

I-WORK National Forum

Improving Work, Relaying Knowledge (I-WORK)

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Contents

Contents.....	2
Welcome Remarks.....	3
Opening Remarks	3
Keynote Speech.....	3
I-WORK Technical Assistance Project (Apprenticeship Strand)	4
I-WORK Sustainability.....	6
Panel Sessions	6
Panel 1: Employers Perspectives on Apprenticeship Recommendation and Experience on Developing Toolkits and Advocate for Apprenticeship	6
Panel 2: The Benefits and Impact of Partnership to TVET Colleges	8
Panel 3: Cross Agency Collaboration in Enhancing Employer-led Education and Meeting Future TVET Graduates Need.....	10
Interactive Breakout Session	11

Welcome Remarks

Sarah Deverall, Director Malaysia, British Council greeted the audience in her welcome remarks to kick-start the second day of the event. The day was planned as a forum to engage with practitioners and leaders from TVET institutions, representatives from companies and industries, advisory experts and different agencies. The forum would introduce the Apprenticeship Strand of the I-WORK project and key outcomes from the project, followed by three panel discussions that featured the industry partners in the apprenticeship study, TVET leaders who participated in the Partnership Strands and the pre-event workshop the day before, experienced international and local leaders from International Skills Partnership (ISP) and private vocational colleges. Five ministries and six TVET institutions were involved in this project, while three deliverables from the Apprenticeship Strand were showcased in this forum.

Opening Remarks

Deputy Minister of Youth and Sports, the honourable Steven Sim Chee Keong captivated the attendees with an iconic literature that represents the beauty of Malay traditions and original artisans. Even though it took place 600 years apart, the 15th and 21st centuries need brave warriors who are also champions in art (craftsmen and engineers). As the world slowly realised the impact of mass production or assembly line to the skill attainment of workers, the wave of change now calls for skills that are more than execution and the human touch, beyond the capability of artificial intelligence. There are 22 TVET colleges under the governance of Ministry of Youth and Sports. The ministry hopes to make TVET cool again, while increasing the competitiveness of TVET graduates. Micro certifications are to be made available and marketing on TVET jobs will be enhanced to communicate the attached values and pride. In a recent engagement with Deloitte on youth employability, 50 students were selected to go through a training and 14 fundamental skills were prioritised. The soft skills become one of the most important criteria and deserved to be called the fundamental skills. The mindset of graduates can be elevated above just making the cut to be employed (employability) but prospect ability, the ability to progress in a job, stay long enough in a company or industry, which converts the investment on human capital development to a career path. The case on Skills Training for At Risk Youth (STAR@U) also exemplified TVET and its position in contribution to disadvantaged community. 30% of the female inmates in the Kajang Prison were beneficiaries of the programme. Echoing the vision by Malaysia's 7th Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, TVET is the engine to produce high-value local talents in the shared prosperity to be achieved by 2030.

Keynote Speech

Ts. Dr. Mohammad Naim Yaakub, Director-General, Department of Polytechnic and Community College, Ministry of Youth and Sports took the stage with his vision on TVET and how it continues to be the gamechanger for the 10th and 11th Malaysia Plan. Policymakers and various ministries involved in TVET were urged to coordinate and organise to ensure quality of the talent supply. As the number of ministries is high, the top-notch coordination and clarity will help the receivers (employers) to be aware and champion TVET movement together. There were a few innovations in governance last year such as the Jabatan

Pembangunan Kemahiran from Ministry of Human Resource and Malaysia Qualification Agency from the Ministry of Education. A single quality assurance framework is key to align best practice for all TVET applications. The TVET Empowerment Committee is a collaborative effort among the ministries. On the pillar of funding, the ministries can strategize and apply from as a single unit from Ministry of Finance. TVET should be on the path of mainstreaming and success of alumni can be told to school children and their parents.

