

Quality Matters

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A Quarterly Newsletter of the Center for Educational Improvement, Research & Quality Assurance (CEIRQA)

St. Mary's University College

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Quote of this issue

"Knowledge is a key ingredient of quality"

Rafael Aguayo (2005)

This newsletter is published every three months by the Center for Educational Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance of St Mary's University College (SMUC). The Objective of the newsletter is to inform the SMUC community as well as interested public, private, non-governmental stakeholders about the activities and endeavors of the institution in fostering quality education and research in the Ethiopian Higher Education setting.

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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Study on Employability Skills of Ethiopian Graduates finalized

The Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation of St. Mary's University College has finalized a study on employability skills of Ethiopian graduates. The study attempts to provide framework for universities to examine their own program offerings against competencies deemed imperative by employers. Employers of graduates from the degree programs of Ethiopian higher education institutions' completed a questionnaire in which they rated the relative importance of a list of 26 workplace competencies using a 5-point Likert scale. The survey instrument, taken from the literature, was used to investigate the views of employers on HEI graduate.

Analysis of the survey data identified lists of important skill attributes that are most sought after by employers., The six most highly valued skill attributes are: adequacy of knowledge in appropriate field, capacity to act ethically, ability to apply knowledge in practice, capacity for cooperation and teamwork, adaptability and resourcefulness, and communication skills in that order. The results of the study also show that employers placed equal importance in their rankings of cognitive (hard) and behavioral (soft) skills. ■

From the Editorial Desk

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is increasingly recognized as an effective means of empowering young people to engage in productive and sustainable livelihoods. This is especially true in countries where a good number of students complete secondary schooling; an achievement that brings with it a challenge for governments to provide further education opportunities for their young citizens or prepare them for the world of work. Hence, TVET programs that respond to the changing needs of the labor market, both at local and global scale, are viewed as central to equip citizens with the work skills that will enable them escape the trap of poverty and contribute to their community's economic wellbeing. Research, in this regard, indicates the pivotal role of TVET in preparing people of all ages from diverse social background in productive and socially responsible work in knowledge economy.

However, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in a globalised world is posing continuous changes in the world of work both in developing and the developed world. Hence, in order to stay competitive in the workforce, all individuals, young or adult, need to upgrade their skills and competencies while acquiring the mindset compatible with new conditions of workplaces. As a branch of education which, by and large is, concerned with

preparing adults for the labour market, it is imperative that TVET keeps abreast of the changes taking place in the world of work. This, in turn, would provide personal, community and human development and, is indispensable for active citizenship building as well as improving the lives of people. It would also be part of a strategy towards building entrepreneurial society at local, national and global levels. The only possibility for achieving this is by making TVET useful and relevant. This requires a comprehensive TVET strategy.

In this edition of our newsletter we have collected diverse views and perspectives on the issue. We hope you will enjoy reading it as much as we enjoyed collecting the issues on the matter. ■



News

Research strategy planning finalized

St. Mary's University College is in the process of establishing itself as the center of academic excellence committed to the generation and transfer of knowledge through research and provision of the best education. To this end, the presence of a research strategy which has the capacity to create the necessary physical and cultural environment for all stakeholders is indispensable.

The research strategy is formulated to guide institutional research operation for the coming five years. It is produced on the presumption that a well outlined research strategy that clearly sets out plans will maximize the potential contribution of research to national economic growth. The document clearly outlines guiding principles specifying priority areas of research that need to be dealt and addressed.

The strategic document identifies planning, management and governance issues of higher education; quality matters of education, performance appraisal practices, grading system, students' performance, motivation and attitude; distance learning as well as highly relevant social issues such as HIV/AIDS as priority areas of research for the strategic period. ■

SMUC planned to partake in the Ethiopian Quality Award competition

Cognizant of the need for continuous institutional quality assessment, St. Mary's University College has registered to take part in the Ethiopian Quality Award competition. The Award competition, which is the first of its kind in the country, is organized by the Ethiopian Quality Award PLC. Accordingly, the Center for Educational Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance (CEIRQA) of SMUC in cooperation with college-wide committees has finalized the preparation of a working document to handle the task. The working document is prepared on the basis of the self-assessment manual of EQA. It is believed that the document will be a good stepping stone for the University College in carrying out the self-assessment. ■

Student Satisfaction Survey for the year 2008/09 Underway

The Center for Educational Improvement, Research and Quality Assurance (CEIRQA) started the fourth round of Students' Satisfaction Survey. The survey which is carried out every two years is used to assess the level of students' satisfaction with the services offered by the University College. This would be used as an input for quality enhancement of institutional service delivery. The study is based on primary data collected from service recipients: students of the regular and extension division, as well as service providers: SMUC office holders of the various units. ■

Research Corner

Research Title: *Implementation of Middle Level TVET Programs in Addis Ababa: the Case of Entoto TVET College & St. Mary's University College*

(Proceedings of the Fourth National Conference on Private Higher Education in Ethiopia, August 2006).

