, 2017) showed that *‘strong semi-independent NGOs have been important in bringing leadership and expertise to drive implementation.’*
- More than 1 in 4 respondents have ‘weak’ partnerships with employer associations and this was a particular feature of responses from Vietnam where a majority held this view.
- An absence of partnerships was most common in relation to NGOs and community groups.

To strengthen partnership working will need action to build capacity not just with TVET institutions and government but also to raise the profile of skills and an understanding of the TVET system with partners. Without effective mechanisms for sharing responsibility and co-ordinating partnership activity, essential partnerships will remain weak. Showcasing how TVET systems have changed is important and the kudos of the British Council was seen as helping to engage employers and partners, and is an area where further support would be welcome.

TABLE 2. EXTENT OF PARTNERSHIP WORKING AMONGST DIFFERENT PARTNERS

	Strong partnership working	Mixed – some strong some weak	Weak partnership working	No real partnership working	Not applicable/ no such organisations
Other local colleges/TVET institutions	33	53	11	1	3
Employer Associations e.g. Chambers of Trade	20	37	28	11	4
Local employers	19	53	18	8	1
Sector Skills Councils/ Associations	15	45	26	9	5
Trade Unions	21	42	25	11	1
Community groups	14	40	27	16	3
NGOs	11	33	29	23	4
Local or provincial government with a role in economic development	28	39	20	12	1
Central government	36	40	14	8	1

THE GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES POSED BY DEVOLUTION

As may be expected, the trend towards greater autonomy for the TVET sector has brought its own challenges and in the survey respondents were asked to identify what issues had arisen in association with moves towards greater autonomy. The chart below shows the balance of those identifying the issue minus those disagreeing with the challenges outlined. Two challenges stand out: insufficient funds to manage the changes required and insufficient or poor quality labour market information to make provision more demand-led: *“LMI does not happen for free and non-investment in this area is destabilising.”* The finding on insufficient funding was universal across the countries surveyed.

FIGURE 7. NET BALANCE OF THOSE IDENTIFYING A FACTOR AS A CHALLENGE MINUS THOSE WHO DO NOT CONSIDER IT TO BE A CHALLENGE



With devolution, the importance of funding becomes far more compelling and it is vital that all levels of government understand the impact of funding on governance of their local institutions. It further suggests that there need to be flexibilities around cost-sharing between the public and private sectors. Furthermore there needs to be some flexibility around the management of contracts, yet as noted earlier, student admissions remain fairly tightly controlled. In England it was said that with tighter funding directed towards apprenticeships, flexibility had diminished and it *‘is very difficult to access funds.’* As a result providers have had to develop their offer to generate funds through activities such as specialist training for employers and ‘train the trainer’ programmes.

One of the barriers to making provision more demand-led is the capacity of staff. A college in Vietnam reported a desire to *“change the mindset of its teaching staff”,* changing their *“attitude and working motivation, their teaching methods and learner support”*. This was seen as essential to improve the college’s ability to be more responsive

to learner needs. Exchange programmes were welcomed as a way of addressing this.

If TVET leaders were able to have greater responsibility they would particularly like more freedoms over:

- Curriculum design
- Investment in facilities and equipment
- Tackling public perceptions of TVET
- Monitoring and evaluation

Governance over curriculum design is the top priority. If institutional leaders are to make their offer more responsive to demand then they would like the freedom to use their local knowledge and expertise to do so. In Vietnam, a move towards demand-led learning was evident from the more in depth interviews with providers reporting that, *“The college needs to realise the principle of training what society is in need of instead of training in what the college has.”* and saying that the impact of change has been, *“Vocational training engaged with employers and responsive to society’s and learners’ needs.”*

TABLE 3. AREAS IN WHICH PROVIDERS WOULD LIKE MORE RESPONSIBILITY

	Would like more responsibility (%)
Curriculum design	66
Investment in facilities and equipment	61
Tackling public perceptions of TVET	61
Monitoring and evaluation	61
Admissions	56
Teacher training	55
Employer engagement	55
Quality assurance	53
Developing labour market information	49
Standards of teaching	47
Qualification standards	45
Budgeting	44
Careers advice	42
None of the above	6

It is interesting to note that ‘tackling public perceptions of TVET’ gains high priority for local rather than central action. This was a particular issue for South Africa and Vietnam, where the low esteem of vocational education and training limits its uptake. In South Africa one interviewee was clear that students still strongly preferred academic or theoretical learning to practical learning.

At the other end of the spectrum, majorities recognised that some functions are better managed centrally than locally, including careers advice, qualification standards and standards of teaching.

Asked in what areas they would like greater autonomy, comments from interviewees included:

“Freedom to choose curriculum delivery to meet labour market needs and also to promote entrepreneurship initiatives.”

“Flexible funding to deliver courses that are in demand without considering the funding implications. A competitive fee structure and access to employers to make our provision more attractive to them.”

“Use of industrial trainers not on academic contracts”

“Autonomy on provision of training at all levels, scale ... on the basis of ensuring the government decrees ... no need to register and ask for permission on training capacity again”

“Employers should provide financial support to the school to ensure training meets the needs of the business”

FACTORS THAT WOULD MOST SUPPORT GREATER AUTONOMY

TVET leaders were asked to identify which of the following financial, strategic and cultural factors would be most important in improving their ability to work more autonomously. A mix of all three topped the choices. In line with the clear theme running through the survey responses, adequate financial and human resources was given the highest priority.

Long term strategic planning was also very important – identified by two thirds, no doubt reflecting the difficulties caused by changes in governments and short term funding horizons.

