

Innovation in Vocational Training

Exchange of Experience between Southern and Eastern-Mediterranean Countries and the European Union

L'innovation en formation professionnelle

Echanges d'expériences entre les pays du Sud et de l'Est de la Méditerranée et de l'Union européenne



Education and Culture



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Innovation in Vocational Training
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Mediterranean countries and the European Union
Turin – 4th November 2003

Proceedings of the conference

Our knowledge and professional skills must be regularly updated if we are to meet the new requirements of the economy and the labour market. So now, more than ever before, lifelong learning is essential for all and has become a priority in Europe as well as in the neighbouring countries of the enlarged Europe.

In line with the commitment of the President of the European Commission, Mr. Prodi, to increase co-operation and intercultural dialogue with Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries, the Directorate General for Education and Culture, in collaboration with the European Training Foundation, organised a conference on 4th November 2003 for the exchange of experiences and good practices in the field of innovation in training systems.

The purpose of the event was to better understand the latest developments in vocational training in the countries on Europe's Mediterranean borders and to stimulate dialogue and launch cooperation in this field. The conference was a first exchange of ideas, experiences, and good practices in the field of vocational training. Good results from projects supported by the Leonardo da Vinci programme and other national initiatives in this field provided the basis for the conference.

I am pleased to present the conference proceedings which I hope you will find interesting. I hope also that they will allow the development of new collaborations.

Viviane Reding
Member of the European Commission
responsible for Education and Culture

(conference proceedings also available on:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/leonardo/new/leonardo2_en.html)



Innovation in Vocational Training – Exchange of experiences between South and East-Mediterranean countries and the European Union

Turin, 4th November 2003

PROGRAMME

- 09.00 hrs Keynote address by *Nikolaus van der Pas, Director General, Directorate-General for Education and Culture - European Commission.*
- Theme I - Training and enterprises: How to ensure that training provided is attuned to the needs of enterprises, in particular of SMEs?**
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- Chair/Moderator:** *Yvan Bostyn, President, European Vocational Training Association, Belgium.*
- 09.15 hrs Presentation of current issues and the latest developments in the European Union and in the MED countries.
- Speakers:**
- Georg Piskaty, Deputy Director, Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, Austria.*
- Munther Masri, President, National Centre for Human Resources Development, Jordan.*
- 09.35 hrs **Presentations of two case studies:**
- “Proactive Internet Training” Leonardo da Vinci project, José Maria Peiro Silla, Professor of Social Psychology, University of Valence, Spain.*
- “National Skill Standards Project”, Mohamed Fouad Elfateh, Training and Development Consultant, Egypt*
- 09.55 hrs Discussion.
- 11.15 hrs **REFRESHMENTS**

Theme II - Quality in vocational education and training, quality management and quality control systems

Chair/Moderator: *Belkacem Djoudad, Responsible for VET Studies, Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, Algeria.*

11.35 hrs Round Table discussion on the diversity of approaches in the European Union and in the MED countries.

Participants:

Hans-Werner Franz, Social Research Institute, Northrhine-Westphalia, Allemagne.

Kim Faurschou, Expert in Quality Management, FACO, Denmark.

Mounir Baati, Ministry of Education, Coordinator of MANFORME Project, Tunisia.

Hana Nasser, GTZ Programme Coordinator, Lebanon.

12.15 hrs Discussion.

13.15 hrs **LUNCH**

Theme III - eLearning : Virtual learning methods

Chair/Moderator: *Rachid Benmokhtar Benabdellah, President, University Al Akhawayn, Morocco.*

14.45 hrs Presentation of current issues and the latest developments in the European Union and in the MED countries.

Speaker:

Paolo Federighi, Professor, University of Florence, Italy.

14.55 hrs **Presentation of two case studies:**

“The Syrian Virtual University”, Riad Daoudi, President, Syrian Virtual University, Syria.

“Distance Education Certificate in Project Management” Leonardo da Vinci project, Jim Phelan, University College Dublin, Ireland.

15.10 hrs Discussion.

16.10 hrs **REFRESHMENTS**

Theme IV - Training teachers and trainers

Chair/Moderator: *Ali Ahmed Sayed, Ministry of Education, Director or the Mubarak-Kohl Initiative for VET reform, Egypt.*

16.30 pm Round Table discussion on current issues and the latest developments in the European Union and in the MED countries.

Participants:

Osmane Meslouh, Director General, Vocational Training Institute, Algeria.

Hisham Rawashdeh, Assistant Director General, Vocational Training Corporation, Jordan.

Marc Durando, Pôle Universitaire Européen Nancy-Metz, Director of Development, France.

Asta Pundziene, Vice-Director of the Centre for Vocational Education and Research, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania.

17.10 pm Discussion.

17.45 pm Conclusions of the conference.

Peter de Rooij, Director, European Training Foundation

Michel Richonnier, Director, Directorate for Vocational Training, Directorate-General for Education and Culture, European Commission.

18.00 pm **Close**

SYNTHESIS OF DEBATES

Summary - Theme I: Training and the business sector: how to ensure that the training provided is attuned to the needs of businesses, in particular SMEs

In view of the challenge presented by the establishment of a free-trade area by 2010, the countries of the Mediterranean have initiated a series of internal economic reforms with a view to improving the productivity and competitiveness of their goods and services. The modernisation of the vocational training systems of these countries is an important instrument for achieving these objectives. For the Euro-Mediterranean countries¹, the private sector would seem the most effective instrument for supporting this economic transition. Given that businesses are experiencing accelerated growth and rapid change, the training and skills of human resources in the private sector have a key role to play. The main challenge faced by the countries of the Mediterranean as they reform their education and vocational training systems is the need to switch from a training system based on supply to one based on demand and better able to meet real business needs. As a result, supply and demand should be aligned closely and active cooperation between the business sector and training systems should be supported.

An example of this approach is the Egyptian government's decision to put in place various projects aimed at securing the country's economic growth, creating a more business-friendly environment and encouraging the creation of more job opportunities. One such project is the national "Skills standards and certification" initiative. This project aims to equip Egyptian labour with the skills necessary to meet the present and future needs of the national and international labour markets. The main purpose of the project is to define skills standards which meet the needs of employers and establish a single system of skills-based vocational qualifications. Private sector professionals, representatives of the vocational training sector, training centres and social partners are all involved in analysing and drawing up skills standards. The main challenge faced by the project leaders has been to secure acceptance for the new system of standards proposed by the numerous actors involved in the process. The project is currently restricted to 100 professions in the tourism, industry and construction sectors.

In Europe, too, the training supplied sometimes fails to meet the needs of businesses, particularly SMEs. There are several reasons for this:

- The formal systems do not always provide all the (technical, commercial and personal) skills needed to work in an SME.
- The training offered to young people does not help make working for an SME as attractive as working for a larger company. Closer cooperation with the vocational training systems and greater involvement in the design of training programmes are thus important challenges faced by both European and Mediterranean businesses.

Businesses provide an invaluable context for training, particularly initial training. Many European countries, including Austria, France, Germany and Luxembourg, have developed training systems in which traditional training alternates with

¹ In the context of the conference, the Euro-Mediterranean region is made up of those European countries which were involved in the Leonardo da Vinci programme in November 2003, i.e. the 15 Member States of the European Union, the countries of EFTA and the EEA (Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway), Cyprus, Malta and the associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia) and of the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean (Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Israel, Palestine and Turkey).

workplace learning. These models often serve as an inspiration for the Mediterranean countries as they attempt to reform their training systems (see the Kohl-Mubarak initiative in Egypt).

However, workers often learn their skills informally, in the workplace. This raises the key question of how skills acquired in the workplace are to be validated, and for the countries on both sides of the Mediterranean the challenge lies in developing mechanisms for recognising these informally acquired skills.

In addition, access to continuing training within businesses should be encouraged further. Training during working hours remains a constraint, particularly for SMEs, which often cannot afford to give staff time off for training. In this respect, the new information and communication technologies, along with various eLearning methods, can help SMEs develop continuing training policies within the business. One challenge faced by the countries on both sides of the Mediterranean is to ensure that training remains, for workers, a tool for learning and updating skills and not merely a means of access to the labour market and, for employers, an investment and not a cost.

External changes can have a major destabilising effect on businesses. Changes in the socio-economic environment, technological and market developments and changes in the law are all challenges to which businesses must respond with new strategies. However, the strategies adopted often prove more reactive than proactive. The ability to anticipate change in the environment of SMEs remains central to defining an appropriate response. Another key to anticipating change in the business environment is the ability to predict how such change might impact on the skills distribution and how the business sector should adjust to new skills requirements. The approach to anticipating the training needs of businesses developed by the University of Valencia within the framework of the “Proactive” Leonardo da Vinci project relies on the participation of all the actors within a business (voluntarist approach): by including the staff in the process of anticipating future needs, the various actors feel more involved, which in turn increases their motivation and readiness to undergo training to help them face up to change. This approach has been used in 17 businesses of varying size (between eight and 5 000 employees) from different sectors in several European countries. When used to identify future training needs, the approach has yielded positive results.

The discussions held in the workshop also highlighted the importance for businesses of successfully combining the demands of a very competitive and rapidly changing economy with the needs of the people “driving” this economy. This is a common challenge for the European and Mediterranean countries and an important factor in the creation of a genuine knowledge-based society.

Summary - Theme 2: TQuality in vocational education and training, quality management and quality control systems

The discussions of the workshop focused on four questions:

the linking of the “quality” objectives with initiatives relating to occupational integration and equal access to training

the key elements of a “quality” training system

the role of businesses in the quality initiative

the professionalism of the actors involved in the quality initiative and the implications for funding policy and the role of public authorities

Quality and quality control play a central role in the reform and modernisation of vocational training systems in Europe and in the countries of the southern Mediterranean. The quality initiative is a key element in the improvement of vocational education and training systems.

At the national level, the quality approach gives rise to a wide variety of different practices. At European Union level, there exists a variety of quality-related approaches, systems, methods and instruments, and the emphasis is on safeguarding this wealth of ideas within a minimum general normative reference framework yet to be defined.

The discussions stressed the importance of seeing the quality approach within vocational training systems as an initiative rather than an objective. As a result, all the actors in the system must be involved and given a stake in the process. Each training component must be subject to quality control, given that the quality of the training depends on the quality of the potential (or input, such as the actors involved, the material conditions, etc.), of the training process and of the product.

The discussions of the workshop revealed the importance of adapting any system imported from outside to national and local needs. A rigid application of standards could ruin training systems designed with the specific characteristics of their territory of origin in mind. When developing a system, it is useful to benefit from and draw on the achievements of other systems while avoiding a rigid approach and allowing changes and improvements to the system. The German so-called dual system has, for example, been exported to several Mediterranean countries. The attraction of the German system is its dual approach, alternating theory and practice by combining classroom and workplace learning. However, the practical application of this dual approach can differ greatly from one country to another. The key is to extract those elements which are best suited to the local reality rather than import a complete ready-made system. The challenge is thus to transpose recognised general standards into a local environment.

In the Mediterranean countries, in particular, quality in vocational training systems is a matter of growing concern. It is approached in different ways and has already given rise to a variety of projects. The increasing number of actors involved at all levels of the training systems represents a new challenge which calls for enhanced cooperation at different levels (public and private) and strict quality control. The quality initiative requires an active partnership between the various actors. A quality system must meet the needs of its beneficiaries at all levels by involving them as much as possible in the design of training programmes. In particular, the active participation of private businesses in the creation of training systems is vital, although not always easy to secure.

One example of cooperation between public and private authorities is provided by the Tunisian Ministry of Education's "Manforme" project. This project is based on the active involvement of the "customers" – businesses, young people and the State – in the design of training programmes. The strategy underpinning the "Manforme" project is the adoption of the principle of demand-generated training. The project is structured around four main themes:

- enhanced participation of businesses in the definition of their skills needs through partnership agreements between the Tunisian Ministry of Education and the trade associations, and the active involvement of businesses in the management of training centres;

- enhanced quality and greater flexibility in the supply of public and private training and upgrading of training centres through the application of a benchmark for quality standards;
- active management of the labour market and of continuing training; and
- the implementation of an ISO 9000 quality initiative covering all the processes linked to the creation and application of training programmes.

Summary - Theme 3: eLearning: virtual learning methods

eLearning is an excellent instrument for sharing knowledge. Its introduction into training practices has completely redefined notions of time and space by making it possible to reach large audiences without geographical restrictions and facilitating the interaction of all the actors involved in the training process. eLearning necessitates a rethink of training programmes, to take into account more modern and efficient tools. eLearning also makes training a genuine opportunity for life-long learning.

eLearning, which is still at a very early developmental stage in the Mediterranean countries, is becoming a policy priority for many of them, despite the obstacles which remain, both in technological terms and in terms of a certain reluctance to make active use of the new information and communication technologies among teachers used to more traditional teaching methods. The key challenge is to overcome these obstacles and turn eLearning into a genuine instrument of learning, available to all and not only to those with access to the latest technology.

Several eLearning projects have recently seen the light in the region, including the Syrian Virtual University (SVU), the first and only fully recognised virtual university in the Middle east. The SVU offers access to excellent higher education from the home and has secured international recognition. By using the latest distance learning technologies, the SVU offers high-quality university degrees from the major American, European, Canadian and Australian establishments as well as student career guidance, the possibility to be part of high-level virtual communities and internships with SVU partner businesses. In the long term, the SVU plans to further develop its own programmes in cooperation with regional universities and partners from outside the Arab world. Inaugurated in 2002 and fully accredited by the Syrian Ministry of Higher Education, the SVU currently has 520 students. National internet connections are not yet entirely reliable in Syria and the cost to the student of spending significant time online can therefore be high. With this in mind, the SVU has created 11 tele-centres which can be accessed for free anywhere in the country, including, in particular, the more remote areas.

In Europe, the efforts of public authorities with regard to eLearning are currently focused on the promotion of organisational models in support of distance learning and on the creation of products specifically tailored to this form of learning.

A significant obstacle remains the ability to guarantee access to eLearning for as many citizens as possible, i.e. narrow the digital divide. It is therefore extremely important to promote and develop efficient high-quality services focused on distance learning.

The distance learning products currently available are limited, often of poor quality and with high production costs (restricting the number of products). However, the demand for distance learning products and the number of users are growing ever

faster. The supply of distance learning products cannot, however, satisfy this demand.

International cooperation, made possible, *inter alia*, by European programmes such as Leonardo da Vinci, often helps overcome some of the obstacles described above, for example by defining common quality standards, encouraging the joint development of distance learning modules and their transfer from one country to another or creating highly innovative forms of virtual mobility and distance learning between different countries. In the era of eLearning, the establishment of transnational networks for exchanging knowledge thus becomes vital. The transfer of training programmes (and, in particular, distance learning products) between countries faces another problem in the form of protection of intellectual property rights and the barrier to the movement and use of training products which this creates. Only a common solution can overcome this problem.

The European DECPM (Distance Education Certificate in Project Management) project, run since 1999 by University College Dublin under the Leonardo da Vinci programme, provides an example of international cooperation. The project examined the possibility of establishing a system of web-based training. This research project assessed the problems and potential of virtual learning in the context of rural development. On the basis of an analysis of the needs of project managers on the ground, an online training programme comprising 12 subjects was drawn up with the help of the Blackboard system. Following tests in three European countries and internal and external evaluations, further improvements were made. Four Irish universities are currently working in partnership with the distance learning module developed thanks to this Leonardo project and, for the second year running, they have issued diplomas in rural development to 74 students.

Summary - Theme 4: Training teachers and trainers

The discussions of the workshop focused on four questions:

Rapid economic change and the effects of globalisation: what skills do teachers need to help them face these challenges?

The use of information and communication technology (ICT) in training: what are the implications for teacher training?

What should public and private authorities be doing to improve the training of trainers?

What financing arrangements should be put in place for the training of trainers?

The role of trainers has changed considerably of late. They must now possess skills which go beyond their specific discipline. They must possess horizontal pedagogical, administrative and management skills – such as ICT skills or foreign language skills – as well as social skills. Teachers have become learning “facilitators”. They no longer “rule” their classes and dispense their knowledge as they did before. As a result, the training of trainers must become more varied. It must increasingly be developed with the needs of the labour market and of businesses in mind. The supply-based approach must give way to a demand-based one. Teachers, for example, should be brought closer to businesses by offering them training periods within their sectors of education. Trainers must also be able constantly to update their skills in order to

keep up with the rapid technological development of the modern knowledge-based society. Unfortunately, the current provision of training for trainers is out of step with the new challenges and new roles expected of trainers. A general overhaul of teacher training is vital in order to improve its quality and relevance.

Unfortunately, in Europe as in the countries of the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean, the training of trainers does not yet occupy the place it deserves in the national strategies for developing vocational training.

In Europe as in the countries of the Mediterranean, training is rarely considered a vital element in the professional development of teachers. Hence the need for a change of approach in training systems in order to enhance the training of trainers and, in particular, the continuing training of teachers, and to strengthen their often unattractive status and the European dimension of their basic training.

Information and communication technology constitutes a very useful training tool for trainers as a means not only of constantly updating their knowledge in their field of specialisation, but also of entering into contact with other trainers, exchanging ideas and information, learning and discussing. In this regard, making new technologies available for the training of trainers represents a necessary investment.

The importance of quality training for trainers is well understood by the public authorities in, for example, Jordan, where a national institute for training teachers and trainers who work in (public and private) technical and vocational training establishments is being set up. Different approaches are currently under consideration with a view to securing more appropriate financing for the training of trainers (financing from a fund for the training of trainers based on contributions from businesses, allocation of a budget for teacher training by vocational training establishments or government support to establishments on the basis of their internal staff training plans).

In Algeria, in connection with the reform of the national training system, the government has recognised the importance of ICT in the training of trainers. As a result, various projects aimed at teaching trainers how to use ICT, including by use of ICT, are emerging, often in partnership with European countries or the United States. However, much remains to be done. Effective training of trainers clearly requires resources and radical changes to the organisation of vocational training systems. Thus, in Algeria, 90% of funds allocated by the government to public establishments providing vocational training and training of trainers are used to cover employees' salaries, thereby preventing the implementation of effective teacher training actions.

The case study presented during the round-table discussion illustrates how the Leonardo da Vinci programme helped reform the Lithuanian vocational training system in 1997. Following the demise of the Soviet regime and the establishment of an independent Lithuanian State, and in a context of transition towards a market economy, the national vocational training system was in urgent need of a radical overhaul. The policy on the training of trainers also needed to be recast. The objective of the Leonardo project coordinated by Vytautas Magnus University in Lithuania was to establish the institutional framework for vocational teacher training in Lithuania, including a legal and administrative framework and a pathway of qualifications and skills which teachers must possess. As a result of the project and of the exchange of good practice with the project partners (Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands), a new concept of initial and continuing training for trainers and a modular initial training programme were created on the basis of the new skills required to become a trainer. The project also made policy recommendations with regard to reforming the training of trainers.

Opening address by Nikolaus van der Pas
Director General, Directorate-General for Education and Culture –
European Commission.

CONFERENCE

“Innovation in vocational training – Exchange of experiences between countries in the southern and eastern Mediterranean and the European Union”

Check against delivery

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to be here today to open this conference on behalf of Mrs Reding, Member of the European Commission responsible for education and culture. I would like to thank you for taking part in this exchange of views and experiences between the countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean and the EU Member States. Of course this is not the first such exchange of views with these two Mediterranean regions. It is, however, the first time that a meeting of this kind has been held as part of the Community's Leonardo da Vinci programme. Since 1995, this European programme has provided assistance for innovative pilot projects in the field of vocational training, and this experience is sure to be an enriching one for the non-European countries too. In turn, we are very interested in hearing how the non-European countries in the Mediterranean region have responded to the major challenges facing all our vocational training systems at the beginning of the 21st century.

This event would not have been possible without the very strong commitment of the European Vocational Training Foundation, whom I wish to thank for organising it.

I would also like to thank those who will be running the various workshops. Like you, they are from a variety of national, European and non-European institutions, social partners or promoters of vocational training projects. Their diversity and the extent of their responsibilities and commitment are a guarantee of the quality of the work which they will be coordinating and in which you are invited to play an active part.

In this opening address, I would like to stress how important investment in vocational training, both in Europe and in the countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean, is for addressing the challenges of the knowledge society. I would also like to emphasise the strategic importance, for the European Union, of dialogue and exchanges with the Mediterranean countries.

* * *

The strategic importance of investment in human resources is, unfortunately, too often forgotten. In most of our countries, the short term takes priority over the long term. Yet, according to an ancient Chinese proverb from almost 3000 years ago (ca. 645 BC):

"If you want one year of prosperity, grow rice. If you want ten years of prosperity, plant trees. If you want twenty years of prosperity, educate people".

This oriental wisdom has too often been forgotten by our political and financial leaders. It is worth noting, however, that the Heads of State and of Government of the EU Member States declared, at the Lisbon European Council in March 2000, that education and training were a crucial factor in making Europe the most competitive

and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world. Access to lifelong learning must become the principal objective of our national and European education and training policies. An excellent way in which to respond to the rapid changes in modern society and to tackle unemployment, which is a concern common to Europe and the Mediterranean region, is to continuously update skills.

The training systems in both our regions are currently undergoing restructuring. Reforms are necessary to help improve the employability of the population as a whole, develop learning, update individuals' skills and improve their ability to look for, find and keep a job. Vocational training is a key investment, as are research and technological development.

This is borne out by our knowledge of this area. A recent study² analysed the socio-economic impact of investment in human capital. In their conclusions, De la Fuente and Ciccone state that:

- investment in human capital plays a significant part in a country's economic growth;
- it is estimated that, for example, one additional year of further education corresponds on average to an increase of at least 5% in a country's productivity;
- it goes without saying that training plays a key role in adapting our human resources to technological change;
- investment in human capital yields a worthwhile return both in economic terms, with stronger and more sustainable growth, and in social terms, as it also helps strengthen social cohesion.

Improving the quality of human capital should therefore be one of the priorities of all stakeholders, public authorities and social partners on both sides of the Mediterranean. Vocational training should increasingly be perceived as an investment rather than as an additional cost. We in Europe still have a long way to go. For example, businesses in those countries which are Europe's main competitors invest five times more in vocational training than their European counterparts. Of course, our social systems are different and public authorities in Europe have a more active role, but this alone does not justify the enormous difference in the amount of private sector expenditure on vocational training.

After the Lisbon Council of March 2000, another important step in recognising the importance of vocational training at European level was the Copenhagen Declaration of November 2002. For the first time in the history of European integration, the Education and Training Ministers of 31 European countries decided, together with the European Commission and the European social partners, to set strategic objectives to increase European cooperation in vocational training. Of course, this action at EU level does not replace the action to be taken at national and regional levels in Europe but complements it by helping to ensure that all European citizens' qualifications and skills are recognised throughout Europe. In other words, having created a single market for goods and services in 1992 and introduced monetary union in 2002, our Ministers responsible for vocational training have laid the foundation stones of a truly European labour market.

