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**Promoting critical knowledge, skills and qualifications for  
sustainable development in Africa: How to design and  
implement an effective response by education and  
training systems**

### **Sub-theme 1**

**Common core skills for lifelong  
learning and sustainable  
development in Africa**

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## **Generic Work-Related Skills in Education for a Sustainable Development: a Synthesis of UNESCO-UNEVOC and other Publications**

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*Submitted by*

*Teeluck Bhuwanees,*

*Head UNESCO-UNEVOC Networks, Bonn, Germany*

### **ABSTRACT**

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# 1. ABSTRACT

As a resource centre and clearinghouse, the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre has done a number of studies related to skills: skills development, learning needs in the informal sector, restructuring secondary education towards employment and sustainable skills among others. In this regard, UNESCO-UNEVOC has compiled a number of lessons learnt and recommendations that can be used to develop a road map for the integration of generic skills in education and training.

This contribution is based on a synthesis of UNESCO-UNEVOC and other related publications in the field of skills with a particular emphasis on reforms and innovations implying changes in the education and training system or many management levels. It analyzes different experiences regarding how acquired skills improve the employability of young people in the context of sustainable development. This paper aims at informing the global debate on the way to design and implement inclusive and integrated educational reforms towards developing generic work related skills in Africa. It is part of a global re-conceptualization of education and training systems to meet the expectations and needs of young people in Africa, particularly incorporating the concept of sustainability in the labour market. It reviews the present economic context of Africa and development of the skills concept in the TVET literature in Africa and elsewhere and makes a synthesis of these publications on generic work-related skills in education for a sustainable development, with a particular focus on skills for both the formal and informal labor markets in Africa.

The different dimensions of developing generic skills in education are used as lenses to analyze the publications: lifelong learning by recognizing skills acquired in formal, non-formal and informal pathways, efficiency of training programs based on learning outcomes and public-private partnerships to meet work-place needs.

Generic work-related skills belong to emerging critical skills as they enable people to adapt in various situations of work besides job-specific requirements. In this regard, this paper takes a holistic and inclusive approach of basic education, shifting from a supply-based to a demand-led approach and taking into account socio-economic situations of learners.

The study serves to stimulate the development of new education policies targeting the development of generic skills in basic education. The study presents the lessons, recommendations and options related to skills acquisition in other contexts with a view to transfer the acquired knowledge to policy makers and administrators, with a particular focus on Africa.