

International Conference on
Technical and Vocational
Education and Training

ICTVET
2026

CONCEPT NOTE

Theme:

**“Innovative Pathways and Best Practices for the Promotion
of TVET for Entrepreneurship and Youth Employment”**

24 – 27 March 2026

at

**Emperors Palace Hotel Casino Convention Resort, Gauteng,
South Africa**

Hosted by:

UNISA



in partnership with:



About:

The University of South Africa (UNISA) will be hosting its Second Hybrid International Conference on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (ICTVET2026) from 24 – 27 March 2026 at *the Emperors Palace Hotel Casino Convention Resort, Gauteng, South Africa*. The conference will be organized in close partnership with the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), supported by the South African Public Colleges Organization (SAPCO – organization that represents 50 TVET Colleges in South Africa), the Association of Technical Universities and Polytechnics in Africa (ATUPA), Education Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDP SETA) and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET).

The UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) recognizes University of South Africa (UNISA) as a UNEVOC Network Member. UNESCO-UNEVOC officially admitted the University of South Africa as one of its global UNEVOC Centres ([UNISA UNEVOC Centre](#)) in December 2024. The overall mission of the UNEVOC Network and its UNEVOC Centres is to contribute to improving the standards and quality of TVET in their respective countries and globally. To celebrate UNISA's admission to the UNEVOC Network, UNESCO-UNEVOC and UNISA will be jointly organizing an Inauguration Ceremony on 23 March 2026. The attendees will gain insights into UNISA UNEVOC Centre's future direction and its role within the Network and in the TVET Sector (South Africa). The Inauguration Ceremony will also include a guided tour of the UNISA Science Campus, during which attendees will have the opportunity to see the state-of-the-art resources and programmes available to students.

The theme of the conference is: *"Innovative Pathways and Best Practices for the Promotion of TVET for Entrepreneurship and Youth Employment"*. Innovative pathways involve integrating entrepreneurial learning into curricula, fostering partnerships with industry, and leveraging digital technologies. Best practices include developing entrepreneurial skills, providing access to resources, and promoting a culture of innovation within TVET institutions.

Geopolitical, technological, and economic shifts are redefining the global workforce, and TVET must evolve to equip individuals with future-proof skills. These dynamics in society and the economy call for greater nurturing of entrepreneurial thinking in the next generation. Indeed, the importance of entrepreneurial skills in equipping youth for the world of work and improving their capabilities to adapt to changing skills demands is well reflected in the commitments made by the international community. SDG 4 on quality education and SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth call for the strengthening of skills for employment, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship.

Globally, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) systems are investing in new learning pathways, setting-up innovative initiatives, and programmes, and developing new partnerships enabling responses to 21st century challenges. Responsive skills development programmes need to ensure not only the functional consistency with the demands from the world of work, but also the development of transversal skills and competences that enable youth to respond to changing industry demands. TVET has the potential to bridge the gap between education and the labor market, offering young people the practical skills, technological literacy, and entrepreneurial competencies they need to thrive.

This conference will explore how TVET can give learners/students tools to create their own jobs and career paths, or to bring an entrepreneurial mindset to their role as an employee, thus improving job security.

1.1 Objectives of the Conference

The conference is designed to support UNESCO-UNEVOC Medium Term Strategy IV (2022-2026), UNESCO's Strategy for TVET 2022-2029 and the African Union's TVET Development Framework by:

- Exploring new approaches to integrating entrepreneurship in TVET Curriculum.
- Empowering Youth through entrepreneurship and digital skills needed to lead economic transformation in Africa.
- Preparing TVET institutions to meet the challenges and seize the opportunities of AI.
- Exploring innovative and promising practices in TVET that support sustainable partnerships and inclusivity.
- Improving information on the TVET College system through research.

1.2 Streams for Paper Presentations and Panel Discussions

The theme of the conference is: "*Innovative Pathways and Best Practices for the Promotion of TVET for Entrepreneurship and Youth Employment (National, Regional, Continental, and Global)*" will cover four key streams: Promoting Entrepreneurial Learning in TVET, Empowering Youth through Entrepreneurship and Digital Skills, Transforming Entrepreneurship in Connected Era and Promoting Inclusive TVET Education. These streams will be explored through paper presentations, panel discussion and keynote addresses.

1.2.1 Streams for Paper Presentations

Papers are invited from leading and emerging scholars, TVET practitioners, students, academics, researchers, universities to share research-driven ideas to empower youth and adults with relevant TVET skills for employment, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship.

1.2.1.1 Promoting Entrepreneurial Learning in TVET

The 21st century is demanding that all individuals develop the capacity to be creative and innovative at work and in their communities. The world of work is undergoing major transformations caused by technological change, shifts in the global economy, new business models, demographics, and other factors, all of which are likely to intensify in the future.

Preparing people to be able to flourish in sustainable enterprises is therefore a priority for the whole education system and especially TVET, which has a specific remit to equip people to enter the workforce. Entrepreneurial learning, also called entrepreneurial or entrepreneurship education, can give learners tools to create their own jobs and career paths, or to bring an entrepreneurial mindset to their role as an employee, thus improving job security. Papers under this stream will explore new approaches to integrating entrepreneurship in TVET Curriculum.

