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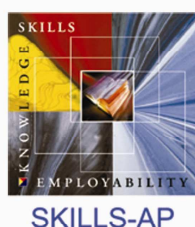
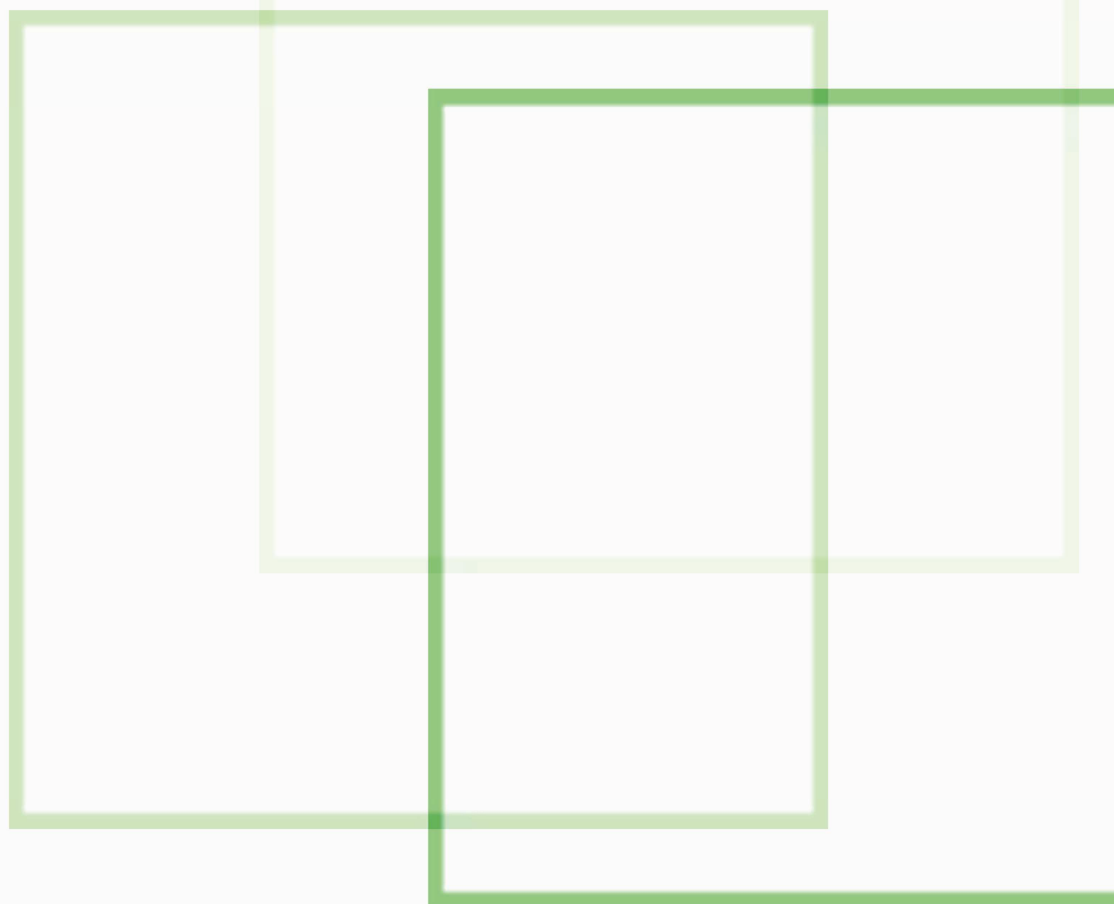
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JAPAN

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

**Report of the ILO/SKILLS-AP/Japan Regional Workshop and Study Programme
on Skills Development in the Workplace
OVTA, Chiba, Japan, 27 January - 6 February 2009**



Regional Skills and Employability Programme in Asia and the Pacific (SKILLS-AP)

Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

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First published 2009

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Skills development in the workplace : report of the ILO/SKILLS-AP/Japan Regional Workshop and Study Programme on Skills Development in the Workplace, OVTA, Chiba, Japan, 27 January - 6 February 2009 / Regional Skills and Employability Programme in Asia and the Pacific (SKILLS-AP), ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. - Bangkok: ILO, 2009

vi, 34 p.

ISBN: 9789221222095; 9789221222156 (pdf)

ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific; Regional Skills and Employability Programme in Asia and the Pacific (SKILLS-AP)

conference report / vocational training / skill / on the job training / off the job training / learning / Asia / Pacific

06.01

ILO Cataloguing in Publication Data

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Printed in Thailand

Foreword

The ILO Human Resources Development Recommendation (2004) stresses that member States should “promote the expansion of workplace learning and training”. The whole issue of workplace learning has gained increasing prominence in recent years and this report is the second ILO/SKILLS-AP/Japan Regional Technical Workshop and Study Programme to focus on Workplace Learning.

I understand that the participant evaluations showed that all gained benefits from the various technical sessions and also from the industry visits. The combination of the workshop and site visits to Japanese industry was extremely useful as it showed workplace learning in action and the different approaches used to provide on-the-job training for trainees from different countries.

Japan has had a long experience in supporting workplace learning and this was clearly evident to the participants. The high priority Japan places on human resources development is also reflected in its Eighth Human Development Basic Plan (2006 – 2011) that they would promote “the support for career development within and outside enterprises in order to put sustainable career development into practice...”

Because a large amount of valuable resource material was prepared for the workshop, a technical manual or working paper will be produced and circulated to participants. Copies will be designed so that they can easily be translated by countries into local languages so that participants and others can share some of the messages and information that they have received.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Government of Japan for their support to this programme and their on-going support to the Regional Skills and Employability Programme for Asia and the Pacific (SKILLS-AP) and skills development in the region. Special thanks are also due to Masafumi Nomiyama and all of the staff of the Overseas Vocational Training Association (OVTA) which made the programme such a success. I would also like to thank Ray Grannall, Regional Senior Adviser on Skills Development for Asia and the Pacific for planning and organizing this workshop together with colleagues in the region. Thanks also to David Lancaster, the resource person for his background paper and many technical presentations during the programme. Finally, I would like to thank Wipusara Rugworakijkul, Programme Officer, Alin Sirisaksopit and Ju Hyang (Lily) Lee, who dealt with all the logistics and support to the meeting, together with who assisted in the preparation.

Sachiko Yamamoto
Regional Director
Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

Contents

Foreword.....	iii
Introduction.....	1
Inaugural session	2
Skills development in the workplace: the international experience	2
Experience of countries in the region	3
Identification of key issues	4
Designing training to meet workplace needs.....	4
Partnerships between industry and training organizations	5
Workplace learning: international examples.....	6
Guide to workplace learning	7
Labour market and skills assessment	8
Recognition of prior learning	8
Technical, operational and management roles	9
Introduction to the field visit programme.....	10
Study visits to Japanese enterprises	10
De-briefing from the field visits.....	11
National action plans.....	11
Synthesis of major issues	12
Closing statements.....	13
Appendix I: Participants	14
Appendix II: Programme	18
Appendix III: Background paper	25
Appendix IV: Template for workplace visits.....	33

Introduction

Workplace learning has become increasingly important during the past decade as an effective means of developing workforce knowledge and skills. Over recent years, in particular, the use of the workplace as a location for learning has been transformed due to: international competition; the consequent need for organizations to differentiate themselves from their competitors; the impact of new technology on productivity; and the growing use of work-design concepts and high performance work practices that are changing the ways in which work is organized.

The International Labour Organization's Human Resources Development Recommendation No. 195 (2004) stresses that member States should "promote the expansion of workplace learning and training". Supporting this recommendation, the Government of Japan stated in its Eighth Human Development Basic Plan (2006–2011) that it would promote a variety of efforts for rebuilding the environment in which workers' capabilities are improved, including restructuring of educational capacity of workplaces and the society. The Japanese Plan focuses on collaboration among related sectors by providing substantial workplace learning programmes. The Government of Japan also supports and promotes capacity building for countries in the region by presenting the Japanese perspective and experience through training and technical cooperation projects.

The aim of the workshop was to increase awareness of the importance of workplace learning and to hear about the different ways that workplace learning is implemented in Japan, participants' countries and other countries.

The workshop consisted of technical sessions, panel discussions, working groups and site visits to four Japanese companies: IHI Marine United, Metal Art Corporation, Nikko Corporation and Nichiyu Corporation.

