



# From School to Work: Contemporary TVET Regional Experiences

Final Report of the Seminar

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## Executive Summary

The seminar on Technical and Vocational Education and Training “From School to Work: Contemporary Regional Experiences” was convened by the National Institute for Educational Policy Research (NIER) of Japan from 23 – 30 January 2007 in Tokyo. This seminar was co-organised with the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (UNESCO-UNEVOC), involving members of the Centre’s international network of TVET institutions – the so-called UNEVOC Network. The meeting focussed primarily on TVET as a means to preparing school leavers for the world of work and on policies and strategies supporting young people through the actual transition process.

In line with mandates of NIER and UNESCO-UNEVOC to provide platforms for an international exchange of information and good practice, the seminar served to increase the understanding of contemporary regional experiences of transition to work issues in the Asia-Pacific region. It was attended by thirteen representatives of UNEVOC Network member institutions (UNEVOC Centres) from the Asia-Pacific region: Bangladesh, Cambodia, The People’s Republic of China, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. In addition, NIER had invited two resource persons to give presentations on key issues related to school-to-work in Australia and in the Pacific Island States.

Several country case studies on school-to-work transition were presented, different approaches and strategies were discussed, and common concerns and issues related to school-to-work transition were identified during the seminar. Based on these key issues and as an outcome of intensive group work, the participants formulated a set of recommendations for a regional strategy on the improvement of TVET.

# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Background

The assimilation of youth and young adults into the world of work has become an important policy issue for the majority of countries. Worldwide, changes in the nature of work and employment have weakened the prospects of long-term and secure jobs, even for the most educated young people. A high level of youth unemployment has become a global phenomenon, but it is especially prominent in the Asia-Pacific region.<sup>1</sup> This region is home to over 45 percent of the world's young people without work (in 2005, 39.2 million young people were unemployed). Young people are three times more likely to be unemployed than adults, especially young women are affected.<sup>2</sup>

In past generations the options facing young people finishing their schooling were narrow and clear cut. These days, particularly in the developed world, transitions from full time education to full time work are no longer simple. A variety of post-secondary educational options, either within TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) or higher education, and flexible part-time work form the basis of what may be quite a sustained period of transition for many young people.

School-to-work transition is a broad term, and gained currency during the 1990's with a widespread renewed emphasis on labour market and educational reforms. The term covers areas such as:

- preparing school leavers for the world of work;
- supporting young people through the actual transition process; and
- strategies to increase labour market outcomes in initial employment opportunities.

In the growing recognition of the transition, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region, NIER has decided to organise a regional seminar in collaboration with the UNESCO International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (UNESCO-UNEVOC). The seminar focussed primarily on the first two stages of the above-mentioned areas, in line with the educational mandate of the two organisations.

A number of issues come into play, and were explored throughout the seminar. As well as obvious structural requirements such as a healthy economy and labour market, appropriate policies and strategies which support young people in the transition from school to working life have an important role. These may include effective guidance and information systems, flexible pathways between school and further study and work,

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<sup>1</sup> The transition of youth from school to work: Issues and policies. UNESCO-IIEP, 2000

<sup>2</sup> ILO Facts on Youth Employment, 14<sup>th</sup> Asian Regional Meeting, 2006

support processes for young people, and special assistance for young people with special needs.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) undertook an extensive study of school-to-work transition across a number of OECD countries between 1996 and 1999, supplemented by meetings and seminars, and published the results in a number of country reports and thematic reviews. The body of work produced by the OECD describes the general context of youth transitions and sets out key policy concerns and prospects particularly relevant to developed countries. It also identified six key features of effective transition systems: a healthy economy, well organised education and training pathways, widespread opportunities to combine workplace experience with education, tightly knit safety nets for those at risk, good information and guidance, and effective institutions and processes.<sup>3</sup>

For countries in transition, and for developing countries, the issue of school to work transition has received much less attention, even though these societies experience the strongest growth in the youth cohort. And for many young people in developing countries, the transition from school to work comes at a relatively early age. The experiences relevant to developing countries and countries in transition in the Asia-Pacific region were explored during the seminar.

### **1.2 Focus and Objectives of the Seminar**

This seminar sought to bring together the best current information on school to work transition in the Asia-Pacific region. It also aimed to build bridges, and to encourage meaningful dialogue between researchers, policy managers and practitioners in the field, and through this modality, promote improved policy outcomes in the region. The seminar topic forms part of the ongoing focus of NIER and UNESCO-UNEVOC on promoting relevant, quality outcomes from education and training for young people.

