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British Council:Evaluation of the Improving Work Opportunities – Relaying Knowledge (I-WORK) Programme

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I-WORK programme

The I-WORK (Improving Work Opportunities – Relaying Knowledge) programme was established with the objective to support skills strengthening systems and enhance TVET in Commonwealth countries, with the overarching aim of improving job opportunities for young people. The programme was funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) as part of the Commonwealth 18-20 programme, and included Ghana, South Africa, India (Punjab) and Malaysia as target countries. The programme had an overall budget of £2 million and ran from November 2018 to March 2020.

By promoting good practice, partnership working and knowledge exchange between Commonwealth member states at a policy and delivery level, the programme aimed to drive improved opportunities for young people whilst raising the knowledge and understanding of the Commonwealth and strengthening relationships with the UK.

Key Features of the I-WORK programme

The British Council's work within technical and vocational education and training (TVET) aims to improve technical and vocational skills systems so that they are inclusive and relevant to labour market needs. Their work in TVET is characterised by sharing UK and international experience from skills policy and practice; encouraging mobility and exchange for young people, practitioners and policymakers; supporting innovative and sustainable partnership working; and helping to build the capacity of teachers, practitioners and policy-makers so that there is a better fit between skills provision and labour market needs.

The I-WORK programme uniquely combines support for multilateral partnerships as well as systems-strengthening for apprenticeships, as well as a focus on disseminating learning:

The **partnership strand** focussed on fostering partnerships between TVET colleges in the UK, Ghana, South Africa, India (Punjab) and Malaysia to develop innovative, inclusive and employer-led education approaches that equip students to take their place in the future job market.

The **apprenticeship strand** focussed on supporting national authorities in Ghana, South Africa, India (Punjab) and Malaysia to strengthen key areas of their apprenticeship systems through Technical Assistance projects.

The **dissemination strand** sought to synthesise the partnership and apprenticeship strands through a series of National and International workshops, which took place in the five I-WORK countries in early 2020.

The focus on involving high-level stakeholders and national governments as part of the apprenticeship strand was intended to contribute to a shift in public perceptions of vocational training as a viable, and even prestigious alternative to further academic study, as is the case in other countries with more established vocational training systems such as Germany and the Netherlands.

Skills gaps and youth unemployment present a significant barrier to economic growth, social cohesion, and personal enfranchisement across the world. However, the negative impact of skills gaps and youth unemployment is most acutely felt in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, where young people make up much of the population.[1] Ghana, South Africa, India (Punjab), and Malaysia were selected on the basis that all four countries suffer from high rates of youth unemployment and under-employment are in receipt of Overseas Development Assistance. All four

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[1] FCDO (2018), Business Case: Improving Work Opportunities for Young People in the Commonwealth, p.7.

countries are engaged in skills reform and could benefit from international collaboration to enhance their apprenticeship policy frameworks.

While the British Council has traditionally engaged with other countries on a bilateral basis, the I-WORK programme piloted a multilateral approach which has sought to engage with several countries at once. It is hoped that collaboration between the countries involved will continue beyond the lifespan of the programme. This innovative partnership approach to system strengthening in TVET is being piloted by the British Council as an approach that could be potentially be translated to other areas of programming.

Objectives of the evaluation

Ecorys was commissioned by the British Council to assess the I-WORK programme, with a view to support learning from the experience of the programme, to inform British Council's future strategy and programming, and provide useful insights for others interested in furthering skills development and job opportunities for young people.

The study focusses on the learning generated in the following areas:

- The accomplishments of the first iteration of the programme, and accomplishments of the three programme strands in each of the four countries; and to what extent these accomplishments could be replicated in other contexts.

- The potential for sustainability of outcomes, and of impact trajectories and longer-term impacts following on from the programme.

- The reasons for what was accomplished, and the necessary conditions and circumstances to support transferability of learning.

- Good practices from the programme, for example processes such as the participatory model, adaptive management approach, benchmarking and baseline tools and partnership/multilateral approach.

- The relevance of the two strand partnership and apprentice approach, and the extent to which this approach has contributed to the design of well targeted, tailored projects which meet the specific needs of the country in which they are operating.

- The inclusiveness of the programme, particularly in relation to gender.

Key findings

The apprenticeship strand

The apprenticeship strand adopted a "cultural relations" approach, which "combined developing an understanding of each country's context, supporting collaborative and partnership working between countries and building trusted relationships between social partners"[2]. This approach was found to be useful and facilitated collaborative and partnership working between countries and building trusted relationships between social partners. In addition, the approach enabled the development of projects tailored to their socio-political, cultural and economic context.

The apprenticeship projects were successful in securing the engagement of key stakeholders, including government ministers, college representatives and industry representatives, to support progress and delivery. The activities and outputs were largely delivered in line with expectations and to the satisfaction of stakeholders, and

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[2] FCDO (2018), Business Case: Improving Work Opportunities for Young People in the Commonwealth.

outputs remained relevant to the objectives for strengthening of apprenticeship systems in each country. The benchmarking tool and adaptive approach meant the projects were able to focus on areas where there was sufficient commitment from stakeholders, and to deliver in areas where it was feasible to make a difference in the 7-8 months of the project duration. There were positive indications of the activities carried out under I-WORK being continued in India (Punjab), South Africa, Ghana and Malaysia. While aspects of sustainability appeared positive, it is too early to be able to substantively assess the impact of the programme in the long-term.

The partnership strand

The partnership strand also drew on a cultural relations approach, and focussed on promoting a multilateral model, creating partnerships between five different Commonwealth countries rather than a single partnership between the UK and the other countries involved. This approach was found to be particularly relevant as it enabled close collaboration and information sharing between the focal countries and UK partner colleges. Moreover, the support from the UK colleges was found to be very useful, due to their strong technical experience of work-based learning approaches.

While not all colleges involved were equally effective in achieving their intended outcomes, there was consensus among the in-country leaders that the most effective aspect of the partnership approach was knowledge exchange and sharing of best practice as part of an international programme. While the condensed timeframes presented a challenge, there was also a sense that the limited time may have lent to the efficiency of the programme, as the in-country colleges were compelled to be strategic with their time and resources to focus on addressing their most pressing challenge. There is good indication that the pilot activities will continue, and in many cases, be scaled up, either in the same setting or different settings. Funding limitations presented a challenge to the sustainability of the partnership strand activities, and while all the colleges were keen to continue their activities, some were unable to due to lack of alternative sources of funding.

Dissemination strand

The workshops were generally very well-received and provided valuable forums for knowledge-sharing and exchange of best practice, as well as the opportunity to network and build professional relationships. The British Council were successful in securing the attendance of key, high profile stakeholders.

Conclusions and recommendations

The evaluation yielded a number of conclusions in relation to the general approach, and the design and implementation of the programme. The multilateral partnership approach to system-strengthening in TVET has been positive and is something that could be applied to future programming, as well as the combination of support for policy dialogue and development alongside support for individual college-level sharing of knowledge. Due to the restraints in time and resources, the programme is best viewed as a catalyst. Support for vocational education is best supported as a part of a longer-term engagement, but short-term programmes can act as a useful catalyst, leading to longer-term systemic change. In order for future programmes to have a more substantial and sustainable impact, longer timeframes could be considered, as well as embedding funding considerations into the design of the programme, such as establishing funding partnerships with national stakeholders, to ensure that they are able to continue their activities beyond the lifespan of the programme.

The evaluation identified a series of recommendations, both in relation to each strand of the programme, as well as recommendations relating to TVET programming more broadly:

Apprenticeship strand

1. Where funding conditions allow, future programmes should utilise a flexible cultural relations approach to ensure activities are tailored to country contexts and there is buy-in for the programme at all levels.

2. Future iterations of the benchmarking tool should take into account the stage of maturity of TVET systems, optimism and pessimism biases and include some elements of peer review, in order to verify responses to the self-assessment questions.

3. Additionally, future iterations of the benchmarking tool could consider a two-stage process, in which a simpler, more condensed version of the tool could be offered as "taster" experience and then a more comprehensive version for those who would like to conduct a more rigorous inquiry of their apprenticeship system.

4. In order that future BC programmes address inclusion issues more directly, programme tenders should reflect this requirement and include specific criteria to be addressed by the activities of the programme.

Partnership strand

5. The British Council should continue to employ a multilateral approach in future partnership programmes and focus on encouraging collaboration between the different countries with which they have built up strong relationships.

6. Future programmes should commence with a thorough initial briefing, covering the ambitions and scale of the programme, clarity on expectations and budget, to ensure alignment between different stakeholder groups and clear communication.

7. A more collaborative selection process, involving the UK and in-country colleges for the clusters would have ensured greater alignment between the partners in each cluster, based on affinities and shared interests.

8. Future TVET programmes aiming to work with a diverse range of colleges should consider tailoring the support offered to the needs and experience levels of the colleges involved and have a dual track offer for more and less experienced colleges, so that all colleges involved are able to benefit from the programme.

Dissemination strand

9. Future programmes should continue to gather a range of high-level stakeholders to increase political commitment to TVET provision in the form of National Workshops or dissemination events.

10. Future programmes could employ a wider range of complementary dissemination activities such as online webinars, to engage a wider range of employers. In addition, shorter events, timed outside office hours would have enabled greater industry engagement.

1.0 Introduction

This section provides an introduction to the I-WORK programme and delivery model, before setting out the objectives of the evaluation and the methodology employed.

1.1 Overview of the evaluation

Ecorys was commissioned by the British Council in January 2020 to conduct an assessment of the I-WORK programme. The principal objective of the evaluation was to support learning from the experience of the I-WORK programme, with a view to informing British Council's future strategy and programming and provide useful insights for others interested in furthering skills development and job opportunities for youth. In addition, the study documents lessons learnt and provides examples of innovative practice to generate wider interest from policymakers, practitioners and donors, and enable future programming and scale up in the TVET sector.

The study is particularly focussed on the following areas of learning:

- The **accomplishments** of the first iteration of the programme, and accomplishments of the three programme strands in each of the four countries; and to what extent these accomplishments could be replicated in other contexts.

- The potential for **sustainability** of outcomes, and of impact trajectories and longer-term impacts following on from the programme.

- The **reasons** for what have or has not been accomplished, and the necessary conditions and circumstances to support transferability of learning.

- **Good practices** from the programme, for example processes such as the participatory model, adaptive management approach, benchmarking and baseline tools and partnership/multilateral approach.

- The **relevance** of the two-strand partnership and apprentice approach, and the extent to which this approach has contributed to the design of well targeted, tailored projects which meet the specific needs of the country in which they are operating.

- The **inclusiveness** of the programme, particularly in relation to gender.

1.2 Programme overview

The I-WORK programme was established with the objective to support skills systems and enhance TVET in Commonwealth countries and had the overarching aim of improving job opportunities for young people. The programme was funded by the FCDO as part of the Commonwealth 18-20 programme, and included Ghana, South Africa, India (Punjab) and Malaysia. The programme had an overall budget of £2 million and ran from November 2018 to March 2020.

The programme was comprised of three strands of activity:

- The **partnership strand** focussed on fostering partnerships between TVET colleges in the UK, Ghana, South Africa, India (Punjab) and Malaysia to develop innovative, inclusive and employer-led education approaches that equip students to take their place in the future job market.

- The **apprenticeship strand** focussed on supporting national authorities in Ghana, South Africa, India (Punjab) and Malaysia to strengthen key areas of their apprenticeship systems through Technical Assistance projects.

- The **dissemination strand** sought to synthesise the partnership and apprenticeship strands through a series of National and International workshops, which took place in the five I-WORK countries in early 2020. The workshops were designed to showcase the achievements of the programme, as well as provide the opportunity for stakeholders in the TVET sector to share best practice.

1.3 Programme rationale

The I-WORK programme was funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and designed by the British Council in response to a call by the 2018 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, to develop "improved opportunities for young people in the Commonwealth". The I-WORK programme directly supports A FAIRER FUTURE vision and strategy, which was established at the Commonwealth Summit for the two-year period, 2018–2020. The programme has primarily focussed on action 5 of the A FAIRER FUTURE vision: creating opportunities for the next generation, as well as strengthening and renewing relationships between the UK and Commonwealth member states and providing a platform for social and economic development.

While young people in Ghana, South Africa, Malaysia, and India face a range of different challenges, all four countries are suffering from varying high rates of youth unemployment and under-employment. These four countries were selected on the basis that all are engaged in skills reform and could benefit from international collaboration to enhance their apprenticeship policy frameworks. In addition, these countries all have a large youth bulge which will leave them vulnerable to negative factors such as radicalism and unrest if employment opportunities are not enhanced.

The I-WORK programme aimed to address these challenges through a combination of support for policy dialogue as well as support to individual college level interventions designed to promote the profile of vocational training through innovative, inclusive and employer-led education approaches that equip students to participate in the future labour market. The demand for the project is clearly articulated in regional economic development plans as well as the countries' national strategies:

Ghana: The African Economic Outlook notes that "While industry is the second largest contributor to Ghana's GDP, its performance could be strengthened if industrial support policies and programmes were better targeted and measures to improve access to finance and tackle constraints related to skills and infrastructure could be prioritised." [3]

India: The Asian Development Bank's Education Sector report states that "India's weak human capital and skill base is a key binding constraint which needs to be addressed urgently in order to reap its demographic dividend and facilitate inclusive growth."[4]

Malaysia: Chapter 5 of the eleventh Malaysia plan, 2016–2020 states that "The development of highly skilled human capital is essential to helping Malaysia make the shift towards higher-value and knowledge intensive activities which are the hallmarks of an advanced nation. Investments in human capital are also vital to the improvement of personal wellbeing due to its many socio-economic benefits."

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3 http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/country-notes/ghana
4 https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/linked-documents/cps-ind-2013-2017-ssa-07.pdf

South Africa: The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) [5] is focusing on the development of the TVET and community college sectors as the ideal institutions to address the South African economy's "dire need for technical and vocational skills." [6]

In order to account for the unique context and specific set of challenges faced by each country involved, the British Council employed a "cultural relations" approach which combines "developing a deeper understanding of the context of each country, whilst supporting collaborative and partnership working between the different countries and building strong relationships between social partners both in the UK and abroad as shown in the diagram below:

Diagram 1: A cultural relations approach

Source: FCDO (2018), Business Case: Improving Work Opportunities for Young People in the Commonwealth, p.10.

1.4 Delivery models

The apprenticeship strand

The objective of the apprenticeship strand was to research, benchmark and provide technical assistance to improve the policy and provision of apprenticeships in the participating countries. By engaging with government TVET Authorities and other key stakeholders, participating countries worked to benchmark their current system, identify areas for improvement and design and deliver technical assistance projects to improve apprenticeship policy, management and delivery in the identified areas.

The apprenticeship strand was designed on the principal of adaptive management for the purpose of working with complex systems. As each participating country was operating within very different cultural, socio-economic and

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5 http://www.dhet.gov.za/SiteAssets/Latest%20News/December%202016/TVET%20colleges%20AC%201216%20ap%20web%20story.pdf

political contexts, the apprenticeship strand was designed to enable the comparison of practice and approaches across the countries involved and create a platform to support developments in key areas of interest.

1. Development of benchmarking tool and apprenticeship research report: the British Council's global apprenticeship expert developed the benchmarking tool and report based on international frameworks such the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) guidance on quality apprenticeship and other relevant good practice. The tool identifies. the key aspects of effective apprenticeship delivery and policy that a self- assessment can be made against

2. Piloting in the UK: the completed benchmarking tool was piloted against the UK's apprenticeship systems to test how it functions in a real-world scenario before it was rolled out for use in the participating countries.

3. Applying the tool in target countries: local apprenticeship experts and national advisory groups were briefed and supported on the use of the benchmarking tool by the global expert. The country apprenticeship experts then utilised the benchmarking tool to develop an assessment of the characteristics and challenges of their apprenticeship system against the tool's key criteria, to enable the comparison of approaches with the other participating countries. The results of this process were then be reported back to the National Advisory Groups in each of the target countries.

4. Project response: based on the findings from the benchmarking process, the country experts facilitated a process of project design and development, to support innovation in a relevant aspect of the apprenticeship system. Each country had a budget that could be used to put together a technical assistance or capacity building project to spur reform of policy, system or institutional functioning.

5. Learning and adjusting: the learning generated from the various activities as part of the apprenticeship strand was used to adjust the focus of project inputs to ensure they were supporting value generating activity and to encourage further reform efforts following the completion on the project.

The partnership strand

Colleges involved in the partnership strand were grouped into six clusters, with each cluster comprised of representatives from Ghana, Malaysia, India (Punjab), South Africa and the UK. Each cluster was further subdivided into two working groups: a leadership group consisting of a TVET leader from each country and a practitioner group consisting of two TVET institution staff members.

Three of the clusters focussed on ensuring employer-led education impacts young people's learning and leads to outcomes that enhance employability through skills training centre hubs. The other three clusters focussed on ensuring that at a local and regional level the right mechanisms are in place to enable employer led education to happen. The clusters each followed a series of steps in designing and implementing their activities, as outlined below:

6. Participating TVET colleges from each cluster were encouraged to use a baseline tool to identify where employer-led education sits as a priority. They then were invited to attend a global meeting.

7. Leadership workshop: the leaders from the participating TVET colleges met face to face in a selected country for a 2 day workshop and worked together to develop a strategic framework that responds to their selected cluster theme and contributed to the overall objectives of the I-WORK programme.

8. Practitioner workshop: Four to six weeks later, the practitioners met to consider the strategic framework and how they can develop innovative projects, and how they will gather data that will inform monitoring and

evaluation through reflective practice. The projects proposals were then submitted to the TVET leaders for approval.

9. Both the leaders and practitioners had access to an online platform which allowed them to share information and exchange ideas and learning, specific to their cluster, and allow cross-fertilisation with other clusters.

10. Project delivery: the two practitioners in each of the five countries worked to deliver pilot projects, with support from their TVET leader.

11. Dissemination and learning: upon completion of the projects each country gathered the representatives of 6 clusters (leaders and practitioners) to disseminate and share learning through a policy dialogue at the National Workshop events.

Diagram 2: The Cluster approach
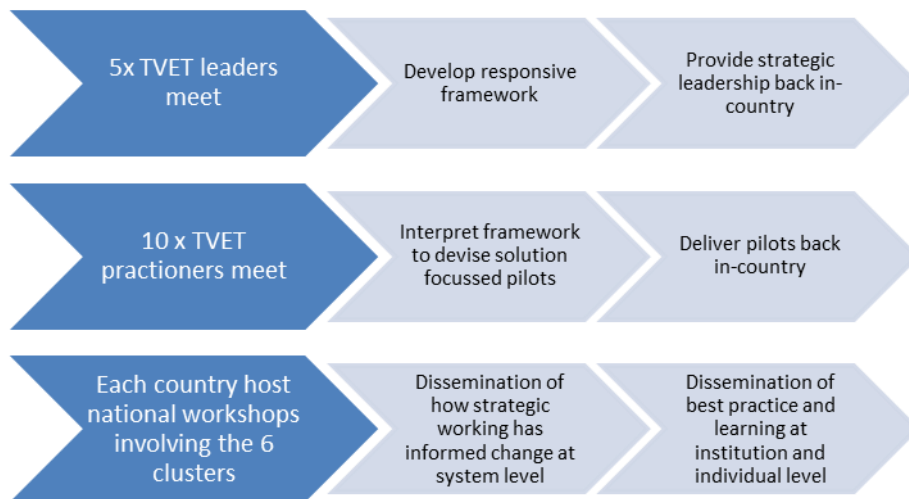
Source: British Council (2019), Evaluation of the British Council's I-WORK Programme: Terms of Reference, p.15.