Training providers in the partnership can also benefit because their trainers gain current information about the training needs of industry and current industry practice. However, ineffective organizing of a partnership can result in limitations or problems, such as:

Formal partnerships work most effectively with reasonably large organizations and the cost of customizing courses or developing individual training plans may be too expensive for small enterprises. However, if a large number of small enterprises are located together, it may also be possible to organize partnerships between the group and one or more training organizations.

Mr Lancaster then presented examples of partnerships between industry and training organizations from a variety of countries. Specifically, he commented on local partnerships (including through local chambers of commerce and related organizations) and supply-chain partnerships (of particular relevance in Japan in the automobile sector). He also mentioned "corporate universities" as a particular example of partnerships, which provoked considerable interest among the participants.

Consistent with this policy framework, ILO's Regional Skills and Employability Programme for Asia and the Pacific (SKILLS-AP) organized a workshop and study programme (27 January - 6 February 2009) at the Overseas Vocational Training Association (OVTA) in Chiba, Japan, for government, employers' and workers' representatives from Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam. (The list of participants and workshop programme are shown in appendices I and II.)

The participants also developed plans for action in their own countries on completion of the workshop.

Inaugural session

The inaugural session comprised three presentations:

First, Masahiko Hayashi, Deputy Director of ILO Office in Japan, welcomed participants and provided information about SKILLS-AP and its objectives. He also commented on the importance that Japanese organizations have always placed on skills development, including workplace learning.

Second, Masaharu Tanaka, Director of the Overseas Cooperation Division, Human Resources Development Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, underlined the importance to Japanese organizations of skills development, particularly workplace learning. In the current difficult economic circumstances, he said, skills development remains important to Japanese organizations.

Finally, Isao Aoki, President of OVTA, officially opened the workshop. He spoke of the long association between OVTA and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare and also of the links over some time with the ILO/SKILLS-AP and its predecessors, including the hosting of a similar workshop a year previously. He outlined the range of activities and facilities of OVTA.

The inaugural session was followed by the selection of workshop session chairs and panel members and a group photograph.

Skills development in the workplace: the international experience

Janet Abasolo, government representative (Philippines), chaired the first technical session, with Antonio Asper, workers' representative (Philippines) and Iftida Yasar, employers' representative (Indonesia) as panel members.

The session included two complementary presentations: David Lancaster, ILO consultant, addressed international experiences in workplace learning, followed by Nobuo Matsubara, Deputy Director, Overseas Cooperation Division, Human Resources Development Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, addressing the specific context in Japan.

Mr Lancaster first noted the three primary needs for skills development:

- i. national productivity and national wealth creation;
- ii. organizational productivity and organizational wealth creation; and
- iii. individual productivity and individual wealth creation.

He positioned skills development in the context of a poverty-reduction agenda, particularly in raising productivity and incomes in the informal sector, where most new jobs in Asia are created. He pointed out that skills development is also important to enable people to access decent work, especially people in subsistence employment.

Quoting a popular sentiment – “the only competitive advantage we have in the long run is our knowledge and skills”, he listed the drivers of the need for skills development, including globalization and international competition, and particularly the need for employment-specific skills development at the workplace (including for organizations to differentiate themselves from their competitors). He then cited benefits of workplace

learning and identified a range of workplace learning methods. He emphasized important differences in large and small organizations and in different countries.

Mr Lancaster positioned workplace learning in relation to developments in the past two decades, in terms of:

- i. competence frameworks
- ii. the concept of the learning organization
- iii. lifelong learning.

In concluding, he cited national programmes to support workplace learning and company and organizational case studies from a range of countries in Asia, Europe, North America, Australasia and southern Africa.

Mr Matsubara presented a detailed explanation of skills development in the workplace concerning Japan. He reported research by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, involving 23,637 persons in 7,372 enterprises, with a focus on corporate responsibility and staff development as part of employees' career development. He pointed out similarities and differences across different sectors of the economy the research revealed. The survey also included conclusions on recent and current practice and on expectations about future trends.

Mr Matsubara presented a sophisticated Model of Human Resource Development at the Workplace and a related model of the Skills Development Cycle in the Workplace. He outlined the support available to employers in Japan and the support available to workers. His focus on the practical aspects of human resource development systems concluded with a view of the "Japanese-styled dual system".

Experience of countries in the region

Siriwan Romchatthong, employers' representative (Thailand) chaired the first half of the second technical session (Skills development in the workplace: Experience of countries in the region). Participants from Bangladesh, China and Indonesia presented the current experience of their countries.

Yue Kang, workers' representative (China), chaired the second portion of the technical session, with participants from Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam giving country experience presentations.

In each presentation, the participants addressed ways in which skills development operates in their country; the extent to which workplace learning is supported by government and employers' and workers' organizations; and issues relating to trainees who return from overseas training programmes, such as Japan's IMM Technical Internship Training Programme.

In terms of those issues the matters reported were:

- Bangladesh has a long history of apprenticeships but is in a relatively early stage of a focus on workplace learning as a concept.
- China has developed a detailed National Occupational Classification Directory that includes 1,838 job species, retains a central responsibility on vocational skills testing and vocational qualifications certification and values the importance of skills competitions.
- Indonesia offers a National Competency-Based Training System and associated certification system for professional competency and verification process for workplace assessment.

- There is a wide-ranging use of labour market information in the Philippines; current initiatives include “greater modular access kiosks” and the “seek-find-train” paradigm.
- There are strong tripartite links between government and employers’ and workers’ organizations in Thailand in the context of a well-structured skills development strategy.
- Viet Nam (like elsewhere) grapples with a mismatch between the capabilities provided by the education sector and the needs of employers, though there is a work-based training programme in the agricultural (tobacco) sector.

Identification of key issues

Le Shen, government representative (China) chaired the first working group session.

Three working groups, mixed across country and organizational type, built on technical sessions 1 and 2 by identifying key issues in workplace learning across the countries represented in the workshop.

These identified issues were:

- how to balance the priorities of governments, employers and workers;
- how to prioritize pre-employment training and during-employment training;
- how to encourage employers who do not currently provide training to do so;
- how to minimize the loss to employers who train workers who then leave to join other organizations that do not provide training;
- what is the most appropriate form of a levy and grant system to encourage employers to train;
- how to improve the links between employers and training organizations;
- what kinds of skills are most suitable for off-the-job training and what kinds of skills are most suitable for on-the-job training;
- how to recognize and accredit the skills and expertise acquired on overseas training programmes, such as that provided by the Japanese Government;
- how to identify which training organizations are of high quality and which are not; and
- how can national and international skills competitions best be used.

The outputs and conclusions of the working group session were used i) as a focus for discussions during the workshop and ii) to guide observations and questions during the visits in week two to the Japanese enterprises.

Designing training to meet workplace needs

Tran Chidung, employers’ representative (Viet Nam), chaired the third technical session (Workplace Learning and Designing Training Programmes to Meet Specific Workplace Needs). It also included two complementary presentations: David Lancaster, ILO consultant, addresses experience internationally, followed by Kazuo Takebuchi, AGP Corporation, presenting a specific case study in Japan.

Mr Lancaster began with a training needs analysis at two levels: i) the organization as a whole and ii) individuals. He addressed specific workplace needs, both in relation to operational and technical skills and also concerning “soft skills”, such as teamwork and adaptability that are consistent with an organization’s culture and values. He cited a range of workplace learning examples and various means of encouraging workplace learning – both by employers encouraging employees to develop their skills and also government programmes that encourage employers to promote workplace learning.

He emphasized the need to assess the effectiveness of workplace learning, including in the Asian cultural context of assessment. He concluded with a personal observation of a possible trend towards emphasis on “trainability” or “learning to learn” rather than on specific skills and invited participants to comment.

Mr Takebuchi gave a detailed presentation of workplace learning to meet specific workplace needs in AGP. AGP’s business focus is the aviation sector, providing power, maintenance and ancillary services at airports; although, it has diversified into providing similar services in the hospitals sector. AGP’s educational philosophy is that humanity and morality should be respected and that all employees should share the same values and ethics. Mr Takebuchi talked of position-specific training that AGP provides, including an induction programme that emphasizes the company’s educational philosophy. The overall positioning of staff development in AGP and the driver of workplace training is the notion that “skills consist of thinking *and* action”.

The presentations were followed by the second working group session, chaired by Van Le Tran, workers’ representative (Viet Nam).

Three groups, mixed across country and organizational type, addressed and reported on issues in the implementation of workplace learning in the countries represented, with specific examples of successful and unsuccessful policies and programmes. Participants were also asked to identify the factors that are associated with success and the lack of it in meeting workplace training needs.