It should be noted that the approach taken was not to introduce European legislation but to make the European programme, Leonardo da Vinci, and its budget of some 200 million Euro per year, work to achieve the goals of the Copenhagen and Lisbon process. This Leonardo da Vinci programme supports transnational mobility, for example, by awarding some 45 000 grants per year, and every year it cofinances some 250 innovative pilot projects in transnational cooperation with a view to

² Angel de la Fuente - Antonio Ciccone "Human capital in a global knowledge-based economy" (May 2002)

facilitating social and vocational integration in the knowledge society, improving the quality of training in Europe and helping national or regional vocational training systems to adapt and modernise.

Since its adoption in 1995, the Leonardo da Vinci programme has financed more than 3 000 innovative projects designed to develop training tools and methodologies. On the Europa website there are several databases which provide the public, both within and outside Europe, with access to information on the Leonardo da Vinci programme and the results it has achieved.

The countries which are currently participating fully in the programme are the 15 Member States of the European Community, the countries of the European Economic Area, the associated countries of central and eastern Europe and Cyprus, Malta and, soon, Turkey. It is not planned to allow other countries access to the programme before 2007. However, the lessons and results of the current Leonardo da Vinci programme, which runs until 2006, are available to all and may be developed in other contexts and for other beneficiaries. These are the investments made since 1995, which must continue to bear fruit in order to improve the training systems and practices of businesses in the EU and also in other countries, such as those in the Mediterranean region.

For the countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean, the Euro-Mediterranean integration process is both a challenge and a lever for increasing the competitiveness of their productive economy. Training and investment in human capital therefore play a major role. The MEDA programme is the principal European instrument for applying this policy of cooperation and it supports the reforms of secondary technical education and vocational training in the countries of the Mediterranean region. It is also intended to help improve human resources and identify the skills needed in businesses. The education and training projects currently under way or being envisaged in the short term have an overall budget of more than €670 million.

Let me give you some examples:

- In Morocco, MEDA is helping to develop vocational training in tourism, the textiles sector and new technologies (in the amount of 50 million).
- The Manform project in Tunisia is helping to upgrade its vocational training system (45 million).

The time has come to review the investments made in the two regions in terms of vocational training and to make the best use of the outcomes of the various initiatives.

* * *

I would now like to focus on the strategic importance, for the European Union, of dialogue and exchange with the Mediterranean countries. As you know, 2004 is a major turning point in the history of the "old continent" once divided by war and ideology. This enlargement to the east of Europe in no way means that Europe will lose interest in its Mediterranean neighbours!

Today's conference is an expression of the concern of Romano Prodi, European Commission President, to strengthen the dialogue between our cultures, as well as mutual cooperation and exchange, beyond the borders of an enlarged Europe.

Today's objective is therefore the exchange of knowledge and best practice between the southern and eastern Mediterranean and the European Union, with a view to mutual enrichment, shared knowledge and the exchange of innovative strategies in

relation to vocational training systems and practices. In short: how can we fully exploit the experience of each country in this field? How can we make the most of investment in vocational training?

This is what prompted us to bring together today the most senior officials in vocational training in the various countries and those active in the field, technicians who all, in one way or another, play a part in reforming and modernising the systems in our various countries. The objective of today's event is not only to compare ideas and to learn from one another. It is also to bring about a change in our systems and practices, based on what our neighbours have already done or are currently doing in this field. This conference is intended to help intensify relations between the Member States of the future enlarged Europe and the countries of the Mediterranean region.

This conference will address four topics which are key political challenges in reforming and strengthening our two regions' vocational training systems:

1. The first is the question of how to strike the best balance between businesses' training needs and the vocational training available.
2. The second concerns the quality of vocational training and teaching, and quality management, which is a major issue in any reform of a vocational training system.
3. The third topic is that of education and vocational training using the new information and communication technologies. This genuine technological, economic and social revolution needs to be able to cater to all of our education and vocational training systems, even though, unfortunately, only certain firms which are at the cutting edge have extensive access to these new methods that are more successful in both economic and educational terms.
4. Teacher training is another key topic for the future of our countries and our vocational training systems.

These four topics will be illustrated using case studies undertaken in the two regions by programmes such as Leonardo da Vinci and MEDA.

* * *

On 1 May 2004, the European Union will enter a new phase of its history. It will comprise 25 Member States, and Europe's new neighbours will include the countries from the southern and eastern Mediterranean. With the accession of the new Member States, the Union will have to strengthen further its relations with its new neighbours in order to create an area of prosperity and neighbourliness marked by close, peaceful and cooperative relations.

The European Commission's "Wider Europe - New Neighbourhood" initiative was encouraged by the most recent European Council, held on 16-17 October. It encourages the Union to involve its future neighbours more closely in planning its activities in order to ensure that they derive maximum benefit from the process of European integration. It also wants to work with its partners to reduce poverty by creating an area of prosperity and shared values based on deeper economic integration, closer political and cultural relations, enhanced cross-border cooperation and shared responsibility for conflict prevention.

The European Council also urged the Council and the Commission, and here I quote from the Presidency conclusions, to "take forward work in implementing this initiative with a view to ensuring a comprehensive, balanced and proportionate approach, including a financial instrument, responding to the needs to promote cross-border and regional/transnational cooperation on the external borders of the enlarged Union".

In the area of education and training, the prospect of an enlarged Europe is becoming particularly important: dialogue between different civilisations, religions, traditions and cultures forms the basis for the development of a thriving and democratic civil society. Discussions are already under way within the European education and training programmes on how greater account can be taken of the Wider Europe component as of 2007, and in particular in the new generation of programmes.

With regard to the Mediterranean region, more specifically, the EU and its Mediterranean partners recognised in the 1995 Barcelona Declaration that geographical proximity increased the value of developing a comprehensive policy of close association. Constant dialogue and cooperation have already been achieved thanks to the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. The latest European Council highlighted this, recognising "the crucial importance of the Mediterranean region (...), the need to actively support the economic development of the region through concrete initiatives to be adopted and to enhance political dialogue and cooperation in the cultural field" (Presidency Conclusions, Brussels, 16-17 October 2003). The Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, to be held in Naples on 2/3 December, should be an important stage in this process, as it will finalise arrangements for the Euromed Foundation project. This is primarily intended to promote dialogue between cultures and civilisations based on the report by the High Level Advisory Group, which was commissioned in 2002 by Commission President Prodi to look at ways of strengthening the Euro-Mediterranean intercultural dialogue.

Today's conference, therefore, is only the first step towards strengthening the dialogue. I hope that this meeting will lead to more regular exchanges in future and to regular and successful cooperation. This conference should make it possible to build bridges between the two sides of the Mediterranean for greater mutual understanding and a more important role for vocational training. We should all regard education and training as one of the best possible long-term investments for the growth of our economies and the welfare of our people.

I hope you find the conference informative and useful. Thank you.

Executive summary

Sergio Piccolo
DG AIDCO, European Commission

This document is intended to provide an overall view:

- of the challenges of Euro-Mediterranean integration for the MED countries in terms of unemployment, jobs and social inclusion;
- of the strengths and weaknesses of the reforms in progress to address those issues;
- of the European support provided in the context of the MEDA Programme in relation to vocational training and employment.

In most of the countries and partners of the southern Mediterranean and Middle-East, unemployment is high and the level of employment is insufficient. In both cases the most affected segments of population is women and young people. These shortcomings are in general due to insufficient economic growth in relation to the demographic pressure, and to an environment which does not greatly favour business creation. In particular, the absence of a coherent and integrated employment strategy, the weakness of vocational training (VT) systems and of mechanisms for information, guidance and mediation specific to the labour market, represent major obstacles for the economic and social inclusion of the active population.

In the context of the Barcelona process and the implementation of the association agreements, the prospect of creating a Euro-Mediterranean free trade area in 2010 represents a major challenge for the partners in the MEDA zone. To meet that challenge, on the one hand the productive sector must be brought up to the required standard and on the other hand the employability of the active population must be enhanced. The skills of individuals and their ability to seek, find and keep a job must be improved.

Actually, among the various production factors, which affect the efficiency and competitiveness of the productive sector, human resources play a major role. In this context, the particular objectives of the MEDA Programme are:

- to improve, inside of businesses, the management of human resources and the capacity for identifying the skills needs of businesses;
- to better tailor VT systems to the skills needs of enterprises;
- to improve labour market performances so as to bring supply and demand closer together with regard to skilled employment.

MEDA support is systematically provided in line with the ambitious reforms of the VT systems, which almost everywhere aim to restructure the supply of training, both public and private, on the basis of the skills needs identified in the business sector. Among the various methods of training, particular importance is attached to apprenticeship, alternate training and continuous training. In some countries support

is provided to the employment services in order to improve the matching of qualified labour demand and supply.

The implementation of the MEDA projects involves a wide range of institutional bodies as well as the productive sector, and their aim is to favour gender equality.

With the support of the European Training Foundation, MEDA projects are identified according to harmonised methodologies taking into account local specific conditions

Euro-Mediterranean integration and employment

Active labour market policies to reduce unemployment and to improve the employability of human resources play a strategic role for systemic competitiveness and social development.

A capital of qualified human resources enables more jobs to be created, and of better quality. And it is the jobs and sectors with a high level of education and training which are most sustainable during periods of low growth.

In Europe the budgetary adjustments made during the 1990s with a view to economic and monetary convergence entailed efforts to improve efficiency and convergence at European level of the national employment policies. The principle was that *the delays of some countries would have an impact on the budget deficit of some other countries.*

For the partner countries in the MEDA area, it is the process of Euro-Mediterranean integration which represents the challenge, and at the same time the lever for strengthening the competitiveness of the productive system and improving the employability of the active population.

In fact, current and anticipated structural adjustments affect the levels and quality of employment. Obsolete jobs disappear and new ones are created. New skills are required.

Consequently, in the MEDA region any insufficiency and incoherence of the employment and VT systems, in particular difficulties in responding to business sector skills needs, affect a country's competitiveness at regional and international level.

Labour market and job creation in the partner countries

In terms of labour market, the problems of the MEDA partners can be summarised as follows:

- growth of the active population averaging over 3% per year,
- high rate of school failure,
- high unemployment (20% on average), especially among young people and women,
- poorly integrated active labour market policies,
- high migration trends,
- concentration of employment in the public and informal sectors.

To reduce unemployment, economic growth is a necessary condition. Given the demographic pressure, an average economic growth rate of 7% per year is needed between now and 2010 to reduce present unemployment levels by half³.

Economic growth, however, is not a sufficient condition. Increasing the employment levels necessitates a broad range of policies that include both demand-driven and supply-driven measures. Active employment measures are also needed to offer job seekers, particularly the most disadvantaged among them, conditions for seeking, finding and keeping a job. This means bringing supply and demand closer together with regard to skilled employment, in short:

- a systematic effort to provide initial and continuous training,
- a systematic effort of information on the labour market,
- an institutional effort to promote social dialogue,
- the promotion of the entrepreneurship.

Employment policy in Europe and the MED countries

In the wider context of fight against poverty, a recent Commission Communication⁴ stresses that strong liaison and coordination are necessary between the education, VT and labour market systems.

... the European experience ...

At the European level, the economic and monetary convergence during the 1990s entailed a convergence of the national employment policies. The principle recognised was that if some lagged behind the budgetary equilibrium of others would be affected.

After five years of an employment policy integrated at the European level⁵, the results of this convergence show that it is an integrated and coordinated approach to preventive and active employment policies and taxation, structural, local and equal-opportunities policies, which yields encouraging results in terms of fighting against unemployment, and for job creation.

... and the situation in the partner countries ...

In most of the MED partners, VT is the main tool of employment policy. At different levels from one country to the other, all types of VT are envisaged: initial and continuous; off- and on-the-job training, dual training; public and private; depending on the Ministries responsible for VT, or on other sectoral ministries.

... the reforms in progress ...

³ At the recent seminar in Brussels (23-24 April 2003) on the impact of the EU's enlargement on MEDA, it emerged that in the MED countries, having regard to the demographic pressure (+ 2.8% per year for the next 10 years) and the relatively slow growth rate in recent years, about 40 million new jobs will have to be created just in order to keep unemployment at its present levels. To meet that need there will have to be greater foreign direct investment and a larger and better-orientated accumulation of internal capital (physical and human capital) (Contribution by Mr Reiffers, Femise).

⁴ "Education and training in the context of reducing poverty in developing countries", COM (2002) 116.

⁵ The European strategy for employment, initiated by the Luxembourg European Council of November 1997 following the introduction of the "Employment" title in the Treaty of Amsterdam (June 1997), envisages the creation of national employment policies coordinated at the European level but for which the Member States of the EU of 15 keep entire responsibility.

In recent years, some countries in the area have undertaken ambitious and systematic reforms of the national VT systems (e.g. **Tunisia, Algeria**), while others prefer to concentrate their efforts on the specific needs of certain strategic economic sectors (e.g. **Morocco**).

Several countries, although to different extents, are striving to tailor VT systems more closely to the demands of the economy. In other countries VT is still a social shock-absorber with no link to the labour market.

The success of the reforms depends on the interaction and synergy between the productive system and a VT system well founded on efficient mechanisms for guidance and mediation in the labour market.

... certain weaknesses persist ...

However, VT systems are still failing to meet adequately both economic and social demands.

Economic demand:

Within companies, the notion of investing in the training of human resources is still very poorly developed.

Social demand:

The provision of VT is not sufficiently targeted on the needs of the job-seekers who are most in difficulty (young people dropped out of school, women, the long-term unemployed, people laid-off, etc.) and the VT facilities do not have the required capacities.

For example, in Morocco where the structures are among the best-established in the region, this capacity is still only one out of five applicants.

Because of these weaknesses, the training given does not systematically lead to the occupational integration of the person trained.

Indeed, all the analyses and evaluations of the active labour market measures carried out at the international level confirm that there is a direct relation between proper targeting and the efficacy of an employment measure.

MEDA cooperation and the projects

The MEDA projects (261 million €)	
Morocco:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Improvement of VT (38 million €), in progress- Job creation (3.3 million €), in progress- Support for the occupational integration of women and people with disabilities (1.72 Mio €),- VT in three priority sectors (50 million €), in progress (MEDA II)
Algeria:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Improvement of VT (60 million €), in progress
Tunisia:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Reform of VT (45 million €), in progress- Job creation (9.6 million €), in progress

Egypt: - Reform of vocational education and training (33 million €) ,in progress (MEDA II)

Syria: - Reform of VT (21 million €), in course of preparation for 2004 (MEDA II)

The EU supports these efforts with the MEDA Programme, whose implementation is steered by the Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) and the National Indicative Programmes (NIPs). The latter are adopted after bilateral negotiations, in close coordination with the Member States of the EU and other bilateral and multilateral donors.

The CSPs propose an analysis of the situation in each country and a medium-term and long-term strategy, *inter alia*, on the social development needs of the countries. The NIPs indicate the support needed in the short and medium term in order to support the efforts made by the partner countries.

Under the MEDA Programme a whole series of projects in the field of labour market and VT are in progress or about to be launched in the various countries, for a total budget of around 260 million euros. The support in question aims to the upgrading of institutional devices.

... the strategic axes ...

EuropeAid, in coordination with the Delegations and with the support of ETF, strives to apply similar operational methodologies from one country to another having regard to the local situations, and good practices identified at the European level.

There are six strategic axes common to these projects:

1. Reinforcing the strategic steering of the VT and labour market systems;
2. Improving the visibility and performance of the labour markets;
3. Reinforcing the management of human resources and identification of skills needs in enterprises, with the involvement of professional organisations;
4. Better tailoring public/private VT delivery in conformity with business sector skills needs;
5. Promoting ownership and capitalisation of the results at national level;
6. Promoting equal opportunities, not only between women and men, but also for other disadvantaged groups such as young dropouts, disabled, long-term unemployed people.

... Steering and effectiveness of VT and labour market ...

All the major MEDA projects in the VT field (**Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco**) aim to reinforce the institutional overall steering of VT, in other words the ability to manage and use all qualitative and quantitative information about the performance of VT in relation to the needs and foreseeable trends of the labour market.

As an example, the VT project in progress in **Algeria** provides for the creation of an Employment Observatory⁶.

⁶ It should be pointed out that the ETF (European Training Foundation) is developing other similar projects of Employment and VT Observatory (Morocco, Syria, Jordan) with the aim of improving the production, evaluation and management of quantitative and qualitative information on labour market

These projects also provide for components aiming to improve knowledge about, and the visibility of the labour market. Such visibility enables the production of lists of existing and foreseeable job profiles. Referential lists of skills are then produced which help to steer VT in the right direction.

Certain projects (**Morocco, Tunisia**) provide specific support for the public employment services in order to reinforce information, advice and guidance in favour of job seekers, in particular as regards business creation.

A regional project is being prepared, with the aim of promoting the exchange of good practices and the joint collection of qualitative and quantitative information in order to reinforce the steering of employment and VT systems.

... Identification of the needs of the economy ...

Tailoring VT delivery toward the economic demand depends on the prior identification and anticipation of the skills needed by sectorial enterprises, and on the ability of enterprises to formulate their training requirements.

The MEDA projects for upgrading VT delivery in **Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco** provide for advisory and assistance activities to improve the management of human resources, in particular in SMEs. In Tunisia, in the framework of the MANFORM project, 170 enterprises have benefited from such support.

This action is organised in a transparent way and also aims to promote initial training (through dual training and apprenticeship) and continuous training within the enterprises.

The continuity of such actions is ensured via the active involvement of the sectorial professional organisations and external business support services (**Morocco**).

... Demand-driven training ...

Further to the identification of skill needs in enterprises, the training centres undergo a re-engineering process, in other words their training objectives, practices and teaching equipment are reviewed and modernised. The focal point of this process is the “*job label*” which translates the requirements of a given job in terms of competencies.

The “*job label*” is then translated into a training programme in accordance with a methodology known as a “skills-based approach” (*Approche par compétence*). This method ensures that the training programmes match the job descriptions, and that they are updated regularly.

The training of trainers and the development and provision of new teaching tools are included. A substantial part of the EU contribution is devoted to the overall modernisation of the training equipment of the VT centres.

Particular attention is devoted to mixed forms of training (on and off the job). In Syria, where the VT system is still largely supply- rather than demand-oriented, ETF (European Training Foundation) is currently developing a pilot project reinforcing apprenticeship in certain secondary vocational schools with the involvement of enterprises.

and VT systems, and to promote the networking of national stakeholders with responsibilities in this field.

... Institutional coordination, ownership and sustainability ...

VT is often organised and managed by various ministerial departments. To limit a scatter effect, certain projects provide for the dissemination of common methodologies and actions among the various responsible departments, thus promoting institutional coordination and synergy.

The ownership of methodologies and results of the projects is also an important objective.

The institutional and sectorial stakeholders are systematically involved.

A relatively substantial part of the EU contribution is used to provide technical assistance (TA). To promote ownership of project outcomes, the TA systematically involves local experts, according to the needs. Several projects (e.g. in Algeria, Morocco) also provide for the involvement of national administrative officials in the management of the projects.

... Indicators, monitoring and evaluation ...

The most recent projects set-up by EuropeAid foresees performance indicators for each component and action, which promote the efficiency and efficacy of the projects to be evaluated throughout their implementation.

Finally, equal opportunities for women and men, but also for particularly disadvantaged groups (first job seekers, young drop outs, people with disabilities, and long-term unemployed) is a priority criterion of *ex-ante* identification.

Conclusions

Human resources are an important factor of production. In the MEDA area, high unemployment is an obstacle to economic development and social cohesion.

In Europe, the budgetary adjustments carried out in the 1990s were the driving force for improving the efficacy and convergence at European level of the national employment policies.

For the countries and partners in the MEDA area, it is the process of Euro-Mediterranean integration which constitutes the challenge and at the same time the lever for strengthening the competitiveness of the productive system and improving the employability of the active population.

In fact, weak employment and vocational training systems, in particular the difficulties with facing the business sector's skills needs, affect the competitiveness of a country at regional and international levels.

In almost all the MEDA partners, vocational training is the principal tool of labour market policies and inclusion.

Despite some recent efforts, this instrument is not yet effective because:

- it is not yet able to adequately meet the skill needs of the demand;
- it is not sufficiently tailored to the profile of job seekers;
- it is not systematically coordinated with other measures and policies which have an impact on the performances of the labour market.

It should also be stressed that in some countries the level of literacy is still too low for VT to have a real impact on the employability of the active population. This is also a major obstacle to the development of continuous training.

The structural and macro-economic adjustment efforts should go hand in hand with measures to make the labour market more transparent and effective.

Without underestimating the macro-economic and structural differences between the EU and the MED partner countries, the latter could draw on European experience (that of the current EU and of the future Member States) to a greater extent when it comes to employment strategy and the best possible use of human resources.

DISCUSSION PAPERS

THEME 1 - TRAINING AND ENTERPRISES: HOW TO ENSURE THAT TRAINING PROVIDED IS ATTUNED TO THE NEEDS OF ENTERPRISES, IN PARTICULAR OF SMEs?

DISCUSSION NOTE

Training and enterprises

Jean-Marc Castejon

Department for the Mediterranean Region, ETF

The issue of training in SMEs in the MEDA region can be seen in the light of the implications of the Barcelona process, which in a unique and ambitious initiative laid the foundation for a new regional relationship. In the Barcelona declaration one of the 3 main objectives is the construction of a shared zone of prosperity through an economic and financial partnership and the gradual establishment of a free trade zone by the target date of 2010.

This is to be achieved by means of the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement negotiation between the EU and the Mediterranean partners which include certain common aspects: free trade will be completed over a transitional period; gradual liberalisation of trade in services; gradual liberalisation of arrangements on public procurement; the adjustment of provisions relating to competition, state aid and monopolies.

The action taken by the EU at the level of the individual Mediterranean partner is illustrated by a number of instruments among which the creation of eight "business centres" located in Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, the Palestinian Territories, Jordan and Syria.

The private sector is for Euro-Mediterranean Partners the best positioned to support economic transition in South-Mediterranean countries and promote growth and employment in the region. SMEs are fast increasing, therefore facing an array of challenges, among which the issue of competitiveness and, therefore, of competences is central. Training is therefore of vital importance, whether for the up-skilling of workers to improve the performance of the organisation or the re-skilling of workers laid-off from the shrinking industrial public sector.

