

Draft Background Note

ILO/SKILLS-AP/JAPAN Regional Workshop and Study Programme on Skills Development in the Workplace

Overseas Vocational Training Associations, Chiba, Japan
27 January – 6 February 2009

Background

Skills development in the workplace has increasingly become a critical issue for many countries in the Asia Pacific Region. New technology is being introduced and there is a constant need to train and retrain workers to ensure productivity and growth. This need was reflected in the ILO Human Resources Development Recommendation (R195, 2004) which stressed that member States should “promote the expansion of workplace learning and training”. In line with this Recommendation, the topic was discussed at the International Labour Conference (ILC), in 2008. The ILC Identified responsibilities for governments, social partners (employers and workers) and part of the role established for the ILO was to provide support and to promote the skills development system in promoting workplace learning along global value chains, in local clusters and in small enterprises;

The ILO and the Government of Japan organized a workshop and study programme on Workplace Learning in Japan in January 2008. The programme raised awareness of partner organizations on the effectiveness of workplace learning for skill development. They were also encouraged to make more effective use of private sector organizations for skill development.

The government of Japan has focused on the effectiveness of workplace learning for skill development. It has supported the transfer of trade skills by receiving trainees from Asian countries into the private sector companies under the scheme. Workplace Learning is effectively used as the key process for skilled worker development.

Many trainees, who acquired skills through the international scheme for transfer of trade skills, such as the Technical Internship Training Programme, have already returned to their home countries. However, the skills acquired by the trainees are not always effectively used by the employers. In addition, the trainees tend to face difficulties in their own career development after they have returned to their home countries.

The Japanese Government is seeking to develop systems and strategies to support the transfer of trade skills and subsequent career development of trainees from partner countries. Part of this systems development process is continued development of workplace learning within private sector organizations.

The major theme of the workshop and study programme will be to develop strategies for HRD using ‘Workplace Learning’ within private sector organizations. Countries will cooperate in sharing information and experiences on skills and subsequent career development focusing on ‘Workplace Learning’. This international cooperation will assist

countries in the region in the development of HRD strategies. There will also be a focus on ways in which the skills obtained by the trainees can be more effectively used after they have returned to their home countries.

Objective of the Workshop

The aim of the workshop will be to explore the ways human resources development systems and workplace learning support collaboration between private sector organizations or industries. It will also discuss strategies to strengthen the partnerships among partner organizations in the Regional Skills Network. The workshop will provide an opportunity to discuss challenges and exchange ideas about a range of issues.

The programme will provide an opportunity for each sending country to describe their current systems for:

- skills training and job assessment systems,
- workplace learning within private sector organizations,
- labour market structure and labour market information,
- ways in which trainee and skilled migration programmes operate

A particular focus will be given to the status of the trainees when they return to their home countries. Existing systems will be reviewed to ensure that the trainees can use any new skills to get better jobs or to establish a business. There will also be a chance to identify any problems or issues to be resolved.

The programme will then provide an opportunity for discussion about the challenges associated with the current system and support needed to improve the skills development of workers in private sector organizations in the Asia Pacific region.

Programme Structure and Methodology

A study programme will include case studies and visits to companies which participate in the Japan International Scheme. These will be used to provide examples of useful and effective systems for skill development and the ways that issues of international cooperation and human rights protection are being addressed. Information about workplace learning will also be provided. Discussion will focus on ways in which the skills obtained by trainees can be more effectively used after they have returned to their home countries.

The workshop programme will also include information about the Korean system and a number of practical activities. An opportunity will be provided to review work from previous seminars in areas such as

- Designing short specific training programmes to meet particular workplace learning needs;
- Using various methods to identify workplace training needs;
- Strategies to identify demand for training.

Preparation and inputs

Each government representative, where appropriate, in collaboration with social partners, is requested to prepare a background paper which has two parts.

The first part should focus on

- ways that skills development in the workplace operates in your country
- the extent to which workplace learning is supported by government and the various employer and worker and organizations
- the status and issues of the returned trainee/workers, who have acquired skills through the international scheme, such as the Technical Internship Training Programme;

The second part of the paper should focus on

- labour market structure and labour market information;
- ways that skilled workers returning from work in another country are supported in their home country;
- skills training and job assessment systems;
- workplace learning within private sector organizations

The report should also make reference to any activities that promote workplace participation or support workplace learning for people with a disability.

During the meeting, **each participant** will be requested to make formal presentations on these two parts. Government representatives will be requested to present for ten minutes on each paper and workers' and employers' representatives will be requested to present for five minutes on each part.

Participants

Senior level staff of the national vocational training organizations involved in the planning and development of the national skills policies and systems from Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam will be invited. Workers and employers organizations dealing with this subject will also be invited to participate and share their experience. Korea will be invited to participate to describe the existing skills development for workers mobility and trainees. The participation of women in the meeting is strongly encouraged.