

Innovative Practices in TVET towards Education for Sustainable Development

County Paper

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Abstract

In most countries, linking education with employment has proven to be a real challenge. For educators, Industry is where young people go after they drop out of school, or reach the highest level possible in formal education. For Industry, school provides a classification system to help in staff selection and school may provide some basic theoretical understanding that which experienced on the job can turn into productive activities.

The education process is usually seen as a continuing school based experience starting with children of 5 or 6 years of age and completing at 21 to 25, with University degrees at various levels. The objective of each level is to meet the entry requirements of the next level up. Standards are set by the education system itself.

Such a system usually does not meet the needs of either employer for a skilled workforce or the majority of young people for decent jobs, other than at the professional skills levels such as medicine and engineering. When the needs of many economies are considered, there is little relationship between the needs for economic growth and the learning systems in place to support this growth.

The world of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is unique in the field of education in the Maldives. A lot of departments are working in conjunction to promote this unique but important arena of education. They include: Ministry of Higher Education and Training, Ministry of Education, Education Development Centre (EDC), Centre for Continuing Education (CCE) and PIU-TVET Team. Of the mentioned partners, the Ministry of Education, EDC and CCE works hand in hand to promote Skills Development and Vocational Education through integrating it in the formal school system to prepare the students for the different levels or grade up through university. On the other hand TVET prepares learners for employment and then helps them to continue their education part time.

The tradition of education is to fill the first 22 years of life with learning designed around growth and maturation. TVET is based on young people mastering skills and the concepts behind those skills, over a working lifetime to get a first job and then remain employable as technology and society change.

It is estimated that there will be about 10,000 school leavers from grades 10 and 12 combined by 2008. Already we have 20,000 unemployed youth. As there are limited TVET institutions in the existing educational framework of the Maldives, we have no systematic way to train these unemployed youth for employability skills.

The Government of Maldives, concerned with rising youth unemployment, particularly in regions outside Malè, led to the initiation of Employment Skills Training Project (ESTP) delivered in collaboration with Asian Development Bank (ADB) to increase the number of Maldivian, men and women, actively participating in the labour force and employment.

The project is designed specifically for youth, aged 16 to 34, and adults previously unable to continue their education and training. The project aims to train about 5,000 youth by March 2010, at least 40% of whom will be female. The goal of the project is to increase the number of Maldivian men and women with entry-level occupational qualifications and skills for employment or for self-sustaining livelihood initiatives. A consistent and effective TVET management system is the solution to achieve this goal.

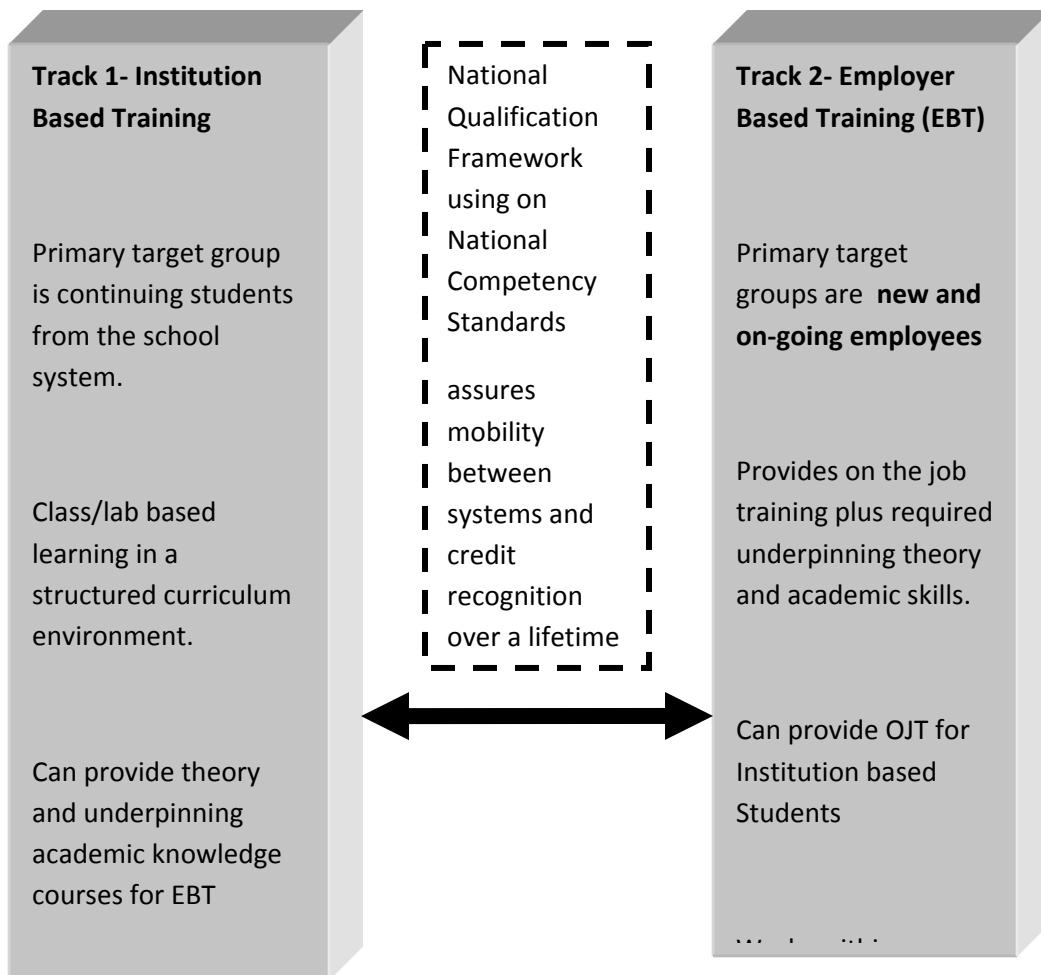
Present Status on TVET Programs in relation to Education for Sustainable Development