It cannot be said that SMEs are benefiting a business friendly environment and the use of training reflects this situation. Problems **on the demand side** include:

- Heavy procedural access to funding.
- Lack of real human resource function in the enterprise and therefore little attention and resources allocated to human resources.
- Lack of real management of companies. The principle of owner/manager restricts the efficiency of the organisation. As a result, it is very difficult for the companies to define their needs and even less to address them.
- Lack of visibility on the future needs of the markets due to rapid privatisation.
- Relative weakness of company representatives (chambers) in terms of services to companies.

On the delivery side, there is still a relative weakness of providers:

- VET systems in the MED region have evolved mainly as sub-sector of the global vocational and employment system and in relative isolation from the labour market needs. The tendency has been to duplicate provision from initial training to the continuing training with little consideration of the skill needs analysis nor of the specificity of adult training. The result is that this field still lacks professionalism.
- On the other hand, if the legal framework is in theory in place at public training centres level to provide training services to local businesses the management of schools is not open to the local environment, as a result from a centralised system. Therefore, the general feeling among enterprise managers is that the provision of continuing training does not meet their fast growing needs, with the emerging exception of new technologies and management training.
- Public provision has long been without competition from the private training sector and no market for continuing provision is as yet really in place.
- There is in most countries a strong cultural reference to qualification and diplomas. Any training, which does not lead to one or the other, is looked down upon. Continuing training, which is not aiming at qualifications but at competencies does not have yet the appeal of initial training.

There are **signs of change** in the link between demand and provision:

- Most countries have developed strong institutional support to continuing training (FNAC, Fonds National de Développement de l'Apprentissage et de la Formation Continue in Algeria, GIAC, Groupements Interprofessionnels d'Aide au Conseil in Morocco, Centre National de Formation Continue et de Promotion Professionnelle in Tunisia, National Centre for Human Resource Development in Jordan) in an effort to promote human resources development especially in the private sector and so among other things facilitate access to training.
- Most countries (Morocco, Tunisia) have initiated the competence approach, which through close cooperation between enterprise and vocational centre involved shows a drastic step towards partnership between the demand side and the provision side.
- There is an emerging private sector in vocational training for enterprises, especially in management training.
- The EU and Mediterranean partners have developed a number of projects within the MEDA programme aiming at:
- The reform of the VET system with special attention to the provision of continuing education (Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco, Syria).
- The promotion of the private production sector and specially SMEs (like the the Industrial Modernisation Programmes in several countries, the Syrian-European Business Centre, Euro-Maroc enterprises, Euro-Tunisie enterprise, and a number of MEDA reform projects of SMEs sector in Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco.) These projects should raise awareness on the importance of for training and, in particular, raise capacities within the enterprises for the assessment of needs and especially training needs.

Those programmes along with the numerous local initiatives should bring the training providers closer to the production sector and enhance professionalism in the field of adult training.

Case Study

The case of Egypt: Skill Standard and Certification Project

Presentation

The National Skill Standard Project is a four-year program with the aim of equipping the Egyptian workforce with the skills required to meet the current and future needs of the national and international labor market. To achieve this aim, the project is dedicated to developing a sustainable system that will allow for the development and delivery of skill standards, implemented and evaluated in three sectors and to benchmarking the standards against the best European practice. The project will also allow the vocational training system in Egypt to change from a supply driven to a demand driven system. When completed the project will provide a series of formal qualifications to be called the Egyptian Vocational Qualifications (EVQ) and these will be awarded initially at levels 1, 2 and 3.

To provide for the assessment and the validation of the new EVQs, the appropriate equipment will be procured and installed in those Vocational Training Centers (VTCs) that have been selected to take in the pilot program. It is also intended to establish a National Staff Training Center (NSTC) and Skills Standard Unit that will be supported by a database within the Social Fund for Development (SFD).

Objectives

- The benefits generated by the activities described above all include:
- A system that is able to respond to the demands of the labour market.
- Enhanced job and career development opportunities for the workforce.
- A highly skilled workforce that will encourage investment in jobs.
- Open access to a vocational, educational training system that will allow adults to update and upgrade their skills through specialist modular units.
- Confidence by employers in recruiting people to meet their future skill needs.
- Increased exports and profits.
- Enhanced job satisfaction for employers and employees.
- Less wastage of the national skills talent.
- Clear paths, opportunities and progress for school leavers.
- Enhanced careers guidance for young people in pre-vocational education and those with special needs.

Main features

As one of the main objectives of the Skill Standard and Certification Project is to satisfy the changing needs of the industry from the highly skilled workers to meet the demands of the labor market. This is achieved through:

- Identifying skills, underpinning knowledge (technology, service, math's, technical drawing. I.T) as well as the working behaviour for every qualification. This is a main characteristic

of the VET standards.

- Developing a proper assessment system that objectively measures the evidence of achieving the required competencies for each unit of a certain qualification level.
- Since the objective is addressing the market needs and standards, then it is logical that the market (employers) has to accredit those who are applying for employment, as in this case the training is demand driven.
- Professionals from private sector (employees), representatives from technical education, vocational training centres and trade unions are all members of the trade committees that carried out the function analysis and developing the standards for each element, including assessment criteria as well as writing the training material. Each committee is working under the guidance of foreign support (EU consultant).
- The role of the federations is to co-ordinate and to facilitate the work of the trade committees with the relevant chambers. Building the capacity in the federations is one of the project objectives to ensure the sustainability of the system with the private sector. Federations officially represent their sectors nation-wide, while the different businessmen associations (that are legally NGOs), look after their local interests in their geographical areas only.
- The Presidential Decree 102/2000, restructuring the Supreme Council for Manpower Development and Training, includes the representation of the Ministry of Education, besides the federation. The council approved the SSCP. The responsibilities of the executive committee of the SC include the follow up of setting national skills standards and their accreditation according to the priorities of labor market needs and requirements, within a specific time limit.
- Education can make use of the output of this project in developing their teaching subjects and practical skills. There is an idea in MOE to introduce an integration system between secondary general schools and basic secondary technical education in one path. In this case graduates from the new system will need upgrading their skills in training centres, in order to achieve the labour market standard requirements and to accredit.

During the life time of the existing project it is essential to:

- Prepare the legislation that has to be issued to approve the standards and qualifications, as well as the assessment criteria and the accreditation system.
- Create the accreditation body(s) with the co-operation of foreign recognized bodies.
- Build up the Skills Standards Unit incubated temporarily within the TS of the SCMDT.
- Create the National Training Fund. One of its duties will be to sustain the Skill Standard and Certification System to cover all trades and continue developing them according to technological development (during the next 10 years).
- Draft the second phase of the existing project to be approved by the SC.

INTRODUCTION NOTE

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As time goes by, it is becoming increasingly evident that one of the key factors on which European economic development in the 21st century will depend, will be the ability of training providers to fulfil the training needs of commercial enterprises, and particularly those of SMEs. To accomplish this, cooperation between training providers and companies, at all levels, will be crucial. Every indication so far would tend to indicate that the key to efficiently enabling cooperation of this type to take place is the concept of '**networking**', (geographical and sectorial). The quality of networking in the future will require the development of new tools and new approaches (help desks, new technologies, new management techniques, etc.). Based on our own experience as a network we in EVTA have determined that knowledge-sharing constitutes the basic element of all forms of cooperation.

ISSUES AT STAKE

Georg Piskaty

Austrian Federal Economic Chamber

INTRODUCTION

All over the world - and this is true especially for the European Union - small businesses (employing 50 or less people) - including micro enterprises with less than ten employees - play a central role in economic activities. In the European Union they account for 99 % of all businesses and provide more than half of the jobs. It is therefore clear, that an economically successful training system should correspond to the needs of SMEs and offer them those qualifications; they need to fulfil their economic activities. We know by experience that this is in many cases not the given situation.

There are many reasons for that which I would like to emphasize, as follows:

- SMEs seem to many job seekers, especially to youngsters leaving higher education or universities less attractive than large companies. Therefore they attract not always the workforce they need, especially in technologically and/or scientifically demanding professions. For example, in High Tech! This image problem is also very serious when we look at apprenticeship training systems which are - where there exist alternative choices due to a parallel schooling system - regarded as less attractive and therefore as a "second choice" for gifted pupils.
- We know on the other hand that working in a SME can be of challenge and needs more polyvalent skills than working as a specialist in a large enterprise: working in a SME demand different competences, very often highly specialised technical and commercial skills, but in addition also personal key skills as dealing with clients, customers, other enterprises. This "polyvalence" gives us also a clue why SMEs cannot be satisfied with a small set of rather technical competences, but need a broad range of interconnected qualifications. Schools and universities often don't realise these differences as they have in the best cases only connections to large or multinational companies.

When a Commission paper mentions that an increasing number of small and micro enterprises feel that the lack of skilled labour is their most important problem, that shows us also a challenge to economic development which depends on the well being of SMEs. We must not forget that becoming a self-employed person is normally only possible by creating a small or micro enterprise. If we want to have successful entrepreneurs in our society who act really entrepreneurial to create profit and economic welfare, SMEs must attract the best, becoming "first choice".

WHAT DO SMES NEED FROM THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM?

When one researches the needs of SMEs concerning the educational system, very often the first given answer is not-as one might expect- high technical or commercial knowledge, but reliable knowledge of "basic skills" which should be developed during obligatory schooling. Basic skills are normally defined as literacy (reading, writing,

expression in the mother tongue), counting, nowadays also the use of a computer and the ability to communicate in a foreign - economically important - language. From the view point of SMEs we should also add "basic understanding of economics" as a necessity.

Schools should also -beginning in the early ages - develop "entrepreneurial thinking", to overcome this existing "circulus vitiosus" that often economic activity and performance is regarded by youngsters as second choice compared to a job in public administration.

Therefore we need to foster cooperation between schools and enterprises. One of the big problems in our society is, that teachers often have chosen their profession because of lack of interest in the economy, and therefore they have - with some notable exceptions - no personal experience of and interest in the working world outside the educational system. That makes it very difficult to expect from them the development of entrepreneurial thinking and spirit and activities together with enterprises.

WHAT CAN SMES OFFER?

Concerning the training system, SMEs can offer during initial education "work place based training". These activities we find nowadays throughout the EU in nearly all member states but nevertheless to a very different degree of importance for the whole educational system. We distinguish the traditional "apprenticeship system", especially important in Germany, Austria, Luxembourg and to a lesser degree in Denmark. and under the name of "alternance" a more school-linked system in France. In the Southern member states, Spain, Portugal, but also in the Northern countries, there exist nowadays activities – some sponsored by Chambers of Commerce -to establish such systems and to adapt them to the existing socio-cultural situation in each country.

Notwithstanding the national educational system SMEs offer "internships" to pupils and students, but also to interested teachers. They are in some systems obligatory, sometimes they are organised on a voluntary bases. They are of special value for introducing young persons to labour in a real work environment. Last but not least SMEs offer for their employees a wide range of informal learning opportunities, which has to do with the already mentioned polyvalent working situation. Recently the EU try to find formulas to make the extent of such informal learning visible and recognisable.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE TO CORRESPOND BETTER TO THE NEEDS OF SMES?

I have already mentioned the need for obligatory performance standards for schools, especially but not exclusively for basic skills. Enterprises should be confident that school leavers have acquired the knowledge and skills the school is responsible for.

Teachers should get work experience outside the educational system, either through internships or through working periods before entering their job career in schools or universities.

Universities and higher education institutions should get specific departments for SMEs regarding their economic and training needs. A good example is at the economic university of Vienna, such a special department for SMEs and entrepreneurial skills, sponsored by the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber. Last but not least, SMEs need better access to programmes which are very often

dedicated especially to them, but which are nevertheless difficult for SMEs because of paper work and the high risk of investing in a complicated and demanding application process without getting elected. We need therefore special formulas for SMEs and micro enterprises. This is also true for the European Community programme LEONARDO da VINCI, where SMEs are on the one hand very important partners especially within the mobility programme, but need on the other hand help, which is in some member states given by chambers of commerce or by chambers of handicraft as representatives for SMEs.

OUTLOOK

In the European Union - as in most parts of the world - SMEs are very important economic factors, but they have problems to be treated due to their economic importance. On the one hand the school and university system will not automatically consider their needs. On the other hand as further training during work times concerned, SMEs have bigger problems as larger companies to offer their employees free time for attending courses and seminars or to finance them. The new media, especially computer based learning and e-learning, could help a lot, but only under the condition that the software corresponds really to the needs of SMEs. Also the recognition of informal learning processes which are especially important in SME`s may help. More emphasis to the needs of SMEs in Vocational training is necessary from all the partners: the Commission, the state authorities, last but not least from teachers and professors!

ISSUES AT STAKE

Education, training and enterprises

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INTRODUCTION

The relation between enterprises on the one hand, and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) on the other, within the overall system of human resources development (HRD), has always been an issue of prime importance. In this paper, the various dimensions, limitations and rationale of such relation are explored.

THE CONCEPT AND SCOPE OF HRD

"Human Resources Development" can be viewed as one component of the overall concept of human resources that comprise three groups of elements, which combine and interact within a framework of economic, political and socio-cultural criteria and values. These three groups are:

1. The supply side of human resources, which comprises the following elements:
 - Outputs of the formal education system, with its various, levels and offerings.
 - Outputs of non-formal education.
 - Outputs of technical and vocational education and training, both formal and non-formal.
 - Expatriate workers.
 - Returnee workers, i.e. national workers who return home after work periods outside their country, or who return to work after temporary stoppage.
2. The demand side of human resources, which comprises the following elements:
 - HR needs of local labour markets, in light of the nature of national socioeconomic developments.
 - HR needs of regional (and sometimes international) labour markets, in light of relevant economic and political developments.
 - HR replacement requirements due to retirement and death.
3. Linkages and channels between supply and demand, which include:

- Relevant legislative tools.
- Occupational standards and classification systems.
- HR information systems, covering both supply and demand sides.
- Institutional linkages and channels, such as councils, organizations, administrative units and committees that are concerned with both aspects of supply and demand.
- Guidance and counseling services directed towards the supply side, taking into consideration the characteristics of the demand side.
- Employment and recruitment services.
- HR information systems, covering both supply and demand characteristics.

The figure illustrates the three groups of elements referred to above. The concept of "human resources development" comprises both the supply side and the linkages between the supply and demand sides. The demand side and these linkages are referred to as "human resources utilization".

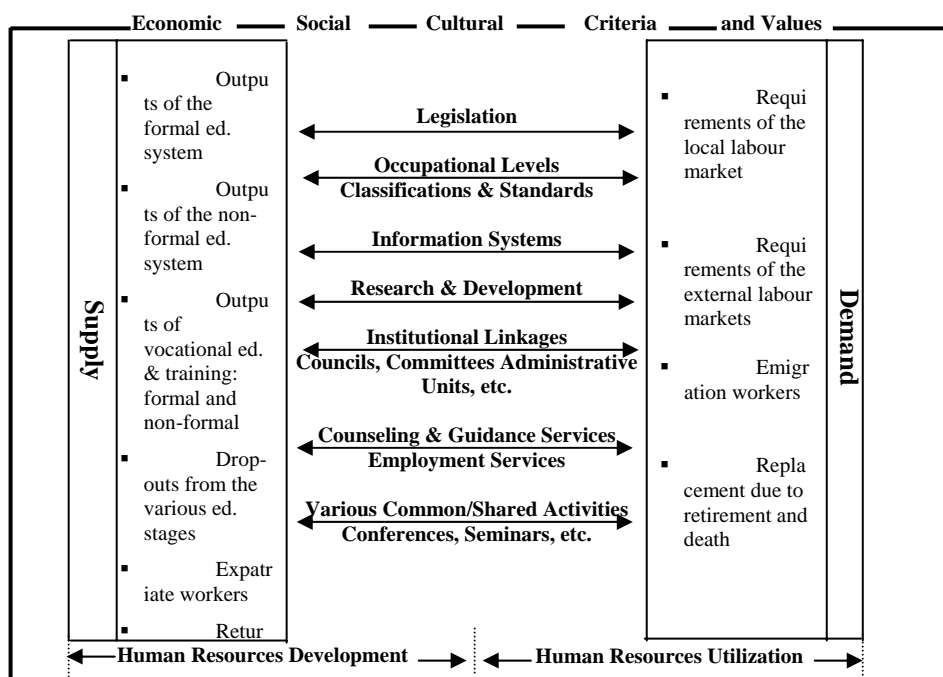


Figure (1): Human Resources Development & Utilization System

TVET AND THE CONCEPT OF RELEVANCE

It can be stated that there are two main inter-related dimensions that characterize the functions of institutions involved in the provision of TVET services and facilities, i.e. TVET providers. The first dimension is concerned with the qualitative aspects of HRD systems and programmes. Such aspects comprise all educational and training inputs and processes, including instructors, curricula, physical facilities, learning and

training methodologies, governance, evaluation, etc. The second dimension is concerned with the relevance of the outputs of TVET systems and programmes to developmental needs and labour market requirements. Thus, the first dimension is related to the internal efficiency of TVET, while the second dimension is related to the effectiveness or external efficiency of TVET.

TVET providers in modern systems and economies are exposed to continuous pressures to deliver relevant outputs. Such pressures include:

- The need to enhance productivity and competitiveness of enterprises in a predominantly free economy that is becoming more and more integrated in the world economy.
- The continuous and accelerating technological developments that call for adequate response of HRD systems and programmes.
- The changing characteristics, needs and priorities of labour markets, in response to the nature and dynamics of investments and capital mobility, that require similar flexibility and adaptability of TVET as well as mobility of the labour force.
- The growing role of the private sector and social partners in HRD systems, resulting in a shift from a predominantly supply driven HRD system to a balanced supply-demand driven system.

In general, the relevance factor of TVET can be promoted through a two dimensional approach: quantitative and qualitative.

The quantitative approach to relevance does not imply accurate planning concerning the size of TVET outputs to fit the quantitative needs of the labour market. Rather, it implies a number of policies and measures that influence and rationalize intakes to, and hence outputs of TVET. Such policies and measures include:

- Availability of a comprehensive human resources information system, covering both the supply and demand sides, to help learners and planners take rational decisions in joining and planning for TVET.
- Availability of educational and vocational guidance and counseling services, as well as employment services.
- Utilization of legislative tools and funding policies to influence the quantitative nature of TVET.
- Expanding and diversifying non-formal and adult TVET facilities and services, to help flexible response to the changing needs of the labour market.

The qualitative approach to relevance of TVET, on the other hand, can be activated through such policies and measures as:

- Deriving TVET programmes and curricula from the actual job requirements and relevant competencies.
- Designing the performance standards, and hence testing and certification systems, according to actual occupational characteristics and requirements.

- Responding to technological developments and changes in labour market needs through the introduction of relevant developments concerning the types, fields, contents and standards of TVET programmes.
- Involving all partners on the supply and demand sides of human resources in the planning and implementation of TVET.
- Utilizing modern technologies and methodologies.
- Promoting evaluation systems and procedures, through studies and field research, and benefiting from the resulting feedback.

TVET AND THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

The onset of the knowledge economy in some societies, and the approach of such economy in some others, will influence the general approach to HRD objectives, and shift it from a combination of "education for education" and "education for work" approach to "education for life" approach.

Within the concept of "education for education", TVET tends to be supply driven and learner centered. The concept of "education for work", on the other hand, would require TVET to become demand driven and job centered. Within the more comprehensive concept of "education for life", TVET tends to be driven by a combination of factors that include supply, demand, learner needs, society needs and learning for life. Accordingly HRD systems are considered both as an economic investment, with viable returns on the individual, the enterprise and society; as well as a social service made available to the individual to develop his abilities and potentials, and respond to his needs.

In a knowledge economy, the historical schism between the views and priorities of educationists and economists vis-à-vis the objectives and contents of HRD, and hence TVET programmes, becomes narrowed to a great extent.

Furthermore, in a knowledge economy, TVET providers should aim at the preparation of what might be called "knowledge workers" who possess four groups of skills. These are:

- Basic work skills that comprise job related knowledge, skills and attitudes, as well as the required level of competency in organizational skills and work standards.
- Communication skills.
- Higher mental skills that comprise critical thinking, problem solving, systems thinking, analytical skills, etc.
- Developmental skills that comprise self-learning, creativity, innovation, initiative, risk-taking, etc.

THE ECONOMICS OF TVET

The issue of the "economics of TVET" has two main dimensions. The first is concerned with the sources of finance for TVET, while the second is concerned with such elements as cost and efficiency.

By their nature, TVET systems, especially school-based systems, are costly. This is mainly due to the special facilities and equipment needed, and relatively low instructor-learner ratios.

In general, TVET systems can be financed through one or a combination of the following sources, depending upon the delivery system (school-based, enterprise-based, dual or cooperative), and whether they are provided as a pre-service or in-service activity:

- Public sources via central or local government agencies.
- Enterprises and employers.
- Learners` contributions through direct (fees) or indirect (production work) means.
- Income generating activities.
- Special taxes and funds, such as training levies.
- Voluntary and philanthropic sources, as in the case of TVET services provided for groups of special needs, like the disabled and the disadvantaged.

The role of enterprises in TVET funding can be almost exclusive as in on-the-job systems, in-service training, and special tax schemes. It can, on the other hand, be substantial as in dual and cooperative systems, or minimal as in-school-based systems.

The efficiency and cost-effectiveness aspects of TVET comprise such components as the internal and external efficiencies, as well as the choice of systems and processes that produce highest benefits at lowest costs. In general, enterprise-based TVET systems tend to be more cost effective, besides being more relevant.

LABOUR MARKETS AND COMMODITY APPROACH TO TVET

To be responsive to developmental needs and labour market requirements TVET, as a major component of HRD, is sometimes treated as having many characteristics of a commodity. A commodity approach to TVET has, understandably, advantages and disadvantages. The major advantages are:

- Commodity producers diversify their products and are responsive to the tastes and needs of consumers. In the case of TVET, the consumers are the learners, the employers, and the community at large.
- Commodity producers are expected to adhere to local and international standards, including health, safety and environmental criteria. Such standards for TVET include, in addition, technical, economic and social considerations.
- Marketing efforts are major activities of commodity producers to promote demand and consumption. Similar efforts have positive effects for TVET.

- Competition is a salient feature among commodity producers, resulting in better quality and lower costs, as well as the disappearance from the markets of inefficient producers. Similar considerations have positive effects for TVET.
- The economics of production is an intrinsic feature of the process of commodity production, with the objective of maximizing returns and increasing benefits. A similar approach to TVET services is beneficial.