In the 12th Malaysia Plan, the TVET strategy will be on five thrusts, which are image building, governance (coordinating), quality of programmes (single accreditation), funding and industry involvement. I-WORK projects are vital to spark these changes from the grassroot level to meet with policy governance. The customisation through listening to industry will replace the one-size-fit-all programmes. Work-based learning (WBL) will be helpful for students and also the industry as the companies understand what motivate the next generation of workforce. Case studies such as the Hospitality college from YTL has a co-ownership model where the industry leader took the initiative to build industry-specific education institutions to cater to their own demands. Adjustment can be done on switching the internship to the last semester of the study to increase the chances of students getting job offers when they perform during their internship. The place and train model are an alternative solution as placement helps students to bring knowledge back to the campus and make their learning more effective. Discovery of talent and cultivation of interest towards TVET can start as early as in the primary school, which can lead to change of mindset when students grow and develop their core skills.

I-WORK Technical Assistance Project (Apprenticeship Strand)

Ms. Sasha Ratnam, National Apprenticeship Expert and Prof. Datin Ts. Dr. Noraini Binti Kaprawi from University of Tun Hussein Onn have been leading the Apprenticeship Strand for the I-WORK project. The study occurred concurrently in four countries through extensive research and benchmark excellence. While comparing best practices and detailed approaches on policy and provision of apprenticeship in other nations such as the United States (US) and UK, the key learnings were distilled and translated into the ingredient to help develop optimal working model for Malaysia. Recognising that the landscapes vary in different countries, the study shows most countries are now prioritizing the co-ownership model that invites industry to invest and play a part in the journey on revitalizing TVET. The findings have demonstrated again that learning environment is pivotal in enhancing the skills in real-life setting.

The evidence from International Labour Organisation (ILO) shows that investment in apprenticeship as high as 1% will yield a 0.95% increase in youth employment. The economic returns to public investment from the US and UK validated that government spending on apprenticeships is truly rewarding, with a respective 1:26-28 and 1:36 ratio. Ghana, South Africa, India and Malaysia are involved in I-WORK with each nation producing key deliverables based on the national context. Ghana is determined to build a National Apprenticeship Policy; South Africa is creating an online platform on roles and responsibilities of TVET stakeholders in apprenticeships; India has produced employers and training providers guides and a communication strategy to help Punjab in societal progress; Malaysia developed the apprenticeship tools to increase employer engagement.

At this juncture, the market and industry should be made aware about the difference of internship and apprenticeship. An apprenticeship is a structured system of training that involves both on-the-job training and classroom education or training institutions. This offering is usually targeted to increase competency to employees or potential employees. Post apprenticeship, the participants will receive certification or qualification or performance report that focuses on specific job or profession. The apprenticeship study in I-WORK takes on the definition based on the National Dual Training System (NDTS), which delivers the Malaysian Skills Certificates (SKM) using the National Occupational Skills Standard (NOSS). The governing laws include Act 350: Children and Young Persons (Employment Act) 1966, Act 265: Employment Act 1955, Act 612: Pembangunan Sumber Manusia Act 2001 and Act 177: Industrial Relations Act 1967.

A benchmarking tool and final project paper were among the output of the study. The tool consists of over 250 questions about the apprenticeship landscape in Malaysia, which were used to identify key area of research and project. The key findings revealed that there are complicated leadership roles that involved many ministries in TVET development. There are lack of a National Act and Policy for Apprenticeships, sustainable funding and public awareness about TVET. The second part of the study works on the areas of the last insight – low employer engagement in TVET programmes.

With further investigations and engagement with key stakeholders, the main issues behind low employer engagement have been identified. Based on the employers engaged in the study, there is no existing synchronized guideline for employers that are involved or interested in apprenticeships. The industry representatives also believe that the flexibility of procedures can help increase traction to apprenticeship programmes. Some companies who have no experience in this area are not aware of the apprenticeship programmes available. For experienced companies, they feel that the incentives are not enough or barely attractive, and apprenticeship projects were too short and did not show sustainable impact. Some standards and offerings are not being updated and the industry has observed mismatch in the skills produced and skills demanded in real work.