Staffing, in terms of teaching capacity and motivations were important, as were strong partnerships and collaboration across different levels of government and up to date, high quality labour market information:

TABLE 4. FACTORS THAT WOULD SUPPORT GREATER AUTONOMY;
PERCENTAGES IDENTIFYING EACH

Factors		%
Finance	Adequate financial and human resources	71
Strategic	Long term strategic planning	65
Other	Expansion/modernisation of our teaching capacity	60
Strategic	Strong partnerships and collaboration across different levels of government	51
Strategic	Good quality/up to date labour market information to know what skills employers need	51
Other	Staff motivation and acceptance of modernisation and reform	51
Finance	A need for new facilities/equipment	48
Finance	Sustainable funding	44
Other	Action to tackle negative public attitudes towards TVET provision	38
Other	Staff ability to adapt to new ways of working	38
Strategic	Incentives for employers to engage with local institutions	35
Other	The funding matches the policy intentions	30
Strategic	Coherence at national level so there is no duplication of TVET delivery	27
Other	Freedom to control admissions	23
Strategic	A central drive to create the conditions for success	22
Strategic	The pace of change to be manageable	19
Strategic	Institutional guidance from national and/or sub regional government/agencies	17
Finance	Funding which recognises the extra costs of provision in rural areas	16
Strategic	Formal structures for employer engagement at local level	16
Strategic	Political alignment between national and sub national government to generate trust	13
Strategic	Formal structures for employer engagement at national level	12
Finance	Clear guidance on how funds can be spent	10
Other	Ability to meet the needs of different language groups	9

Typical individual comments on what needs to change tended to centre on communication and partnerships:

“Communications, alliances, skills to work in public administration and everything that entails”

“Mind-sets need changing”

“Communication skills need to be improved”

“The image of the TVET Sector and industry involvement”

“Need to change communication and how partnerships are structured”

“Funding and the removal of risk”

“Competition at the moment means that there isn’t a joined up offer across the devolved areas. It would be good to review the need in an area and offer coherent provision across all the providers e.g. instead of everyone offering all the levels, different providers offer different levels so that they can develop an expertise in it. It will also ensure quality of provision is standardised.”

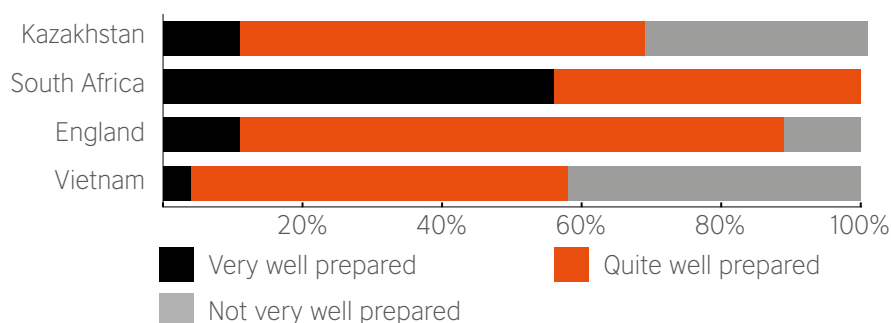
“Need to exchange more information, more cooperation, funding support, teachers (need to) have more opportunity for learning at the industry, cultural and language exchange”

LEVELS OF PREPAREDNESS FOR GREATER AUTONOMY

Asked how prepared their institution was in terms of resources and capacity to take on new tasks and responsibilities if they were given greater autonomy 66% said they were 'quite' or 'very' prepared' and 34% said they were not very well prepared.

There were significant differences between the case study countries in terms of preparedness, reflecting their experiences and distance travelled:

FIGURE 8. PREPAREDNESS TO TAKE ON NEW TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES



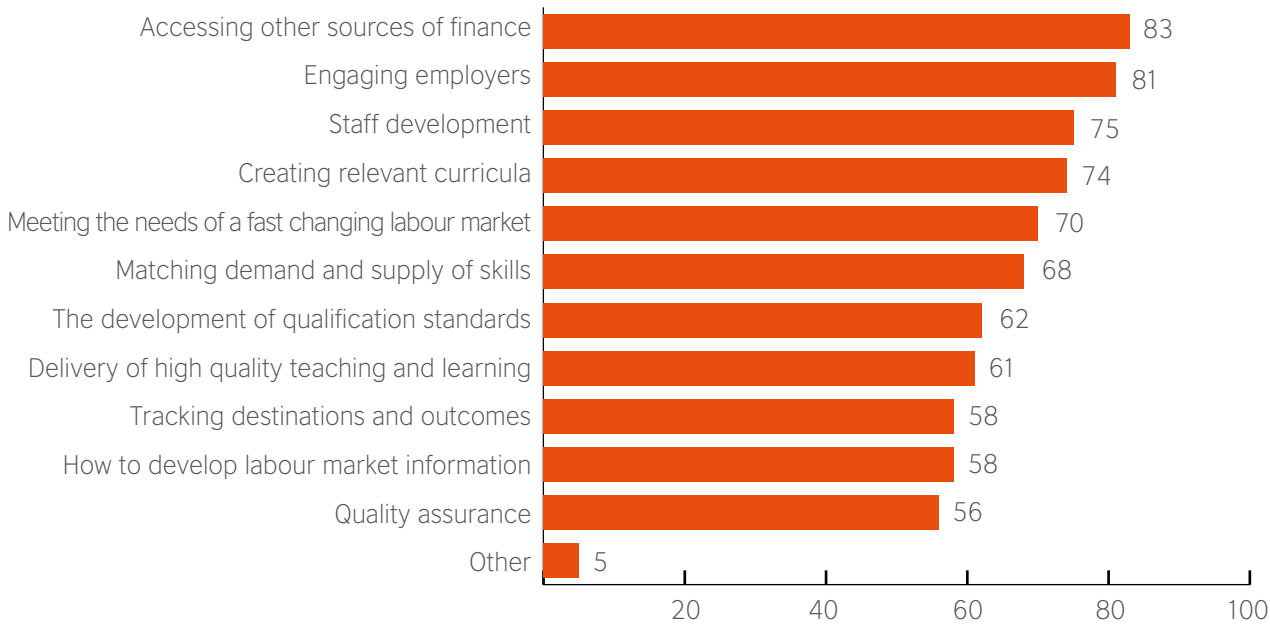
SUPPORT NEEDS

TVET providers operating within devolved systems have more freedom and opportunities which bring a need for more training and support at many levels to develop new ways of working. Respondents were asked in which areas they would welcome external support.

Foremost among the needs identified is support in accessing other sources of finance identified by a majority of respondents in each country with the exception of England, no doubt reflecting the long history of marketization in the UK. It is interesting to note that respondents in Kazakhstan were also less likely to identify this as a key factor, suggesting that they may have experience to share with other countries.

No doubt reflecting the fact that TVET providers have been given greater autonomy to engage with employers in recent years, support to develop employer relationships is another key area where TVET leaders would benefit from external assistance.

