

Report of Seminar
UNESCO-UNEVOC Sub-regional Seminar:
Enhancing the National Effectiveness, Role and Profile of UNEVOC
Centres

Colombo, Sri Lanka. 8-10 May, 2006

Overview of the Seminar

The seminar held in Colombo over three days, from the eighth of May 2006, was one in a continuing series of professional development seminars for Directors of UNEVOC Centres. The series is being organised, run and financially supported by the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre in Bonn (UNESCO-UNEVOC), in partnership with a host institution, preferably a UNEVOC Centre. The UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre provides funding support for participants from centres in developing countries, the expertise for planning and conducting the workshops, and advice to the host centre on all aspects pertaining to the seminar. The UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre is also responsible for nominating participants and for financial matters pertaining to their participation in the seminar. Each seminar is run for a group of participants totalling approximately 20 in number. The intention is to focus on participation by newly appointed UNEVOC Centre personnel: both directors of newly recognised UNEVOC Centres and those who have recently been appointed into established UNEVOC Centres. Each seminar also seeks, though, to include a small number of continuing UNEVOC Centre Directors, who can provide input on the basis of their experience in the role, while also engaging in the seminar as part of their continuing staff development.

The Colombo sub-regional seminar was designed to include leaders of UNEVOC Centres in South Asia, West Asia and East Asia. Its focus was on enhancing the national effectiveness, role and profile of participating centres in improving TVET. The host institution was the Sri Lankan Technical and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC), itself a UNEVOC Centre. The 11 participants nominated by the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre were from seven countries: Afghanistan (1 UNEVOC Centre participant), Bangladesh (1 UNEVOC Centre participant), China (1 participant from the Ministry of Education and 1 from a UNEVOC Centre), India (1 participant from a UNEVOC Centre), the Philippines (2 participants from 2 UNEVOC Centres), Sri Lanka (2 participants from two UNEVOC Centres), and Thailand (2 participants from 2 UNEVOC Centres). There were also five observers from the host UNEVOC Centre. It had been expected that there would be a participant from a UNEVOC Centre in Iran, but the nominee failed to attend. It was originally intended that there would be a number of other UNEVOC Centre participants from other countries in the sub-region, but communication difficulties with those centres thwarted their involvement.

The seminar was planned and conducted by Dr L. Efison Munjanganja, in his role as the Head of the UNEVOC Network. He was assisted by the author of this report, as a

UNEVOC Centre Director with a strong background in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) leadership and group facilitation.

The hosting of the seminar was seen by the TVEC as an opportunity to highlight the importance of TVET in Sri Lanka and the reforms in TVET that are there being pursued. The seminar was opened with a magnificent ceremony involving the state Minister of Vocational and Technical Training (The Honorable Piyasena Gamage), The Secretary of the Ministry, the Director General of the TVEC (Dr T.A. Piyasiri), the Deputy Director General (Mr B.H.S. Suraweera), Dr. L. Efison Munjanganja, other dignitaries and all seminar participants, staff and observers.

The seminar program involved a mix of different teaching-learning engagements: individual input on expectations and experiences; illustrated lectures to introduce the concept of the UNEVOC Network and to provide information on its operation; case study presentations on UNEVOC centre operations; open discussion on issues raised in the course of the seminar; small group work in sharing experiences and developing centre plans; and plenary presentations of developing centre plans.

The program was structured around the common task of developing action plans for each of the participating centres to take away as guides to their continuing work as centre directors. The three working groups involved in this programmatic aspect of the seminar were self-generated on the basis of perceived shared interests and the potential for collaborative programming across the centres in the working group. The working groups were open to change in the course of the seminar, as new possibilities were revealed, although, in the event, their composition remained little changed throughout the seminar.

Outcomes of the Seminar

The final action plans from the working groups involved essentially group goals and activities, to which each of the participating centres plans to contribute. They were summarised in the final working group presentations as follows (the group ordering and numbering here being entirely arbitrary):

1. Group One (Including Centres from the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand)

Linkages

- Sharing of information among the UNEVOC Centres through:
web, e-mail, e-conferences, e-forum.
- Communication and exchange of publication material and resources (exchange of resource materials: print and non-print).
- Study-tours, visits to UNEVOC Centres and TVET institutions to gain knowledge on best practices, innovativeness, and to have interaction with the stakeholders of TVET.

Periodic Assembly

Periodic assembly of UNEVOC managers to discuss common issues and concerns. These might be thematic.

Effective Documentation

Effective documentation and database of UNEVOC programmes and activities.

Reporting

- Conference reports.
- Progress reports.
- State reports.

