



GOVERNMENT OF KIRIBATI

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DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS FORUM

Tarawa, Kiribati

25 – 27 June 2012

AGENDA ITEM 3: Human Resource Development – Post- secondary education

Purpose

1. The paper discusses the direction for developing human resources after leaving the formal education system, taken in this context as post secondary education.

Background

2. One of the major challenges facing Kiribati is growing un-employment and this is more pronounced with our bulging youth population exiting formal education from Forms 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.
3. One of the important weaknesses of our formal education system is the failure of the curriculum to provide different pathways for those leaving the school system, since the current curriculum is too academic. Subsequently, those leaving the formal schools find it difficult to find jobs. There is growing evidence that jobs are available in many fields and outside of Government but school leavers lack the required skills.
4. Climate change is a serious threat to our islands and the people of Kiribati. The government is looking at all possible options to ensure the survival of the people starting from adaptation and mitigation strategies within the country but does not rule out the option of re-locating if things come to the worst. However, we must migrate with integrity and thus it is important that our people are skilled so they can contribute positively to the countries taking them on and not be regarded as an extra burden. In this connection it is important to provide opportunities to acquire new knowledge and skills to be able to get employment.
5. In most countries, including Kiribati, there is an acute shortage of people who possess skills to be employed in the services industries. Thus there is growing need for technical and vocational education and training (TVET). The Government of Kiribati has identified this to be an important need for our young people and efforts must be expended to provide opportunities in this regard.

Issues

6. The delivery of TVET and approach taken in the past has not been well coordinated. The existing institutions taking on school leavers to provide them with specialized training for employment are the Marine Training Centre (MTC) mainly for employment on foreign merchant vessels, Fisheries Training Centre (FTC) for service on Asian owned fishing vessels, Nursing School for domestic nursing needs and Kiribati Institute of Technology (KIT) for other vocational training.
7. Except for MTC, there is a lot that needs to be done to improve standards in these institutions. The Nursing School and KIT have received assistance from Australia while MTC and FTC are currently the focus of New Zealand development aid.
8. At the regional level the Australia Pacific Technical College (APTC) initiative is helping us develop appropriate skills in different engineering sectors, carpentry and hospitality services just to mention a few. The main challenge is that there is a lack of people with the basic qualifications to take on courses at APTC. Those who possess the relevant work skills lack numeracy and literacy competency while those who have the latter do not have the former. In this regard there are ongoing activities to upgrade KIT to a level that will be able to offer Level 3 certificates in the trade areas it is teaching. It is anticipated that in the future APTC will and other overseas institutions will take our people for higher level training.
9. Kiribati has also received assistance from AusAid to improve TVET delivery in the country. As such KIT is offering courses based on Australian standards. This requires qualified and properly trained instructors and so this is a first step that is being addressed. Another important component is the auspicing arrangement being finalized between KIT and an international partner.
10. Apart from the above there is little else. Some NGO institutions such as the churches are keen to establish TVET schools to offer alternative pathways to those not interested in entirely academic studies but there is no policy to accommodate such interests. One notable issue also is that there is no clear link between what is taught in the formal education system and the needs of the labour market with regards to TVET subjects. Any future assistance should look into this matter to provide basic information on ways forward as it is the outputs from the formal education system who will be TVET students later on.

11. To be able to channel our limited resources to demand driven trainings we must have good labour market data, both domestically and abroad. The TVET Sector Support programme funded by AusAid is assisting in this need.
12. From the above the main identified issues are
 - Absence of labour market information
 - Existing gaps in numeracy and literacy competency
 - Lack of basic work skills to be able to proceed to vocational and technical training
 - Little link with internationally acceptable standards
 - Need to finalize a TVET policy .
 - Need to finalize a clear direction of what we aspire to achieve, where we want to head to and how to reach our goal.

Recommendations

13. The Forum is invited to consider the following recommendations:
 - a) Note the information provided in this paper, especially the identified issues.
 - b) Render support to assist in developing a strategic plan for this sector reflecting our needs and appropriate strategies to address the challenges raised in this paper and to set direction of what we want to pursue.
 - c) Provision of assistance in developing a TVET policy framework that takes into account the issues raised above.