FIGURE 9. AREAS WHERE EXTERNAL SUPPORT WOULD BE WELCOMED



CONCLUSIONS

Notwithstanding their very different starting points and political and legislative frameworks, providers in the survey were grappling with similar issues of funding, management capacity and employer engagement in managing change and trying to make provision more responsive to demand. In the words of one interviewee, *“Change is not always a bad thing, but there can be a lack of understanding of the implications for the provider.”*

OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

The British Council is growing its activities internationally within the 'skills' sector and there are a number of areas where its encouragement of closer links between education, employers and policy makers will help enhance the skills and employability of young people globally. In this respect, the English and UK TVET system already has considerable experience and expertise. The survey shows a clear trend towards greater devolution internationally and it is evident that there are areas of mutual interest which may benefit from international collaboration such as sharing models for engaging employers, aligning TVET to labour market need and responding to labour market change.

It is important to recognise that there are different types of TVET delivery being developed and differing models from the developed world. For example the German Dual system is well known but not necessarily easy to duplicate given the liberalisation and marketisation of TVET delivery that is taking place. On the other hand, the English model of TVET delivery and its institutional governance, having as it does, considerable autonomy and flexibility gives the more successful providers considerable expertise in working to:

- Develop lasting relationships with employers
- Use freedoms to test innovations and new ways of working
- Utilise relative curricular freedoms to build new qualifications
- Respond to challenges and opportunities swiftly and effectively

There are a number of areas where collaboration could help to meet the needs identified in the survey and accompanying research. These are presented below:

ACHIEVING AGENCY

To achieve effective TVET Governance, and a lesson that can be learned directly from the England experience, there is a need for education providers to have agency with policy makers, funders and qualification deliverers. This has often not been required within centralised systems but if delivery is to be more responsive it is something that will greatly benefit the institutions involved. It is an area where links with England (and UK) TVET providers could be beneficial to other countries moving towards more devolved systems.

Within the interviews we undertook, Iain Mackinnon identified a key area as supporting institutional leaders to react in the right way when policy settings

change. Leaders need to be confident and if necessary robust when engaging with government and putting forward their case. They must therefore have agency with those in government who should understand and trust the TVET leaders' decisions, listen and respond – recognising that TVET is delivering their own broader (governmental) priorities.

UTILISING TVET GOVERNANCE TO ENHANCE RESPONSIVENESS TO EMPLOYERS AND SECTOR BODIES

Many providers regularly engage with employers through a range of channels. Important channels include their own employer networks, local and regional policy bodies and direct relationships with individual employers. Some providers have business relationship development teams and have forged close relationships by, for example, hosting sectoral and local meetings.

In the survey, England was identified as having far greater employer integration with TVET than elsewhere, particularly in relation to board representation and collaboration on the curriculum. Elsewhere, employers were least likely to be involved in the funding of courses and in course approval – again areas where the English experience of apprenticeships is instructive.

The importance of strong and autonomous governance is confirmed, particularly in regard to apprenticeships, to ensure that employers adhere to minimum standards and that apprentices are not exploited as a form of cheap labour. Similarly, a robust governance system should ensure that apprenticeships remain valuable to both apprentices and employers during periods of economic recession or social, institutional or demographic pressures.

Initiatives in which the British Council is already involved such as 'train the trainer', and employer-led training and programmes that incentivise co-creation between educators and local employers, clearly have considerable relevance.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING WITH STAKEHOLDERS AND INTERMEDIARIES

In England, the Education and Skills Funding Agency has local contacts who are impartial and provide useful intermediary roles to keep providers informed and to act as a conduit back to government. Internationally, relationships like this are important and hard to reproduce without financial commitment as the intermediaries must understand both funding policy and the sector. International collaboration across different levels of government, building on the English experience can help develop an understanding of the potential of these intermediary roles.

TRUST AND METIS

Linked with the above, Keep (2016) conceptualised how best to approach a move towards a more localised (Further Education) system that enables providers to thrive and cites two interconnected concepts – ‘trust’ and ‘metis’. Research suggests that the most effective national education and training systems tend to possess and engender relatively high levels of trust between the different actors and stakeholders. This enables those at the centre to devolve responsibility and to afford delivery agents and front line staff higher degrees of discretion. The idea of metis relates to the vital importance of local knowledge and expertise, and to trust subordinate actors to use this knowledge to improvise at local levels. Collaborations between the centre and regions/localities to boost this area would make sense and could include a review of where quality control lies.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Jonathan Barr (OECD LEED interview) believes that the obstacles to successful TVET devolution are mainly in capacity. For example in South East Asia there is a lack of basic infrastructure and equipment in many providers. Teachers may not often have enough training and qualifications to operate the equipment. He argues that there is already a great deal invested in primary and higher education but TVET is too often neglected. This view was supported to varying degrees by the survey and follow up interviews and there is much practice that could be shared as countries tackle this challenge and develop their own responses to devolution.

LABOUR MARKET INTELLIGENCE (LMI) AND OUTCOME MONITORING

A number of partners to the study have reasonably sophisticated but centralised models of labour market intelligence gathering (England, South Africa, and Kazakhstan). However the amount and quality of LMI at the local and regional level is not as developed, making the delivery of demand-oriented courses and training difficult. Exchange of models to enable demand-led VET would be beneficial, particularly where these are not relatively liberalised and independent or run by moderators. Similarly linking programmes that disseminate models for outcome measurement (still relatively new) would be beneficial.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEADERSHIP – TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Those on the boards of TVET Providers, as well as employed senior staff, will need to develop a swift understanding of the new systems, and of the new areas and types of activities in which they will find themselves interacting and expected to make an impact, such as economic development. In England, evidence is emerging that a majority of colleges are imposing maximum terms of office for governors and this practice may be something to explore.

Additionally, greater freedoms will place greater burdens on financial management, evaluation and responding to inspection regimes and requirements. Leadership of TVET programme managers is key. Productive relationships with the private sector largely rely on the leadership of TVET managers who know how to network and develop relevant, high quality TVET programmes by involving a range of stakeholders.

