

Design the future of your region to provide all its citizens with a valuable life: the COMMEET Toolkit helps you to embed your TVET-schools in your community.

Welcome to our Learning Community NGO COMMEET!

It is absolutely wonderful that you are taking action to strengthen your community / region. This toolkit aims to guide you towards becoming a powerful region, step by step. This approach has been developed and implemented successfully over the years.

If you have any questions during your development process, please do not hesitate to contact us! Our network of professionals will always be happy to help you!

Good luck!

The COMMEET team



Please find our complete 10-step toolkit below. You may find that you are already carrying out some of the steps; if so, just skip them and continue with the next.

1. Form a group of stakeholders

Get the Community Empowerment group (CE Group) of 8-10 participants together, which should consist of the 4 main parties in your community:

- citizens
- politicians
- educators
- company leaders.

Leadership and organisation aren't that important, but it is important to:

- have a pro-bono co-operation
- use your own network
- structurally meet and contribute
- be transparent in the communication to the community
- have an open mind towards new people with valuable skills.

The CE group is not a closed entity; in case a new participant presents themselves, membership should always be open on the basis of competency.



2. Define and describe your community and its main problem(s)

This exercise has to be done with the CE Group members.

Advice

- Try to answer questions like: What problem(s) do we want to be solved? And for whom do we want to do this? Focus on the problem(s) and causes, not on the solutions.
 - Whether your community is a small rural village with one TVET-centre that needs to be installed or improved, or a complex industrial area with a high density of TVET-centres and Entrepreneurship initiatives: be clear in your choices. Choose a community that is a coherent unity, with a well-defined structure.
 - Define your community in such a way that the CE group has contacts at all levels, in every sector. Possibly adapt the group.
 - Organize community meetings and share ideas on the subject of Sustainable Regional Development and the role that TVET and Entrepreneurship Training should have. It is essential to achieve as broad a basis as possible for the idea of community empowerment from the outset.
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3. Describe the community's ecosystem of socio-economic activities, stakeholder groups and of education in general

Advice:

- In many countries community studies have been carried out already by regional development agencies. Search for the most suitable and complete descriptions that give a reliable overview of the socio-economic situation of the region and its educational provisions. Search for studies in administrative bureaus of the Town Hall and Chambers of Commerce.
- Adapt the situational overview to your community. This would be an excellent assignment for a student group as a case study in their curriculum or as an collective internship task. Remember, you cannot start early enough with involving local/regional parties in your work!



4. About the Community's Development Agenda (CDA)

Community's Development Agendas do not usually exist. Yet, under the new paradigm of Sustainable Regional Development, there is a growing tendency to bring more initiatives to the communities, instead of leaving them to a national level. To take up this challenge, regions must prepare themselves and accept the invitation to think about their own future.

Advice:

- Find ideas and inspirations at international institutions like:
 - UNESCO's GAP 2015-2030
 - UN's Sustainable Development Goals 2030
 - If there is a Community's Development Agenda, form a regional partnership on the basis of this existing Development Agenda with the CE group.
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5. Start up the discussion about a new or updated Community's Development Agenda, in line with the Lekgotla-philosophy

About the meaning of Lekgotla

Lekgotla is an African word, used for a typical African phenomenon. When, in a village, town or city neighbourhood there is something to discuss, the community gathers around the old Baobab tree in the town centre. Every citizen has the same rights to listen, to reflect, to speak and to vote. The community meeting ends with the determination of a common vision, in which a maximum of opinions are comprised. Lekgotla has been defined by many observers as the ultimate form of democracy.

NGO COMMEET is a supporter of the Lekgotla philosophy. To enhance sustainable regional development it should be applied in many ways to determine the community's future.



6. Define and describe the role of TVET and Entrepreneurship Training in the Community's Development Agenda

- **What is TVET?**

TVET is a comprehensive form of education. It refers to all forms of instruction that aims to prepare participants directly to fulfil a job. In this way TVET could be called the entire set of initial education because students/participants acquire the specific skills to start working in their field of training. Or, as professionals usually explain it: "They can start running when hitting the ground". As such TVET differs from general secondary or university education, where students are taught to acquire the general abilities for a larger spectrum of working situations, but need a preparation period before being fit for an actual job.