Among the characteristics of organizations that are successful in workplace learning, the following were emphasized:

- the commitment of the organization to employee development;
- strong partnerships with training providers – with high quality training providers;
- a focus by the organization on personal development broadly, not just the acquisition of specific or narrowly used skills;
- employees feeling valued, including through training that is accredited with recognized qualifications;
- the structuring of training in a modular framework, so employees can see how specific training fits within a wider picture;
- provision of opportunities and material resources to encourage employee self-development; and
- ensuring that trainers are up to date in terms of technology and work processes.

Partnerships between industry and training organizations

Abdul Malek, government representative (Bangladesh), chaired the fourth technical session. David Lancaster, ILO consultant, presented issues regarding the links between companies and training organizations in developing and implementing partnerships and offered examples of such partnerships.

Mr Lancaster started by identifying the benefits and non-benefits of partnering with training organizations and the distinction between one-off partnerships and ongoing partnerships. He indicated that some or all of workplace learning can be provided through the partnering with one or more training organizations (including both government and private sector training providers or skills-development centres). If the partnerships are set up and managed effectively, they can offer a number of benefits, such as:

- Specialists from the training organization can work with the enterprise to develop a customized training plan for employees.
- Existing courses can be customized or new training programmes can be developed to meet the precise needs of the organization.
- Staff can be assessed to identify their competencies.
- Staff can receive formal accreditation and certification of skills.
- Special support programmes can be organized for small numbers of employees with specific learning needs.
- The organization's management can focus on its core activities without the distraction of organizing the training.
- The lack of direct relevance to the company/organization of parts or even much of what is taught in an external course.
- Rigidities of time and location of external training (particularly for rural enterprises, if training organizations are located in a city).

Workplace learning: international examples

Roselle Morala, employers' representative (Philippines), chaired the fifth technical session, which included examples of workplace learning from three countries.

Yoshiyuki Fukuzawa, Director, Foreigner's Training Office, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, focused on Japan's IMM Technical Internship Training Programme. He explained its objectives, its growth during recent years, details of its organization and the number of participants (in total, and by country, and by occupation). He then cited the outcomes and conclusions of a recent analysis of the programme, including reports from participants of its positive and negative aspects, which have fed into the ongoing reformation of the programme.

Akiko Sakamoto, Skills Development Specialist based in the ILO Subregional Office in New Delhi, presented a situation analysis and explained plans concerning the five-year skills development programme being introduced in Bangladesh. One of the five components of the project focuses on workplace learning. Ms Sakamoto presented the initial thinking and planning of the project in relation to:

- i. policy development;
- ii. raising employers' awareness and demand for it;
- iii. standards and curriculum development;
- iv. strengthening apprenticeships;
- v. public-private partnerships in technical and vocational education and training;
- vi. introduction of modern work practices; and

- vii. other measures for promoting workplace learning (such as pilot programmes assisting selected companies in organizing workplace learning).

Margaret Willis, Director of the New South Wales Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board (Australia), addressed workplace learning in Australia, the national training and qualification framework and its regulation and quality-assurance dimensions, including the role of the Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board in the context of the Australian Quality Training Framework. She discussed two main models of workplace learning: i) enterprise-registered training organizations and ii) partnerships with registered training organizations, including guidance on how to work with enterprises. She indicated that there had been major changes in recent years relating to the use of competency standards by large companies. In these organizations, the national standards were being used for recruitment, staff selection and a range of other applications.

Guide to workplace learning

Ray Grannall, ILO/SKILLS-AP, outlined the *ILO Guide to Workplace Learning* and took feedback from the workshop participants on the priorities in relation to issues addressed in the guide. He described the ILO research, which challenged a number of myths about learning and training in small enterprises. He indicated that to survive in increased global competition, enterprises must:

- continually upgrade workforce skills;
- improve productivity;
- achieve international standards;
- add value to products and services;
- find new markets; and
- effectively use external training providers (especially small and medium enterprises).

He pointed out that in the current world environment there is an accelerating rate of change in business (technologies, quality, productivity, management practices and environment). There is also pressure to “move up the value chain” and adopt more high-value products. Because of this, small and medium enterprises require different, customized combinations of skills than those provided by formal courses.

He described a survey conducted in 2006 in which 70 per cent of enterprises in Mauritius said that 70 per cent of learning was in the workplace, while 30 per cent said 90 per cent of learning was in the workplace. In Thailand, 70 per cent of operators, 50 per cent supervisors and 20 per cent of managers indicated that learning was informal.

In general, the survey found that smaller enterprises rely more on workplace learning. While the traditional view of workplace learning is slowly changing, learning by experience still remains most important and learning on-the-job is most relevant. The survey further showed that learning and training needs differ according to such factors as sector, technologies, products, competitive strategies, the speed of change, the size of enterprise, among others. As enterprises grow, learning becomes formal and structured. In Mauritius, for example, 22 per cent of large enterprises used formal learning compared with 5 per cent of smaller enterprises. Large enterprises adopt more formal, structured approaches to learning and training, training plans, skills audits and the use of a human resources or training manager. Smaller companies rely on informal workplace learning in which the owner or manager drives the process.

Recent ILO research on high performance work organizations, trust between management and workers was a critical factor. Work organization and job design have a major influence on the type of learning used. But there was a need for workers to be capable of more than one job through job rotation and teamwork. Giving greater responsibility for problem solving and decision making also was shown to reduce the need for supervision. The research concluded: i) workers need access to continuous learning; ii) organizations need to develop trust, cooperation and partnership; iii) governments need to extend the training policy to integrate workplace learning; iv) small and medium enterprises need to make training and support systems more effective; v) and new and different policy responses are needed to face these challenges.

He next outlined research conducted for the International Labour Conference in 2008 that focused on “How skills development can help increase both productivity and employment in order to attain development goals”. He cited three critical success factors for skills development to improve productivity, increase employment, and reach development objectives:

- i. effective cooperation between providers of training in schools, vocational institutions, enterprises and government ministries;
- ii. effective coordination between training providers and employers’ and workers’ representatives; and
- iii. effective coordination of skills development policies with industrial, investment, trade and technology policies.

Labour market and skills assessment

Antonio Asper, workers’ representative (Philippines), chaired the first portion of the sixth technical session in which participants from Bangladesh, China and Indonesia presented their experiences in labour market and skills assessment. Zhongwei Zhao, employers’ representative (China) chaired the second portion in which participants from Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam presented their experiences.

In each case, each representative explained the labour market structure and the nature of labour market information in their country, the skills-training and job-assessment systems and workplace learning within private-sector organizations.

Recognition of prior learning

Van Le Tran, workers’ representative (Viet Nam), chaired the seventh technical session (Recognition of Prior Learning, following skills development in another country), which entailed presentations by David Lancaster, ILO consultant, and Nobuo Matsubara, Deputy Director, Overseas Cooperation Division, Human Resources Development Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

Mr Lancaster introduced the session by outlining general principles of recognition of prior learning (RPL) and the benefits to employers, employees and governments. He then addressed the relevance of competency frameworks to recognition of prior learning. He then discussed matters of “re-entry” following external training and compared the situation of participants in the programme in Chiba with that of trainees returning from extended training programmes overseas. Finally, he addressed the

specific issues of cross-national recognition of prior learning, particularly in the context of the IMM Intern Programme in Japan and the equivalent programme in Korea.

Mr Matsubara explained the details of the Technical Intern Training Programme provided to participants from overseas countries by the Government of Japan. He discussed the criteria for recruitment into the programme and the role of sending organizations. He outlined the use of trade skill tests and the vocational ability evaluation system. Additionally, he presented details of the job card system.

The session was followed by the fourth working group session in which participants – in country groups – addressed issues in their countries, both in general in relation to recognition of prior learning and also specifically in relation to the Japan and Korea programmes. The groups also addressed the current practice in their country in relation to the recognition of skills development in another country; the positive and negative features of current practice; and actions that could be taken to improve the recognition of skills development in another country.