The format for delivery can vary between them but there is considerable potential within areas already supported and funded by the British Council with some new ones, giving a mix of interventions and collaboration such as:

- a. Supported/facilitated discussions at expert/practitioner level
- b. Workshops/lectures seeking to give good detail to particular models and means of working with associated case studies
- c. Work shadowing/staff exchanges and study visits
- d. Online MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) and courses for developing the skills of TVET leaders

International partners including GIZ (the German provider of international co-operation services for sustainable development and international education) and the OECD LEED Programme have signalled a willingness to collaborate and an expertise in delivering activities of this kind. They are already engaged in international knowledge sharing – and could help with this in bringing local success stories and examples to support work in this area. OECD LEED expressed a desire to co-design delivery support with British Council, this could perhaps be a network focussed on TVET to bring employment and skills innovations to help improve outcomes. GIZ are also a possible partner and are active in a number of areas including building regional labour market intelligence capacity. They would welcome leveraging knowledge to help with this kind of topic. There is also a willingness within the UK FE sector to engage in such activities (personal communication Exeter College).

Partners in England are well placed to be able to help support greater TVET institutional autonomy given its own history of TVET Governance within a highly liberalised economic setting. Indeed it is better placed than many other EU countries with more structured systems.

CASE STUDY COUNTRIES

ENGLAND

A FAST CHANGING, COMPLEX POLICY OF DEVOLUTION

PARTNERSHIPS

TVET leaders say that there is a shared view between some but not all levels of government as to what TVET should deliver.

56%

believe that this leads to a mismatch between supply and demand.

English TVET leaders are more likely than average to have partnerships with local employers, SSCs, employer associations and community groups. They are less likely than average to have partnerships with other TVET institutions.

With the exception of course approval, employers are more likely than average to be involved in all aspects of provision from representation on the board to curriculum development.

AUTONOMY AND OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

100%

agree that they have flexibility to operate independently within a national structure and that there is a good balance between local independence and accountability.

CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH GREATER AUTONOMY

9 OUT OF 10

institutions are 'very' or 'quite' prepared to take on new challenges.

Reflecting their experience to date, leaders are more prepared for greater autonomy than any of the case study countries.

KEY CHALLENGES ARE:

78%

Insufficient funds to manage change.

78%

Institution's capacity to take on new roles and responsibilities.

Engaging with employers is not seen as a challenge.

Factors that would support greater autonomy	England	Ave
Long term strategic planning.	78	71
The funding matches the policy intentions.	67	30
Sustainable funding.	67	44
Adequate financial and human resources.	56	71
Incentives for employers to engage with local institutions.	55	35
Action to tackle negative public attitudes towards TVET.	55	38
Staff ability to adapt to new ways of working .	55	38
Staff motivation and acceptance of modernisation and reform.	55	51



POPULATION:
53M

2.2M
Learners aged 19 and over in
Further Education in 2016/17.

0.9M
Apprenticeships.

CURRENTLY TVET INSTITUTIONS HAVE MOST AUTONOMY OVER:

- Strategic planning
- Development of employer partnerships
- Curriculum design
- Size of student enrolment
- Innovation

LEAST AUTONOMY OVER:

- Tuition fees
- Salaries
- Borrowing Funds

DIRECTION OF TRAVEL

In the past

5 YEARS

there has been little change in levels
of autonomy and leaders do not
expect this to change in the future.

KEY AREAS IN WHICH TVET LEADERS WOULD LIKE MORE RESPONSIBILITY

Reflecting the current extent of devolved powers, TVET leaders in England are far less likely than average to want more responsibility over different functions.

EXTERNAL SUPPORT WOULD BE MOST WELCOMED FOR...

55%

Accessing other
sources of finance.

67%

Tracking destinations
and outcomes.

ENGLAND

In the UK, TVET policy has increasingly diverged between England and the other three nations with government policy having introduced greater institutional autonomy, marketisation and a reduced role for local government.

In England the further education sector (FE) (which encompasses most TVET) is highly complex. It engages with millions of learners (around 4 million publicly funded learners in 2015/16) from a wide range of backgrounds and most learners are over 19 years of age (75%) with just 25% under 19 (Snelson and Deyes 2016). Learners participate in learning with one of around 1,150 publicly funded providers across the country.

The system is characterised by:

1. Strong institutional leadership
2. Strong development and input from outside (e.g. Local Government and private sector)
3. Mixed use of evidence (labour market intelligence)
4. A national system driven by finance and qualifications
5. A very liberal system sometimes with little real strategic planning
6. Devolution is not really delivered it is 'emerging'
7. Big differences across the system between, for example rural vs urban
8. Large employers dominate discussions in the sector
9. Courses and qualifications are not always relevant to the market but rather to "perceptions of the market"
10. Qualifications are perceived as too complex and confusing – and this is in part due to devolution and employer demand for tailored solutions
11. The Education and Skills Funding Agency provides a route though centralised local contacts and are key and impartial so ideal to keep providers informed and as a route back to government.

Recent changes in education and training policy in England continue to focus on creating a 'demand-led' system in an environment where public funds have been tightened and where more responsibility is being devolved away from central government. This raises questions about governance of the system, among others, and the roles that key system actors are expected to play (Stasz, 2015). In interviews, for example, it was said that there is a tension between agencies like LEPs who want 'big wins' such as skills development for a new power station, whilst there

is a pressing need to tackle basic 'work ready' skills for the wider economy. It is easy to overlook the foundations of the economy, by focusing on more eye-catching initiatives.

Though both liberalised and marketised a striking differences between the English and American systems are the governance and authority structures, which are stronger in the US and afford greater scope for strategic planning by states and between states and the federal level. The experiences of community colleges in America in working with employers to provide workforce training may be worth further investigation as further education colleges further develop this type of provision. Stasz concludes that:

- The voluntarist nature of the English (somewhat changed since the introduction of the Levy) and US systems, which creates challenges for engaging employers, unlike in Europe where strong social partnerships and policy mandates provide strong incentives for employers
- Both systems have similar concerns about citizens lacking preparation for the 21st-century workforce
- There are difficult financial circumstances which affect public funding for education and training institutions
- Both have a market-driven governance model where vocational education is oriented toward demands of the labour market and requirements of employers and encourages private providers
- The emphasis has moved away from 'rational planning' and management approaches toward market-driven, 'strategic investment' approaches
- There are organisational similarities in the central role played by further education and community colleges in England and the US, respectively. Both, for example, have been charged with the mission of providing access to higher education, especially for students from lower-income and minority backgrounds and operate as comprehensive institutions that offer a variety of programmes in a community

An education and training system implies having connections between different levels so that individuals can transition from one level to the next in pursuit of higher skills development. It has been argued that progression would be enhanced if a single funding agency was responsible for both adult skills and higher education, but there appears to be no movement in this direction. In discussions with TVET leaders there was a plea to reduce the number of layers involved in the system with a need to use IT to simplify processes and a need to make it easier to access by 'hiding the wiring'.

