



International
Labour
Organization

▶ ACTRAV Regional Webinar on Skills Development and Lifelong Learning in the Post- Pandemic Recovery and the Future of Work

8 July 2021 | 9:00 CET/14:00 BKK | Zoom

ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

► Speakers and resource persons

Speakers

Maria Helena André	Director, ILO Bureau of Workers' Activities, Geneva
Chihoko Asada-Miyakawa	Regional Director, ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
Ashwani Aggarwal	Team Leader for the Working Group on Work-Base Learning, Apprenticeships and Recognition of Prior Learning, ILO Geneva
Kal Joffres	CEO, Tandemic
Tran Ngoc Diep	National Coordinator, ILO Viet Nam
Gilbert Tan	Assistant Director-General, Singapore National Trade Union Congress and CEO of Employment and Employability Institute
Rafael Peels	Workers' Activities Specialist, ILO Bureau of Workers' Activities, Geneva

Moderators

Ariel Castro	Desk Officer for Asia and the Pacific, ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
Pong-Sul Ahn	Regional Specialist in Workers' Education, ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

► Introduction

Pong-Sul Ahn opened the second webinar of the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Bureau of Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) on Skills Development and Lifelong Learning as a follow-up to the webinar in December 2020. The two activities were organized in coordination with the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and the Skills Department. This webinar aimed to:

1. Introduce a new trend and the ILO policy on skills development and lifelong learning.
2. Share country-level good practices.
3. Promote trade union engagement in social dialogue on skills and lifelong learning so that they can contribute to the standard-setting discussions on quality apprenticeships at the International Labour Conference in 2022–23.

► Opening remarks

Ariel Castro began by noting how it was an exciting time to discuss skills and lifelong learning, considering the approaching International Labour Conference (in November–December 2021). For guidance and inspirations for the webinar, he invited Maria Helena André and Chihoko Asada-Miyakawa for their opening thoughts.

Maria Helena André **Director, ILO Bureau of Workers' Activities, Geneva**

Maria Helena André welcomed the participants from various countries in the Asia–Pacific region with thanks for their participation and expressed appreciation to the ILO Regional Office, especially ILO Regional Director Chihoko Asada Miyakawa for joining the webinar, and to Bureau of Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) colleagues in the Asia–Pacific region for their efforts in organizing the activity. She explained that the webinar was part of a broader, comprehensive ILO and ACTRAV programme supporting trade unions on skills development and lifelong learning.

At the second round of the International Labour Conference in 2021, she reported, there will be a general discussion on skills and lifelong learning. And on the agenda of the International Labour Conference in 2022–23, there will be standard-setting discussion on apprenticeships and other forms of work-based learning. Thus, the webinar aimed to:

1. Share ILO policies on skills and lifelong learning in the context of the forthcoming general discussion as well as considering the important role it will have in the context of the recovery from the pandemic.
2. Present the White Report on Apprenticeships, in preparation for the discussion on the development of a standard for apprenticeships. So far, apprenticeships and other forms of work-based learning are not covered by international labour standards.
3. Invite the participants to consider and use the various materials developed by ACTRAV and the ILO that are freely available on the website in their future training activities.

She emphasized that the most important aim of the webinar was to hear participants' experiences and views on the why, how and what is the best for trade union involvement on the topic of skills and lifelong learning. This includes how trade unions can influence the ILO and the national discussions on the matter; and how trade unions can profit from the results because they will shape the future work on skills and lifelong learning. The challenges related to the future of work and the post-pandemic recovery call for an active role by trade unions.

Building on the 2019 ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, the Global Call to Action for a Human-Centred Recovery from the COVID-19 crises, which the 2021 International Labour Conference adopted, considers that skills development and lifelong learning that are (i) human-centred and based on international labour standards; and (ii) that reflect the engagement of social partners through social dialogue will be keys to building a better normal in the post-COVID-19 world.

The pandemic has presented many challenges for the economy as a whole, for workers and for their organizations. Access to skills development, lifelong learning and quality education for all have been affected by the crises but they will be central in the response to the crisis in the short, medium and long terms, Ms André stressed. They are also a critical “part of the toolbox” to achieve and accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

As actors in the governance of skills and lifelong learning, trade unions must continue their important role in making training systems responsive to the current and future needs regarding job creation and just transitions within the environmental, economic and social aspects.

Social dialogue in which trade unions have a role should give greater importance to skills development to lift sectors, economies and workers out of the crisis, targeting job creation, innovation, technological change, whole sectors that are under massive stress and new economic sectors that have emerged or will emerge – while addressing the serious decent work deficits.

The focus on skills development and lifelong learning in a context of digitalization and automation is essential. Technological developments have massive impact on today's economies, labour markets and the lives of workers, as well as the capacity of companies to stay afloat in the competitive world. Therefore, it is a necessity to think of technological developments that change the type and nature of jobs and accordingly the skills that are needed; of technological change in the transition towards a green economy; and of the impact of globalization in terms of technology spillovers or outsourcing low-skill and high-skill jobs.

Skills development and lifelong learning are essential to steer economic growth and productivity increases and to enhance workers' capabilities to participate fully in the labour market. For instance, facilitating their access to, their progression in and their staying with the labour force requires respecting and promoting decent work and human-centred development. What matters in the end is that all workers, either employed or unemployed, in the formal and informal economies or in the traditional or new sectors, can acquire the skills of their choice to get jobs and to keep jobs. It also matters that they are equipped to face the transitions they will be confronted with over the working life.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has put the concept of "transition" front and centre in terms of economic development and the implications for the world of work and for trade unions themselves, Ms André said. Trade unions have been faced with serious challenges throughout the ongoing crisis. But they have also shown resilience. Trade unions are starting to reflect upon what this crisis means for them and for the model of development to be built.

Ending her remarks, Ms André reiterated that the webinar would be an opportunity to further develop trade union thinking and action on this matter.

Chihoko Asada-Miyakawa **Regional Director, ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific**

Chihoko Asada-Miyakawa began by detailing the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on economies and societies, in particular on employment. According to the ILO *World Employment and Social Outlook* estimates, in 2020, approximately 8.8 per cent of total working hours globally were lost, equivalent to the loss of 255 million full-time jobs. The total working hour losses led to a sharp drop in labour income and an increase in poverty. In the Asia-Pacific region, an estimated 81 million jobs were lost in 2020, and an additional 22–25 million employed persons fell into extreme poverty, living on income that was less than \$1.90 per day. Businesses also have suffered from the pandemic and social distancing measures. Some industries have become weaker due to the reduction of jobs, while some industries have grown with the creation of more jobs. The pandemic has escalated the demand for digitalization, automation and adoption of advanced technologies, from manufacturing to the health industry to commercial activities. The changing business environments affect the employment structure as well. For instance, workers need to acquire new skills, upgrade their qualifications and transit their jobs. Therefore, rights at work are fundamental not only for ensuring social justice but also for guaranteeing income security for all workers.

In 2021, the tripartite delegates met at the International Labour Conference virtually – for the first time in ILO history, Ms Asada-Miyakawa pointed out. The International Labour Conference brought up a message of hope and commitment to work together under the principle of tripartism and social dialogue. The delegates reiterated the relevance of the Centenary Declaration for building resilient economies and a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. The Declaration highlights the importance of a human-centred approach to cope with challenges in the future of work and embrace its positive effects. It

recommends investment in people through skills development, education and training. It also promotes the acquisition of skills, competencies and qualifications for all workers throughout their working lives. The ILO stresses the importance of quality education and training along with free education and access to affordable technical, vocational and tertiary education.

The COVID-19 crisis has reversed the social and economic development in the Asia-Pacific region, with an increase of doubt for achieving the SDG goals by 2030, said Ms Asada-Miyakawa. The United Nations has launched the Decade of Action for accelerating the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The ILO leads on SDG 8 for promoting economic growth and decent work. Full, productive and freely chosen employment is at the heart of the strategies to achieve SDG 8. Informal employment, such as the self-employed, precarious workers, independent workers and platform workers, have been growing since onset of the pandemic. Policies and programmes need to be reinforced to support the transition of informal employment towards formal employment. South-South cooperation is also essential to share knowledge and the good practices that countries have discovered.