This regional seminar aimed to address the following key questions:

- How has young people's transition to work been affected by global trends over the past decade?
- Which features of successful transition policies are most important in particular national settings within the Asia-Pacific region?
- What lessons can be learned, and replicated, from national and regional experiences?

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<sup>3</sup> "From initial education to working life: making transition work" by M. Durand-Dourand & Richard Sweet (OECD), in: *The transition of youth from school to work: Issues and policies*. UNESCO-IIEP, 2000

The following outcomes were achieved:

- Increased understanding of contemporary regional experiences of transition to work issues, with particular reference to the Asia-Pacific region;
- Increased mutual understanding of the issues from the perspectives of researchers, policy managers and practitioners;
- Strengthened base for regional sharing of information and action on the issues; and;
- A set of recommendations for a regional strategy on TVET.

### **1.3 Participants**

There were thirteen participants in this seminar from Bangladesh, Cambodia, the People's Republic of China, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam. The participants were invited in their role as representatives of their national UNEVOC Centres. In addition, there were two resource persons from Australia and Fiji. The UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training, as the organising partner of this seminar, was represented by its Director and a Programme Specialist. Furthermore, a Programme Officer from the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Asia and the Pacific attended the seminar. NIER staff served as observers and members of the secretariat. The list of participants is attached as Annex 1.

### **1.4 Preparatory work by the participants**

Participants from each country were requested to prepare short reports on key issues related to the role of technical and vocational education and training in the facilitation of school-to-work transition in their countries. The full text of these country reports can be found in this report in Annex 3.

### **1.5 Organisation of the seminar**

The seminar was organised in a way to ensure maximum participation and interaction between the participants in order to allow for an exchange of experiences and lessons learnt with regard to different approaches to school to work transition in the various countries. The country cases prepared by each participant were presented in roundtable-style sessions followed by questions and answers. Overarching current trends and concerns were elaborated upon in a number of key presentations delivered by the resource persons and experts from UNESCO. Specific questions of relevance to all countries were examined in several working group sessions. The agenda of the seminar is in Annex 2.

### *Inaugural Session*

The session was chaired by Ryo Watanabe, Director, Department for International Research and Cooperation of NIER. The opening address was given by Shigenori Yano, Director-General of NIER. He warmly welcomed the participants and expressed his thanks to the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) for their continuing support to the work of NIER, and also to UNESCO-UNEVOC for the cooperation in the organisation of this seminar. Shigenori Yano briefly elaborated on the longstanding special role of NIER as a platform that facilitates dialogue between researchers, policy makers and practitioners on different aspects of education, not only from within Japan, but also from other countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

The opening address was followed by the welcoming words of Kenji Seyama, Secretary-General of the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO, and Director-General for International Affairs of the MEXT. The topic of school-to-work transition has recently been recognised as crucial by the Ministry, and an action plan for career-oriented education programmes has been developed. In the light of the growing problem of youth unemployment in Japan, Kenji Seyama congratulated the organisers on the timeliness of the seminar, and expressed his appreciation for the efforts of NIER to broaden the discussion beyond the borders of Japan by inviting the views and experiences from other countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

Rupert Maclean, Director of the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training, followed Kenji Seyama in congratulating on the positive impact that NIER had on education in Asia and beyond. He stressed the importance of TVET in facilitating the transition from school to work and improving the employability of youth. He made further reference to the significance of relevant and good quality TVET in achieving the global goals set by broader international frameworks such as Education for All and the UN Decade for Education for Sustainable Development.

### *Election of office bearers*

The participants unanimously elected the following as the steering committee for the seminar:

Chairperson: Annette Gough, *Australia*

Vice-Chair: Huang Chunlin, *China*

Rapporteur-General: Epeli Tokai, *Fiji*

The following participants volunteered as facilitators for the country case roundtables:

Dhruba Dhungel, *Nepal*

Geethasena Hewa Katupothage, *Sri Lanka*

Nordin Mahmud, *Malaysia*

Bujinlkham Duger, *Mongolia*

Idris Ali, *Bangladesh*

### ***Country case roundtables***

In these roundtable sessions, each participant had the opportunity not only to present on issues related to TVET and school-to-work transition in their own country, but also to engage in discussions with the other participants in the time set aside for questions and answers.

### ***Key presentations***

NIER had invited two resource persons to give presentations on key issues related to school-to-work in Australia and in the Pacific Island States. In addition, there were presentations by UNESCO experts on global and regional trends, concerns and strategies.

### ***Group work***

On several occasions the participants split up into smaller groups in order to discuss more in-depth the following overarching questions and tasks:

- How has young people's transition to work been affected by global trends over the past decade?
- Which features of successful transition policies are most important to particular settings?
- What lessons can be learned from national and regional experiences?
- Setting up a regional strategy.