KAZAKHSTAN

Kazakhstan is vast: it stretches across two continents and is equivalent to the size of Western Europe. Organising TVET across such a large area is challenging and in 2011 the President set up a new agency Kasipkor to lead the development of high quality, high level, and high prestige technical education which meets international standards, and to pioneer new approaches which will be extended in time to the rest of the country's colleges. It has four priorities:

- Updating the content of technical and vocational education process
- Improving the quality of teaching of technical and vocational education
- Enhancing the prestige and efficiency of technical and vocational education
- Developing existing educational institutions of technical and vocational education on-demand and innovative areas of the economy

In Kazakhstan, TVET has three main functions, Álvarez-Galván (2014):

1. Qualifications: to provide the population with the skills needed to foster economic prosperity and social stability
2. Employment: to help the population to find a job suited to their preferences and responsive to societal needs
3. Integration: to help individuals to integrate successfully in the society.

Students wishing to enter TVET institutions in Kazakhstan may do so either at upper secondary level (currently after 9th grade) or after upper secondary schooling (currently after 11th grade) (OECD 2013). Overall, upper-secondary and post-secondary TVET are provided at the same institutions in Kazakhstan. Until 2012, two main types of institutions provided TVET: colleges and vocational lyceums. Both types of institution enabled students to obtain a professional diploma in more than 180 professions and 15 fields. The colleges of technical path and professional lyceums, tended to focus on training specialists mainly for industry, building, transport and agriculture. Colleges tended to train specialists outside the industrial sphere, for example for primary teachers or health professions, but also in the field of art, theatre or dance (OECD 2013). Since 2012, these types of VET institutions have been called colleges.

Through a period of reform, many changes have been introduced including updating all TVET standards, developing a National Qualifications Framework and upgrading of college infrastructure. The German system of dual education and training combining school education with practical training

in enterprises is serving as a model for further strengthening the TVET system.

According to the International Labour Organisation¹ the status and prestige of TVET in Kazakhstan is relatively low as students and population in general perceive TVET appropriate for those who cannot pursue academic pathways. The report states that on average 33,000 students drop out of their studies every year. However, the report notes that employment prospects of TVET graduates are generally favourable as employers struggle with skills shortages in technically and professionally skilled workers.

In line with Kasipkor's priority to improve the quality of teaching, the survey found that the 'expansion and modernisation of teaching capacity' as well as 'more funding' were top priorities for local TVET leaders.

The British Council has experience with the project 'Support to Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Kazakhstan' within the agriculture, machine engineering and oil and gas sectors. As part of this and in partnership with private stakeholders a number of business plans and a model for independent certification and independent assessment were developed for the certification centres. Educational programmes for two occupations in each of the sectors were developed jointly with the selected vocational colleges. Guidelines for cooperative TVET school management were developed and the managers were trained in its implementation.

Colleges of Kazakhstan are currently developing technical and vocational education which is deemed by central government to be a priority to help with the socio-economic integration of young people. In the 2015/16 academic year, there were 780 colleges in Kazakhstan with 499,000 students pursuing studies there. The number of technical and vocational education institutions has increased by 1.6% in a year but the number of students has actually reduced by 5.6% explained mostly by demographic factors and a shrinking cohort.

Under the 2016–2019 Governmental Programme of Education and Science Development, the system of technical and vocational education is to be modernised. The colleges of Kazakhstan are experiencing a number of problems. In comparison with more developed countries, the coverage of students with technical and vocational education in Kazakhstan is significantly low (in 2015, the share of young people aged 14–24 in technical and vocational education institutions is only 16.1%).

There are also issues with perceptions of TVET – with only 22% of the population believing that technical and vocational education can be prestigious.

¹Jobs and skills for youth: review of policies for youth employment of Kazakhstan / International Labour

KAZAKHSTAN

REFORM IS WELL UNDER WAY

PARTNERSHIPS

72%

say there is a shared view of what TVET should deliver between their institution and local govt.

KZ institutions are more likely than average to have strong partnerships with other institutions, employers and employer associations.

Employers are more likely than average to be involved in course approval but less likely to contribute towards funding.

AUTONOMY AND OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

More than

8 OUT OF 10

say they have flexibility to operate independently within a national structure.

CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH GREATER AUTONOMY

2 OUT OF 3

institutions are 'very' or 'quite' prepared to take on new challenges.

Reform is well embedded: Local leaders less likely than overall to identify any challenges.

KEY CHALLENGES ARE:

78%

Insufficient funds to manage change.

Factors that would support greater autonomy	KZ	Ave
A need for new facilities/equipment	80	48
Expansion/modernisation of our teaching capacity	75	60
Strong partnerships and collaboration across different levels of government	70	51
Long term strategic planning	60	65
Incentives for employers to engage with local institutions	60	35
Sustainable funding	55	44
Staff motivation and acceptance of modernisation and reform	55	51

POPULATION:
16.4M

1 IN 4

Over 25s have completed tertiary education.

55%
expect greater autonomy in the future

CURRENTLY TVET INSTITUTIONS HAVE MOST AUTONOMY OVER:

- Innovation
- Employment and dismissal of staff
- Strategic planning
- Development of employer partnerships
- Curriculum design

LEAST AUTONOMY OVER:

- Salaries
- Borrowing Funds

DIRECTION OF TRAVEL

In the past

5 YEARS

TVET has gained more autonomy, especially over innovation.

KEY AREAS IN WHICH TVET LEADERS WOULD LIKE MORE RESPONSIBILITY

AVE KZ

Curriculum Design 49 65

Admission 42 55

Qualification Standards 44 50

Tackling Public perceptions of TVET 47 45

EXTERNAL SUPPORT WOULD BE MOST WELCOMED FOR...