The dissemination strand

A workshop was held in each of the five countries, and gathered practitioners, college leaders and policymakers to see the results of pilot projects from both strands. The National Workshops took place in Ghana, South Africa, India (Punjab) and Malaysia and consolidated the learning and showcased the outcomes of the work in both strands in each country. The International Workshop was held in the UK and had similar objectives but focussed on the outcomes in all participating countries.

1.5 Intended outcomes

The overarching objective of the programme was to improve young people's employment prospects by piloting and introducing new approaches to employer led skills development. This will be achieved through a combination of support to policy development and reform, as well as institutional strengthening and capacity building.

There were a number of intended outcomes across the three strands of the programme:

- The partnership strand aimed to enable skills training centres to implement more effective, employer-led and inclusive approaches to skills development. The partnership strand aimed to build the capacity of

TVET leaders and practitioners through peer to peer mentoring happening as a result of face to face cluster meetings and undertaking action research projects policy dialogue events.

- The apprenticeship strand aimed to enable the development of new policies and approaches to enhance apprenticeships and work-related learning.

- The dissemination strand aimed to both promote and amplify the best areas of practice and provide a good public engagement vehicle, in support of the commitments made during Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 2018.

Table 1:Intended outcomes across the partnership, apprenticeship and dissemination strand

	Partnership strand	Apprenticeship strand	Dissemination strand
Intended outcomes	increased % of participating institutions propose to introduce new approaches to skills development that better meet the needs of employers	development of an International Apprenticeship benchmarking tool for use in the four participating countries and disseminated to at least ten other Commonwealth countries	new links between TVET actors developed across Commonwealth countries
	increased % of participating institutions propose to introduce new approaches to supporting access and achievement for disadvantaged groups	proposal of new policies or approaches to apprenticeships by policy makers	improved understanding of good practice globally for participants in dialogue
	improved progression rates for learners where interventions have taken place	increased % of participants improved their knowledge and understanding of effective approaches to skills development	creation of an online platform for knowledge sharing
	Improved relationships between training institutions and employers in participating countries		

1.6 Methodology

The evaluation was conducted between January and April 2020. The inception phase ran from 9th to 24th January and involved a desk review of available programme documentation combined with remote interviews with available stakeholders, to establish an overview of key activities and the rationale for the design of the programme. This then guided the second phase, whereby fieldwork was conducted in Ghana, South Africa, India (Punjab), Malaysia and London both at the National Workshops and in preceding and subsequent interviews with key stakeholders. Quantitative analysis of the survey data collected at the conclusion of the workshops was later conducted.

See Annex 1 for full details of the evaluation framework, data collection methods and sampling strategy.

1.7 Structure of the report

The remaining sections of the report are structured as follows:

▶ Section 3 provides an overview of the methodology used as part of the study and outlines the evaluation framework, sampling approach and limitations of the study.

▶ Section 4 outlines key findings from the partnership strand, highlights examples of good practice and areas for future development.

▶ Section 5 outlines key findings from the apprenticeship strand, highlights examples of good practice and areas for future development.

▶ Section 6 outlines key findings from the dissemination strand, highlights examples of good practice and areas for future development

▶ Section 7 describes the cross-cutting issues running through all strands of the programme and assesses how the programme activities addressed these agenda.

▶ Section 8 summarises lessons learnt on what went particularly well and what could have been improved upon.

▶ Section 9 is a series of recommendations for consideration and reflects on how the programme can be adapted based on learning and relevant trends.

▶ Annexes include:

  - Annex 1: Evaluation approach and framework

  - Annex 2: Achievements of the partnership projects

  - Annex 3: Analysis of National and International Workshop feedback forms

  - Annex 4: Stakeholders interviewed

2.0 Apprenticeship strand

This section outlines key findings from the apprenticeship strand both at the programme level and country-level, and provides an analysis of the outputs achieved, key enablers and barriers that shaped the activities, and evidence of pathways to systemic change.

Apprenticeships are increasingly recognised by governments as one of the most effective ways to prepare young people for work and to create the human capital needed to drive economies. The British Council Technical Report states that "While the concept appears simple, the development and delivery of quality apprenticeship systems is more complex. There are often issues in achieving a coherent policy position, framing enabling legislation, employer engagement and quality delivery shared between employers and public training institutions is challenging and insufficient attention is often paid to monitoring, evaluation and return on investment." [7]

The apprenticeship strand focussed on supporting national authorities in Ghana, South Africa, India (Punjab) and Malaysia to strengthen key areas of their apprenticeship systems through technical assistance projects. Each of the four countries carried out a self-assessment of their apprenticeship system using a global apprenticeship benchmarking tool designed specifically for the I-WORK programme, to identify gaps in current TVET provision and areas for exploration. A specially appointed National Expert then worked with the National Advisory Group and British Council project staff to design and deliver bespoke Technical Assistance projects to address they key challenges facing the TVET sector in each country.

The apprenticeship strand was designed on the principal of adaptive management for the purpose of working with complex systems. The strand took an action research focused approach to project development to ensure that the technical assistance projects were targeted to address the key challenges faced by the TVET sector in the different countries involved. While the TVET systems in each country involved were at very different stages of development and thus faced different challenges. The apprenticeship strand enabled the British Council to compare practice and approaches across the countries involved and create a platform to support developments in key areas of interest, using the innovative benchmarking tool. The apprenticeship strand was iterative in its development, with local partners contributing to the design of the project as it evolved and ensuring its relevance to local issues.

This iterative development of the strand followed a 5-step process, which is encapsulated by the diagram below:

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7 British Council (2020), I-WORK project strand 2: Technical report on benchmarking, p.3.

Diagram 3: The 5-step process
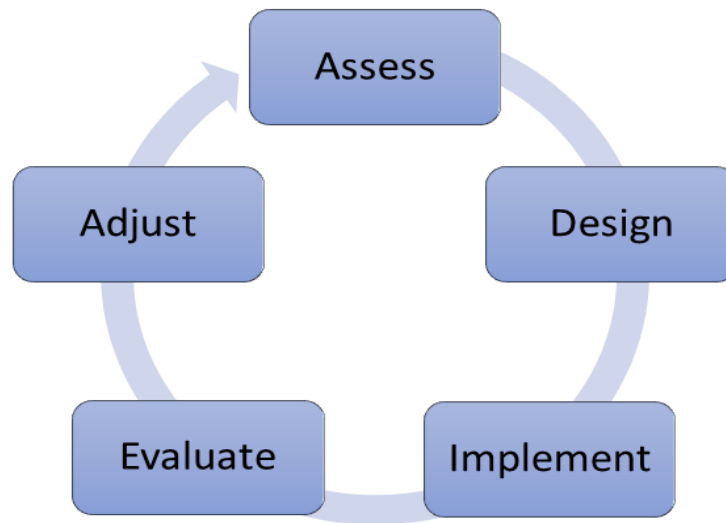
Source: British Council (2019), Terms of Reference I-WORK.

2.1 Relevance

To what extent did the I-WORK model for providing technical assistance through international collaboration contribute to engaging relevant actors in skills development and strengthening apprenticeship systems?

The apprenticeship strand was characterised by the benchmarking tool, which was developed and piloted specifically for the I-WORK programme. The benchmarking tool was designed as a diagnostic and action planning instrument for independent use by countries, without the need for extensive external support.[8] The purpose of the tool is to allow countries to benchmark their apprenticeship system against an objective standard for quality apprenticeships and compare their system with those in other countries, to take an objective view of the strengths and limitations of their model and address any areas for improvement.

The tool drew on existing apprenticeship tools and frameworks, the most influential being The ILO Toolkit for Quality Apprenticeships, Volume 1: A Guide for Policy Makers[9], the Interamerican Development Bank's report "Apprenticeships for the XXI Century: A model for Latin America and the Caribbean?"[10] and The European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships[11]. Those developing the tool endeavoured to strike a delicate balance between a binary tool which would enable comparison between countries, and a more discursive tool to provide more contextualised answers. The current model emphasises the binary approach, and has three main sections, 13 main criteria and over 220 self-assessment questions. The questions cover a full range of policy, implementation, inclusion and monitoring and evaluation issues, including an action planner highlighting strengths, gaps, challenges, and areas for practical action.

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[8] British Council (2020), I-WORK project strand 2: Technical report on benchmarking, p.3.
[9] The ILO Toolkit for Quality Apprenticeships, Volume 1: A Guide for Policy Makers, Nov. 2017. The ILO has subsequently published a second volume of the guide, focussed on implementation. This was not available at the time the Benchmarking Tool was being developed. https://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS_607466/lang-en/index.htm
[10] Apprenticeships for the XXI Century: A model for Latin America and the Caribbean? IDB, Fazio, Fernandez and Ripiani, Oct. 2016 https://publications.iadb.org/en/apprenticeships-xxi-century-model-latin-america-and-caribbean
[11] The European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships, European Union, March 2018 c.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/content/european- framework-quality-and-effective-apprenticeships

Stakeholders generally agreed that the technical assistance was of high quality. The benchmarking tool and adaptive approach meant the projects were able to focus on areas where there was sufficient commitment from stakeholders, and to deliver in areas where it was feasible to make a difference in the 7-8 months of the project duration.

As a result of the benchmarking exercise and detailed project planning, the following projects were agreed:

Ghana: to develop a National Policy for quality apprenticeships that defines and articulates apprenticeship delivery conditions. The aim was to develop a draft policy on apprenticeship; research the available training and create a manual for quality apprenticeship training scheme.

India (Punjab): a communication and engagement strategy to catalyse apprenticeship implementation in the Punjab and engage employers, employer associations, training providers and trainees.

Malaysia: an in-depth study on how to engage employers with apprenticeships for the manufacturing sector in Malaysia since the government aims skilled workers in the manufacturing sector to increase from 16% in 2016 to 35% by 2025.

South Africa: to develop a digital guideline explaining the different roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in designing and implementing a quality apprenticeship system.

Ghana

Ghana has increasingly high levels of youth's unemployment. The Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (COTVET)'s strategic goal states: "Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) are to make Ghana a world class centre for skill development and a leading country in TVET delivery in Africa".[12] There are currently 19 different ministries that work with TVET and there is no apprenticeship policy to regulate activities. There is also a disconnect between the existing regulatory framework and formal apprenticeship practice.

The apprenticeship strand thus supported the development of a national policy on formal apprenticeships, as apprenticeships in Ghana have traditionally been conducted informally within artisan systems such as fixing mopeds on the side of road, rather than modern industrial apprenticeship placements.

The technical assistance component consisted of the British Council working with COTVET and key stakeholders in Ghana to prepare and finalise the National Policy. The National Policy provides a clear definition of quality apprenticeships, outlines a regulatory framework, and defines the roles and responsibilities of the different ministries and agencies involved in apprenticeships. The programme focussed on three principle areas of activity:

- Creating international skills partnerships

- Enhancing national apprenticeships schemes

- Contributing to international best practice

The focus of the project was decided during consultative meetings with the executive director of The Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (COTVET), the deputy minister of education and the advisory team. The process of developing the policy was participatory, including conducting consultations in three different regions of Ghana with various stakeholders, including women and people with disabilities. The British Council engaged COTVET and the deputy minister of education from the start, key stakeholders responsible for implementing the policy.

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12 British Council (2019), Evaluation of the British Council's I-WORK Programme: Terms of Reference.

India (Punjab)

The Government of India enacted the Apprenticeship Act in 1961 with the objective of training of trade apprentices. There have been many amendments since 1961, and in 2014, and it was made compulsory for employers to engage apprentices in designated trades and in optional trades. The apprenticeship strand supported the Government of Punjab to strengthen apprenticeships training and engagement of apprentices in the State. Punjab has a large population of young people and ambitious plans to scale up skill development centres, but the number of skills trained youth and number of apprentices are not proportional to the overall numbers of young people in the State.

While there is a comprehensive apprenticeship policy in place including a number of schemes, such as the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS), which offers a stipend to employers taking on apprentices, take up of the schemes remains variable across states, and generally low, despite being mandated by law for establishments with more than 5 employees. In the state of Punjab, the number of apprentices and youth with skills training is not proportional to the overall numbers of young people in the state.

The British Council in consultation with the Punjabi government used the benchmarking tool to identify the following areas to address through the programme:

- **Insufficient information flows** and awareness among industry representatives of how to set up an apprenticeship scheme

- **Lack of industry involvement** in the formulation of policies and practices relating to apprenticeships

- **Poor participation among Training Providers** and Trainees, leading to a lack of quality trainers and effective employer engagement.

The I-WORK programme aimed to address these issues through the following technical assistance components:

- The development of a communication strategy for the Punjab State Government and a toolkit to be used in workshops involving employers, associations, training providers and trainees to discuss their specific issues, views, and feedback on how to improve apprenticeships.

- The development of a model to engage employers more actively through a sectoral approach involving the IT sector which is gaining importance in the State.

- The preparation of guides for employers, training providers and State Apprenticeship Advisers on best practice in conducting apprenticeships

- The establishment of a feedback mechanism to continuously improve the apprenticeship implementation process in Punjab and develop a set of recommendations to be submitted to the Punjab State Government to inform their policies and plans in relation to apprenticeships.

Malaysia

In October 2011, the Malaysian Ministry of Education commissioned a comprehensive review of the education system in Malaysia in order to develop a new National Education Blueprint. TVET was identified as a critical component for the success of the Economic Transformation Programme in this Blueprint, with nearly one million jobs requiring vocational certificates or diplomas by 2020. Several initiatives have been introduced to raise the quality of TVET and ensure programmes are in line with industry needs and requirements.

Through the I-WORK Apprenticeship benchmarking tool enabled the Malaysian stakeholders to identify several issues for the Apprenticeships and the TVET sector:

- **Complicated leadership roles**: TVET provision is delivered by six ministries with a lack of overarching leadership. The Ministry of Education and Ministry of Human Resources are involved in accreditations and certifications. The Malaysian Qualifications Agency also allows for educational institutions to develop and accredit their own programmes. Ministries, agencies and funders run their own programmes.

- **Lack of a National Act and policy for apprenticeships:** there are some laws in place but there is no legal definition of apprenticeship. There is no overarching policy stating the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, minimum standards and legal requirements.

- **Lack of funding guidelines:** Malaysia has a levy system, and funding is not always available leading to inconsistent program implementations.

- **Lack of information about TVET education:** there is a lack of public awareness on apprenticeships and a negative perception about TVET as a less prestigious option and focussed in a 3D (dirty, difficulty and dangerous) environment.

- **Low employer engagement:** there is no clear mechanism and enough incentives for employer engagement in apprenticeships, including messaging, marketing of programs, guidelines on delivery and wage management.

In order to address these issues, the I-WORK programme focussed on an in-depth study on how to engage employers with apprenticeships for the manufacturing sector. The Malaysian Investment and Development Authority (MIDA), the Department of Skills Development, The Federation of Manufacturers, The Human Resource Development Fund and The Department of Higher Education supported to the project.

South Africa

The benchmark framework analysis and the problem tree analysis indicated that a well-developed workplace-based learning system exists in South Africa, but there is a lack of understanding by stakeholders of their roles and responsibilities in respect to their apprenticeship system. The apprenticeship strand in South Africa thus focussed on developing a comprehensive guideline to explain the various roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders involved in the TVET sector.

The guideline was not designed to cover every stakeholder involved in delivering apprenticeships in South Africa, but rather provide a template. The guideline focussed on specific group of stakeholders who were closely involved in the development of the new apprenticeship system in the country as an initial pilot process. This grouping was known as the Centre of Specialisation – Apprenticeship of the 21st Century (COS—A21). The COS-A21 process is the third phase of the development of a modern, 21st century apprenticeship system in the South Africa country. Phase 1 was known as the Dual System Apprenticeship Project (DSAP) that ran from 2013 to 2016; Phase 2 was known as the Dual System Pilot Project (DSPP), which began in 2015 and is still ongoing.

Key stakeholders, including 19 TVET Colleges with over 50 linked employers, over 700 learners and other stakeholders players such as provincial and local governments, businesses and the national coordinating pilot team were invited to collectively shape a single digitally based resource that defines roles and responsibilities for the new 21st Century apprenticeship system being implemented through Centres of Specialisation in South Africa.

2.2 Effectiveness of the apprenticeship strand

This section explores the outputs achieved in the apprenticeship strand and the quality of the outputs achieved, as well as highlighting examples of good practice and the enabling factors and barriers that shaped the strand's activities.

The aim of the apprenticeship strand was to research, benchmark and provide technical assistance to improve the policy and provision of apprenticeships in the participating countries. As was the case for the partnership strand, the apprenticeship strand was designed to contribute to the three overarching programmatic outcomes:

- A shared understanding of approaches to enhance employer-led, inclusive skills training

- New approaches to enhance employer-led, inclusive skills training are piloted and lessons are captured,

- Good practice and lessons are shared nationally / internationally, and new approaches and policies are implemented

In addition to these broad outcomes, the Results Framework outlines two intermediate outcomes for the apprenticeship strand[13]:

- Intermediate outcome 2: Policy makers, institutional leaders and employers have a better understanding of how their country's Apprenticeship system compares with other countries and how it could be improved

- Intermediate outcome 3: Good practice is captured and disseminated. A 'community of practice' is formed with knowledge and experience made available to all commonwealth nations

The apprenticeship strand met its ambitions within the time frame both in terms of outputs and outcomes, which varied according to country. The quality of the design and delivery of activities was found of high standard especially given the tight timeframe. However, as was the case in the partnership strand, the achievement and quality of outputs varied between the different countries involved, as did the scope and scale of their ambition.

What were the outputs achieved in the apprenticeship strand and what was the quality of these outputs?

Table 2: Intended outputs of the apprenticeship strand

Country	Intended output
Ghana	National Policy for quality apprenticeships
India (Punjab)	Communication and engagement strategy to catalyse apprenticeship implementation in the Punjab
Malaysia	playbook and toolkit for all industries, informing employers about what apprenticeships are and a step by step process in how to set one up
South Africa	a digital guideline explaining the different roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in designing and implementing a quality apprenticeship system

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13 FCDO (2018), Business Case: Improving Work Opportunities for Young People in the Commonwealth, Results Framework, p.31-35.