Nevertheless, a commodity approach to TVET has some disadvantages that can be summarized as follows:

- Profit making is usually a main objective of commodity production. For TVET providers to offer their services with the objective of making profits is detrimental to the whole system, especially in the case of services to the young to prepare them for work, even if the cost is met by employers or society at large.
- Commodity producers usually avoid producing commodities that are not justified on economic grounds, either because of the small market and low demand, or because of high production costs and investments. In the case of TVET, such an approach is not acceptable, as it might exclude some services and programmes that are needed for the public good.
- Commodity production is characterized by a minor role of the public sector in funding and general organizational aspects. On the contrary, an effective role of the public sector in TVET is needed.
- Economic considerations and factors prevail in commodity production. In the case of TVET, a combination of economic, educational and sociocultural factors are taken into consideration.

CASE STUDY

Anticipating Environmental and Organizational Changes to Develop Employees' future needed competencies: The proactive methodology (Leonardo da Vinci project)

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Changes in socio-economical environment, technology and markets, shifts in products, legislation, and finances are creating many opportunities and threats for the companies, especially for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and require from them strategies to survive and develop their business. These strategies often include restructuring, outsourcing, new product launches, new work system arrangements, technological innovations or entering into new markets. They imply new competencies in company's manpower and their identification is a required step to determine the strategies and practices of human resources management.

The present paper aims to present a methodology to anticipate SMEs' environment changes and to identify the actions companies initiate in order to cope with the expected environment's transformation. Furthermore it aims to define the competencies that the companies will need for implementing the actions defined and planned. The PROACTIVE methodology provides several tools to anticipate changes in the companies' environment and the actions these companies will implement to cope with those changes. It also provides tools to identify how these changes will influence on the competencies of human resources, and to define how this new competencies will be made available for the company.

Two main approaches have been distinguished to define anticipation: One is the mechanistic and objective approach and the other is the socio-constructive one. The first one assumes that changes will happen and then anticipation is to foresee them and to act on the basis of such information. The second one, is aware that people who anticipate are also agents and when they interpret the situation they influence it. According to this approach, anticipation is to construct shared meanings about the aims and strategies to built a new situation. In order to promote this strategies a R&D team⁷ developed the PROACTIVE conceptual model and methodology to support SMEs to anticipating changes, identifying their implications for the competencies needed in the future, and developing the strategies to get them available in due time.

The Proactive methodology offers a tool-kit that facilitates the identification of competence needs in the organisation. They are organized in six phases on the basis of the process of its implementation:

- The introductory phase, evaluates the possibilities of success of the anticipatory analysis and creates the conditions for its implementation.

⁷ The partners who developed the methodology were: University of Valencia, Spain, Lifelong Learning Institute Dipoli Finland, Chambre Regionale de Commerce et d'Industrie des Pays de la Loire y Fundación Universidad-Empresa de valencia. In addition to these partners, The Consellería de Trabajo (from Valencia Region and Unefor from Aveiro, Portugal, cooperated in the validation of the methodology.

- The second phase focuses on helping the SMEs to identify the potential future changes in their environments and how companies could cope with and adapt to those changes. Afterwards, an analysis about the strategy and the actions that the company will take in the immediate and intermediate future to cope with anticipated changes is performed.
- The third phase analyzes the implications for jobs and the job requirements these changes will have. Jobs that will change or disappear as well as the new jobs needed on the basis of anticipated changes are identified.
- The fourth phase provides guidance for a competence analysis of new and remaining jobs. This analysis will imply to define the competencies required and to see if the organization has them available or not in their current labour force.
- The fifth phase focuses on the analysis of the company's current conditions that will foster or hamper the actions to provide the competencies needed and on the identification and planning of actions.
- Finally, in the sixth phase, the evaluation of the application of the methodology and its results is performed.

The validation of the methodology started training experts that would use it in companies. During the training, the conceptual framework, theoretical background and the knowledge and use of the tools were presented and analyzed. Training includes exercises using the tools. The training load to achieve adequate competence is about 40 contact hours. Afterwards, the methodology was applied to 17 companies⁸ within a wide range of size (from 8 to 5000 employees), sectors (telecommunication, food industry; metal industry, ceramics, textil industry; ICT services, business services, finances, etc.) and countries (Estonia, France, Finland, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain).

Once the application of the methodology was finished an evaluation session took place and the most important conclusions reached were: First, the rationale of the methodology is very positive and powerful because it focuses on several critical issues for promoting strategic management of human resources in the company. The main positive features that have been often mentioned are: a) its anticipatory approach for identifying factors of change; b) the specification of actions to be taken by the company for adaptation; c) the identification of future competencies needed, d) the analysis of alternatives to make the needed competencies available. Second, the use of the methodology is helpful and effective because, in a systematic way, helps the company to carry out an anticipatory analysis of needed competencies. Third, the application of the methodology has proved more useful in some companies than in others. Several factors such as size, or readiness to change, can influence on its usefulness. Fourth, although its application is not very complex it requires professional preparation in strategic analysis and in managing human resources by competencies. Furthermore, its implementation requires resources to systematically analyse the company. Fifth, professionals that used the methodology made a number of practical suggestions to improve several parts and processes of it such as shortening it, making it friendly-use, etc.

⁸ In some cases, the application of the methodology was only partial. The selection of the tools used was based on the company's needs, the special features of the company or the company situation and also on the basis of the resources available.

The aim of the Leonardo “PROACTIVE Open and Distance Training”, that is currently under development is to favour the dissemination and valorisation of PROACTIVE methodology. Thus, the focus is on the adaptation of the methodology to a flexible and distance-learning training system available by internet, in order to alleviate the lack of time and increase the flexibility that were suggested in the previous project. Software and a multimedia version are being developed to facilitate its implementation in data gathering, data analysis and report production. This version is more user friendly and, at the same time, more flexible to meet specific needs of the companies. A side effect of this format is the extended possibilities of data analysis combining data from different companies, and sectors. These analyses will produce relevant information that will enrich its application in future cases. Finally, the professionals trained by means of the ODL training will carry out a second wave of case studies. These new cases will provide data for additional validation.

CASE STUDY

Improving Egyptian Vocational Education and Training

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INTRODUCTION

As Egypt is joining the free trade zone - to be fully established in Y 2010 - among the European Union and Southern Mediterranean Countries, the Government of Egyptian (GoE) has already started a number of initiatives in order to be an active member of the global economy. The challenge is for Egypt to increase its national productivity and to enhance the competitiveness of its products and services. There are currently various reform strategies and projects in existence, which are aimed at improving the skills and efficiency of the Egyptian workforce as well as employment services. Some of these projects have technical and/or financial foreign support, for example:

- Establishing National Skill Standards – conducted by the Supreme Council for Human Resources Development and Training (SCHRDT).
- Technical Education Reform – conducted by the Ministry of Education (MOE).
- Reforming Middle Technical Institutes – conducted by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE).
- Skills Development Programme and TVET Reform Projects – conducted by the Ministry of Industry and Technology Development (MITD).
- Labour Market Service Reform – conducted by the Ministry of Manpower and Immigration (MMPI).

This year the Egyptian Parliament endorsed a new legislation for work issues (law no. 12), including articles about regulations for work licensing and for creating a national training fund. The importance of these articles will help sustainability of the skill standards and VET certification as a basis of a demand driven training system.

ESTABLISHING THE NATIONAL SKILL STANDARDS PROJECT

This project was launched in Nov. 1999, and has now reached the implementation phase in some selected VTCs. The project is sponsored by the SCHRDT, and funded from the Government contribution allocated to the Social Fund for Development (SFD). The technical assistance is obtained from a consortium of a number of European partnerships (SQA – AFPA – CarlBro – iB) led by the British Council as the main contractor. The project's main objective is to develop skill standards to employer requirements, and is mainly concerned with the establishment of a unified system for competency-based vocational qualifications.

The project is, currently, limited to 100 trades in three economic sectors namely Industry, Tourism and Construction. Emphasis is given to the building of an Egyptian

vocational training system capable for extending the skills and qualifications development to other economic sectors. The respective Federations - representing employers' interests – received technical and financial support from the SFD in order to play the role of the “Lead Bodies” in that system. This allowed the Federations to form and manage the trade committees, which include members representing all VET actors and beneficiaries on tripartite bases. Their task is to analyze job activities in respective sectors and to produce functional maps describing the skills required to do a job, as a reference for identifying: employment, learning and assessment specifications. The methodology used in the production of the skill standards is similar to that adopted by ETF in defining the VET Standards. The European Consultants assisted the Egyptian counterparts in benchmarking the developed skill standards against European best practices.

The main deliverables of this project to date are:

- The development of over 200 competency based training programmes at levels 1 & 2 and some at level 3 for the chosen 100 trades.
- The production of exemplar training material (Student Centered Learning Packs SCLPs), as well as the development of pedagogical and technical training manuals to assist training instructors in the delivery of these SCLPs.
- The preparation of master equipment lists and specifications for procurement, to facilitate the development of centers of excellence for vocational training.
- The improvement of the efficiency of selected VTCs for the purpose of the trial of the system. This process achieved training of 77 trainers of trainers, 22 center managers and their deputies, 86 trainers and instructors, 60 internal assessors and verifiers, and 18 external evaluators.

Currently, the project is working on the production of recommendations for accreditation and endorsement of the new Egyptian vocational competency-based qualifications (EVCQS). This process will support the recognition of skills and qualifications locally, regionally and internationally.

TECHNICAL EDUCATION REFORM

Since mid 80's, the Ministry of Education had started a number of initiatives aiming at improving the technical education sector to meet the labour market standard requirements, including:

- Upgrading training curricula and instructors of three technical secondary schools in collaboration with DfID (formerly ODA -UK),
- Establishment of two Industrial Education Colleges, in collaboration with WB. to qualify the integrated technical and pedagogical teachers. Now these colleges are affiliated to the higher education sector that belongs to the Ministry of Higher Education.

In mid 90's, the MOE adopted the implementation of the German dual system experience of vocational training and education in some of its technical secondary schools. The German technical co-operation agency GTZ is offering the technical assistance including upgrading curricula and training of trainers. MOE created a project policy implementation unit with special entity to cater for the partnerships between the private sector and the ministry. The implementation mechanisms

required the establishment of about 20 regional units in various geographical locations to regulate the practical training for 4 days/week in companies.

The project's main objective is to use its outputs as a model to reform the Egyptian vocational education system. Since starting of the pilot phase in 1994, about 4500 students has been enrolled in 11 trades (statistics released in Y 2000). 19 more trades will be added during the next four years required for the production, services, construction & building, and health sectors. GTZ succeeded in extending partnerships and co-operations with other training institutions run by different ministries and governmental institutions as well as non-governmental organizations.

Also, the MOE is in the process of integrating secondary general schools with commercial secondary technical education into one system. The same will apply to industrial schools. In which case graduates from the new system will need to upgrade specific and key skills in training centers.

REFORMING MIDDLE TECHNICAL INSTITUTES

In 2002, the Ministry of Higher Education endorsed a comprehensive reform strategy in collaboration with the World Bank that consists of 25 sub-projects, including a sub-project to restructure 47 Middle Technical Institutes into 8 Technical Collages. The objective is to improve the quality and relevance of mid-level technical education through:

- Increased autonomy to allow institutional control of budget.
- Designing new curricula with significant private sector input.
- Provision of quality training for instructors.
- Strengthening academic management and administration.
- Refurbishing facilities and provide equipment including IT backbone.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME AND TVET REFORM PROJECTS

The Ministry of Industry and Technology Development accepted to take responsibility for the implementation of two inter-related initiatives aiming at improving relevance and efficiency of the Egyptian TVET system, so that it can provide the country with the required skilled workforce, as well as to enhance lifelong learning and training. Because both projects are multi-sectoral, they will be steered by a tri-ministerial advisory and coordinating committee under the broad aegis of the SCHRDT. Currently, the ministry formed a board of trustees and established a project management unit.

The skills development programme is a pilot operation designed to stimulate private sector demand for demand driven and competitively provided training. It will be implemented over a period of five years and it is partially financed by a World Bank loan.

The TVET reform is a six year project co-financed by the GoE and the EC (MEDA II). Ultimately the project is designed to improve the quality of TVET delivery on two levels: (i) local level, through establishing partnerships between groups of enterprises sharing common technical skill needs and regional training providers; (ii) national level, by applying a bottom-up approach to affect a wider reform policy. The

envisaged reform will have a short and medium term level focusing on immediate and well defined needs for skilled labour within the existing TVET system; and a long term re-orientation of the overall TVET system to become more student and demand oriented. Three main components is to be achieved:

- Development of decentralized and demand driven TVET institutions.
- Improvement of the quality of TVET delivery.
- Development of national regulatory and support institutions for a decentralized and demand driven TVET system.

EGYPTIAN LABOUR MARKET SERVICE REFORM (ELMSR)

The focus of the ELMSR project is to build the capacity of the employment offices run by the Ministry of Manpower and Immigration throughout Egypt, such as to offer a full range of employment services to workers and businesses alike. The project is receiving technical and financial support from CIDA. It has already started its pilot phase in five geographical regions. The main outputs of this project will cover three key areas:

- The establishment of a comprehensive system of delivery of programmes and services in a network of employment offices.
- The training and developing of professional staff to operate employment services.
- Expanding the utility of the Egyptian national occupational classification system, by linking the database to the Egyptian national skill standards. This will be achieved through a fully automated and easily accessible electronic labour exchange, which will facilitate the rapid matching of the qualifications of skilled workers with available jobs. This MIS system will have the capacity to provide services to all areas of Egypt as well as potentially provide linkages with similar systems in other countries throughout the Middle East.

CONCLUSION

The GoE is persuading procedures to ensure sufficient economic growth and to improve the environment that will prosper businesses and hence the creation of more work opportunities.

Overall it can be concluded that there is a need for a unified strategy to articulate the various outputs achieved by some of these projects. The national skill standards benchmarked to European and International best practices can form the backbone for the various existing drives for reform. It is indispensable to build-up coherence among the sub-sector strategies adopted by different ministries into a national TVET reform strategy, including:

- Creation and supporting a national accreditation system for the Egyptian vocational competency-based qualifications.
- Inclusion of all active VET actors and beneficiaries into the SCHRDT, to guarantee the sustainability of the system.

- Establishment of the flexible mechanism of information accessible to various stakeholders of demand driven training and lifelong learning context.
- Establishment of guidance services and mediations specific to labour market needs that is equally accessible to women and workers with special needs irrespective of religion or race.

**THEME 2 – QUALITY IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, QUALITY
MANAGEMENT AND QUALITY CONTROL SYSTEMS.**

DISCUSSION NOTE

Quality policies in training

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The structural adjustment programmes set in train in the late eighties and membership of the World Trade Organisation prompted the southern Mediterranean countries (MEDA area) gradually to open up their economies to international competition. This process has been consolidated by the various partnership agreements with the European Union, which are to be given practical expression through establishment of a free trade area between the MEDA countries and the European Union. Given what is at stake, setting up a free trade area is a significant factor in economic and social plans. Accordingly, restructuring and modernisation (upgrading) strategies have been launched for the economies of the MEDA region countries to help them attain a sufficient level of competitiveness and stand up to both national and international competition.

To win through and achieve the necessary standard, the MEDA countries understood that it was imperative to develop and improve the skills of their human resources. Strategies for reform of the education and training systems have been drawn up and applied in certain countries of the area (Morocco, Tunisia and Jordan); they are already operational. Other countries (Algeria, Lebanon and Egypt) have started on the same path, but at a slower pace. The reform programmes for vocational training in the MEDA countries broadly aim to develop the education and training system to the benefit of social and economic development. They break with the strictly social approach to vocational training taken in the past and mark a shift from a training supply approach to an economic demand approach, which is coming into place progressively. The economic operators are thus becoming the customers of the vocational training systems.

Three major types of teaching and initial vocational training are found in the MEDA region. The first (good examples are Tunisia and Morocco) is "outside the school system"; training is given above all in sectoral or multi-purpose training centres, in some cases in conjunction with companies. The training followed leads to qualifications recognised through an approval system. The second type is primarily school-based (for example, Lebanon); teaching is carried out above all in technical and vocational establishments and leads to national education diplomas. These first two types are found side by side in a number of Mashrek countries (Egypt, Jordan and Syria) and combine to form the third.

In several countries of the region (Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, Jordan), a further training market is gradually materialising thanks to the growing investments made by both governments and companies to develop human resources, increased provision of training, greater flexibility in procedures for the grant of funding, and revision of the refund procedures, particularly in the countries concerned by the vocational training tax (Morocco and Tunisia).

The interest in the quality of training results from a number of trends which have had a strong impact on the development of vocational training in the MEDA countries:

- The progressive awareness among the authorities of the countries concerned about bringing companies up to the required standard and boosting their competitiveness with a view to the introduction of the free trade area.
- The restructuring of initial and further vocational training arrangements so as to cope better with this new situation (shift from the supply approach to a demand approach underpinned in so far as possible by establishment of a training market).
- The increasing investments made by governments to this end and the search for effectiveness and efficiency in these investments.
- The international tendency to give weight to the quality of training and the transfer of concepts and approaches, notably via sponsors and international cooperation.
- Adoption, by major companies and also certain SMEs, of quality assurance systems like ISO 9000 at the level of production activities. This trend is found in all the business support programmes funded by the European Commission.

Vocational training systems are starting to focus on quality. Various approaches and/or pilot schemes have been launched; they are so numerous and varied that it is difficult to list and classify them. In Morocco, for example, discussions on quality led, on the one hand, to introduction of an accreditation system for private vocational training establishments and, on the other, to inclusion, in the assessment of the existing centres of excellence, of a higher level (of quality) which will be ISO 9000 certification. In Tunisia, the debate on quality has two main themes: the quality of public services (certification of the Ministry responsible for training holding authority over training structures), and the training process, from design to assessment. In Egypt the debate includes the definition of qualifications and skills. Common concerns come to the fore in one form or another in all these discussions: adapting vocational training and its output to the changing needs of the economy resulting from the economic reforms linked, among other things, to the free trade agreements.

Although quality is a recent concern in all countries of the region, it is reflected in the reforms undertaken. The concept of quality has been taken on board in numerous ways (in European countries too); this aspect is increasingly included all parts of the programmes undertaken and it has led to considerable achievements. Now that a few years of reforms have been completed with the support of the European Commission and other sponsors (World Bank, Canadian cooperation, assistance from the Member States), two developments are worthy of our attention: firstly, the gradual generalisation of the skills approach and combined work and training in the vocational training systems of the countries concerned (Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan); secondly, the repercussions of this generalisation from the organisational standpoint on the parties concerned and all vocational training systems (involvement of professionals in the design, production and assessment of training, establishments of partnerships between industry and vocational training; establishment of training standards; certification of trainers' skills; accreditation of private training establishments, and so on). The knock-on effects of these trends inevitably result in the introduction of methodologies and quality approaches that the countries concerned start to identify, formalise and develop.

Quality policies in the MEDA area countries have progressed in a few years from rudimentary to an experimental stage. The vocational training players are in search of ways, means and tools for bringing under control their design and production of training output. Only one country in the region (Tunisia) has identified quality as a

priority. However, the proposed policies concern only a proportion of the vocational training players as companies are involved only marginally. It is true that the industrial fabric of the MEDA countries is mainly made up of SMEs, which find it difficult to get involved in the initial training process and gain access to further training. Nevertheless, the SMEs are becoming familiar, slowly but surely, with staff training, trainees on combined work/training schemes and putting across their skill needs to the training system management.

Introducing quality policies into vocational training systems in the MEDA countries, as elsewhere, requires determination of certain principles or requirements to be adhered to or met so as to ensure that the quality policies bring added value to the systems in place. A first principle consists in defining the objectives of the introduction of quality policies, the second in including the proposed policy in a supply/demand partnership relationship, and a third in encouraging a more professional approach among the stakeholders by equipping them with the means and skills to play their part in the training process. Lastly, the success of the quality policies depends on a number of prior conditions: firstly, ensuring political commitment and secondly, including quality policies in an overall reform encompassing the aims, machinery, and means for managing and adjusting training. Tackling the question of quality policies therefore means breaking with a basic rule of economic modelling: "all other things being equal".

Case study

The reform of the vocational training and employment system in Tunisia, MANFORME

The reform of the vocational training and employment system, known in Tunisia as MANFORME, is a national strategy adopted in the framework of the programme for upgrading the Tunisian economy in preparation for the free trade area with the European Union in 2008. The strategy covers various aspects of vocational training in Tunisia; however, its cornerstone is adherence to the principle of orienting training on the basis of economic demand. This approach is reflected in MANFORME's overall objective: "Quality vocational training to the benefit of the production system". The programme is funded by a vast number of sponsors and organised around four priorities:

- Improving participation by companies in definition of their skills' needs.
- Improving the quality and adaptability of public and private training supply.
- Implementing active labour market management and further training.
- Introducing quality policies.

MANFORME was tailored to the requirements of the economy and as a result businesses' abilities to express their skills' needs gradually improved, partnerships between companies and their representatives were built up and training engineering was applied on the basis of skills with repercussions on the organisation of vocational training establishments and human resources training.

The two key components of the quality policies adopted by the Tunisian government are introduction of a quality policy complying with ISO standards at the level of the Ministry responsible for vocational training and the bodies under its authority, and the devising of vocational training standards. In that approach, the quality policy covers all the processes associated with the preparation and implementation of initial and further training programmes.

QUESTIONS ON THE TUNISIAN EXPERIENCE

- What are the main stages of the policy adopted?
- What consequences has this policy had on the daily operation of vocational training?
- What roles do the trainers play in the design and implementation of the policy adopted?
- What is the position of the learner in this policy?

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION DOCUMENTS

Questions for the Round Table

Belkacem Djoudad

Ministry of Vocational Educational Training, Algeria

This Round table discussion shall begin by looking at aspects, which are of particular relevance to the MEDA countries.

Therefore, we shall look at questions relative to improvement in the quality of human resources by the implementation of 'Quality' initiatives in vocational teaching and training systems in the MEDA region, taking into account the socio-economic specificity of the region and discussing certain concerns.

These concerns could be expressed in this way:

How do we link "Quality" objectives with Integration and Equal Access to Training initiatives in the context of job improvement? The "Quality" initiative should not be reduced to a certification initiative.

How do we integrate the "Quality" initiative into global policies for the improvement of the systems themselves? What are the mechanisms and the determining factors of a training system, which is centred on "Quality"? This line of thought leads to the question of evaluation and the implication of beneficiaries (companies and individuals) in this process.

How do we involve companies more, augmenting their role from the expression of needs (a concern in itself, given the nature of the economic fabric of the MEDA countries, which is dominated by small businesses) to evaluating the quality of training?

How do we reinforce factors such as quality and professionalism of players, which necessarily implies a policy of finance and organisation before going through a revision of the role of public powers?

These questions should broaden the "Quality" debate, which would not be limited to technical questions of norms and criteria, but could establish a consultation and partnership of different actors through mechanisms of evaluation and valuation validated by all.