### ***Closing session***

The seminar outcomes were discussed and synthesised on Monday, 29 January 2007. Based on this, the report drafting team prepared a draft report, containing the key issues and general recommendations. The draft report was presented to the participants during the closing on Tuesday, 30 January 2007. After review and discussion, the report was adopted by the participants.

The seminar ended with remarks from NIER and UNESCO-UNEVOC, and a vote of thanks from a representative of the participating countries.

## Chapter 2: Presentation, Discussion and Reflection

### 2.1 Key presentations

#### **“International overview of current issues and concerns regarding TVET”**

*Rupert Maclean (UNESCO-UNEVOC)*

In his introductory presentation, Rupert Maclean, Director of UNESCO-UNEVOC, gave an overview of current issues and concerns regarding TVET. He elaborated on the question “Why is TVET for All so important”, especially in the context of reaching the goals set in international frameworks such as Education for All, the Millennium Development Goals, the UN Decade for Education for Sustainable Development and the UN Literacy Decade. Work is a central feature of most people’s lives, and having access to decent work and being able to generate a decent income is an important step towards achieving economic and social development, both for the individual and the society as a whole. Since about 80 percent of jobs world-wide require technical and vocational skills, TVET is a direct means for people to acquire these skills and to gain access to employment. But in order to fully develop the potential of TVET, a number of issues have to be addressed such as the financing of TVET, training of trainers, harnessing ICTs and TVET, access to TVET, especially for marginalised groups, and quality and relevance of TVET, etc. UNESCO, with UNESCO-UNEVOC as its specialised centre, is working with Member States in addressing these issues, with a special focus on the needs of developing countries, countries in transition, and those in a post-conflict situation.

#### **“Pathways and transitions from school to work: Australian experiences”**

*Annette Gough (Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology)*

To build up a highly skilled workforce for achieving economic growth, increasing international competitiveness and to develop and strengthen Australia’s capacity to effectively operate in the global knowledge-based economy, Australia has put into place a number of policies with regard to education and training for the world of work. A major focus of these policies has been on the creation of flexible pathways between education, training and paid employment, as well as on the identification of key employability skills in cooperation with the private sector. Under these policies, several initiatives were designed to address skill shortages, to encourage young people to stay in school longer, to acquire employability skills and to gain employment experiences, and to see vocational education and training and other options as viable post-school pathways between school and work as well as between school and university. This presentation examined a range of these initiatives, with a focus on Victoria, and also

looked in more detail at the Longitudinal Study of Australian Youth (LSAY) which aims to help understand the transitions between education, training and work through longitudinal surveys of cohorts of young people.

It can be said that the support structures and initiatives available to learners in Australia have improved and increased during the past ten years. However, it is clear that the nature of both students and the workforce keeps changing. Training and education needs to remain adaptable to these changes, and should become part of the culture of the workplace as well as an expected outcome of formal schooling as students make the transition from school to the world of work.

### **“School to work transitions – Issues and concerns from the Pacific Island States”**

*Epeli Tokai (University of the South Pacific)*

Traditionally secondary education in the Pacific region has been largely academic in orientation catering only for students who aspire for white-collar jobs or providing students with skills and understanding for further academic studies at universities. As a result more and more students are being pushed out of the school system without acquiring relevant knowledge and skills for paid employment and also for self-sufficiency, self reliance and self-employment. This has contributed significantly to the high number of unemployment amongst youth and young adults in the Pacific. Numerous studies reveal that, upon high school graduation, many students who are not college-bound are neither prepared for nor connected to employment opportunities. The effective preparation of students for life and work is beginning to receive more attention now than before. School-to-work transition initiatives offer a promising approach to this issue and require major school restructuring including the need to build genuine partnerships between the Ministries of Education, industries, parents and training institutions. It will also require a major shift in government policies and priorities. School-to-work programmes provide ways for students to transit successfully into the economy, either through paid or self employment. This paper highlighted issues and concerns of Pacific Island governments as they try to put in place mechanisms and systems to facilitate effective transitions/pathways between school and TVET, school and the world of work, and between school and life. Lessons learned from the Palau and Fiji case studies on school to work transitions and the teaching of TVET at secondary level were also discussed.