The entire project took about seven months to complete. The manufacturing industry is the target segment for this study, which includes the government-linked companies (GLCs), multinational companies (MNCs) and small and medium enterprises (SMEs). There are three distinct objectives that underlined the direction and working model of the study. The first objective is to understand the key issues faced by manufacturing employers when engaging in apprenticeships. The second objective is to use an action based research method to convert a non-engaged employer into an engaged employer. Last but not least, the team determined to create a “nudge” action to propose change in the problem areas faced by the employers, synthesising the findings in Stage 1 and Stage 2 of this study. To ensure success in meeting these objectives, five major agencies were invited for multilateral collaboration: the Department of Skills Development, the Federation of Manufacturers, the Human Resource Development Fund, the Department of Higher Education and the Malaysian Industrial Development Authority.

The Apprenticeship Playbook was one of the three notable final outcomes that were presented. The playbook illustrates the details of apprenticeship and benefits for employers in championing this cause. Three main players (employers, individuals and input training institutes) will be able to understand the requirements and their responsibilities involving in apprenticeship programmes. The second deliverable,

The Apprenticeship Toolkit is used specifically for companies that are new in apprenticeship. With simple and concise information in the guide, the companies can follow the steps and look for the resources as they register themselves as a partner on apprenticeship. Based on the findings of this study and opportunities to establish a prominent centre for apprenticeship, a proposed One Stop Apprenticeship Centre was also proposed to address long-term sustainability of such programmes. The Toolkit and Playbook have been deployed to introduce apprenticeship to four companies (Tarmah Industries Sdn. Bhd., Claytan Sdn. Bhd., BP Plastics Sdn. Bhd. and Munchy Food Industries Sdn. Bhd.). All four companies have signed up to commit to apprenticeship programmes and rated their experience with the new resources helpful.

Prof. Datin Ts. Dr. Noraini Binti Kaprawi presented more detailed structures about the research process and the strategic locality that drives the setup of OSAC. The action research methodology is a testing platform for the research team to engage and co-create the desired outcome after the true definition of apprenticeship was clarified. The employers are more confident now as they see values in apprentices who receive training and will become their permanent employees. The employers were able to validate the practicality of the Toolkit and Playbook in the process.

I-WORK Sustainability

Prof. Datuk Ts. Dr. Wahid Bin Razzaly, Vice Chancellor of Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM) presented the One-Stop Apprenticeship Centre (OSAC) as an effective apprenticeship employer engagement model, a spin-off from the Technical Apprenticeship Study. A total of 15 recommendations were in line and OSAC has been selected to be the all-inclusive and feasible answer to a sustainable apprenticeship centre. As the world is embracing the disruption of IR4.0, Malaysia aspires to transform through a knowledge-driven economy, guided by values and able to export the in-demand technology. The National Industry 4WRD policy underlines the timeliness to increase Malaysia's attractiveness as a preferred manufacturing location using IR4.0 technologies and processes. The FIRST (funding, infrastructure, regulation, skills and talent, technology) areas in the policy are the reminder for education institutions (TVET and higher educations, public and private) to pay attention to Skills and Technology that would assist the rapid transformation. UTHM and the creation of OSAC are dedicated to establishing infrastructure that would complement this change. UTHM is also committed in Shared Prosperity 2030 which can be achieved through strong TVET cultivation, making sure no one is left behind.

