
INTERNATIONAL SKILLS PARTNERSHIPS CASE STUDIES

Bringing the Learning Home

‘Building Quality TVET Provision Globally’

Case studies and learning through our
International Skills Partnerships



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Introduction

Since 2009, the British Council has delivered over 100 International Skills Partnerships (ISPs) in 30 different countries. Partnerships bring together experienced organisations in the UK skills sector and one or more counterparts in other countries to develop and deliver an agreed project plan that supports national level policy priorities related to skills development and employability.

Working together, to tackle common issues is imperative. Providing young people with the best opportunity to transition to a decent job calls for investing and transforming education and training to the highest possible quality. Providing young people with skills that match labour market demands and levelling the playing field so that all aspiring young people can attain productive employment regardless of their gender, income level or socio-economic background is a shared goal around the world. However, for educationalists, industrialists and key agencies this agenda presents many challenges.

International Skills Partnerships are increasingly recognised by governments and industry, globally, as a powerful and highly cost-effective way of building the skills required to deliver economic prosperity, social cohesion and individual fulfilment. They enable organisations to share knowledge and experience, and work together to develop new and imaginative approaches. With our support and advice, partnerships can deliver real, sustainable change that can be replicated to transform national educational systems.

Bringing the Learning Home is the British Council's annual International Skills Partnership seminar. It is designed to showcase established international partnerships and other organisations from around the world interested in addressing the skills challenge through international collaboration. Over the years the event has included inspiring plenary presentations, interactive capacity-building workshops and outstanding international networking opportunities.

The British Council, through external partners such as UK colleges and national agencies, have successfully delivered a significant number of skills projects and as a result there has been a naturally forming desire to share knowledge and good practice across these regions.

Many partners have been involved in delivery of ISPs over a number of years and have matured in their approaches and are emerging as specialists in a number of key fields such as employer engagement, soft skills and entrepreneurship, to name a few. The British Council captures the energy and drive forming in these projects and focuses it towards developing a formal or informal knowledge sharing community across the globe via the annual *Bringing the Learning Home* conference. The conference is aimed at showcasing best practice, sharing and celebrating success and providing a platform for multilateral networks to grow and new international relationships to flourish.

In December 2017, the British Council had planned to host *Bringing the Learning Home* in Bali, Indonesia. Unfortunately, due to the risk of volcanic eruption on Mount Agung in the days leading up to our event, all flights to Bali were cancelled which meant we had to cancel *Bringing the Learning Home*. The British Council would like to thank all our partners who were due to travel, for their patience and understanding at that time. In lieu of the event we wanted to capture the learning and share amongst partners who would have attended. The British Council commissioned Afshan Baksh of Evolve Global Solutions Ltd to interview our partners and produce a record of the learning through case studies. Afshan brings a wealth of experience to the International Skills Partnerships community, both as a practitioner/grant recipient initially and more latterly in a global advisory capacity. The British Council would like to thank Afshan for her role in producing this document.

This document captures a select few case studies, featuring recent, awarding winning projects. The purpose of this document is to celebrate and recognise the hard work of all ISP project as well as to show case the impact of these projects to organisations, individuals and most importantly to international skills development.

This document is a snapshot of some of the amazing work that has happened globally. The British Council wishes to thank all of our partners worldwide. You have led innovation in the internationalisation of the TVET sector.



Brian Wilson
Senior Consultant – Skills
British Council
January 2019

Preparing a Future Workforce – How ISPs Make a Difference?

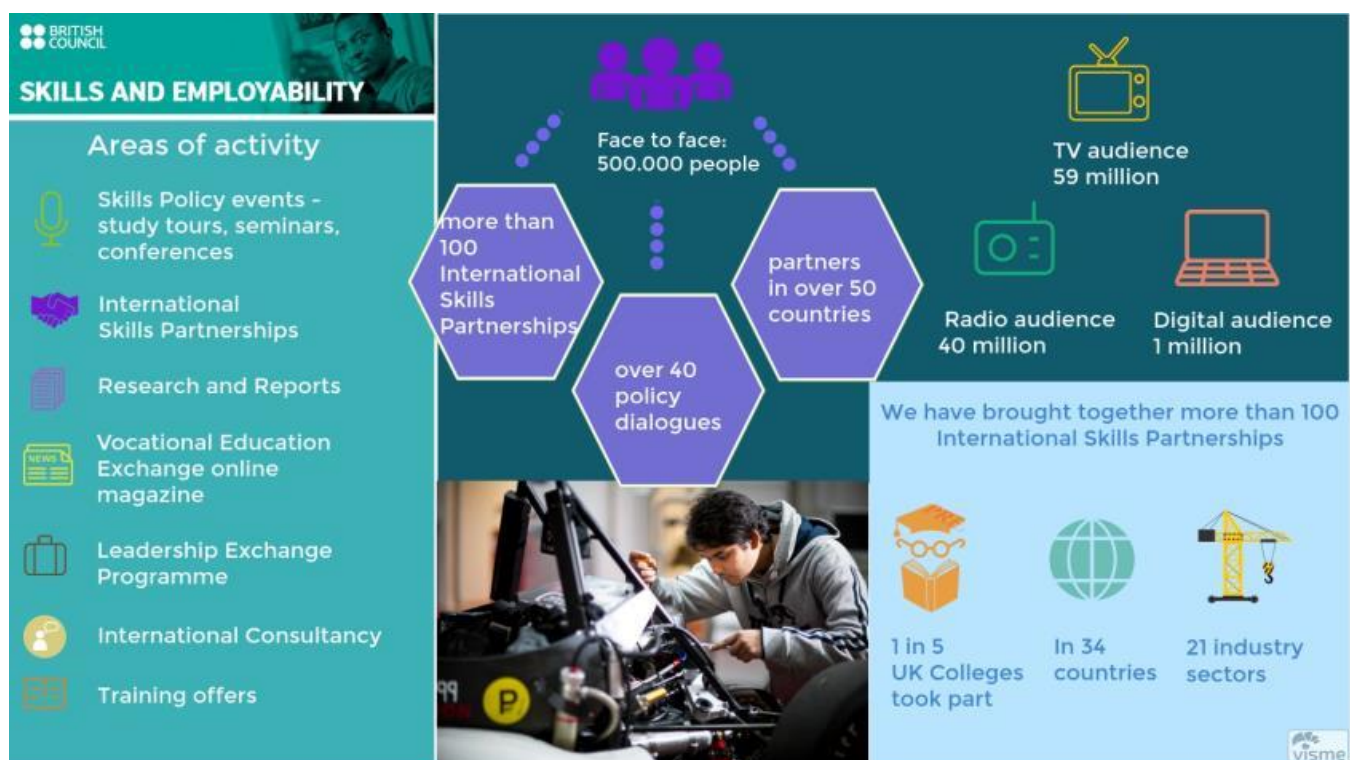
How can we predict what will be required in the future labour market and how do we prepare educationalists and industry to meet these demands?