Skills development and lifelong learning is a policy of the ILO in response to the crisis and for the preparation of the future of work, reminded Ms Asada-Miyakawa. The ILO has placed skills and lifelong learning as a general discussion agenda at the International Labour Conference later in the year. It will also undertake a standard-setting exercise on apprenticeships with constituents at the International Labour Conference in 2022–23. The standard-setting itself will focus on addressing a normative gap in the existing standards on skills development and introduce quality apprenticeships. Its processes will offer social partners opportunity to engage more in national, regional and global dialogue on skills development. Governments and social partners should take shared responsibilities in promoting skills development and lifelong learning, which are crucial for sustainable development. Trade unions also must take an active role in social dialogue with governments and employers to strengthen the governance system of skills development and lifelong learning in their countries.

In concluding, Ms Asada-Miyakawa expected the webinar would create momentum for trade unions to accelerate social dialogue with governments and employers concerning skills and lifelong learning while putting a cornerstone to bring in an international regulatory framework on the topic. She also wished for the webinar to increase unions' engagement in the agenda of skills and lifelong learning.

Mr Castro noted that the opening speeches provided valuable information regarding the context and the importance of the discussion, along with supportive encouragement and useful guidance.

Mr Castro turned to a review of ILO policies and action on skills and lifelong learning, along with a teaser on digital learning and training. The next session, he said, would combine the ILO reports and views on the topic and what has been increased over the pandemic period, such as digital learning and innovative solutions.

► **Presentations: Review of ILO policy and action on skills and lifelong learning**

Ashwani Aggarwal

Team Leader for the Working Group on Work-based Learning, Apprenticeships and Recognition of Prior Learning, ILO Geneva

Presentation: Standard-setting on apprenticeships and International Labour Conference general discussion on skills and lifelong learning

Ashwani Aggarwal began his remarks with reference to the White Report on Apprenticeships, which was the result of a survey and other information on what the International Labour Conference will discuss regarding skills and lifelong learning in November–December 2021.

Mr Aggarwal expressed appreciation for ACTRAV and the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific for taking the initiative to organizing early engagement with constituents in debating the important issues that are coming up at the International Labour Conference. He noted that both Ms André and Ms Asada-Miyakawa had provided the background on the increasing need for skills and lifelong learning in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery.

The International Labour Conference general discussion at the end of the year will focus on skill development and lifelong learning, Mr Aggarwal pointed out. Then in 2022–23, the delegates will focus on the standard-setting for apprenticeships. As background, Mr Aggarwal explained that generally in developing countries, the main complaint is that a large percentage of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) graduates do not have the skills needed by the labour market. This is a big concern because despite investing a lot of money in the training institutions, the graduates do not meet the requirements. Another major concern is the fast-changing labour market and the COVID-19 crisis, both of which are increasing the skills mismatch. Due to these two phenomena, youth and workers of all ages need skilling, reskilling or upskilling to overcome the skills mismatch and thus to be fully employed in jobs of their choice. Apprenticeships have proven to be an effective and efficient tool to develop the skills needed by the labour market. The global trend shows that most countries, such as in the Asia–Pacific region, increasingly focus on apprenticeships.

For instance:

1. ILO Member States will develop international labour standards for apprenticeships.
2. G20 countries have come up with recommendations to promote quality apprenticeships in their countries.
3. L20 and B20 countries have come together with a publication on the elements of quality apprenticeships.
4. The European Union has established the European Alliance for Apprenticeship.
5. The ILO, with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and others, has also promoted the Global Apprenticeships Alliance.

Regarding the growing importance of apprenticeships in the context of the fast-changing world of work, Mr Aggarwal highlighted the need to be mindful at what happened following the juridical replacement of two instruments, the Apprenticeship Recommendation, 1939 (No. 60) and the Vocational Training Recommendation, 1962 (No. 117). Currently, there is no instrument that comprehensively addresses the apprenticeship issue. It is not only taking place in training centres but also in industry. It requires a good training qualitatively and should protect the rights of apprentices. Accordingly, the 334th ILO Governing Body in 2018 requested the ILO to place a standard-setting item related to apprenticeships on the agenda of the 110th session of the International Labour Conference.

The following is the process and timeline for the standard-setting on apprenticeships.

29 November 2019

The ILO sent the White Report and questionnaire to constituents (governments and employers' and workers' organizations).

31 March 2021	Deadline for replies to questionnaire extended until 31 March 2021. By that time, the responses received from 94 governments, 14 employers' organizations and 39 workers' organizations. The ILO did the initial analysis, prepared the first draft of the report and shared it through interdepartmental dialogue, including ACTRAV, for feedback and comments.
31 January 2022	Received the report containing replies from constituents and draft conclusions for the purpose of the next year's International Labour Conference.
May-June 2022	First discussion at the 110th Session of the International Labour Conference (2022).
August 2022	Report containing proposed text and ILO commentary.
14 November 2022	Deadline for constituents to send comments on the proposed revised text of the instruments.
28 February 2023	Publication of Reports A and B – summary of comments and proposed texts of the instruments.
May-June 2023	Second discussion on the draft instruments by constituents at the 111th Session of the International Labour Conference (2023).
Final instruments – Convention and/or Recommendation	

Regarding the issues, according to the responses received from the constituents as well as the ILO research, most countries face challenges in expanding quality apprenticeships, despite the known benefits. As for quality, the ILO has come up with its own practices of apprenticeships. However, the International Labour Conference will discuss this issue and define what is considered as essential components of quality apprenticeships.

In the context of the future of work and lifelong learning, there are many questions regarding apprenticeships:

- Can it serve the needs of the digital and knowledge economy?
- Can the model be used for higher education? This question relates to the reality that more and more young persons want to go on with higher education. They believe that they can get better decent jobs with more education.
- Can it be used for reskilling and upskilling of adults? Traditionally, apprenticeship is more for young persons for their first job in the labour market, thus this question comes up.

Other important issues that can be observed from the constituents' replies:

- Characteristics of apprenticeships differ among countries. So, how should apprenticeship be defined?
- What should be the training and working conditions?
- How can the cost be shared between government, enterprises and apprentices? This doesn't mean that the apprentices must pay but in terms of the time they spend.
- How could apprenticeships be upgraded in the informal sector? In many countries, up to or more than 90 per cent of workers are in the informal economy, and apprenticeships take place there with many challenges.
- What policy measures are needed to overcome the challenges?
- Should the standards cover internships also?

The ILO continuously conducts new research and evaluations, developing new knowledge and the capacity of constituents in addressing the challenges in their respective countries, Mr Aggarwal reminded. This involves running various programmes, assisting about 35 countries around the world in improving their apprenticeship system and recently publishing a two-volume *Toolkit for Quality Apprenticeships*, which he noted is quite comprehensive in providing guidance to constituents and stakeholders and can be freely downloaded from the ILO website.

- Volume 1 targets policymakers for developing systems. It talks about policy and system-level issues.

- Volume 2 targets practitioners for designing, implementing and evaluating programmes.

Mr Aggarwal referred to the upcoming International Labour Conference's general discussion on skills and lifelong learning in November–December 2021. Based on the report for that meeting and suggested points for discussion, the objectives he explained will be to:

- contribute to an informed and balanced discussion on skills and lifelong learning, including in the COVID-19 context;
- examine the roles of the ILO and constituents for the delivery of the Centenary Declaration, human-centred recovery and the 2030 Agenda.

Other suggested points for the discussion that he noted:

- What are the challenges and opportunities for skills and lifelong learning in a changing world of work, which is further impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic?
- How can elements of skills systems be shaped and modernized?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of governments and social partners for realizing the transformative potential of skills and lifelong learning for all?
- To strengthen the ILO's global leadership on skills and lifelong learning, what should be the core elements of an ILO skills and lifelong learning strategy?

Mr Aggarwal concluded by pointing out the expected outcome from the International Labour Conference meeting, which is to have clear and innovative guidance on the role of the ILO and the ILO skills and lifelong learning strategy for the 2030 Agenda.

Kal Joffres

CEO, Tandemic

Presentation: Digital learning and innovative solutions for union education and training

Kal Joffres explained that Tandemic is the company name that he came up with more than a decade ago. It's a combination of "tandem", which means working together, and "pandemic", which means something that grows exponentially. In his presentation on digital learning and innovative solutions for union education and training, he addressed the practical challenge of how to design effective, skills-building training in the digital space. First though, he noted some concerns:

- low completion rates for self-guided courses;
- lack of clarity on how much can be learned through bite-sized videos;
- low engagement, with webcams off in live workshops.

Due to those concerns, he wanted to highlight a few practical actions that can be done when it comes to designing effective, skills-building training online.