Among the main points that emerged in their reporting back and subsequent discussions were:

- The benefits of a database of returning trainees (which is in place in some countries, but not in others) is a necessary step in ensuring that the learning that has taken place can be captured and can be recognized.
- The use of job fairs for returning trainees (which take place in some countries but not in others) can help to match returned trainees with employers where their skills can best be used.
- Skills competitions can be useful both for recognizing skills acquired overseas and also in promoting the benefits of overseas training.
- Although it would be ideal – if possible – to have mutual recognition between sending countries and receiving countries, it would be a complex task that would take considerable time to achieve. In the meantime and as a shorter-term objective, sending countries could usefully map the skills from overseas onto their own qualification framework as a means of providing recognition to returning trainees.
- The experience of those countries that have a relatively long history of sending trainees to structured programmes overseas (for example, Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand) can be of considerable assistance to those countries that have an interest in, but less experience of, such programmes (for example, Bangladesh).

Technical, operational and management roles

Sakif Tabani, employers' representative (Bangladesh), chaired the eighth technical session (Workplace Learning for Technical, Operational and Management Roles). David Lancaster, ILO consultant, compared and contrasted workplace learning for technical and operational roles with that for management roles, including the extent of adoption of principles of work design (job rotation, etc.).

Mr Lancaster began by addressing the relevance of work design to workplace learning. In addition to job rotation, he commented on job shadowing, job sharing, mentoring and involvement in one-off projects to illustrate how the tools and techniques of work design can be use in workplace learning to develop the skills of both individuals and the organization as a whole. He emphasized the relevance of workplace learning to attract new staff and to retain existing staff – both operational and management staff. He moved on to address the similarities and differences between workplace learning for

operational and for management roles, particularly in relation to the range and breadth of processes typically used. He underlined the role of workplace learning in relation to both operational and management roles in developing new skills and in developing and confirming attitudes and behaviours consistent with the organization's culture and values. He commented on the training of trainers before concluding that many of the approaches and methods of workplace learning (such as job rotation and mentoring) are applicable equally to operational work roles and to management work roles.

Introduction to the field visit programme

Three brief commentaries were made at the end of the Friday session as a prelude to the field visits:

- i. Nobuo Matsubara summarized the key characteristics of the Japanese approach to learning and training.
- ii. Masafumi Nomiya, OVTA Assistant Manager of the International Affairs Section, reviewed the logistics of the field visit programme, including transport and hotel arrangements.
- iii. David Lancaster explained the data collection template (included as appendix IV) for use by the participants during each of the four Japanese enterprise visits.

Study visits to Japanese enterprises

The study visit element of the workshop and study programme entailed visits to four Japanese enterprises, selected by OVTA for their relevance to the workplace learning.

The first enterprise visited was IHI Marine United, in Kure, near Hiroshima. The IHI Marine shipyard employs approximately 1,300 people (of the approximately 2,000 total IHI Marine employees). IHI is a very active participant in the Japanese IMM Intern Programme, with about 150 trainees from Viet Nam and 130 trainees from the Philippines (one of whom recently won the skills competition). In addition to a tour of the shipyard, the participants saw the training workshop for welding and the area for assessment and testing of welding skills. The overseas trainees are involved in high-technology work processes, although within a rather narrow area of the company's overall activities.

The second enterprise visited was Metal Art, the forging division of Metalart Corporation. The Metal Art division in Shiga, Kyoto, has about 320 employees. Since 2000, Metal Art has been a very active participant in the Japanese IMM Intern Programme. There are currently about 30 trainees from Indonesia. Metal Art has a technical assistance agreement with a company in Indonesia, Menara Terus Makmur (as well as a similar technical assistance agreement with a partner organization in India). Metal Art produces forgings particularly for the automobile sector (crankshafts, con rods, etc.) and the construction industry. In addition to visiting the forging workshop, the participants also saw the training room where health and safety training is provided, including hydraulics and pneumatics. Similar to IHI, the overseas trainees are involved in high-technology work processes, although within a rather narrow area of the company's overall activities.

The third enterprise visited was Nikko Corporation, which is a small general engineering company located in Kyoto. It is a family company that began about 50 years ago, originally in the casting and forming of bronze temple bells; it more recently

moved into the production of forged components for the automobile sector, particularly for fork lift trucks. The company engages 20 employees, including 5 from Indonesia. Interestingly, the company has an ongoing business relationship with some of the initial trainees from Indonesia, who source components for Nikko. Partly because the company is small and partly because the owner runs the operation as a family-like business (several post-retirement age employees have chosen to continue to work in the company well beyond retirement age), the trainees (both Japanese and Indonesian) get a wide exposure to the whole organization – both across its range of technologies and also an understanding of the organization as an entrepreneurial business. This perspective offers trainees the opportunity to consider whether self-employment might subsequently be an option for them.

The fourth organization visited, Nichiyu Corporation, also in Kyoto, is a manufacturer of fork lift trucks and automated warehousing equipment. It is the major customer of Nikko Corporation, and it was interesting to see the link between two organizations. Nichiyu has a highly automated manufacturing and assembly operation. It does not participate directly in the Japanese IMM programme but clearly has good working relationships with Nikko and is supportive of Nikko's involvement in the programme. Nichiyu employs about 2,300 people (including a large proportion in marketing and sales), 610 of whom work at the Kyoto manufacturing plant. For an organization that is sophisticated in its manufacturing and assembly operations – with automated transport and transfer of components and many robots in the machining area – new employees are recruited almost exclusively from the local high schools and then trained by the company. Nichiyu does not have substantial training workshop facilities or full-time trainers but, instead, conducts workplace learning, with experienced workers training new employees and with extensive use of skills competitions.

De-briefing from the field visits

Nikom Tengyai, workers' representative (Thailand), chaired this session.

In a "roundtable" de-briefing, each participant reported the one thing that he/she found of interest from the site visits. The participants then moved into mixed country groups to assess the main learning points.

Some found the high-technology companies particularly of interest in their operations and the associated training provided. In the larger organizations, trainees often did only one type of work while in the smaller companies, trainees appeared to have greater opportunity to learn a variety of jobs. This seemed to be the issue of greatest interest to the participants.

National action plans

Areeya Rojvithee, government representative (Thailand) chaired the session on the development and presentation of national action plans.

In introducing the session, Ray Grannall suggested themes to be included in the action plan, including the current situation in each country, barriers to the further development of workplace learning, issues for government and employers' organizations and workers' organizations in encouraging and supporting workplace learning, and observations and implications from the organizations visited during the study tour.

The participants worked in country-specific groups to develop and update their country action plans. On the following day, each country representative presented its action plan. Among the items reported in the national action plans were:

- Bangladesh: The need to include disadvantaged individuals and groups (for example, illiterate people and women) in the skills development framework and the extended use of micro-credit facilities to encourage self-employment and entrepreneurship.
- China: The extension and broadening of the coverage of the national vocational qualifications system and building on skills competitions as part of skills development in the country.
- Indonesia: Addressing the mismatch between the outcomes of the education sector with the needs of employers through a competency-based framework; developing a database of workers returning from training overseas and conducting job fairs for them.
- Philippines: Recognition of in-house training programmes conducted in the workplace under the technical and vocational education and training qualifications framework.
- Thailand: In the context of “learning the Thai way”, carrying out a three-phase activity-based case study of Thai companies.
- Viet Nam: The incorporation of recognition of prior learning as part of the national skills qualifications framework.

In summary:

- i. There were several similarities across the countries, reflecting that the sharing of experience between countries is valuable.
- ii. There were significant differences between countries, including differences reflecting the duration for which the different countries have been addressing workplace learning.
- iii. There was considerable evidence that the learning from the workshop, including from the study visits to the Japanese companies, had been a significant influence on countries’ action plans.

Synthesis of major issues

David Lancaster summarized the major issues that emerged during the workshop and among participants’ discussion:

- i. Major issues entailed reconciling the somewhat different priorities of governments, employers and workers; providing incentives for employers to train; the problem of “poaching” of trained workers; the appropriate balance between off-the-job and on-the-job training; inclusion in a country’s qualifications framework of skills acquired in another country; quality assurance of training; sharing examples of good practice within countries and between countries.
- ii. The characteristics of organizations that are successful in workplace learning entailed organizational commitment to employee development, strong partnerships with high-quality training providers and a focus on “learning to learn”.

Closing statements

Masahiko Hayashi, Deputy Director of ILO Office in Japan, thanked the workshop organizers and advised the participants that this workshop was not a finish but a start – that the most important part of the event is when participants return to their country with the “fruits of the seminar”.

The workshop concluded with closing statements from the representatives of government (Md Abdul Malek, Bangladesh) and the employers’ (Siriwan Romchatthong, Thailand) and workers’ organizations (Antonio Asper, Philippines). The representatives identified learning points and highlights of the workshop and thanked the organizers and fellow participants.