55%

Development of qualification standards.

75%

Accessing other sources of finance.

85%

Engaging employers.

70%

Staff development.

65%

Creating relevant curricula.

Governmental spending on technical and vocational education is 2.5–3 times lower compared to the indicators of the world's developed countries and in survey there was said to be a lack of funds for facilities, equipment and developing teaching capacity. A survey conducted by the OECD found 70% of Kazakhstani companies believe that low levels of personnel training remain an obstacle for the development of business, but in our interviews it was reported that employer funding of training is not the norm.

Government is therefore targeting:

- updating the content of technical and vocational education (linked to innovation and industrialization)
- improving the image of technical and vocational education
- ensuring the availability of technical and vocational education
- improving the management and monitoring of technical and vocational education development

According to the Ministry of Education and Science, the project “Technical and Vocational Education Modernization” in 2015 Kazakhstan developed 147 modular educational programmes. In order to make technical and vocational education more available, education officials of the country introduced legal amendments to guarantee free technical and vocational education for citizens. 348 colleges have introduced dual education with the involvement of 1,715 enterprises covering more than 22,000 students in 10 priority areas. (Kazinform, 2016)

Álvarez-Galván (2014) looked at skills beyond school in Kazakhstan for the OECD in 2014. They found that among the strengths were the high quality education and training in many colleges, reasonably up to date equipment and learner motivations. Workplace learning was highly appreciated and importantly communication links with employers were established – evidence that Kazakhstan is able to provide, and it is doing so already in some colleges, TVET of good quality. There were also steps to boost the workplace learning elements of programmes and the training of TVET teachers. Steps were afoot to give central responsibility to employers in TVET certification which could be a strong incentive for the system to be used and regularly updated by stakeholders.

Nonetheless, Álvarez-Galván noted areas for improvement:

- Employers argue that TVET graduates do not necessarily gain the skills that firms require
- Teachers do not seem to have enough access to industry to update their skills regularly

- Authorities are conscious that more and detailed information is required for students to inform their education and training choices.

A Kazakh TV Website article² from January 2018 describes further planned TVET transformations. In each region, changes in the training of workers will be needed to take into account a priority industry. For example, geological exploration, oil extraction and processing are priority industries in the Atyrau region. The main goal of the new vocational education system should be the rapprochement of the training process and the requirements of employers. Twenty new competence centres will be established in the regions all related to particular industries.

SOUTH AFRICA

The Department for Higher Education and Training (DHET) was established in 2009 and responsibility for TVET was brought together under this single ministry in 2012. The mandate of the new Department included aspects of skills development which had previously resided in the Department of Labour. The new Department was specifically established to focus on post-school education and training in a holistic way and has extended its scope of operations extensively. DHET took over the management of the 50 TVET colleges countrywide in 2015 and also absorbed all adult education and training facilities into nine community colleges, one in each province. These shifts of function have expanded DHET to become one of the largest state departments in the country.

The intention was that central government would have a strong steering role, with responsibility for policy and funding, supported by strong partnerships with organised business, labour and communities. The growth, expansion and performance of institutions within the Vocational Continuing Education and Training sub-sector is a strategic priority for the Department.

The Department is leading on the implementation of a Turnaround Strategy for TVET colleges in order to speed up delivery on skills provision in an integrated manner. The strategy focuses on a wide range of areas including management, leadership and governance.

Despite many achievements and a positive review from the OECD, major challenges remain including:

- Growth in provision is still inadequate to meet the demand

²http://kazakh-tv.kz/en/view/news_kazakhstan/page_190141_

- The system/curriculum is not sufficiently diverse
- There are quality issues
- Linkages between colleges and the workplace are not effective
- More effective school to work transition is needed

In particular there is a need to link vocational provision more closely with the needs of industry to:

- Make workplace learning mandatory for vocational programmes
- Co-ordinate vocational provision through a strategic body that would also involve industry stakeholders
- While maintaining a national curriculum, establish flexibility in a proportion of the curriculum that can be adapted by training providers to meet local needs
- Invest in better data, particularly on labour market outcomes linked to career guidance.
- In support of these recommendations, more systematic use of work based learning is practicable given the successful experience of other countries and employers and trade unions might be more fully engaged in provision through appropriate advisory bodies
- Boost local flexibility in curricula, again following international experience, which can be used to build local partnerships with employers
- Better data on the labour market outcomes of programmes are vital in linking provision to labour market needs

These challenges are intensified by the structural challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality. These should inform British Council involvement.

In its Development Plan for period up to 2030 the Ministry sets out a vision of a transformed post-school system based on the principles of social justice and equality. This will be achieved through an expansion in terms of quantity, quality and diversity.

Having one central Ministry with responsibility over TVET and a strong vision and policy means that institutions do not face the complexity and divisions of responsibilities experienced in countries with more decentralised governance. The Ministry has now been responsible for TVET for 6 years so the system has had a chance to establish and become embedded, providing some stability for local institutions. This is reflected in the survey findings which show that TVET leaders in South Africa have experienced little change in their levels of autonomy in recent years and, along with England – are less likely to expect change in the future. They are most likely to say that there is a shared view of TVET objectives across different levels of government and

between their institutions and central government. However, with the growth of the sector, funding and capacity remain as challenges.

This is an interesting time to be working with South Africa in this sector as TVET and the community college sectors are viewed as the ideal institutions to address the South African economy's dire need for technical and vocational skills. DHET are leading the construction of 12 additional TVET campuses to help facilitate the absorption of many more people, especially the youth, into the TVET sector. Government has identified the expansion of the TVET sector as a national priority in the post-school education and training system. But on the ground, interviewees reported that funding is key both for capital and programme delivery. It was said that equipment is so outdated that providers cannot provide learners with the up to date skills they need and there is still a strong preference amongst learners to pursue academic pathways.

Field et al (2014) identify that the high demand for artisans and skilled workers by the economy has necessitated the re-prioritisation of the sector in order to meet South Africa's future targets. Since 1994, there has been no consistent, coordinated investment in the expansion of the TVET college sub-system. The establishment of the 12 new TVET college campuses and the refurbishment of two existing campuses, is aimed at putting in place a standard for expansion. A particular focus is on improving access in regions which have a high poverty index and in which there is inadequate or no provision of education and training. This infrastructure will have a multi-purpose capacity for offering a mix of qualifications and programmes specifically relevant to, and within each, affected local municipality.