Ghana

The apprenticeship policy was successfully developed within the expected timeframe and is currently being reviewed by COTVET and awaiting ministerial approval. There is currently no strict deadline on the draft policy being approved, yet the COTVET board has approved the policy and it has been sent to the Ministry of Education. The policy should be approved by early June 2020 after which a manual to operationalise the policy is to be developed

In Ghana, six months was noted to be a very short period to develop a policy. However, other stakeholders said that the short timeframe was a positive because it forced them to adhere to deadlines. At the time that fieldwork was conducted (February 2020), the likelihood of the policy being approved by COTVET and the Ministry of Education was high, due to their involvement throughout the policy development process and stakeholders argued that if the policy were to be approved, there would be sufficient resources to support change across the system.

The policy provided a regulatory framework for apprenticeships across the country; it encouraged partnerships with the formal sector to move apprenticeships away from the 'traditional' way of doing things, and aimed to ensure equal accessibility to apprenticeships, including encouraging women to work in male dominated fields (and vice-versa), and ensuring access for people with disabilities. Consultative workshops were held in three country-zones in Ghana, with the purpose to enable participants to understand advocacy and its importance in policy formulation. Moreover, three different meetings were set up with the National Advisory Committee to scrutinize the policy, and finally, on the 26th of November 2019, a national validation workshop was organized in Accra with 147 participants in attendance (including the Deputy Minister for Education and the Executive Director for COTVET.

India (Punjab)

In India, outputs were delivered in line with expectations and were relevant for strengthening the system. There are already strong policies and programmes in place in India, so theI-WORK intervention was designed to address challenges with implementation. The project was delivered in Punjab, where the British Council had good links with government stakeholders. While there were some challenges in getting the project up and running, the British Council managed to develop good working relationships with the government stakeholders.

Stakeholders commented on the effectiveness of the workshops, which aimed to build relationships between key stakeholders, across ITIs, industry and government, and supporting Apprenticeship Advisors (AAAs) to better understand their role and increase their engagement with industry to support the delivery of the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS), which offers a stipend to employers taking on apprentices. Participants found the workshops engaging, particularly the use of role play so stakeholders could consider other points of view. The fact that different stakeholder groups were represented meant that issues could be solved in 'real-time'.

The toolkits were designed and refined based on the questions that stakeholders had during workshops, and feedback has been positive so far. The study visit enabled the Punjabi government to see in practice how another state was implementing the NAPS and other skills training schemes and the full potential of AAAs. This resulted in the identification of collaboration, and commitment to further supporting AAAs. Based on consultations, the Punjab state government also became aware of the challenges faced by the industry in using the government portal used to manage the NAPS and has raised this to the national level.

The British Council commissioned an end of project survey to identify the extent to which good practice was seen in the project. The survey identified that the recommendations and good practice identified during the workshops are being rolled out: there have been increases in communication and outreach around apprenticeship schemes and how to operationalise them, processes developed to recognise champion training institutes and employers

and increased numbers of employers and training providers are registering on apprenticeship portals and starting to contact stakeholders.

Malaysia

As previously mentioned, the benchmarking elucidated the need to address lack of employer engagement in the Malaysian TVET sector. In order to further understand the issue, the Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM) conducted a study surveying 200 small-medium enterprises (SMEs) asking about their awareness and needs around apprenticeship. Their survey response rate was 50% (100 companies) and determined that the vast majority of industries were unaware about apprenticeship, and for example, the difference between internships. They also lacked knowledge on how to go about developing an apprenticeship including how to access government funds.

As a result, UTHM developed a playbook and toolkit for all industries, informing employers about what apprenticeships are and a step by step process in how to set one up. While this was seen as highly relevant, some government officials highlighted the existence of the National Dual Training System (NDTS) which is an industry-oriented training programme combining workplace and institutional training. While there are reported guidelines under the NDTS, it was reported that the tools developed by UHTM were more accessible and user friendly.

To ensure relevance of the tool, UTHM selected four private companies to partake in various workshops to understand their needs. After developing a first iteration of the tools, a focus group was conducted with the companies who provided feedback including that the length of the document was too long, and employers would not engage with it as a result. In response, UTHM adapted the tools to make them shorter, concise and to include visualisations. A short video was also produced to further encourage engagement from industries.

Several stakeholders reported on the utility of the playbook and toolkit. Feedback from one of the private companies involved workshops that shaped development of the tools asserted that the updated versions were high-quality, clear and user-friendly. Furthermore, they could be adaptable to other sectors. A representative from the Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA) noted that the tools would help to raise awareness about apprenticeship across many industries if adequately disseminated.

South Africa

The quality of the design and delivery of activities was found of high standard especially in light of the tight timeframe. The Apprenticeship of the 21st Century (A21) guidelines strengthened the South African apprenticeship system in that they established a common framework for all stakeholders and supported standardisation of the rules. The online format of the guidelines makes them available at all time which is seen as particularly effective to keep stakeholders up to date and increase the transparency of the system overall.

The A21 guidelines were helpful in attracting different tiers of employers that are not usually involved in the apprenticeship system namely smaller employers by making them aware of the existing incentives for them when hiring learners such as tax rebates. The ability to access the A21 digital guidelines on mobile devices made it easily accessible to even the most remote areas. In addition, the online format was particularly effective in keeping stakeholders informed and thus increased the transparency of the system overall.

Case study: the A21 guidelines in South Africa

The Process: I-WORK stakeholders agreed to develop **A21 digital guidelines** to provide stakeholders in South Africa with clear guidance on their responsibilities within the new apprenticeship system. To do so, the I-WORK National Advisory Panel agreed on a detailed workflow process and timeline. In parallel, the I-WORK team commissioned an impact evaluation of the knowledge of involved stakeholders about the new apprenticeship system through a pre- / post-survey. The team went on to develop a website to host the digital guidelines, and contracted the design, development, and publication of the digital guidelines. The team then promoted the draft A21 digital guidelines and engaged with stakeholders to gather their feedback through a wide range of means: a social media campaign across six platforms, a national Roadshow campaign in cooperation with the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), workshops in TVET colleges involved in the A21-COS roll-out process, etc.

The Outcome: Drawing on feedback from stakeholders, the I-WORK team finalised the A21 digital guidelines and published them on DHET's website[14]. These guidelines are the first of their kind in South Africa whose government processes remain primarily paper based, and adopt a gamification approach, in that they entail interactive features for facilitating users' learning such as animated videos, podcasts and quizzes. In addition, the apprenticeship strand produced a total of fifteen outputs ranging from technical documents about the history and current apprenticeship system in South Africa; evidence of the knowledge levels of apprenticeship stakeholders about the A21-COS pre- and post- I-WORK; dissemination efforts to promote the guidelines; events for engaging with stakeholders, and a video about apprenticeship best practices in South Africa[15]. The impact evaluation found most stakeholders had higher knowledge of the apprenticeship system by the end of I-WORK, and data analytics found over 2500 users visited the A21 guidelines website, for an average duration of around 3:30 min.

Next steps towards sustainability: Whilst all agree that the A21 guidelines were a highly relevant achievement, there is also consensus that these are only a first step, and that more needs to be done to make the most of their potential for strengthening the South African apprenticeship system. The legacy I-WORK will be conditional to the level of follow-up from the government to promote the guidelines, take ownership, and incorporate them in their work as part of an integrated approach. Efforts took place to hand-over the A21 guidelines, and to build DHET staff capacity to take this mechanism forward, including through the development of a formal Memorandum of Understanding between the British Council and DHET. The project also developed a set of precise recommendations for taking the apprenticeship strand forward. There is evidence that the national government intends to pursue efforts engaged as part of I-WORK.

What were the key enablers for the achievement of and progress toward outcomes?

High levels of flexibility and freedom: stakeholders really appreciated having a blank canvas to work with in designing the most appropriate project, given the context, project duration and availability of funds. This enabled the project teams to work closely with key stakeholders to develop the most relevant project. The piloting and adaptive approach was key to enable context-relevant projects, testing, adaptation and course correction.

Quality National Experts: who were able to leverage their existing relationships with key stakeholders.

Strategic design of projects: the apprenticeship projects were successful in strategically selecting 'quick-wins' and areas to work in where change was possible in a short period of time, where there was commitment from key stakeholders and interest in this change and where there was sufficient resources to do so.

Good relationships with the British Council and key stakeholders (including industry and government), which supported the implementation process, and likelihood of uptake of outputs.

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[14] Available at https://nadsc.dhet.gov.za/A21#/
[15] See: https://vimeo.com/397981850/51d5f3ab80

What were the key barriers to the achievement of and progress toward outcomes?

The principal barrier to the achievement of outcomes was the condensed timeframe. The apprenticeship projects needed to manage their expectations and design realistic interventions given the range of constraints. While the benchmarking tool identified a range of issues, addressing these issues would require a longer-term perspective which was outside the scope of the programme. The condensed timeframe was noted as a real challenge by all stakeholders. Stakeholders pointed out that relationship building, especially with government ministries takes time, to build rapport and ensure sustainability. More time would have enabled programme team to continue to support and monitor uptake and further tailor projects as needed.

2.3 Sustainability and pathways to systemic change

This section explores the outputs achieved in the apprenticeship strand and the quality of the outputs achieved, as well as highlighting examples of good practice and the enabling factors and barriers that shaped the strand's activities.

While stakeholders involved in the apprenticeship strand agreed that it was challenging to deliver sustainable change in a seven-month period. Several stakeholders described the project as a 'catalyst', which then needs to be taken on by key stakeholders, and will be dependent on continued commitment, and support from senior stakeholders. There are nonetheless encouraging signs for sustainability across all four countries.

What is the likelihood that outcomes generated by the apprenticeship strand will be sustained beyond the programme?

Ghana

The National Policy for formal apprenticeships was developed during the I-WORK programme and the policy should be approved by early June 2020. In addition, a manual to operationalise the policy is is under development. There is strong commitment within the government to approve the policy, which will contribute to the promotion of formal apprenticeships as an alternative to traditional artisanal apprenticeships going forward.

India (Punjab)

There is currently strong commitment to change among the Punjabi state government officials, industry and training providers, though it is noted personnel can change quickly at the government level and ability to deliver depends on the support of senior management. Organisational capacity has been strengthened among government stakeholders, AAAs and industry, through the delivery of workshops and development of a practicable communication and stakeholder engagement strategy. The toolkits developed have had good feedback and are expected to continue to support stakeholders with implementing the apprenticeship scheme.

Malaysia

The apprenticeship project had not matured enough to be able to determine whether substantive policy development and change would occur. However, early engagement with the government was positive. Some government departments had agreed to engage with UTHM around the One Stop Apprenticeship Centre (OSAC), for example. It was noted however, that systemic change will take many years to achieve. It was also asserted that Malaysia has too many systemic issues in the TVET sector for one programme to impact on significant change at the policy level.

South Africa

The A21 guidelines brought together numerous stakeholders and employers together, which has been key to develop relationships between stakeholders. The guidelines strengthened the South African apprenticeship system in that they establish a common framework for all stakeholders and support standardisation of the rules, such as tax rebates for employers who hire apprentices. It was praised for bringing the numerous stakeholders together under one roof and provide them with a common language

To what extent did the apprenticeship strand contribute to change in the key domains important for systemic change?

The benchmarking tool was the primary feature of the apprenticeship strand, and this section will consider how to what extent the design, piloting and utilisation of the tool led to systemic change. The aim of the benchmarking tool was to inform improvements in apprenticeship policy and practice, and thus the focus of the apprenticeship strand was to lead to systemic change. As previously discussed, the key domains for systemic change outlined draw heavily on the ILO framework for quality apprenticeships.

The benchmarking tool

BC stakeholders were positive about the 5-step process and found it to be a very useful exercise. BC Ghana representatives interviewed reported that the constant process of self-evaluation and adjustment enabled them to ensure that the policy being developed would be inclusive and have a positive impact on those involved. South African participants found the problem tree exercise very useful in identifying areas for further development, and they plan to continue using in other policy areas.

The benchmarking tool was also found to be useful, as it compelled different government stakeholders to talk to each other and interrogate what a quality apprenticeship system would like for South Africa. Similarly, BC India representatives commented that the tool was useful in reminding them of which key stakeholders should be involved and will be useful to track progress going forward. While some stakeholders commented that they felt the tool was too long, others made suggestions of further questions that could be added in. Condensing the tool too drastically could lead to less rigorous process of reflection, future iterations of the tool could include clear sub-divisions, such as policy, reflection and implementation, to make it more accessible and digestible, and thus ensure its take-up.

The benchmarking tool highlighted that the process of project design is not a purely technical exercise but is also shaped by cultural and political considerations. There were a range of complex range of motivations shaping respondents' answers to the benchmarking tool. As a self-assessment tool, these differences were of little consequence, yet are more problematic if the benchmarking tool is to be used a mechanism for comparison between different countries.

While the different responses could partly be attributed to cultural differences, these different perspectives could also be explained by the maturity of the countries' systems. Malaysia had the most sophisticated apprenticeship system in place, and thus much higher levels of ambition than Ghana, which was starting from scratch in developing a national policy for formal apprenticeships, which could explain why Malaysian respondents took a much more critical view than their Ghanaian counterparts. In order to account for the cultural, socio-economic and political differences between countries, close attention should be paid to the commentary and action plans that country representatives provided as part of their answer to the benchmarking questions, and careful consideration of the context in they are answering the questions.

Further British Council support and guidance is required to enable policymakers in the countries involved in I-WORK to continue to use the tool, as well as other countries who were not involved. Translation into other languages would enable greater take-up and applicability to multiple country contexts. A huge amount of effort went into developing the benchmarking tool and it was generally found to be very valuable in encouraging a process of reflection. In order to scale up the use of the tool, the tool will need to be carefully marketed to be as accessible as possible, whilst retaining its comprehensiveness.

Policy development and change

The ILO's six building blocks for developing quality apprenticeship systems state that "quality apprenticeships require a robust and stable regulatory framework which establishes the overall conditions for designing and implementing systems and secures decent work for apprentices". [16] This was perhaps the most promising area in terms of systemic change, due to the focus of the benchmarking tool on systems strengthening and policy reform.

For Ghana, it is likely that the new apprenticeship policy will be approved due to the high-level buy in from the Deputy Minister of Education and executive director of COTVET. In addition, the policy has buy-in from other key stakeholders including the advisory committee, people with disabilities and women's groups.

In South Africa, while there was consensus that the A21 guidelines were an impressive achievement given the time and resource constraints of the programme, there was also a sense that the guidelines represent a first step, and that more needs to be done to make the most of their potential for strengthening the South African apprenticeship system. The legacy of the A21 guidelines will be conditional to the level of follow-up from the government to promote them, take ownership, and incorporate them in their work as part of an integrated approach. There is indication of government's commitment to change, as the A21 guidelines have been posted on the national government website.

In Malaysia, aspects of sustainability appeared positive, but it was too early to be able to substantively assess real change. No firm policy commitments have been in the TVET sector or around uptake of the tools they were only released at the conference which took place in February 2020. However, UTHM had already began discussions with relevant ministries to develop a One-Stop Apprenticeship Centre (OSAC) which would act as a convening body for all seven ministries involved in TVET to engage and coordinate on policy development. One government minister noted that policy reform takes a long time to develop in Malaysia, and a new TVET policy and associated centralised governing body would take about 3-5 years to establish. It was also suggested that it would require a ministry taking ownership over the whole process, which would be challenging.

Knowledge and capacity of stakeholders

The ILO's framework for quality apprenticeships highlights the importance of stakeholder knowledge and capacity, stating that "quality apprenticeships are built on the support and commitment of numerous stakeholders, who should have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and who also have a common purpose." [17] This was a focus in Ghana, where there currently are 19 ministries that work with TVET as well as the National Vocational Training Institute and the Council For Technical And Vocational Educational Training. While traditional artisanal apprenticeships are very common in Ghana and are seen as a way to tackle youth unemployment, and there is some level of organisational capacity already in place, there was no framework for formal apprenticeships

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16 ILO (2019), A framework for quality apprenticeships. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_731155.pdf
17 ILO (2019), A framework for quality apprenticeships. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_731155.pdf

in place before the I-WORK programme. The National Policy developed through the apprenticeship strand thus defined the roles and responsibilities of each ministry involved.

In India (Punjab), there was strong commitment to change in the key state officials in the Government of Punjab, industry and training providers, though it is noted personnel can change quickly at the government level and ability to deliver depends on the support of senior management.

In South Africa, there were efforts to hand-over the A21 guidelines to the government, and to build DHET staff capacity to take the guidelines forward. A capacity building workshop was held with DHET IT and communications staff. Specific recommendations on how to take the guidelines forward have also been developed. Nevertheless, effective take-up is needed to enable the apprenticeship strand to have an impact.

Increased collaboration between stakeholders

There was limited evidence for the apprenticeship strand leading to increased collaboration between stakeholders. However, the dissemination events gathered key stakeholders involved in the activities and there was positive feedback that the National Workshops enabled attendees to build new working relationships. This said, each country had a very political context and dynamics between government ministries, which could not be addressed in the short timeframe of the I-WORK programme. For example, in Malaysia, while it appeared there was some impetus at the national level to implement a One Stop Apprenticeship Centre, it was also reported by experts that several ministries had incentives to maintain the devolved system to protect their own TVET budget lines.

Resources from all stakeholders sufficient to support change

The ILO framework highlights the importance of equitable funding arrangements, that distribute the costs of apprenticeships fairly between public authorities, enterprises, and apprentices themselves. The level of resource availability varied between countries.

In India (Punjab), future sources of funding did not emerge as a potential challenge for continued delivery, yet it was noted that without additional incentives/impetus, it is unlikely that the state government will allocate resources to continue using the benchmarking tool.

In Malaysia, it was unclear what would happen with the playbook and toolkit after the dissemination conference. One employer interviewed who participated in the scoping study asserted that they would take the present the benchmarking tool to senior leadership within their company to try and implement an apprenticeship next year. However, additional funding was being sought to digitalise the tools which would make them easier to access and potentially improve their reach across industries in Malaysia

In South Africa, DHET demonstrated explicit interest in taking the guidelines forward. However, there was no evidence that a budget has been specifically earmarked for their maintenance and further development.

3.0 Partnership strand

This chapter outlines key findings from the partnership strand both at the programme and country-level, and provides an analysis of the relevance of the approach in supporting skills systems and TVET in implementation countries, as well as the outputs achieved, key enablers and barriers that shaped the activities, and evidence of pathways to systemic change.

3.1 Relevance

To what extent did the partnership approach lead to activities that were suited to the needs of each country context?

This section explores the relevance of the partnership strand approach in terms if addressing gaps in TVET service provision in the focal countries and the tailoring of activities to the specific context of the countries involved. As key components of the partnership strand, we explore the cluster approach; the selection and matching of partners within the clusters; communication flows; and areas for improvement.

