

## SUMMARY

# How Collaborations Make TVET Relevant in the Future



The Government of Bhutan has established training institutes across the country to offer poor but deserving students the chance to study vocational education for free. Photo Credit: ADB

*Potential threats to the labor market with the onset of the Fourth Industrial Revolution are giving rise to quality assurance collaborations among TVET institutions.*

## Overview

Low-skilled and repetitive jobs are bound to be eliminated by robots and artificial intelligence under the Fourth Industrial Revolution. This scenario is forcing technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions to partner and collaborate to ensure that TVET remains relevant in the future.

## Key Findings

Once seen as the “last choice education” because of a perceived lack of quality, TVET these days is drawing attention for its growing role in helping the workforce of the future face the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

“TVET is a key ingredient for employability and economic mobility,” said Oliver Haas, Head of the Global Division “Health, Education, Social Inclusion” of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) in Germany. “The quality of TVET — making sure that it is still relevant in the future — is the make-or-break question.”

At the Asian Development Bank’s 7th International Skills Forum, TVET institutions shared key lessons from their years of experience forging partnerships and collaborations.

Lesson 1: Know your partner.

“Due diligence in the choice of partners and understanding of the local context are of paramount importance,” said TAFE Queensland International Executive Director Janelle Chapman.

The Australia-based organization actively works in partnership with international clients, including governments, industry and institutions from over 30 countries. Its engagement models with partners vary and are tailored to the local context. This ensures that the quality of TVET not only leads to greater employability, but also labor mobility. “We need people whose skills can be “transportable” especially in a future where there will be greater labor migration, Ms. Chapman added.

“Over time, TAFE Queensland has worked in a number of markets. We’ve been in the Asian market since 1999 delivering offshore and over that time we have learned many lessons. We have learned that every partner in every project is different and we have to look at how we manage each of those projects to achieve the outcomes that are needed. We’ve learned that not all requirements are the same. Sometimes, people needed qualification outcomes. Sometimes, they need skill set upgrading. So we would be able to manage and develop a program and implement a program that meets their needs.”

Lesson 2: Initiate inter-institutional and cross-regional governance on TVET quality assurance.

“Today, we often encounter fragmented and incoherent systems in quality assurance due to institutional as well as procedural reasons. We need to harmonize qualifications and increase flexibility to manage the complexity and speed of change,” said Mr. Haas of GIZ.

“I think the most pressing is that TVET systems are often very fragmented. There are different stakeholders who play different roles. Sometimes even contradicting each other. Let’s say ministries or {{creation}} bodies. Sometimes or oftentimes, the private sector, the corporate world is not involved at all. And even TVET providers on the ground are not incorporated in the systems. I would say systems are fragmented. That’s certainly one issue that I would find as a challenge.”

Lesson 3: Enhance the image of TVET.

“Quality assurance (of TVET) is chronically over-governed and under-funded,” Mr. Haas added. Part of the reason is due to the low perception on TVET. Mr. Haas presented GIZ’s findings on German development cooperation and called for a new thinking on quality assurance in TVET. “To a certain extent, TVET, especially in Asia, is still often considered as a second-best option” to formal education, he said.

Lesson 4: Set up or strengthen institutional accreditation bodies for TVET.

“The absence of a formal accreditation system at the national level in some countries and the lack of education and training standards at the regional level” hamper the quality of TVET, said Ramhari Laminchane, Director General of the Colombo Plan Staff College in Sri Lanka. A regional accreditation body is “imperative to solve problems of producing a qualified workforce, promote harmony of qualifications, and mutual recognition of qualifications.” He cited the case of the Asia Pacific Accreditation and Certificate Commission, in which he is president, set up by the Colombo Plan Staff College for Technician Education following an agreement in 2004 by 17 countries to establish a regional body for accreditation and certification of TVET institutions.

Lesson 5: TVET must adapt to the changing times.

“With a rapidly changing economy, the technical and vocational education and training system needs to be more adaptive and train students to be more resilient,” said Institute of Technical Education (ITE) Education Services chief executive Bruce Poh. Presenting the Republic of Singapore’s experience in transforming its TVET system, Mr. Poh said in addition to investing in hardware (“creating a one-ITE system, 3 colleges” governance and education model), the state has also undertaken massive transformations in “software” (offering market-relevant courses and real environment learning facilities), as well as “heart-ware” (building a “caring culture” among staff, teachers and students). ITE has more than 120 active industry partnerships and has provided over 30 international consultancy projects in 27 countries in Asia, Africa, Middle East and Latin America.

## Conclusion

Partnerships and collaborations among TVET institutions offer an effective way to meet international quality standards to ensure the skills taught remain relevant in the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

## Resources

*Quality Assurance in TVET.* TVETipidea.

*Technical and Vocational Education and Training,* GIZ.

*“The Issue of Quality in the TVET System,”* UNESCO International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

## Related Links

Event: *7th ADB International Skills Forum*



**Janelle Chapman**  
Executive Director

Janelle Chapman is the Executive Director of TAFE Queensland International in Australia. With more than 28 years of experience in vocational education and training, mainly in the international industry, Janelle has always been a strong advocate for the sector in several positions.



**Oliver Haas**  
Head of the Global Division “Health, Education, Social Inclusion”

Oliver Haas is the Head of the Global Division “Health, Education, Social Inclusion” of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) in Germany. He was Senior Operations Officer at the World Bank Group in Washington D.C., USA and has worked in Southeast Asia, Africa and Latin America where he led programs in TVET.



**Bruce Poh Geok Huat**  
CEO

Bruce Poh Geok Huat is the CEO of ITE Education Services in Singapore. He was an engineer in Hewlett-Packard before joining the Singapore Economic Development Board in 1981. He helped set up Nanyang Polytechnic in 1992 and was its Deputy Principal before taking up his current position at ITE in Feb 2007.



**Ramhari Laminchane**  
Director General

Ramhari Laminchane is the first Nepalese and the 11<sup>th</sup> Director General of the Colombo Plan Staff College (CPSC) in Sri Lanka. He had served as Member Secretary/Chief Executive Officer of the

Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training in Kathmandu, Nepal prior to his appointment at CPSC.

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