Appendix I: Participants

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

Overseas Vocational Training Association (OVTA), Chiba, Japan

27 January - 6 February 2009

List of Participants

	Country	Name			Position	Organization	Telephone	Telefax	E-Mail
Participants									
1	Bangladesh	Mr	MD. Abdul	Malek	Director General	Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training	(880 2) 9349925 (880 2) 8332863	(880 2) 9353203, (880 2) 8319948 (travel)	bmet@bmet.org.bd nurulislam@bmet.org.bd
2	Bangladesh	Mr	Sakif Ariff	Tabani	Member of the Committee	Bangladesh Employers' Federation KHADIM CERAMICS LTD	(880 2) 9891942-10, 8860137 -30	(880 2) 8822026	sat@mirpurceramic.com
3	Bangladesh	Mr	Nur	Mohammad	Senior Vice President	Bangladesh Free Trade Union Congress	(880 2) 801 7001	(880 2) 801 5919	bftuc@dhaka.agni.com bftuc@agni.com
4	China	Mr	Le	Shen	Principal Staff Member	Department of International Cooperation, Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security	(86 10) 8420 1663	(86 10) 8425 4390	shenle2003@sohu.com
5	China	Mr	Zhongwei	Zhao	Researcher	China Enterprise Confederation, China Enterprise Directors Association	(86 10) 8841 3605	(86 10) 6870 1197	zhaozw2004@yahoo.com.cn

	Country	Name			Position	Organization	Telephone	Telefax	E-Mail
6	China	Mr	Yue	Kang	Deputy Director of Division of economic and technology department	All-China Federation of Trade Unions	(86 10) 68591540-1 (86 10) 68591420 (travel arrangement)	(86 10) 68562031, (86 10) 68591499 (travel)	tony_zhang@acftu.org.cn jianfu_sun@acftu.org.cn feelwine2002@yahoo.com.cn
7	Indonesia	Mr	Mangu	Pramudia	Head Division of Legal and Administration, National Board for Certification Profession	Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration	(62 21) 529 64505 (62 21) 799 2685 (travel)	(62 21) 529 60456 (62 21) 799 2321	info@bnspp.go.id pramudia_mangu@yahoo.com
8	Indonesia	Ms	Iftida	Yasar	Vice Secretary General of APINDO	Employers' Association of Indonesia (APINDO)	(62 21) 579 38821, 579 38824	(62 21) 579 38873 579 38825 (travel)	sekretariat@apindo.or.id lftidayasar@yahoo.com
9	Indonesia	Ms	Nurul Afifah	Habie	Education Officer	Confederation of Indonesian Trade Unions	(62 21) 798 9005, 798 2140	(62 21) 798 9095 871 7858 (travel)	kspi_citu@cbn.net.id ml_pmi_puk_spmi@id.panasonic.com afifah.habie@yahoo.com
10	Philippines	Ms	Janet	Abasolo	Chief ,TESDA Specialist of the Enterprise and community based TVET System	Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA)	(63 2) 810 7875 (63 2) 817-4423	(63 2) 892 6918 (63 2) 817 4423	janetabasolo@tesda.gov.ph Milagros_dawahernandez@yahoo.com
11	Philippines	Ms	Roselle	Morala	Training & Development Manager	Employers' Confederation of the Philippines	(63 2) 895 8575 (63 2) 899 0411 (travel)	(63 2) 895 8576	training@ecop.org.ph

	Country	Name			Position	Organization	Telephone	Telefax	E-Mail
12	Philippines	Mr	Isidro Antonio C.	Asper	Executive Assistant to the FFW President	Federation of Free Workers (FFW)	(63 2) 5219435164 (63 2) 5219464	(63 2) 400 6656	asper.tony125@gmail.com, acasper1951@yahoo.com
13	Thailand	Ms	Areeya	Rojvithee	Deputy Director General	Department of Skill Development, Ministry of Labour	Ms Areeya: (66 2) 245 1820	(66 2) 248 3449	areeyaroj@yahoo.com
14	Thailand	Ms	Siriwan	Romchatthong	Secretary General	Employers' Confederation of Thailand (ECOT)	(66 2) 385 7117, 385 7177	(66 2) 385 8477, (66 2) 385 7116 (travel)	ecot@ecot.or.th toecot@gmail.com siriwan@ecot.or.th
15	Thailand	Mr	Nikom	Tengyai	Committee Advisor	Thai Trade Union Congress (TTUC)	(66 2) 384 0438	(66 2) 384 0438	thai_tuc@hotmail.com
16	Viet Nam	Mr	Thu	Pham Xuan	Head of Vocational Curriculum and Method Department	International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA)	(84 4) 826 9532, 3974 5198	(84 4) 826 4222, (84 4) 3974 5020 (travel)	phamxuanthu@yahoo.com
17	Viet Nam	Mr	Tran	Chi Dung	Deputy General Director of Bureau for Employers' Activities	Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industries (VCCI)	(84 4) 3574 2022	(84 4) 3574 2020	vcci@fmail.vnn.vn dungtc@vcci.com.vn
18	Viet Nam	Mr	Van Ly	Tran	Member of the Presidium, Director of International Department	Viet Nam General Confederation of Labor (VGCL)	(84 4) 3942 1795	(84 4) 3942 3781	doingoitld@hn.vnn.vn

	Country	Name			Position	Organization	Telephone	Telefax	E-Mail
ILO–Bangkok									
19	ILO	Mr	Ray	Grannall	Senior Specialist & Manager	Regional Senior Specialist on Skills Development and Regional Skills and Employability Programme	(662) 288 1855	(662) 288 1086	grannall@ilo.org
Resource Persons									
20	UK	Mr	David	Lancaster	Managing Director	Lancaster Education and Training International (LETI)	(44) 1788 552617	(44) 1788 552625	David.Lancaster@ intrec.co.uk
21	ILO (India)	Ms	Akiko	Sakamoto	Skills Development Specialist	ILO SRO New Delhi	(91) 11 2460 2101(ext.263)	(91) 11 2464 7973 (91) 11 2464 2111	sakamoto@ilo.org
22	Australia	Ms	Margaret	Willis	Director	New South Wales Vocational Education and Training Accreditation	(612) 9244 5500		margaret.willis@ det.nsw.edu.au
Observers									
23	ILO (Bangladesh)	Mr	AKM	Shahiduzzaman	National Programme Officer TVET Reform project	ILO Dhaka	(880 2) 911 2876 01716 314539	(880 2) 811 4211	shahidzaman@ilo.org
24	Japan	Mr	Nobuo	Matsubara	Deputy Director	Overseas Cooperation Division Human Resources Development Bureau Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare	(81 3) 5253 1111 (ext.5955) (81 3) 3502 4657 (Direct)	(81 3) 3502 8932	matsubara-nobuo@ mhlw.go.jp

Appendix II: Programme

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

Overseas Vocational Training Association, Chiba, Japan
27 January - 6 February 2009

PROGRAMME

TUESDAY, 27 JANUARY 2009

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 08.30 – 09.00 | Registration |
| 09.00 – 09.40 | <i>Opening addresses</i>
Mr Masahiko Hayashi, Deputy Director, ILO Office in Japan
Mr Masaharu Tanaka, Director, Overseas Cooperation Division, Human Resources Development Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Japan
Mr Isao Aoki, President, Overseas Vocational Training and Association (OVTA) |
| 09.40 – 10.00 | <i>Introduction of participants</i>
Programme and arrangements for the meeting
Group photograph |
| 10.00 – 10.30 | Tea/coffee break |
| 10.30 – 11.00 | <i>Selection of workshop session chairs and panel members</i>
Individual meetings of government, employer and worker participants
Coordinated by: Mr Ray Grannall, Manager, SKILLS-AP |
| 11.00 – 12.10 | <i>Technical session 1: Skills development in the workplace – The international experience</i>
Panel chairperson: Ms Janet Abasolo, Chief, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) and Specialist of the Enterprise and Community-Based TVET System, Philippines

Presentations: Mr David Lancaster, ILO Consultant
Mr Nobuo Matsubara, Deputy Director Overseas Cooperation Division, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MoHLW), Japan |
| 12.10 – 12.30 | <i>Comments from panel members</i>
Workers' and employers' perspectives (5 minutes each) |
| 12.30 – 14.00 | Welcome lunch hosted by OVTA |
| 14.00 – 15.15 | <i>Technical session 2A: Skills development in the workplace: How it operates and how it is supported – Experience of countries in the region</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Ways that skills development in the workplace operates in your country▪ The extent to which workplace learning is supported by government and the various employers' and workers' 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

Panel chairperson: Ms Siriwan Romchatthong, Secretary General, Employers' Confederation of Thailand (ECOT)

Country presentations: Government representative from Bangladesh, China and Indonesia (10 minutes each)
workers' and employers' views (5 minutes each)

15.15 – 15.45 Tea/coffee break

15.45 – 17.00 ***Technical session 2B: Skills development in the workplace:
How it operates and how it is supported experience of countries
in the region (continued)***

- Ways that skills development in the workplace operates in your country
- The extent to which workplace learning is supported by government and the various employers' and workers' 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

Panel chairperson: Mr Yue Kang, Deputy Director of Division of Economic and Technology Department, All China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU), China

Country presentations: Government representatives from Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam (10 minutes each) workers' and employers' views (5 minutes each).