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programme run from the Ministry have been contracting public and private training institutions to prepare the youth for employment by acquiring skills. TVET system in the Maldives is **demand driven, accessible, beneficiary financed and quality assured** that meets the needs of society for stability and economic growth, the needs of Enterprise for a skilled and reliable workforce, the need of young people for decent jobs and the needs of workers for continuous mastery of new technology. TVET also prepares learners for employment and then helps them to continue their education and training on flexible mode with courses running part-time and full-time.

Since TVET programs are demand driven it is targeted to cater for the labour market through various skills training programs. At present TVET has trained 747 youth since mid 2007 and an additional 1994 are currently enrolled in various skills training programs.

At present, the Maldives skills based training delivery is comprised of 2 choices for a Two Track, Demand Driven TVET System.

Institution Based training and Employer Based Training are equally recognized pathways or tracks to develop a career based on skills training.



Track 1: Institution Based Training (IBT)

This refers to technical colleges or similar institutions in which students who have completed a requisite O or A level program and continue in a diploma or degree programs on a full time basis. The term includes part time learning in which learners come to the institution in the evening or weekends.

The beneficiaries of IBT are the out of school, unemployed youth. This group will receive priority. Individuals who complete school on finishing grade 10 are also a priority. IBT will provide entry level courses which are 3 to 6 months, full-time. Graduates of these courses can continue learning and move up the career ladder. As skills are required, at least 50% of the training will be based on on-the-job training (OJT), applied and hands on. Institution Based Training also includes full or part time training offered by private sector trainers.

It is important that IBT be strengthened to meet the longer term requirements of both enterprise and learners for higher level education in key economic areas. Other than maintaining staff competence and equipment, the main challenge in achieving this would appear to be learner interest and enterprise comfort with the degree of fit between graduate skills and work place needs. There appears to be little demand from enterprise or from learners for expanding full time institution based trades training.

Thus support to the IBT system should be in the general area of career counseling and in assisting public and private institutions to improve links to employers by adhering to national competency standards set by Enterprise and those who hire new workers. To this can be added the purchase on behalf of employers, of theory and underpinning knowledge classroom based learning as part of on-the-job training for new employees.

In addition, Maldives Institute for Vocational Education and Training (MIVET) has been established on 9 May 2009 to deliver technical and vocational training. MIVET is also working on introducing technical and vocational subjects in the school curriculum.

The MIVET under the Ministry of Education, is a new institution designed to meet the needs of:

- employers for a skilled workforce
- young people for jobs leading to careers
- communities to be part of long term economic development .
- Government for social stability.