Research Type: *Descriptive*

Researcher: *Antonios Philiche Babisso*

The study attempts to analyze how Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs are implemented in Addis Ababa, by taking the case of two purposefully selected TVET colleges of the private and public sector: St. Mary's University College and Entoto TVET College respectively. The colleges were selected on criteria such as ownership type, relative academic strength, and similarity of the programs the colleges are currently offering. The study also attempts to elucidate bottlenecks that hinder quality in program implementation.

The study adopted instrumental qualitative case study design. Primary data were collected through in-depth interview with students, teachers, academic deans, vocational counselors and apprenticeship supervisors, and personal observations. In order to substantiate the findings of the research, data obtained from primary sources were triangulated with secondary sources of data obtained through document exploration.

The data both in private and public institutions revealed that TVET programs are losing vocational taste in their program offerings and are, therefore, less likely to achieve goals of the policy. It also indicated that TVET institutions in the private sector are more effective than their governmental counterparts. The findings of the study further indicated that quality of implementation of the program is affected by various factors. According to the study, stakeholders are not effectively discharging their responsibilities in promoting quality in the implementation of the program.

The study, thus, put forward the following recommendations:

- ▶ Students and parents should make wise decisions about students' choice of future careers;
- ▶ Schools should take responsibilities of orienting their students to help them make the right curricular choices for their future careers;
- ▶ Schools should also be well organized in areas of career counseling services for their students;
- ▶ Teachers and curriculum designers should appropriately design and implement TVET curricula in an effective way;
- ▶ The existing curricula for different occupations need timely revision;
- ▶ Policy-makers should take responsibilities of re-designing policies and strategies in such a way that they will balance the needs of students with the needs of the industry.■

Interview

This column features interviews of people including government officials, policy makers, educators, researchers, and presidents of universities or colleges as well as students on educational issues . In this edition we interviewed Ato Amanuel Eromo on issues of TVET. The center would like to extend its thanks to Ato Amanuel for sharing us his valuable time.



Background

Ato Amanuel Eromo is Head of Institutional Quality Assurance Unit at the Addis Ababa City Administration TVET Agency. The agency is accountable to the Mayor's Office of the City of Addis Ababa Administration. The Agency is established to work in areas of technological transformation, training, institutional quality assurance and occupational competency assessment.

Ato Amanuel has his second degree in Curriculum from Addis Ababa University. He has served most of his professional career as school director in various schools in Addis Ababa. He has also worked as Education Team Leader for the last four years in Bole Sub-city of the Addis Ababa City Administration.

Quality Matters: *What does Quality mean in the context of Technical and Vocational Education and Training?*

Ato Amanuel: Well, when we talk about quality, there is one thing we can agree upon. Quality can best be described as fitness for purpose, for example, to be qualified in the Education and Training of a given discipline. Professional fitness is not expected to happen gradually but it should be automatic. In other words, it signifies to be armed with the skills required in a given course of thinking. In this regard, Technical and Vocational Education and Training should equip trainees with entrepreneurial work skills needed at national, regional and global level. Hence, is a serious issue in TVET quality. This is due to; first, the training equipment necessary for the programme are expensive; also, the programme itself is practical; the theoretical part takes only 30 percent of the training. And one way of measuring the effectiveness of the programme is by looking into the competitiveness of trainees.

However, there are circumstances where effectiveness of TVET both in the public and private sector, is hindered. This is partly due to large class size as that seems to inversely affect the quality of education in so many ways; such as, in student teacher ratio, student-workshop ratio. Hence, in order to maintain educational

quality, we educators need to treat our students individually, regardless of their performance level and differences. This is justified by the fact that our students come from diverse socio- economic backgrounds.

Also, quality can be affected in so many other ways; for example, due to students' interest, the teaching- learning process as well as due to test administration. To be more precise, we can view quality from various perspectives Input, Process, Output and Outcome. Since our focus in this regard is outcome oriented, there is a need to efficiently make use of our inputs for the best possible process. What our agency does in this respect is, carrying out outcome based accreditation with its Center of Occupational Competency Assessment (COCA). Hence, colleges are required to let their graduates be examined through COCA and the colleges will be categorized in three levels of ranks as bronze, silver and gold on the basis of the number of students who passed the Occupational Competency Assessment Test. Hence, it is on this basis that colleges will be accredited in the future. We can, thus, say that the measure of quality in this regard is more of outcome-based. And this is what is popularly used in many other countries.