Panel Sessions

Panel 1: Employers Perspectives on Apprenticeship Recommendation and Experience on Developing Toolkits and Advocate for Apprenticeship

Three key representatives from local industry in the Technical Assistance Project and People Development Partner from Dyson shared the stage to express their perspectives through respective apprenticeship experience. Mr Lim Hang Seng from Tarmah Sewing Machine, a company of 40 years history in the industry, have equipped more than 50 employees with at least SKM (Malaysian Skills Certificate) Level 2 and Level 3. They are from various departments and roles such as maintenance, sewing, creative sewing and engineering. For Barry Callebaut Services Asia Pacific, Mr. Salehuddin Mohd. Haimee, used the

training academy in Zurich as an example of leadership development that focuses on permanent employees. The company is applying incremental change to focus on process training, such as TVET to improve processes and human resources in factories. With the availability of training materials (playbook and toolkit) and a solid apprenticeship model, the company is now aware of the incentives that exist through participation in apprenticeship programmes and more ready to be part of the apprenticeship family. Mr. Tuan Ahmad Tuan Besar from Usaha Bersama Terengganu has a few decades of experience in TVET and observed that the crowd did not know about apprenticeship and the differences compared to internship. Companies such as Petronas has been the pioneer of apprenticeship and utilise the source of skilled apprentices as the foundation of manpower planning. As human resource management determines the capacity of a firm, a detailed long-term plan can be an advantage if a company is able to generate a supply of local talents for their departments. The cost of hiring skilled foreign workers has been growing and the local companies should take the opportunities to capitalise on TVET and apprenticeship. On the other side of the world, Dyson in UK works closely with government and local school partners to expose students to apprenticeship as early as possible on their learning pathway. Currently the company has upskilling programmes for engineers, while there are tailor-made learning and development for all levels across the organisation.

The panellists shared commonality in having dedicated training engine for their employees. Mr. Haimee explained that the production line requires highly skilled operators to sustain the efficiency. The vision is to provide consistent refresher on required skills, at the same time assisting them to grow within the system and progress to the next stage of their careers. This talent development and retention strategy has been effective in increasing overall employees' happiness. Mr. Lim recognised that is difficult to get skilled workers in the industry, and committed to ensuring new staff acquire proper training, especially on-the-job training to ramp up their knowledge and skills. The company is also flexible and optimistic about trained workers applying the skills outside of the company and work with other garment factories. Usaha Bersama Terengganu has the same dilemma and hail manpower as the most important asset of an operation-based system. Mr. Tuan Ahmad Tuan Besar pointed out a five-year manpower planning is essential for a company in the same context, stressing that performance management on human capital is crucial for the success of the company. As the employees stay longer and become more loyal, it will create a substantial cost-saving for the operations of the company, in the long run increasing its competitiveness as industry leader. For Dyson, the leadership applied a forward-looking resource planning to ensure there are no shortage of engineers that will slow down the growth of the company. Dyson set up a learning institution to train local and foreign students as next generation of engineers for Dyson.

Mr. Haimee highlighted that the company was not clear about the distinctive definition on internship and apprenticeship before the programme. He claimed that with internship it's a short-term solution and can only match interns with small projects. As the industry has no prior information about university students' schedules, there could be shortages of manpower if relying on interns solely. With apprenticeship, the uncertainty can be minimized, and forward planning can be practiced in the operation. Mr. Lim commented on the general lack of info and awareness about how to get involved in an apprenticeship programme. Through the engagement in I-WORK, the company is now grateful to know there are other fundings and grants available. For Usaha Bersama Terengganu, speaking on behalf of SMEs, the company wants to use the platform to address manpower demand and minimise the reliance on foreign workforce. Mr. Tuan Ahmad Tuan Besar also praised the inclusiveness of TVET programmes that empower special need groups such as people with physical and learning disability. It also creates more opportunities for children who are better in hands-on skills rather than academic excellence.

Mr. Haimee hopes to witness the soft skills development to be enhanced in order to help skilled workers proceed to the next stage of their careers. For Tarmah Sewing Machine, 70% of focus should be on job training and 30% on classroom teaching about theories. They can also earn while learning and solve the challenge of education loan. In Sept 2018, JPK (Jabatan Pembangunan Kemahiran – Department of Skills Development) and National Competency Standard (NCS) have made the rule for SKM Level 1 to Level 5 to pass the practical examination and theoretical test. Additionally, they need to be evaluated on the core skills such as integrity, punctuality, technology savviness and other interpersonal skills.