A shift in thinking and innovation is required when considering how to better enable young people to tackle the challenges they will face in an ever-competitive labour market. Governments, skills agencies and educationalists need to recognise that we are preparing a workforce for a future job market, a job market where some of the jobs don't yet exist and where potentially today's jobs may cease to exist.

Key Insights from ISP Partners

- i Improving the quality of education is one of the most important and urgent challenges for the future of the Arab world. Teachers and educational leaders have a key role to play in addressing the needs of the skills sector.
- ii International Skills Partnerships are considered to be a unique experience.
- iii It is not just about starting your own business as not everyone wants to be an entrepreneur. It is, however, about having skills which are transferable and knowing how to adapt to new and emerging labour and economic needs.
- iv Industry and entrepreneurs need to be part of the skills development agenda and should share the successes and failures of vocational, education and training providers.
- v The partnerships could be improved if UK employers were also involved.
- vi 'We expect International Skills Partnerships to reinforce non-technical skills.' Soft skills are difficult to teach but are essential for not only the future success of young people but future socio-economic improvement. Should we re-name soft skills to place a higher emphasis on their importance as essential skills and transferable skills?
- vii A need to seize the opportunity of International Skills Partnerships to raise the standards of English Language Training (ELT). It is widely accepted and recognised that English Language is a key component if professional development and training are to be easily accessed and assimilated.
- viii There is a need to change the social view and to raise awareness to give acceptance, recognition and status to vocational training. It is especially imperative to change the mind-set of young people.

Our Skills work at a Glance, including ISPs



Case Study 1:

Tourism, Culture and Food – Capturing the Spirit of Two Countries



Food tourism is one of the fastest growing trends in the modern world. Many countries have positioned food as intangible heritage in the global tourism market. Food appears to connect tourists to local culture and heritage and has become one of the most visible examples of the tourism experience.

Dundee & Angus College - Scotland	Politeknik Negeri Bali - Indonesia
<p>The College delivers over 1,000 courses from introductory level to degree and postgraduate studies. It offers courses for people over the age of sixteen, offering qualifications such as Higher-grade exams, work-based learning, vocational training as well as further and higher education programmes leading to nationally and internationally recognised qualifications including SQA (Scottish Qualifications Authority) National and Higher National Certificates and Diplomas. Dundee and Angus College also works closely with the city's universities and schools, providing access courses to gain entry to university. It has campuses and learning centres located across the Tayside region. In Dundee, the College has two campuses: the Kingsway Campus and the recently opened Gardyne Campus.</p>	<p>Politeknik Negeri Bali (PNB) or Bali State Polytechnic (BSP) is a leading vocational education institution in Bali. It is located in a strategic area of tourism in Bali, the 'Paradise Island'. It provides two fields of study: engineering and commerce. Engineering is divided into Civil, Electrical and Mechanical Departments while commerce is divided into Tourism, Accounting and Business Administration Departments. Moreover, Bali State Polytechnic will conduct non-regular Open Distance Learning for all study programs.</p>

Bali receives nearly 8 million visitors per year, however Scotland attracts approximately 15 million per year. With developments such as the Waterfront development and the V&A project, Dundee is set to undergo a transformation which will increase tourism to the city and bring about 7,000 jobs to the city, many of these in travel and tourism and hospitality. This project gave Dundee and Angus College an opportunity to explore ways in which to position themselves as a key provider of skills training that is innovative and has links with one of the world's desired tourist destinations – Bali. Indonesia is also undergoing a positive economic change and having a foothold in this region can provide a platform to access other opportunities.

Project Overview

Whilst the primary industry sector focus was travel and tourism and the overarching aim was to set up a Centre of Excellence in Travel and Tourism and, especially, with an emphasis on Ecotourism that would be equally important in both countries. Through project planning discussions the team realised that their ambitions were perhaps far reaching when considering the duration of the project and the resources available (time commitment and finance). The project team therefore decided to sharpen their focus further and concentrate on gastronomy, as a starting point, in order to achieve a tangible outcome that all parties would benefit from.

Attention was directed towards more practical aspects rather than the theoretical. This focus gave project partners a simple and achievable goal that also served the purpose of developing and nurturing relationships as well as providing time and space to refine longer term project objectives and desired outcomes.

Food has strong links in the culture of both countries and links to the areas of eco-tourism or sustainable tourism. Exchanging techniques and awareness of locally sourced ingredients and foods enabled the project team to gain a deeper and richer understanding of the ethos and spirit of each society, attitudes, culture, religion, history and resulting tourism, which of course touches on each of these aspects.

'The trip to PNB Bali was a life changing experience. It enabled me to see the island and the way of life from the point of view of the Balinese – and how culture, tradition, religion and food all play a part in their daily life. It will definitely influence our curriculum in the future.'

Louisa Kingham, Head of Hospitality, Retail and Tourism, Dundee and Angus College

Through further discussions and collaboration, teams increased their understanding of the importance of each country's government agenda on the issue of eco-tourism. Through exchange visits and knowledge sharing, partners explored the options available to jointly develop a certificate in excellence in travel and tourism. Plans for training modules for the certificate in excellence as well as supporting train the trainer programme content is in place and ready to roll out once future funding is secured.

Plans are underway for continued networking with local and central government, education officials as well as development agencies such as the Asian Development Bank – where a project application will be submitted to the Chief Education Officer for funding of the 'Centre of Excellence in Travel & Tourism'.

Impact on Participating Organisations

'Apart from being interesting to learn about the exotic cultural aspects of Bali, there are sound business reasons for being involved... tourism is big business in the region and education has been highlighted as a growth sector for Indonesia.'

'There are many opportunities for Dundee & Angus in the region in the travel and tourism and hospitality sectors, and this partnership should provide students and staff from the College opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge of the culture of the country which will enable them to impart these skills to Tayside e.g. eco-tourism is a new topic which is becoming increasingly important and could provide the first area for joint working on commercial offerings.'

