International conference

Bringing education and business closer together in Armenia

Yerevan 15-16 September 2011

Background

Many countries worldwide reinforce their education and training systems’ capacity to respond to the pressures of globalisation and the challenges of the knowledge society. Closer cooperation between business and education is one of the tools for providing learners with new skills and competences for work. However, knowledge available on the current forms and modes of cooperation between the education and economic sectors, and the roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders is limited and fragmented.

The EU has been the key donor in the field of VET reform since many years and, recently, the assistance has been provided through sector policy support programmes, designed with the contribution of the ETF. The support has facilitated the progress made in Armenia in the involvement of business in education in particular through their representation in the National VET Council and in School Management Boards.

A debate is also on going in the country about the establishment of Training Fund as a tool for promoting investment in continuing training.

The good work done to date in Armenia with social partners needs to be expanded and embedded. A true partnership needs to be developed with industry and business to promote “their ownership” of the sector. The ETF has been working very closely for many years with the Ministry of Education and Science in promoting the reform of VET and, since 2009, has been working with the National Centre for VET Development (NCVETD), which has been established by the Ministry to follow up the implementation of the reform and to make it more visible and attractive for business.

Through local and external resources, Armenia has used a wide range of methods to build and develop social partnership in VET in Armenia at national and local levels. The relevance of the VET system is dependent upon active social partnerships involving business and education.

The establishment of Management Boards in the preliminary and middle vocational institutions marked important progress. These Boards include business representatives and have formed the basis for education and business cooperation at local levels. However, the operation of the Boards has not reached the expected outcomes and it is evident that more productive methods are necessary to achieve the desired results.

There are also some isolated but very good models of social partnerships that operate effectively in Armenia. It is necessary to disseminate these good examples of best practice and to discuss how this can be mainstreamed into the national VET system.
Purpose

The purpose of this conference is to seek input and expertise for VET reform through learning from European experience on effective models of education and business co-operation, in particular from Poland, Estonia and Austria as a tool for:

- Making VET an attractive education option, including for reintegration of early school leavers;
- How to promote up-grading of the workforce through Continuing VET;
- Keeping or improving the relevance of VET meeting the requirements of the economy;
- Expanding the Armenian experience of management boards of VET institutions in order to strengthen social partnership.

The conference will allow policy makers, employers and VET providers from Armenia to present the current situation of business-education cooperation, share the challenges and engage with current models of education and business co-operation in Europe.

Expected outcomes

The conference is expected to provide key players in the Armenian VET sector with an enhanced awareness of the advantages of enhanced co-operation between business and education as a key tool for VET reforms, learning from the experiences of Belgium, Estonia and Austria and establishing a network for continuing to exchange views and ideas.

Conference design and methods

The conference will consist of keynote speakers with plenary and panel discussions to allow debate and exchange of ideas. The conference will also facilitate site visits to selected Armenian Colleges to show case good practice.

The Conference papers will be published on the NCVETD web-site.
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<tr>
<td>9:00-9:30</td>
<td>Registration of participants</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:30 – 13:00</td>
<td>Chairperson: <strong>Karine Harutunyan</strong>, Deputy Minister</td>
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| 9:30-10:30   | Welcome Speech  
  - **Armen Ashotyan**, Minister of Education and Science  
  - **Tigran Davtyan**, Minister of Economy  
  - **Arthur Grigoryan**, Minister of Labour and Social issues  
  - **Androulla Vassiliou Commissioner** for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, European Commission (tbc)  
  - **R. de Luzenberger**, Head of EU Delegation to Armenia  
  - **Madlen Serban**, ETF Director                                                                |
| 10:30–11:00  | VET reform in Armenia  
  **Marine Hakobyan**, Director National Centre for VET Development  
  - The experience on social partnership in the context of VET cooperation  
  - Questions and answers, exchanges of ideas. |
| 11:00 -11.30 | **Coffee break**                                                                                                                                |
| 11:30 – 12:15| VET reform in Estonia  
  **Lessons learnt**  
  **Ms. Kulli All**  
  Adviser  
  Vocational and Adult Education  
  Ministry of Education and Research  
  Estonia |
| 12:15 – 13:00| Presenter: **Martin Sargsyan**, President of Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of Armenia  
  - The current situation regarding business-education cooperation and the reforms that are necessary.  
  - Questions and answers, exchanges of ideas |
| 13:00 – 14:30| **Lunch**                                                                                                                                      |
| 14 -30 – 17:30| Chairperson: **Madlen Serban**, ETF Director                                                                                                    |
| 14:30 -15:00 | The co-operation between business and education in Poland  
  **Lessons learnt**  
  **Mr. Jerzy Wisniewski**  
  Expert in education and public policy  
  Ministry of National Education  
  Poland |
| 15:00 – 16:00| Presenter: **Paruyr Santrosyan**, Director of Yerevan Regional College N1.  
  - Locally developed social partnership mechanisms and their benefit to Armenian Colleges.  
  Presenter: **Gayane Kaparetyan**, Director of France-Armenian Vocational Center.  
  - Locally developed social partnership mechanisms and their benefit to Armenian Colleges.  
  - Questions and answers, exchanges of ideas |
| 16:00 – 16:30| **Coffee break**                                                                                                                                |
| 16:30-17:00  | The co-operation between business and education in Austria:  
  - Examples of successful mechanisms for establishing and developing social partnerships in education-business cooperation models.  
  - Possible difficulties and ways to avoid them or to overcome them. |
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<td>17:00 – 17:30</td>
<td>End of first day, conclusions</td>
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- Questions and answers, exchanges of ideas

**Mr. Reinhard Nöbauer**  
Senior Expert  
Vocational Education and Training  
Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture  
Austria
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| 9:30 - 9:50  | Presenter: Robert Abrahamyan, Head of VET Department, Ministry of Education and Science  
Brief presentation on the outcomes from day 1 and what to expect today |
| 9:50 – 10:15 | Presenter: Milena Corradini, ETF country manager for Armenia  
The Torino process and the current situation of VET in Armenia. |
| 10:15 – 10:45| Presenter: Representative of employment field. F.e GRDND HOLDING  
- Multifunctional enterprises as beneficiaries of VET system.  
- Questions and answers, exchanges of ideas |
| 10:45 – 11:15| Coffee break                                                          |
| 11:15 -12:30 | Panel session with the 3 international experts and 3 representatives from Armenia from employers, employees and government on:  
- How to make VET system more effective?  
- Who should pay for VET?  
- How to stimulate the offer and demand for continuing VET? |
| 12:30 – 13:00| Conclusions from panel session  
Lessons learnt for Armenia and commitment to future reform  
Madlen Serban  
Marine Hakobyan  
Robert Abrahamyan |
| 13:00 – 14:00| Lunch                                                                 |
| 14:00        | Visit to Vayots Dzor regional state college.                          |