Effective policy development depends on the capacity for policy analysis backed by good data and research. In South Africa this analytic capacity exists in the Department and in well-respected universities and research institutes that work closely with DHET. Lessons could be shared with labour market information initiatives already in place in countries in the MENA region where GIZ are trialling labour market observatories.

SOUTH AFRICA

A STRONG EDUCATION MINISTRY IN A CHALLENGING CONTEXT

PARTNERSHIPS

TVET say leaders across most levels of government there is a shared view as to what TVET should deliver.

Institutions are most likely to have partnerships with other TVET institutions, Sector Skills Councils and central government.

33% Community groups

47% NGOs

47% Local government

Employers are less likely than average to be involved in developing the curricula and course approval but more likely to be represented on governing boards.

THE MAJORITY SAY THAT THEY OPERATE IN A CENTRALLY CONTROLLED SYSTEM.

69%

Say they have flexibility to operate independently within a national structure.

69%

Say that there is a good balance between local independence and accountability.

CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH GREATER AUTONOMY

Along with Vietnam, institutions are least likely to say that they are 'very' or 'quite' prepared to take on new challenge.

KEY CHALLENGES ARE:

87%

Insufficient funds.

86%

Poor quality LMI

69%

Difficulties in engaging employers.

Factors that would support greater autonomy	South Africa	Ave
Adequate financial and human resources.	81	71
Strong partnerships + collaboration across different levels of government.	63	51
Good quality LMI.	63	51
Modernisation of our teaching capacity.	65	50
A need for new facilities/equipment.	50	48
Sustainable funding.	50	44
Action to tackle negative public attitudes towards TVET.	50	38

POPULATION:
55.9M

10%
of population
participate
in tertiary education.

CURRENTLY TVET INSTITUTIONS HAVE MOST AUTONOMY OVER:

- Development of employer partnerships.
- Strategic Planning.
- Spending budgets to achieve objectives.
- Innovation.
- Owning their own building and equipment.

LEAST AUTONOMY OVER:

- Salaries
- Curriculum Design.

DIRECTION OF TRAVEL

In the past

5 YEARS

there has been little change in levels
of autonomy and leaders do not
expect this to change in the future.

KEY AREAS IN WHICH TVET LEADERS WOULD LIKE MORE RESPONSIBILITY

AVE SA

Quality assurance 47 88

Qualification standards 44 88

Investment in facilities and equipment 52 79

Tackling public perceptions of TVET 49 75

Admissions 42 75

Teacher training 55 75

EXTERNAL SUPPORT WOULD BE MOST WELCOMED FOR...

88%

Meeting the
needs of a fast
changing
labour market.

94%

Meeting the
challenge of
matching demand
and supply of
skills.

94%

Engaging
employers.

88%

Creating relevant
curricula and
keeping
them up to date.

88%

Quality
assurance.

VIETNAM

Vietnam is the easternmost country on the Indochina Peninsula in Southeast Asia. It is bordered by China to the north, Laos and Cambodia to the west, the Eastern Sea to the east and the Pacific Ocean to the east and south. The population of Viet Nam was approximately 90 million in 2014, the thirteenth largest in the world and third largest in Southeast Asia. There are 54 different ethnic groups across the 64 cities and provinces of Viet Nam.

Vietnam, like much of Southeast Asia has experienced unprecedented growth and development over the last thirty years and, among Asian economies, only China has grown faster since 2000. This has pulled millions out of poverty and drastically improved living standards over the course of a single generation. As industry becomes more diversified, job requirements demand more complex and skills needs more sophisticated, the government has moved to bring education up to international standards. Strong vocational education programmes at the local level can play a significant role in helping national economies to adjust to changes in the labour market, advances in technology and challenges associated with globalisation. Interviewees reported that along with this change, a shift to an employment outcomes approach has improved public perceptions of the value of TVET.

But the alarm bells have been ringing for a few years now about a productivity gap between Vietnam and some of its regional neighbours, and these concerns are linked in part to issues of skills training and employability of graduates from the country's universities and colleges. It was reported in discussions that the government would like providers to work more closely with employers, for instance, on course design but that is new for colleges and they lack the capacity, staff competencies and funding to do that.

In Vietnam the Ministry of Labour, Invalids, and Social Affairs (MOLISA) is responsible for TVET. Within the Ministry, the General Department of Vocational Training (GDVT) has, with the introduction of the Law on Education and training in 2016, been given a mandate to:

- Take the lead and co-ordinate with related ministries and agencies to provide guidance and arrange implementation of legal regulations on TVET;

- Issue charters for the operation of colleges, technical secondary schools and centres for TVET, regulations on enrolment and training, examinations, testing for graduation;
- Provide qualifications
- Determine the curriculum and standards
- Take responsibility for quality accreditation
- Manage and arrange teacher training
- Decide on the establishment of colleges

In a report presented to the Development Donor Conference at the World Bank in 2017, the Ministry stated that progress has been made on TVET quality and efficiency and has gradually transformed to a more demand led system. However, there are still weaknesses and bottlenecks are identified as:

- A demand for improved training quality and quantity
- A need for investment but a lack of funds
- Modest participation from the corporate sectors
- Issues of management capacity
- Incompatibility of qualification standards with other developed countries

To renew and improve provision 10 measures have been identified including 3 particular measures for improvements to 2020. These include,

- The development of standards for qualifications, teachers and managers
- Enhancing the autonomy of institutions and promoting collaboration – including support to improve governance capacity
- Fostering business engagement

The survey findings reflect this level of change with the majority of leaders having experienced greater autonomy and 9 out of 10 expecting more gains in the future. Whilst there is a recognition of a need for closer ties with employers, this remains a challenge and there are issues about capacity, management, quality assurance and teaching staff – all of which the Ministry has acknowledged in its priorities for the future. In follow up interviews it was reported that the salaries of teaching staff are relatively low and in turn that means it is difficult to attract staff and impacts on motivation for skills development. A focus on performance rather than problem solving, creativity and management skills means that the *'productivity and efficiency of teachers remain limited'* according to an interviewee. It was notable that there is a strong willingness and openness to benefit from external support to address these issues. Institutions referred to support received from KOICA (South Korea); the British Council; USAID and GIZ.