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION DOCUMENTS

Answers to questions

Hans Werner FRANZ

Dortmund Social Research Center, Germany

General remarks

It is difficult to answer these questions due to the difference of the socio-economic and political systems implied. Also within the European Union we can find a vast plurality of approaches, systems, methods and instruments. It is important to perceive them as wealth. There is no one best solution. Therefore, in the European debate, at the moment, everything is oriented towards safeguarding this wealth of ideas looking for a certain reference framework of issues which must be covered and certain minimum standards of methodical rigour.

If there is something like a European trend in quality issues, it has four characteristics in my view:

- growing standards-based competence orientation, increase of modular approaches for lifelong learning;
- accreditation of training centres according to certain minimum standards;
- some sort of systematic quality management in the provider organisations;
- some sort of testing of the output quality.

Quality in training like in everything else may be

- quality of input (or potential): people (trainees and trainers), material conditions and machines of whatever kind needed, but also the objectives formulated by the stakeholders;
- quality of throughput (or process) including all the particular processes of production, administration, service, etc. Training like all personal services (e.g. health care) has a specific characteristic which lies in that the “client” is a co-producer of quality;
- quality of output (or product) which is measured and evaluated as a general (exchange) value and as a specific (use) value. Therefore, it is helpful to distinguish output and outcome quality. Output is what you measure in terms of quality checks and examinations. For measuring the outcome, it is important to ask those who can falsify the use value, i.e. the employers as users of qualifications and competencies, and the individual which has to make a living on what he or she has learned.

Question 1:

Quality is a construction. It is what you define it to be. If you want to include specific social objectives, then they are part of what you conceive as quality. Of course, this depends on what you can do to implement it and make it come true.

The most important answer to this question therefore is: Try to imply all those in the formulation of the objectives who have to make them come true and who could have an advantage or disadvantage from what is the expected outcome. Use a stakeholder approach for all levels: VET system, provider organisations, provision of training, national, regional, local, etc.

Question 2:

This question is asking for an answer on the systemic level. There is no one answer to this but a system of answers.

- Do not copy and do not trust anybody who tells you to copy.
- Try to make sure that you yourself know what you need and want what is best for you.
- Look at all the systems or as many as possible to find out what suits you best.
- Take the best from what you have seen and known and build your own system.

I do not recommend to copy the German system. It has major systemic elements which are not easily replicable elsewhere, not even in Germany itself as it is failing in Eastern Germany. If you have employers in your country who tell you to copy the German system, ask them whether they want to contract trainees (not cheap labour) and pay for them under defined and examined learning conditions and without any obligation for trainees to stay in the company afterwards. It is not by chance that there is a serious debate in Germany at the moment about introducing a training fee for those companies who do not train (about 70 per cent).

What is valuable in the German system is the double dual approach of content and alternating learning places which combines theory and practice on the one hand learning in a school and/or training centre and in a company on the other hand. How you achieve to implement this dual approach may well be very different in each country.

I recommend to have a close look at the Spanish experience and their new VET system, preferably in its Basque variety. It contains all the four characteristics enumerated above as a European trend following strictly a competence and quality approach (basically EFQM with external auditing).

Question 3:

The answer to this question again depends strongly on the institutional tissue in each country. For example, are their really representative employers' associations and trade unions? The answer also depends very much on what is the level on which you want to find out what: system level, regional level, local level? The answer is very much the same as the one to Question 1.

Question 4:

What applies to the system as a whole, also applies to its parts, e.g. the organisations and the people working in the system.

- Use a standards-based competence reference system for those employed in the system (recommended reference: new Italian regional system of accreditation of VET organisations).
- Use accreditation of VET providers according to unified minimum standards.
- One of these standards must be the existence of systematic quality development. Good quality systems are learning systems.
- Let them learn to report about their own systematic quality efforts and results and audit them.

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION DOCUMENTS

Answers to questions

Kim FAURSCHOU

FACO, Denmark

General remarks

Quality can be seen as fulfilment of goals. One achieves quality when the activities fulfil the goals. This can be expressed in another way:

$$\text{Quality} = \frac{\text{Experience}}{\text{Expectation}}$$

To take any advantage of this definition, we need a clear description of the context. This description has to include both experience and expectations from a number of different actors.

Quality is very context dependent. This – expressed in the difference of the socio-economic and political systems implied - makes it difficult to give concrete answers to the four questions. And maybe we don't need concrete answers but more the direction of the answers, which is what I will try to give.

Our work within quality in VET in all the Member States of the European Union shows a plurality of concepts, approaches, systems, methods and instruments. This plurality shows, there are no "best solution", but in fact a number of different possibilities – depending on the context you live in. Based on this I conclude, search for a solution that fits to your context (history, society, future and your goals/objectives) and use the plurality of the concepts, approaches, systems, methods and instruments to inspire your work. But remember, it is your decision and it is you who have to live with the solution, so please make a solution that fit to your society.

Question 1. How do we link "Quality" objectives with Integration and Equal Access to Training initiatives in the context of job improvement? The "Quality" initiative should not be reduced to a certification initiative.

As described in the introduction to my answers, are all answers dependent on the context and what you want. If you want Integration and Equal Access to training initiatives to be a part of your goals, then include these goals together with all your other goals. The difficult task is to secure, that these goals are general understood, measurable and clear. This work can be done together with a number of different stakeholders on all levels, in order to secure a common definition of the goals. The key point here is to agree in some clear goals on measurable very difficult areas, e.g. equal access means equal in relation to what? age, sex, skills, possibilities, political priorities.

Question 2. How do we integrate the "Quality" initiative into global policies for the improvement of the systems themselves? What are the mechanisms and the determining factors of a training system, which is centred on "Quality"? This line of thought leads to the question of evaluation and the implication of beneficiaries (companies and individuals) in this process.

The improvement of systems can be done first of all by taking your own medicine. If an activity and a principle is good for students, teachers, managers and VET-providers, why shouldn't it be good for a Ministry or some other actors at system level?

Systems have to learn and develop based on the same principles the individual actors. The Common Quality Assurance Framework and the Common Core Criteria of Quality Assurance in VET provide us with a structure for the answers on the mechanisms and the determining factors of a training system, which is centred on Quality.

You need to work structured within the following 5 steps:

- Planning (purpose and plan)
- Implementation
- Evaluation and assessment
- Review (Feedback and procedures for change)
- Methodology (actors, measurement, organisation)

Without describing the details of several years work on the topic I will mention, that the proposed framework, can be seen as a critical friend. A friend that raises a number of key questions and insist on clear and well structured answers. An other key point is the involvement of a number of different stakeholders e.g. students, parents, teachers, companies, the social partners, the society.

Further details can be found on <http://cedefop.communityzero.com/quality> or just mail me on fac0@spo.dk.

Question 3. How do we involve companies more, augmenting their role from the expression of needs (a concern in itself, given the nature of the economic fabric of the MEDA countries, which is dominated by small businesses) to evaluating the quality of training?

Companies can be involved in a number of ways:

Advisory boards – on system level and at the individual VET-provider

Guest teachers

Training places for students

Training places for teachers

Dual systems

Political pressure

Social responsibility

But behind all these different tools we need to answer the question: what do the companies gain from an involvement?

Companies are motivated in a number of different ways: cheap workforce, relevant and competent labour force, their own development, etc. Search for what motivates the companies and see if this – hopefully – fit in your possibilities to motivate.

Question 4. How do we reinforce factors such as quality and professionalism of players, which necessarily implies a policy of finance and organisation before going through a revision of the role of public powers?

Again here the answer could be to take your own medicine. Use a systematic approach to all actors and use a model that fits you. Hopefully you can be inspired by the Common Core Criteria of Quality Assurance in VET. Money is only on tool to reinforce quality, but not the only and necessarily not the most important one. Good ideas, structure, support, motivation and follow-up are very often the scarcest resources. But on the other hand resources we can do something about.

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION DOCUMENTS

Proposed elements for replies

Baati Mounir

Ministry of Education, Tunisia

In response to Mr Djoudad's questions, I would like to provide some additional information on the national quality benchmark for vocational training and on the quality initiative taken within the framework of the vocational training set-up.

The aim of any quality initiative, whether implemented in an industrial company, a service company or even a public service organisation, is to convince the client of the ability of the organisation or company systematically to take into account and meet his expectations.

The initiative taken by the Tunisian Ministry of Education and Training in the area of vocational training is no exception. It is based on two fundamental considerations.

The first is that the training centre should be situated at the heart of the set-up and that all other bodies revolving around it should support its work. After all, the training centre is where training is provided, policies are implemented and the skills of the trainers for delivering the training programmes are revealed, and it is to the centre that companies and young people will turn to air any dissatisfaction. This is the *raison d'être* of the national benchmark, which provides a framework for the activities of the centres and enables them to focus on continuous improvement (each centre may set itself annual targets in terms of compliance with new standards set against its original level of compliance and the resources available to it) while ensuring that they all pursue the same targets.

The second consideration concerns the profile of the training set-up's clients. In any quality initiative, the first task is to identify the product and the client. Talk of product quality only becomes meaningful once the client has been identified and his level of satisfaction assessed. Against this background, the Tunisian vocational training set-up has identified three client groups with different yet related expectations. These are companies, young people and the State.

Companies are clients of the centre by virtue of being its graduates' future employers. Any dissatisfaction on their part would indicate that the training offered by the centre had failed to meet their expectations.

Young people undergoing training are clients insofar as failure to take into account their expectations and significantly enhance their employment prospects by providing training which meets the expectations of companies would drive them away.

Finally, the State is a client by virtue of funding the set-up, and it expects its investment in the centres to bear fruit and to produce the human resources needed by the country's companies.

The initial task of identifying what these three client groups expect of a training centre has been completed, and the expectations have been transformed into standards which together make up the benchmark. As you will have noticed, for each standard

we have identified the activities to be carried out at centres in order to implement the standard. To identify these activities, we consulted the set-up and those centres in which the standard was already met and for which activities were already taking place and included them in the document. However, the activities defined for a given standard, and for the majority of standards, in fact reflected what was already good practice in certain centres and which we were merely able to highlight.

We believe that this benchmark helps the centres focus on continuous improvement by gradually integrating new standards into the annual plan as described above, on the understanding that although some standards are compulsory, they, and thus the benchmark itself, evolve in response to clients' expectations.

The benchmark also represents a series of norms and criteria applicable to public vocational training centres, reflecting the key themes in the reform of vocational training, such as partnership, in-house training and skills-based training. These are norms set by the public authorities and their partners with a view to implementing political choices in the training field.

In addition, to help them implement training programmes, the centres need programmes developed at the level of the national centre for teacher training and training systems as well as material and human resources requested and negotiated within the framework of programme-contracts with the Tunisian Vocational Training Agency. These two bodies, along with the Directorates-General of the Ministry of Education and Training, will each draw up a detailed quality plan tailored to their respective missions and to the expectations of the centres.

One of the questions concerns the involvement of companies in the identification of needs and evaluation of training.

This involvement is very strong at various levels of the Tunisian set-up.

At the political level, partnership agreements have been signed between the Ministry of Education and Training and various trade associations (18 agreements), providing for regular meetings and systematic consultations of the associations on the creation of new diplomas or new centres.

At the practical level, companies are involved in the management of the training centres, each training establishment having a board chaired by a trade association representative. Furthermore, as in-house training begins to dominate, companies in practice become actors in the training process. These elements have been written into the benchmark in the form of standards.

The CENAFFIF (the National Centre for Teacher Training and Training Systems) uses the skills-based approach in its training programmes, analysing the actual work situation with a view to identifying the activities and tasks of a given trade and subsequently translating them into skills which must be acquired by anyone wishing to exercise that trade.

Within this set-up, the CENAFFIF is responsible for matching, in qualitative terms, training programmes to the skills needs of companies, whereas the centre is responsible for ensuring that the particular training programmes which it chooses to offer correspond to the needs of the companies which it serves. This choice must be governed by the need to achieve tangible results, not least in terms of subsequent placements and use of funds.

LIST OF STANDARDS

Organisational Standards:

CHAPTER 1: Centre Management Process

- 1.1 – Developing the partnership between the Centre and companies
- 1.2 – Drawing up and adopting target-based contracts
- 1.3 – Ensuring that the Centre functions well and achieves its targets
- 1.4 – Making optimal use of the Centre's resources

CHAPTER 2: Financial Management Process

- 2.1 – Consolidating the annual budget in expenditure and income in accounting terms
- 2.2 – Producing scoreboards and making them available
- 2.3 – Ensuring cost-effective purchasing

CHAPTER 3: General Services Management Process

- 3.1 – Ensuring that the Centre's facilities work at all times

CHAPTER 4: Human Resource Management Process

- 4.1 – Keeping the staff motivated
- 4.2 – Promoting internal communication
- 4.3 – Ensuring adequate staffing levels
- 4.4 – Making optimal use of human resources

CHAPTER 5: Performance Development Process

- 5.1 – Defining the Centre's current and future market

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

CHAPTER 1: Advancement, Training and Guidance of young people

Groups of standards:

- 3.1 – Informing and communicating with companies
- 3.2 – Informing and communicating with young people
- 3.3 – Contributing to the guidance of young people
- 3.4 – Creating or adapting training

CHAPTER 2: Training performance

- 2.1 – Sub-heading: centre-based training
- 2.2 – Sub-heading: in-house training
- 2.3 – Sub-heading: evaluation

2.1 Sub-heading: Centre-based training

Groups of standards:

- 2.1.1 – Administrative and pedagogical management of learners
- 2.1.2 – Teaching systems and course preparation
- 2.1.3 – Training provision
- 2.1.4 – Centre-companies liaison
- 2.1.5 – Innovation in training
- 2.1.6 – Learners' life at the Centre

2.2 Sub-heading: In-house training

Groups of standards:

- 2.2.1 – Preparing the ground for in-house training
- 2.2.2 – Managing learners within the company
- 2.2.3 – Carrying out and monitoring in-house training

2.3 Sub-heading: Evaluation

Groups of standards:

- 2.3.1 – Centre-based evaluation
- 2.3.2 – In-house evaluation

CHAPTER 3: TRAINING RESULTS

Groups of standards

- 3.1 – Post-training placement of learners
- 3.2 – Survey of client satisfaction

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION DOCUMENTS

Proposed elements for replies

Hana Nasser

GTZ Consultant Office, Lebanon

Thirteen years after the end of the civil war, Lebanon is still suffering from the aftermath of the war. The *economic situation* of Lebanon is unstable: at the beginning of this year it was said that the country was on the brink of a total collapse. Today – after some support from the funds coming from Paris II -, the danger seems to be postponed; although the government has still to fight against the high debts caused by the high costs of recovery of the country.

The *political situation* undergoes, more or less, every 18 months a change of the government. The *social situation* is characterized by

- 18 different confessions.
- Different ethnic groups struggling for life.
- Traditional values competing with the requirements of modernization.
- The threat of open and latent conflicts in the South of Lebanon, especially along the borderline.

But the process of reconstruction and development continues. This is documented in the signing of different projects in the field of vocational and technical education as well as the signing of the European partnership last year. In this context, quality is an important prerequisite to be able to compete with foreign products.

In Lebanon, there are 44 public VTE schools / institutes versus more than 350 private schools / institutes. Today, the economic situation forces a lot of pupils to turn to the public schools; they cannot afford to attend the favored private schools requiring high tuition fees. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education will face more and more the problem of accepting all applicants.

HOW DO WE LINK QUALITY” OBJECTIVES WITH INTEGRATION AND EQUAL ACCESS TO TRAINING INITIATIVES IN THE CONTEXT OF JOB IMPROVEMENT? THE “QUALITY” INITIATIVE SHOULD NOT BE REDUCED TO A CERTIFICATION INITIATIVE

The objective of quality is to satisfy the different groups of clients, i.e. the school directors and the teachers, as well as the pupils and the industrial companies. To achieve that, the DG VTE must have appropriate curricula, qualified and motivated administrators and teachers, and the adequate equipment. It is not sufficient to have a large number of graduates with a formal certificate, if they don't find a job, because they were not properly trained to meet the needs of the industry. Therefore it is important to link school to industry.

The Cooperative (dual) system permits here to link quality objectives with integration and equal access to training initiatives in the context of job improvement. It has got practice-oriented curricula adapted to the need of the labour market; training takes place at both, the school and industry; industry is involved in the elaboration of curricula, as well as in the examination; teachers are regularly trained; training measures are evaluated and teachers are coached; equipment is assured according to needs; graduates will be followed to a certain extent after leaving school by tracer studies. All those measures are undertaken to assure quality of education and meet the needs of the labor market for skilled workers.

HOW DO WE INTEGRATE THE “QUALITY” INITIATIVE INTO GLOBAL POLICIES FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE SYSTEMS THEMSELVES? WHAT ARE THE MECHANISMS AND THE DETERMINING FACTORS OF A TRAINING SYSTEM, WHICH IS CENTERED ON “QUALITY”? THIS LINE OF THOUGHT LEADS TO THE QUESTION OF EVALUATION AND THE IMPLICATION OF BENEFICIARIES (COMPANIES AND INDIVIDUALS) IN THE PROCESS.

It can be done by means of supplying other stakeholders with patterns of successful quality initiatives for certain branches (for instance, car repairing in Lebanon). The main factor is the practice-orientation of the curricula. A close cooperation between “theory” and “practice” is a prerequisite for the process. The whole process has to be implemented in a revolving manner. Starting with the needs of the market, continuing with an analysis of the required qualifications and the respective contents of the curricula, the teaching methods up to the evaluation of the results of the training performed there has to be installed an efficient monitoring system.

The will to change the circumstances given has to be supported. Responsibilities have to be delegated to all co-players, so that everyone will be involved. Results of examinations will show up to which extent the 350 private schools meet quality requirements. Curricula are set up together with industry and have to be controlled by means of exams throughout the three years of training. The last “proof of quality control” is the employment of the trainees – after graduation – by the company where they were trained.

HOW DO WE INVOLVE COMPANIES MORE, AUGMENTING THEIR ROLE FROM THE EXPRESSION OF NEEDS (A CONCERN IN ITSELF, GIVEN THE NATURE OF THE ECONOMIC FABRIC OF THE MEDA COUNTRIES, WHICH IS DOMINATED BY SMALL BUSINESSES) TO EVALUATING THE QUALITY OF TRAINING?

According to the industrial census made in Lebanon in 1998 24.000 industrial companies exist in Lebanon; 2/3 of them have less than 5 workers. In Lebanon we were ambitious enough to strive for “good quality” with those small companies. The companies were involved by establishing “coordination committees” being responsible for curricula, examination and the coordination with the schools.

The experiences made up to now with the coordination committees are encouraging. Nevertheless, a lot of measures still have to be introduced to make them smoothly work.

HOW DO WE REINFORCE FACTORS SUCH AS QUALITY AND PROFESSIONALISM OF PLAYERS, WHICH NECESSARILY IMPLIES A POLICY

OF FINANCE AND ORGANIZATION BEFORE GOING THROUGH A REVISION OF THE ROLE OF PUBLIC POWERS?

Training of trainers is very important here, but to keep teachers motivated, you must give them some incentives, considering especially the fact, that 2/3 of them are only “contracted” (i.e. not officially employed by the Lebanese state). This bears the risk that some of them may leave the public sector and turn to the private one, which means a loss of “collected experiences” and a loss of time and money for the State.

We can reinforce quality and professionalism of those players by offering them a good training. The Lebanese government went a step forward and felt the need for a foremen-/master training in Lebanon. Skilled workers from industry are trained in their specialization, as well as in economic matters, related to the management of a company. In addition to this, those who cannot attend the evening courses, for one reason or another, could attend courses directed to school teachers according to their specialization. The pilot project is located in Beirut, but will be extended to other parts of the country by spring 2004.

THEME 3 – ELEARINING: VIRTUAL LEARNING METHODS

DISCUSSION NOTE

eLearning in the Mediterranean Region

Jean-Marc Castejon

Department for the Mediterranean Region, ETF

eLearning is in its infancy in the MEDA region. Policymakers have a growing awareness of the issue and a number of initiatives are taking place throughout the region. eLearning is specially high on the policy agenda in Tunisia (within the latest five-year plan) Jordan and Syria. In Algeria, eLearning is mostly conceived as distance learning rather than as a tool to bring education to all despite huge distances.

A number of institutional initiatives are worth mentioning, especially at tertiary level, traditionally more active in this field.

TERTIARY LEVEL

Virtual universities: there are three virtual universities in the region in Algeria, Jordan and Syria. Virtual universities are an emerging phenomenon that offers maximum flexibility for learner:

- The Syrian Virtual University (SVU) long-term objective is to provide the existing workforce and the new high school graduates in the Arab World and the region with the latest knowledge and skills in modern fields, through international accredited programs, or by world-class programs developed in collaboration with local and regional universities. SVU is the first and only accredited full-fledge virtual university in the Middle East. It provides teaching methods based on international standards and new technologies. Thus SVU is seen as the link between the region and the Western world that has been missing in the past when students had to leave their homes to pursue quality education.
- Continuing Education University (Algeria) in connection with the CNEPD (*Centre national d'enseignement professionnel à distance*) is providing courses for Technicians in banking, insurance and Law. In time, 160 centres throughout the country will be connected in one single platform and will be managed as one university where students will register at any of them and follow courses on-line. The University has projects of promoting a virtual library, computer lab and TV studio.

SECONDARY LEVEL

Ministries of vocational training have been quick in developing projects.

- Among them the OFPPT (*Office de la formation professionnelle et de la promotion du travail*) in Morocco has developed a videoconference centre in association with the Canadian cooperation office. The courses are mainly tertiary education (computer studies, administration, accountancy...). It is possible to acquire the Cisco certification in computer studies. Morocco has also a Centre of Interactive Television which functions as a virtual class in higher education.
- Algerian Ministry of vocational training is offering training trainers courses on line in a one-year course. eLearning is principally used for in-service training, either to train large numbers of recently hired but unqualified teachers or to upgrade teachers skills for the introduction of a new curriculum of teacher training.
- Tunisia has a well functioning *Ecole Virtuelle*, which offers courses to all levels.

There are a number of **obstacles** to the development of eLearning, mainly technical. Distance education through any medium requires a basic infrastructure. The availability of different kinds of infrastructure, which varies significantly across countries, will necessarily influence decisions about the appropriate technology.

- The use of computer is not widespread outside urban centres. Internet access is not everywhere standard at work or at home.
- Knowledge based society, which give their full meaning to eLearning is not the main issue at the moment in public training delivery. The need for just-in-time delivery is not expressed, except in big companies, nor is the flexible access to lifelong learning.
- Many intranet services within institutions are available but few real on-line courses. The expertise in ICT is not yet available.

Despite these difficulties, there are signs of **new development** including:

- A number a of conferences held in most countries on eLearning.
- The number of projects awaiting realisation or in progress, especially on the basis of bilateral cooperation between MEDA countries and western countries.