- Examples of what can be done with interactive digital learning: How can organizers go beyond a webinar and presentation to do something more interactive?
- Four principles for designing effective digital learning experiences based on Tandemic's experiences.

He said that one of the most important things when it comes to designing a course is that there is no direct translation. Many digital courses that didn't really work were the ones for which his team tried to translate directly from in-person courses into digital courses. It didn't work in the digital space because people's attention span isn't there – organizers cannot have captivated audiences like in a workshop room. Therefore, the challenge is to redesign the training from scratch for the digital space. He emphasized that the key to doing it well is not to look at the digital space as a second class in-person training space. Instead, it is better to think of some of things that organizers can do with digital that may be easier to do

in the digital space than through in-person training. The good news, he said and based on Tandemic's experiences, is that well-designed digital training can be better than face-to-face training.

Among the many advantages, Mr Joffres singled out the followings::

1. Stretch the training out over time and work on real projects (on the job and about the job), like what was done with the in-person workshops, when the organizer and participants used to do simulations. With digital learning, the organizer can deliver the training alongside what people are doing in their work.
2. It is possible to deliver quick feedback and have visibility of progress. In the digital classroom, the progress of all students is evident, and the facilitator can provide individualized feedback.

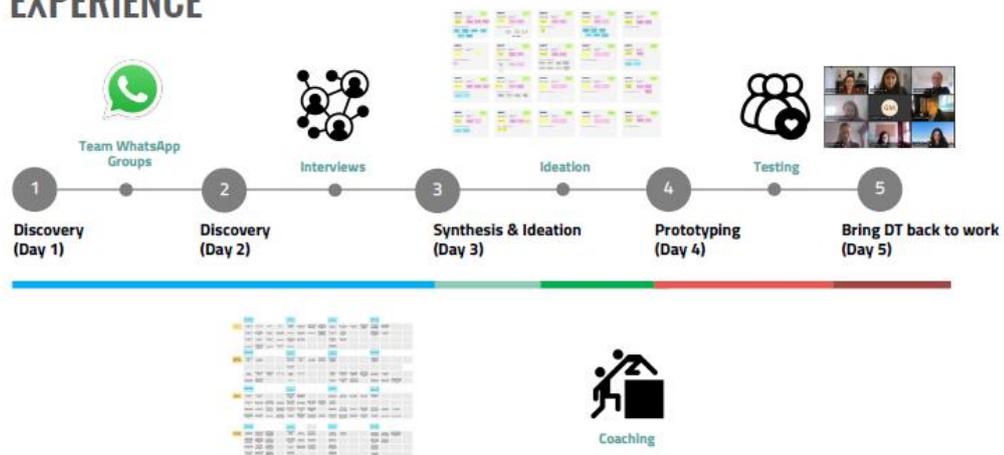
Mr Joffres mentioned that some tools that can be used for the digital learning are available for free. For instance, there are tools for putting digital post-its for brainstorming activity or working together on a map for case study regarding the possible intervention in a particular space.

Mr Joffres then described the spectrum of digital learning:

- **Mostly live**

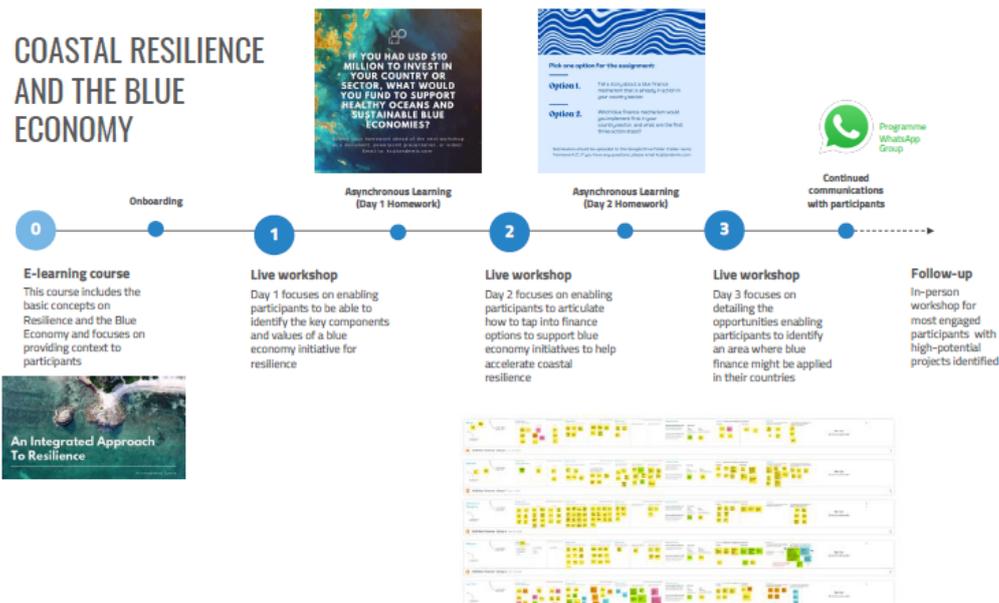
As an example, Mr Joffres described a programme run by Tandemic called Design Thinking Experience for workers. The programme is five to seven weeks in duration. It starts by creating a WhatsApp group for each team to discuss how to solve a problem using a certain methodology. There are digital workspaces in which people can use digital post-its and write collaboratively. Then the participants are sent to interview people. There's also a coaching session. As they work in the live workshop, they have a digital framework in the workspaces that allows them to work together. They are also able to do testing after they build a prototype for their problem-solving project. That is how they work in a team with colleagues and with people outside their team.

DESIGN THINKING EXPERIENCE



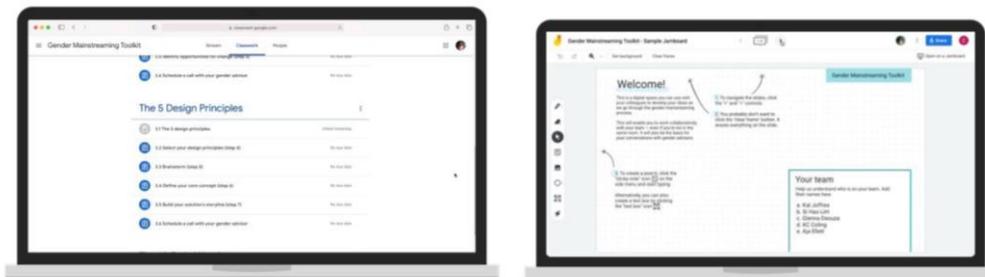
- **Mixed**

Sometimes, when a training is to cover a very technical topic and the participants join from different levels, the organizers don't want to spend the first workshop covering all the fundamentals because then the more advanced learners will stop paying attention. Thus, for example, in the Coastal Resilience and Blue Economy Training, the organizer starts with an e-learning course. Then engages in a series of live workshops and gives the participants homework throughout the programme. The participants have digital workspaces in which they work and a WhatsApp group for them to continue interacting.

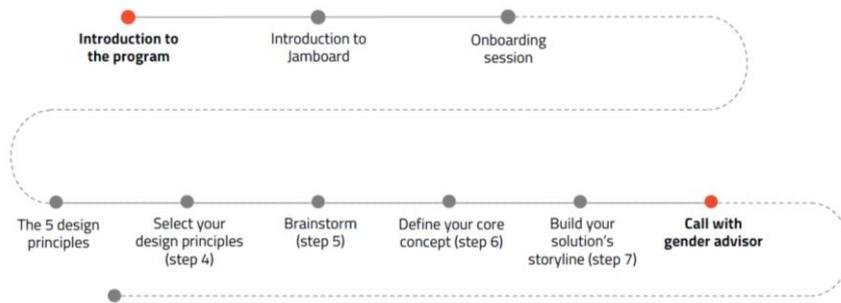


• **Mostly self-guided**

Tandemic never does a purely self-guided course because the rate of completion is very poor. What it does to build person-to-person interaction: An organizer conducts a workshop in a way that the participants feel some kind of responsibility that there is a group of colleagues they are familiar with and who want to complete the course. For instance, in the gender mainstreaming programme that Tandemic designed (see the below illustration), there are videos with different kinds of content that would be expected in a regular learning management platform. There are also digital workbooks with which the participants can work on fun exercises as team. The thing that is important is the journey. The programme starts with live and in-person activities, and the participants have a regular call with the adviser at different points in that journey. Therefore, they still have an interaction with real people to help them get back on track and to answer their questions.