The MIVET offers certificate and diploma and eventually degree level programs in skills areas identified by Employment Sector Councils and approved by the Maldives Accreditation Board. In the future it may also offer degree level programs as well.

Track 2: Employer Based Training (EBT)

This refers to organized learning by employees that takes place in the work place. It includes both mastery of skills under the direction of a worker/trainer and classroom training in the employers premise or elsewhere. Apprenticeship is a classic example of this but so too is pre- and post employment training provided in the hospitality industry and non formal learning in family businesses.

At this time, there is no formal Employer based training system. There is no formal apprenticeship. Father to son, mother to daughter skills transfer is the base of much out island learning. The hotels and resorts have training programs for new staff and these vary from extremely basic to formal international level development activities.

Several Ministries have financed short-course trades training in fields such as barbering and tailoring. However there is no record of any impact of these efforts and the impression of training managers is that they did not lead to employment. With no TVET National

Qualifications Framework, there is no record of credits awarded for training in a career growth model.

Short term training in trade skills such as electrical wiring are being offered and while such training rarely leads to employment, it does introduce young school leavers to basic concepts in technology, alternate career options, health and safety and an exposure to formal employment.

EBT is a better option to provide training as the employers' needs and demands can be fulfilled through this.

Best Practices on ESD in Maldives

For TVET to be accessible by all communities in Maldives, public private partnership has to be achieved. Not only for accessibility, government alone cannot bear the cost of training Maldivian to cater for the growing economy. The Government wishing to increase the number and ratio of skilled Maldivian workers launched several projects under several names in conjunction with the private sector. Some of these projects are progressing well and a few still remains dormant.

a) Skills Training at Resorts (STAR) program

STAR is an on the job training program that strives to put youth on the first step of a career ladder that can lead over time to higher jobs as well as academic achievements.

A partnership program initiated by Maldives Association for Tourism Industries and TVET, STAR is a 3 – 6 months training program that will present the youth with a tremendous range of careers available in the tourism industry. This new approach to training is an exciting development for those looking for careers in the tourism industry.

In addition to providing career opportunities to apprentices in the tourism industry, STAR also focuses on facilitating newly joined employees in the industry achieve a desired level of training, certified by the Maldives Accreditation Board.

Combined with some classroom work and extensive on the job training, STAR trainees will develop the basic skills required to work in this dynamic industry and start climbing the ladder to success. As of now a total of 30 trainees have been recruited for training at resorts, out of which 5 have completed training and are employed at resorts.

STAR program is getting more popular and more resorts are participating and taking up trainees for STAR. As an encouragement government pays a certain amount per trainee.

b) TVET – EBT Training

EBT provides an opportunity for trainees to earn and learn. The primary target groups are proposed, new and on-going employees trained to employer set competency standards. Trainees will be placed for a 3 to 6 month on-the-job (OJT) training with 1 month orientation to the industry. At the end of the training, the trainees will receive a National Certification.

EBT is organized around the needs of the employer for employment competencies and work attitudes at employer set standards. This is different from IBT targeting Diplomas and Degrees and the needs of the higher education community for academic achievement based on group learning. EBT does not fit easily with the needs of institutions for a predictable learning environment based on groups of similar students moving year by year through classrooms and labs. EBT is based on new and ongoing employees receiving training to meet job requirements. The job requirements are the organizing framework for the training rather than the orderly body of theoretical knowledge provided in classroom instruction.

To facilitate EBT programs, TVET advertises for training providers and receives proposals for training. Employers from Tourism sector as well as Transport sector have given a good response to these trainings. As of now several EBT trainings are being conducted. The costs of the trainings are shared between the employer and the government. As an incentive to the trainees a living allowance is given to them.

These EBT trainings are a good example of public private partnership since in every aspect of the training, both parties are contributing and both parties are gaining as well. Employers are getting employees with the exact skill requirement and the government is achieving the objective of acquiring a skilled labour force.

c) Community Applied Training (CAT)

CAT is another excellent example of public private partnership. CAT is accessible to the whole republic, the demand for training comes from the community and the cost is again shared by both the parties.