The partnership strand focussed on fostering partnerships between TVET colleges in the UK, Ghana, South Africa, India (Punjab) and Malaysia to develop innovative, inclusive and employer-led education approaches that equip students to take their place in the future job market. The strand grouped the colleges in clusters of five (a UK college as lead and partner colleges from Ghana, South Africa, India and Malaysia), and entailed a number of group activities to support the in-country colleges to work collaboratively and review their current practice, identify areas for development within their institutions, and design and pilot projects to address those areas.

The cluster approach

The partnership strand was designed to enable knowledge exchange and innovation between TVET leaders and practitioners across the five countries, bringing them together face to face in six clusters. Each of the six clusters consisted of representatives from Ghana, Malaysia, India, South Africa and the UK.

The primary focus on the programme seemed to be knowledge exchange and sharing, as opposed to direct technical assistance. Generally, there was minimal support and technical assistance provided after workshops, though there was some informal communication and exchange of materials

The partnership model was a relevant one and broadly achieved its target as set out in the FCDO Business Case of "enabling participants to develop and design solutions to common problems; draw on each other's expertise and develop tailored solutions to their individual contexts"[18], as part of a cultural relations approach.

Participants saw the benefit of drawing on relevant experience and skills from other countries to improve their understanding of effective approaches to inclusive and employer-led skills development. Colleges generally agreed that the engagement with the other countries was helpful and rewarding.

Stakeholders generally agreed that a multilateral approach was stronger than a bilateral approach and facilitated knowledge-sharing and the exchange of best practice between the different countries, as well as with their UK partners. In addition, the multilateral approach enabled colleges to benchmark themselves and assess their performance in relation to the other colleges.

Exchanging information and ideas with other countries beyond the UK, at different points in the duration of the programme helped colleges get perspective about their level of infrastructure and resources. For example, one Indian college noted that they had a lot more in common with South Africa's experience than that of the other countries. In addition, the South African colleges valued the international exposure and felt that participating in an international partnership gave them a competitive edge compared to other TVET colleges in the area.

The selection and matching of partners

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18 FCDO (2018), Business Case: Improving Work Opportunities for Young People in the Commonwealth, p.11.

The partners were generally well matched, and the thematic focus of clusters was seen to be appropriate, though in practice this was quite loose, with colleges in each cluster going on to deliver a wide range of projects. The selection of colleges was done by British Council offices through the use of a partnership matching grid. The pool of colleges was loosely matched according to five criteria of: private/public; age range of learners; rural/urban; specialisms and experience across the identified cluster areas. While there was an effort to group colleges into thematic clusters, not all colleges were aware of the thematic links between themselves and the other colleges in the cluster, and the themes did not directly influence the content of the workshops or the projects eventually delivered.

One of the Indian partners, Empower, noted that it had a lot of similarities with the other colleges. For example, its UK partner was also situated in a rural location and had a strong focus on social inclusion, similar to the Malaysian and Ghanaian colleges. On the other hand, a few Indian colleges felt that they were more advanced in their TVET journeys than the colleges in Ghana and South Africa, and hence felt that they had little to learn from the partnership. Gram Tarang noted that it was well matched to the other colleges in the cluster, all of whom had some sort of digital platform, that Gram Tarang was interested in developing. However, it seemed that this was incidental rather than a deliberate decision.

Three Indian colleges suggested that the selection and matching of partners could have been more targeted, and thus ensure partners were more systematically matched along criteria including length of course, ownership, funding structure, and areas of strengths and weaknesses. They suggested that colleges could also be matched based on a specific knowledge exchange and learning objective, for example, where a specific college is interested in developing a new approach or tool, that has been successfully developed by others, such as a digital platform in the case of Gram Tarang. It was also suggested that participants could all attend a first introductory meeting in one country, and then collectively decide on the make-up of each cluster.

While some in-country colleges and UK leads found there was affinity between themselves and the other colleges in the cluster, this seemed to be incidental rather than a deliberate decision, and many colleges felt there was little thematic commonality within the cluster. An initial leadership meeting in which college representatives could network and build rapport, and then decide on the composition of the cluster collaboratively may have helped in ensuring closer alignment between colleges in each cluster around specific themes, as well levels of experience. The selection process could involve colleges specifying what they hope to gain from the programme, in order to match them with other colleges who share their priorities and objectives.

Communication

The rationale for first holding a leadership event, and then a subsequent practitioner event was to first to secure buy-in from senior management and decide on the design of projects, and then for the practitioners to discuss the finer details and logistics. The structure of the training events was intended to avoid leaders to assume the role of a figurehead with limited involvement in the programme's activities, yet in hindsight it seems that the distinction between leaders and practitioners was artificial, as in some cases those attending the leadership event would also be involved in implementing the projects.

Multiple stakeholders commented that it would have been more useful to combine the leader and practitioner workshops rather than hold siloed events. There was a disconnect in communication between UK leads, in-country colleges and central British Council team, which led to confusion about the programme timeline, available budget, expectations, potential direction of activities. A more thorough initial briefing would have been useful and helped to avoid miscommunication later on. Certain in-country stakeholders felt uncomfortable at being led by UK college leaders who were perceived to be less experienced, and the terminology of "UK leader" was thought to be inappropriate.

The South African and Indian colleges noted that the separate leader and practitioner events did not facilitate alignment between leaders and practitioners and had the unintended effect of enabling strategic staff to overlook operational considerations. UK college representatives also fed back that several partners requested that leaders also be allowed to attend the practitioner workshop, and a number were also happy to pay for this. For one UK college in particular, it appeared that those attending the workshops were quite distinct from those delivering the projects, and those delivering the projects seemed to not be engaged in the programme and knew little about the broader I-WORK project.

Stakeholders agreed that UK colleges and personnel delivered strong workshops, with clear agendas, fruitful visits to industry and other departments and facilitated good discussion that supported learning, by driving common themes. In country colleges reported that their UK partners and the British Council team facilitated a very open and collaborative environment and found the UK colleges responsive, available, and open to sharing information. South African colleges also commented on the value of learning from UK partners in regard to new IT skills, discipline, time management and delivering on commitment. Some UK leads were praised for their responsiveness, availability, and their information sharing.

Regular communication between the BC local country offices and the in-country colleges would have been helpful and enabled BC would have been able to maintain oversight of the progress of the activities, report any issues upwards. The British Council had originally intended for the UK colleges to take the lead in managing the different levels of experience among the in-country colleges and selected them on the assumption that this would be feasible. The UK colleges found the workshop facilitator to be enormously helpful as a point of contact and technical support, yet there was no equivalent point of contact for the in-country colleges. The in-country British Council teams could play a more active support role going forward and act as the point of contact for in-country colleges participating in a similar scheme. In addition, a more tailored offer involving one stream for more advanced colleges, and another stream for less experienced colleges requiring more support would perhaps address this disparity of experience.

3.2 Effectiveness of the partnership strand

This section explores the outputs achieved in the partnership strand and their quality, as well as highlighting examples of good practice and the enabling factors and barriers that shaped the strand's activities.

The theory of change outlines that the intended outcomes of the programme as a whole were the following:

- A shared understanding of approaches to enhance employer-led, inclusive skills training

- New approaches to enhance employer-led, inclusive skills training are piloted and lessons are captured,

- Good practice and lessons are shared nationally / internationally, and new approaches and policies are implemented

In addition, the Results Framework outlined an intermediate outcome for the partnership strand:

1) Intermediate outcome 1: As a result of international sharing of practice and piloting of approaches, leaders and practitioners in Skills training centres have a better understanding of effective approaches to skills development which are employer led or more inclusive of disadvantaged groups.

While the achievement and quality of outputs varied across colleges and individual projects, a mapping of the colleges against enabling factors which emerged from fieldwork interviews have enabled us to identify a number of key factors which influenced the achievement of outputs and outcomes. Key enabling factors include British Council support; strategic use of funding; private sector engagement; and projects that had already been conceptualised prior to the programme. These are discussed in more detail in later sections.

What were the outputs achieved, and the quality of these outputs?

It was expected that the effects of the projects would impact on 120 learners per institution in the evaluation period. The partnership project completion reports demonstrate that results varied by intervention, with some colleges exceeding this target, while others were unable to reach it. In addition, it seems that the more ambitious projects reached fewer learners during the evaluation period, as their projects were still being developed and were yet to be implemented in full. Fieldwork consultations revealed that the target of 120 learners per institution rarely came up in conversation and did not seem to be something that college representatives were particularly aware of.

In Malaysia, projects that had been designed to provide soft skills training to students were able to develop curriculum plans but had not reached learners during the evaluation period. However, a college in South Africa reported 410 student participants, while another South African college reported 500 student participants. In contrast, Gram Tarang in Punjab, India reported only 41 student participants. While Gram Tarang only reached 41 participants, the project focussed on developing an online learning management system which they planned to roll out to the entire college

Knowledge exchange

The clusters were effective in sharing relevant experience in inclusive and employer-led approaches, and generally led to a number of high-quality outputs. All colleges cited a number of areas where they had learned about new approaches, been inspired by seeing employer-led approaches delivered in practice, shared tools and curriculum with others, discussed how to address common challenges and been reassured that they were on the right path.

The cluster approach enabled the sharing of best practices from different countries, which helped inspire the different colleges and encourage them to think about innovative ways to deliver their services. In addition, the cluster approach was helpful in enabling colleges to benchmark their projects with other countries including the UK and encouraged colleges to consider how their existing projects could be improved.

South African and Indian colleges reported developing a deeper understanding of workplace-based learning and curricula, partnerships with industry, strategies to strengthen public private partnerships, the importance of entrepreneurship skills and the acknowledgement and promotion of a range of vocational skills. The South African colleges also noted that they learned about commercial linkages for apprentices' outputs and the value of adopting shorter and more flexible TVET programmes, a specific feature of programmes run by the Indian colleges, which generally tended to be shorter.

Learning and take-up

While the cluster approach enabled valuable knowledge exchange between the colleges in each cluster, there were some limitations to the approach, in terms of learning and take up. The leader and practitioner workshops

were noted as a very effective platform to share learning, experience, ideas and best practice. While there has been some indication of useful learning and take-up among the different colleges involved in the partnership strand, whether the knowledge that was exchanged is transferable in terms of supporting the development of the partnered institutions will rely on ongoing communication between the in-country colleges as well as with the UK college leads. As some projects and initiatives are still in development, further knowledge-exchange and dialogue will be vital to cement the learning generated during the I-WORK programme and enable future projects to be informed by this learning.

Learning and take-up was not even across all the countries involved however, due to the different stages of maturity of the various systems in each country. Ghana's system of formal TVET provision is still in the early stages, and thus the Ghanaian colleges felt they had learnt a lot from the UK college lead, as well as the other in-country colleges. In contrast, many Indian colleges felt that they had most in common with the South African colleges and had little to learn from the Malaysian and Ghanaian colleges. Indian colleges also noted that the cluster approach was useful in confirming that they were on the right path, especially given the fact that the Indian TVET sector is still in its infancy. Those colleges who had participated in international exchange programmes before were able to use the programme to advance their existing projects, while those with no previous international experience faced a far steeper learning curve and learnt a huge amount in a short space of time.

A number of colleges reported that they had learnt useful techniques from their UK college partners. For example, Empower College in India found South West College's approach to mentoring particularly useful, as mentoring had not been a part of their offer, and they adapted the UK college's job specification to create a mentoring role in their college. The visits to the UK college campuses were consistently highlighted by the in-country college representatives as one of the most useful aspects of the clusters in terms of learning. Staff from 2nd Image college in Ghana were very impressed by the facilities at the Isle of Wight college campus in terms of catering to students with disability. In addition, those who attended the practitioner workshop were interested to see how the college offered childcare to learners and commented that the visit has made them consider how to adapt colleges in Ghana to meet the different needs of students.

What was the quality of the design and delivery of activities?

Despite time constraints, the programme led to some very impressive achievements across all four countries, particularly in the area of work-readiness support and training.

Delivery of work-readiness support and training

- Politeknik Muadzam Shah in Malaysia developed a 'mentor intern to success' guidebook for students to enhance their soft skills, while Empower college in India provided mentoring training to all staff.

- Gram Tarang and Labournet developed a digital platform to support e-learning and a learner management system.

- Gert Sibande in South Africa delivered training to 588 students in employability skills, based on findings from a survey of employers, students, lecturers and graduates to identify employability skills needs in the labour market.

- Koleg Komuniti Gerik in Malaysia delivered a one-week work readiness programme with five companies in the automotive sector.

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Ghana

In Ghana, the partnership strand was deemed to have been reasonably successful. However, it was noted that engagement from the college leads differed tremendously, and this could be a barrier to success. For instance, colleges such as KVTI showed strong engagement, and others such as DORESS fashion institute, less so. As part of the I-WORK project, the KVTI leader and practitioners decided to focus on the development of Employer Advisory Boards (EABs) to create an avenue for stronger collaboration between trainers and employers for skill training. KVTI arranged regular confidential meetings with the EABs where they discussed the needs of the employers and the ways in which KVTI could address them. The EABs led to additional OJT sites being formed, placement opportunities were increased and all industry partners agreeing to sign a formalized MoU with KVTI, where previously there were none in place. According to industry partners, KVTI's college leader is known for being immensely passionate about his college and KVTI students have a reputation for being very disciplined, qualified and fast learners, and there is demand from employers to hire them as workers.

DORESS fashion institute focused on developing occupational standard for the contemporary Garment industry, with the overall aim to increase employer and student satisfaction with the curriculum and its delivery. This would be achieved via a questionnaire sent to employers within the garment industry combined with one-on-one consultations. However, according to a stakeholder at BC Ghana, there was little engagement from the college lead at DORESS fashion institute because she was waiting to receive funds from the BC before starting work (such as arranging partnership meetings). This led to delays in the project timeline and a college leader from ATTC college was assigned to help her. Nonetheless, promising outcomes included seven training modules (shot courses) being developed and 5 apprentices trained with a 95-98% completion rate.

Case study: KVTI, Ghana

Partner UK College: CAVC

Theme: Employer-led approaches Background: Kumasi Vocational Training Institute (KVTI), a subsidiary of the National Vocational Training Institute (NVTI) is located at the heart of Suame Magazine Kumasi, Ashanti Region of Ghana. KVTI's mission is to provide its learners with demand-driven employability skills through the Competency -Based Training (CBT) approach to apprenticeships, as well as business and career development coaching.

The process: One of the challenges of TVET delivery in Ghana is the limited number of enterprises and industries that are open to On-The-Job Training (OJT). As part of the I-WORK project, the KVTI leader and practitioners decided to focus on the development of Employer Advisory Boards (EABs) to create an avenue for stronger collaboration between trainers and employers for skill training. The project aimed to increase employers' participation in vocational training delivery, whilst equipping learners with relevant market skills that meet industry demand. This in turn would complement the National agenda for providing demand-driven TVET skills to produce a skilled workforce. To develop the EABs, KVTI reached out to employers with whom they already had existing relationships, and garnered the participation of four industry partners in four different trade areas: Catering (Jofel Catering Services Limited); Printing (University Press KNUST-Kumasi); Automation (Japan Motors Trading); and Manufacturing (Neoplan Ghana limited).

The outcome: KVTI arranged regular confidential meetings with the EABs where they discussed the needs of the employers and the ways in which KVTI could address them. Minutes from the meetings were taken and shared back with the group. The EABs led to additional OJT sites being formed, placement opportunities were increased, as well as opportunities for instructors' industrial training. One employer, University Press KNUST, agreed to donate some of their unused printing machines to KVTI for practical training purposes. Moreover, perhaps one of the most valuable outcomes of the project was that it led to all industry partners agreeing to sign a formalised MoU with KVTI, where previously there were none in place. According to the industry partners, their motivation to get involved in the project was because KVTI students are known to be very disciplined, qualified and fast learners, and there is demand from employers to hire them as workers. For instance, roughly 70% of the technical staff at Japan Motors are graduates from KVTI. According to the Deputy Branch Manager:

'*Students from KVTI are given priority when there is vacancy… when [KVTI] students are employed, effectiveness and quality are guaranteed'.*

Next steps towards sustainability: Moreover, KVTI's college leader is known for being immensely passionate about his college and intends to use the remaining budget for industrial activities to continue with the I-WORK project. In terms of future plans for sustainability, the team intends to deepen relationships with industry partners through encouraging exchange programmes for learners and facilitators and sharing workplace learning.

India   (Punjab)

In India, activities were generally delivered, and outputs achieved. There was also emerging evidence of achievement of outcomes, including employment of learners, though it is too early to tell for most projects. Only one component of one project was not delivered to plan, and the college has successfully reflected on the failed pilot and plans to test a different approach. B-ABLE college set up a number of industry partnerships and delivered multiple training programmes to train learners to become qualified phlebotomists and painters, resulting in the placement of 39 phlebotomists and 240 painters with employers.

Malaysia

In Malaysia, activities were divided between 'employer-led approaches' and soft skills training. Colleges involved in employer-led activities were able to make substantive achievements in part due to the fact that their I-WORK projects were a continuation of previous work. For example, Institut Latihan Perdustrian Mersing (ILPM), approached Petronas, Malaysia's largest oil and gas company, with whom they already had an established apprenticeship programme to develop a new curriculum. ILPM collaborated with Petronas on developing a new syllabus to ensure that students had the specific skills required by Petronas to successfully enter in their apprenticeship programme. Petronas also provided ILPM with machinery for students to practice on so skills development could be maintained. In addition, Kolej Komuniti Geri's (KKG) project was very successful. They were able to engage five major companies in the automotive sector including Honda, Toyota, Proton, Ramlee Motos and a tire company, to host first years for one week to learn specific automotive skills they wouldn't have learned from the college.

South Africa

Before the introduction of the dual system approach in South Africa, TVET colleges only offered academic, classroom-based learning. The dual system model was initially established in Germany and refers to the combination of academic classroom teaching alongside an industry work placement. Occupational qualifications are new to these institutions and required adapting their teaching and building greater ties with the industry. The partnership strand of I-WORK strived to support this endeavour, by facilitating knowledge sharing and the implementation of projects at college level to promote soft skills teaching and employer-led education.

In South Africa, the six TVET colleges could be divided into two groups: one group of three colleges that performed well and met their most important outputs despite the tight timeframe; and one group of colleges that encountered major challenges in implementation and could not deliver most of their activities and outputs, which were broadly similar. Majuba College was one of the most successful, and established an industry board with public sector representatives, as well the implementation of a job placement and employability skills training budget in the college. In addition, they established an entrepreneurship unit and set up a regular of a business breakfast with industry representatives to aid employer engagement.

The colleges that did not perform as planned encountered primarily internal challenges such as staff turnover, lack of senior leadership buy-in, and inability to secure the resources needed to fund their project. Some of these institutions had never been exposed to international partnerships and faced a steep learning curve. Conversely, those colleges that performed better tended to have prior experience implementing international projects, had stronger organisational capacity and existing relationships with employers.

What were the key enablers in the achievement of or progress toward outcomes?