Richard Faint, International Project Leader, Dundee and Angus College

The following highlights the impact experienced by Dundee and Angus College:

- i A better understanding of the Bali hospitality and travel tourism market and opportunities which emerge from that for the VET sector in Scotland, and especially, opportunities for Angus and Dundee College to take further either as commercial or funded projects.
- ii This collaboration has provided staff from across the college, with in-depth knowledge about a new and growing market as well as a broadening of their horizons on a global level. Working with peers in Bali has helped our staff to gain confidence, increase professional knowledge, raise morale, and enable reflection and improvement of their own area of work. This will filter through to an enhanced curriculum content and changed approaches that will, in turn, have a positive effect on our students.
- iii The project has opened doors to opportunities for establishing a wider collaboration across other curriculum areas at Dundee and Angus College as well as the potential to develop links made with institutions across Indonesia. According to the Asian Development Bank - Indonesia has the largest economy among the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), and the 16th largest worldwide. Its economic growth since 2009 has helped lift over 3 million Indonesians out of poverty. Participation in this project gives -Dundee and Angus College an advantage in that the college now has a presence and network within Indonesia and is therefore well placed to pursue business within the country as well as within ASEAN.
- iv **Links with employers and industry.** Although -Dundee and Angus College already have links with Hilton hotels, participation in this project enabled further links to be developed through the relationship that our partner had with the Hilton. UK hotels have indicated that they would be happy to have chefs from Bali in their kitchen. There is further work to do in this aspect, but doors are certainly open and Dundee and Angus College have opportunities to develop with employers and employer groups within the UK and Indonesia.

Tips, Advice and Lessons Learned

Project partners were asked the following questions and their insights are captured in the numbered list below:

- Q1 - If you were able to go back in time, what would you have done differently and why?
- Q2 - What factors do you consider to be key in the success of our project?
- Q3 - What advice would you give to anyone who has just begun or is about to begin their ISP project journey?
- i The main challenges have been in matching up the term and holiday schedules of the two colleges and the schedules of the participants who are required for the programme. The holiday periods are not aligned and so ensuring that this issue is discussed, and key dates are agreed well in advance, perhaps even at the start of the project, are vital in easing this problem.
- ii On-going marketing and dissemination – project teams found that this aspect could easily be forgotten but involving their marketing departments in the project meant that there was an on-going focus on capturing content for marketing, PR and wider dissemination. The Marketing Department would remind the project team to contribute content and assisted in posting news. Reaching out through a variety of marketing and PR platforms not only ensured that project updates were widely communicated but also had the added impact of opening up people's minds and their understanding of international partnerships, different cultures, people and countries.
- iii In the future, project managers would consider procuring local radio and local press to ensure a much wider reach.

- iv An essential contributory factor to the success of this project was the high degree of trust on both sides of the partnership (based on good communications and understanding of the other's situation) which will underpin the relationship in the future.
- v Focus on something practical as an outcome and factor in that it will take a significant proportion of project time to move from strategic to practical activity. This in part is due to language issues, mutual understanding of some terminology and other unexpected issues such as staff changes or changes in political or other environmental factors – such as volcanic eruptions!
- vi Develop a full and detailed plan that has clear KPIs (key performance indicators) in each month. Clarify roles and responsibilities.
- vii Expect that it will very likely take a full year before seeing real results.

Case Study 2:

Mutual Collaboration - Quality, Teaching and Learning and Programme Development



Development of new programmes requires many stakeholders. The inclusion of international partners, especially where expertise is highly specialised can be of great mutual benefit. Collaboration can exist on many levels from student/staff exchange to knowledge sharing or sharing of key contacts and resources. This project enabled staff at Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education to work with partners in Egypt to address a wide-range of issues that affect future skills demands.

Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education (GIFHE) - England	Arab Academy of Science, Technology and Maritime Transport (AASTMT) - Egypt
<p>The Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education is an Ofsted Outstanding, QQA Commended and TEF (teaching excellence framework) Silver provider of learning and skills, with success rates that rank in the top 10% nationally. The Institute is one of the Country's largest FE/HE training providers and has a diverse curriculum offer. It delivers courses from entry level to postgraduate, as it has Foundation Degree (Levels 4/5) awarding powers to write and award its own degrees. Annually, it supports nearly 22,000 learners, delivered between its campus sites in Grimsby, Scarborough and Skegness, with halls of residence, experience in delivering teacher training and development and in supporting international collaboration.</p>	<p>AASTMT runs programs in marine transportation, business, and engineering, and established the Industry Service Complex (ISC) as one of its entities to facilitate the process of transferring modern technology and to provide different industrial sectors with consultancy and highly qualified technical staff. In 2007, ISC established the Technical and Vocational Institute (TVI) to provide education and training through advanced applied educational programs to fulfil industry demands. These programs are accredited by Person BTEC and students are awarded High National Diploma (HND), in addition to a High Technical Diploma from AASTMT accredited by the Egyptian Ministry of Higher Education.</p> <p>The ISC attended the UK Skills Show in 2016 and 2017 and used this experience to organise the first Egyptian Skills Competition in March 2018.</p>

Project Overview

Having just invested £7m in setting up new provision for programmes in maritime and logistics GIFHE had already approached AASTMT as AASTMT has been established in this curriculum since 1972. When the opportunity to become involved in the British Council ISP projects came about GIFHE were keen to apply as Egypt was one of the regions highlighted. GIFHE thought that by gaining a project in Egypt it would be able to use this platform to gain knowledge, insight and a network in a region that was already strategically important in the development of maritime and logistics programmes.

GIFHE were delighted to be matched with AASTMT, an organisation that the college had already reached out to.

The objective of the project between GIFHE and AASTMT was to improve quality across both organisations through visits and sharing of information. The ISP was focussed on delivering genuine mutual benefit, with GIFHE assisting AASTMT to review quality systems and approaches to embed improvements in teaching, learning and assessment. In return, GIFHE sought to develop a greater insight into logistics curriculum provision.

Originally the project partners had planned to develop degree provision at AASTMT but through early exploration and scoping it was realised that there was a need to distil this into teacher training and actions to help AASTMT review quality processes to improve the foundations to develop new course provision. For GIFHE gaining an Ofsted Grade 1 (outstanding grade) and a Beacon Award for Excellence in Teaching and Learning injected a higher level to skill and recognition as experts in these aspects.

Importantly, this project was also about building the relationships and exploring wider opportunities for collaboration, including additional summer schools and educational collaborations. AASTMT were intending to send four staff members to the UK for two weeks, and the UK would send a management delegation back in return to gain insight into the AASTMT curriculum. GIFHE and AAST had already entered into the partnership with an MOU and were keen to build provision and relationships, working with the practical constraints of the timeframes and development cycles of new curriculum.