Quality Matters: *What does the Agency do to enhance quality of the Education?*

Ato Amanuel: What we did so far with regard to quality is we have developed and established Institutional Accreditation Systems. The accreditation system is established for two purposes: the first is, to help institutions achieve quality by setting benchmarks for institutional quality measurement and hence

show institutional level of competence as well as evaluate their outcome. Secondly, we not only offer pre-accreditation and accreditation, but also follow up and support institutional quality through internal and external quality audits. Also, there is what we call skill competition among institutions. This is used to rate their level of competence. We also carryout research on academic institutions and support them. The other areas of assuring institutional quality is weighing institutions through Certificate of Competency (COC)/ Occupational Competency Assessment because quality these days is measured by learners' achievement. We also inform stakeholders about the level of institutions in their programme offerings by identifying their level of quality.

Quality Matters: *There are actually complaints on the part of TVET graduates that even upon successful completion of their studies, they are less favored by industry employers. In this regard, employers are often blamed for favoring diploma graduates of the older curriculum. What does your Agency do to create equal employment opportunities for TVET graduates?*

Ato Amanuel: Before we moved out from the Addis Ababa city administration education bureau to be an independent agency, there was no this kind of structure and process. Due to this there was lack of awareness among the society in general and employers in particular with regard to Technical and Vocational Education and Training. In this regard, it should be admitted that

(Cont'd to P. 8)

Perspective

TVET and Sustainable Development

By Martha Kibru (CEIRQA)

It is globally acknowledged that education is key to sustainable development. As a branch of education most concerned with creating effective and skilled manpower, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is crucial to realize the development goals set by a country.

TVET is a combination of education and training, knowledge and skills which qualifies people for the requirements of the labor market. It is a direct means of providing workers with skills more relevant to the evolving needs of employees and the economy.

Scholars in the field suggest that greater attention should be given to TVET to register economic growth in a given country. They say that TVET helps to meet the human power demand of the different sectors that are essential to the development of a country.

Many countries believe that TVET has major contribution to make to their economic and social development. It is also important to reduce the skills gap that exists in many countries between the labor market needs and the number and type of work-related skills possessed by their citizens. It is estimated that worldwide about 80 percent of the jobs undertaken by people require technical and vocational skills (UNESCO, 2005).

Developing countries can reorient themselves towards sustainable development using TVET as a vehicle for socio-economic and technological transformation. Several countries have already given more recognition to some form of technical or vocational education. The South East Asian development miracle of rapid industrial growth and economic prosperity can be attributed to the importance attached to TVET in those countries.

Similarly, experiences from countries of Latin America also underline the importance of such training programmes (Ibid). Such comparative practices should sound a wake up call for other countries, which pay little attention to technical or vocational education, to conduct training that is tailored to their local needs.

Turning to the Ethiopian case, TVET has been massively expanded since the last decade intending to meet the skilled human power demand of the different sectors essential for the overall development of the country (FDRE, 2005). The realization of the Government's national development endeavor which demands the supply of skilled human power at different levels requires the entry of young people into different occupational fields and strategies that encourage young people to become self-employed based on firm education and training background, including training a wide variety of work-related skills through

TVET programs. Furthermore, the programme has been absorbing the large proportions of students who cannot progress to higher level of education thereby enabling them to contribute meaningfully to economic development. Obviously, the TVET sub-sector in Ethiopia is facing challenges associated with the cost of delivery, barriers of access, quality, relevance, perception and lack of awareness (Babisso, 2006). Despite all these challenges, TVET still plays a pivotal role in national development programmes. I will conclude by reiterating the fundamental role of TVET in securing skills for sustainable development. It is the best way of producing qualified human power in sufficient number in order to meet the needs of the economy. Recognizing this, all concerned stakeholders should play their role so as to promote the effectiveness of the TVET programme. ■

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(Cont'd from P. 6)

let alone employers but trainees themselves have lack of awareness. However, a lot is being done now in this regard and we presume that things will change soon.

Quality Matters: *So, in outcome terms, how do you rate the quality of the TVET programme?*

Ato Amanuel: Well currently, of those who took the COC, only 25 percent passed the Occupational Competency Assessment Test and this shows there is a problem in training. Therefore, there is a need for problem-solving research so as to take the necessary corrective actions. Hence, there is a plan to bring achievers of the occupational competency assessment test from 25 percent to 100 percent.