Dyson Institute is a home-based academy in UK that was set up with the vision to provide future skilled leaders for the corporation. Students from all over the world are welcome to apply and enrol in the courses that have a four-year learning and followed by employment. It also creates classroom within factories, where 40 to 50 students will visit and experience the real working environment. This is part of the collaboration with primary and secondary schools to ensure the interest of students on engineering and design are not lost. The learning department also creates and supplies students with practical learning toolkit that are real Dyson products, which can excite the students to learn by doing and working on the actual products.

Panel 2: The Benefits and Impact of Partnership to TVET Colleges

In this session, six TVET institutions that participated in the I-WORK Partnership Strand contributed values to the panel discussion through their views and key learnings gained in the programme. Kolej Komuniti Gerik (KK Gerik) has taken a different perspective to assert change in the earlier stage of a TVET student's journey. "Work Readiness", a week of placement is initiated in the partner companies to build the foundation for learners to know what to learn and how to practice what they learn in real-life situations. Fifteen students from the light vehicle services immersed themselves in five automotive companies. The industrial data will be gathered and analysed as the guideline for improvement before the start of the next cycle. The end goal is to increase the marketability and employability of the students, while establishing close and sustainable collaborations with industry. For Politeknik Muadzam Shah, the I-WORK project inspired the creation of Mentor Intern to Success guidebook and a structured methodology for trainees and mentors. The project aims to tackle the talent and demand mismatch issues, as well as miscommunication between students and companies, pre and during the industrial placement. The observation (through video recording) and in-person mentoring approach helped unearth the necessary improvement for students to perform in four dimensions: professional competency, cultural, personal and social. The innovative addition to the industrial training refreshed the views from both the educators and students. The students renewed their believes in TVET and honed their much-needed skills as readiness to enter the market with higher employability. Kolej Kemahiran Tinggi Masjid Tanah piloted two programmes during the I-WORK journey, addressing key challenges at the intake and output of the college. The first project TVETMARA Advocacy Programme was successful to meet 99% of the July's and 85% of the January's intake KPI. The second project aims to increase the employability rate of the graduates with a target fresh graduate's salary of RM2000. Through the advocacy programme, the students were exposed to the work environment and hands-on experience with the machines (psychomotor learning approach). 90% of the students did not know the clear idea about TVET and felt negative about it. Post the advocacy programme (industrial visit), the response to the survey was positive and it showed effectiveness of production-based education (learners are able to learn on a real product and leave with their own creation). Institut Latihan Perindustrian Mersing dedicated the I-WORK project to

advocate for employer-led TVET education. The institute co-developed the programme with INSTEP to train highly skilled workforce in oil and gas industry. The project so far has achieved amazing success with 100% of employment and at least a RM2000 starting salary for each of the graduates. The team is now anticipating for another round of data collection when it reaches full cycle in July 2020 and more findings can be shared for feedback. Institut Kemahiran Belia Negara Kuala Langat has piloted a series of employer-led initiatives on a hosting platform within the institute. Some noteworthy achievements include the Handbook of Industrial Relations, career fairs with participation of 46 industry players, guest lecturing involving industry partners. These initiatives were based on the idea of Smart Partnership that can promote co-ownership and sustainability of TVET programmes. Institut Kraf Negara pledges to craft training in six different areas, offered in certification and diploma level. IKN is the only craft learning supply and training of the trainers in Malaysia. In the I-WORK pilot project, project-based learning (PBL) methodology was implemented to sharpen the essential skills of the students such as interpersonal skills, critical and innovative thinking. The students engaged with the industry and learned about the market trends in order to increase their employability, at the same time giving them the chance to be the creators of jobs, as craftpreneurs, who can eventually hire artisans to work in their sustainable businesses. The students from IKN have had outstanding track records in being recruited for various industries that are not craft-based but in needs of skilled work, such as ship building industries. Craftmaking is the field that represents the cultural values of Malaysia, something that “you can yield and bend, but cannot break.”