The key enablers at the programme level were the commitment and openness of the participating organisations (at the leader, practitioner and teacher level), the quality technical assistance provided by the technical experts and UK TVET colleges that were relevant to country contexts, the support from the British Council team and the positive influence of the British Council brand (especially in Malaysia and South Africa).

British Council support: fieldwork consultations with in-country college representatives highlighted the integral role of the British Council team, both centrally and in-country, which facilitated an open and collaborative environment at all events, workshops and dissemination events. In addition, the British Council was successful in leveraging existing relationships and bringing high-level government stakeholders to the table.

BC India noted that due to the short time to identify partners, they went with trusted partners they had pre-existing relationships with. There may be a trade-off between 'safer' partners and riskier partners, who require more support, but for whom there is greater potential to significantly build capacity. Across all four countries, the British Council's ability to leverage their existing partners was noted to be very valuable. Involvement from the British Council helped to raise the profile of a number of colleges, and secure more employer engagement and high-level buy-in.

The multilateral approach bringing in momentum and high-level interest in the programme due to its international nature. The multilateral approach was useful in sparking dialogue between countries, yet in order to sustain this communication, there needs to be ongoing support from the UK colleges to manage the communication flows and play a leadership role.

The flexible and non-directive approach meant that college leads could design and adapt projects relevant to their contexts. As the partners had free reign to design the projects, and were often required to identify their own funding, this meant they were fully committed to the projects. There was good evidence of continued commitment to these pilots, or to continuing piloting, where the pilots had been unsuccessful.

Strategic use of funding for projects. British Council's funding can thus be seen as 'seed funding' for pilots, playing a critical role in providing the initial injection to test an approach, which is then funded by the college themselves (such as digital platform, testing of new mentoring approach).

Private sector engagement: the fact that the Indian colleges were private organisations, used to having to secure funding from different sources, including government, industry and learners, and often with existing ideas for new projects and collaborations, meant that the Indian projects were able to achieve a lot in a relatively short time period. The fact that the Indian colleges were all private organisations meant that they were very nimble in securing funding, and thus were able to design more ambitious projects and sustain their activities beyond the lifespan of the programme.

Stage of development of projects: The projects that achieved the most was where there was initial groundwork undertaken by partners, and where the partnership and knowledge exchange was able to play more of a catalytic role, especially given the short duration of the project. This meant projects could focus on drawing momentum, inspiration, approaches and tools from the exchange programme, and draw on employer interest and commitment.

Case study: B-ABLE College, India

Partner UK College: Cardiff and Vale College

Country: India (Punjab)

Theme: Employer-led approaches

Background: B-ABLE had already been in discussions with Lal Pat Lab and AkzoNobel about potential collaborations. While progress was good with Lal Pat Lab, discussions with AkzoNobel had not progressed far. The workshop at CAVC reinforced the importance of engaging with industry and industry tie-ups, provided evidence that it can work in practice and reassured B-ABLE that they were on the right path. B-ABLE learned from CAVC the importance of ensuring they presented opportunities that were beneficial to industry.

The process: CSR departments in Lal Pat Lab and AkzoNobel sponsored training in Delhi on painting, and phlebotomy in Lucknow. Both employers were involved for social motivations, as well as commercial ones: Lal Pat Lab wanted painters who would be able to recommend its products, and AkzoNobel was facing a supply demand in villages of trained phlebotomists. Both employers were involved in the recruitment of trainers, design of curriculum and participation as guest lecturers.

The project targeted learners from poorer socio-economic backgrounds – this was assessed as part of the application process. Courses were delivered with a mixture of theoretical and practical training, which was followed by on the job training (OJT), which was often followed up transition to full employment.

The Outcome: The Lal Pat Lab course trained 49 learners, placed 44 learners into on the job training, of which 39 are currently in employment as phlebotomists. Lal Pat Lab are satisfied with the project and are planning to move to a Phase 2 with B-ABLE, scaling this to Rajasthan.

The AkzoNobel course trained 540 youths (240 new painters, 300 current painters requiring upskilling). All of these youths also participated in on the job training and are currently in employment as sub-contractors.

Next steps toward sustainability: Scale up is being discussed with AkzoNobel and is expected to start in May 2020 in additional locations.

What were the key barriers to the achievement of and progress toward outcomes?

Most colleges noted that **more clarity and information** was needed in terms of programme objectives, expectations and resource requirements. Due to the fast pace of the programme mobilisation phase, there was limited time for programme partners to prepare for the first stages of engagement. Stakeholders reported that they

would have been able to plan their approach to representation if not constrained by the timetable. A number of organisations were unsure about what the programme entailed until they arrived at the workshop. Stakeholders noted that they would have thought more strategically about the most appropriate team members to send, had they known more about the programme.

The condensed timeframe was noted as a real challenge by all stakeholders. Stakeholders pointed out that relationship building, especially with government ministries takes time, to build rapport and ensure sustainability. More time would have enabled the programme team to continue to support and monitor uptake and further tailor projects as needed.

Disconnect between leaders and practitioners: In some colleges, the practitioners who were implementing the project were not involved in the leader workshops, during which a strategic framework for the projects was developed, as well as a plan for how to monitor and evaluate the proposed projects. Many practitioners did not seem to have had formal briefing on the aims and objectives of I-WORK and were unclear as to what the programme entailed. A thorough initial briefing for both leaders and practitioners, as well as joint workshops to design and plan the implementation of the projects would have been useful.

Challenges with securing funding was a major barrier to sustainability, except in India (Punjab), which had good access to government funds, industry funding, learner funding. Consideration of sustainable funding mechanisms during the pilot development phase could have been useful.

The approach **to allocation of funds** was inconsistent across the clusters. While some UK colleges simply divided the funding equally between the in-country colleges, others based the allocation on need, and others were under the impression that the entirety of the funding was intended for the UK colleges. This was noted as a challenge by a number of organisations, as resulting in over/under ambitious projects.

3.3 Sustainability and pathways to systemic change

This section discusses the likelihood that the outcomes generated in the partnership strand will be sustained beyond the lifespan of the I-WORK programme, and considers the contribution of the strand's activities to pathways to systemic change.

There is some indication that a few of the pilot activities as part of the partnership strand will continue, and in many cases be scaled up, either in the same setting or different settings. The fact that the projects were driven by the in-country colleges increased their commitment to these projects. In addition, there is evidence of continued discussions on potential collaborations, between the colleges across the four countries. A longer duration for partnerships would have enabled stronger relationships between stakeholders and enabled the identification of further opportunities for mutual support. A follow-up exercise one year after the completion of the programme would aid in solidifying lessons learnt, and identifying any sustainable impact achieved by the programme. However, given the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, such an exercise may not be feasible in the immediate future.

What is the likelihood that the outcomes generated by the partnership strand will be sustained beyond the programme?

Ghana

KVTI is planning to deepen their relationships with employers in terms of workplace experience learning and cost sharing of specific activities. They are in the process of formalizing their relationship with various employers including Joefel Catering, Japan Motors, University Printing Press, and Neoplan, and there have been discussions about conducting an exchange of facilitators from KVTI and Joefel Catering to train their students. However, it is unclear whether activities underway towards formalizing relationships with employers would have happened organically anyway without I-WORK (as most relationships with employers were already standing for years).

India

In India, as the projects were fully developed by the organisations who were responsible for identifying funding mechanisms for the projects, there was promising commitment to either continue delivery, or in cases where the pilot project worked less well, continue to test other approaches. For example, there are plans to continue existing pilots and partnerships with industry and plans to scale up by either extending the projects or rolling it out in other states, and plans to roll out organisation level activities, such as a placement brochure and a Learner Management System. For the pilots set to continue, organisations have either committed their own funding, secured funding from industry or established a learner funded model. One UK college plans to continue work with their Indian partner to scale up the activities of their social inclusion project.

Malaysia

In Malaysia, many colleges reported that they would continue activities developed on the I-WORK programme beyond the end date. However, a couple of colleges noted it was uncertain what would happen with the tools developed as part of their I-WORK project. For one college who focused on developing a soft skills module, this would have meant a change in the curriculum which required approvals from senior college administrators, which had not occurred at the time of the data collection. For another college involved in employer-led approaches, it was asserted that additional finances were needed to provide certain costs (e.g. accommodation for students) to maintain the activities in which they were in discussions with industries.

South Africa

In South Africa, most colleges expressed their intention to continue implementing activities. Stakeholders pointed out that funding is available from the Sector Education Training Authorities (SETAs) and The National Skills Fund[19] for I-WORK type of activities. As a result of I-WORK, Northlink college secured budget and buy-in from management for developing an online work readiness programme. They have identified an opportunity to partner and receive funding from the Indian Whadwani Foundation in South Africa to implement this initiative.

To what extent did the partnership strand contribute to change in the key domains important for systemic change?

Due to the pilot nature of the programme and adaptive management approach, we took an exploratory view to assessing emerging outcomes, using domains identified in the broader literature on TVET and skills strategy, in particular the ILO's six building blocks for developing quality apprenticeship systems, which include a robust regulatory framework; meaningful social dialogue between employers' and workers' organisations; clear roles and responsibilities of numerous stakeholders; equitable funding arrangements; strong labour market relevance and inclusiveness.[20]

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[19] https://nationalgovernment.co.za/units/view/259/national-skills-fund-nsf
20 ILO (2019), A framework for quality apprenticeships, p. 8. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_731155.pdf

In terms of changes in the key domains necessary for systemic change, change was mainly seen in the areas of increased collaboration between stakeholders and knowledge and capacity of stakeholders across the countries involved. In addition, a number of projects increased collaboration between training providers and employers, though it should be noted that this was often built on pre-existing relationships.

Knowledge and capacity of stakeholders

Quality TVET provision is dependent on the knowledge and capacity of a wide range of stakeholders, including educators; principals; employers; government ministers; policymakers and students themselves. All stakeholders involved should have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, as well as their shared objectives.[21] Stakeholders across all four countries reported that they had shared and developed knowledge of different inclusive and employer-led approaches. South African colleges noted that staff members were able to gain greater exposure to public speaking opportunities, curriculum building skills, and several soft skills through the programme, which they would not have had otherwise. A number of colleges also grew in standing through the I-WORK programme. For example, Majuba college in South Africa is becoming a national centre for TVET in South Africa and other colleges, such as Eastern Cape colleges, are visiting to learn from them.

Greater engagement among stakeholders, and an improved understanding of the importance of inclusive and employer-led approaches.

The ILO framework highlights that TVET provision bridges the gap between the education sector and labour market, and thus it is vital that there is dialogue between employers and TVET providers. Employer-led approaches are particularly important, as they are best placed to identify the current and future skills needs of the labour market and how to provide them. The training organisations involved in the partnership strand were already engaged and understood the importance of inclusive and employer led approaches but were inspired to pilot *different* approaches to engaging employers. In addition, they were able to improve their understanding of the importance of supporting work-readiness and cultivating soft skills. I-WORK triggered greater interest from colleges in making links with employers, building more partnerships with the industry, and expose lecturers to industry in a meaningful way. The international nature of the programme added weight and prestige to the participating colleges' offer, and they were able to engage with more employers.

The programme was also successful in increasing collaboration between the colleges and training providers across the five participating countries, and there are indications of potential future partnerships. For example, a UK college and Gram Tarang in India (Punjab) have been discussing a future collaboration. In addition, another Indian college Empower, and their UK partner have discussed a potential joint programme. Empower has followed up with an industry in the UK which had branches in India. The Indian college Nettur Technical Training Foundation and a Malaysian college are discussing a potential future collaboration in the aerospace industry.

Sufficient resources to support change

The ILO framework highlights the importance of equitable funding arrangements in quality TVET provision, stating that "quality apprenticeships generate both costs and benefits for the public authorities, enterprises and apprentices themselves. There must be a clear overall understanding that costs are shared equitably to ensure that all stakeholders are willing to participate on a long-term basis"[22]. Resource limitations were highlighted by several colleges in Ghana, Malaysia and South Africa, but only by one college in India. In India, the majority of

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21 ILO (2019), A framework for quality apprenticeships, p. 8. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_731155.pdf
22 ILO (2019), A framework for quality apprenticeships. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_731155.pdf

pilot projects were funded either by the organisations themselves, or by employers or learners. This appears to be unique to the Indian context and could be due to the involvement of private sector and social enterprise organisations.

4.0 Dissemination

This section outlines key findings from the dissemination strand and provides a quantitative analysis of the data collected at the conclusion of the National Workshops, as well as reflecting on the value of the events across the different countries involved.

The dissemination strand sought to synthesise the partnership and apprenticeship strands through a series of National and International workshops, which took place in the five I-WORK countries in early 2020. National Workshops took place in place in Ghana, South Africa, India (Punjab) and Malaysia in January and February 2020 and consolidated the learning and showcased the outcomes of the work in both strands in each country. The International Workshop was held in the UK and focussed on the outcomes achieved across all participating countries. The events gathered practitioners, college leaders and policymakers and aimed to further the reach and impact of the projects, expand the use of good practice and inspire others to take new approaches to TVET provision.

4.1 The National Workshops

The National Workshops took place in Ghana, South Africa, India (Punjab) and Malaysia in February 2020 and consolidated the learning and showcased the outcomes of the work in both strands in each country over two days. The workshops all followed a similar format, with the first day focussed on the partnership strand, and the second day on the apprenticeship strand. The workshops aimed to gather a broad range of stakeholders, and included in-country college leaders, national experts, policy makers, representatives from ministries, employers, and potential funders and sponsors. The purpose of the National Workshops was threefold[23]:

1. Capacity Building: exchange of learning generated during the pilot partnership projects in each country and encourage best practice to be replicated by other colleges.

2. Influencing: present the apprenticeship project outcomes and the impact of the partnerships to high level stakeholders in the country.

3. Networking: create the opportunity for local policy makers, employers and college representatives to meet and share knowledge.

Ghana

In Ghana, stakeholders reflected that the National Workshop enabled them to learn more about the I-WORK programme and connect to other relevant people in their industries, including employers from formal and informal apprenticeship sectors. Stakeholders claimed that the coverage of the event by 30 different media houses helped to raise awareness about the new apprenticeship policy. In addition, the National Workshop presented the opportunity for the apprenticeship policy to be disseminated to an audience of 300 people . One of the reasons why the workshop was so popular was due to the consultative nature of policy development process. Active participation and endorsement of the policy by the ministries, agency departments, employers, training institutions, students and craftspeople was proof of the relevance of this project. Leadership provided by the British Council team provided a clear plan and implementation framework for the process.

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23 British Council (2018), Evaluation of the British Council's I-WORK Programme: Terms of Reference.

India (Punjab)

In India, though the colleges were already aware of each other, the National Workshop provided a further opportunity to connect and share learning. Many participants identified useful learning and ideas that they wanted to test in their own contexts. One college was also interested in adopting the apprenticeship pilot in its own state. The second day of the workshop would have focused on the apprenticeship scheme and included more national and policy level stakeholders. Unfortunately, the second day was cancelled due to concerns about COVID-19.

Malaysia

In Malaysia, the National Workshop was highly successful in disseminating learning, connecting relevant stakeholders in the wider TVET landscape in Malaysia, and generating interest in scaling up effective practices and tools created in I-WORK. Several participants reported the I-WORK conference to be inspiring and engaging. It was clear that relationships between attendees were being established both at the college level (partnerships), academic institutions (apprenticeship strand) and at the national level (government officials). However, it was highlighted that employer engagement should be prioritised, and there perhaps could have been more attendees from industries.

South Africa

In South Africa, the event successfully generated interest in the programme and employer-led education, especially from non-participating colleges. For example, one official from the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) was particularly impressed with the setup of an advisory board with the industry by one of the colleges and plans to promote the idea further with colleagues. Stakeholders noted that the event convinced them of the need to increase collaboration and was an invaluable opportunity for peer-learning between colleges.

The fact that DHET facilitated workshops was noted to be very effective. However, it would have been helpful to gather more industry associations; and have more senior representatives and relevant decision-makers from colleges and from the industry. Employers from participating colleges in regions were disappointed they had not been invited to the conference and suggested employers should systematically be invited to such events if such programmes are to be successful.

4.2 The International Workshops

A two-day workshop took place in London in March 2020, and gathered the National Experts and policy advisors from the four I-WORK countries, policy makers from England, Scotland, Wales and Norther Ireland, college leaders of the 6 UK colleges, representatives of international organisations, as well as British Council country managers and the British Council Skills team.

A week-long leadership training was planned to take place in Cardiff in March 2020 and gather the in-country college leads involved in the partnership strand. The event had to be cancelled due to concerns about COVID-19, and a number of training sessions were held online instead.

The purpose of the International Workshop was slightly different to that of the National Workshops, and had the following objectives:

1. Disseminate the results of the partnership projects and sharing of learning among the commonwealth countries, participating in the programme.

2. Promote the Apprenticeships benchmarking tool.

3. Present the achievements of the programme to an international audience.

4. Facilitate networking among policy makers, employers and college representatives from the four Commonwealth countries.

London

The London workshop provided a valuable forum for the different countries involved to showcase the work they had produced over the course of the programme, as well as highlight their achievements and opportunities for further development. The London workshop gathered the key project staff from the British Council, as well as the British Council in-country teams. The tone of the London workshop was more reflective than the National Workshops, as the activities of the programme had concluded by that stage. In addition to providing a forum to showcase the achievements and highlights of the project, the London workshop provided the opportunity for the in-country representatives to provide their feedback on some of the tools and processes in the programme such as the problem-tree analysis and benchmarking tool.

Feedback from the London workshop was also positive, as the majority of respondents agreed with most of the questions in the feedback form. More than 95% of respondents reported that the workshop was of value to their work and that it helped in building new working relationships, while 100% agreed that it was relevant to their role, useful, and of high quality. More than 90% also reported that they are aware of effective approaches to improve the quality of TVET and that they will implement changes to their institution/organisation in the future.

4.3 Outputs and quality of outputs

What was the quality of the design and delivery of the National and International Workshops?

There was overwhelmingly positive feedback about the National Workshops across all five countries, and the vast majority of participants reported that they found the workshops useful, relevant, and of high quality. The first day of the workshops was more focused on colleges, while the second day was open to a wider audience. The only exception was India (Punjab), where the second day of the workshop was cancelled due to concerns regarding the Covid-19 pandemic.

Table 3: Number of workshop attendees

Country	Ghana	India	Malaysia	South Africa	London
Total Number of attendees (Day 1)	72	11	29	14	NA
Total Number of returned forms (Day 1)	57	11	20	13	13
Total Number of attendees (Day 2)	307	NA	NA	122	NA
Total Number of returned forms (Day 2)	119	NA	54	62	24

Numbers of attendees varied significantly with Ghana being the largest workshop and India (Punjab) the smallest. The following analysis is based mostly on data from day 2 of the workshops, with the obvious exceptions of India (Punjab) and also data stemming from questions only asked in the first day of the workshop. The questions were in the feedback forms covered participants' knowledge of the UK's profile in the TVET sector; the role of the British Council in skills development; participants' confidence in continuing the activities of the programme, and opinion of the workshops.