THE JOURNEY



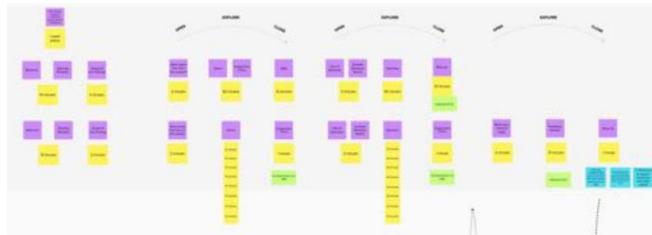
Regarding the principles for designing digital engagements, Mr Joffres explained four important lessons:

1. Make it a human experience – an experience in which people are in contact with each other.
 - a. Get everyone to turn on their cameras.
 - b. Use break-out rooms, which is very powerful in digital work. In a digital workshop, it is possible to have more small group interactions rather than with an in-person workshop. The organizer can send participants to the break-out rooms for 5 minutes and bring them back right away. In an in-person workshop, the organizer may spend more time just to bring people back to the plenary session. Thus, having breakout rooms in digital work is extremely more efficient.
2. Go beyond the agenda to the process, which is about how the organizer breaks down the whole agenda into small and micro activities.
 - a. Build 5- to 10-minute micro activities to compete for attention with so many different things.
 - b. Switch views, speakers and activities. For example, the following illustration depicts a training programme in the digital space about a new IT system. In the original plan, there were 60 minutes of demonstration, 15 minutes for Q&A and 90 minutes of hands-on exercises. To conduct the programme in the digital learning space, the organizer needed to revise the design to: 10 minutes of demonstration, a Q&A, 20 minutes for hands-on exercise, 15 minutes of demonstration, another Q&A, 30 minutes hands-on exercise, 10 minutes of demonstration, another Q&A and then 20 minutes hands-on exercise. Thus, organizer didn't try to show everything upfront, but taught the participants just enough so that they could use the tool to do some exercises with it first and then the organizer continued introducing the material a little bit more and so on.

JUST-IN-TIME LEARNING

The new IT system

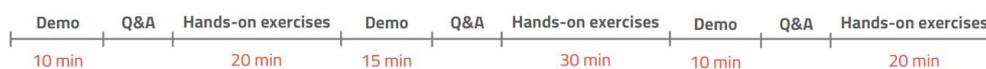
How can an IT system be presented virtually? And how can hands-on exercises be effectively conducted in the digital space?



Original design



Revised design



3. Leverage multitasking productively. What are the interface tools that enable participants to collaborate? A number of tools are available for free.
 - a. What are participants looking at together?
 - b. What are they working on together?

What the organizer wants is that participants do multitasking but it has to relate to the training. Therefore, the organizer needs to draw in the participants' attention. To do so, for instance, the organizer can arrange a mapping of stakeholders alongside video calls in an activity.

4. Design for all three layers. The design of the official workshop is not the only thing important in the design of a training programme. In many cases, there are unofficial things that people get from in-person workshops that they find really valuable, such as the sense of community, the ability to meet colleagues and the emotional experience. But these are not possible with digital training or workshops. It is important to think about designing the official workshop but also the unofficial aspects of a workshop. For example, when Tandemic ran a training programme in Myanmar that took several months, one of the challenges was attendance. To manage this, Tandemic put 15 minutes in the beginning of the workshop to get people in small groups to talk about what they had been working on in the past week. That activity became the glue to create a sense of community and made them want to come back to the content. Despite the content being good, sometimes people come back for the opportunity to socialize and to connect with their colleagues. It is important, he stressed, that this is about what participants think is valuable – not the organizer!

Q/A session

A participant asked: In real life, technology changes rapidly. What kind of training are we looking at – more generic job type of training or more relevant kinds of training based on the needs of companies?

Mr Aggarwal responded that there is a notion that digital technology has made the change much faster than the earlier times, but the change is always there. With many skills systems, there are some good systems, but there are some country systems that are not flexible or responsive to the fast changes of the world. As an attempt to manage this, the ILO normally promotes two types of skills:

- a. technical skills, specific for performing tasks on the job; and
- b. core skills or soft skills, which are more social-emotional and cognitive skills. And these are becoming more and more important.

The ILO has developed a new framework for core skills. It's a global framework that was going to be launched in July 2021. The ILO has considered this particular aspect in the changing world of work for lifelong learning. What are the required core skills? The ILO has come up with a combination of big categories:

- social-emotional skills;
- cognitive skills;
- meta-cognitive skills.

Meta-cognitive skills have been added because this brought several reflections and learning. Therefore, it is not about how someone can pull someone else to learn, but it has to be something that comes from inside the learners – people must want to learn and to do self-reflection on what they need and then be proactive.

The ILO has added a basic set of digital skills as part of the core skills. Digital skills are technical skills, but considering that digital technology is part of people's lives nowadays, the ILO considers that basic digital skills should be part of everyone's core skills. Similarly, basic green skills or basic skills for green jobs are also incorporated into the core skills.

How should a skill system be organized? In producing a module for curricular design, there should be foundation skills that should have a broad base. Because the question was also asked about whether it should be job-specific or generic, the answer is that it has to be both. Generic skills or foundational skills are based on which one is broader, and not only for any particular occupation. But it must cover many occupations in many sectors and beyond to related sectors. A specific or specialized module should be there that relates to that one. Whenever changes happen, a new specialized module can always be added into the fundamental one.

Mr Castro gave assurance that the ILO will make sure that trade unions put this important issue into their agenda in their respective countries due to the important role they will have moving forward in the recovery and post-pandemic period. He also gave assurance that after the webinar, the ILO and trade unions will stay connected and updated on this topic.

► **Sharing country-level good practices and experiences**

Mr Ahn turned the session to sharing country-level good practices and experiences on skills and lifelong learning. Viet Nam, he introduced, is one of the fast-industrializing countries in the region and thus requires more skilled labourers. The Government has made skills and apprenticeships a priority policy and recently updated its legislation. He said the first presentation would look at the national policy and governance on skills development and apprenticeships in Viet Nam.

Tran Ngoc Diep
National Coordinator, Applying the G20 Training Strategy: A Partnership of the ILO and the Russian Federation (Phase 2), ILO Hanoi

Case: National policy and governance on skills development and apprenticeships in Viet Nam

Tran Ngoc Diep introduced herself as the National Coordinator from the ILO Country Office in Viet Nam who has six-years of experience working with trade unions and employers on industrial relations project. She is now working with skills projects, focusing on skills development in vocational training and career guidance.

National policies on skills development

Among various legal documents, including laws and decrees, Ms Diep introduced what is used to regulate skills development in Viet Nam:

- Labour Code 2019. The labour code was adopted by the National Assembly in 2020 and became effective in January 2021. In the Labour Code, Chapter 4 centres on vocational education and training and skills development, with new regulations regarding the Sector Skills Council and apprenticeships. The chapter consists of:
 - new definitions of apprenticeship
 - time frame contract for apprenticeships (less than or equal to three months);
 - contracts are required for apprenticeships linked to Article 39;
 - minimum age of an apprentice or intern is 14 years;
 - payment;
 - employment contracts after apprenticeship or internship period;
 - on-the-job training.
- The Vocational Education and Training Law contains Article 39, which identifies the required content of contracts with apprentices and interns. It has detailed information to protect the benefits of interns, apprentices and workers.
- The Employment Law consists of:
 - Chapter IV, which regulates the assessment and granting of certificates of National Occupational Skills. Based on that, when workers get a certificate, they have proof of their skill, which should afford them more employment opportunities.
 - Chapter VI, which is about unemployment insurance, training and retraining to improve occupational skills qualifications for job maintenance and job counselling.
- Other legal documents support skills development and apprenticeships, such as:
 - Directive No. 24 of the Prime Minister dated 28 May 2020 on Promoting skilled workforce development to contribute to improvement of productivity and national competitiveness in new situation;
 - Circular No. 29/2017/TT-BLĐTBXH dated 15 December 2017 on Regulations on joint organizations implementing training programmes;
 - National Occupational Skills Standards – five levels;
 - Vietnam Qualification Framework – eight levels;
 - Circular No.32/2018/TT-BLĐTBXH dated 26 December 2018 on Guidelines for Vocational Training Assistance for Employees in Small and Medium-sized Enterprises;
 - Directive 14/CT-TTG on Promoting on-the-job training, distance learning and guided self-study with an aim to build a learning society in the 2021–30 period.