WEDNESDAY, 28 JANUARY 2009

09.00 – 10.00 ***First working group session: Identification of key issues***

Panel chairperson: Mr Le Shen, Principal Staff Member, Department of International Cooperation, Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, China

Introduced by: Mr Ray Grannall, Manager, ILO/SKILLS-AP

Three working groups (mixed according to country and background)

10.00 – 10.30 ***Presentations from the first working group discussions***

Panel chairperson: Mr Le Shen, China

Presentations from: Chairs of the Working Groups (10 minutes each)

10.30 – 11.00 Tea/coffee break

11.00 – 12.10 ***Technical session 3: Workplace learning and designing training programmes to meet specific workplace needs***

Panel chairperson: Mr Tran Chi Dung, Deputy General Director, Bureau for Employers' Activities, Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industries (VCCI), Viet Nam

Presentations by: Mr David Lancaster, ILO Consultant
Mr Kazuo Takebuchi, AGP Co. Japan

12.10 – 12.30	<i>Comments from panel members:</i> Government and workers' perspectives
12.30 – 14.00	Lunch
14.00 – 15.00	<i>Second working group session: Designing training programmes to meet specific workplace needs</i> Panel chairperson: Mr Van Ly Tran, Member of the Presidium, Director, International Department, Viet Nam General Confederation of Labor (VGCL), Viet Nam Introduced by: Mr David Lancaster, ILO consultant Three working groups (mixed according to country and background)
15.00 – 15.30	Tea/Coffee break
15.30 – 16.00	<i>Presentations of the second working group discussions</i> Panel chairperson: Mr Van Ly Tran, Viet Nam Presentation from: Chairs of the Working Groups
16.00 – 17.00	<i>Technical session 4: Partnerships between industry and training organizations</i> Panel chairperson: Mr MD. Abdul Malek, Director General, Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training, Bangladesh Presentations by: Mr David Lancaster, ILO Consultant
17.00 – 17.15	<i>Comments from panel members:</i> Workers' and employers' perspectives (5 minutes each)

THURSDAY, 29 JANUARY 2009

09.00 – 10.00	<i>Technical session 5: Workplace learning – International examples</i> Panel chairperson: Ms Roselle Morala, Training & Development Manager, Employers' Confederation of the Philippines, Philippines Presentation by: Mr Yoshiyuki Fukuzawa, Director, Foreigner's Training Office, MHLW Ms Akiko Sakamoto, Skills Development Specialist, ILO Sub-Regional Office in New Delhi Ms Margaret Willis, Director, New South Wales Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board (VETAB), Australia <i>Comments from panel members:</i> Government and workers' perspectives
10.30 – 11.00	Tea/coffee break
11.00 – 11.30	<i>Technical session 5a: Workplace learning – Draft guide</i> Introduced by: Mr Ray Grannall, Manager, SKILLS-AP Introduction to the <i>Draft Guide to Workplace Learning</i> .

11.30 – 12.30	<i>Technical session 6a: Skills development in the workplace: Labour market and skills assessment – Experience of countries in the region</i> ▪ Labour market structure and labour market information ▪ Skills training and job assessment systems ▪ Workplace learning within private sector organizations Panel chairperson: Mr Antonio Asper, Executive Assistant to the FFW President, Philippines Country presentations: Government representative from Bangladesh, China and Indonesia (10 minutes each) workers' and employers' views
12.30 – 14.00	Lunch
14.00 – 15.00	<i>Technical session 6b: Skills development in the workplace: Labour market and skills assessment – Experience of countries in the region (continued)</i> ▪ Labour market structure and labour market information ▪ Skills training and job assessment systems ▪ Workplace learning within private sector organizations Panel chairperson: Mr Zhongwei Zhao, Researcher, China Enterprise Confederation, China Enterprise Directors Association, China Country presentations: Government representatives from Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam (10 minutes each) workers' and employers' views (5 minutes each).
15.00 – 15.30	Tea/coffee break
15.30 – 16.30	<i>Technical session 7: Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) RPL following skills development in another country</i> Panel chairperson: Mr Van Ly Tran, VGCL, Viet Nam Introduced by: Mr Ray Grannall, ILO SKILLS-AP; and Presentation by: Mr David Lancaster, ILO Consultant Mr Nobuo Matsubara, Deputy Director Overseas Cooperation Division, MHLW Japan <i>Comments from panel members</i> Government and employers' perspectives
16.30 – 17.00	<i>General discussion</i>

FRIDAY, 30 JANUARY 2009

09.00 – 10.30	<i>Fourth working group session: Supporting trainees when they return; Effective approaches to skills development in the workplace three mixed working groups)</i> ▪ Measuring workplace learning ▪ Skills training and job assessment systems ▪ Recording information Introduced by: Mr Ray Grannall and Mr David Lancaster Three mixed working groups
10.30 – 11.00	Tea/coffee break

- 11.00 – 11.30** ***Fourth working group reporting back***
Presentation from: Chairs/rapporteurs of the working groups
- 12.30 – 14.00** Lunch
- 14.00 – 15.30** ***Technical session 8 – Workplace learning for technical, operational and management roles (role of managers, project design, job shadowing, job sharing, mentoring programmes, etc.)***
Panel chairperson: Mr Sakif Tabani, Member of the Committee, Bangladesh Employers' Federation/Khadim Ceramics Limited, Bangladesh
Introduced by: Mr David Lancaster, ILO Consultant
- Comments from panel members*
Government and workers' perspectives
- 15.30 – 16.00** Tea/coffee break
- 16.00 – 17.00** ***Introduction to the field visit programme and reporting***
- Japanese approach to learning and training in the workplace
 - Overview of the visit programme – OVTA representative
 - Data collection – David Lancaster, ILO consultant

SATURDAY, 31 JANUARY 2009

Own arrangements

SUNDAY, 1 FEBRUARY 2009

P.M. *Travel to Hiroshima*
Overnight in Hiroshima

MONDAY, 2 FEBRUARY 2009

- 10.00 – 11.30** *Visit to Japanese enterprise*
- IHI Marine United Inc, Kure near Hiroshima
- 16.46 – 18.32** Travel to Kyoto
Overnight in Kyoto

TUESDAY, 3 FEBRUARY 2009

- 10.00 – 11.30** *Visit to Japanese enterprise*
- Metal Art Corporation, Shiga, Kyoto
- Overnight in Kyoto

WEDNESDAY, 4 FEBRUARY 2009

09.00 – 10.00 *Visit to Japanese enterprise*
▪ Nikko Corporation, Kyoto
▪ Nichiyu Corporation, Kyoto

17.15 Return to Chiba

THURSDAY, 5 FEBRUARY 2009

09.00 – 10.30 ***De-briefing from the field visits***
▪ Key features observed
▪ Lessons learned
Panel chairperson: Mr Nikom Tengyai, Committee Advisor,
Thai Trade Union Congress (TTUC), Thailand
Introduced by: Mr David Lancaster, ILO Consultant

10.30 – 11.00 Tea/coffee break

11.00 – 12.30 ***Development of national action plans (country working groups)***
▪ Using various methods to identify workplace training needs
▪ Strategies to identify demand for training
▪ International cooperation
▪ Cooperation in sharing information and experiences on skill
▪ Career development focusing on workplace learning
▪ Changes to government regulation required
▪ Government support required
Panel chairperson: Ms Areeya Rojvithee, Deputy Director General,
Department of Skill Development, Ministry of
Labour
Introduced by: Mr Ray Grannall, Manager, SKILLS-AP