Cross-country analysis

Overall, the feedback from the workshops was very positive. On average, 93% of respondents found that the I-WORK National Workshop was of value to their work, and 90% reported that they build new working relationships as a result of the workshop. The workshop also proved to be educational for the participants, as they reported improved knowledge of the UK's profile and reputation as a source of expertise in skills development, as well as the role and work of the British Council in skills development. On average, approximately 96% of the respondents also reported an improvement in their knowledge of effective approaches which can improve the quality of TVET, while almost 95% reported that they will implement changes to improve the quality of TVET in their institution. The feedback forms demonstrated broad consensus on the effectiveness and importance of the workshops, with little variation across countries. As shown by the preceding figures, the vast majority of respondents across all countries either agreed or strongly agreed with the statements given in the feedback form. See Annex 3 for the full analysis of the workshop feedback forms.

Diagram 4: Workshop Feedback form

5.0   Cross-cutting issues

This section outlines the programme's three cross-cutting issues, which were of interest across all programme strands, and provides an analysis of the extent to which these agenda shaped the activities of the programme.

5.1 Strategic resource allocation

How well were resources allocated between project strands and components?

The I-WORK project performs well against the Value for Money (VfM) framework, against the efficiency measures and cost-effectiveness measures. The British Council can consider further developing the VfM framework, to broaden focus from the partnership projects to other outcomes from the partnership approach, such as capacity building and relationships developed.

The efficiency measures include cost per successful partnership project, cost per successful skills institution pilot and cost per skills professional and skills institution engaged. In particular, the dissemination events have been highly successful in engaging key stakeholders in each country.

The cost-effectiveness indicator focuses on uptake of these pilot programmes, assessed by the ratio of pilot projects that are converted into sustainable changes in skills training centres and national/regional apprenticeship schemes by adopting or planning to adopt more employer-led and/or inclusive practices. As discussed in the sustainability section, there is strong evidence of partnership and apprenticeship projects being developed into sustained changes for at least a year beyond programme funding. The allocation of resources between project strands and components was largely fixed by the initial budget. If time had permitted, it may have been beneficial to review and allocate resources across strands and projects depending on the development of proposals, which would have better matched resources to scale of ambition.

UK colleges reported that funding was generally adequate for their activities, but there was lack of clarity on the allocation of funding to in-country partners. This affected efficiency, with in-country partners noting that they had developed overambitious or under ambitious proposals, as they did not know that budget was available, or the value of budget available. While project funding was small in scale, there is indication that these were strategically used. For example, in India (Punjab), this funding was to test and pilot a mentoring programme in one in-country partner, and an IT platform in another, both of which are planned to be scaled up across both multi-site organisations.

5.2 Efficiency

Were activities and projects delivered in the intended timeframe?

While the condensed timeframe was frequently highlighted as a challenge across the various strands of the programme, there was also some suggestion that it may have enhanced the efficiency of the programme to some extent. Participants were compelled to focus on the most pressing challenges in their apprenticeship systems, and design an intervention to address that challenge specifically, as seen in the apprenticeship strand in Malaysia. The benchmarking exercise identified employer engagement in the manufacturing sector to be a major problem, so the activities focussed on creating a playbook for employers explaining how to set up an apprenticeships scheme.

The projects were generally delivered efficiently and within budget, and there was good use of competitive tendering and consideration of economy in delivering the apprenticeship and partnership projects. Government stakeholders in India (Punjab) suggested workshops could have been delivered more economically, in cheaper venues or in colleges.

There were varying degrees of staff capacity across the different countries involved, and evidence of the efficient use of limited staff resources. Some stakeholders felt that it would have been beneficial to deliver the projects entirely in house rather than rely on the in-country British Council teams.

There were some challenges with how the budget could be used in South Africa, which meant new staff members could not be recruited. In the end, a significant proportion of work was outsourced to external consultants. The work was delivered well, but the BC team thought that it might have been more efficient to have hired a full-time project manager and project coordinator.

The apprenticeship strand projects were delivered in the intended timeframe, but efficiency in the partnership strand was variable, and some colleges were unable to implement their activities due to running out of time. Across all four countries, the apprenticeship projects were delivered within the timeframe and achieved targeted outputs, which is particularly impressive, given the fact that the projects required building strong relationships and engagement with government ministries.

5.3 Inclusion

How inclusive were the activities of the programme across the partnership and apprenticeship strands?

While inclusion was a cross-cutting concern throughout the three strands of the programme, the programme documentation is broad as to the definition of inclusion and how it should be interpreted. The FCDO business case stated that while the programme's primary focus was on young people, programme activities should address other areas such as gender, disability and socio-economic disadvantage.

The broad definition of inclusion in this context was intended to allow the countries involved to address local priorities for inclusion and allow for some analysis both at country level and institutional level to inform both priority and baselining. While inclusion was highlighted in the theory of change, there was no evidence of specific efforts to engage with students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Even given the contextual constraints the lack of attention to inclusive approaches was notable. This contrasts with the expected approach to the project. The risk plan in the BC for example noted that there was a low risk of this happening, "Our team will ensure the principles of gender equality and equal opportunities are embedded in all project activities and will incorporate these also in the development of partners' KPIs to encourage targeted support towards young people from disadvantaged backgrounds."[24]

Fieldwork consultations revealed that the concept of inclusion is highly normative, and interpretations of inclusion varied between countries and colleges. There is thus a trade-off between allowing colleges to focus on their own priorities and being more prescriptive to ensure that programme activities are inclusive across gender, disability, ethnicity and socio-economic considerations.

Ghana: while the National Policy developed as part of the apprenticeship strand had an explicit focus on including people with disability, there were few students with disability in the participating colleges. Ghana's activities under the apprenticeship strand included aiming to encourage more men into traditionally female-dominated professions

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24 FCDO (2018), Business Case: Improving work opportunities for young people in the Commonwealth.

like cosmetology, and women into traditionally male-dominated professions like engineering, but it is too early to ascertain whether this will be achieved.

Malaysia: colleges in the partnership strand did not intentionally target females or students with disabilities in their I-WORK activities. However, some colleges targeted students from disadvantaged backgrounds as part of their general in-take.

India (Punjab): the focus on inclusion was strongest in India, with several colleges in the partnership strand focussed on working with rural communities and other marginalised groups. However, this was already a focus of the colleges involved, and thus cannot be attributed to the I-WORK programme.

South Africa: inclusion was not a strong focus in South Africa and there was no explicit policy in place to include more female students or students with disability.

6.0 Key findings

This section summarises key findings from each of the programme's strands, including good practice, as well as unintended outcomes and challenges in delivering TVET programmes more broadly.

6.1   Apprenticeship Strand

At the apprenticeship level, stakeholders very much appreciated the level of freedom and flexibility they were afforded, which enabled them to design projects tailored to their country contexts and the strategic priorities of the individual colleges.

The problem-tree analysis was found to be a useful exercise, and enabled participants to critically assess their existing apprenticeship system and identify the most salient issues to be addressed through the programme. This level of flexibility and freedom enabled the development of contextually relevant interventions with local support.

The buy-in and commitment of stakeholders is key, and involving multiple stakeholders in the development and testing of new approaches, tools and policies supports buy-in.

Across the apprenticeship pilots in particular, being able to test products, and create outputs from stakeholder feedback was crucial, supporting the likelihood of uptake (Ghana, India, in particular). This is also a good way to include inclusivity considerations. For example, Ghana included a broad range of stakeholders in its consultations (across 4 different regions), including people with disabilities, and would have liked to expand their consultations to all 16 regions of Ghana.

The principal value of the benchmarking tool was been to encourage a more rigorous planning process when designing a policy framework for apprenticeship systems, rather than as a tool for comparison. Future refinement and support from the British Council would facilitate the use of the benchmarking tool beyond the lifespan of I-WORK.

The benchmarking tool was useful to assess each country's systems as a self-improvement tool, but there is indication that some of the issues were already well-known such as in India (Punjab), and plans were already in plan to develop the project, such as in Ghana. While the benchmarking tool enabled a valuable exercise of self-reflection, more could be done to reach its full potential. The benchmarking tool was noted as a comprehensive tool, with great potential to help track progress. Ongoing support from the British Council will be required to build and develop engagement with and usage of the benchmarking tool.

It was noted during the development of the tool there is an inherent tension between rigor and accessibility of the tool. While some stakeholders commented that they felt the tool was too long, others made suggestions of further questions that could be added in. Condensing the tool too drastically could lead to less rigorous process of reflection, yet future iterations of the tool could include clear sub-divisions, such as policy, reflection and implementation, to make it more accessible and digestible, and thus facilitate its take-up. In addition, translation of the tool into other languages would enable greater take-up and applicability to multiple country contexts.

Although the theory of change outlines the programme aim to focus on students from disadvantaged backgrounds, there was little evidence of special consideration of the inclusiveness of activities across both the apprenticeship and partnership strands.

Fieldwork consultations and project completion reports revealed how broad and normative the concept of inclusion is, and inclusion was interpreted very differently across the different countries and colleges involved in the programme. The benchmarking tool does include a number of questions which specifically seek to address inclusion issues, both in policy terms and targets in relation to gender and disability, as well as questions specifically related to the implementation of policies.

While inclusion is an undeniably important issue across a variety of policy areas including TVET, the inclusiveness of TVET interventions varies across different country contexts. Even in countries like Germany and the Netherlands, which have very progressive policies in relation to gender equality and strong vocational training systems, professional and occupational segregation is quite high. A short-term programme like I-WORK alone cannot address these deeply entrenched issues, yet a clear set of outcomes and indicators would help to pave the way for more inclusive activities in future TVET programming.

6.2 Partnership Strand

The move away from bilateral engagement towards a multilateral approach was effective, and demonstrated that partnership work in TVET in general is useful as a catalyst to pave the way for longer-term systemic change.

The cluster approach was very well-received, and participants valued the opportunity to exchange knowledge and best practice with the other colleges in the cluster. While the lifespan of the programme was too short to witness long-term systemic change, the multilateral cluster approach has been very successful and helped to strengthen links between the Commonwealth countries involved, as well as improve knowledge of the UK's profile and reputation as a source of expertise in skills, and knowledge of the British Council's role and work in skills development. There was evidence that the partnership approach inspired new ideas. While a number of projects were already in development, the partnership approach also helped to further support the development of projects, as well as spark the launch of pilot projects. While the partnership strand was successful as a catalyst for action, more could have been done to support learning and take up of good practices.

The rationale for the separate leadership and practitioner events was to secure buy-in from stakeholders, yet the separate events resulted in miscommunication and a lack of information sharing.

While there was a clear rationale for holding separate leader and practitioner events, the distinction between leaders and practitioners was artificial, as for some colleges, the leaders also played a role in implementing the activities. Unfortunately, the practitioners were not always aware of the discussions that had taken place between the leaders, with the result that there was some confusion about the programme timeline, available budget, expectations, potential direction of activities. A thorough initial briefing for all participants would have been useful and helped to avoid miscommunications later on.

The British Council had intended for the UK colleges to lead the clusters and manage the different levels of experience and different cultural backgrounds within their cluster. However, the UK colleges themselves had different levels of experience of managing international programmes and would have benefitted from greater support from each other as well the in-country British Council teams.

The more experienced UK colleges were able to lead communications with their cluster and effectively manage the diversity of experience and cultures within the cluster. The different levels of experience and different ambitions of the in-country colleges was challenging to manage, and perhaps a dual track offer, with more intense support for those less experienced colleges, would have been helpful and facilitated the management of the clusters. For those less experienced colleges, this was more of a challenge and they struggled at times to engage with the in-

country college leaders. The UK college leads would have benefitted from the support of the in-country British Council teams, who would be able to answer any queries and support them in addressing challenges.

The structure of the programme was designed to foster collaboration and long-lasting relationships between the colleges in each cluster, yet the limited timeframe made it difficult to establish meaningful connections. Longer and more structured partnerships would have enabled participants to further nurture relationships and enable the identification of further opportunities for mutual support.

A longer duration for the partnerships would have fostered more meaningful connections between the different colleges in each cluster. In addition, it seems that communication for some clusters tailed off as the programme continued, with the result that they are no longer in touch. A structured plan for continued communication between the colleges in the cluster beyond the lifespan of the programme would have been beneficial.

6.3 Dissemination Strand

Both the National and International Workshops were very well-received, and gathered key stakeholders including industry, government and training providers, which helped increase buy-in for the activities.

All the workshops received positive feedback and provided valuable forums for knowledge-sharing and exchange of best practice, as well as the opportunity to network and build professional relationships.

Greater involvement from the UK college leads, and a closer tailoring of the National Workshops to the needs of employers would have improved attendance and facilitated relationships between attendees.

While inviting all the UK college leads to all the dissemination events would have been financially prohibitive, staggering the invitations to include one UK college at each dissemination event would have created a greater sense of continuity between the UK colleges and their in-country partners.

In order to secure engagement from relevant stakeholders, their specific needs must be considered. For example, shorter workshops outside office hours would ensure industry partners in particular are able to attend. Strong partnerships with employers in terms of trainer recruitment, curriculum design and placements, increases the rate of placements, and ultimately, securing of jobs.

In order to support industry participation, a breakfast session might have been more appropriate than a two-day conference and more notice is needed to enable invited stakeholders to attend. The British Council wouldn't expect individual employers to attend these kinds of events and would rather employer representative organisations to attend and then disseminate to their members. However, there is still a need for more innovative ways to engage these organisations as well.

7.0 Recommendations

This section sets out a number of out recommendations for how future TVET programmes can build on the learning generated by I-WORK, and take forward the best practice developed, as well as improve upon areas of development.

Given the time and resource constraints, the I-WORK programme has led to impressive achievements across all three strands of the programme. The programme piloted an innovative approach to system strengthening in the TVET sector and has yielded several examples of good practice which could be used to inform future programming both by the British Council and wider stakeholders in the TVET sector. Recommendations have been developed based on consultations with external stakeholders, British Council representatives, as well as experts in the TVET sector.

Apprenticeship strand

1. Where funding conditions allow, future programmes should utilise the flexible cultural relations approach adopted in I-WORK in order to ensure activities are tailored to country contexts and there is buy-in for the programme at all levels.

2. Future iterations of the benchmarking tool should take into account the stage of maturity of TVET systems, optimism and pessimism biases and include some elements of peer review, in order to verify responses to the self-assessment questions.

3. Additionally, future iterations of the benchmarking tool could consider a two-stage process, in which a simpler, more condensed version of the tool could be offered as "taster" experience and then a more comprehensive version for those who would like to conduct a more rigorous inquiry of their apprenticeship system.

4. In order that future BC programmes address inclusion issues more directly, programme tenders should reflect this requirement and include specific criteria to be addressed by the activities of the programme.

Partnership strand

5. The British Council should continue to employ a multilateral approach in future partnership programmes and focus on encouraging collaboration between the different countries with which they have built up strong relationships.

6. Future programmes should commence with a thorough initial briefing, covering the ambitions and scale of the programme, clarity on expectations and budget, to ensure alignment between different stakeholder groups and clear communication.

7. A more collaborative selection process, involving the UK and in-country colleges for the clusters would have ensured greater alignment between the partners in each cluster, based on affinities and shared interests.

8. Future TVET programmes aiming to work with a diverse range of colleges should consider tailoring the support offered to the needs and experience levels of the colleges involved and have a dual track offer for more and less experienced colleges, so that all colleges involved are able to benefit from the programme.

Dissemination strand

9. Future programmes should continue to gather a range of high-level stakeholders to increase political commitment to TVET provision in the form of National Workshops or dissemination events.

10. Future programmes could employ a wider range of complementary dissemination activities such as online webinars, to engage a wider range of employers. In addition, shorter events, timed outside office hours would have enabled greater industry engagement.

8.0 Annexes

8.1 Annex 1: Evaluation approach and framework

8.1.1 Evaluation framework

Our evaluation framework draws on the OECD-DAC criteria and is focused on assessing pathways to impact and distil important lessons learned around project design and delivery in relation to effecting positive systemic change in the TVET and skills sector.

Table 4: Evaluation Framework

Evaluation questions	Criteria/Questions for each strand
Relevance: Does the I-WORK programme have a relevant approach to supporting skills systems and TVET in implementation countries?	
To what extent did the IWORK model for providing technical assistance through international collaboration contribute to engaging relevant actors in skills development and strengthening apprenticeship systems? To what extent did this approach lead to activities that were suited to the needs of each country context?	**Partnership strand:** Participants saw the benefit of drawing on relevant experience and skills from other countries to improve understanding of effective approaches to inclusive and employer-led skills development. The organisation of cluster groups into leadership and practitioner groupings met the objectives of supporting inclusive and employer-led approaches to skills development. The thematic focus of cluster groups was relevant to the needs of TVET institutions and their stakeholders (learners and industry). **Apprenticeship strand:** The cultural relations approach contributed to the profile and effective stakeholder engagement in IWORK The 5 step process (global benchmarking tool, piloting, implementing the tool, project response, learning and adjusting) led to an approach that could be suitably adapted to meet the specific needs of each country.
Effectiveness: What was achieved by the programme overall and the individual projects?	
How effective were the different activities? - Process: what was the quality of the design and delivery of activities? - Outputs: what were the outputs achieved, and the quality (relevance, usability) of these outputs?	**Partnership** strand: Clusters were effective in sharing relevant experience in inclusive and employer-led approaches. Technical assistance for TVET leadership was high quality and met the needs of participants. Activities and outputs were achieved in line with expectations and to the satisfaction of stakeholders under the following themes. **Work-readiness**: Work readiness through apprenticeships and work-based learning. **Employer-led**: Employers engaged in defining curricular and engaging in quality assurance. **Regional approaches**: Developing regional initiatives to champion/broker apprenticeships, WBL and work-readiness training. **Collaborative approaches with SMEs:** Collaborating with SMEs to support apprenticeships and WBL **Employer voice and LMI**: Developing mechanisms for capturing employer voice and labour market intelligence.