The challenge for MEDA countries is immense. At the same time, the organisation and the institutional landscape are changing, with new providers emerging. This represents an opportunity for the region. It will not be possible to expand learning opportunities during lifetime with the traditional model of secondary and higher education.

Case study

Syrian Virtual University

SVU is an academic institution that aims at providing a world-class higher education for the Syrian and Arab students from within their homes through the Internet. That can only be achieved by creating a complete academic and electronic environment which relies on a highly developed network that provides university degrees from the leading American and European institutions along with different types of support and help for the students, under the supervision of a virtual community of professors, experts and Arab instructors from all over the globe.

International and local Accreditation

The Syrian Virtual University has ensured for itself an internationally recognized credibility. Indeed, the Syrian Ministry of Higher Education accredits the degrees offered worldwide by the official international Accreditation Agencies. SVU also enjoys from its strategic partnerships with leading industrial and business corporations which grant the university another dimension of credibility by offering to the students the chance to participate in top trainings and internships and to establish contacts for employment after graduating.

Student Journey: Easy and Guaranteed

In addition to these administrative assistances, SVU provides Career Planning and Academic Support of a team of advisors who are there to guide the students in the most appropriate way through their studies. SVU also presents different means to interaction and discussions in high standard academic specialized communities.

The role of SVU is clearly translated in the different services. It provides in addition to the educational responsibility it serves. On top of the Electronic Learning and the different features which allow the students to work from any place and at any time, SVU also grants a wide variety of scientific majors which are not available in the local and regional universities and prepares the future Human Resources according to the needs of the Knowledge Economy. Furthermore the Syrian Virtual University presents tailor-made certificates for the employees who wish to upgrade their skills in different fields of our economy, such as tourism, banking, e-business and more.

In addition to offering higher education degrees, SVU offers a support to the schoolteachers, university professors, doctors, engineers, lawyers and army officers in order for them to improve their level.

The Syrian Virtual University established several Telecentres in all Syria where the students in all the areas of the country can have a free of charge access to a fast Internet connection, and thus an immediate access to SVU services.

Different languages, modern and developed curricula

The university proposes a variety of curricula in different languages in a technological environment that can be used in different manners, from studying in a virtual classroom and virtual communities to a personalized workspace for each of the student with a private e-mail, which connects the learner directly to the modern age and its tools.

INTRODUCTION NOTE

Rachid Benmokhtar Benabdellah

University Al Akhawayn, Morocco

The use of e-learning would seem to be an excellent way of disseminating knowledge and training, as well as a way for universities and traditional institutions to open up, extend their work, target a broader and more varied audience and improve the quality of their programmes, as launching an e-learning programme means that teachers have to revise the content of their courses and use more modern and effective tools.

However, previous experience and current solutions suggest that we should be cautious and pose the general question of the suitability of the knowledge transmission/acquisition/ evaluation processes for the technologies used (mainly in IT and communications).

Given the recent nature of the majority of the projects, authentic case studies, evaluating them provides an excellent source of information for those who have launched or who wish to launch e-learning programmes.

E-learning in the context of training and the dissemination of knowledge

Examining this matter is tantamount to examining what the university's mission is.

I consider it unwise to separate the process of learning - including learning through the use of the information technologies - from the overall process of producing, storing and disseminating knowledge, a process which is at the core of the university's mission.

The yardstick for measuring the quality of a university is its capacity to produce and acquire, store and enhance knowledge, and to pass that knowledge on.

Knowledge is disseminated traditionally through different channels. These can be grouped into three categories:

- generic dissemination via articles published, books and conferences.
- academic teaching, continuing training.
- the transfer or the sharing of knowledge, e.g. technological transfer or cultural exchange.

The universities are today having to broaden out their mission in order to take account of the radical changes taking place internationally, e.g.:

- globalisation of the economy
- opening up of the audiovisual area and growth of its relative importance in disseminating information and knowledge
- the contribution of the Internet and its place in the area of communication, exchange of information and access to data, information and knowledge
- relentless pace of technological and scientific change
- increasing and increasingly diversified risks.

The universities clearly have a duty to take on board these factors in their development strategies and adapt their mission accordingly.

They must therefore be able to train students for life, in other words, produce students capable of adapting to change and acquire new knowledge and knowhow, but also to offer products catering for the expectations of a broad non-student public.

They have to build up economic and social relations and play a role in rising to the social, regional, national and international challenges to be met in the areas of teaching, security, international trade, etc.

This is the context into which it is necessary to bring E-learning as a new and original tool as part of this wave of substantial change, enabling the universities to better accomplish their mission to produce, store and pass on knowledge, while being able to offer simultaneously specific targeted services and generic broad-based services on a large scale.

Looked at in this way, E-learning can be seen as an opportunity.

E-learning as an opportunity

It is an opportunity which is not solely commercial but also academic.

It is an opportunity to improve quality, to introduce new methods, to enhance the learning process, as E-learning is a natural extension of learning and teaching.

It is also an opportunity to introduce standards in the composition of curricula and syllabuses and to formalise access to learning contents and instruments by incorporating assessment criteria, means and techniques from the outset.

The point is to introduce different teaching approaches.

A different look at teaching

Teaching approaches and methods have in actual fact changed little for thousands of years.

My impression is that the progress made by humanity over the past two thousand years has not changed in any significant way the teaching methods used in teaching, be it primary, secondary or higher.

The introduction of new teaching instruments or computers has taken place leaving the school framework, the teaching area and teaching and assessment methods intact. Considering the importance of education in the human development of nations it is time for a new look at approaches and methods, in the light of the potential offered by the information technologies.

A number of elements need to be considered before arriving at a different teaching approach. These include:

- the problem of matching up content and course objectives
- the respective roles of the learner and the teacher in this process
- consideration of sound, image and text in the learning and dissemination process
- mastering the tools and the problem of choosing technological platforms, particularly for E-learning.

Training engineering

Powerful tools are available today which could help us to design and organise effective and dynamic education and training processes. This is not to say that one system should replace another, e.g. introduce E-learning in the place of traditional teaching. The point is rather to consider the specific objective before designing new approaches which involve different methods and tools.

Technology is frequently flexible and offers different options for dissemination and interactivity; everything depends on the learner's objectives and the results expected.

Technological potential notwithstanding, however, there are some essential points to be remembered. Firstly, we have to consider cultures and attitudes, conservativeness, reticence and rejection, and the difficulties of adjusting to technologies. Secondly, there is the need to re-strike the right balance in the learner-teacher relationship, eliciting responsibility, curiosity and initiative in the learner, while securing coaching and individualised communication from the teacher.

The importance of experimenting

E-learning is an integral part of the area of new teaching approaches and the quest for a new vision of the university and should not be isolated from that. The aim should be to reinvent education taking due account of these multiple dimensions and adding the spatial and technological dimension while stressing the human dimension. This is what makes the experiments being conducted all over the world so important. These experiments can all contribute something and bring new solutions nearer.

ISSUES AT STAKE

Paolo Federighi

University of Florence, Italy

INTRODUCTION

In recent years the Member States and the Commission have been devoting increasing attention to e-learning.

Work is in hand on two main fronts:

- Promoting organisational models to provide support for distance learning.
- Bringing out products for distance learning.

Our progress on these two fronts depends to a large extent on ICT research and its progressive elimination of the still numerous technological limits.

OVERCOMING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

The expansion in access to education and training can attain un hoped-for levels with e-learning. But we need to solve the problem of access to e-learning (possession of equipment, connections, telephone charges, self-directed learning skills, ability to use equipment).

E-learning services are spreading in different ways:

- Support services for traditional education and training centres.
- Independent specialised centres (public and private universities, vocational and company training centres).
- Web learning points within various kinds of organisation (not independent).
- Non-specialised public systems (also without charge) providing distance learning which could cover all sectors and levels.

The European Union has given substantial support for the establishment and dissemination of these organisational models.

BRINGING OUT PRODUCTS

The shortage and low educational quality of existing products constituted and still does constitute one of the problems constantly on the agenda and it is also related to the cost problem. Both of these have had adverse effects on the expansion of access and on the drop-out rate in distance-learning.

It is difficult to increase product output if costs cannot be brought down. At the same time, it is pointless if the number of users does not rise. However, the number of products continues to grow, as does the number of users.

The demand for products and distance learning is greater than the supply capacity. To reduce costs, blended forms of distance learning are becoming more widespread.

Although not ruling out the usefulness of blended learning, however, expansion of access must be based on increased output and its differentiation. That is why e-learning centres are now tending to offer products and backup services which cover the entire training pathway: from guidance to placement, to the multiplicity of subjects, to assessment and certification. The backup services, which are coming to form part of distance learning, do not just have the role of facilitating the chosen training pathway. Some products already aim to provide guidance in choosing personal training pathways or individual careers.

Alongside the quantity and variety in the training offered, we also have to tackle the problem of quality in the substance and also in methods and teaching approaches. In the early years, distance-learning products were above all a transferred form of attendance-based learning. But there was a big contradiction with the "medium" itself, which cannot rely on transmission methods, but must be based on the user's self-directed learning skills. Nowadays more interactive features are emerging among many producers and many products; they are building up standards, which make the products more streamlined and consistent with pedagogical know-how. In some applications, "experimental laboratories" have even been organised for distance learning. But there is still much scope for improvement.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Thanks to the Leonardo Programme – and other European programmes – the e-learning players have been able to explore the areas in which international cooperation has proved extremely useful. We believe the main fields for cooperation include the following:

- Definition of common quality standards.
- Establishment of support services for the exchange of distance learning products between centres in different countries.
- Operation of forms of virtual mobility and distance learning as between different countries, but with forms of local support.

A NUMBER OF OPEN QUESTIONS

- Development of e-learning depends, more so than in other areas, on international cooperation and the transfer of know-how to solve distance learning problems: how to encourage the development of transnational networks for the exchange of knowhow not only between centres, but also between the different types of specialists working in this field?
- Cutting costs and times for developing a vast number of distance-learning products depends on increasing opportunities for exchanging them as between centres: how to encourage product import? How to promote an

integrated production programme between several centres? Could forms of joint production be used?

- Migratory flows in Europe are continuing to increase: how can we boost the supply of training solutions for migrants both before their odyssey and afterwards, once they have reached their country of destination?

CASE STUDY

The Syrian Virtual University

Riad Daoudi

Syrian Virtual University

INTRODUCTION

The Syrian Virtual University was officially inaugurated by President Dr. Bashar Al Assad on the 2nd of September 2002 as the first academic institution of its kind in the region.

Fully accredited and endorsed by the Syrian Ministry of Higher Education, the SVU primarily aims at providing the Arab students, worldwide, with a world-class quality education, at home, through an integrated online learning environment based on the latest technological and educational developments.

Bringing international expertise home is meant to meet the needs of fresh high school and university graduates as well as Human Resource Development plans. The Syrian Virtual University has a great role to play at this level by promoting and establishing a new culture in the region: Lifelong Learning.

THE SYRIAN VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY MODEL

Considering the immediate need to present the future Human Resources with the latest specializations available worldwide, the SVU has opted for a short-term plan, which provides the students with international degrees from partner-universities at high quality standards.

On the long run, the Syrian Virtual University is to continue creating, delivering and managing its own programs which are to be designed in collaboration with the regional traditional universities and even some of the non-Arab partners.

This is an essential role for the SVU: the aim is not to replace existing universities but to help them in enhancing their capacities and quality by adapting to the latest educational technologies.

SYRIAN VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY: MISSION STATEMENT AND ACCREDITATION

The Syrian Virtual University is a public institution, **fully accredited** and **endorsed** by the Ministry of Higher Education in Syria. It aims at providing Arab students in the region and all over the world with International standards of Higher Education within an integrated pedagogical environment based on the latest technological developments.

There are two tracks offered at the SVU:

- International Degrees and Programs presented by the American, European, Australian and Canadian partners
- The SVU-designed Degrees and Programs, created, delivered and managed by the SVU

SYRIAN VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY: VALUE ADDED SERVICES

Academic curricula, even when designed by the finest professors cannot be efficiently taught outside a comprehensive learning environment in which the students can be supported and guided by professionals.

Accordingly the Syrian Virtual University offers a large number of services which cover all the university-life aspects and needs in order to provide the students with higher chances of success and achievement during their studies.

Academic Support

Arab Professors Network

It is undeniable that cultural differences and gaps resulting from different backgrounds and ethos are to affect in some ways the learning journey of Arab students enrolling at non-Arab universities.

In order to bridge this cultural distance, the SVU has conceived an online community of Arab professors and experts from all over the world who are familiar with students' backgrounds (since they come from the same milieu) and who are living or lived in the university's environment in non-Arab countries.

Specialized Virtual Communities

Each student enrolled at a specific program may participate in discussions, online and offline, with peers and professors in his/her specialization. This will enhance rich and constructive interaction as well as study progress, which is improved by communication and group debates.

Advising

The Syrian Virtual University assigns an academic advisor to all SVU students, even the ones who already have an advisor from their remote universities. The SVU advisor is responsible for guiding the students in their learning journey and supporting them in academic issues.

Career Orientation and Career Services

In our societies education is directly related to prestige and that is why parents always attempt to guide their children towards the specialization which are considered to be as esteemed. These prejudgments lead the high-school graduates to all enrol at the same faculties. This trend directly affects the local and regional market, which is and continues to be saturated in some fields and lacks experts in others.

The SVU considers career enrolment as a duty much more than a simple service. A Career Planning team is always available for prospective students to assess their future academic and professional possibilities according to their needs, interests, academic and financial statuses.

Furthermore *Studying and Working at the same time* is a motto at SVU, and students are constantly reminded and encouraged to find part-time jobs or internships. Hence a Career Services office has been established to help students being employed at SVU corporate partners during their studies and when possible after graduation.

Local Curricula

The SVU is keen on providing world-class quality education to all Arab students. In order to reach the widest number of students, curricula in Arabic must be implemented. Already some programs are being “arabised” from English-speaking universities so that the Arabic courses are up-to-date with the latest developments in the different fields of study.

On the other hand, the Syrian Virtual University aspires to enhance local and regional universities’ curricula by inviting their professors to teach at SVU and thus develop those advanced programs in Arabic. Then the local or regional university could present the courses in partnership with the SVU and initiate a new market in the Arab world for Virtual Education.

Language Proficiency Issues

In the Arab world, it is quite difficult to propose degrees in non-Arabic languages because the majority of the students do not have the possibility to master a second language during high-school years.

This does not necessarily mean that they are not potential students for non-Arab universities. It is from this perspective that the SVU designed the Preparatory Year which enables the students to develop their language proficiency as well as computer and internet skills.

The Prep Year courses cover English or French (for the time being, according to the language of our partners), basic IT, Self-Motivation and Time Management in order to ensure that the student enhances the dexterity needed by Virtual Education.

Telecenters

Since domestic Internet connection is not totally reliable yet in Syria and costs can exceed expectations when students need to spend more time online, the Syrian Virtual University has established *free of charge* Telecenters all over the country, especially in the most remote areas in order to give all the Syrian students an equal opportunity to enrol at SVU.

These Telecenters are also Certified Testing Centers in which the students sit for their proctored examinations throughout the year.

Technical Support

The SVU Technical Support team is always available online and offline for the students and staff who need help with any technical difficulties.

A “physical” team is also available in all SVU Telecenters to give face-to-face support (within the Telecenter) when needed.

Administrative Support

Pre-Registration, Application processes, course enrolment can be distressful for students who are not used to non-Arab universities' systems. Problems and misunderstanding often discourage students who abandon easily when they feel processes are too complex.

At the SVU, the Administrative Team handles all these procedures for the students. Also a primary filtering for all applicants is effectuated at the Admissions Office which informs students of missing documents or failure to meet requirements beforehand. Therefore students can better their applications and save time, while partner-universities can ensure that all applications sent by the SVU are complete and conform to their pre-requisites.

Virtual Library and Virtual Bookstore

The academic progress is never restricted to class material; students must always search and research in order to build stronger knowledge and understandings. For an extensive study environment, the Syrian Virtual University provides the students with a Virtual Library, which gathers the resources of several of the best electronic libraries today. These libraries usually charge their users; however, the Syrian Virtual University students can access them for free.

Moreover, SVU students from all over the world may order their study materials from the online Bookstore available via the website.

CONCLUSION

Society is knowledge, and knowledge is power.

Strategic, Economical and Human Resource Development are at the heart of the Syrian government today. The Syrian Virtual University carries a great responsibility in reforming those aspects and shaping a new society where the workforce enhances the socio-economical factors. At the same time, these factors constantly create new market needs to be resolved by qualified Human Resources to progress towards a New Economy of Knowledge.

CASE STUDY

DECPM - Distance Education Certificate in Project Management (Leonardo da Vinci Project)

Jim Phelan

University College Dublin, Ireland

Third level education in a virtual age

Like any business, universities are not immune to the impact of technological developments and it is in this area that profound changes may yet occur. The "Virtual Classroom" is now a reality and universities are gearing themselves for this new challenge. The purpose of this analysis is to report on a research project that examined the delivery of a web-based learning system. It assessed the problems encountered and the potential of the virtual learning environment as a course delivery mechanism for courses in rural development.

The term distance learning has been applied to a great variety of programmes, providers, audiences and media. Its hallmarks are the separation of teacher and learner in space and/or time [1]. Early systems provided little opportunity for feedback, leaving the learner isolated. The material was also very often not user friendly and only the most ardent persisted to the end. Schlosser and Anderson [2] refer to Keegan's model of distance learning [3] and state that distance learning must recreate as far as possible the atmosphere and interaction of the traditional classroom. Perraton (1988) views the role of the distance teacher as a facilitator of learning rather than a communicator of a fixed body of information that exemplified traditional learning [1].

The evolution of distance learning

The developments in computer technology and the advent of the World Wide Web have created new and challenging opportunities for both traditional and distance learning education. In contrast with traditional distance learning systems, it provides an opportunity for feedback and brings to life the concept of the "virtual classroom". The main advantage put forward for learning through the use of on-line systems is that it enables a large audience to be reached without the limits of geographic location. It is accessible at any time so students can learn at their own pace. It reduces the workload on the lecturer (once developed). It allows students the opportunity to explore a wide variety of knowledge, it can link students to a catalogue of libraries and provides almost limitless access to a vast array of data and information.

On-line learning pilot project

The on-line learning project brought together three organisations with strong professional links and each with a solid grounding in the delivery of rural development programmes at all levels. The project co-ordinator was the Department of Agribusiness, Extension and Rural Development, UCD, and the partners were AERDD, University of Reading, UK and ANKA SA, Greece. The project was funded under the EU LEONARDO Programme. In order to develop a curriculum shaped by the needs of practitioners with a clear focus on improving the tasks performed by on-

the-job managers, a survey was carried out which assessed the skills and training needs of field based project managers. The focus was on organizations involved in rural development, and in particular on EU leader groups. Results were extrapolated from 74 questionnaires and from these results a curriculum was developed, containing twelve topics. This curriculum followed both 'academic' considerations and 'practitioners' needs. "Team Building and Management" was the topic selected for piloting as it was ranked highest in the needs analysis. The choice of operating system for this project was based on many aspects. Blackboard was chosen because it was felt by the team that it offered a range of facilities to encourage an interactive learning experience. The three partner institutions could also access it and the view of the partners was that it offered the best technical assistance support should difficulties arise. The critical components that the team were interested in were the virtual classroom, the discussion thread activities as well as the extent to which learners could access and follow the material presented on the web. The course was offered on-line to participants in the three partner countries. A one-day workshop was held in each country, which introduced course participants to the course on-line. This was the only direct contact with the participants as it was decided to pilot the system as close to a full virtual learning environment as possible. On workshop day each participant, with the aid of tutors, was given the opportunity to gain familiarity with the Blackboard system and the mechanics of moving through the course. They were also presented with a student guide which was adapted from the Student Guide printed on-line by Blackboard. A similar guide was developed for the tutors. The course was conducted over a six-week period. Participants had on-line access to tutors on a daily basis.

PROJECT EVALUATION

The project was evaluated internally by the core partners, by the tutors and by the course participants. An external evaluation was carried out by an independent evaluator who examined the on-line materials and the comments of the participants. This method of on-line learning was endorsed by all evaluators. All evaluators, however, stressed that the system had difficulties particularly in terms of gaining access to Blackboard on-line, and moving through some areas of the course. While the computer requirements necessary to undertake the course were specified, many participants found the system slow. Serious difficulties were encountered with the "virtual classroom" and only on a couple of occasions did this area work with any degree of satisfaction. Where difficulties occurred with the Blackboard system the partners were not able to obtain technical support to help with solutions to the problems. It was felt, however, that many of these difficulties were merely 'teething' problems that could be resolved with the new version of Blackboard that had come on-line. Of the 52 participants that registered, 23 completed the course. Lack of time, difficulty with accessing the course, and general technical difficulties were the main reason for non-completion.

Follow On

Four universities in Ireland have come together and are now in the 2nd year of delivering a bsc in rural development to 74 students. The programme is a partnership programme and participants will receive their degrees from the National University of Ireland.

CONCLUSION

On-line learning offers real potential for the future. Over time it will affect all institutions, either through active engagement in the process or through increased competition from those who do engage. The challenge for universities is to become leaders not laggards in the process.

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THEME 4 – TRAINING TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

DISCUSSION NOTE

Teacher and trainer training practices in the Mediterranean Region

Borhène Chakroun

Department for the Mediterranean Region, ETF

- The vocational education and training (VET) systems of the Mediterranean countries are in the process of change, “in transition”. VET is being restructured in such a way that its initial objective is no longer to train young people rejected by the education system, but to provide the skills required by the economy. There is a progressive transition from the principle of social supply and demand to the principle of economic demand. Dialogue is being established with the production sector, there are more varied programmes, sources of finance are becoming diversified and there are higher performance levels in the educational, administrative and financial management of the institutions. Vast programmes with the aim of modernising vocational training systems are underway, supported by the European Union and other donors. They are designed to work alongside the modernisation of the national economies.
- Many strategies and initiatives have been undertaken or planned for trainer training in different Mediterranean countries. Despite their number, however, they are not the result of a genuine strategic analysis of the problem of developing human resources. Teacher and Trainer Training (TTT) in fact occupies only a small place within the strategies for developing vocational training. For example, within the EU project aimed at upgrading vocational training in Algeria, it appears in fifth place in the hierarchy of logical framework for the programme. In the Tunisian MANFORME project, it does not appear in the first three levels of importance. What is more, there is still a low level of involvement and communication with the trainers on the envisaged reforms and their role within them. This could be an explanation for their low level of ownership of the on-going reforms.
- In most Mediterranean countries, there is difficulty in taking account of the new requirements that arise from the necessary development of the vocational training systems. The teaching and learning processes remain traditional and teacher-oriented. Some skills, which are necessary to ensure that the vocational training systems attain new objectives, are rare amongst working trainers. It is no longer sufficient for them to possess educational skills. They also need technical, organisational and training management skills. These are needed for the introduction of new programmes; the management, design and organisation of continuing training; the evaluation and recognition of skills acquired within the working environment, etc. Some of these difficulties arise from the fact that there is no job preparation for trainers prior to recruitment. When such training exists, it takes place after recruitment. As a result it cannot be too long for cost reasons. It is expected that technical skills will have been acquired before recruitment, but this is not always verified. In some countries attempts have been made – especially within the framework of internationally assisted reform programmes – to introduce more student-oriented teaching and learning approaches i.e. the competency-based approach in Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan and Egypt.