Quality Matters: *So do you think TVET has achieved its goal given the current outcome?*

Ato Amanuel: Well a lot is expected from TVET. This is especially true in a city with multifaceted problems like Addis Ababa. Thus, this is the time when new beginnings are being observed. This is done on the presumption of creating productive and problem solving human resource.

Quality Matters: *What are some of the impacts TVET has made so far?*



☞ **Ato Amanuel:** Thousands of youth in the city are organized in various micro - small scale enterprises and are helping themselves, especially in fields like cobble stone and housing construction.

Quality Matters: *What are the challenges you faced in enhancing quality of the programmes and the mechanisms you employed to overcome them?*

Ato Amanuel: Among the challenges we faced so far are the practice of student admission at colleges. In this regard, some private colleges were found admitting ineligible students - those below the minimum admission standard. Also, some private colleges don't treat their students like customers. We have come across with cases of conflicts between students and some colleges. We have also come across with colleges offering training with teachers lacking the proper qualification to train students. Moreover, there are cases where colleges offer training with facilities that are below the minimum standard set forth. And, the cumulative effects of these poor practices severely affect the quality of the programmes offered.

Quality Matters: *If you have any other remarks?*

Ato Amanuel: Institutions providing TVET are meant to produce middle-level skilled human power. Thus, the trainings offered should produce appropriate skilled manpower in line with labor market research outcomes. Furthermore, the institutions should also be concerned with the employment prospects of their trainees. They should assist them to create jobs or be employed. ■

Forthcoming Event

Global Connections - Local Impacts: Best practices, Models and Policies for Cross-Boarder Higher Education. October 21-24, 2009. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Available at:

http://www.obhe.ac.uk/the_obhe_global_forum_malaysia/welcome

Virtual Links

Ministry of Education

Website: <http://www.moe.gov.et>

Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency (Ethiopia)

Website: <http://www.higher.edu.et>

ROPHE - Programme for Research on Private Higher Education

Website:

<http://www.albany.edu/dept/eapt/eaps/prophe/>

International Network for Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education (INQAAHE)

Website: <http://www.inqaahe.org>

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (UK)

Website: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk>

Center for International Research on Higher Education

Website: http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/soe/cihe

Quality and Standards Authority of Ethiopia

Website: <http://www.qsae.org>

International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa

Website: <http://www.eric.ed.gov>

International Institute for Higher Education in Ethiopia (NHEA)

Website: <http://www.bc.edu>

International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education

Website: <http://www.inqaahe.nl>

European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)

Website: <http://www.enqa.eu>

Asian Pacific Quality Network (APQN)

Website: <http://www.apqn.org>

Fun Corner

After applying some simple algebra to some trite phrases and clichés, a new understanding can be reached of the secret to wealth and success.

Here it goes.

Knowledge is Power, Time is Money and as everyone knows, Power is Work divided by Time.

So, substituting algebraic equations for these time worn bits of wisdom, we get:

$$K = P \quad (1)$$

$$T = M \quad (2)$$

$$P = W/T \quad (3)$$

Now, do a few simple substitutions:

Put W/T in for P in equation (1), which yields:

$$K = W/T \quad (4)$$

Put M in for T into equation (4), which yields:

$$K = W/M \quad (5)$$

Now we've got something. Expanding back into English, we get:

Knowledge equals Work divided by Money.

What this MEANS is that:

The more You Know, the More Work You Do, and
The More you Know, the Less Money You Make.

$$M = W/K \quad (6)$$

Money equals Work divided by Knowledge.

From equation (6) we see that Money approaches infinity as Knowledge approaches 0, regardless of the Work done.

What THIS MEANS is:

The More you Make, the Less you know.

Solving for Work, we get

$$W = M \times K \quad (7)$$

Work equals Money time knowledge.

From equation (7) we see that Work approaches 0 as Knowledge approaches 0.

What THIS MEANS is: _____

Working out the socioeconomic implications of this breakthrough is left as an exercise for the reader.

Source: the Internet.

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Photo Gallery

Farewell of Volunteer American Language Teachers



Seminar on Information Systems



Center for Educational Improvement, Research & Quality Assurance (CEIRQA)

Areas of Focus for Institutional Quality Audits

While assessing institutional quality of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency (HERQA) focus on the following ten areas:

- ▶ Vision, Mission and Educational Goals
- ▶ Governance and Management System
- ▶ Infrastructure and Learning Resources
- ▶ Academic and Support Staff
- ▶ Student Admission and Support Services
- ▶ Program Relevance and Curriculum
- ▶ Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- ▶ Student Progression and Graduate Outcomes
- ▶ Research and Outreach Activities
- ▶ Internal quality assurance

Source: HERQA Institutional Quality Audit

St. Mary's University College