	Apprenticeship strand: Effective processes were used to design and deliver activities. Quality of technical assistance was high quality and inputs were sufficient to support progress and delivery. Stakeholder engagement was adequate to support progress and delivery. Piloting of the benchmarking tool led to clear learning for delivery. Adaptive approach allowed consideration of different contexts. Activities and outputs were achieved in line with expectations and to the satisfaction of users. Outputs remained relevant to the objectives for strengthening of apprenticeship systems in each country.
	Dissemination strand: Relevant learnings disseminated to attendees. Events inspire, engage, persuade and connect stakeholders. Events generate interest in scale up and use of effective practices and tools created in I-WORK.
To what extent has I-WORK contributed to change in the key domains important for systemic change?	**Assessment of change in areas of:** Policy development and change Knowledge and capacity of stakeholders Increased collaboration between TVET stakeholders (including employers), Stakeholders are engaged and understand the importance of inclusive and employer-led approaches Resources from all stakeholders sufficient to support change.
What are the key enablers and barriers in the achievement of or progress toward outcomes?	Internal project factors External project factors

Efficiency: How efficient was the delivery of the project?	
Was the project delivered efficiently?	Evidence of consideration of ways to minimise costs in design and delivery used during delivery, travel planning, use of experts, identification of cost savings (use of TVET premises, use of virtual meetings, etc.)
How well were resources allocated between project strands and components?	Strategic prioritisation and allocation of resources between strands and components, with consideration of mix of activities and outputs that will lead to the desired outcomes
Were activities and projects delivered in the intended timeframe?	Activities and projects delivered within the timeframe

Sustainability: To what extent will I-WORK outcomes be sustained beyond the programme?	
What is the likelihood that outcomes will be sustained beyond the programme and what are the factors that will influence sustainability?	**Partnership strand:** Interest in continuation of activities in the same setting Interest in scale up of activities in the same setting Evidence of potential for adaptation to a different setting Indication of funder interest/resource availability **Apprenticeship strand:** Commitment to change Organisational capacity Resource availability

8.1.2 Data collection methods

As part of the study, a variety of methods of data collection were employed:

Key informant interviews, delivered both face to face and virtually, covering:

- Delivery process (including piloting, participatory, partnership, adaptive management approach)

- Relevance of project to the country/other countries

- Achievements of the project, including quality of outputs

- Progress towards change

- Perception of the value of apprenticeships

- Key lessons learned

Focus group discussions, with learners and apprentices involved in pilots, covering:

- Quality of apprenticeships

- Inclusiveness

- Pathways for and barriers to progression

Observation guides, to support observation at international and national workshops, covering:

Quality of the workshops

- Diversity of stakeholders involved

- Engagement and dialogue between stakeholders.

8.1.3 Sampling approach

As set out in the introduction, the project consists of three strands. The strands and our sampling approach are summarised below.

Table 5: Sampling Approach

Strand	Components / Projects	Proposed coverage
Apprenticeship	One project each in Malaysia, India (Punjab), Ghana and South Africa	All projects
Partnership	Six projects each in Malaysia, India (Punjab), Ghana and South Africa Leadership/change management workshop	All projects and workshop, with particular focus on five projects, covering the four countries and five themes.
Dissemination	National workshops in Malaysia, India (Punjab), Ghana and South Africa International workshop in London	All workshops

8.1.4 Case studies

Partnership strand

The table below sets out the selection of case studies from the partnership strand mapped to the four countries and five themes.

Table 6: Partnership Strand

College	Country	Theme
IKBN Kuala Langat	Malaysia	Employer voice and labour market intelligence
KKTM Masjid Tanah	Malaysia	Work-readiness
Kumasi Vocational Training Institute (KVTI)	Ghana	Employer-led
Gert Sibande TVET college	South Africa	Regional approaches / Collaborative approach with SMEs
B-ABLE	India (Punjab)	

8.2 Annex 2: Achievements of partnership projects

Malaysia

- **IKBN** developed a programme to build relationships with employers and get them involved in their college. Their project was about changing the dialogue so that employers felt the value of engaging with their college, as opposed to the previous perception that apprenticeships were resource intensive to employers and did not yielding value for money. (Note: this project existed before I-WORK, but through the programme they were able to scale up the number of employers they were able to engage with quite substantially)

- **Koleg Komuniti Gerik** created a pilot which involved first year students to undertake a one week work readiness programme with five companies in the automotive sector. Students would spend the week acquiring skills early on that they would have received at KKG and allowing employers to lead on what they felt students needed to be trained on.

- **Institut Latihan Peridustrian Mersing** implemented an employer-led work readiness programme in which they worked with an oil and gas company (Petronas) to develop a 14-week apprenticeship syllabus. Petronas also provided machinery to ILPM for students to maintain their skill after the apprenticeship. After students complete their final year, they take an exam, and if passed, are able to acquire jobs within Petronas. (Note: this programme existed before I-WORK, but through I-WORK they were able to scale-up and improve processes.)

- **Politeknik Muadzam Shah** developed a 'Mentor intern to success' guidebook for students to enhance their soft skills.

- **Institute Kraft Negara** designed a module for students to develop interpersonal skills to sell their craft projects and well as critically think about how to create and design products. (Note: the module curriculum had only been developed and not piloted on students at the time of the data collection.)

- **KKTM** developed a soft skills module to enhance students' interpersonal skills. Their project also included developing ways to increase the number of students attending the college, as they were only at 60-70% capacity at the time of data collection.

Ghana

Table 7: Ghana

Institution	Theme	Project objective	Relevance to skills development	Outcome of project implementation
Kumasi Vocational Training Institute (KVTI)	Theme 5: developing mechanisms to capture employer-voice, Labour Market Intelligence etc to ensure inclusive approaches to delivery of education. Development of Employer Advisory Boards (EAB) in four trade areas	Development of Employer Advisory Boards (EAB) in four trade areas to create an avenue for stronger collaboration between trainers and employers for skill training and manpower development.	• Increase employers' participation in vocational training delivery • Equip learners with relevant market skills • Meets the industry demand • Provide customized skills training (tailored-made programmes/short-courses) to address the skills gaps.	• KVTI developed memorandum of understanding (MoUs) between the institute and industry partners to regulate employer-partnerships • Shared experiences acquired about employer-led education through international workshops with other institutions • Shared best practices in employer-led education and training across the partners in cluster

			• Address skills gaps within the local economy • Complement the National agenda of providing industry-led/demand-driven TVET skills to produce skilled workforce	• Created opportunity for instructors' industrial training • Established additional "On-the-Job Training" (OJT) sites and placement opportunities increased • Signed memorandum of understanding (MoU) with University Press, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology agreed to release some of unused printing machines to the institute for industry partners (employers /practical training).
Ho Technical University (HTU)	Theme 4: Deepening collaborative work with small firms to create effective work-based learning opportunities for students. Bridge the gap between employers and learners	The objective for the project was to equip students with the requisite Technical skills and Workplace culture; filling the technical skills gap with requisite skills from industry through collaboration between the industry and academia	• Learners will be able to go to employers for workplace experience learning • Employers can contribute to development and validation of occupational standards and related	• Three of the HTU Departments are eager to pilot the Project. • Opportunity to provide commercial service to firms in the area of Food processing, Farming, and manufacturing of machine components. • 5 interested firms have signed collaboration interest form. • Work-based Supervisory Team formed with relevant industries • Ho Technical University is also planning for the development of assessment instruments for the industrial attachment. • HTU intend organising breakfast meetings with potential partners for collaborations in its catchment area.
Dabokpa Technical Institute	Theme 1: Developing work readiness in learners through apprenticeships and work-based learning To promote Workplace Experience Learning (WEL) on the part of learners from the informal sector in agriculture related enterprises	Promoting an entrepreneurial mind set of learners to develop business capacities in agriculture. Providing irrigation facilities for all year farming Up-scaling the ongoing Competency Based Training (CBT) program to include agricultural value chain specifically in agriculture mechanization. Institutional empowerment and increasing numbers of commercially active and mechanized	• Agriculture training in line with CBT approach and on the NTVETQF is needed to improve on ATVET delivery	• 50 Acre land acquired for agriculture mechanisation campus; • Procurement of one tractor and implements on hire purchase from the Ministry of Agriculture; • 350 maxi (50kg) bags of maize harvested from our maize farm; • 33 pioneering students admitted for the agriculture mechanisation programme; • 8,000 blocks moulded on site ready for construction; • Sinking of a mechanized borehole with 1,000ltr capacity water storage facility at the new campus for irrigation purposes.

		agricultural related enterprises.		
2nd Image International College	Theme 1: developing work readiness in learners through apprenticeship sand work-based learning And Theme 2: engaging employers in defining curricula and partnering in quality assurance Formalisation of informal training delivery	Validation of occupational standards, learning materials and assessment tools	• To conduct a survey to confirm practical and knowledge gaps • To organise stake holders' meeting • To pilot a module in a CBT curriculum • To organise capacity building for facilitators and Master Craft Persons • To pilot, monitor and evaluate • Training conducted in line with CBT approach to meet COTVET requirement and on specific level of the NTVETQF	• 20 learners who had previously enquired about enrolling in beauty therapy but could not as a result of financial challenges were contacted • Learners visit the workplace twice and come to school three times in a week • Learners have a logbook to record daily activities in the salon • Monitoring team visits salons every week to ensure learners full participation • Employers: are very much enthused about the project as they would have fully prepared and highly competent workforce for the job market • Learners: Higher confidence and competent levels as they have the opportunity to put into practice what has been taught in class • College: Students always bring in more ideas from the workplace for more interaction in class • Imports from practitioners' meeting: A replicate of smart assessor and work readiness programs
Accra Technical Training Centre	Theme 5: developing mechanisms to capture employer-voice, Labour Market Intelligence etc to ensure inclusive approaches to delivery of education. 'Establishment of Industry Advisory Board (IAB) for training'.	Constitute a welding industry advisory board with a blend of academia and industry professionals to direct the training of learners, ensure their placement in industry for their apprenticeship while still going through training, and providing mentorship for the placed learners.	• Partnership with relevant industry for quality and relevant technical and vocational skills delivery • Validate selected occupational standards, learning materials and assessment tools • Training conducted in line with CBT approach to meet COTVET requirement and on specific level of the NTVETQF	• Welding Industry Advisory Board formed • First meeting held with appointment of the interim chair and secretary • Terms of Reference (ToR) of the board drafted • Training of learners co-opted into the project in TIG and MIG ongoing • Advisory board developing a working plan to achieve the set objectives • Industry overwhelming us with their enthusiasm and ideas for the future of the project.
DORESS Fashion Institute	Theme 1: develop work readiness in learners through apprenticeships and work-based learning	Strengthening the collaboration between training providers and garment industries.	• Find out the skills and knowledge gaps among prospective trainees/learners • Develop training modules/units to address the skills and knowledge	• 7 training modules (short courses) developed • 5 Trainers/facilitators capacity developed • 5 Apprentices trained • 95-98% apprentices achieved completion rate

| | Strengthening the collaboration between training providers and garment industries. | | required by the garment industries
• Implement the training modules on targeted apprentices.
• Determine tools and equipment needs of training providers | |

South Africa

Table 8: South Africa

Theme	TVET College	Project objective	Outputs and Outcomes	Key challenges
Work Readiness	Gert Sibande	Long Term Goal: By 2021 Gert Sibande TVET College will increase the number of graduates into permanent employment by 10% **Short Term Goal:** Identify Employability Skills requirements of employers and train 350 students on the identified skills by 30 November 2019	• Developed and implemented a survey of employers, students, lecturers and graduate in employment to identify needs in employability skills. • Based on survey results, developed training manual and Powerpoint Presentation • 8 lectures were trained to deliver a session on employability skills • 588 students were trained in employability skills	• One practitioner resigned from the college which affected implementation of project. • Lack of knowledge about IWORK by college staff. • Huge distances between campuses • Difficulty in meeting with some employers as they are reluctant to leave their places of operations
	Capricorn	Establish a platform for staekholders to influence and shape Curriculum Offerings of the college to ensure relevance to employer requirements in terms of quality, innovation, job market	The programme is yet to implement the programme • More workplace exposure and awareness for lecturers • Intensive M&E to maximize impact of the programme • Establishment of industrial advisory board • Assisting students to compile Job Hunting Tool Kit and integration of soft skills into Life orientation lessons and through one on one sessions with CDO's	• Lack of information sharing from project leader • Practitioners unable to attend meeting in person
Employer-Led Education	Northlink	1. Develop and implement a work readiness programme for apprenticeship learners inclusive to learners with special needs. 2. To establish an accredited online work readiness programme with an awarding body.	Unable to secure funding and therefore unable to roll out the programme. The college has however secured budget and buy in from senior management as well as a funding opportunity with a Foundation and planning on implementing programme in 2020.	Internal challenges: • Turnover and restructuring of portfolios • Stop-start effect • Not aware that there was a work-readiness project already in place under Student Support services • Identified need for an online work readiness • No budget to implement project
	Majuba	1.Providing job readiness training 2. Explore and Develop Practical Strategies and Models for Employer and Industry Partnerships	• Establishment of an Industry Board Meeting with Public Sector representatives • Approval by Senior management of a job Placement and employability skills training budget • Establishment of an entrepreneurship unit • Organisation of a business breakfast with the industry • Increased access to SETA funding	• Cultural differences • Time constraints • Tight schedules in submission of project information and delivering on project activities • Lack of experience in international projects

Buffalo City	Placement and Employability through building partnerships	The college is yet to implement the programme. Nevertheless, the college has: • Identified 25 Financial Management students to participate in the Accounting Lab programme • Memorandum of Understanding signed with partners • Ongoing provision of laptops and smartphones to participating learners	• Lack of resources
NCRTVET	Establish an advisory board to better prepare learners for the workplace and make teaching more relevant to the needs of the industry	• Established a task team • Launched and held the first meeting of the Industry Advisory Board on one campus • Developed activity plan for placement and mentoring for students and lecturers	• Difficult to get all stakeholders involved in the IAB • Workload of lecturers and stakeholders involved • No budget • Time constraint • Inadequate information on the needs of industrial training • Communication with the UK

India (Punjab)

Table 9: India (Punjab)

| College	I-WORK contribution	Project objective and activity	Outputs
Employer - led			
NTTF	NTTF were inspired by the UK college's engagement with customer. UK college shared tools with NTTF. The workshop involved visits to industry and discussions of technologies and upcoming technologies.	The objective was to: 1. **Work with specific sectors/skills councils/employers to create job roles of the future.** NTTF worked with BOSCH to offer an 'industry 4.0' and a training course. This involved industry visit, sessions with industry experts, and provision of technical skills around automation and AI. Training was launched in January 2020, and a second batch expected in March 2020. 2. **Improve feedback model and provide support to placement of learners.** NTTF found students were placed but often receiving below market salaries as they were not in the right roles. Mapping was done between skills training and requirements of different roles, involving working closely with industry to identify skill set, and obtain feedback from industry and students on how the training needed to be improved.	**Project 1** • Centre of excellence and curriculum launched with FANUC and BOSCH, including intel for industrial IoT and Machine Learning (ML) • First batch of industry 4.0 programme attracted more than 15 participants from 10 different organisations • Sustainable, as funded by learners **Project 2** • Placement Brochure developed and published. • Increased number of meetings with industry, including additive manufacturing 3D. • Initial figures show that with the brochure, students are applying to roles that better suit their skillsets and with higher salaries, increasing salaries by 20-30%. Average placement salary increased to INR 670,000 • Self-funded by college, and expected to continue **Long Term** Continuing to explore possibilities with UK, EU partnerships and collaborations. Proposals developed for rotational apprenticeship, and seeking funding
Gram Tarang	This was something in the pipeline but was inspired by the strong partnership with industry at the UK colleges, and the Learner management systems and e-learning being used in the other colleges in the cluster. The other colleges shared material and examples, this required customisation. £6000 was provided for the LMS.	1. **Design of** learning management system, focused to customise industry specific workplace training content and implement an e-tracking system for supervisory, assessment and quality monitoring. 2. **Effective tracking of learning progression and a systematic assessment system** – to implement various work-integrated learning schemes, e.g. NAPs, flexi-MOU ITI, etc. 3. **Pilot batch of learners:** 15 fresh candidates working in metaflex doors 4. **Development of training modules** – behavioural and soft skills and technical skills.	1. The LMS platform has been developed, training on the ground rolled out, and modules being developed and digitilised. 2. Training management system developed, which is expected to support Gram Tarang to more effectively track and monitor training, learner progression and involvement in different schemes. 3. Pilot programme involving work integrated learning. 15 people joined the project, with 0% attrition (normally 30-40% attrition). Gram Tarang attributed this to the fact that learners could see the degree and relevance of the project for future employment. 4. Good feedback on curriculum. Employers were more deeply engaged in curriculum development. Findings so far is that learners have benefitted from improved basic communication skills and better technical skills. **Longer term expectations** • Industries preferring manpower with work integrated learning • More students completing courses based on work integrated learning

			• Increase in overall quality of course delivery • Ability to extend programs in remote locations and small industries
Labour net - second project	Exchanged practices to engage employers at the workshop, which was the inspiration for the project.	Develop a model to define industry sector vocational and employability/ entrepreneurial skills to increase employer and student satisfaction with the curriculum and its delivery. Development of curriculum for automotive service technician, that is relevant across multiple businesses.	Curriculum incorporating employer requirements for knowledge and skills developed and implemented, including practical videos and learning cards; Model to engage with industry on a regular basis piloted. Expected longer term effects: • Students are work-ready, and available to take on more tasks independently • Students are able to apply critical and innovative thinking skills on the job • Higher Employer satisfaction on the training imparted Plans to track this through pre and post training assessment, student and employer feedback and employer survey with other companies
Work-readiness			
Empower	Learned from SWC importance of mentoring in a structured fashion. Support provided had been less systematic. Recognised the importance of mentoring. Used the UK's college job description for a mentor. British Council provided some financial support for the creation of materials and delivery.	Objective was to ensure mentoring is in the entire chain, from when learners are first approached to when they are placed in jobs. This can help along the whole delivery model, with identifying students, supporting them with developing soft skills and tracking them in jobs. The mentor job description was used, and unpicked across everyone's roles, and used to create responsibilities for every team member who interactions with students, from mobilisers, counsellors, trainers, placement officer, centre management to head office staff. Mentoring training provided to all staff in two pilot projects in the North and the East. Version two of framework being developed	We will also get call centres to get them through this training and will make some measures to track. Just one training programme, will take time to start seeing results. Results pending. Tracking retention, employer retention. Mobilisation etc. • About 50 participants across 2 Centres and our Call Centre inducted to SAARTHI module • 100% of the Participants rated the program as very effective in building their skills to counsel and mentor students better. • Early improvement seen in student attendance in the 2 centres. • Specific Modules have been included in the regular TTT Programs for Trainers • Version 2 of the framework is being developed and planned to roll out across the company. EMPOWER has set aside budget for module development, and to improve the framework based on learning from the pilot. Should be no other ongoing costs. **Impacts on students:** EMPOWER is tracking the impact of the programme on improvement in enrolment, student attendance and placement retention, but data not yet available.
Collaborative approach with SMEs			
B-ABLE	ABLE had already been in discussions with industry partners about potential collaborations. The workshop reinforced the importance of engaging with industry and industry tie-ups, provided evidence that it can work in practice and reassured B-ABLE that they were on the right path. B-ABLE learned	CSR departments in Lal Pat Lab and AkzoNobel sponsored training in Delhi on painting, and phlebotomy in Lucknow. Lal Pat Lab wanted painters who would be able to recommend its products, and AkzoNobel was facing a supply demand in villages of trained phlebotomists. Both employers were involved in the recruitment of trainers, design of curriculum and participation as guest lecturers.	The Lal Pat Lab course trained 49 learners, placed 44 learners into on the job training, of which 39 are currently in employment as phlebotomists. The AkzoNobel course trained 540 youths (240 new painters, 300 current painters requiring upskilling). All of these youths also participated in on the job training and are currently in employment as sub-contractors. B-ABLE reported that the % of candidates completing the training, placed and now in employment is higher than that of their other courses.

	from CAVC the importance of ensuring they presented opportunities that were beneficial to industry.	The project target learners from poorer socio-economic backgrounds – this is assessed as part of the application process. The project was slightly different to other programmes run by B-ABLE, in terms of the heavy industry involvement, as well as the heavy focus on placement (government funded courses tend to be more focused on numbers of learners).	Lal Pat Lab are satisfied with the project and are planning to move to a Phase 2 with B-ABLE, scaling this to Rajasthan. Scale up is being discussed with AkzoNobel and is expected to start in May 2020 in additional locations.
Labour net – first project	Participants noted that they were more conscious about the important behavioural aspect, and the importance of reinforcing and supporting students. I-WORK supported the organisation to further develop an idea that was already in the pipeline.	The project had 3 components, working with industries of different sizes (large, medium and small), to explore how Labour net could support the integration of earning while learning. **Pilot 1: Training at employer site** – this was conducted with a multi-national corporation, a leading manufacturer of automotive ancillary products globally and involved providing training and industry relevant certificate **Pilot 2: Cluster based approach** – with conglomerate engaged in the manufacturing and processing textiles, training was held at a common centre **Pilot 3: Dispersed trainees** – partner with largest women owned and managed cooperative bank in India, for training to be done remotely	**Pilot 1:** Good feedback from supervisors, and confident that training will result in higher wages. **Pilot 2:** this has been working well, but training needs to be extended. **Pilot 3:** This has not been so successful, as it is challenging to engage and motivate trainees remotely. **Longer-term** Labour net commented that the programme needs to be extended to be successful, and result in a dignified wage, and continuous mentoring for apprentices, including providing support and motivation. Labour net are looking to build an online hybrid model, to balance the flexibility of e-learning, with the engagement aspects of face to face, in order to address the attendance and retention challenges. Labour net also exploring how to measure productivity, to demonstrate the value of work integrated learning.