### **“Review of policies and programmes concerning the transition from school to work”**

*Astrid Hollander (UNESCO-UNEVOC)*

This presentation examined to what extent, and under which conditions TVET can be considered as an adequate instrument of school-to-work transition, and which policies

work best in a given context. A number of main issues that transition policies are addressing such as youth at risk, youth training schemes, training for the informal sector, and creating links and partnerships with several stakeholders, especially from the world of work, were identified. Typical components of school-to-work strategies include, amongst others, the vocationalisation of education, targeted training schemes, provision of subsidies, improved information systems, career guidance and counselling, and reforms of the certification system. The success of many of these strategies often depends on the availability of human and financial resources, political commitment, and the flexibility of the education systems in place. It was stressed that while each of these strategies can contribute to school-to-work transition, an approach that integrates a variety of interventions that go beyond education and training strategies is more likely to be successful. Furthermore, it has to be borne in mind that even relevant and high quality TVET can only have a limited effect in a situation where economies and, as a consequence, employment opportunities are stagnating and interventions at a macroeconomic level are required.

### **“From school to work: A multi-stakeholder approach to youth employment”**

*Lay Cheng Tan (UNESCO Bangkok)*

The increase in global youth unemployment is a major concern for Asia-Pacific countries. The issues related to youth unemployment in general, and school to work transition in particular, are multi-sectoral, cutting across many levels, and involve a variety of stakeholders. UNESCO Bangkok is working with many partners to bridge the thin divide between the world of learning and the world of work and to enhance linkages between education and work. There is no one-size-fits-all solution. Features of successful transition policies are manifold, including holistic and flexible approaches to address the issues. Linkages with different stakeholders can help to enhance job prospects for students.

At a brainstorming meeting held in November 2006 in Bangkok with participants representing international organisations, Ministries of Education, Ministries of Labour, industries and youth groups, the following key issues for youth unemployment were identified:

- Mismatch of qualifications with employers' needs
- Lack of labour market information
- Lack of proper career guidance and information
- Lack of exposure of students to the real world of work
- Lack of soft skills
- Economic issues

Within the scope of their possibilities, the participants committed themselves to address some of these issues, for example by working on the advancement of national qualifications framework, the development of quality assurance systems, the identification of skills needs and demands, and the provision of career information and guidance.

The outcomes of the meeting were meant to pave the way for the formulation of a longer-term strategic plan for activities, involving and coordinating the various sectors and stakeholders.

### *Additional presentations*

There were additional presentations by UNESCO on the specific TVET related work programmes of UNESCO-UNEVOC and UNESCO Bangkok. Furthermore, UNESCO-UNEVOC presented the multi-media campaign kit “Learning and Working: Motivating for Skills Development”. And Dhruba Dhungel (Nepal) made a presentation on effective learning and sustainable development.

## **2.2 Country reports**

During the first two days of the seminar, time was given to each participant to give a presentation of concerns and issues related to school-to-work transition in their countries. The full text papers of these presentations can be found in Annex 3. Even though there are different approaches to facilitating school-to-work transition, and different challenges to be overcome depending on the local context, throughout all presentations a series of common themes and challenges could be identified.

### *The status of TVET*

In many countries, the status of TVET is low in comparison to academic oriented education and suffers from a lack of social recognition. It is often considered as a “second class education” and a last resort for those students who have difficulties in the academic subjects. As a consequence, the role of TVET as an important vehicle to facilitate transition to the world of work and as a contribution to reduce unemployment is often not recognised or underestimated. There is thus a need to create a positive image of TVET and to stress its importance in order to attract not only students, but also investment from the government and the private sector.

### *School-to-work policies*

For TVET to become an effective tool to facilitate transition, clear strategies and policies need to be put in place and supported at a high political level to ensure a consolidated approach by all stakeholders involved. In many countries, these policies are already in place, but their implementation is lagging behind.

### *The role of TVET instructors*

It is often the teachers and trainers who are the “real” change agents when it comes to educational reforms, as they are the ones who most directly deal with the clientele, i.e. the students. They are also the ones who in the end have to put into practice the policies that are decided at a higher level. School-to-work transition strategies and programmes can only be successful, if teachers and instructors are motivated and well qualified, and in touch both with the current demands of the local labour market and the needs and abilities of their students. To attract motivated and qualified TVET teachers and instructors, adequate remuneration and career prospects should be offered. Regular in-service training is necessary to keep their knowledge about new technologies and work processes up-to-date.

### *Qualifications frameworks*

Certificates and certification play an important role with regard to the transition process, as they make the qualifications of a job candidate visible for the employer. In a situation of a great diversity in TVET provision and a resulting variety of certifications, it is difficult for an employer to assess the real “value” of the certificates presented by a job applicant. National Qualification Frameworks can be an effective way to organise a recognised certification system which increases the transparency of qualifications and the visibility of skills for the employers. Furthermore, nationally and regionally recognised qualifications provide the job seekers with greater flexibility and mobility, even across borders.