However, in most cases the initial and continuing teacher training systems have not been able to ensure the relevant preparation of teachers and trainers for the new approaches to teaching and learning. Another reason for the difficulties relates to the dispersed nature of the teacher and trainer training institutions as well as vocational training institutes. For this reason programmes for trainer training are still heterogeneous, both in terms of content and approach.

- Too often, the management of trainer training follows bureaucratic methods, which do not encourage professionalism or development of customer-oriented type relationships. The methodology to be used for identifying requirements and setting them out in programmes is inadequate or nonexistent. The initiatives are rarely assessed, which makes it difficult to analyse the results and effectiveness of the training. Even though there are striking exceptions, the economic world is more often than not left out of the procedure for training trainers. The result of this situation is that many trainer training initiatives are split up and intermittent and a number of trainer training initiatives are implemented according to supply principles which do not fully respond to requirements in terms of trainer skills. Furthermore, the schemes introduced do not lead to a certification of skills, and successful completion of training is not automatically marked.
- Funding of trainer and teacher training institutions is not always clearly identified as a separate budget but is often included as civil service employee expenditure and therefore under-funded. In all Mediterranean countries the support of foreign sponsors is an appreciated addition that enables targeted initiatives to be carried out. There are many useful and worthwhile projects being conducted through international donors but often this brings some uncertainty as to whether the funding will continue and allow the initiative to become established. Likewise for many of the countries, government funding for training needs to be more assured.
- European Commission, and particularly ETF, experience in the Mediterranean region has highlighted areas of strength in the quality and relevance of teacher and trainer training practices. It is these strengths that will need to be built upon in order to develop the systems. In fact, almost all Mediterranean countries have a good TTT institutional set-up. In some countries useful initiatives have been taken particularly pilot projects, where the training of trainers is linked to the economic world⁹. In some countries, the standards for training occupations have now been defined and trainer training can be based on these.
- With reference to this analysis of the trainer training practices in the Mediterranean countries, a number of issues can be highlighted:
 - Developing collective responsibility (the ministry responsible for vocational training, other training departments, representatives of the private training sector, both sides of industry, training personnel, etc.) to provide greater coherence in terms of objectives, programmes and initiatives.
 - Giving teacher and trainer training the appropriate focus of attention and putting the topic high on the agenda of VET reform strategies.

⁹ For further detail see the report on TTT practices in the Maghreb region, ETF, 2002.

- Trainer training requires a transition from a supply to a demand approach, through the introduction of occupational standards, the implementation of new tools for needs assessment, close cooperation between different actors and better assessment of initiatives. In addition, trainer training should be related to the working world, in terms both of its design and its performance.
- Change is also necessary *in the methods* used for trainer training. More specifically, this will be made possible by developing information and communication technologies in the trainer training institutions in order to diversify the methods of training (for example, through distance learning), improve their educational effectiveness and encourage trainers to spread techniques.

Case study

A new in-service trainer-training model in Morocco

Morocco has a well-developed vocational training system. The principal operator is the Vocational Training and Job Promotion agency [Office de la formation professionnelle et de promotion du travail] (OFPPT), which comes under the responsibility of the Ministry of Employment, Vocational Training, Social Development and Solidarity. OFPPT runs around 150 VET centres, employing a total of 6,000 trainers. The challenge in the VET system is the lack of pedagogical training for staff; 37% of these 6,000 teachers do not have a pedagogical teacher training qualification.

Standards for vocational occupations have now been defined on a competency-based approach. Curricula have to be implemented by trainers and were thus considered as one of the bases for teacher and trainer initial and advanced training.

The Process

Trainers go through skills assessment based on their job profile. A teacher and trainer training information system was established. It covers all aspects of TTT and allows staff to collect, process and retrieve relevant data about trainers.

Training

Teacher and trainer training covers three main components:

- Basic and specialised technological training.
- Educational training.
- Training within enterprises (in some cases).

Organisation

TTT is a networked operation:

- A network of training centres (centres of excellence) for technological training and to introduce the occupation of trainer.
- A network of enterprises involved in TTT.
- A network of trainer trainers and resources.

Assessment

A multiple assessment process has been implemented: assessment of the scheme, assessment of the trainees and assessment of the scheme by the trainees.

Questions

- What are the conditions to improve the involvement of trainers in the TTT process?

- What impact has this experience on the quality of TTT and how can it be assessed?
- What are the other dimensions required to improve the professionalism of trainers?

INTRODUCTION NOTE

Ali Ahmed Sayed

Mubarak-Kohl Initiative for VET reform, Egypt

No doubt that teachers and trainers together are playing a vital role in the whole process of basic and further training, and upgrading of different categories of skills needing groups. Their common work has certainly its impact on all aspects of VET, (quality of training, training efficiency, cost effectiveness...etc)

Referring to the situation of the TTT in Mediterranean countries, a number of issues should be stressed upon, among other issues:

- Developing collective responsibility (the ministry responsible for vocational training, other training departments, representative of the private training sector, both sides of industry, training personnel, etc.) to provide greater coherence in terms of objectives, programmes and initiatives.
- Giving teacher and trainer training the appropriate focus of attention and putting the topic high on the agenda of VET reform strategies.
- TTT requires a transition from a supply to a demand approach, through the introduction of occupational standards, the implementation of new tools for needs assessment, close cooperation between different actors and better assessment of initiatives. In addition, TTT should be related to the working world, in terms both of its design and its performance.
- Change is also necessary in the methods used for TTT. More specifically, this will be made possible by developing information and communication technologies in the TTT institutions in order to diversify the methods of training (for example, through distance learning), improved their educational effectiveness and encourage teachers / trainers to spread techniques.

We hope that our round table will achieve the adequate recommendations in this respect.

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION DOCUMENTS

Questions for the Round Table

Ali Ahmed Sayed

Mubarak-Kohl Initiative for VET reform, Egypt

- Due to the continuous and rapid developments in the world and the unavoidable impacts of globalisation and taking into consideration the vital and crucial role of the teachers and trainers in achieving the quality of the vocational education and training, what are in your opinion (from your experience) the competencies and skills needed for the teachers and trainers (in each country) to face these challenges?
- Taking into account the trends of learning and rapid developing technologies (i.e. teaching ware, training aids, multi-media, different facilities, etc), how to improve education and training of teachers and trainers? How to insure the interaction among them, harmonizing their activities for diversified concepts?
- What could be the roles and contributions of the different decision makers, public and private sectors and institutions and social partners in making available competent teachers and trainers and enhancing their skills and capabilities?
- What are the resources, approaches and strategies proposed or being applied to guarantee financing the training of the prospective and in-service teachers and trainers?

Addressing questions asked during the round table / Theme 4

Osmane MESLOUH

Algeria

The rapid pace of progress and development, which has been spurred on by the emergence of new information and communication technologies, means that teachers are required to have more knowledge and skills and a very high capacity for adapting to the changes produced by globalisation.

In view of these rapid changes, which have come about because of fundamental economic requirements, and the fact that it is essential for the education sector to provide tailor-made qualifications, the teachers and/or trainers have a crucial role to play and more and more skills are required of them by the sectors using their services.

In addition to the technical and teaching skills required, it is essential that the trainers learn to use new teaching methods. In particular, they can do this by:

- using modern learning materials;
- acquiring interdisciplinary skills relating to languages and new information and communication technologies;
- mastering the use of computers and the Internet;
- developing team spirit and concepts of sharing;
- engaging in exchanges of experience at an internal level;
- becoming more involved in the external environment — today, this is facilitated by technology.

It is absolutely essential to regularly update and adapt the content of training for trainers in order to take account of these technological developments, which undoubtedly have an impact on the methodology and approach of trainers.

With regard to the first question concerning the skills which teachers and/or trainers must have, and in connection with the development of teaching and training, particularly after the emergence of new information and communication technologies, the following action must be envisaged, in addition to the technical skills relating to initial teacher training and further teacher training:

- regularly incorporate new subjects linked to new technologies into further training for teachers; this is what we have referred to as interdisciplinary skills and language skills;
- encourage greater teacher involvement in the commercial sector by organising immersion placements, which enable teachers to make the classes they teach more relevant to practical fields;
- diversify teaching methods by promoting e-learning and continuing training; in this regard, there are plans to launch a project to set up a Virtual Distance Learning Centre for Vocational Education in December 2004 with a European partner, primarily through the network of centres for the training of trainers.

One could, perhaps, make the list longer, but it is essential to mention the programmes for the training of trainers, the methodologies and the development of instruments and tools for designing and updating these programmes which require

those who train trainers to have a higher level of knowledge and skills and a completely different status; this is not yet the case in Algeria.

In light of the challenges associated with technological developments in particular, and with a view to bringing its teachers up to standard, the vocational education and training sector, together with the Microsoft Corporation, has launched a training programme for specialist teachers in the context of a "School Contract" in order to prepare them for Microsoft certification, which almost 30% of specialist teachers already have.

In the field of network computing, a partnership agreement has also been signed by the Algerian vocational education and training sector and Cisco-Systems to set up 33 Cisco Academies (3 regional and 30 local academies), which will provide training for specialised trainers and give them certification for Cisco products.

The MEDA project, which supports efforts to bring the Algerian vocational training system up to standard, is a fundamental element of the work to reform the Algerian vocational training system in general and seeks, in particular, to bring trainers up to standard.

It is clear that the action to revitalise and re-establish the National Consultative Council on Vocational Training (CNCFP) in 1997 did not come about by accident but formed part of one of the main strategies of the sector, which was to create an atmosphere conducive to dialogue, consultation, intersectoral coordination, cooperation and decision-making in order to achieve the objectives relating to the reform of the vocational training sector.

However, in spite of the interest shown by the vocational training sector in Algeria and its strong desire to establish a closer relationship with its environment by involving those who play a role in vocational training (social partners, commercial sector, private vocational training sector, etc.), far too little has been done in practical terms, i.e. as regards the gathering of information on occupations, qualifications and training programmes, particularly for trainers and trainers of trainers; the motivation of teachers by optimising their activities and status and by making available the resources necessary for introducing and using new information and communication technologies.

The State provides funding for public vocational education and training centres and even for establishments which provide training for trainers; more than 90% of the funds are used to cover the salaries of employees, which prevents managers from introducing measures to provide training for trainers.

In addition to the fact that these measures must be diversified, their prime objective must be to achieve a high level of quality by introducing innovative projects which are in keeping with the technological developments linked to the increasing demands of the commercial sector.

High-quality continuing training for trainers through annual and multiannual training and further training plans cannot be achieved unless resources, particularly financial resources, are available; it is therefore necessary to look for new sources of funding and ways of diversifying them.

If high standards are to be set for the training of trainers or for designers of training content, there is a need for greater dialogue. This can be achieved, in particular, through the following:

- The provision of more financial resources for achieving essential objectives.
- The adoption of regulations and statutes by training establishments and trainers which will enable them to take steps to generate additional resources which can be used to finance training plans for teachers and trainers.
- The allocation of resources should depend on the performance of each establishment and on projected working programmes.

The training of trainers is of fundamental importance and forms part of the constellation of issues relating to sustainable development, through the harnessing of human resources.

Training, trainers and qualifications are important factors which impinge directly on the development and growth advocated and pursued by all companies.

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION DOCUMENTS

Proposed elements for replies

Hisham Rawashdeh

Vocational Training Corporation, Jordan

TEACHERS / TRAINERS COMPETENCIES

Rapid changes and developments in technologies used by industry and labour market in general demand teachers / trainers to have a wide and deep initial foundation of technical skills and related knowledge, and to a continuously upgrade their skills and knowledge to cope with new technologies and developments.

Also, the new trends and approaches introduced into vocational education and training process to improve its effectiveness and efficiency such as demand driven training, learners centred training, team working and life long learning demand expanding the range of competencies required for teachers / trainers.

On the other hand reforms in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) are taking place in many countries all over the world. Reforms are targeting various aspects of TVET with a central focus on innovation in curriculum development, which of course require more innovative teacher / trainer capable of conducting such developed curriculum.

Above mentioned new context and environments changed the role and functions of the teacher / trainer within the TVET system.

The traditional teacher/trainer who dominates the classroom, teaches formally, decides every thing and represents the only resource for information is no more accepted as a model in most of developed countries in the world. On contrary the accepted model is the teacher / trainer who facilitates trainees learning, teaches informally, involves trainees in decision making, builds relation on mutual respect and trust and encourages trainees to participate actively.

So, in order to fulfill the new role and functions of the teacher/ trainer, a different profile of competencies is required for teachers / trainers those days. This profile should cover the following main areas of competencies.

- Technical practical skills within his field of specialization according to the needs of industry.
- Recent technical knowledge related to his field of specialization.
- Professional pedagogical and instructional technique skill.
- Communication and social skills to enable him of efficient communication with trainees, fellow staff, parents and industry.
- Team working skills.
- I.C.T skills.

- Self development initiatives and skills.

UTILIZING DEVELOPED TECHNOLOGIES / MEDIA IN IMPROVING EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

The ever changing skills, knowledge and attitudes (SK&A) required for teachers and trainers in this rapid changing globe impose the necessity for continuous development and upgrading of teachers / trainers (SK&A) within the concept of life long learning.

Releasing teachers and trainer from their works to join training courses on continuous basis to upgrade their SK&A as needed may encounter some difficulties and constraints.

Therefore, self development through using available learning resources could be more practical and appropriate way for continuous and effective developments of competent teachers / trainers in TVET system.

Learning resources required for self-learning were developed tremendously by introducing recent informatics and multimedia technology including Internet, computer based multimedia and distance education facilities ...etc.

Availability of such technologies will provide teachers / trainers with Just in time education and training and in particular an access to:

- Technical knowledge related to their field of specialization.
- Latest educational pedagogy.
- Interacting with fellow teachers / trainers regarding new concepts, ideas, activities ... etc, particularly when establishing net works.
- High quality learning packages for self-instruction prepared by specialized universities or TTT institutes.
- Tele conferences in the field of TVET.
- Obtaining higher qualifications in vocational education.

Although, such learning resources require an expensive capital investment to establish, but at the long run the costs of developing teachers and trainers competencies are estimated to be less compared with traditional used methods, and of course more effective.

On the other hand, and to benefit from such technologies as learning resources for self-development, teachers / trainers should have specific competencies related to: computer illiteracy, communication language skills/English as well as a strong motivation for self-learning.

ROLES & CONTRIBUTIONS OF DIFFERENT PARTIES IN TRAINING AND DEVELOPING COMPETENT TEACHERS AND TRAINERS.

Different parties have roles and can contribute to the process of building competent teachers/trainers and to the continued enhancement of their skills and capabilities.

Those parties include: Government, vocational education and training provider (both public & private), teachers & trainers training institutes and companies.

Roles & contributions of each party can be summarized as follows:

GOVERNMENT

- Adopting a legal framework for TVET teacher / trainer qualifications which identifies particularly pre-service and in-service training of teachers and trainers.
- Providing financial supporting and incentives for teachers and trainers training institutes and schemes.

TEACHERS AND TRAINERS TRAINING INSTITUTES

- Developing occupational standards for teachers and trainers Jobs and levels.
- Establishing database for TVET teachers and trainers in cooperation with TVET institutions.
- Establishing network for education and training of teachers and trainers and for interaction between teachers / trainers and TTT institutes.
- Providing an initial (pre-service) and upgrading (in service) training opportunities for teachers and trainers.
- Continuous development and updating of teachers & trainers training curriculum according to emerged needs and feedback of TVET institutions.
- Establishing strong technical cooperation links with other TTT Institutes, particularly in developed countries in this field to benefit from their experience.

TVET INSTITUTIONS (TRAINING PROVIDERS)

- Identifying and documenting training needs for their teachers and trainers.
- Allocating required financial support for training of their staff.
- Coordinating with teachers and trainers training institutes regarding establishing and maintaining teachers and trainers database.
- Linking promotion incentives with successful completion of specific training courses.
- Providing actual practice training opportunities for teachers and trainers while under going training programs in TTT institutes.
- Providing feed back for TTT institutes regarding conducted teachers and trainers training programs.

INDUSTRY/PRIVATE SECTOR COMPANIES

- Providing opportunities for on job training to upgrade technical skills of trainers.
- Providing feedback on the performance of trainers/ teachers.
- Contributing in financial support for teachers and trainers training activities.

FINANCING OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS TRAINING

Lack of adequate resources for financing pre-service and in service training of teacher and trainers usually encounter TTT programs and activities.

Main resources for financing such programs and activities usually come from Government and TVET institutions (Public & private).

The Government provides required financial support for establishing Teachers & Trainers Training Institutes in addition to financing annual budgets for running public TVET institutions.

TVET institutions finance training of their teachers and trainers from within their own annual budgets.

Additional fund for training of teachers and trainers also comes from technical cooperation projects with other countries and international agencies for developing TVE institutions, where some of these projects aim at developing teachers & trainers institutions, programs and/ or competencies.

Jordan, as one of the developing countries, and in its efforts to improve its system for training of TVET teachers and trainers, started recently establishing a national institute for training of trainers working in TVET institutions (public and private).

Approaches and strategies discussed or proposed to guarantee sustainable finance of training of teachers and trainers were as follows:

- To link recruitment and promotion of teachers and trainers with successful completion of specific pre-service and in service training courses.
- TVET institutions to allocate specific budgets annually for training of their trainers based on their actual training needs.
- Government to link its financial support to TVET institution with their plans and achievements in developing their training staff.
- TVET fund financed from contributions of private sector companies to allocate a percentage of its resources for supporting teachers and trainers training programs and activities.

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION DOCUMENTS

Proposed elements for replies

Marc Durando

Pôle Universitaire Européen Nancy-Metz, France

PRELIMINARY IDEAS

There are two major problems at the heart of teacher training: **the skills profile of teachers and the attractiveness of the teaching profession**. The two main challenges for the education systems in Europe over the next ten years will undoubtedly be to enhance teaching skills and to make the profession more attractive.

ANSWERS TO THE FOUR QUESTIONS

QUESTION I. TEACHING SKILLS.

In view of the continuous and rapid developments across the world and the unavoidable impact of globalisation and given the vital and crucial role of teachers and trainers in ensuring that vocational education and training is of a high quality, what kind of skills do teachers and trainers (in each country) need, in your experience, to face these challenges?

The changes faced by the teaching profession are particularly topical because they are going to affect a very large proportion of the current teaching body as teachers leave the profession on retirement. These changes mean that now is the ideal time to consider adapting vocational skills to the needs of the teaching profession. Discussions about initial and continuing training for teachers and trainers are therefore moving to the top of the agenda within the various education systems across Europe.

The main question regarding initial and continuing teaching training is **whether the systems currently in place are capable of determining exactly how many teachers they need**.

While today's education systems are placing all sorts of increasing demands on teachers, training courses and recruitment methods are not making it easier for prospective candidates to enter the teaching profession and do not necessarily give them a clear enough idea of what might be expected of them. For one thing, teachers are increasingly having to deal with students who are older and more diverse. For another, teachers are now expected to have skills which extend beyond simply being able to teach a particular subject (in the past, families were much more likely to play the role of social regulator).

It is therefore necessary to carry out a critical examination of how initial and in-service training courses are organised, given that both seem to be largely unsuited to tackling the challenges currently facing the education sector, i.e. the need to overhaul the system and to improve quality as a whole.

The problems associated with initial and continuing training for teachers and trainers will not be resolved simply by changing the structure of education; rather, the whole purpose of initial and continuing training must be thoroughly rethought **so that, from now on, it is clearly understood to concern the training of professionals in the truest sense of the word.** (More attention must be paid during initial teacher training to the development of practical teaching skills.) It is for this reason that, in most teacher training courses in Europe, students acquire practical teaching experience during their training rather than afterwards.

This view of teacher training, which implies the active involvement of universities in the provision of teacher training, is connected with the current debate on the introduction of a higher-education diploma in Europe (three, five or eight semesters). It is important to reposition teacher training in the general context of training for the teaching profession within the higher education sector in Europe.

Five levels of skills can be identified:

- Skills in the subject concerned.
- Pedagogical skills (pupils with special needs, pupils with different aptitude levels).
- Administrative and management skills which enable the teacher to integrate well into his environment.
- Interdisciplinary skills such as expertise in IT and foreign languages.
- "Social" skills which enable the teacher to play a social role and better understand the social background of the problems faced by pupils who have a fractured educational history.

QUESTION II. HOW CAN TEACHER TRAINING BE IMPROVED?

What can be done to encourage teachers to work together? In view of the current trends in learning and the rapid development of new technologies (i.e. teaching tools, training aids, multimedia, different facilities, etc.), how can the education and training of teachers and trainers be improved? What can be done to encourage them to work together and to harmonise the strategies they adopt?

As part of the general debate concerning the development of new strategies in the training of teachers and trainers, consideration must be given to the question of how information and communication technologies can contribute towards and be used in teaching. In fact, over the next decade, educational technologies will be something teachers will no longer be able to ignore. The aim is not to change teaching methods as such or disregard existing strategies but to give careful thought to how the opportunities presented by new educational technologies can be used most appropriately.

The potential uses of information and communication technologies, particularly for "e-learning", mean that it will be necessary to rethink the ways in which the different media are currently used in continuing teacher training.

Moreover, at European level, the key reforms introduced over the past ten years have been specifically designed to improve the quality of training and make it more uniform, with the particular aim of placing teaching on a more professional footing.

The Sorbonne, Bologna and Prague Declarations will also make a major contribution to the organisation of initial teacher training, particularly with regard to ensuring that the national systems of initial training are easier to understand.

As regards cooperation between teachers, the creation of European networks like ATEE and European Schoolnet is inevitable and indeed essential. The teaching body as a whole needs forums for discussion which will help bring about significant improvements in teacher training.

QUESTION III. ROLE AND CONTRIBUTION OF POLICYMAKERS.

What role could the various decision makers, such as the public and private sectors, institutions and social partners, play in helping to create a competent teaching body and in enhancing the skills and qualifications of teachers?

