

## Against The Odds: vocational education and training in countries post-conflict

Karina Veal, Consultant, UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training, Bonn, Germany

This paper will examine some aspects of the provision of vocational education and training in fragile states, emergency situations and, specifically, in countries post-conflict. The impact of conflicts on communities, families and economies are well documented. The impact of conflicts on education and training systems is less often considered. The toll is heavy, and can lead to the almost total collapse of educational services. Re-establishing education is a slow process, and generations of learners can be denied the acquisition of knowledge and skills. Providing skills development for young people is beginning to be seen as a priority policy response for a number of reasons, and the influx of international interest and donor funds provides opportunity for re-development as well as re-construction.

Yet the differing and particular local contexts create enormous challenges for the implementation of VET policies and practices. In a country without equipment, buildings, qualified teachers, curriculum materials, reliable payroll systems, let alone skilled ministry of education personnel, how can VET best be provided?

Drawing upon practitioner case studies of VET in Liberia, Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Timor-Leste, and Uganda this paper will examine some of the ways differing context impacts on policies and practices. Taking 'universal' topics such as planning and administration, facilities and equipment, system financing, ministerial control, quality assurance, teacher training, industry responsiveness, community involvement and meeting the learning needs of particular population groups the paper outlines some of the challenges, and tentative responses, currently employed in countries post-conflict. In so doing, the audience is invited to reflect upon the impact of context on policy and planning within the Australian system; what might be considered culturally specific and what might be more universal.