CAT Training focuses on five key sectors important in the continued economic well-being of the country: tourism, fisheries and agriculture, transport, construction and the social sectors. Such training can be selected, planned, managed, and implemented by the community and focuses on areas that the community has identified as priority areas of concern in employment generation. CAT has been very successful and TVET is going for the second round of CAT trainings.

d). Career path program (CPP)

The school system currently allows students whose learning style is not slanted towards classroom based learning to reduce their course load from 8 subjects to 4 subjects in 8, 9 and 10. However the students must stay in school for the whole day. This leads to a discipline problem and most likely to loss of self esteem by the “non-academic” students.

With parental permission, these students would be involved in on-the-job learning (OJL) during the school time when they are free because of the reduced course load. By the end of grade 10, CPP students are assessed for competencies at the Certificate 1 level (or further) and so have begun their career path up the National Qualifications Framework ladder.

These CPP graduates will be transferred without evident formality or difficulty to the new TVET system and they will continue with the on-the-job training. At this point they will be either employees or EBT trainees. Further theory and underpinning learning would be supported by TVET through the EBT program.

Graduating CPP students would leave grade 10 with a nationally accredited “Certificate of Achievement” recognizing the competencies within Certificate 1 or even Certificate 2 that had been mastered. They will be on the National Vocational Qualifications Framework (NVQF) career ladder on graduation and simply continue with their learning and skills development as employees.

Pilot CPP programs are being conducted at Laamu Atoll. Additional CPP programs will be at 2 schools in the capital Malè, 2 schools in population centers with several employers (such as HDh Kulhudhuffushi,

Addu Atoll and Laamu Atoll), and 1 school in a smaller island with at least 2 resorts within 30 minutes travel distance by Dhoni.

e). Construction Industry Training Initiative (CITI)

Like STAR, CITI was targeted at construction industry. Government recognized the need to increase the number of Maldivians seeking careers and receiving training in the construction industry and agreed to contribute its competence and resources to the development, management and support of the CITI program with the partnership of the representative association (MACI) from the Construction industry.

The Partners agreed that over time, the construction industry, with MACI's leadership, will take responsibility for developing and managing Employer Based Training built on Industry endorsed National Competency Standards.

Though it is a partnership program with the private sector and the government, CITI has not been very successful. CITI was also designed for both the parties to be stakeholders and also both the parties will contribute to the training. It may be the fact that Maldivian youth see construction industry as 'dirty' and requires longer working hours.

More effort has to be put into attract youth and also employers to CITI programs.

Issues and Challenges in TVET on ESD in Maldives

There are major constraints in developing such a system. These are found in most countries. A few of these are:

- Equipment and Facilities cost of technical and vocational training facilities.
- The difficulty in hiring skilled teachers when salary is based on academic degrees rather than skills and experience.
- The setting of skills standards for graduates by employers rather than the institutional system. Employers will not hire graduates that do not meet their standards so many TVET institutions make little contribution to economic growth.
- A focus on employment rather than both employment and self employment. In emerging economies there are often few jobs, but tremendous opportunity for self employed skilled craftsmen.

- The resistance in the education system to recognizing learning and skills mastery that takes place outside of institutions and a reluctance to open the system to adult learning with life experience entry qualifications.
- The resistance of employers to work with educators in particular or government in general.

To manage these constraints, many economies have developed an Employer Based Training (EBT) pathway or track in TVET to parallel the institution based system pathway. The basis of EBT is On-the-Job-Training (OJT) based on agreed competency standards. EBT uses academic services from the institutional system when required to match skills development with the underpinning knowledge required to meet the competency standards and to achieve national certification.

Conclusion

Demand driven education is a new concept in Maldives, not only for educators but for enterprise and learners themselves. Experience has been with institution based learning which is curriculum driven and based on the requirements of the academic community for time based learning during the first 22 years of life. The shift of focus from what students should learn (curriculum) to what graduates must be able to do and at what level (competency standards), is not easily accepted as it contradicts the experience of wider academic community.

The shift of concentration from curriculum to competency standards takes time in a community in which even the TVET educators come from the academic tradition of degrees and graduate degrees rather than the employment tradition of performance to a standard on the job. However, substantial progress has been made in the last several months. A two track, demand driven and standards based TVET system is designed for the unique requirements of this small multi-Island country emerging and there is a clear sense of gaining momentum to support its success.

References

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