Advantages of the national policies:

- For the first time internships and apprenticeships are covered in the law (Labour Code 2019).
- There is now better support for interns and apprenticeships in terms of contracts (three months for an employment contract), working period and negotiated salary.
- Facilitation for workers has been enhanced to skill up and obtain the National Occupational Skills certificate.

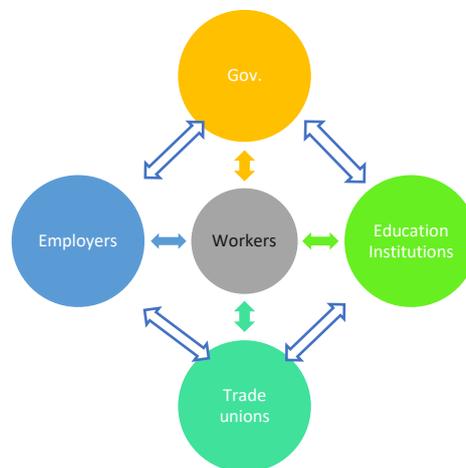
- Unemployment insurance, training and job introduction are important to workers, especially during the pandemic time. The public service centres in Viet Nam have been actively providing support for training and job finding introduction for workers to make sure that they can apply for a new job if they lost a job during the pandemic.

Challenges of the national policies:

- There is a lack of decrees and circulars to provide more details to ensure that more people will have common consensus and understanding about how to implement the law.
- There is no consensus on understanding and implementing interacted laws.
- There are challenges to manage enterprises to ensure benefits for learners and workers.
- There are unfair labour practices for both old and new workers to save costs.
- There is abuse of the “apprenticeship and internship contracts” to evade insurance payments.
- It is difficult to ensure compliance by the apprenticeship and internship programmes in enterprises, which ensure benefits for workers.

Stakeholders involved in skills development

Stakeholders involved in the governance of skills development are not only the tripartite partners – the government, employers and trade unions – but also schools, associations and other councils. However, workers and learners are always at the centre of everything. Regarding the cooperation between stakeholders, as shown in the following graphic, workers are positioned in the centre and they are surrounded by the government, employers, trade unions and educational institutions. The stakeholders are trying to have a better cooperation to support the workers through the skills development, employment and employability.



- Advantages of the cooperation:
 - Business–school partnerships on developing training programmes, curricula and materials have improved. Enterprises are invited into the development process of the training programmes, curricula and materials to make sure that when learners graduate, they can find a job and meet the requirements to do the job without retraining. For the enterprises, this saves the cost for retraining. The schools are more attractive for learners because they offer good training so they can manage the requirements of enterprises and find a good job.
 - All the engaged stakeholders are worker- and learner-oriented.
 - The Government takes a leading role to provide support for the process.

- Education institutions have autonomy. Schools can decide their programme and curriculum based on the regulation in the law for the credits and how many credits are needed for graduating. Yet, for the main programme and the content of the programme, they can decide it by themselves. This is also good for the skills training in the educational institution to meet the requirements and fast-trending demands of the society.
- As for the challenges in the system:
 - Accreditation of trained workers in enterprises is difficult because not all the enterprises recognize the certificate or the qualification of the trained workers after graduation.
 - Many enterprises spend a lot of money to retrain or skill up their workers.

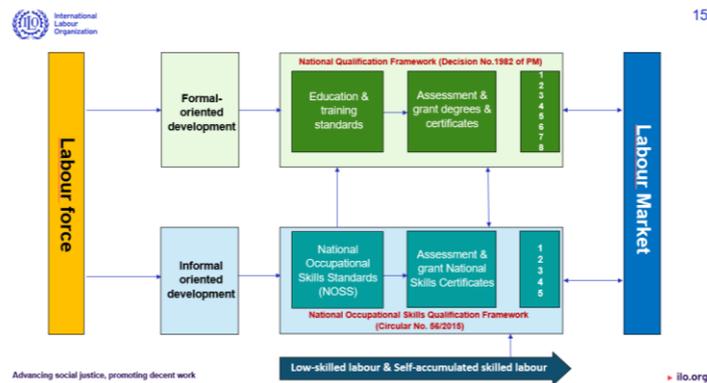
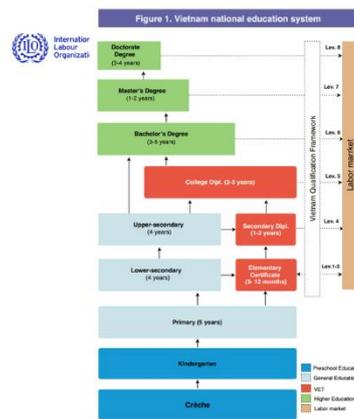
Ms Diep also introduced two significant councils for the skills development in Viet Nam:

- (1) National Council for Education and Human Resource Development, which is the biggest one.
 - Established in March 2017 for the 2016–21 development term with 26 members, chaired by the prime minister. The heads of the Ministry of Education and Training and the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs are executive members.
 - Structure: six subcommittees of preschool education, general education, tertiary education, vocational education and training, continuing education and lifelong learning and human resources development.
 - Main responsibilities:
 - provide advisory to the prime minister on policy making for education of skills development and human resource development;
 - guide the completion and implementation on legal frameworks (laws, framework, strategies, etc.) regarding education and training, vocational education and training and human resource development.
- (2) Sector Skills Council in Agriculture, which is a pilot of a G20 project and the first sector skills project in Viet Nam.
 - The Sector Skills Council in Agriculture was established in 2019 as an ILO pilot model.
 - There are 21 members of the Sector Skills Council:
 - six members from government bodies from the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development;
 - seven members, including two from enterprises and five members from business associations;
 - one member from the Vietnam General Confederation of Labour
 - one member from Viet Nam University of Agriculture;
 - four members from vocational education and training colleges in agriculture;
 - two member from agriculture research institutes.
 - Mission of the Sector Skills Council:
 - provide up-to-date data and information relating to skills;
 - provide technical inputs to the development of national occupational skill standards, on and off the job training curriculum and career paths for the sector;
 - advocate for and contribute to improvements in the TVET sector;
 - monitor and evaluate the progress and the results of training provisions.

Skills assessment and management system

Ms Diep introduced the country's skills assessment and management system and explained how workers benefit. Based on the National Qualification Framework, the vocational education and training level qualification is from elementary to college and continues to tertiary education.

How does the system operate in the Vietnamese labour market? As indicated in the figure, the labour force can choose between formal-oriented development or informal-oriented development, with vocational education and training. As for those options, Viet Nam runs different systems in parallel: the National Qualification Framework for education from kindergarten to doctorate level and for the informal-oriented development. It is based on the National Occupational Skills Qualification Framework, which has five levels of skills standards. These systems are running in parallel, but how to articulate the skills and how to issue certificates between these systems remain big questions.



As for the challenges of both systems, Ms Diep cited:

- The lack of engagement and participation of enterprises in the development process. The inputs from enterprises are important to make sure that the learning outcomes meet the requirements of the labour market.
- Articulation and accreditation between the two systems remains to be resolved.

The following figure reflects the skills development model based on the system of National Occupational Standards. Viet Nam has skills standards for each occupation. Workers and learners have to study, practice and take the assessment tests based on the National Occupational Standards to get a certificate. This certificate is recognized nationwide, and they can find a good job based on this certificate. Viet Nam also has a training programme for skilling up workers because many of them work for companies but have some kind of skills gap. With the skilling-up programme, they can participate in trainings and get the certificate. This is a very good point for trade unions to provide support for workers – to see the demands and the needs of the workers and to support their employability by having more trainings towards obtaining this certificate.



Skills development strategies and activities

The ILO in Viet Nam has been supporting:

- National Vocational Education and Training Strategy 2021–2030, vision to 2045. It is expected to submit the strategy to the prime minister by November 2021.
- Sector Skills Development Strategy in Agriculture (an activity of the Sector Skills Council and a pilot of the ILO). To support this strategy, the ILO in Viet Nam also works with an international expert.
- National digital transformation up to 2025, vision to 2030 and leading to digitalization skills for the Government.
- Promote public-private partnership for skills development, the cooperation between enterprises and the schools.
- National Skills Day, which the Government dedicated as 4 October every year. A big celebration event is planned on that day.
- The pilot of 9+ training models at the collegiate level (high school degree and vocational training certificate). This is a pilot from the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs. After graduation, young people will have both a high school degree and the vocational training certificate. They can also apply for college or university or other academic institutions. This is a new training model in Viet Nam to support skills development and apprenticeships. It promotes cooperation between schools and enterprises to facilitate learners to come to the enterprises and to practice there.