Impact on Participating Organisations

- i The objective was to explore the approach to curriculum, specifically looking at the nature and level of curriculum, in Maritime and Logistics at AASTMT with the objective being to help inform future planning at GIFHE. The exploration and discussions were transformative, in so far as the Institute had just invested £7m in a commercial training centre for logistics, assuming short commercial training as the principle product. AASTMT have a model established on under-graduate cadetships, with a far more diverse range of maritime, logistics, simulator, Health and Safety and business training as integrated programmes. The institute has changed its curriculum strategies in light of these insights and is now developing cadet level programmes (leading to- wards new HE programmes).
- ii AASTMT embedded new approaches in quality - the principle learning point that could be easily translated (as systems, ILT, MIS and team structures are institutionally specific) was actions to address behaviour. AASTMT teams presented back to the faculty and came up with the idea of fines for lateness, or poor behaviour that were recycled back into monthly celebration events for good conduct – it was fun, motivating and engaging and had the desired impact of improving standards.
- iii In addition to project objectives a further off shoot of the partnership resulted in a summer school held at GIFHE. Two groups came over from the Arab Academy of Science, Technology and Maritime Transport in August 2017 to attend two separate summer schools. One group of ten students attended Energy Engineering - The Application of Theory. The other group of eight students attended the International Logistics Summer School. The visit also included joint trips to MODAL, Hull's Street Life Museum, shopping, Estuary TV, Lincoln Castle and an Innovate session. Thus, eighteen staff/students have undertaken training, leading on and building upon the partnership of the ISP. This unintended outcome resulted in the generation of income for GIFHE.
- iv At the end of their visit, three members of the Egyptian project team were persuaded to be interviewed and the account of their visit aired on Estuary TV, which is broadcast to 350,000 households in the Humber and Lincolnshire district.
- v The Grimsby Institute owns and operates EstuaryTV, as the UK's longest standing community TV broadcast station, that can reach 340,000 households in England. As a Freeview channel, EstuaryTV has been able to produce short interviews or news items for broadcast, which has featured the activities of the ISP.
- vi Between the period of planning the ISP and the actual visit, the Grimsby Institute was inspected by OFSTED and in June 2017, and GIFHE were awarded the highest grade of Outstanding. This outcome and in particular, the approaches adopted in respect to setting clear and ambitious objectives, setting the high standards and expectations for outcomes for learners, establishing clear systems, procedures and frameworks and investment in learner resources flowed into the content of what was presented to AASTMT.
- vii GIFHE has undertaken a review of its curriculum plans and in light of our partnership with AASTMT, has had a full review of the mix, type and level of courses planned at MODAL. We have invested in simulators, ICT rich teaching environments and specific technologies as these relate to dock-side as well as maritime training.
- viii Alongside the project GIFHE sought to extend networks and to explore other opportunities. In doing so GIFHE was able to secure two appointments with key decision makers from the Ministry of Education, Egypt. Meetings were hosted by ministerial staff responsible for VET education, employability skills development and employability issues across Egypt. These meetings have placed GIFHE in pole position to supply a possible teacher training solution.
- ix AASTMT's partner network has bolstered GIFHE's own network which provides GIFHE not only a route to Egypt but to wider Middle East and Gulf regions.

Overcoming Challenges during Project Delivery

Timeframes constrained the ability to embed new practice, so project teams had to work constructively within the contract period; however, both partners recognise that the ISP is a vehicle to foster greater collaboration in the future.

While both organisations are committed to transforming quality and developing the collaboration, currency exchange rates mean that partners still face the challenges of UK costs compared to Egypt. While this is a limitation, the educational reforms each organisation faces are the same, in seeking to develop economically relevant, high quality education to address the skills needs of the labour market.

'There remains a lot we can still learn from each other (GIFHE in support of AASTMT, and AASTMT in support of GIFHE). AASTMT sought partnership in a new development for Healthcare, and the Institute would like to support this, but need to change our degree awarding powers to grant overseas degrees. Thus, more time is required.'

Andie Goudie, Executive Director of Projects and Partnerships.

Tips, Advice and Lessons Learned

Project partners were asked the following questions and their insights are captured in the numbered list below:

- Q1 - If you were able to go back in time, what would you have done differently and why?
- Q2 - What factors do you consider to be key in the success of our project?
- Q3 - What advice would you give to anyone who has just begun or is about to begin their ISP project journey?
- i Targeted diagnostic and scoping are the most crucial aspect of the exchange. During the scoping phase it is essential to accurately define the project goals and performance indicators. Scoping also enables project partners to see the reality of the infrastructure that participants are working with.
- ii Getting the right people on the project team and getting direct support from senior managers or decision makers within the organisation is crucial to project success. Ensuring that project objectives align easily with organisational goals ensures support for the project at all levels and that operationally the project is supported in its delivery by the right people.
- iii Be realistic about what you can actually achieve in the timeframe and resources allocated. Gain a consensus view of what the achievable targets are.
- iv Using the project as an example:
- v AASTMT aspired to achieve a full level award; however, in order to achieve this, it was necessary to ensure that the foundation that the new award is built upon is strong. In this case, project teams identified that improvements in quality improvement and quality assurance processes and teaching and learning needed to be made before the main goal could be realised. For the one-year foundation project, it was therefore necessary to distil initial aspirations into manageable, bite sized goals that strengthened the underpinning challenges.
- vi To be successful, projects must achieve equity from the start i.e. all participants must co-invest, shape the objectives and budget together, be open and transparent, co-own all actions, strive to keep a balance at all times.

- vii Briefing updates and alerts not only to project teams but to wider interested parties. These can be through a range of communication channels; however, communication plans must be thought about from the start.
- viii Regular and on-going communication with project partners and project teams – always check mutual understanding of language and terminology.
- ix Ensure that time is given to step back and reflect on project direction and outputs, re-shape if necessary.
- x Allow time for participating partners to learn and experience each other's culture. This strengthens bonds and offers valuable insight into attitudes in life and work.
- xi Actively look to make contact with influencers and policy makers.

Case Study 3:

Innovation in Employer Engagement – Winners of the Sustainable Collaboration Award



This International Skills Partnership was awarded the British Council International Skills Partnership Award for Sustainable Collaboration. West Lothian College also achieved the Herald Higher Education Award for Excellent Employer Engagement in Colleges and the Scottish Training Foundation Success in Partnership Award.

'This project has made a huge difference to the way we engage with employers to develop the future workforce both here in Scotland and in Malaysia. The active involvement of employers in the development and delivery of the curriculum has had a massive impact on our learners and their employability. It has taken contextualised learning to the next level and helped us to ensure that our learners can go into the world of work and integrate to their new environment seamlessly and in such a way that they are making an active contribution to the business of the employer from the very start. We are enormously grateful to the British Council for the opportunity and strongly recommend other Colleges to embrace and get involved with the Skills for Employability Programme, so they too can accelerate improvements and deliver excellent outcomes for learners.'