Throughout the journey of I-WORK, each organisation developed more than capacity of the students. There was much learning as filtered by the leaders on stage. IKBN Kuala Langat has taken the proactive mindset to the next level with high interaction with employers, learning about how to better negotiate with businesses, actively listening to their needs and taking their perspectives into account. ILP Mersing learned that to develop a purpose-driven programme, the employer has to be consulted and the end goal has to be determined and gotten buy-in from the target employers. The organisation has also made sure that their offering is better than the traditional certifications and is able to stay current and relevant with the market demand. KK Gerik strategised using project management skills to implement the six-month project based on the tight schedule and established key indicators for impact.

ILP Mersing also witnessed most of the students being able to earn at least RM2000 per month and embrace the technological changes. The leader believes that testimonials from these graduates will be able to change the mindset of youth generally. The students can obtain SKM Level 1 to Level 3 certification and becoming highly skilled in 14 weeks. It is also against popular belief that they are not inclined to take 3D (dirty, dangerous, demeaning) jobs. The students who passed through the examination by Petronas external audit are presented with opportunities to work with local and foreign oil and gas companies.

Commenting about the experience and skill level of lecturers in TVET institutions, ILP Mersing stated that there are existing train the trainers programme that consistently identifies the gaps on certification requirement for the educators. For IKBN Kuala Langat, there are several options for the lectures to get ahead of the game including job attachment, upskilling and reskilling. Dr. Shamsuri Abdullah, moderator of the session and I-WORK Advisory Group Lead also explained that TVET instructors will start to have more attachment programmes starting February 1, 2020 to ensure the required competency is met before they are selected. As for KK Gerik, the institution insists on life-long learning modules with complete certifications that are open for community other than their students to enrol.

Panel 3: Cross Agency Collaboration in Enhancing Employer-led Education and Meeting Future TVET Graduates Need

Daniel Evans, from West Lothian College and UK partner for ISP, explained the rationale behind an employer-led curriculum. Educators carry more than the role of a teacher, but there are assumed responsibilities to provide students with more than the conventional curriculum. The students need additional advantages that best suit the skills on-demand from employers. West Lothian College believes that flexibility to partner with the employers is important as it takes a lot of effort to quickly adapt to compromise, meet the needs of industry players in local and global context. The college remains in touch with Politeknik Ungku Omar, the Malaysian partner during ISP to conduct on-point evaluation based on long-term goals.

Dr. Izwah Ismail from Politeknik Ungku Omar introduced the TVET project under ISP, which six partners come together to make the programme a success. Three of them are from Malaysia (Politeknik Ungku Omar, Economic Planning Unit under Prime Minister's Department, Carsem (M) Sdn. Bhd. under Hong Leong Group) and the other three are international partner organisations (British Council, West Lothian College and Mitsubishi, UK). The project started with curriculum development that created additional syllabus for existing program. The teaching materials embedded were to drive skills based on National Occupational Skills Standard (NOSS). To ensure the learning methods are relevant for learners, the virtual learning platform was also created to encourage an open learning environment. The students went through work-based learning in Carsem and the evaluation was conducted by Carsem and the polytechnic. To date 800 students have been the beneficiaries of this initiative and the programme is still running with the 4th batch of students. This program was recognised as the winner of the Outstanding Achievements in the Award Category for Sustainable Collaboration, during the International Skills Partnership Award by British Council UK.

