Chapter VI.8
Some Generic Issues in TVET Management

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1 Introduction

This chapter of the UNESCO-UNEVOC *International handbook* identifies and analyses nine generic issues that are significant for TVET management. Six of these issues are presented as contrasting dichotomies—for example, the implications of centralization versus devolution for the management of TVET systems. The nine generic issues for TVET management that are considered in the following sections are:

- centralization versus devolution;
- autonomy versus accountability;
- inputs versus outputs and outcomes;
- governance versus management;
- public versus private funding and tuition fees;
- public versus private provision;
- TVET policy and legal frameworks;
- TVET system configurations;
- TVET institutional management systems.

Expanding on these generic issues, an overview of TVET management practice is set out in the next chapter, with particular reference to eleven specific TVET management functions.

All governments will want their TVET systems to be responsive, effective and cost-efficient. Chapters VI.8 and VI.9 draw extensively on the collective experiences of Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom—three countries that have reformed their public TVET institutions. The management and operational practices in these three countries and the associated legal, policy and organizational environments are benchmarks against which the TVET systems of other countries may be assessed. Contemporary TVET management in Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom is focused on managing the operational efficiency, quality and accountability of TVET institutions to stakeholders—some of the principal areas of TVET management functions that are outlined in the next chapter.
The collective experiences of Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom are documented in a management handbook: *Vocational education and training institutions: a management handbook and CD-ROM*, a management resource produced under the aegis of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Asia and Pacific Skills Development Programme (APSDEP). It contains eleven modules and forty-three self-contained learning units, and is accompanied by a CD-ROM containing more than 400 resource documents on national training policies, legislation, operational documents and management instruments etc.

These two handbooks i.e. UNESCO-UNEVOC *International handbook of education for the changing world of work* (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2009) and *Vocational education and training institution: a management handbook and CD-ROM* (Gasskov, 2006) are complementary. Whereas the UNESCO-UNEVOC *International handbook* is encyclopaedic in its scope, the ILO *Management handbook* is focused on contemporary management practice in TVET institutions and systems.

Chapters VI.8 (generic issues) and VI.9 (management practice) in the UNESCO-UNEVOC *International handbook* (2009) are cross-referenced to the relevant learning units in the ILO *Management handbook* (2006). These forty-three units contain substantial detail on contemporary TVET management practices and extensive links to original resource documents and reference material included on the associated CD-ROM.

## 2 Centralization Versus Devolution

### 2.1 Centralized TVET Systems

Effective governance and management are key issues for the TVET sector. Many countries support large numbers of public TVET institutions that absorb substantial but static or even declining government budgets, yet are facing an increasing demand for skills development (Gasskov, 2006, p. xi—hereafter, only the page number will be given). Although national TVET systems and institutions differ significantly among countries and their management practices reflect national conditions, all governments will want their public TVET institutions to be responsive, effective and cost-efficient.

In many countries, publicly-funded TVET institutions are part of the structure of central government. Their budgets are part of the central government budgets and institutional management and teaching staff are civil servants.

International experience indicates that the responsiveness, effectiveness and cost-efficiency of TVET institutions are enhanced by the devolution of management, financial and teaching responsibilities to the institutions themselves. Centralization of TVET management and delivery commonly translates into a lack of incentives for staff to show initiative and for TVET institutions to improve their performance. Centralization may also fetter the contributions of private institutions to TVET delivery.