Daniel Evans, West Lothian College, Head of Commercial and Marketing

West Lothian College, Scotland	Economic Planning Unit, Politeknik Ungku Omar, Carsem, Malaysia
<p>West Lothian College is based in Livingston, West Lothian. It offers the widest range of academic and vocational qualifications in the area, offering a diverse curriculum to approximately 8,000 learners. It employs more than 320 staff making it one of the largest employers in the West Lothian Region. The college operates out of its main campus in Livingston as well as having offices in Glasgow and Dundee. The College was an early adopter and pathfinder for Foundation Apprenticeships.</p> <p>Recently the college received a National Enterprise Educator Award for delivering exceptional enterprise or entrepreneurship education inside or outside the curriculum.</p>	<p>Ungku Omar Polytechnic was established in the year 1969 by the Malaysian Ministry of Education. The polytechnic was formed for the purpose of training school leavers, who possess the Malaysian Certificate of Education (SPM) or Malaysian Certificate of Vocational Education (SPMV) to become skilled technicians in the field of engineering, middle executive officers and semi-professionals in the public sector as well as private sector.</p> <p>The polytechnic has six academic departments, which offer various academic programmes at degree, diploma and certificate levels and are assisted by two supporting department. At present, the college has produced more than 80,000 graduates serving in various economic sectors, contributing their skills and talent in the process of nation-building.</p> <p>Carsem is a leading provider of turnkey packaging and test services to the semiconductor industry, and offers one of the widest ranges of package & test portfolios in the world. Carsem's portfolio includes many advanced technologies, to support the telecoms, mobile, automotive, Micro-electromechanical Systems and custom solutions markets.</p> <p>Carsem also offers a full range of turnkey test services for, mixed-signal, linear, digital and power devices. Carsem is a member of the Hong Leong Group with factories located in Ipoh, Malaysia, Suzhou, China and sales offices across the USA, the UK, China, Malaysia and Taiwan.</p>

Project Overview

West Lothian College were interested to pursue the opportunity to work with a partner in Malaysia who was also interested in focussing on curriculum reform and employer engagement.

‘At West Lothian College we recognise that times have changed, and the structure of the curriculum no longer reflects the needs and learning styles of our learners. We are embarking on a journey to improve our curriculum indeed to transform it so that it accurately reflects what learners and employers expect from a college education. At the moment lecturers deliver all aspects of college-based learning and we feel our learners need access to specialist support for the different aspects of learning they undertake.’

Daniel Evans, West Lothian College, Head of Commercial and Marketing

The partnership between West Lothian College, and Malaysia’s Economic Planning Unit was designed so that partners could enhance vocational programmes and outcomes for learners through curriculum development driven by closer collaboration with employers.

Both partners were keen to maximise learners’ chances to learn and train in real work environments in a well-paid sector and to give them the chance to integrate to that work environment as part of their training. This meant that learners were able to hone their skills in companies which had real vacancies and a willingness to absorb them into their workforce upon satisfactory completion of their chosen course. West Lothian College and Malaysia’s Economic Planning Unit are both very committed to enhancing pathways to careers in STEM and this project has proven to be an excellent vehicle for the participation of all concerned.

The project team were keen to build a partnership in collaboration with employers and see the delivery of work experience as integral to every course offered within the college. By engaging employers in this way, project participants created a stimulus for employers to get involved, especially via the West Lothian Developing the Young Workforce Group and its equivalent in Malaysia.

Impact on Participating Organisations

This partnership has greatly enhanced the understanding of the benefits of working internationally across both partners’ institutions as a whole. The impact experienced on both organisations is far reaching:

- i Project teams were delighted to have won the British Council’s Skills Project Award for Sustainable Collaboration. This in itself has brought much attention for project partners and helped to emphasise the benefits of such projects.
- ii West Lothian College and Politeknik Ungku Omar feel that we have developed a simple and effective approach to supporting young people into work. Our approach has meant that learners are integrated within the workplace prior to taking up employment this has the effect of cutting down on time spent in recruitment and selection, training and unsuccessful appointments, thus saving employers’ money. West Lothian College worked with Mitsubishi for this part of the project.
- iii As a direct result of this project learners from both partners have been absorbed or accepted for employment by the employer partner in each country.
- iv The College and Politeknik have been able to consolidate their relationship and build trust with major local employers, both in the UK and in Malaysia. These links have strengthened pathways to highly paid careers and made both education institutions more desirable places to study, train and learn.
- v Lecturers in both organisations have been stretched to take an innovative approach to the curriculum. To revise lesson plans, activities and tasks. To contextualise learning so that

learning outcomes and assessments can be carried out in such a way that enables learners to simultaneously prepare themselves for the world of work and specifically for opportunities with the employer partner.

- vi Staff and student mobility has generated a great deal of enthusiasm across the College for International links and opportunities. The realisation that we are part of a much wider global community that brings with it financial and other benefits for Scotland.

'Malaysia has helped me to look at the world with different eyes. After the trip, I have found that I feel more confident, and I have a stronger willingness to finish my studies and to get a job related to engineering. It was a great experience to meet the Malaysian students, to speak to them and to visit their College.'

Dinu Sirbu, Student, West Lothian College

- vii In Malaysia the Economic Planning Unit is closely monitoring the success of the partnership with a view to rolling the model out nationally and in West Lothian College the model has already been discussed by the Scottish Colleges Community of Practice for STEM as an example of excellence.

Overcoming Challenges during Project Delivery

The first meeting was attended by approximately thirty people. The challenge here was how to keep the meeting focused given that everyone had their thoughts. There were also cultural differences to consider, for example, the UK partners were very direct about wanting to get the business done in a set timeframe whereas Malaysian partners were keen to allow everyone to have time to speak as well as to incorporate everyone's ideas into the project. Through persistence, perseverance and diplomacy the group did eventually come to an agreement, however, there were tense moments but, in the end, everyone was pleased with the results.