### *Creating partnerships with the world of work*

Whether TVET has the potential to function as an effective pathway to employment depends very much on the quality and the relevance of the content that is taught and the skills that are trained. Several of the country reports reflect a lack of relevance and mismatch between the supply of TVET and the demand of the labour market, with the result that employers are dissatisfied with the skills level of the graduate TVET students that come to apply for jobs. One very effective way to ensure the relevance of the content is to involve the stakeholders from the world of work both at policy as well as at implementation level. In many countries, this partnership is still lacking and a consultation framework that brings together government, employers and the community and that defines the rights and responsibilities of each partner has yet to be developed. At the implementation level of transition strategies, participants considered it as especially important to create links between schools and the private sector in order to facilitate work experience programmes for TVET students, such as internships and on-the-job training opportunities, which so far do not exist in sufficient numbers.

### *Access and pathways*

Youth, including those from marginalised and disadvantaged backgrounds, should have ample opportunities to select and to be trained in their area of interest. Since training is not always affordable to everybody, students should be given the opportunity to earn

income during the training. This could be linked up with work experience schemes, which would also help students acquire skills that are relevant to a future workplace.

TVET should not be a “one-way-street” for students but should open up to several options for employment and/or further learning. There is a need for flexible pathways which encourage lifelong learning and which enable vertical and horizontal mobility between different types and levels of education and training, and employment.

### ***Career guidance and counselling***

Good information and guidance become increasingly important as the education and employment choices that young people face are changing and becoming more complex. In many countries of the Asia-Pacific region, there are no comprehensive guidance and counselling services available. Also, reliable labour market information systems are lacking which are a pre-requisite for adequate matching between job searchers and available vacancies.

### ***Economic development***

While TVET is considered as an important path towards employment, it is very clear that in a situation of stagnating or low economic growth and development, the creation of employment opportunities is beyond the scope of TVET. The lack of employment opportunities remains a challenge, even if the TVET provided is of good quality and relevance.

### ***Local issues***

Many Asian and Pacific countries are the home to very diverse population groups which often speak different languages. Education and training often take place in one or two official languages, not taking into account those learners who do not have sufficient skills in these languages. In this respect, a need for TVET teaching and learning materials in local languages was noted.

### ***Other issues***

It was noted that the real indicator for the quality of TVET would be the employment outcomes of TVET graduates.

## **2.3 Group Work**

On Days 3 and 4, the participants split up into two working groups to discuss more intensively the following questions:

- How has young people’s transition been affected by global trends over the past decade?

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- Which features of successful transition policies are most important in particular national settings?
- What lessons can be learned from national and regional experiences?

In a last session of group work, the participants were asked to set up recommendations for a regional TVET strategy. These recommendations can be found in the following chapter on “Conclusions and Recommendations”.

*How has young people’s transition been affected by global trends over the past decade?*

The transition from school to work is no longer a matter of simply acquiring the technical and vocational skills for a specific occupational field. As the world of work becomes more complex and more changeable under the influence of global trends, training and education for the world of work has to adapt accordingly. In order to be able to provide learners and trainees with adequate TVET, policy makers and practitioners need to be aware of what these global trends are and what repercussions they will have on the world of work and consequently on TVET.

During this group work and the following discussion on the outcomes, a number of global trends were identified:

- Changes in the economy and the labour market
  - Shift from focus on agriculture and manufacturing towards the service sector
  - Globalisation of the market leads to more competition, both globally and locally
  - Greater mobility of workforce across borders
  - Unstable employment – long-term or even lifelong employment is no longer guaranteed
- Introduction of new technologies
  - New technology is changing manufacturing and production processes
  - Changes in occupational profiles and respective skills requirements
  - Work processes become more technology intensive, and less labour intensive ? loss of jobs

- New information technology, microelectronics, internet and e-commerce are undergoing dramatic changes which also affect the relationship between manufacturers, suppliers, distributors and consumers
- Demographic factors
  - Increasingly young populations ? age structure of the population and the relative size of the youth cohort influence the ease of entry into the labour market
  - High migration from rural to urban areas ? increased competition for employment in urban areas
- Unsustainable development
  - Depletion of resources
  - Environmental degradation
  - Climate change (affects, for example, employment in the agricultural sector)
  - Pandemics such as HIV/AIDS
  - Marginalisation of specific groups in the labour market such as women, ethnic minorities etc.