- How to understand formal, informal and non-formal learning?

Formal types of TVET can be called Professional or Vocational education. It is organised in 3 segments:

- formal education, offered in official institutes and resulting in a government-acknowledged diploma
- informal education, which comprises all sorts of training which doesn't lead to an official diploma, like topping-up courses, forms of lifelong learning (LLL)
- non-formal learning, which is all learning that is not organised as such, like learning during work.

Government-based TVET is usually called TVET EDUCATION, while non-formal and Informal TVET is referred to as TVET TRAINING.

- Learn about new developments like Dual Learning, Action Learning, the importance of Work Placements/Internships.

With the aim of promoting labour market accessibility to the max, numerous forms of combinations of education and practice have been conceptualised worldwide over the last thirty years. Well-known examples are:

- Dual Learning
- Action Learning
- Several types of Work Placements or Internships.

Advice:

- At COMMEET we have many colleagues all over the world who have experimented with forms of Practice Based Learning. They are to be found in our Network and databases.
- Germany is without doubt one of the countries with the most extensive experience in all sorts of Work-based Learning.

- **TVET-education in Universities?**

At the same time it can be concluded that the divide between TVET- and NON-TVET education is not strictly institutional. In many countries, universities, for instance, also offer a fair number of Professional or TVET-courses.

Advice:

- Coordinate and align the several forms of TVET in and/or around your institute. Having Life Long Learning possibilities for TVET-alumni is very advantageous. The effective life circle of a usual TVET-diploma is only a few years, and alumni who get employed will feel the need acquire topping-up skills after two or three years already. So once you have a well-designed TVET-school running, consider how to prepare for after-sales training.
- Clients are the perfect group to assist with defining and creating topping-up courses. So put in your agenda the establishment of an Alumni Union. Alumni Unions are still not very common in many parts of the world, but in countries where the market-orientation of schools is more traditional, e.g. in the USA, there is extensive knowledge and experience in this field. The most important issue is that by initiating and maintaining an Alumni Union, you demonstrate that your student is your client and your alumnus is your lifelong partner.

- **Entrepreneurship and TVET**

Entrepreneurship Training is one of the cornerstones of TVET. Trainees should be prepared to start up their own SME, but also be able to apply Entrepreneurship Skills in a regular job.

Entrepreneurship Training is seen all over the world as a form of informal TVET. It is commonly not considered an essential part of a curriculum. The reason is that Formal TVET is still seen as a form of education that prepares well enough for a job. COMMEET advocates the idea that Entrepreneurship be a fixed part of every TVET curriculum. Labour market orientation should also comprise preparing for an independent future. In cases where Entrepreneurship is no part of a formal curriculum, there should be a possibility to incorporate Entrepreneurship as an elective. The foregoing is the reason why COMMEET suggests changing the abbreviation of TVET in TEVET: Technical, Entrepreneurial Vocational Education and Training.

Numerous Good Practices of Entrepreneurship Training have been developed in the past few decades, also for migrants. The European Union has been a major funder of new initiatives. Please see:

- Entrepreneurs for Tomorrow (for the Russian market)

- Fresh Start (for migrants).
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7. Capacity Building to prepare for the realization of the Community's Development Agenda

Advice:

- **Organize understanding**, enthusiasm and support from community leaders and politicians.
It is important that your TVET-institute is being managed by one or more persons who are experts in the fields of training/expertise that are being taught in your school. Managers have to be inspiring experts who have the right to lead the school, because they are respected for their craftsmanship themselves. First and foremost, your school needs professionals who can shape opinion in their region because of their vision and experience. The German Fachhochschulen are living examples of the importance of managers who can teach and educate at least as well, or even better than their staff.
 - **Try Living Labs**
A relatively new phenomenon is the Living Lab: start up a societal experiment, begin with your work and invite the community to take part in it. Invite them to explain what your goals are, inform them about process details and ask them to come back whenever they want and participate in thinking, acting, contributing and participating with you. Living Labs are a perfect means of inspiring many people around a communal theme.
 - **Introduce Place-Based Learning**
Place-Based Learning is an integrative concept, in which schools are fully immersed in their environment. The community is involved by actively taking part in the Learning Process in schools. With this concept you systematically get the maximum community input in your school or training centre. Private companies, museums, governmental organisations, so the entire community ecosystem, will be involved in the schools' educational process.
 - **Organize Teacher training**
 - **Take care of the necessary financial support**
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8. Develop a methodology for Quality Management of your TVET-project