Suggested Time Frame and Funding Support

Programme / Activities	Time Frame	Source of fund
<i>Linkages</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Sharing▪ Communication▪ Study tours	W.Y.R. W.Y.R. Once a year	UNEVOC Centres UNEVOC Centres ? (Per proposal)
<i>Periodic Assembly</i>	Every 3 years (regional/ sub-regional) Every 2 years (national)	? (Per proposal) UNEVOC Centres
<i>Effective Documentation</i>	Whole year round (continues)	UNEVOC Centres
<i>Reporting</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Conference▪ Progress▪ Status	At the end of every conference End of year As needed	UNEVOC Centres UNEVOC Centres UNEVOC Centres

2. Group Two (Including Centres from the Afghanistan, India, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka)

1. Establishment of independent unit / technical staff to support management / operation of the UNEVOC Centre.
2. Collection of TVET policy documents, activities of other UNEVOC Centres, successes stories, best practices, lessons learnt and other resource materials.
3. Development of Vision/Mission/Goals/Objectives/Activities (VMGOA) statements of the UNEVOC Centres and circulate to other Centres for knowledge.
4. Collection (Exchange) of Competency Based Training Curricula / modules, Teaching Learning Materials, Competency Based Evaluation Tools, Competency Based Assessments, Instruments for adaptation adoption/ adaptation of other UNEVOC Centres.
5. Possibility of exchange / attachment program for staff development (Trainer / Curriculum Developers, TVET Managers).
6. Organization of capacity building programmes and workshops for the TVET officials of Asia Pacific Region.
7. Establishment of network / web site with other UNEVOC Centres.
8. ESL/ICT Training on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for TVET Staff, Trainers, Managers.

9. Preparing and circulating directory of TVET experts of Asia Pacific Region.

3. Group Three (Including Centres from Bangladesh, China, Sri Lanka and Thailand)

Strategies

- Employ new well-trained staff (provide training).
- Organised expert committee (to link with government).
- Local government, UNESCO, other international organisations (budget).
- To appoint group (of experts) to help other countries, by UNESCO, Bonn, for materials etc.
- Establish Separate units (diversified activities).
- Strong political commitment to deal with trade unions.

Actions

- Capacity building for networking (international, equipment, power).
- Networking within the country (selecting focal points).
- Seminars for all UNEVOC Centres.
- Disseminate information to national focal point collected from network (local/international).
- Video conference with experts.
- Use best practices (local/international) and document local best practices and innovations.
- Close links with training providers (curriculum, etc.).
- Make / prepare a directory of UNEVOC experts (local/ international).
- Prepare documentation. Half yearly progress reports.
- Develop a website.
- Translation teams.
- Training programmes based on NVQ.
- National meetings/seminars of expert committees.
- Prepare proposals to get budget.
- To link lively with foreign centres.
- Continuous monitoring on research activities (research cell).

Some emergent Issues in the UNEVOC Network

1. Effectiveness

Two important issues are here identified with respect to the *effectiveness* of UNEVOC Centres:

1. Developing a public profile for a new UNEVOC Centre, such that the centre is recognised as a hub of TVET knowledge and contacts.

The issue here is the challenge for newly formed centres to acquire both the knowledge of the expectations, policies and procedures of the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre and the procedural knowledge, skills and contacts to plan and implement an effective program appropriate to their status as members of the UNEVOC Network. Crucial here is the expectation that members of the UNEVOC Network will rapidly become centres of knowledge, ideas and contacts in TVET. That expectation is commonly difficult for most new centres to satisfy.

2. Maintaining a high profile as a hub of TVET knowledge and contacts.

The issue here is that of maintaining a Centre's high profile as a TVET hub over time. Once the flush of initial activities and ideas has been run, the challenge of maintaining the impetus tends to become increasingly burdensome. It is incumbent on directors of UNEVOC Centres to build a national profile by engaging in various activities, specifically establishing links with relevant stakeholders, undertaking trans-national communication, convening national events, and sharing information on UNESCO TVET normative instruments, innovations and best practices.

2 Management

Four important issues are here identified with respect to the *management* of UNEVOC Centres:

1. Developing pertinent management knowledge and skills with the formation of new UNEVOC Centres.

The issue here is that of staff involved in new Centres developing knowledge of the UNEVOC Centre Network and their role within it, and skill in Centre management, sufficient to develop a program of a prominence and impact appropriate to the vision of the Network.

2. Maintaining continuity in management expertise and programmatic impetus over time in the Centres.

The issue here is that of maintaining that programmatic prominence and impact over time, especially with the appointment of new Centre Directors and other important centre staff. The issue here is exacerbated by a diversity of formal and informal arrangements identifying and naming the office responsible for a Centre's work *as* a member of the UNEVOC Network. It also highlights the commonly secondary or ancillary nature of UNEVOC Centre status on the other activities of the Centres.

3. The lack of systematic procedures for input from the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre into program planning on an on-going basis.

The issue here is that of a lack of clarity about what UNEVOC Centres may reasonably expect of the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre as input into their programmatic activity and how they may best and reasonably interact with the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre in advancing their work as members of the UNEVOC Network.

4. The isolation of UNEVOC Centres from each other.

The issue here is the sense of isolation from other members of the UNEVOC Network.