

APPENDIX

Advancing the APEID Idea and Goals : Glimpses of UNESCO PROAP TVE Programme

L. E. MUNJANGANJA

Salutation*

(Master of Ceremony Dr. Handa, President Kitahara, Mr. Akiyama, Rep. Of the Min . of Education and National Commission Rep. Dr. Sakai, participants to this TASAE, ladies and gentlemen , Good morning)

I am pleased to give this talk at the 1999 Tsukuba Asian Seminar on Agricultural Education (TASAE). The seminar, the sixth of its kind the Agricultural and Forestry Research Center University of Tsukuba is conducting, shows the deep commitment of this Center to its role as an APEID Associated Center. In the same vein tribute needs to be paid to the Japanese National Commission for collaborating in putting up the seminar. UNESCO is excited that there is continuing interest in these events since they are not only valuable vehicles for learning from one another's experiences, but in a sense epitomize one of our modes of action.

The APEID idea and programme of action are rooted in the desire of ASIA-Pacific Member States to encourage innovations in education by exchanging experiences and sharing information in the APEID programme areas. The programme areas, which are nine in number, include technical and vocational education and enterprise education. The area of Technical and Vocational Education is what I have been asked to talk about. My intention in this talk is to give glimpses of TVE activities, in the past, present

and in future. In doing so, it is hoped to show how, among other things, the programme activities promote, encourage and advocate the application of information to renovate TVE and enrich curricula and instruction.

From the desire and associated conditions of development were constructed, way back in 1973, seven long-range objectives for the APEID Programme. Some of these were :
-“to promote awareness of the need for innovation and possibilities for change ;
-“to promote understanding of the processes and practices of innovation with a view to encouraging systematic experimentation and accelerating the adoption of educational innovations in response to problems of development ;
-“to promote inter-country transfer of experience” (APEID, 1980, p. 15).

The same objectives drive APEID activities in their sixth programming cycle, 1997-2001.

The objectives are as relevant and reflective of the needs of Member States in the Region as they were at the time of construction. The needs for development, both of education in particular, and overall societies in general remains as great as before, in spite of successes scored on numerous fronts.

Associated Center such as the Agricultural and Forestry Research Center of the University of Tsukuba have played foremost roles in realizing the objectives. Driven by their capacity and experience, the Centres have organized seminars at which experiences have been exchanged ; information shared ; innovations flagged and discussed ; and avenues for collaboration explored. Outside the

ACEID, UNESCO Principal Regional office for Asia and The Pacific, Prakanong, Bangkok 10110 Thailand

seminar framework, personnel and materials have been exchanged. Today, we take part in yet another seminar organized by this center, the University of Tsukuba. So, the story of translating the ACEID idea, objectives, and programme of action into reality is as much a story of UNESCO ACEID as it is that of its Associated Centres.

Our activities at ACEID in the programme area of technical and vocational education seek to advance the APEID idea and goals among other goals. The idea and goals are the very heart of ACEID's reason for being. These are encapsulated in portions of its mission statement which read: "APEID will lay stress on: forging effective partnerships in education with particular reference to the establishment and servicing of networks between countries (and across regions) which facilitate the free and open flow of information between those involved". (UNESCO Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. Work plan of APEID, 1997-2001, p. (i).

In the times we live change is the only constant. Information is the main force driving the causes of the state of flux. The multiplicity of changes affect all facets of life including nature of work, occupational competencies and so forth. Occupational boundaries are being blurred and re-drawn. Narrow specializations sufficient before to hold jobs until retirement are nowadays giving way to broad education and training and continuous learning. The effect of the changes as Hermann Schmidt put it, "...make it necessary to re-examine aims, contents, qualifications and methods of all educational systems... all over the world {vocational education and training} standards are benchmarked, newly developed or revised". (UNESCO, Final Report, Second International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education, Seoul 1999, p. 19.). The changes being wrought heighten the need for new knowledge, skills and attitudes. More importantly, they raise concerns and issues on the fit of curricula, and instruction to demands of the world of work ; and on the efficacy and relevance of technical

and vocational education systems in preparing the students for work. Rapid responses are needed to address the concerns. One sure way of providing rapid responses is to apply what is known.

Under its TVE programme, universally known as UNEVOC, UNESCO/ACEID has attended to several concerns and issues corresponding to UNEVOC programme areas, namely policy system development ; national capability for research and development ; and access to information and networking. To deal with the concerns and issues, a number of activities have been executed in the past and present.

The Policy and Systems Development

The activities in the area of policy and systems development have taken various forms. Chief among these have been conferences, seminars, studies and meetings of experts. Main subjects covered at such events have included access and equity ; renovations of TVE systems ; information for policy making ; and promotion of linkages between education and the world of work. Topics of special interest such as technical teacher education and TVE in agrarian-based economies have also been treated. Studies of TVE in over 20 countries in the Region have been carried out. Final reports of any of the activities have been disseminated to Member States and other relevant bodies. Also, disseminated have been reports, studies, and publications done under the auspices of UNESCO Headquarters, its institutes, and other Regions. In conjunction with advice and information proffered through these various mediums, advocacy has been given on the Convention on TVE (1989). The Convention on TVE sets the scope, principles and practices in the provision of TVE.