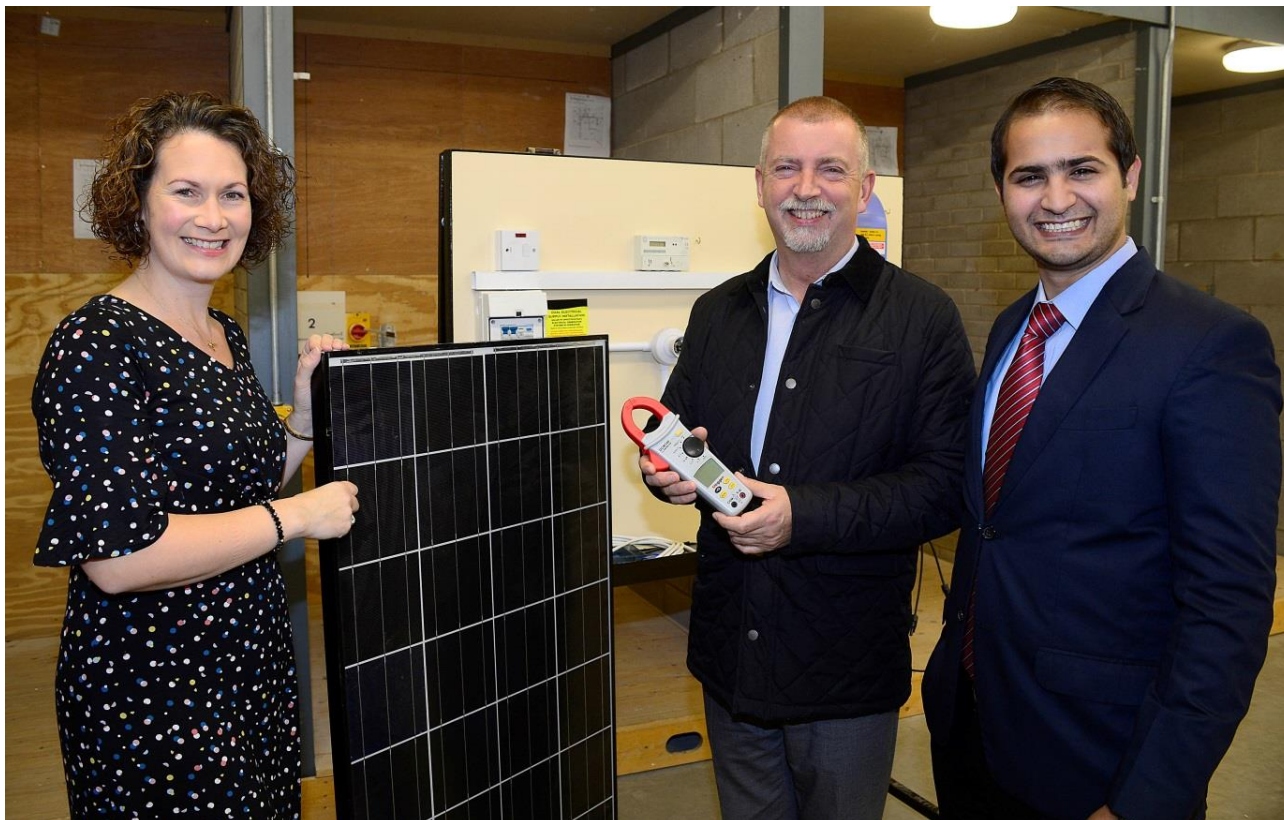
Tips, Advice and Lessons Learned

Project partners were asked the following questions and their insights are captured in the numbered list below:

- Q1 - If you were able to go back in time, what would you have done differently and why?
- Q2 - What factors do you consider to be key in the success of our project?
- Q3 - What advice would you give to anyone who has just begun or is about to begin their ISP project journey?
- i The outputs of this project have been driven by careful planning and the time bound nature of such projects. As a result, partners have pushed themselves to achieve a great deal over a short period of time. The project has been inspirational and motivational for all involved and outputs achieved have been far greater than would have otherwise occurred in the absence of the project. Stays focussed and keep to project timelines.
- ii Employer involvement in the development of curriculum is a key ingredient in ensuring positive progression into employment. Taking time to partner with employers and involving them at the start is vital.
- iii Freeing up teaching staff to travel or to be involved in the project can be a challenge; however, early planning can alleviate some of the issues. Plan visits during term breaks but if visits need to be during term teachers can use this opportunity to give their students independent learning opportunities. Blended learning approaches can be beneficial in introducing learners to a different way to learn.
- iv Aim to use the project experience to further any aims to actively internationalise your organisation, impact on organisation strategic plans and ultimately benefit learners.

Case Study 4:

Sustainable Energy Solutions Project – Winners of the British Council’s International Skills Partnership Award for Innovation



With the increasing demand of sustainable energy solutions, South East Regional College (SERC) in Northern Ireland were matched to Premier Energy in Pakistan to jointly develop a project that develops ways to meet this challenge.

The project has been a success in terms of meeting the project objectives but also in identifying opportunities for both organisations beyond the end of the project.

This project team were winners of the British Council’s International Skills Partnerships Award for Innovation.

SERC (South Eastern Regional College), Northern Ireland	Premier Energy PVT Ltd, Pakistan
<p>South Eastern Regional College (SERC) is one of the largest technical and professional Further and Higher Education Institutions in Northern Ireland, United Kingdom. SERC is a multi-campus College with 4,500 full-time students and 7,000 part-time students. The College provides training in over 45 vocational areas from level 1 to level 6. The design of programmes ensures that the learning experience provides current knowledge and skills expected by industry in order to produce a work-ready workforce with skills and knowledge that relates to business and economic need. SERC has well established partnerships with a number of Vocational education organisations and higher education institutions across the world.</p>	<p>Premier Energy, a part of Premier Group UK is an alternative energy solutions company with a vast network spread across the United Kingdom, Hong Kong, China, Dubai and Pakistan with headquarters in Glasgow, Scotland UK. With Solar Energy, LED Lighting, Wind Energy and Bio-Gas as the areas of expertise; Premier provides international standard energy solutions to corporate and domestic clients. Premier represents 12 international principals in Pakistan and serves both the public and private sector with successful installations in more than 29 cities across Pakistan. Premier’s impressive portfolio has enabled it to be listed by The Asian Telegraph as one of Pakistan’s Fastest Growing Renewable Energy Companies.</p>

Project Overview

Partners, Premier Energy are looking to introduce a high-quality training institute which has an association with a UK Awarding Body. The institute's remit is to improve the technical expertise of staff in line with industrial demands. South Eastern Regional College (SERC) was matched with Premier Energy to support this goal. Project partners collaborated over a period of one year to lay the foundations for setting up suitably certified courses that meet industry needs and help raise standards of training, in this area, within Pakistan and in the UK.

Building upon expertise already gained through establishing a robust and high-quality train the trainer methodology, SERC were well placed to support Premier Energy to realise their goals. SERC provided advice and guidance for the setting up of a training institute and accreditation framework supported by UK accreditation bodies. SERC worked with Premier Energy to train staff in how to seek accreditation for courses in solar energy, electrical installation and environmental technologies and delivered train the trainer training.

