

Study Visit on
“Skill Development for Youth Employment”
Ankara, Turkey, 11-13 January 2012

The participants of the Study Visit on Skill Development for Youth Employment highlighted the following outcomes that will be of value to others. The participants;

emphasized the importance of skill development for youth employment, especially given the current high rates of youth unemployment and the changing demographics in many OIC Member Countries;

underlined that the success of skill development programmes relies on accurate and profound understanding of the dynamics of labour markets in terms of current and future demands for skills;

highlighted in this regard the need for capacity building for early identification of current and future skills-in-demand and entrepreneurship as a strategy for reducing skill gaps;

acknowledged the need for building effective skill development systems that are responsive to current labour market demands, economic challenges and globalization;

stressed the need for bringing all relevant stakeholders together for identifying challenges and devising effective and innovative approaches in improving skill development systems and policies;

emphasized the need for developing national programmes that take into account differences in demanded skills across different local labour markets;

noted the importance of sharing experiences and innovative approaches in addressing the challenge of youth unemployment and promoting cooperation among the OIC Member Countries.

Recommendations

In the light of the discussions and deliberations made during the working sessions of the study visit, the participants agreed upon the following recommendations for developing and enhancing technical cooperation among OIC Member Countries in the area of skill development for youth employment strategies:

1. Member Countries should enhance their understanding of the dynamics of domestic labour markets, root causes of unemployment, as well as socio-economic conditions of unemployed. Development of effective methods for monitoring and analysing labour markets is seen as a prerequisite for taking any actions. This can be achieved through:
 - Collecting regular and detailed data on the status of labour markets, through conducting scientific surveys of both supply and demand side segregated by location and other thematic areas. This would serve to build a framework for identifying areas requiring intervention by the government at each stage of development;
 - Creating a platform/mechanism to bring relevant stakeholders (public sector, private sector and academia) together to identify challenges and discuss effective and innovative approaches for skills development that address youth unemployment;
 - Implementing programmes to reduce a mismatch between skill demands and supply that contributes to structural unemployment. Early identification of current and future skill-needs should be developed as part of a forward-looking strategy that reduces skills gaps.
2. In devising skill development programmes, special attention should be paid to developing skills that encourage and support self-employment and entrepreneurship. Such strategies should be supported by increased access to financial services, including Islamic microcredit and development of Waqf models, as well as improved infrastructure and increased accessibility of information and advisory services.
3. Coordination among the stakeholders needs to be promoted in order to make a smooth progress from education and training to employment. Transition between stages of learning and entry into the labour market can be facilitated by career guidance, skill recognition mechanisms, as well as extensive dissemination of labour market analyses. Improved basic education and core work-skills are particularly important in increasing the employability of the labour force, and in particular enabling youth to enter labour markets while engaging in lifelong learning.

4. Setting monitoring and quality assurance systems for skill development programmes is an important aspect. Considering the high politicizing of such programmes it is hard to measure "real" impact hence performance indicators that are used under the different programmes should be shared. The mechanisms must be established to ensure sustainability of the skill development programmes.
5. Regional programme with local benchmarks on youth empowerment that can include modelling on the ground must be formed. In addition, establishing partnership between the country level benchmarks and related academic institutions in region that have relevant knowledge and comparative advantages in the areas that require development is necessary.
6. The existing models that fall under the "education for employment" approach should be well documented in OIC Member Countries. Further research should be done and trainings must be provided on the subject matter in the region.
7. Apprenticeships, traineeships and internships should be used as effective means of bridging the gap between school and labour market for young people by making it possible for them to acquire initial work experience along with technical and professional training.
8. The role of the networks of vocational training centres should be increased in OIC Member Countries, in order to exchange the information and the experiences in the areas of development of methodologies, and programs and training of trainers and the training institutions.
9. SESRIC, in collaboration with the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB), the TOBB University (TOBB-ETU), Ministry of Education of Turkey and Ministry of Labour and Social Security of Turkey is requested to develop and coordinate a mechanism in transferring the knowledge and experience of the Republic of Turkey in the 'Skill 10' project to selected pilot Member Countries.

10. SESRIC is also encouraged and supported to take further steps towards enhancing cooperation in combatting unemployment through its 'Skill Development for Youth Employment' initiative. SESRIC should provide platforms, such as e-mail groups and e-learning facilities, to have a continuation communication, sharing best practices, exchange of success stories and exchange of information for knowledge sharing of youth empowerment experiences.

11. SESRIC is requested to establish a database of experts for OIC Member Countries specialized in the area of youth empowerment, entrepreneurship development, vocational education and skills development for graduates.

12. OIC Member Countries, the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and other international organisations are invited to provide expertise, experience and financial assistance for projects such as vocational training, training infrastructures, training of trainers, skill development programmes and promotion of youth entrepreneurship in combating youth unemployment.