Capability for Research and Development

Development of national capabilities to do research is an essential goal and action of

the UNEVOC Programme. To this end activities have been done to build a pool of national skills and knowledge in research. Central to the approaches to do so has been the involvement of national “specialists” in conducting studies under the guidance of experienced researchers. Following the studies, seminars and training workshops have been conducted to review methodologies and to discuss findings of the research studies. Some of the subjects treated so far were development and adaptation of curricula, exemplar curriculum in entrepreneurship development, teachers and new training technologies; and trends in articulation arrangements in TVE in South-East Asia. Also from cooperating in doing the research and studies some participants have forged professional links. Some of the links so forged between professionals have proved valuable in their personal development and work.

Access to Data Bases, Information and Networking

UNESCO PROAP has seen the enhanced access to databases, information, communication, and networking in the Region. The core of the measures taken has been the setting-up of UNEVOC Centres. To date their formation has been encouraged and promoted in all Member States save a few. In some of the bigger and more populous countries more than one UNEVOC Centre has been established. In all over 40 centres are in place in the Region. In some countries the UNEVOC Centres are housed at headquarters of Ministries of Education, while other centres are found at research and/or training institutions. Centres are focal point in UNEVOC programme areas. Following their establishment, the centre personnel is trained at meetings of experts, workshops and seminars to lead in improving the TVE. The network of UNEVOC Centres in the Asia-Pacific Region is part of a worldwide network. This is so because UNESCO promotes the creation in all the UNESCO Regions of the world. Inter-centre sharing of information, co-operation and so on, across countries and regions is one

of their distinguishing features. My experience with UNEVOC Centre network has been that of seeing assistance being sought and provided on almost any topic in technical and vocational education. The increased access has become a blessing to students, teachers, and administrators alike. Vehicles for sharing the information and communication are plentiful viz electronic mail, E-forum, internet, off-line version of UNEVOC web pages, print media and correspondence. Others are newsletters, reports of studies and conferences. All UNEVOC Centres can be members of the E-forum. By becoming members they can seek information on any aspect of TVE from 48 UNEVOC Centres in the Asia-Pacific Region and 150 centres all over the world. The newsletters and publications produced under the UNEVOC auspices anywhere in the world are available to UNEVOC Centres free of charge. Because the E-Forum and associated circular letters are open to non-UNEVOC outfits, they make it possible for UNEVOC Centres to communicate with such networks and agencies as well.

In the Region we have set up regional clearing house at one of the UNEVOC Centres. At the clearing house are stored reports, curricula documents, etc on TVE. In conjunction with a co-operating national research centre, the clearing house periodically publishes a bulletin of publications of interest to UNEVOC Centers and TVE practitioners. These services are accessible as print copies, off-line versions, and on the web pages to any UNEVOC Centre in the Region.

Future and Conclusion

The effects of the activities cannot be expected to be the same for all Member States. Apart from disparities in sizes and stages of development, the resource endowments of Member States differ, and so do their ability to take adequate measures to deal with concerns in the areas of policy and system development, research, and access to information and networking. Because of this measures to renovate TVE have taken various forms and been done at different times with uneven

results, the consequences are that in some countries, especially the least developed ones, the necessary actions are still being negotiated. In others the focus of attention is on implementation of new policies and practices. And yet others have their sights on providing their students and employees with knowledge, skills, and attitudes compatible with producing world class goods and services.

For all countries the changing demands of the work place and the need for compatible and competitive skills across countries spur further action to make TVE pertinent to the needs of individuals and society. The Second International Congress on TVE held in Seoul South Korea this year gave expression to these issues. Also, it heard several constructions of likely TVE scenarios and more. For example, environmental concerns now occupy centre stage suggesting curricula revision, re-training of teachers, etc. No less important are changes in employment itself and demographic profiles which are bringing in their train questions of innovating the learning and teaching processes ; TVE for all and co-operation in TVE provisions. And as well, they strongly suggest that concepts of life-long learning kept at the back burner for decades be put on the top of the table- for practical attention. What does this say about TVE in the early years of the 21st century? Will more

of the same content, modes of action and so on do? To answer these questions and conclude my talk let me turn to you, who has done some reflection. In the words of Hermann Schmidt (1999) the TVE in the early years of the 21st century would need to be innovated so "...mathematics, one's own language and English are becoming more important for vocational education than many of the practical skills that have traditionally been related to specialized training. Initial vocational education and training pursue in their turn the kind of educational objectives that have been the prerogative of general education. They include: learn to learn... Vocational education has to be broader and more diversified" (UNESCO, Final Report. Second International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education, 1999, pp. 17-18). In the face of the changes, emerging needs and concerns and attendant vexations, let us take some relief from applying available information, learning from others' experiences and adapting good practices in the Region. This is what 1999 TASAE theme is asking of all of us : Application of global and regional information for the innovation of agricultural and environmental education in Asia-Pacific Countries.

Thank you for your attention.