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Editorial TVET@Asia Issue 7:

Quality Assurance as Basis of Trust and Labour Market Relevance of TVET Qualifications

The recommendation to create quality assurance guidelines to recognize qualifications based on learning outcomes was made at the 3rd International Congress on TVET which took place in Shanghai in 2012. Quality assurance is fundamental to the TVET system in general and with regards to qualifications, and is of particular relevance at this time as many countries in the global village are developing and implementing NQFs.

As Asia moves towards greater socio-economic integration, mutual recognition of qualifications and their quality assurance is becoming increasingly important. Countries that have developed National Qualification Frameworks (NQF) are now shifting attention to their implementation including through the establishment of quality assurance mechanisms which are the foundation for mutual trust, relevance and recognition across borders.

ASEAN member states, in particular, are currently working on referencing their NQFs against AQRF (ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework). Not only quality assurance systems but also NQFs can only be truly operational if they are trusted – trusted by employers, employees, trainees and TVET practitioners alike.

In this sense, the sharing and discussion of quality assurance arrangements for TVET systems and qualifications in Asia-Pacific and recommendations for designing effective and harmonized quality assurance of TVET systems are expected to be useful to relevant policymakers and stakeholders in the region.

In that context, exploring quality assurance in Asia is a timely endeavour. The articles published in issue 7 of TVET@Asia, focus on the evolution of quality assurance development in TVET, take into account suitable assessments which underpin qualification arrangements and discuss quality assurance as a way to increase labour market relevance of TVET qualifications. Furthermore, policies, institutional arrangements and legislations related to quality assurance of TVET qualifications are also taken into account.

UNESCO Bangkok invited authors interested in contributing to this issue with research-, practice- or policy-based articles which provide, in an exemplary manner, insights regarding quality assurance at various levels.

NAYANA TARA, SANATH KUMAR and MATTHIAS PILZ focus on the need for quality in vocational training institutions in India. The need for integrating Quality Management principles in effective functioning of vocational schools (Industrial Training Institutes) is emphasised. The authors present findings of two own empirical studies of Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) conducted in different states of India; one survey focusses on regular ITIs and the other on upgraded ITIs, the so called Centres of Excellence (COE). On the basis of the findings the authors discuss an appropriate Quality Management model as well as needs for research and cross-country collaboration.

ANM EHSANUL HOQUE, former State Minister for Education in Bangladesh (2001-2006), focusses on the country's challenges in aligning technical and vocational education and training with the market needs. Considering that Bangladesh is becoming the most densely populated country in the world and that remittance has become one of the main sources of economic development, the author comments on the current structure, system and policy of TVET in Bangladesh. He also provides information about government initiatives and highlights the need to develop a quality assurance system.

PHUONG CHI DIEP from Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology and Education, takes a close look at policies and measures to promote quality assurance of TVET in Vietnam. She reports on the Vocational Training Development Strategy of Vietnam for the period 2011-2020 and gives insights regarding quality assurance approaches such as National Occupational Skill Standards (NOSS) and the development of a National Vocational Qualification Framework (NVQF). Furthermore, this article provides information about initial steps in the process of promoting and enacting the TVET quality assurance program as well as reflections on the mutual recognition of qualifications in the light of the development of the ASEAN Qualification Reference Framework (AQR).

While PHUONG CHI DIEP mainly comments on political developments and their implementation, THI KIM OANH DUONG highlights project learning and competence-based assessment at Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology and Education. The author focuses on core competencies which can be defined as personal attributes or underlining characteristics which, combined with technical or professional skills, enable individuals to fulfil requirements set by employers. The paper reviews theoretical approaches to competence and competence-based assessment and shows that the application of competence-based assessment must be considered in ensuring the consistency of learning outcomes, teaching methods and assessment.

NORNAZIRA SUHAIROM, AEDE HATIB MUSTA'AMAL, NOR FADILA MOHD AMIN, MUHAMMAD KHAIR NORDIN and DAYANA FARZEEHA ALI from the Universiti Teknologi Malaysia reflect on the quality of professionals in the Malaysian Culinary Industry. They introduce competency profiling through self-assessment using a newly-developed questionnaire as the competency measurement instrument. The authors explain that their method can help organizations to gather data on the quality of their current workforce and to identify top performers.

GEORG SPÖTTL and MATTHIAS BECKER introduce a concept of standards for teacher training in technical education with a clear link to scientific disciplines at university level in individual countries. Their concept follows a dynamic approach which allows teachers to specify standards for the requirements of quality indicators. Via a bottom-up approach, this concept can be developed for a whole study programme and the quality indicators could be compared between countries and regions.

SYAZANA EBIL, NORAZLINA OTHMAN, HJH NORHAKIMAH HJ MOHD NOR, MARLINAWATI AHMAD, and MOHD YUSRAN HJ MASUD from the Institute of Brunei Technical Education, in their article, present an overview of quality assurance of the qualifications process in TVET in Brunei Darussalam. They review the current quality assurance system and identify the progress made so far and challenges of implementing quality assurance of TVET qualifications which is effective, efficient and responsive to greater socio-economic integration in South-East Asia.

With an update in November 2016, two more articles could be published online:

JUNAINAH BINTI MOHD AMIN from the Malaysian Qualifications Agency comments on quality assurance in Malaysia: Her article gives a general overview of the TVET system in Malaysia and summarizes the current quality assurance governance for TVET qualifications and its development as the government of Malaysia has determined the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector as the main route in providing highly-skilled human resources and contributing towards economic growth.

JEONG-YOON CHO from the Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education & Training (KRIVET) outlines quality assurance models in the Republic of Korea where two quality assurance systems, namely the National Technical Qualification System and a Private Qualification System, have been introduced during the past decades. The paper covers strengths and weaknesses of quality assurance of the TVET qualification process, as well as opportunities for and barriers to improving the present quality assurance process in Korea.

Thank you to the contributors. Enjoy reading!

The editors of Issue 7

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