Advice:

- Create a 5-year Strategic Plan with critical success factors.
Three secrets of successful strategic planning:
 - don't plan too much and don't go into detail; focus on 5 years and limit yourself to 1 or 2 main goals.
 - only include issues in your planning that you can influence
 - plan externally, not internally; define your strategic goals in terms of achievements, not in terms of actions.
 - Write a 1-year Action Plan
 - Develop a Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle
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9. The COMMEET Index on Community Empowerment (CICE)

Advice:

Check if all relevant factors about Sustainability have been prepared for:

- human rights, gender issues, democracy
- environmental issues
- financial stability
- sustainable and long-lasting stakeholder's support.

Calculate your score on the COMMEET Index on Community Empowerment (CICE).
See the last page of this guide.

Your score should at least be 60/100.

- Compare your score with those of colleagues
- Find out how/where to improve
- Never be satisfied! Remember to ask the COMMEET-helpdesk if necessary.



10. About maximum involvement and lasting commitment of all relevant stakeholders

A TVET-school that is really connected with the community in which it is settled will have a large number of stakeholders, people or organizations that have an interest in a well-functioning TVET-school. These stakeholders can be:

- the permanent Community Empowerment group (CE group)
- the curriculum advisory board
- the alumni union
- the Internship companies
- the regional Employers Association
- the regional Chamber of Commerce.

Advice:

- Build connections of trust with all these stakeholder groups and ask them how they see their possible input in the school
- Keep the stakeholders together and engaged with the school.

There is only one answer to these and related questions: the stakeholders will have to be convinced that it is in their own interest that the TVET-school or the Entrepreneurship Centre functions well. It will take permanent discussions with all of them to understand what their interests are, and how the school can help realizing them. Many good practices exist in this field all over the world.

APPENDIX: The COMMEET Index on Community Empowerment (CICE)

		1 pt	2 pts	3 pts	4 pts	5 pts
		Poor	Fail	Pass	Good	Excellent
1	Does your Community or TVET-school have something like a permanent Community Empowerment (CE) group that meets at least 4 times every year to discuss matters of sustainable community progress?					
2	Is the CE- group open for new members and is it transparent in its work?					
3	Does the CE-group have a self-evaluation and self-assessment programme?					
4	Is there something like a Community Development Agenda (CDA; 5 years) in the community, which is clearly described, up-to-date and broadly accepted by stakeholders?					
5	Is the TVET-school's programme in line with the Community Development Agenda (CDA)?					
6	Does the TVET-school, or TVET-training centre, also offer informal training and schooling programmes? Is Lifelong Learning a structural part of the curriculum?					
7	Does the school follow a structural philosophy in its policy, like Place-Based Learning, or Dual Learning, or...					
8	Does your school have a student counsellor?					
9	Does your school play an active role in regional policy making?					
10	Does every student in your school have at least one field trip or business visit every week?					
11	Does every student in your school have a guest lecture from a business leader or other practitioner from your community at least once every week?					
12	Does your school have an Advisory Board of relevant employers in the community, who meet at least once every month to discuss relevant curriculum issues?					
13	Does the school have a regular Open Day, for instance once every semester, where all citizens are welcome and are invited to submit their opinions about the school and its functioning, and to propose new ideas on how to perform better (Lekgotla-philosophy)					
14	Does your school have a structural internship programme in which your students actively work in a study-related field for at least 20% of their study time?					
15	Does every teacher / lecturer in your school have at least 1 expert-colleague outside school with whom they exchange good practices and subject matters?					
16	Have you organized good accessibility to Entrepreneurship Training (before or after graduation) for your students?					
17	Does your school have a Human Rights policy?					
18	Does your school have an Environmental policy?					
19	Does your school have an Alumni policy including an Alumni Union and at least one annual Home Coming Day?					
20	Does your school have a labour market office and a labour market officer?					
	Total number of points					

	<i>Grand total</i>	
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