*Which features of successful transition are the most important in particular national settings?*

In line with the themes and challenges identified throughout the country report, this group listed a number of features that they would like to see implemented in their countries to improve the transition process, such as better link to the private sector, increased relevance and quality of TVET, formalised common qualification systems, etc. A number of examples of successful initiatives were given from some of the countries represented in this group:

- Access and pathways
  - Free provision of vocational education, including free boarding for students from rural and remote areas, to facilitate access for all (Mongolia)
  - Flexible TVET system with multi entry and exit opportunities (Cambodia)

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- Establishment of provincial training centres to improve access for remote populations (Cambodia)
- Community-based, short-term mobile trainings for rural populations (Cambodia)
- Establishment of a separate university for the NVQ qualification holders to obtain a degree of Bachelor of Technology (Sri Lanka)
- Division of 4-year universities into two branches: Academic/Research oriented and Vocational Education oriented (Republic of Korea)
- Frameworks and policies
  - Recognised national vocational qualifications framework in place (Sri Lanka)
  - Long-term national plan and national policy to develop TVET in place (Cambodia)
  - Ministry of Education upgraded to deputy prime minister level to coordinate human resource development issues (Republic of Korea)
  - Policy in place to increase the enrolment of vocational students up to 70 percent by 2010 (Thailand)
- Linkage with the world of work
  - Proper arrangements or agreements have been made with industries to only recruit the graduates of authorised training institutions (Sri Lanka)
  - Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labour cooperate in developing a strategy for greater involvement of the private sector in policy and implementation of TVET (Mongolia)
  - Most TVET institutes have industrial liaison unit (Cambodia)
- Labour Market information
  - Employment promotion fund provides finance for labour market information service & labour market survey to improve the match between supply and demand side (Mongolia)
  - Skills demand analysis to improve the match between TVET and labour market demands (Cambodia)
  - Incentive policies for graduates to take up unfilled vacancies in remote areas and in unpopular professions (China)

- Collection of information on alumni employment rates and career paths (China, Republic of Korea)
- Decentralisation
  - Decentralised management system including a National Training Board, Advisory Industry Technical Committee and Provincial Training Board (Cambodia)
  - Decentralisation of implementation of training programmes to different providers, including private providers such as NGOs, through National Training Fund and pilot voucher training programme (Cambodia)
- Vocationalisation
  - Pilot project on vocationalisation of higher education (Republic of Korea)

More detailed information on these examples and the experiences of those countries not represented in this particular working group can be found in the country reports in Annex 3.

### *What lessons can be learned from national and regional experiences?*

As reflected in the country reports, the challenges experienced across the region are often similar and the approaches to find solutions to overcome the challenges often circle around similar themes. Working on the assumption that what works successfully in one country might also work in another country, the participants exchanged the experiences of their different countries to learn from each other. Nevertheless, diverse national contexts and conditions call for an adaptation of these various approaches to each country's specific economic situation and labour market requirements, local demographic, social and political factors, the set-up of the education system, etc.

The results of this group work provided a basis for further elaboration in the group work on developing regional TVET strategies, which is reflected in detail in chapter 3 on "Conclusions and Recommendations".

## Chapter 3: Conclusions and Recommendations

As outlined in the introductory chapter, the objectives of the seminar were

- to increase the understanding of contemporary regional experiences of transition to work issues, with particular reference to the Asia-Pacific region;
- to increase mutual understanding of the issues from the perspectives of researchers, policy managers and practitioners;
- to strengthen the base for regional sharing of information and action on the issues; and;
- to set recommendations for a regional strategy on TVET.

Supported by the feedback from the participants and by the impressions of the lively discussions and exchanges of good practice examples and lessons learnt throughout the seminar, the organisers are confident, that these objectives have been achieved.

It is clear that the issue of addressing youth unemployment by creating better pathways from school to the world of work has already been recognised as an important task of the relevant TVET authorities and institutions in most of the countries that participated in the seminar. Not all countries are at the same level when it comes to the development and implementation of the necessary policies and programmes, and, as stated above, there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach that would do justice to the diversity of the different countries. Nevertheless, the participants at this seminar developed a set of recommendations and strategies which broadly apply to issues that are relevant to most of them. These strategies can be found below and can serve as guidance to both the relevant stakeholders in the respective countries, but also give an orientation to international organisations with a mandate in TVET and skills development for the world of work, such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and UNESCO.

### ***Issue: International cooperation***

The increasing globalisation of labour and education requires countries to be able to collaborate, cooperate, and communicate with each other to ensure the exchange of information and parity of qualifications. Such communication can be facilitated through the involvement of both UNESCO and ILO.