12.30 – 14.00 Lunch

14.00 – 17.00 ***Development of national action plans (country working groups)***
Continuation of discussion

FRIDAY, 6 FEBRUARY 2009

09.00 – 10.30 ***Presentations of the national reports and action plans***
Panel chairperson: Ms Areeya Rojvithee, Thailand
Panel: Representatives of the Country Working
Groups: Bangladesh, China and Indonesia

Open discussion

10.30 – 11.00 Tea/coffee break

11.00 – 12.30 ***Presentations of the national reports and action plans***
Panel chairperson: Ms Areeya Rojvithee, Thailand
Panel: Representatives of the Country Working
Groups: Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam

Open discussion

12.30 – 14.00	Lunch
14.00 – 15.00	<i>Synthesis of major issues</i> ▪ Issues identified in the meeting ▪ Discussion of follow up action Panel chairperson: Mr Ray Grannall, Manager, SKILLS–AP Synthesis and Review by: Mr David Lancaster, ILO consultant
15.00 – 15.30	Tea/coffee break
15.30 – 16.00	<i>Closing session</i> Chairperson: Mr Masahiko Hayashi, ILO Office in Japan Statements by: Mr Md. Abdul Malek, Director General, Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training, Bangladesh Ms Siriwan Romchatthong, Secretary General, Employers' Confederation of Thailand (ECOT) Mr Antonio Asper, Executive Assistant to FFW President, Philippines
17.30	Farewell party hosted by OVTA

Appendix III: Background paper

ILO/SKILLS-AP/Japan Regional Workshop and Study Programme on Workplace Learning in Japan

Overseas Vocational Training Association, Chiba, Japan

27 January - 6 February 2009

Different international approaches to learning and training in companies

Introduction

This paper addresses the need for skills development in companies and different approaches internationally to learning and training in companies. It includes examples at

- i. national level
- ii. subnational (sector level)
- iii. company level (and also of organizations in the public sector) of systems to support learning and training, particularly workplace learning.

The need for skills development in companies

There are several related reasons underlining the importance of skills development in companies (and other organizations). These include:

- for national productivity and national wealth creation
- for organizational productivity and organizational wealth creation
- for individual productivity and wealth creation.

At the global and national level, it is important to recognize the contribution of skills development to poverty reduction – which is, rightly, a major priority of governments and international development banks. Skills development is important to poverty reduction for a number of reasons, including:

- Skills development is important for raising productivity and incomes in the informal sector, where most new jobs in Asia and the Pacific are created.
- Skills development is important to enable the poor to access decent work and to add value in existing subsistence employment.

Formal and informal skills development

Training and learning in companies directed at skills development can take place by either formal or informal means – or, of course, by a combination of formal and informal means.

Formal skills development includes “off-the-job” training, either on company premises (perhaps by a training division) or external to the company (for example by a commercial or governmental training organization).

Informal skills development includes – as is the focus of this workshop – workplace learning.

What is workplace learning?

Workplace learning can be defined as the acquisition of knowledge or skills by formal or informal means that occurs in the workplace (rather than knowledge or skills acquisition outside the workplace – for example in classrooms).

Increasing emphasis on employment - relevant learning

There is an increasing emphasis internationally on employment-relevant learning due to globalization and international competition driving the need for skills development, among other reasons.

It has been said that “the only competitive advantage we have in the long run is our knowledge and skills”. Companies, particularly those that either operate internationally or face international competition in their home market increasingly need to continually develop the skills of their employees.

Increasing emphasis on workplace learning

Within that overall picture of an increasing emphasis internationally on skills development, there is a related increasing emphasis internationally on workplace learning. This, again, is for a number of reasons, but particularly:

- The need for a company to be different from its competitors, and better than its competitors drives the need for organization-specific (rather than generic) skills development.
- The efficiency and effectiveness of workplace learning is increasingly recognized, as are the limitations and problems of external training).
- Workplace learning – by focusing on the specific skills needed in an organization – helps reduce the mismatch between labour market needs and supply of skills.
- In a context in which there is a shortage of particular skills nationally, and in which it is therefore important for companies to retain skilled workers, the development of company-specific skills helps in staff retention (such benefits to companies are contradicted by the off-setting non-benefit to the country's economy as a whole by reducing labour market mobility).
- As a by-product of assisting staff retention, workplace learning may also assist (in relation to those companies located in rural areas) in minimizing the rural to urban migration that is a substantial problem in a number of countries (though, again, there is the off-setting non-benefit to the country's economy as a whole by reducing labour market mobility).

Limitations and problems of external training

Formal training external to the company has several clear benefits. It also has several associated limitations and problems, including:

- the lack of direct relevance to the company/organization of parts of what is taught on external courses;
- frequently, an insufficient understanding by external providers of the organization's activities;
- the rigidities of time and location of external training;
- the cost of external training.

Benefits of workplace learning

Some of the limitations and problems of external training are reflected by the benefits of workplace learning, including:

- a focus on the skills that are essential to the individual and the organization;
- a means of transmitting and underlining the organization's culture and values;

In its June 2008 report *Education and Skills: Strategies for Accelerated Development in Asia & the Pacific*, the Asian Development Bank said of the region: “Generally, too much emphasis is placed in Asia on pre-employment, institution-based training”. The implication

is that generally too little emphasis is placed in Asia on within-employment training and workplace training.

It may be that – in contrast with the international trends stated at the start of this paper (an increasing emphasis internationally on employment-relevant learning and an increasing emphasis internationally on workplace learning) – those priorities have not previously been so manifest in Asia as elsewhere. This is important to the increasing interest in Asia currently on employment-relevant training and workplace learning.

Spectrum of types of workplace learning

Within the definition of workplace learning (the acquisition of knowledge or skills by formal or informal means that occurs in the workplace), there is a spectrum of types. One classification of types of workplace learning is:

- informal skills and knowledge transfer (by passing “hints and tips”, sharing ideas, passing information, observation, etc.);
- semi-structured learning (an experienced machine operator showing a new employee how to operate a particular machine);
- formal training (apprenticeship programmes, training courses, etc.).

Types of informal/on-the-job training

Informal skills and knowledge transfer includes a number of different types of training:

- training by the trainee’s line manager or other supervisor;
- training by the company’s training officer or training department;
- training provided by external training companies;
- training provided by equipment suppliers;
- computer-based learning (especially when the job involves using computers).

Learners’ preferences about methods of workplace learning

A study published in November 2008 by the UK Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (the main professional body in the field in the United Kingdom) reported learners’ preferences about methods of workplace learning as follows:

- “be shown and practice” (reported by 46 per cent of the respondents as their preferred method)
- one-to-one coaching (reported by 18 per cent of the respondents as their preferred method)
- classrooms (reported by 15 per cent of the respondents as their preferred method)
- colleagues (reported by 13 per cent of the respondents as their preferred method)
- books, etc. (reported by 8 per cent of the respondents as their preferred method).

Differences between large and small organizations (and different countries)

A number of studies have reported significant differences between large organizations and small organizations in the ways in which they provide training. In summary, small organizations tend particularly to focus on informal and workplace learning. Large organizations tend to have a wider mixture of formal off-the-job and workplace training.

There are also differences between countries with different economic profiles, based on the Asian Development Bank classification of:

- low-income agricultural countries (e.g. Bangladesh, Papua New Guinea);
- countries focusing on low-cost manufacturing (e.g. Sri Lanka);
- transitional economies (e.g. Lao PDR, Viet Nam);

- countries that have investment-driven growth (e.g. Indonesia, Malaysia);
- countries that have innovation-driven growth (e.g. Korea, Japan, Singapore);
- small island countries (e.g. Samoa, Tonga).

Informal and workplace learning is used in all countries but with formal/external training being more extensive in some – particularly in those countries where there are a larger number of large organizations.

The relevance of competence frameworks

During the past 20 years, several countries have progressively introduced competence frameworks – specifications of required competences for each occupation in each sector of the economy. Such competence frameworks can be used for:

- recruitment – specifying the competences needed in a job;
- prioritizing and driving training plans – both the organization's overall training plan and the training plans of individual employees or groups of employees;
- pay scales (sometimes).

Competence frameworks are particularly relevant to workplace learning as they are very helpful in specifying the competences needed for a particular job role or for a group of employees, and thereby act as a basis for determining – and prioritizing – the training programme (or learning programme) of particular individuals or work groups.