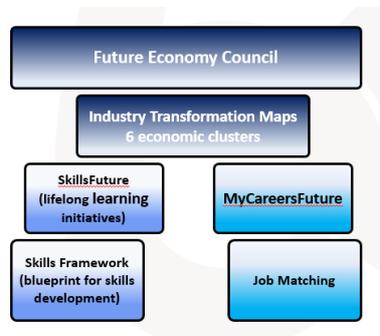
Mr Ahn thanked Ms Diep for the comprehensive presentation and highlighted the implementation of insurance that led to the skills obtainment and training during the pandemic. Stakeholders' involvement in the governance system strengthens a partnership. On the other hand, a challenge remains with the accreditation for the trained workers in enterprises. It is often common that certificates are not recognized in many countries. The pilot of the Sector Skills Council in Agriculture, he noted, requires sectoral skills strategies, negotiation and agreement among tripartite partners.

Mr Ahn then turned to Singapore's good experiences in using skills development policies and strategy as drivers to deal with increasing unemployment as a result of the economic crises of 2008–09 and 2019–21.

Gilbert Tan

Assistant Director-General, Singapore National Trade Union Congress and CEO of Employment and Employability Institute
Case: Skills development and lifelong learning in the era of digitalization and automation: The role of the Singapore National Trade Union Congress

Gilbert Tan explained he would share some experiences from Singapore in partnering with the Government and employers in skills development and lifelong learning, especially in responding to digitalization and automation and most recently in the COVID-19 pandemic. He said he wanted to show how the country came together in a tripartite manner to solve problems due to the negative impacts. The following diagram reflects the government initiatives to steer Singapore's growth and transformation for the future.



At a broad level, there is a Future Economy Council that was set up to address issues related to how Singapore could transform, how workers could transform and how businesses could stay competitive. This Council is a tripartite structure, chaired by the deputy prime minister and participants include the Singapore National Trade Union Congress (SNTUC) and the employers' federation. It developed several blueprints for conducting Industry Transformation Maps that guided sectors and subsectors and covered about 80–90 per cent of the economy. The maps guided how the blueprints for companies and industries could transform.

The Industry Transformation Maps covered things like technology, how technology will take over businesses after five, ten and 15 years, and how skills can complement technology for making the transformation. A lot of this was operated through two important initiatives that partnered closely with the SNTUC. One initiative was the Skills Future that put forward many programmes, efforts and funding or recourse support for lifelong learning initiatives. Many of the skills frameworks were put together, developed and pushed through that reflected a combination of training providers. Some of them were institutions of higher learning and some of them were industry-based learning providers with a funding team, good control of the curriculum and qualified trainers.

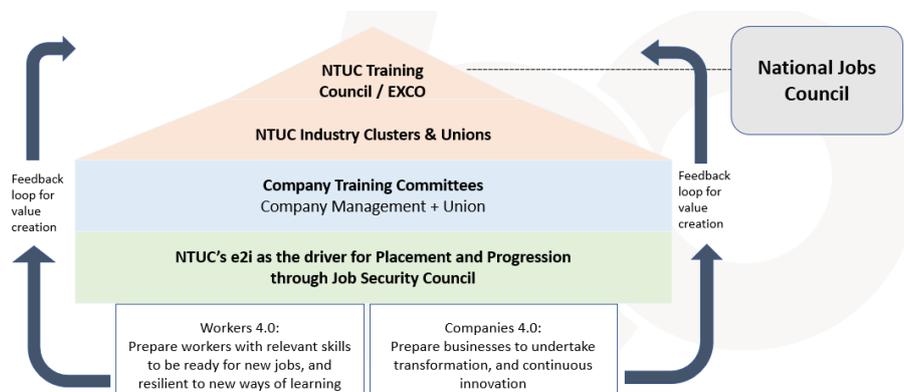
The other initiative related to careers and jobs. The Government set up My Careers Future, which was and remains an all-in-one go-to portal for all jobs in Singapore. The SNTUC, employers or private entities can go to this portal and figure out what the jobs are and what the opportunities are and then use that information to guide job matching and career guidance as well as to help direct and coach the workforce into jobs available in the future.

When COVID-19 hit Singapore, the Government put in place two more efforts to focus on getting the country out of the pandemic and getting stronger and better in terms of employers and workers. The government initiatives that are tripartite in nature and in response to COVID-19:

- Emerging strong task force with an aim to:
 - identify system shifts arising from pandemic;
 - identify challenges and opportunities;
 - provide recommendations to the Future Economy Council.
- National Jobs Council aims to ensure that companies do not release too many workers. and if they do need to release workers, to ensure that the workers can carry through the pandemic and continue to be able to feed themselves and their families as well as acquire another job. The National Jobs Council has planned to put all workers that are affected into three categories of jobs or opportunities. First, the National Jobs Council tries to coordinate, establish and direct where the

jobs will be during and beyond the pandemic. Second, in the area of apprenticeship, there are two categories: (i) traineeships for the younger generation, fresh graduates who are graduating from the school system in the middle of pandemic. How National Job Council provides jobs for them in the traineeship's way? Where can they pick up skills as they move to the labour force? (ii) Programme for people who are affected by the pandemic and the COVID-19 virus (the National Jobs Council brings them into the apprenticeship system where they can pick up new skills to switch job or career in the middle of their journey of work). The third one is the Skills Programme, where the National Jobs Council can pool together people who cannot get a job and cannot get apprenticeships through the training programme. This programme covers these areas, such as logistic or advance manufacturing that will be needed in the future. These groups of initiatives of the National Jobs Council were branded under the initiative Singapore United Jobs and Skills programme.

What did the SNTUC do to partner and to support the government initiatives as a strong and equal partner to roll out the initiatives? As the following diagram illustrates, Mr Tan said that the SNTUC's Training Strategy Framework drove jobs and skills. The SNTUC formed a training council, or EXCO, that consisted of many central community members and worked to figure out and find an understanding and provide feedback, information and field assessments on how to best drive jobs and skills. From there, the SNTUC organized industries across clusters so that the initiatives could be run by unions and companies. With that, the SNTUC formed Company Training Committees as a strategy across platforms to work together with workers as well as employers to ensure that jobs and skills were delivered and deployed. The SNTUC also set up an entity called e2i (Employment and Employability Institute) to drive placement and progression through the Job Security Council to recruit companies that partnered with the SNTUC in their release and recruitment of workers. Through this, the SNTUC pushed companies and workers to be ready for Industry 4.0. From there, the SNTUC created value and captured the value back to itself so that it grew stronger while Singapore emerged from the economic crises. Workers, companies and the SNTUC could get stronger because they continuously partnered with the government and employers in the journey.



Preparing workers for the future economy

- Upskilling and reskilling workers to support the economic transformation:
 - Company Training Committees work with company management to fill workers' skills gaps and nurture them toward Worker 4.0. On the employer side, the Committee forms a platform in which workers, led by the union leaders and the company management, come together to talk about the company's plans for the future, how this can be translated into skills, job transformation and job redesign that is needed. To do that, they use tools such as the Operation and Technology Roadmap.
 - Operation and Technology Roadmap is facilitated in companies and sectors to assist the Company Training Committee to implement their business and workforce initiatives. The tool helps companies (through the Company Training Committee platform), to identify where the companies are today, what the various challenges will be, how they want to be

in the future, how they can get there, what the various human resources and technologies will be needed and how to work with the companies to fulfil them. If there is a need to move workers around, to develop or recruit more workers, then the Job Security Council springs into action.

- Job matching, placement and coaching:
 - The SNTUC Job Security Council brought on board more than 10,000 companies to place more than 29,000 workers into jobs in 2021.

To do all of this, the SNTUC nurtured the workforce to become Worker 4.0 through a series of skills and training programmes, skills frameworks and the SNTUC's own training providers.

Through the formation of the Company Training Committees, which have various clusters or grouping of sectors (as shown in the following figure), the SNTUC became an institutional platform to ensure:

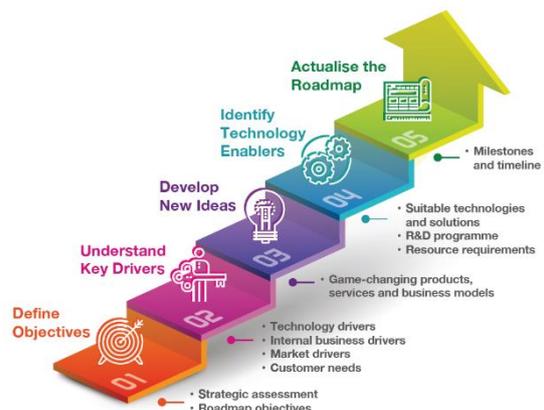
1. strong nexus between the transformation plans at industry transformation map level and the company's growth plans;
2. workers' skills development keeps pace with the plans.