### ***Strategies:***

- UNESCO and ILO should assist countries conduct tracer study for job market analysis both in-country and abroad
- UNESCO and ILO to facilitate/organise regular conferences on TVET issues

- UNESCO and ILO to facilitate dissemination of information between countries
- UNESCO and ILO to share successful experiences on TVET with countries in the region

### ***Issue: TVET Institutional Administration***

With the growth of TVET institutions many people have moved into administrative roles without adequate and/or appropriate preparation. For TVET institutions to function effectively and efficiently, these administrators need training.

#### ***Strategies:***

- Develop an occupational standard for institutional administrators.
- Provide training for administrators according to the standards

### ***Issue: TVET for rural and adult populations***

There is a need to develop TVET programmes for formal and non formal education sectors to cater for rural and adult populations that are relevant to the local economy.

#### ***Strategies:***

- Introduce and expand TVET for adolescents, adult males and adult females in rural areas
- Design and introduce modular courses in entrepreneurship and self-employment skills linked to the local market prospects for disadvantaged groups
- Explore ways of supporting skills development programmes in non-formal sector
- Develop national policy and regulatory framework for public, private and NGO TVET providers
- Improve information and communication technologies within TVET by providing Government support through technical, financial and infrastructure assistance.

### ***Issue: Gender equity in TVET***

Girls seem to be under-represented in TVET in comparison with boys in most countries. Gender inequalities in access to TVET may reflect not only a gender based division of labour but may also reflect the status that societies attribute to girls/women.

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### *Strategies:*

- Introduce measure to attract large number of female entrance into under represented fields
- Introduce stipend programmes for female TVET students
- Adopt measures and target to attract more women into the teaching and management positions in TVET in schools and other training institutions.

### *Issue: Disadvantaged groups*

In most countries poor people, disabled people and religious minority groups are often underrepresented in formal and non-formal TVET programmes.

### *Strategies:*

- Introduce target/quota system for participation of poor, disabled and religious minority groups in TVET programmes
- Utilise Community Learning Centres to implement specific programmes for disadvantaged groups

### *Issue: Employment of graduates*

Improve the percentage of vocational and technical graduates obtaining employment both in domestic and international market.

### *Strategies:*

- Update equipment and curriculum for TVET
- Strengthen TVET teacher training and retraining by developing a competency framework for teachers
- Improve recruitment of competent TVET teachers
- Improve skills and knowledge base of existing TVET teachers
- Strengthen liaison with local and foreign employer associations

### ***Issue: Status of TVET***

TVET has been the second choice of students in most secondary and post secondary institutions in the Asia-Pacific region. It generally has much lower status compared to academic education.

### ***Strategies:***

- Conduct programmes to create awareness and to change peoples' mindsets about TVET being second choice
- Promote TVET as a career path that has upward mobility to students and parents
- Promote the potential and benefits of TVET as a pathway to work and tertiary studies.
- Highlight skills orientation of TVET such as through Skills Olympiad
- Identify celebrities whose base is in TVET and use them as ambassadors for TVET
- Expand TVET and dual vocational training system
- All TVET courses must be encouraged for both genders

### ***Issue: Increased role of business and industry***

An effective demand driven TVET programme has to be coordinated by government together with business and industry with support from other stakeholders such as the private sectors and NGOs. Governments cannot afford to work in isolation. They need the support of the stakeholders to ensure that gaps are filled, and duplication avoided. Coordination of effort is currently seen as the weak link.

### ***Strategies***

- Strengthen linkage between schools and business and industry
- Government policies should encourage participation of industries in TVET provisions
- Forge partnerships between the private sector, NGOs and training providers.
- Involve industries in
  - (i) Curriculum development, implementation and monitoring and evaluation
  - (ii) Developing standards
  - (iii) National Qualifications Framework

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- (iv) Student placement and on the job training
- (v) Representation on governance of school
- (vi) Developing teachers

### *Issue: New skills for new times*

Globalisation, advancements in technology and other changes are having a major impact in work places today. This will require new skills if industries are to remain competitive.

### *Strategie:s*

- Coordination among UNESCO member states for training and retraining need to be given due priority.
- Best practices of other countries with respect to training of school leavers should be adopted and implemented.
- Governments to develop and promote policies for regular training attachment of teachers and instructors in industries.
- Training providers should involve industries in curriculum development and training
- Ongoing research should be carried out to inform training providers of new developments in the workplaces and in the labour market.
- ICT and foreign language provision should be available in TVET institutions

### *Issue: Qualifications Framework (QF)*

Most countries in the region do not have a transparent qualification framework for the education system. This is a particular need in the TVET sector to give recognition and pathways to further studies and life long learning. People are now increasingly becoming immigrant workers so the national QF needs to be internationally recognised.