Mr. Khairul Azhar spoke on behalf of Institut Kemahiran Belia Negara (IKBN) Kuala Langat, one of the institutions that promotes "soft" TVETs such as photography, videography and sport therapy. Using an evidence-based Edmund Model of Work-based learning, the programmes were curated and modified based on some key employers' inputs in the industry. The organisation also challenges the students to "work out of the box", such as attempting to become a personal trainer instead of focusing on pursuing roles as a sport therapist (their major). Through I-WORK, the relationship with employers have been strengthened and the two-way communication highlighted the needs of both parties to create win-win partnerships. Aiming at solving one of the most common challenges for graduates (lower entry-level salary), Mr. Khairul Azhar shared case studies where the organisation approached the employers to understand key competency that the jobs need, in order to shape the learning modules so that the graduates are able to be hired and paid with a salary more than RM2,000. Moving forward, his team is also encouraging the employers to play their role as educators or mentors for the students. For the current stage, they are on track to achieve this co-ownership model in the future, as invited lectures and luncheon talks are being included in the curriculum to embed practical and current industry input in the learning process.

Tech Terrain College (TTC) has been at the forefront of industry-focused education for the last 17 years. Since then the private college has 5000 graduates and 97% of them successfully received employment offers post-graduation. The college emphasised on the importance of industry partners and through 250

partners in collaboration, the students have better confidence and jobs guaranteed after their hands-on learning through doing syllabus. Mr. Ben McClelland from TTC also stressed that the attitude and aptitude of the students are also crucial in helping them to secure their ideal jobs. TTC also created an online job portal that enables higher accessibility of technical and vocational jobs for graduates.

The panel also provided specific case studies on how an education institution can approach the industry partners to start employer-led education. Mr. Khairul Azhar reminded the public TVET institutions that their reputation is hardly known outside of general government sector, hence requires the institutions to be proactive in reaching out to the companies. To have a tool such as the handbook of industrial initiatives can serve as a bridge for industry with a good will to help them realise the incentives of working on TVET and apprenticeship programme with TVET institutions. After experiencing the ISP and learning through the programme, Politeknik Ungku Omar is now working on a collaboration with another industry partner, specifically in providing the expertise in enrolling in employer-led education programme. Ben from TTC stressed that key learnings from other industries can be useful to develop TVET and partnership businesses, such as using logistic industry learning to inform cost reduction, efficiency and economy of scale. A key aspect that industry partners wish to see is the deliverable in planning for resources. By listening to and understanding their demands, it has a higher potential to meet demands of the clients in meeting their timeline for human resource planning. Mr. Daniel Evans reminded the participants that vocational education usually works within the constraint and as an educator, they shall need high flexibility from their end to build in solution that helps the delivery to the clients (industry partners). The big picture is about creating a pipeline for local talents rather than focusing on meeting the request for human resource at a certain point of time.

Interactive Breakout Session

The concluding session of the day had the purpose of getting feedback and recommendation from the participants of the event, as the basic for call to action and underlining the sustainable elements throughout the conversation. The participants realised that they were informed with new approaches that can be used to seek collaboration with the industry to achieve employer-led education. It is about changing the mindset of being an educator and waiting for employers to take actions. The educators are more driven to be proactive and building the future of education that is demand driven. Each of the initiatives from the Partnership and Apprenticeship Strand has received shout-outs when breakout session facilitator Ms. Sasha Ratnam asked for best practices that can be implemented in their localised context. The audience also shared keen interests to utilise their tools and practices in diverse areas of TVET and apprenticeship programmes. Despite the positive feedback and enthusiastic outlook, the leaders and practitioners are also very much aware of the key challenges and opportunities on the ground. Most of the comments were based on the engagement with employers and how much effort should be injected into creating the interests of industry partners. While the challenges remain in sight, the public and private institutions agreed that thinking and executing out of the box can energise the field such as Work Readiness programme by KK Gerik and Luncheon Talk by IKBN Kuala Langat. The I-WORK project has also started on the right footing for the switch to a more practical curriculum (70% practical 30% theory) as agreed by most of the practitioners. The National Dual Training System (NDTS) is in the limelight again with much more discussion on the floor. As the I-WORK National Forum drew to a close, it signified a change is on the horizon and the TVET institutions will be at the forefront to lead the change.