The Project has enabled Premier Energy to take the first step to setting up a training institute delivering UK standard training.

'The solution focused approach adopted by SERC and the vision shared by Premier Energy to revolutionise the energy sector of Pakistan, led to the formation of this amazing partnership with SERC providing adequate training and platforms. With this partnership, SERC and Premier shared more than just a knowledge base but will also be taking Pakistan one step closer to Energy independence. With the establishment of a fully equipped training institute "PremSol", Premier Energy together with SERC will be increasing employability, creating more employment opportunities and promoting the use of renewable energy resources hence playing our role in creating a greener tomorrow for generations to come.'

Daniyal Siddiqui, Country Head, Premier Energy, Pakistan

Both partners have found the partnership mutually beneficial and have realised that the scale of the project goes beyond the one-year project. Other areas of collaboration have been identified and in March 2018, both partners agreed to sign a Memorandum of Understanding to work towards the operation of the Premier Energy training institute. Partners have also identified other areas to collaborate on.

This ambitious partnership project is an exciting milestone and recognises our continuing focus on sharing our expertise on a global scale. Our international strategy is to seek opportunities through the development of sustainable global partnerships to meet economic and workforce needs. It is testimony to the growing reputation of SERC that we have been successful in securing this and other successful partnerships throughout the years.'

Zia Nazar, International Officer, SERC

Impact on Participating Organisations

The impact on project participants has been transformative:

'SERC is delighted to share our expertise with Premier Energy in this way. Our new partner was incredibly impressed with the UK education system, our facilities, teaching staff and warm hospitality and we are delighted to be supporting them in their ambition to set-up their own vocational training facility back home in Pakistan.'

SERC is dedicated to ensuring a global vision and outlook in all that we do. This project represents us around the world and is a hallmark of our quality teaching and learning. We are proud to be working with Premier Energy to build their capability in the areas of renewable energies to meet the skills gaps of their region.'

The train the trainer training will enable Premier Energy to take the first step to plan, execute and operate a technical training institute in Pakistan, providing accredited City and Guilds vocational training programmes.'

Paul Henry, Lead Business Consultant, SERC

- i International Award – Innovation Award British Council ISP Project.
- ii Open up a valuable network such as universities, technical institutes, government bodies in Pakistan (TEVTA and NAVTTC), and closer ties with UK awarding bodies such as Pearson and City and Guilds and employers from the Solar Business Community who attended the dissemination event.
- iii Social media awareness through the digital marketing campaign and inclusion of case study in this publication.
- iv Train the Trainer training of Premier Energy staff in accredited Electrical Installation, Solar Energy and Environmental Technologies courses, therefore enabling SERC to position themselves as a key provider in the international community.
- v SERC and Premier Energy agreed to collaborate beyond the conclusion of the ISP through the signing of a MOU in March 2018.
- vi SERC has an ISP with Flavius Mareka TVET College, South Africa. This project is focussed on solar training and SERC identified a potential linkage between Flavius Mareka and Premier Energy. As a result, Premier Energy has agreed to supply solar energy panels in the Flavius Mareka TVET College which will complement the training which SERC will deliver and enable the South African College to introduce a new curriculum area training students and industry. The cost of this equipment would have prevented Flavius Mareka from initiating the solar training.
- vii SERC is delighted to share our expertise with Premier Energy in this way. Our new partner was incredibly impressed with the UK education system, our facilities, teaching staff and warm hospitality and we are delighted to be supporting them in their ambition to set-up their own vocational training facility back home in Pakistan.
- viii Under commitments of the MoU, Premier Energy has introduced SERC to educational institutions in Pakistan to coordinate and promote the development of summer schools between Pakistan and SERC. One organisation that has been identified is the University of Central Punjab with potential summer school programmes focussing on project based learning and enterprise along with a UK cultural and social programme.

Overcoming Challenges during Project Delivery

Both partners feel the main challenge with this project was the timeframe, due to the scale of the project. Premier Energy's vision to set up a training institute is ambitious but achievable. The partners felt that a longer project would have allowed them to take it to the next stage beyond planning and see the actual implementation of the training institute.

Tips, Advice and Lessons Learned

Project partners were asked the following questions and their insights are captured in the numbered list below:

- Q1 - If you were able to go back in time, what would you have done differently and why?
- Q2 - What factors do you consider to be key in the success of our project?
- Q3 - What advice would you give to anyone who has just begun or is about to begin their ISP project journey?

- i It is vital that all project participants share the same ethos and goals. This is as crucial for project teams internally as having the right people with similar vision and desire creates the drive needed to progress well. All staff involved must be equally keen and make the partnership work.
- ii Clear and regular communication channels in place from the start. Get connected via social media and support each other with comments on posts and sharing news stories.
- iii Invest time to build the partnership and think about long-term partnership goals. SERC have included Premier Energy in an Erasmus + (EU funded) opportunity.
- iv Take it seriously. Ask yourself what, potentially, your project can lead to and involve your partner in seeking wider links.
- v Have your International strategy in place and ensure that the project falls under your strategic goals.
- vi Look to increase involvement in the project from a wider group of staff. For example, include someone new to the project team but build in mentoring support from a more experienced project team member. This has the benefit of ensuring a wider pool of people are available for future projects and also helps publicise and raise awareness of what the international team do. By following this approach, SERC staff have visited the international department either looking to support a project or with project ideas and opportunities.
- vii Enlist the support of the local British Council office.

Case Study 5:

On the Move in South Africa – Scottish and South African Automotive Modern Apprenticeships



New College Lanarkshire (NCL) and Central Johannesburg College (CJC) partnership has focused on the automotive industry and development of work-based learning programmes. NCL are the largest provider of college-based Automotive Modern Apprenticeship activities in Scotland and CJC want to develop their work-based learning infrastructure in this area. It was identified that, in both countries, colleges collaborate with sector skills agencies and industry partners, with activities structured around the needs of the employer and the future employability of the individual.