### *Strategies:*

- Each country needs to develop and implement a standardised regional qualification framework that is agreed across the region so that skills and qualification is recognised by all national training institutions, industries and countries in the region e.g. certificate 1-4 , Diploma etc. in each occupational category.
- Establish system and framework through dialogue with business, industries, government and training organisation to enable vertical and horizontal movement of graduates

- The Qualifications Framework needs to recognise that young people are likely to seek employment locally, regionally and globally.

### ***Issue: Occupational Standards (OS)***

Each country needs to develop agreed OS to underpin their QF to ensure the training programmes have a pathway and mobility so that they can progress through levels and be regionally recognised.

### ***Strategies:***

- Each country needs to develop agreed OS each with a set of skills standards (eg level 1... level 4)
- Countries need to work together to develop a standard OS for the region to allow mobility of the labour force
- Establish framework of standardise competencies for young people
- Develop institutional capacity to provide up to date labour market information system
- Set up national board for making standardised competencies
- Set up system for recognition of prior learning and accreditation of work experiences

### ***Issue: TVET Curriculum***

In the region, TVET curricula are often outdated and do not meet the needs of industry and the labour market locally, regionally and globally.

### ***Strategies:***

- Competency-based standards should also include other learning skills
- Needs to be flexible (modularised and compromise supply /demand)
- Needs to be developed in consultation with business and industries
- Build the capacities of staff in the curriculum development unit
- Develop, implement and evaluate the curriculum
- Internationally recognised competency framework (common regional/ international)

### ***Issue: Developing, attracting and retaining TVET teachers/instructors***

Teachers/instructors are key actors in the development and implementation of TVET programmes. However, some have outdated knowledge and skills to be able to cope with the demands of new technologies and the changing needs of industries and some qualified teachers move out of the sector for better benefits. Strategies are needed to develop appropriately qualified skilled instructors and to improve their working conditions and provide them with a career path.

#### ***Strategies:***

- Governments need to put in place industrial attachment policies for all TVET teachers so that they can continue to upgrade their knowledge and skills
- Strengthen teacher training in literacy and ICT and develop skills to adopt student-centred learning
- Develop occupational standard for teachers
- Develop career structure for teachers
- Improve working conditions of teachers such as social recognition and better salaries in order to recruit and retain them on their job

### ***Issue: Careers guidance and counseling***

Students cannot make well informed career choices because of the lack of relevant careers information and trained Careers Counsellors are needed to inform them about career prospects and career pathways.

#### ***Strategies:***

- Each country needs trained career counselors in schools, training institutions and information centres
- Establish information centres in strategic locations around the countries and employ suitable personnel
- Develop and disseminate career and training information to students, graduates (job seekers) employers and members of the community
- Provide follow up support to successful graduates
- Ensure career guidance information is available on CDs and websites

### ***Issue: TVET infrastructures***

Teaching of TVET is often done in poor facilities, with poorly trained teachers and with the absence of or lack of teaching and learning resources for effective learning to take place. As a result, TVET subjects easily degenerate into being taught ‘theoretically’ with inadequate attention to practical skills learning thus affecting the quality of programmes and the quality of graduates.

### ***Strategies:***

- Governments in consultation with industries and training institutions develop minimum standards in all training institutions and upgrade facilities in training institutions to meet standards
- Governments to facilitate the development of a master plan for upgrading the institutions, facilities and equipment
- Need collaboration between schools and industry regarding provision of equipment and other teaching and learning resources

### ***Issue: Monitoring and evaluation (Quality Assurance)***

The monitoring and evaluation of TVET curriculum, teachers and graduate outcomes (including employment rate) is essential for assuring the quality of programmes and that they are meeting the needs of industry and labour market as well as being of appropriate educational standard. Programmes need to be benchmarked nationally and internationally

### ***Strategies:***

- Curriculum should be periodically reviewed with the involvement of industries and schools
- Student outcomes (graduates and employment) should be regularly evaluated by industry
- Standards should be monitored and revised as appropriate
- Secondary level teachers should be regularly licensed by training authorities
- Institutions should be accredited by training authority composed of business industries, government and professional bodies

### ***Issue: Financing of TVET***

Government funding is not sufficient to meet the demand of preparing young people for the work force. School to work transition programmes are not being implemented

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effectively because of lack of funds and other related resources for TVET. Other stakeholders need to be involved in funding TVET programmes.

### *Strategies:*

- Encourage stakeholders such as industries and corporate sector to contribute funding for TVET
- Government to provide incentives to industries and private sectors that provide funding for TVET initiatives
- Government to work with donor agencies to support implementation of TVET related reform programmes
- Give autonomy to schools and ensure transparency in financing
- Introduce student loan schemes to enable TVET participation

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