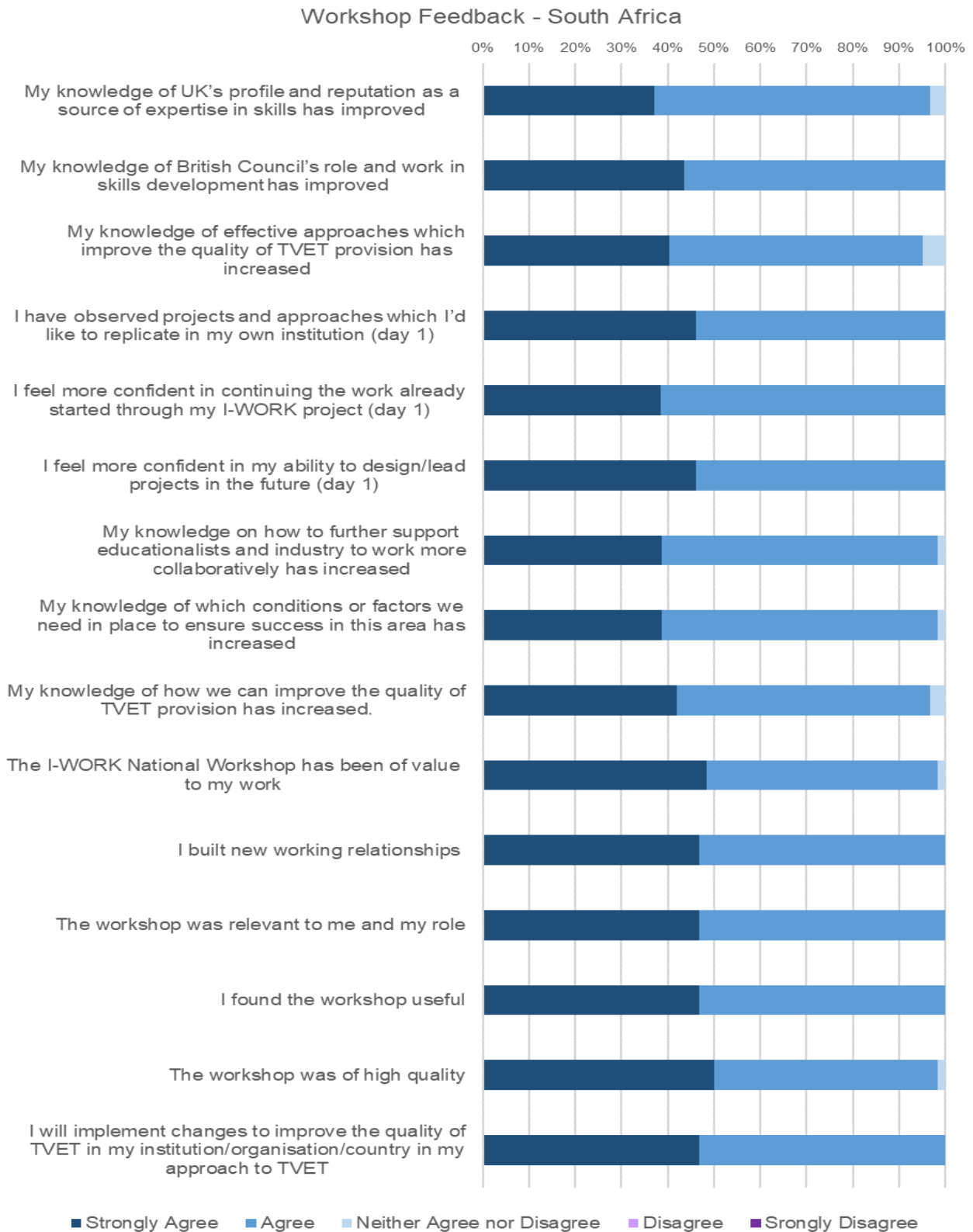## 8.3 Annex 3: Analysis of National and International Workshop feedback forms
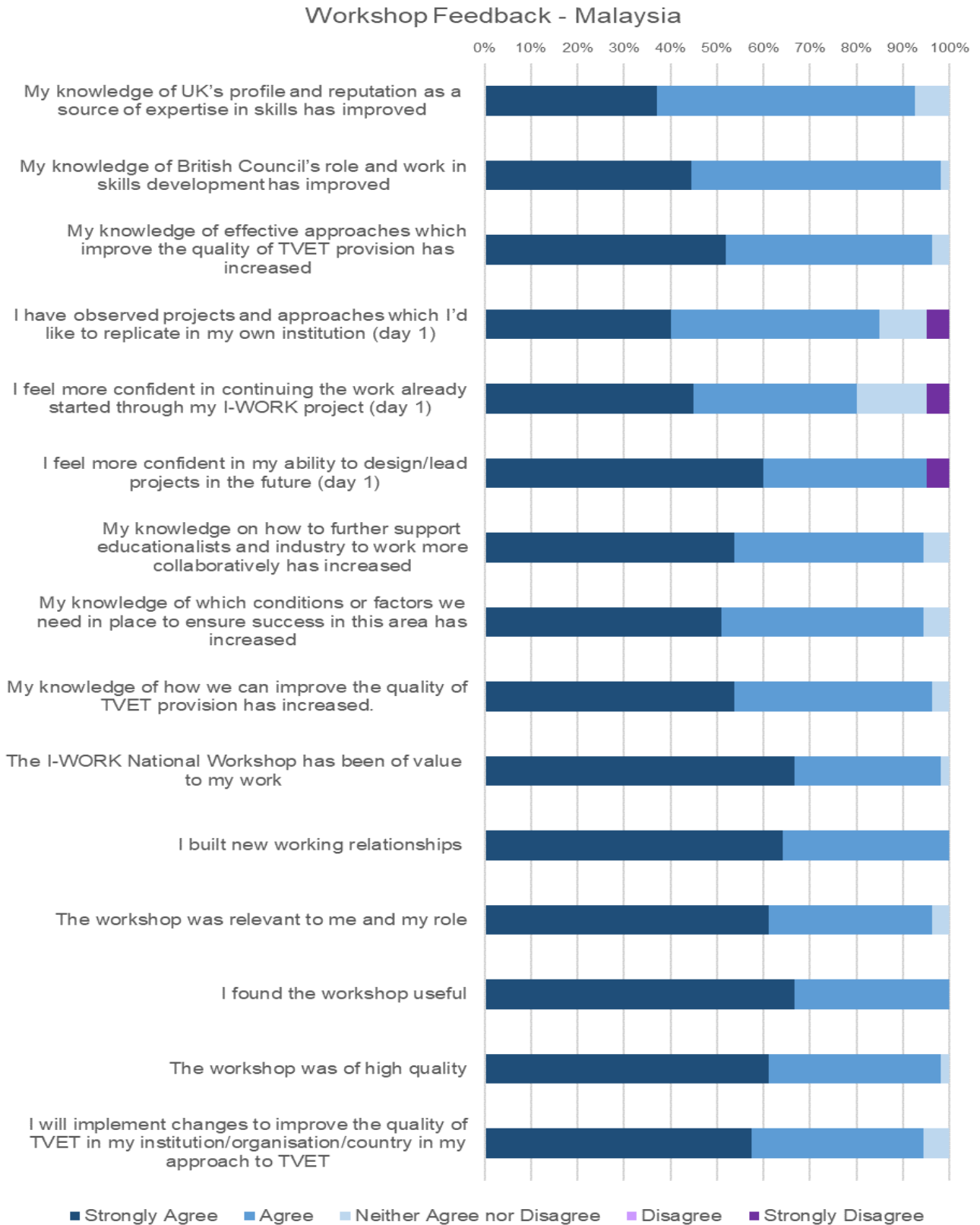
Ghana

Diagram 5: Workshop Feedback - Ghana

Workshop Feedback – Ghana
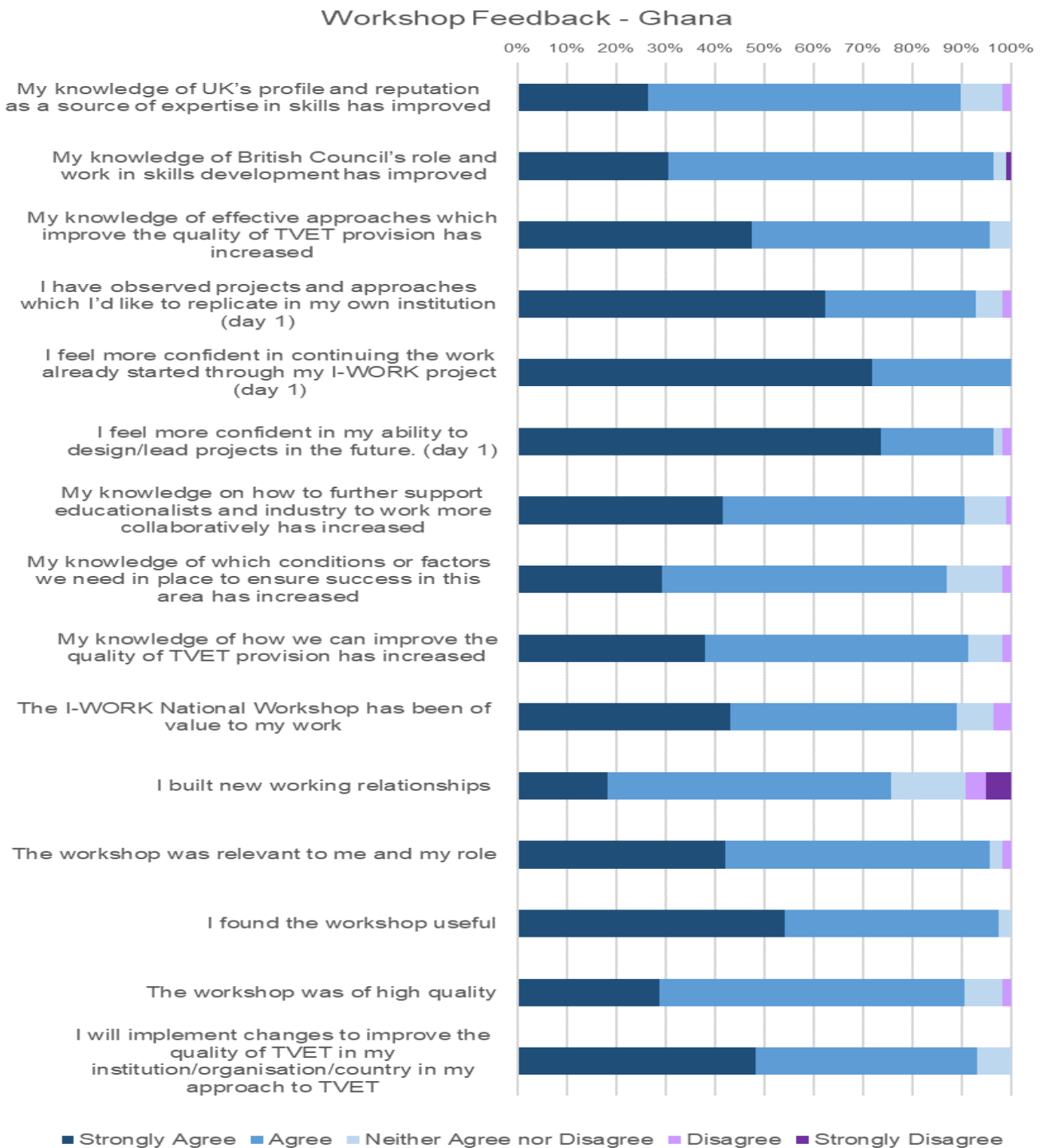
South Africa

Diagram 6: workshop Feedback-South Africa

Workshop Feedback – South Africa

Malaysia

Diagram 7: Workshop Feedback - Malaysia

Workshop Feedback - Malaysia

India

Diagram 8: Workshop Feedback -India

Workshop Feedback – India (only Day 1)

Legend: ■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neither Agree nor Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Srongly Disagree
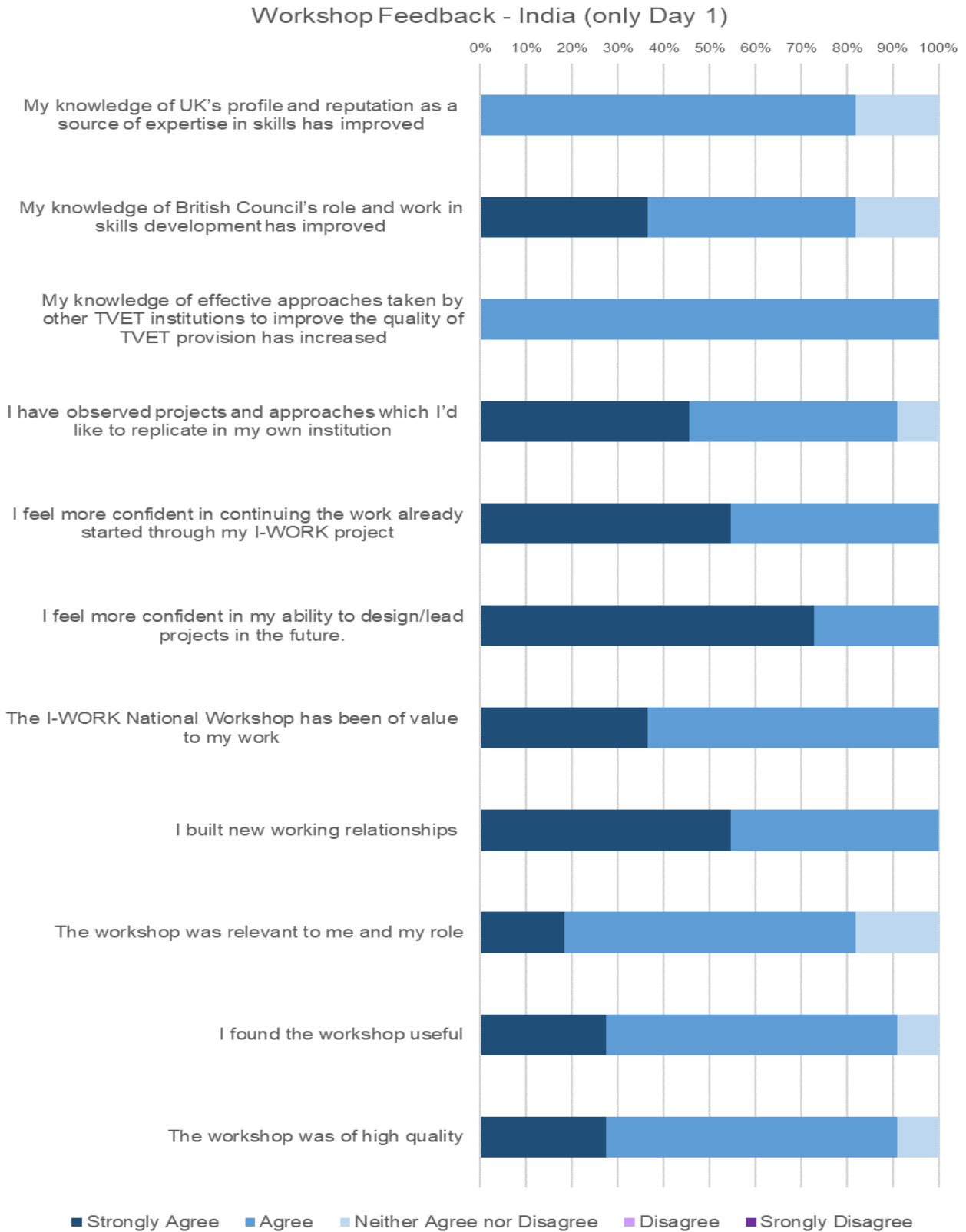
8.4 Annex 4: Stakeholders interviewed

Table 10: Stakeholders interviewed

Stakeholder category	Description	Sampling approach
Programme Level		
Key informant interviews		
British Council	British Council project manager and country teams BC skills team	12
Experts	International and national experts involved in delivery UK skills advisors	5
Programme advisory groups	Advisory groups set up to support the programme	6
National advisory groups in each country	Relevant advisory groups, such as Ghana Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training	10
Government ministries	E.g. Ministry of education, Ministry of Labour, Department of skills development	13
Employer councils, and individual employers	Those involved in pilots, for example the Federation of Manufacturers in Malaysia	14
Participating colleges/training institutes	College principals and TVET institution staff – leaders and practitioners, including UK colleges.	55
Funder	FCDO	1
National partners	Other organisations involved in or interested in supporting employer led training	6
International partners	ILO Global Apprenticeship Network UNESCO	4
International stakeholders	Other governments not part of the original programme Potential funder(s) of follow-up activities to this programme.	3
Learners	Learners and apprentices involved in the pilots	23
TOTAL:		152
Survey		
Workshops attendees	All attendees	Open to all participants
Observation		
Workshops attendees	International and national workshops	Selection of relevant sessions (including informal networking sessions)

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