ASIA- PACIFIC REGIONAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE

ACQUISITION OF SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES FOR THE 21st CENTURY

‘Supporting countries in the Pacific region to achieve quality education’
THE PACIFIC CONTEXT
What are the new and emerging issues in the region (economic, demographic, sociocultural, environmental, etc) and what implications do they have for skills and competencies?

• Economic:
  – Slow economic growth and economies of scale

• Demographic:
  – Isolation and remoteness
  – Increasing urbanization
  – Reducing/increasing populations

• Socio-cultural:
  – Traditional views
  – Lack of incentives
  – Lack of support towards education
  – High unemployment rates and school dropouts

• Implications:
  – Limited resources to support education development (e.g teachers and resources)
  – Challenges to service delivery for greater effectiveness and efficiency
  – Low levels of literacy and numeracy
  – Greater demand for job related skills and valuing of life-long learning
  – Community support to education is low
What are the skills and competencies which learners need, and will need, in order to effectively progress to higher levels of education, the world of work and/or their role as active members of society? Of these skills and competencies, which are the most important in the Asia-Pacific region?

- Basic literacy and numeracy skills in the broader sense (not confined to language and math skills) including reading, speaking and writing competencies
- Higher level cognitive skills (application, analysis/synthesis)
- Problem solving and research skills
- Creative thinking and innovative skills
- ICT skills
- Communication and inter-personal skills
- Data analysis and reporting skills
- Conflict resolution skills
- Management and leadership skills as well as time management skills.
- Knowledge, skills and values development (all three domains of Bloom’s taxonomy) through, general, TVET and NFE, and valuing life-long learning (FEdMM 2014)
What are the overall trends, issues and challenges in the region in terms of the achievement of these skills (e.g. literacy, technical skills)?

*Overall trend:*
- maintaining of status quo and ‘business as usual’. Accepting the situation as it is?

*Biggest Challenge:*
- change mind-set and paradigm shift Improving teaching effectiveness and teacher quality, school leadership helps in improvement in learning and ensure acquisition of necessary and basic skills.
- Moving away from focusing on collective needs of students towards a more individualized (or inclusive) teaching learning situation
- Current situation is that we focus on teaching students to acquire a set of common skills and competencies that we believe are necessary for life in our society.
- Need to move towards a situation where students take control of their learning in accordance with their aspirations for life.
- sustainable delivery of internationally recognized tertiary qualifications that support Pacific regional integration objectives and processes
- use of evidence-based decisions through use of relevant tools to measure learning outcomes and research findings to guide curriculum development and teaching pedagogies;
- use of labour-market research to guide skills training (demand-driven TVET) in schools in order to better match skills development with labour-market demands.
CONCLUSION

For the Pacific region the overall trends are:

– The challenge of size (economy of scale), resources, aid dependency, language barriers, environmental issues, and political instability are common challenges faced.

– Achievement of skills and competencies by children and young adults are dependent on the degree to which systems overcome the challenges as highlighted.

– The Pacific region believes in the concept of regionalism which is working together for their individual as well as collective good under the new Pacific Plan Framework for Regionalism.

– Forum Education Ministers set high level priorities for regional education development.