Leveraging Operation and Technology Roadmap

The Operation and Technology Roadmap develops a Customized Roadmap for Business and Workforce Transformation so that the companies can grow and recover from the crisis. Mr Tan presented another diagram that illustrates:

- a series of planning workshops involving organization stakeholders facilitated by industry training officers to take stock of the present and chart the way forward;
- comprises cross-functional company management and union leaders or workers' representatives;
- fully subsidized for companies with Training Committees.



To date:

- supporting 115 companies across industries in recovery and growth;
- partnering with agencies, trade associations and chamber of commerce for sectoral transformation.

Job Security Council

The SNTUC Job Security Council is managed by the Employment and Employability Institute and works with companies to save jobs, manage human resource costs and upskill the workforce. The Council has supported workers amid business uncertainties and job insecurity:

- more than 10,000 participating companies to ensure that their workers feel job security regardless of the condition of their employer;
- more than 1,000 unionized companies in partnership for more than 15,000 vacancies and making 52,000 job referrals;
- assisted more than 29,000 workers.

Worker 4.0

The SNTUC believes that for the workforce to be ready for the future, three categories of skills are needed:

1. adaptive skills – how they will be able to adapt with and have resilience to go through the changes in the future;
2. technology skills – how to provide every single worker with a very basic technology skills that will be needed in the future;
3. technical skills – required by each sector.

Mr Tan stressed that it is necessary to complement adaptive and technology skills that are needed to get workers ready for the future.

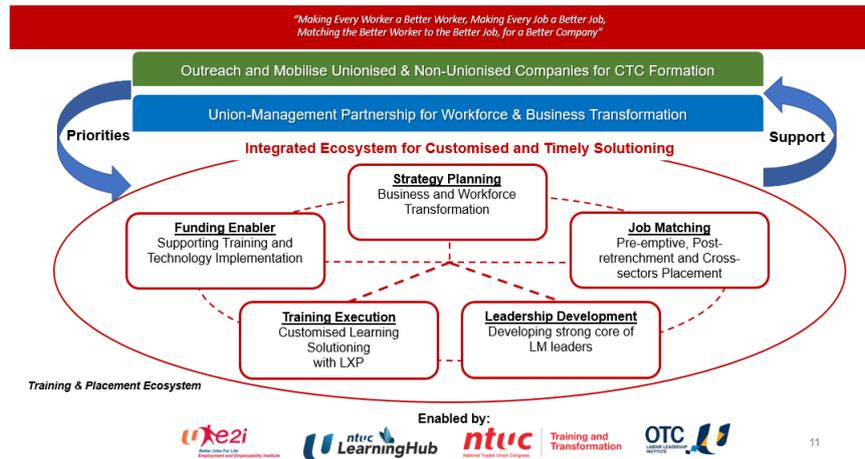
The SNTUC will partner with the Government to prepare workers to be Worker 4.0. For instance, it will:

1. partner with the Government to translate Industry Transformation Maps into tangible benefits to workers;
2. lead transformation company by company by establishing Company Training Committees;
3. mobilize workers to be Worker 4.0.

Regarding SNTUC's own training provider, it operates a Learning Hub that has been very effective in supporting workers through professional development.

- To date, the SNTUC Learning Hub has helped more than 21,000 organizations and achieved more than 2.5 million training places across more than 500 courses with a pool of more than 400 certified trainers.
- Learning Hub GO is innovating training to deliver timely bite-sized courses.
- It is Singapore's largest subscription-based online learning platform.

In supporting business transformation by building a ready, relevant and resilient workforce, the SNTUC tries to work with various entities who respectively have their own functions, Mr Tan explained. The SNTUC has partnered with employers and sectoral industries from the very beginning, in the process of strategy planning and identification of the needed technologies and skills, run the trainings, provide and match jobs with the needs of employment, provide leadership development as the glue and catalyst for the work and provide the resources, such as funding. These five processes are very effective when SNTUC partners with the Government, employers and other entities.



Prolonged recovery and job insecurity will continue to impact the workers. To get stronger, Mr Tan said, the SNTUC will continue to:

- secure and match good jobs with workers;
- partner unionized and non-unionized companies through the Company Training Committees to deepen relevant skill sets;
- partner with the Government, trade associations, chambers, companies and ecosystem partners to share best-in-class solutions to close gaps in employability skills;
- strengthen the tripartite effort to provide upstream outreach to retrenching companies and continual support for retrenched workers through a common depository of good jobs.

In conclusion, Mr Tan emphasized that the successful transformation of workers and companies for now and for the future needs tripartism. Therefore, it is a necessity for:

1. tripartite working groups and task forces to discuss and build consensus on sensitive but important topics;
2. harmonious industrial relations to pull through economic crisis;
3. tripartism as a pillar supporting the social compact.

Mr Ahn thanked Mr Tan for his remarkable presentation, noting the importance of tripartite constituents in Singapore to work together to transform the industry and assist the workers in that transition. It is also astonishing that Singapore had already talked about Industry 5.0, facing the digital life of the society, economy and the world, and because of the pandemic, it fast forwarded in that direction. He reiterated the role of the SNTUC, which was substantial in establishing the Job Security Council and engaging workers, employers and the Government and in providing services to workers.

Q/A session

One question raised: How do you see a digital apprenticeship? How effective it is? How can trade unions be involved in the implementation of digital apprenticeship?

Mr Tan responded that there are some important roles of SNTUC and trade unions regarding digital apprenticeships. As for the unions that know the work, the work environment and the jobs, there are three roles in getting and creating apprenticeships and redesigning jobs.

- In the design of the programme. Apprenticeship programmes need to close the skill gaps. In the design of apprenticeships, it is extremely valuable that trade unions know how to better help trainees or apprentices acquire the skills, the ability and the non-skills aspect of work, such as work culture and work environment. In that aspect, the unions will be the most relevant in providing inputs on the design of the apprentice programme, the length of the programme and the way the programme should be carried out.

- Being on the ground, unions and their members can make a great contribution in the aspect of matching the correct apprentice with the apprenticeship programme. Often, personal or self-awareness solely is not sufficient for someone to choose an apprenticeship programme. Thus, the unions can get involved in the matching process.
- Mobilization. Apprentices need to be continuously motivated and inspired to learn so that they don't just drop the programme. Unions have a role in pulling people together into a greater community of learners who will inspire each other to pick up more skills and knowledge along the way of the development.

Ms Diep also responded:

- Regarding the role of enterprises, the Directorate General of Vocational Education and Training under the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs in Viet Nam develops national occupational skills standards for each occupation. During the development process, enterprises are invited to provide the inputs, comments and the requirements for this standard to ensure that the certified workers could gain adequate knowledge and skills and would be able to complete their work without retraining by the enterprises. The enterprises have the opportunity to raise their voices and to add their requirements and expectations to the skill standards of the workers. The standards are also based on the licence qualification standards.
- How does the Government or the law incentivize the enterprises to support apprenticeships? The Government provides a tax subsidy or tax redemption for enterprises participating in vocational education and training. This subsidy applies to the tax revenue, land renting tax, etc. To promote and encourage the enterprises to participate in the vocational education and training and to have more cooperation with schools, the Government provides some support and legal documents to regulate the enterprises. They can set up training centres in their enterprises and provide on-the-job training. This also supports enterprises. When the enterprises understand the benefits of apprenticeships or internships, it is a good way to encourage them to have more activities and programme for the learners.
- Regarding the competencies to remain relevant to the needs of the labour market, it also comes back to the cooperation story between the schools and businesses to provide support and guidance to ensure the competencies remain relevant to the labour market. Viet Nam has piloted a programme through which schools developed a competencies-based training programme, materials and curriculum. It did not focus on the traditional way of developing curriculum of a training programme.