Over time, while the rate of qualified workers has increased from 18.39% in 2014 to 20.2% in 2015, this also indicates that up to 80% of the Vietnamese labour force is untrained. There is also an imbalance in the level of technical training, as people with university education or higher comprise 43.9% of the total trained workforce, resulting in comparatively few people with intermediate skills. This has resulted in both ongoing skills shortages but also an oversupply of engineers and those with 'masters' degrees. In 2015, 178,000 of workers holding a masters or university degree could not find employment. There are increasing signs of skills mismatch, as the skills gained from the education system fail to meet those demanded by the labour market. As a result, labour productivity was amongst the lowest in the Asia-Pacific region. According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), productivity in Singapore in 2013 was nearly 15 times the level of productivity in Vietnam and Vietnam's productivity was only one-fifth and two fifths of Malaysia and Thailand, respectively. (ILO, 2014)

Viet Nam's Law on Vocational Training (2015) states that business associations, social organisations and professional organisations are responsible for participating in the design and development of training and the appraisal of vocational training curricula. There are also provisions to facilitate the inclusion of employers in VET activities. However, in practice, employers are not actively engaged in TVET activities. The onus typically falls on TVET institutions to determine solutions and build relationships with companies to improve the quality of training. Many TVET institutions have recognised the need for closer links with industry and a movement away from the largely classroom-focussed nature of vocational education, but the challenge of effectively engaging employers remains.

The Asian Development Bank (2014) includes some recommendations on actions to strengthen Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) over the coming decade. The two main recommendations are to strengthen the knowledge base on TVET as a means to raise performance, and to consider a payroll levy for training as a way to stimulate more enterprise-based training.

Barr and Attrey (2017) set out lessons and recommendations for Vietnam and neighbouring countries (Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand) to:

1. Inject flexibility into the design and delivery of TVET programmes. Vocational education and training systems must be agile and inject flexibility into programme delivery and design to respond to variation in employer needs at the local level. This includes offering more part-time course, modular training units, and using e-platforms to deliver skill development programmes.
2. Promote collaboration and dialogue between stakeholders at the local level.
3. Streamline governance structures to ease engagement with national governments.
4. Develop stronger linkages among groups of employers. Current forms of engagement with employers tend to feature ad-hoc collaborations between individual employers and individual vocational education and training providers.
5. Improve the quality of formal TVET. Many training providers lack capacity, and there is a wide degree of variation in the nature and quality of training. This in turn affects perceptions of the value of technical vocational education and training amongst students, parents and employers.

Again, this is a good time for engagement with TVET in Vietnam. An ICEF Monitor Article (May 2016) cites growing demand for vocational training in Vietnam. The latest statistics indicate a significant increase in demand for vocational training among Vietnamese high school leavers. University graduates are also returning to vocational studies to improve their employment prospects and the Vietnamese government aims to increase the percentage of formally trained workers in the labour force from about 15% currently to 55% by 2020. It continues:

The bottom line is that the Vietnamese economy needs skills: English skills, IT skills, and targeted training for a wide range of occupations and industries. The patterns we now seeing playing out in Vietnam indicate that students are now going to access skills training through a variety of new models and new collaborations and, increasingly, outside of a university campus.

VIETNAM

VOCATIONAL SKILLS TRAINING AND BOOSTING EMPLOYMENT IS AT THE HEART OF THE GOVERNMENT'S DEVELOPMENT GOALS

PARTNERSHIPS

Across most levels of government there is a shared view as to what TVET should deliver, but different central government ministries do not all share the same view. This leads to a lack of clarity over the strategic direction of TVET policy

(50%)

an overlap of responsibilities (50%) and a mismatch between skills supply and demand

(42%)

Institutions most likely to have partnerships with central and local government, trade unions, and other TVET institutions. Less likely than average to have partnerships with local employers.

Employers are far less likely to be represented on governing boards or to be involved in course approval.

AUTONOMY AND OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

The majority say that they operate in a centrally controlled system.

70%

Say that there is a good balance between local independence and accountability.

67%

Say they have flexibility to operate independently within a national structure.

CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH GREATER AUTONOMY

Along with South Africa, institutions are least likely to say that they are 'very' or 'quite' prepared to take on new challenges.

KEY CHALLENGES ARE:

92%

Capacity to take on new roles / responsibilities

92%

Capability of managers to take on new roles

92%

Quality assurance

88%

Quality of teaching staff

88%

Poor quality LMI.

2.1M

students are in tertiary education. Aims that by 2020, trained skilled workers will make up 55% of the labour force, compared with the current figure of 30%.

POPULATION:

93.4M

9 OUT OF 10

leaders expect greater autonomy in the future.

Factors that would support greater autonomy	South Africa	Ave
Adequate financial and human resources.	81	71
Strong partnerships + collaboration across different levels of government.	63	51
Good quality LMI.	63	51
Modernisation of our teaching capacity.	65	50
A need for new facilities/equipment.	50	48
Sustainable funding.	50	44
Action to tackle negative public attitudes towards TVET.	50	38

CURRENTLY TVET INSTITUTIONS HAVE MOST AUTONOMY OVER:

- Curriculum design.
- Development of employer partnerships.
- Strategic planning.
- Employment and dismissal of staff.
- Innovation.

LEAST AUTONOMY OVER:

- Salaries
- Tuition fees.
- Student enrolment.

DIRECTION OF TRAVEL

In the past

5 YEARS

TVET has gained more autonomy, especially over innovation.

KEY AREAS IN WHICH TVET LEADERS WOULD LIKE MORE RESPONSIBILITY

AVE VIETNAM

Teacher Training 55 79

Monitoring and evaluation 52 61

Curriculum design 49 66

Tackling public perceptions of TVET 49 61

Standard of teaching 40 63

Investment in facilities and equipment 52 61

EXTERNAL SUPPORT WOULD BE MOST WELCOMED FOR...

Meeting the needs of a fast changing labour market.

Delivery of high quality teaching and learning.

Staff development.

Accessing other sources of finance.

Creating relevant curricula.

Engaging employers.

Leaders in Vietnam were most likely to identify areas where support would be welcome.

Qualification standards.

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