No reform has ever been introduced which has changed teacher training in such a way as to enhance either the professional development of teachers or their careers as such. This is partly due to the fact that there is no strategic management scheme for human resources in place in the various education systems. It is also somewhat unfortunate that training is not considered to be an essential ingredient of a teacher's professional development. Most teachers are usually employed within the State system and the State's capacity for managing human resources is often open to question.

It is essential that new strategies be developed in order to enhance teaching activities and that the methods currently used be channelled in new directions. In particular, this must be achieved by:

- Enhancing continuing training;
- Enhancing the status of teachers;
- Taking account of the European dimension in initial teacher training.

As already mentioned, a large percentage of the current teaching body is going to be affected by retirement in the years to come. The demand for teachers is determined by demographic change. The fact that the population is ageing is nevertheless compensated for by the fact that pupil numbers are falling. However, the problems of too few or too many teachers are relatively complicated factors for which it is difficult to create comparable situations at European level. This highlights the need to attach even greater importance to planning practices which are better suited to regulating supply and demand.

The most important role which policymakers at all levels will have to play in the months and years to come relates to the attractiveness of the teaching profession. If nothing is done to make the profession more attractive, our education systems run a serious risk of suffering from a shortfall of suitably qualified teachers. One reason for this is that employment conditions are much more favourable in sectors outside education.

QUESTION IV. RESOURCES, APPROACHES, STRATEGIES.

What are the resources, approaches and strategies proposed or being applied in order to finance initial training and in-service training for teachers and trainers?

An examination of the problems associated with teacher training brings to light a number of contradictory factors, such as:

- Theory v. practice.
- Subject knowledge v. vocational skills.
- Joint training v. specialist training.
- Initial training v. continuing training.

All these elements will certainly have to be addressed if there is to be a more wide-ranging discussion of the challenges posed by initial and continuing teacher training.

One of the challenges will involve reviewing the arrangements in place for continuing teacher training at all levels. Consideration will have to be given to:

- Analysing (current and future) requirements as regards teacher training (match with current supply).
- Placing teachers under an obligation to undertake continuing training (including the frequency and amount of such training).
- Reviewing arrangements for financing continuing training.
- Reviewing arrangements for enhancing teachers' careers.
- Introducing new forms of continuing training based on "e-learning".

CASE STUDY

“Systematic organisation of continuing development of VET personnel” (Leonardo da Vinci project)

Asta Pundziene

Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania

PREHISTORY OF THE PROJECT. A CLEAR NEED FOR THE STRATEGY OF MODERNISATION OF THE VOCATIONAL TEACHER/TRAINER EDUCATION AND TRAINING.

Thinking about the prehistory of the project we should move back to 1997 when the 2nd stage in Vocational Education and Training (VET) reform in Lithuania was about to start. The main emphasis of the 1st stage of the VET Reform was on modernising VET curriculum, teaching-learning material related to new programmes as well as some efforts of school development. Even though the 1st stage had some significant achievements, it had not promoted major effect on the development of VET teachers'¹⁰ new Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes (KSA) on the large scale. It was obvious that teachers should think and perform differently with respect to on-going reform, however no efforts of systematisation of new functions and competencies were undertaken. The previous centralised and very formal VET teacher education system was not any longer adequate for the socio-economical developments at the nineties. The need for a new, flexible model of teacher education was clear, although we still had to answer some questions: What were the new challenges and consequently new functions and desired competence of VET teacher? What model could be the best for VET teacher education in Lithuania (how was Teacher/Trainer Training (TTT) arranged in other countries)? What would the roles of stakeholders be and how should the system be financed? Last but not the least, how to make the changes at a national level?

As an academic institution, we understood that we should start from designing the vision or the concept of the VET teacher education and training, in contrast to starting to deliver certain “demanded” courses as it would not have a sustainable effect on ordering and developing the “teaching profession”¹¹ in the country. We also understood that our ideas would fail if VET politicians and employers were not involved in designing the new vision and the model.

Factors that influenced the necessity to reform VET teachers' education and training can be divided into 3 groups:

- *Political factors.* The declaration of Independence brought to an end the centralized, unified VET teacher education and training system for the whole Soviet Union. It was necessary to create a new system for VET teacher education and training in order to correspond to new conditions.

¹⁰ “VET teacher” is used as a general term to indicate different levels of VET professionals, e.g. teachers, lectures.

¹¹ “Teaching profession” is a term developed by ETF TTT focus group. “Teaching profession” comprises all individuals (teachers, teacher educators, trainers, instructors, education Managers, etc. who play a coaching, mentoring, teaching, training or supervising role in the learning process of people. Teaching profession is a synonym for VET personnel.

- *Economic factors.* The Creation of the independent State of Lithuania and the complicated transition to market economy increased the need to look for economically viable ways for VET teacher education. This was attempted, not by establishment of new special educational institutions, but by seeking to integrate VET teacher education and training programs into already functioning institutions.
- *Content factors.* Orientation to a market economy forced the need to change curriculum for VET teachers' education and training, and to create new programmes that would guarantee modern education and training. A new system of VET teachers' education should assure innovativeness and creativeness of VET teachers' activity, and in view of changes in the environment, also give way to such new competencies as researcher, learning counsellor, etc.

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The project had an ambitious aim to create the institutional framework for VET teachers' education and training in Lithuania, foreseeing legal and qualification' parameters coordinated with principles of Lifelong Learning.

Objectives of the project "Systematic Organisation of Continuing Development of VET Personnel" were:

- To assess the situation with regard to VET teachers' education and training in Lithuania and partner countries.
- To describe vocational teachers' (of different categories) competence and qualifications in Lithuania.
- To decide on vocational teachers' (of different categories) education and training levels.
- To revise the module programme for vocational teacher education.
- To describe management model for vocational teacher education and training, foreseeing adequate infrastructure and regulations.
- To describe ways to upgrade qualifications of vocational teachers' trainers.
- To describe the system for vocational teachers' continuing development that would be in line with European standards.
- The project work was organised in three steps:
 - Development of a "**national standard**" in VET TT specifying the qualification levels and competencies (output profiles) required for teachers at different levels.
 - Critical analyses and some adaptations of the modularised TT **curriculum** developed under the Phare programme.
 - Analysing and defining criteria for establishing the needed **institutional capacity** to provide the required TT services.

The main results of the project were:

- A professional standard for vocational teacher.
- A Concept for initial and continuing education and training of vocational teachers.
- A Modular programme for initial pedagogical training of vocational teacher in the line with professional standard.
- Political recommendations developed on the basis of conception.
- Programme for realisation of concept for vocational teacher education and training.

Professional standard for a vocational teacher describes the goal of vocational teacher profession, major areas of work and competencies that are necessary both at the beginning and later in the career as it develops. Determination of teacher competence is the initial stage of training for identification of training objectives, content, forms, evaluation, and so on. It is important that the standard concerns both initial and continuing training for teachers. After assessing the new role and functions a VET teacher is expected to perform, and in consultation with the project partners, we came to the conclusion that the holistic qualification of a vocational teacher is reflected in four interrelated areas:

- Competencies related to the personality area.
- Competencies related to the subject area.
- Competencies related to the area of didactics.
- Managerial competencies.

The Concept for vocational teacher education and training consists of 3 parts:

- Theoretical aspects of training for vocational teachers.
- Experience from education and training vocational teachers in Lithuania and other countries.
- The main parameters for development of vocational teacher education and training in Lithuania.

The concept comprises common conceptual statements on initial and continuing training for vocational teachers. Vocational teacher education and training is developed as an integral part of overall pedagogue education and training system.

The most suitable model for initial education and training of vocational teachers in Lithuania is consecutive model. Teachers' pedagogical education is organised in licensed institutions according to the programmes prepared in line with the professional standard for a vocational teacher.

Of course it should be underlined that the project would not have progressed so quickly if it had been the partnership that gave knowledge of best practice and skills in TTT from Denmark, The Netherlands and Germany. Another valuable part of the

project partnership has been the involvement of education politicians and employers that made the project results to be recognised on national level.

Contractor - Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania
Project coordinator - Centre for Vocational Education and Research at Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania
Project partners – Hohenheim University, Germany (Prof. W. Compter)
Eindhoven PTH, the Netherlands (Peter van Engelshoven, Derk Oddens)
DEL, Denmark (Soren P.Nielsen)
Akershus College, Norway
Kaunas Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Handicraft
Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science
Kaunas College
In cooperation with - EU Leonardo da Vinci programme coordination support foundation in Lithuania
PHARE vocational education and training reform programme coordination centre

The main achievements of the project are detailed below.

NEW CHALLENGES FOR VET TEACHERS. CHANGING FUNCTIONS AND COMPETENCIES

Constant progress of science and technology, globalisation of economics, development of the knowledge society as well as other factors have created new requirements for VET, influenced its renewal in general and gave more importance to the role of a teacher as the main initiator of change. In the context of these changes VET teachers/lecturers are becoming not only learning organizers, but also:

- Designers and developers of the programmes.
- Coaches (instructors) and assistants.
- Members of school development teams.
- Consultants for learning and vocational career.
- Facilitators of learning.
- Researchers for upgrading the teaching profession.
- Participants in international cooperation and communication networks, etc.

New vocational teacher roles in the teaching process are implemented through solving managerial, vocation and labour market analysis tasks. Vocational teacher becomes an active participant in the interaction with the world of work, needs to have good knowledge of labour market situation, is able to investigate and analyse it. It should be emphasised that the performance of these tasks leads to the necessary and constant amendment of vocational curriculum according to the changes in external school environment (professional, social, etc). A teacher becomes a “transformer” of this change into the teaching process and school environment. Apart of the tasks, related to the subject, didactic and managerial activity, VET teachers are responsible for their own general personal development.

Vocational teachers should have:

- Self-esteem and self-analysis abilities, that determine the development of learners dispositions with regard to self, environment and activity.
- A good knowledge of the subject, be aware of science and the practical activity panorama in the science area, foresee development tendencies in the country and the rest of the world, know the vocational activity area corresponding to the teaching programme, be aware of the subject theoretical and practical significance for the vocational activity, theoretical and practical links with other subjects, tendencies of change in labour market and qualification vocational activity requirements.
- Awareness of the interaction between the component parts of vocational education curriculum. Be able to flexibly and continuously develop goals of education and adequate content, evaluation forms and methods.

These changes of the VET teacher functions and competence were reflected in the professional standard developed under the project. It should be emphasised that due to the constant and rapid changes the standard should be reviewed and amended periodically.

NEW TTT MODEL FOR LITHUANIA. INVOLVEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS

The social, economic and education traditions and specificities in different countries, determine the different models of teacher - including vocational teacher - education and training.

In Lithuania the priority is given to the consecutive model of initial VET teacher education and training. Prospective VET teachers achieve a subject qualification in high or higher institutions, and then they work no less than 3 years in industry according to the acquired profession. After this prospective VET teacher starts working in VET institution as a junior teacher and he/she has to acquire pedagogical qualification in initial pedagogical education and training studies of 1 year.

The management of the 1 year modular programme for initial pedagogical education and training is based on the principle of the “rising spiral”, i. e. study cycles consist of a by **combination of studies in teacher education and training institutions and practice in own VET school**. Organisation of studies is based on individual study plans that are designed with regard to personal achievements. Evaluation of study achievements is based on a “portfolio” principle. During the studies all the learners collect the material related to their achievements in the “portfolio”, which is used for recognition of competence.

The VET school is an equal partner to the institution (universities, colleges) for VET teacher initial pedagogical education and training. In VET institutions a specially prepared experienced teacher (mentor) is appointed for each participant of the programme. The mentor’s aim is to help a prospective teacher who aims to acquire pedagogical qualification to relate theoretical didactical (both managerial and methodological) curriculum design problems to real situations and to carry out practical experiments demonstrating the quality of the achieved study objectives. The Mentor helps the prospective teacher to link theory to practice, as well as to overcome boundaries between higher institutions and VET schools. The Mentor works as a trainer of educational practice, as facilitator, consultant, disseminator, innovator and manager.

The following **principles** are characteristic to the *in-service training of VET teacher*:

- Regard to the main objectives and principles of VET change.
- Collegial selection of in-service training topics cohering the opinion and evaluation by learners, teachers, educational politicians, scientists and employers.
- Active, innovative participation of teachers (lecturers) based on sharing of experience.
- Free choice of place, time and curriculum for in–service training.

The curriculum of in-service training of VET teachers comprises three types of competence according to its objectives, purpose and organisational principles:

- **Curriculum of strategic competence development.** It is the curriculum of in-service training that corresponds to the latest strategic scientific and practical innovations that will determine the development strategy for vocational education and training: its content, forms and change of pedagogical technologies, continuous development of VET institutions as learning organisations.
- **Curriculum of the development of competencies** necessary for achieving higher **qualification categories**. Acquisition of these competencies, described in Professional Standard for VET teacher allows teachers/lecturers to master new, more complicated roles of pedagogical activities, which ensure their qualification development, i.e. the recognition of higher pedagogical qualification categories.
- **Curriculum of the development of individual competencies**, whose importance is recognised by VET teachers and VET institutions themselves.

Distinguishing between these three groups of VET teacher in-service training curriculum and programme determines, on the one hand, different planning, organisational and control mechanisms, on the other, different possibilities for VET teachers.

Expert groups for VET teacher qualification upgrading needs are formed to identify strategic competencies and demands of target groups. These groups consist of scientists from relevant areas and fields of science, vocational teachers, specialists from companies and organisations, representatives of vocational teacher education and training institutions. Their functions are the following:

- Evaluation of the most significant competence and qualification changes in each vocational group or subgroup.
- Examination of the adequacy of VET teacher subject qualification to the determined qualification needs and VET system purposes.
- Identification of the most important VET teacher strategic competencies and target groups, as well as the main characteristics of in-service training curriculum necessary for the acquisition of these competencies.

On the whole, Education and training of VET teacher should be based on the following **principles**:

- Decentralisation, with regard to accessibility to education and training, freedom to choose place, time and themes, etc.
- Openness to competence and qualification demand and supply, interest of social partners and other social groups, interest of learners, etc.
- Systematisation of initial and in-service training, autonomous and State approach, step-by step achievement of qualifications, etc.
- Compatibility between demands of the world of work, the education system and interests of VET teachers.
- Cooperation, i.e. links between, management institutions, VET institutions, social partners, governmental and nongovernmental institutions and partners of international projects.
- Specificity, i.e. VET personnel education and training being distinct from other types of educational personnel.

VET teacher education and training should take into account:

- General regularities and traditions of education and VET development.
- Factors influencing changes in VET personnel education and training.
- Validity of the strategy and model for VET personnel education and training.
- Experience and tendencies in the field of VET personnel education and training in European countries.

FINANCING OF TTT

Financing of TTT is always a difficult question in “transition” economies as the States always has a budget deficit. However, to create equal opportunities and to ensure a minimum level of quality of VET at least the initial TTT should be financed by the Ministry of Education and Science in other words by the State. The continuing education and training of VET teachers should have self or programme-based (MES, local and international projects, etc.) financing.

Currently the Ministry of Education and Science finances most of the TTT. Also part of the in-service teacher training is financed from the student’s “basket”. Though tradition of decentralised financing of in-service TTT activities is only starting to get its development.

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

- It is relatively easy to acknowledge the need for change, though it is difficult to make it operational and implement it. We were aware that the teacher’ education and training system do not correspond to the actual situation, however to list the set of competencies required under the new conditions and decide how they should be acquired (institutional framework), took some time of targeted assessment of previous teacher education and training system, changes in the environment locally and globally as well as the existing systems in partner countries and beyond.

- The Leonardo da Vinci pilot project was a possibility to bring together human and financial resources to solve already matured problems on a pilot and subsequently on a national level after the products proved themselves. The project results were validated by internal and external groups of experts comprising representatives of VET schools, universities, politicians and employers.
- With the growing complexity in the external environment of the VET school, the complexity of teachers functions also increase. To satisfy a demand on the labour market for intelligent, flexible and qualified work force, teachers should be able to act as researchers, curriculum designers, learning process counsellors and facilitators, communicators with employers and society, school developer, etc. This is reflected in a constantly revised national teacher professional standard, where competence is categorised in 4 main competencies groups: personality, subject, didactics and managerial.
- After careful studies of teacher education and training traditions as well as existing models, a consecutive TTT model was chosen as the principle one for Lithuania. This was decided due to several reasons: the consecutive model is more flexible in the sense that VET teachers education and training is not limited to the subjects that are offered by the institutions with a parallel model. VET schools can choose whatever subject teacher they need and then equip her/him with pedagogical knowledge and skills; this model supports lifelong career decision-making as it is easy to become a teacher if after some years of work you discover teaching as a vocation; Social partnership plays a crucial role in VET on the whole and in teacher education and training in bringing new demands and innovation to the teaching-learning process.
- Financing schemes try to follow the innovative developments of the teacher education and training system, although the decentralised model of financing still needs some time and flourishing of the economy to become fully functional. Currently MES, international programmes and donors finance the major part of TTT. Teachers themselves and schools are also making some investments.

CONCLUSIONS

CONCLUSIONS (SPEAKING POINTS)

Peter de Rooij

Director of the European Training Foundation (ETF)

Thanking participants for the richness of the debate

Preparatory work had allowed seeing that common issues are at stake both within the EU (with its actual and future MS) and with Med partners

Debates have confirmed the commonality of challenges that can exist even in countries approaching VET systems reform in fairly diverse ways

Beyond the relevance of the topics for the Mediterranean countries that have been reviewed during the seminar, it is interesting to identify signs of changes in each area:

- Regarding the topic “enterprise and training”, quite noticeable changes occur in the attitude of companies towards training, as it has been repeatedly stressed during the conference: development of human resource management in the companies, development of a private sector in Vocational provision, due to the rise of continuing training in the public policies and to the necessity for companies to be competitive as the free trade zone is approaching. The key words “competences”, “human resources”, “needs analysis”, have replaced old supply-oriented approaches. There is still some way to go to reach professionalism, but everyone is aware of the challenges.
- One of the main challenges is indeed the challenge on quality of the systems of VET. The main issue here is of course to turn supply-oriented systems to demand oriented systems, and here the demand is both social and economical. This means bringing closer the training sector and the productive sector, which has drastic effects on the quality of the provision. Here again, the conference showed that the med countries are tackling the problem head-on: the competence approach and the generalisation of dual systems impose a quality policy along the whole chain of VET provision from the conception (curricula development) to evaluation.
- Another change is in progress: the development of e-learning. Every country in the region is now developing it despite the technical problems. E-learning is everywhere high in the agenda and forms an important part of reforms most of the time with the cooperation of donors and especially the EU. More so for the moment at the tertiary than at the secondary level, but everyday there are new developments and it is hard to keep track of this fast-growing dimension of VET where many pilot projects are giving shape to the future.
- No vocational nor indeed educational system is possible without trainers and teachers. Enhancing the role of these key players was in my view of paramount importance. Too often they are left behind. But no successful reforms without their support and commitment. Here again, things are changing in the med countries in the wake of reforms. Trainers have to find their place in more autonomous, more responsible more reactive VET institutions. This will require more training and also awareness among policy-makers that a better recognition of trainers is called for. The trainers face new technologies, new generations, new curricula among other things. The institutions will need renewed professionalism among trainers. All countries are tackling this fundamental issue.

Debates today have demonstrated the wealth of pertinent experiences on these key reform issues that do exist on both side of the Mediterranean area.

This first conference has as well allowed glimpsing at the benefit that could be drawn by all involved in a better awareness and familiarity of each other's experiences.

It does not mean that everything is relevant for all, different traditions; governance approaches and place of social partners do induce differences that need to be acknowledged.

Assessing the relevance and adaptability of each experience is a prerequisite for a successful transposition between the different Euro-Mediterranean partners. ETF is an instrument to help in that process.

It is the intention and the mission of ETF to support, in coherence the European Commission and EU policies, the set of reforms and modernisation that are called for and which the region is currently undergoing. Many bridges are still to be built over the sea in term of VET. This conference has showed another way.

CONCLUSIONS

Michel Richonnier

Director of Vocational Training, European Commission

We have reached the end of a very interesting day. Indeed, we all have benefited from a fruitful exchange of experiences. This will help us to cope with the similar challenges that our training systems and labour market have to face, such as globalisation or the knowledge society.

The last session on the training of trainers has shown that we still need to achieve further progress. Throughout Europe, national and regional systems are being reformed just like in the Mediterranean countries. We know that we still need many years (one generation?) before these reforms will be fully effective.

* * *

With this conference, it was the first time that the LDV programme (2000-2006) established a link with stakeholders from the Mediterranean region. A lot of ideas have been developed today and it would be interesting to meet again, say in 2010, to see if these common challenges have been successfully met by all of us.

On the European side, our Heads of State and Government have said in 2000 in Lisbon that Europe should by 2010 be positioned at the forefront of the knowledge society. In 2002, in Barcelona, they acknowledged the key role of education and training systems that should become world references by 2010. Major challenges indeed!

With these challenges in mind, the EU is preparing a new generation of education and training programmes starting from 2007 until 2013. These new programmes will be the main tool to help with the modernisation of our training systems in Europe. But they will also have a stronger international dimension. President Prodi was recently emphasizing the need for a closer cooperation with our neighbouring countries of the enlarged Europe with the purpose to guarantee peace, security, stability and prosperity. These are challenges for all our countries. These offer opportunities for a stronger cooperation between our countries.

The Mediterranean and European countries have a lot in common, possibly more than between the USA and Europe. The role of the public sector is very important on both sides of the Mediterranean sea. Also, we have another common goal of lifelong training for everyone. We are also confronted with enormous social challenges such as the high number of young people who leave the education system with a very low level of education and that need to be integrated in our labour market and societies.

* * *

In terms of a short term follow up of this conference, what we can do is first of all maintain the network alive. Since we have all access to e-technologies, we should keep in regular contact through e-mail. Of course, we should also have some physical meetings and not only virtual ones. Technology is fine but nothing is going to replace the face to face discussion.

For instance, in one year from now, on 15 December 2004, with the Dutch presidency, the European Commission is organising in Maastricht a major conference. This conference, could offer an opportunity to meet some of you again. Different sessions will analyse where we stand in Europe with the reforms of our training systems. You would imagine that there would be topics that are very close to the one we have been developing in our conference today such as the key problem of training in SME or the issue of eLearning. In parallel to that conference, we will also have an exhibition of Leonardo da Vinci projects that will focus on all these key issues. I hope to see some of you again in Maastricht.

* * *

Finally, I would like to thank all of those who have worked very hard to make this today conference such an interesting event: the ETF staff and director, Peter de Rooij, my own staff, notably Alice Copette and Elisabetta Degiampietro, and all the speakers and participants.

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