1.2.1.2 Empowering Youth through Entrepreneurship and Digital Skills

Empowering youth through entrepreneurship and digital skills involves equipping young people with the knowledge and tools to start businesses and thrive in the digital economy, fostering innovation and economic growth. Empowering youth to become entrepreneurs and develop digital skills fosters innovation, leading to new products, services, and solutions. But due to the seeming dearth of adequate entrepreneurial skills among them, their business potentials seem to be losing value daily. Papers under this stream will examine how TVET programs can support youth empowerment through entrepreneurship training, digital literacy, and resilience to adapt to new technologies, ultimately creating self-employment and sustainable livelihoods.

1.2.1.3 Transforming Entrepreneurship in Connected Era

The evolving development and deployment of AI technologies is altering learning systems, labour markets, industrial services, agricultural processes, value chains and the organization of workplaces. There is a need to better understand the impact of AI on labour markets, and consequently on TVET systems. Entrepreneurship education in TVET colleges needs to focus on integrating core AI concepts, providing practical projects and internship opportunities, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, and designing industry-oriented curricula. Papers under this stream will explore the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on entrepreneurship education in TVET colleges and universities as well as the strategies adopted by these institutions.

1.2.1.4 Promoting Inclusive TVET Education

Inclusion in education is about ensuring that every learner feels valued and respected and can enjoy a clear sense of belonging. Yet many hurdles stand in the way of that ideal. Most, vulnerable populations continue to face significant obstacles in accessing quality skills training. These barriers include instruction in non-mother tongue languages, low levels of foundation skills, restrictive fees, familial responsibilities and inadequate TVET institutions in rural areas. In addition, many TVET institutions are ill-equipped to provide pathways to further education, training, or employment. This challenge is compounded by a lack of strategic partnerships between the formal, non-formal and informal sectors, and trainers and instructors with insufficient practical knowledge and experience in meeting the needs of marginalized groups. Research under this stream will focus on policies and practices that ensure access to TVET for marginalized groups, including women, people with disabilities, and rural communities. Papers will explore models of inclusive education, barriers to participation, and successful case studies from across the globe.

1.2.1.5 TVET research and knowledge base

The TVET research and knowledge base aims to build a local body of knowledge to inform policymakers, practitioners, employers, learners, and communities about TVET colleges and empower the TVET for continuous development and improvement. This is being achieved through publications of research findings in reputable journals.

1.2.2 Streams for Panel Discussions

Panel discussions will bring together policymakers, industry experts, business people, employers, entrepreneurs to exchange ideas and develop actionable strategies.

1.2.2.1 Public-Private Partnerships in TVET

Public-private partnerships are essential to building resilient TVET systems. Engaging the private sector in TVET provision is, thus, not only an important undertaking, but also has strategic importance in improving the relevance, working modalities and contributions of the TVET system. Quality TVET, obtained through enhanced collaboration with the private sector, not only helps students to acquire the necessary skills, but can also lower the likelihood of mismatching qualifications with labour-market demands. Private business and industry could be involved in a variety of tasks that include policy and governance, curriculum development, training and assessment, development of occupational standards, monitoring and evaluation, among others. This panel will discuss strategies for collaboration between governments, the private sector, and educational institutions, focusing on enhancing TVET for the promotion of entrepreneurship and youth employment.

1.2.2.2 Equity and Inclusion in TVET Education

Equity and inclusion in TVET education means ensuring that all learners, regardless of background or ability, have equal access to quality vocational training and opportunities for skills development and employment. Despite inclusive education policies in place in several countries, vulnerable populations continue to face significant obstacles to accessing quality skills training. Prioritizing the rights, equity, and inclusion of marginalized groups in TVET is crucial because it can help them to transition from unemployment and from precarious livelihoods and employment situations to formal employment and decent work. The panel will discuss practices that ensure access to TVET for marginalized groups, including women, people with disabilities, migrants, disadvantaged youth, and other vulnerable groups and rural communities.

1.2.2.3 Innovation and Excellence

To remain relevant to the needs of the economy, society, and environment in a rapidly evolving world, TVET must continuously innovate and strive for excellence. Innovation implies a substantial change in the design and delivery of TVET that improves institutional efficiency and effectiveness. TVET providers must integrate appropriate cutting-edge technologies into their curricula and adapt their teaching methods to ensuring that TVET graduates possess the skills and competencies needed to thrive in tomorrow's workforce. This panel will focus on the adoption of various digital tools, e-learning platforms, and smart technologies, AI, discussing strategies for integration and addressing the challenges that institutions may face.

2. Conclusion

This ICTVET2026 focusing on entrepreneurship is expected to have a positive impact on individuals and the broader economy. It is anticipated that it will inspire and empower aspiring entrepreneurs, provide valuable learning opportunities, foster connections, and collaborations, and ultimately contribute to economic growth and job creation.