The learning organization and lifelong learning

Again during the past 20 years and in parallel with the development of competence frameworks, there has been a development of the concept of the “learning organization”. It is relevant in the context of workplace learning in that a central concept of the learning organization is the sharing of learning within the organization.

The concept of lifelong learning (and the related concept of “lifewide learning” – learning across a broader range of capabilities than that which is usually incorporated into country's formal education systems) is also directly relevant in the context of workplace learning. Formal education systems in school, colleges and universities have tended to emphasize (though there have been some developments in recent years) pre-employment education. The concept of lifelong learning places an increasing emphasis on within-employment learning, of which an important dimension is workplace learning.

Evaluation of training, learning, and workplace learning

Formal training is sometimes (though, arguably, insufficiently often) evaluated. One popular framework for doing so is the Kirkpatrick 4 level model:

- Level 1: Participants' reactions (sometimes called “happy sheets”);
- Level 2: Learning gain (often through pre-tests and post-tests);
- Level 3: Extent of application of new skills;
- Level 4: Improvements in the organization.

Workplace learning is less frequently formally evaluated. In principle, though, a framework such as Kirkpatrick is equally applicable to the evaluation of informal learning and workplace learning.

A matter related to evaluation is that of quality assurance. That includes the relevance, or not, of quality assurance frameworks, such as set by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). Such frameworks clearly have a relevance to private sector training providers in their marketing activities. Opinion seems to be divided in relation to their relevance to workplace learning; in principle they should be of direct relevance, though in practice the trade-off between benefits and administrative costs and time is sometimes reported on adversely.

Examples of workplace learning programmes

Within the context of the main issues being addressed internationally in training and learning, the following present examples of workplace learning programmes. They are examples from different countries of national programmes and frameworks relevant to workplace learning, followed by examples of company's approaches to workplace learning programmes.

National programmes to support workplace learning

Various countries have established national programmes and frameworks to promote and support training within employment, including workplace learning. Those programmes and frameworks have aspects in common, but also with important differences.

Examples include:

Malaysia Human Resource Development Fund (HRDF)

- started 1992
- a levy/grant programme
- 1% levy on payroll for firms with more than 10 employees
- employers can re-claim up to about 75% of the costs of training (up to maximum of levy paid) for eligible/approved training
- issues of “complex paperwork” – especially for SMEs

Skills Development Fund (SDF), Singapore

- started 1979
- a levy/grant programme
- 1% levy on payroll
- grants cover 30–70% of training costs
- training for certifiable skills is the priority
- SDF has contributed to large expansion of company training
- current emphasis on SMEs, service sector, less-skilled workers, older workers

Training and Productivity Authority of Fiji (TPAF)

- a levy/grant programme
- 1% levy on employers
- employers can re-claim up to 90% of their levy
- large employers tend to re-claim; SMEs do so to a smaller extent
- levy covers all costs of TPAF, so TPAF does not depend on public funds (unique in Pacific)

Industry Training Programme, New Zealand

- 40+ industry training organizations (ITOs) established for all major sectors
- ITOs work with individual companies to help them assess training needs
- ITOs can contract with training partners to provide workplace learning (or external training)
- Training relates to the National Qualifications Framework

Sector Skills Councils, UK

- Initially sector-based industry training organizations, with a National Council of ITOs
- evolved into Sector Skills Councils
- responsible for specifying competences in occupations in their sector
- responsible for promoting training (including workplace training) in their sector

Dual system, Germany

- long-established programme
- vocational qualifications based on theoretical studies in college combined with workplace training
- elements of the dual system have been incorporated into training systems in many countries

Trade Union learning programme, UK

- government funded; managed by Trades Union Congress (TUC)
- objective: to support participation by those in the workforce who are not currently taking part in learning, particularly those with basic skill needs
- 4,500 people trained as “Union Learning Representatives”
- sectors: printing, transport, retail, low-paid workers in local government, hospitality/hotels

Apprenticeships in Finland

- often “top of the league” in world surveys of education and skills
- agricultural/forestry to high tech (Nokia)
- most apprenticeships are for adults
- competence-based apprenticeship
- individualized learning programmes
- 20% theoretical; 80% workplace learning

SMEs in Spain

Three types of input:

- permanent tutors
- supervisor/mentor
- informal training by other employees at times when these employees have less work – that is, they become “unofficial tutors”.

Advanced Vocational Training (AVT) in Sweden

- focus is on developing analytical ability, applying system approaches and assuming responsibility
- advanced supervision and workplace must be organized to make learning feasible

Company/organizational case study examples

As can be seen in the previous section, programmes and frameworks at the national level have several aspects in common as well as important differences.

Programmes in companies are equally variable in type, as the following examples illustrate:

7-Eleven Thailand

- shop assistants trained in-store in product display and customer service
- training provided by a mix of store managers, trainers from 7-Eleven training centre and computer-based training
- competence-based, using generic retail competences are tailored for 7-Eleven

Gough & Gilmour Mining, Australia

- training programme designed for mechanics to maintain the Caterpillar equipment used in the local mining industry
- training modules from the trade course are customized modules to meet the specific needs of the company
- course consists of 200 hours of accredited modules from the planned mechanics trade course
- course designed to ensure participants gained the specific skills required on the job

Van Hool bus manufacturers, Belgium

- 4,000 employees
- labour shortage of welders and fitters
- recruitment from long-term unemployed and unskilled, migrant workers, women and older job-seekers
- guiding principle: support for the new recruits within the enterprise
- technical training in welding and/or fitting
- occupational behaviour training

Workplace Language and Literacy (WELL), Australia

- training provided for health department employees in the catering, linen services and housekeeping areas
- 700+ employees received training in three years; for many employees it was their first formal qualification
- WELL teachers work closely with the industry experts to ensure that workplace needs are met
- training always on the job and flexible
- delivery modes designed to fit in with workplace production pressures

Four industrial sectors in Canada

A recent study in Canada in four sectors (office skills, jewellery making, technical drawing, and modelling) highlighted the importance in the success of the programme to the skills of workplace mentors: openness

A recent study in Canada in four sectors (office skills, jewellery making, technical drawing, and modelling) highlighted the importance in the success of the programme to the skills of workplace mentors:

- openness;
- attentiveness;
- responsiveness to questions;
- imparting of “tips and tricks”;
- communication of methods of work;

- patient behaviour in the face of challenges;
- encouragement;
- explanation;
- relevant advice; and
- developing confidence in themselves.

PRIMO Abattoirs, Australia

- on-the-job training provided for employees for Certificates II & III in abattoir, boning and slaughtering
- delivery is on the job, with close alliance with the employer to support existing and new workers in the plant
- consultancy services also provided to assist PRIMO in their expansion into the export market

Ford Motors: Employee Development and Assistance Programme (EDAP)

- not really “learning at work” because it is for learning out of work time
- provides funding for employees to learn a variety of skills (not necessarily work-related) for example, IT, languages, car repairs, building, etc.)
- rationale: if people become more open to (non-work related) learning, they become more open also to work-related learning

Conclusion

In the context of an increased international emphasis on employment-relevant skills development and an increased international emphasis on workplace learning, two approaches have been adopted: i) national programmes to promote and support training within employment, including workplace learning and ii) company approaches to training and learning, including workplace learning. These show considerable differences between countries and between organizations.

This is not surprising, of course, as approaches to learning and skills development are substantially culturally influenced. The differences do result in there being a considerable range of approaches and examples from which we can all learn.

Appendix IV: Template for workplace visits

ILO/SKILLS-AP/Japan Regional Workshop and Study Programme on Workplace Learning in Japan

Overseas Vocational Training Association, Chiba, Japan

27 January - 6 February 2009

Template for Workplace Visits

Name of company _____

Date of visit _____

Facts and figures about the company
(for example, product/sector, number of employees):

Things I was impressed with concerning:

- the company
- its approach to training
- its approach to workplace learning

What I learned from this visit that is relevant to my country:

Actions I will take when I return to my country as a result of this company visit
(for example, inform Mr ABC about x or y or z):

Other comments, notes and points of interest:

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

This is a report of a tripartite Regional Workshop and Study Programme covering a wide range of issues relating to learning within the workplace. The aim of the workshop was to increase awareness of the importance of workplace learning and to learn from the ways that workplace learning is implemented in various countries. The workshop consisted of a number of technical sessions, panel discussions, working groups and site visits to four Japanese companies.

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ISBN 9789221222095