In a new pilot with two schools in Viet Nam, they developed a programme based on the demand of the labour market. During this process, they invited enterprises to provide comments and inputs. Because of it, the coordination or cooperation between the schools and the business improved gradually. Enterprises of course have different requirements from one to another. Despite their practical experiences and the technology that they have, the schools haven't provided new machines for the students to understand. And the machines in the schools are almost out of date because the schools don't have enough money to buy new technology and equipment. Therefore, the cooperation between the schools and enterprises provides the technical requirements and practical experiences for the development of the training programme.

Currently, there is another pilot programme in fishery and carpentry. It requires more time to implement to see how the students can develop their skills and to meet not only the requirements of the labour market or enterprises but also for them to gain the certificate of the National Occupational Skills standard and thus improve their employment opportunities.

In closing the Q/A session, Mr Ahn said that each country must have their respective and unique policy and system regarding skills development and lifelong learning. It would be great to learn from each other

about other policies and systems where workers can adapt to the new skills and get the support from the industry to transform their jobs.

► The next step

Mr Ahn then moved to the presentation on the way forward and suggestions of what trade unions can do at the national, regional and global levels. Rafael Peels, who is the focal point of ACTRAV on skills and lifelong learning, has produced a manual on skills and lifelong learning.

Rafael Peels

Workers' Activities Specialist, ACTRAV, Geneva

Case: Regional Webinar on Skills Development and Lifelong Learning in the Post-Pandemic Recovery and the Future of Work

Rafael Peels drew attention to two main events taking place at that ILO: the International Labour Conference general discussion on skills in November–December 2021 and the development of a new standard of apprenticeships, which will take place at the International Labour Conference in 2022–23.

In regard to the follow-up actions by the unions, Mr Peels highlighted the following messages:

1. The issues of skills and lifelong learning and apprenticeships should be highlighted in the political agenda.
2. ILO Centenary Declaration and its relevance in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic and the recovery has been reframed. The virtual International Labour Conference in June stressed the big principle that provides guidance for a human-centred approach, which puts human capabilities at the centre of development agendas.

Mr Peels reiterated what was mentioned by colleagues that COVID-19-related challenges in many cases have aggravated the labour-market-related challenges and had important impacts on skills. The impact caused by automation has been accelerated by the crisis. The rapid pace of change of the labour market requires workers to learn new skills, such as creativity, innovation, critical thinking, problem-solving, information literacy and information and communication technology literacy. He also highlighted and recognized the complexity of the skills ecosystem. The case of Viet Nam requires a variety of actors, not only ministries and the social partners, but also education institutions that have shared and differentiated responsibilities. Apart from that, there are also different sectors with different needs and policy levels. The webinar, he said, has touched upon other various topics, ranging from the Fourth and Fifth Industrial Revolutions to apprenticeships and further to job transition.

Mr Peels saw this discussion as relevant and timely due to the many changes taking place in the world of work, such as the technology change, environment change, demography change, globalization, etc. What has become more relevant in the time of COVID-19 is automation, a shift towards online learning and the need to rework curricula to adapt to that reality. Mr Peels highlighted two dimensions from this discussion on the role of trade unions:

1. Governance of skills and lifelong learning systems – Trade unions make sure workers' voices are raised on the design, implementation and the monitoring skills and lifelong learning systems. This is ranging from skills anticipations, the development of the training curricula, which include using technology, the recognition of informal learning, negotiating work and entitlement for training, reach out to the local training providers and awareness-raising.
2. Mediating the losses and gains when there's an important change in the labour market and work organizations related to skills development. As a consequence of the technology change in the labour market, trade unions have to think about the disruption, reshape and recreation of

employment. Skills development should be translated from productivity increase to improve working conditions.

Regarding the main mechanism for the workforce, there is social dialogue at different levels:

1. National level – This can be in the form of tripartite negotiation and strategy as well as trade unions' involvement in national consultative bodies, such as the ones in Viet Nam, Singapore, Philippines, India and some other countries.
2. Sectoral level – Trade unions can get involved in the governance of TVET bodies at the sectoral level, with sectoral collective agreements and with training providers.
3. Company level – Work Councils and company-level collective agreements can be negotiated with union representatives. Trade unions at the company level can be involved in the monitoring of training or assessing the training needs in terms of technological development.

International labour standards that the ILO has on the topic of lifelong learning:

1. Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142);
2. Paid Educational Leave Convention, 1974 (No. 140);
Human Resources Development Recommendation (No. 195). There are three important elements in the Recommendation:
 - a. Skills development to address skills mismatches and market innovations, which is key in contributing to the overall decent work and decent working opportunities for the workers involved.
 - b. The Recommendation is inclusive because it mentions equal access for skills development so everybody should have access to skills regardless of their gender, age, etc. This is based on the right for lifelong learning.
 - c. The importance of social dialogue in all phases of decision making, implementation, monitoring in all issues, ranging from skills anticipation to certification.
3. Employment and Decent Work for peace and Resilience Recommendation (No. 205).

Mr Peels highlighted that inputs from trade unions are needed for the upcoming International Labour Conference discussion on skills, lifelong learning and apprenticeships through:

1. International Labour Conference 2021 and the general discussion on skills and lifelong learning (November–December 2021); the ILO tripartite constituents will develop guidance and set priorities for the coming years.
2. International Labour Conference in 2022–23 and the standard-setting for apprenticeships. The ILO development of a new standard for apprenticeships is a response to a current gap in the existing ILO standards. There will be different phases that lead to different reports:
 - a “white report” providing background information about the topic;
 - a questionnaire to get the inputs from the constituents;
 - a “yellow report” as a draft with priorities and areas of concern, such as the scope of the standard that will include internships or the deficit and potential abuse in the apprenticeship; these will be highlighted and discussed at the 2022 International Labour Conference;
 - a “brown report”, which is the first revision of the text of the instruments;
 - a “blue report”, which is the fourth and final report for the consideration at the 2023 International Labour Conference.

In concluding, Mr Peels showed the various materials that ILO and ACTRAV have developed, including:

1. Skills and ACTRAV Policy Brief: Workers' Organizations Engaging in Skills Development;
2. *Skills Development and Lifelong Learning: Resource Guide for Workers' Organizations*;
3. A Framework for Quality Apprenticeships.

Mr Ahn highlighted the important role of trade unions at the different levels, such as national, regional and enterprise levels, as well as the necessity of equal access to the skilling, reskilling and upskilling in

times of crisis and transition of the economy. The role of trade unions is to ensure equal opportunities for all workers, including informal workers, migrant workers and new jobseekers.

► Closing remarks

Maria Helena André **Director, ILO Bureau of Workers' Activities, Geneva**

Maria Helena André expressed appreciation for the discussion and thanked everyone in the webinar for their active participation. She also appreciated the work done by the colleagues of ACTRAV and headquarters so that the discussion could carry on well. She then pointed out several takeaways from the webinar:

- Skills and lifelong learning are not needed just because of the confrontation of the pandemic, but it is needed for all the time. It is very important for the trade unions to put this agenda under their umbrella as one of the most important services they can give to their members or potential members. It can also be a way to recruit new members if the trade unions are able to offer skills and lifelong learning agenda that workers (employed, unemployed, women, young, old, migrant and formal economy), informal economy can identify with.
- The discussion on skills and lifelong learning cannot be separated from the discussion on digitalization and automation, not only in terms of what is happening in the labour market and in the companies but also in the delivery methods of skills and lifelong learning. It is important to continue the conversation in relation to the role of digitalization and automation in this regard.
- There are three areas that are very relevant to the discussion on skills and lifelong learning:
 - Quality, such as quality of the system, quality of the delivery and quality of the impact, is critical.
 - Everyone needs to have the right to lifelong learning. Accessibility is also linked to the discussion on apprenticeships.
 - Inclusiveness is fundamental to make sure that there is an open offer to the development of skills throughout one's life.
- Skills development has two main aims:
 - Although workers will have their own skills from their current school, the skills may be not enough for their lives. They need to continuously upgrade their skills. That is a new challenge from the individual's point of view and that is why accessibility becomes very important.
 - Skills are not just functional. Skills are also for personal fulfilment. This aspect also needs to be taken into consideration. There are a lot of issues that still need to be discussed, including what is the individual's responsibility? What is personal capacity to have access to more skills and qualifications?

In conclusion, Ms André noted that the discussion on skills development and lifelong learning should be continued – the webinar is not the end of the conversation.

Mr Ahn informed that the ACTRAV team is developing a regional policy brief on the skills and lifelong learning, followed by an ACTRAV regional academy on the topic, scheduled for November 2021. He closed the webinar with appreciation for the resource persons' contribution as well as the participants' commitment to the event.

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