New College Lanarkshire (NCL), Scotland	Central Johannesburg TVET College (CJC), South Africa
<p>New College Lanarkshire (NCL) is one of the largest Further Education colleges in Scotland with over 1,100 staff and 19,000 learners across six campuses in the Lanarkshire region.</p> <p>The college mission is to ensure learners are well prepared for the future by providing innovative, high quality, relevant learning for careers, life and success while supporting the people, business, economy and sustainable development of Scotland.</p>	<p>Central Johannesburg College is a public Technical and Vocational Education and Training College that offers a wide range of qualifications, from NQF Level 2 to NQF Level 4 - from National Technical Education (NATED) programmes to the new and exciting National Certificate Vocational [NC(V)] to Skills courses and Learnerships. There are over 56 full time study opportunities in five schools, from which a student can choose. The Career</p>

New College Lanarkshire (NCL), Scotland	Central Johannesburg TVET College (CJC), South Africa
NCL deliver a wide ranging curriculum at further and short cycle higher education level; utilising a learning outcome approach, delivering a range of unitised courses from access level to degree programme, across the SCQF framework.	Development Programme activities include industry led career guidance workshops, tools and materials development and marketing of the portfolio to all CJC campuses and sites.

Project Overview

New College Lanarkshire is dedicated to continuous improvement, a desire to internationalise and a commitment to collaborative working and exchange of good practice.

At the outset of the project, partners identified demand for activities to address the identified needs of both learners and the automotive industry. This included the development of work-based learning tools to address the need for practical skills for young learners in South Africa, the need for greater employer input in training programme design, the need to close the gap between education and industry standards and the need for practical skills training within industry-standard workshop environments. Through the college skills audit, it was identified that not all CJC lecturing staff have the requisite skills to deliver training on automotive maintenance and repairs at a standard acceptable by industry.

In order to address the needs described above, partners agreed to undertake key activities. This included an analysis of current work-based learning toolkits, an analysis of current employer engagement methods (in both countries), the initiation and development of industry relationships with South African partners and the development of work-based learning toolkits for use in both countries.

‘Happy to work directly with CJC to help progress the project – we must make this happen.’

James Mogale, Deputy Director: Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges Curriculum Development and Support, Department of Higher Education and Training, Republic of South Africa

Impact on Participating Organisations

This initial foundation level project resulted in creating impact for both Scotland and South Africa, as follows:

- i Better staff engagement within the workplace, increased awareness of industry standards/needs and collaboration of networks and partnerships.
- ii NCL will benefit from an updated toolkit of resources which will enhance employer relationships, improve understanding of industry practice, enhance work-based learning programmes aligned with industry need and improve monitoring and management processes. It is estimated that the toolkit will benefit 360 learners each year in South Africa and 1000 in Scotland. Ten industry partners have been engaged in the partnership discussions including includes Car Track, BMW, Ford and the South African Police Service (SAPS).
- iii It is anticipated that improvements to current work-based learning practice may increase learner retention and positive programme results.
- iv NCL will benefit from adopting an innovative, international, multi-agency approach to addressing issues highlighted by the annual review process and Education Scotland review/inspection.
- v CJC have benefited from NCL expertise and experience with outcomes already evident in stronger industry relationships and buy-in to CJC ambitions. In addition, CJC will benefit from the continued support of NCL in order to mirror the Scottish model for maximum impact on the community, the learner, the employer and the sector overall. Due to the exposure and experience of two CJC officials who visited the NCL in May 2017, the college was in a better position to engage with industry and two lecturers were placed for training in the automotive industry.
- vi A key achievement of the project to date is the expansion of the partnership to incorporate a range of relevant, enthusiastic stakeholders: Institute of Motor Industry (IMI), the South African Department of Higher Education and Training, Gauteng Community Education and Training College, Creative Directions, Industrial Development Corporation (South Africa) and SIOC-CDT (The developmental arm of Kumba Iron Ore Mine in Kathu, Northern Cape). These partners have contributed to the discussions and helped shape the direction of the project by giving advice and support throughout the latter stages of delivery.
- vii The potential exists to roll-out the partnership delivery model to an additional community college and a Technical Vocational Education and Training College, which delivers Automotive programmes within South Africa. The Gauteng Community Education and Training College (GCETC) in South Africa is working closely with CJC in many respects. The benefit of this project will be felt and reached out to many youngsters in three Metropolitan cities and two District Municipalities through 47 community learning centres.
- viii **Employer voice:** Over the lifetime of the project a number of employers supported the work of the partnership. These employers are committed to supporting the future goals of the partnership in order to derive mutual benefit.

The development of industry links is a priority of the partnership. To date, discussions have been initiated with the Industrial Development Corporation of South Africa Ltd (IDC) and the Sishen Iron Ore Company Community Development Trust (SIOC-CDT), with a view to sourcing additional funding for future activities.

MerSETA, the South African Skills Development Agency for the Automotive sector are interested in the project from a skills development perspective and are able to provide CJC with advice, support and potentially, additional funding.

International Automotive Industry Awarding body (IMI) are in the process of entering the South African market and have expressed an interest in supporting the project during an advanced phase.

What employers had to say:

'We appreciate the efforts of the training currently facilitated by CJC in providing possible candidates to be employed by Cartrack with the relevant theoretical skills. We also need to concentrate on the practical training required to bring the theory covered into the workplace – which could be offered with the CJC/NCL model which incorporates practical and theoretical skills. Trainees should also be trained on behaviour needed for the workplace.'

Pierre Coetsee, Technical Services Manager, Cartrack, SA

'We are happy to continue to host CJC students. If students came with practical skills, this would be a big advantage.'

Colonel Mnguni, Service Manager, South African Police Service Station (SAPS)

'BMW would be happy to host CJC students in the future. Students with practical skills would be more advantageous in the reduction of cost of repairs and we would see a quicker return on investment. BMW would be happy to provide artisans to deliver guest lectures and mechanical workshop activities at CJC.'

Peter Callanan, Project and Facilities Manager, BMW Car and Motorcycle Dealership

'We would like to document the journey of this project as an aide for further dissemination to high level South African organisations.'

Laura-Beth Eicker-Harris, Managing Director, Creative Directions, SA

- ix Addressing the gender gap:** Partners would like to further investigate the issues of gender equality in the automotive industry, having noted a difference in the Scottish and South African models – in Scotland the industry is male dominated, from access programmes to chief executives of key businesses, however in South Africa a much more inclusive approach was apparent, with females involved in activities at all levels and areas of interest.

Overcoming Challenges during Project Delivery

General communication was problematic, with online tools such as SKYPE not facilitating online discussion as anticipated. A full understanding of achievable aims and objectives was not gained until face-to-face meetings were possible and full and complete discussion could take place. Regular teleconferencing, facilitated by the British Council, helped to ensure that momentum was not lost and that relationships developed during face-to-face meetings were maintained.

Tips, Advice and Lessons Learned

Project partners were asked the following questions and their insights are captured in the numbered list below:

- Q1 - If you were able to go back in time, what would you have done differently and why?
- Q2 - What factors do you consider to be key in the success of our project?
- Q3 - What advice would you give to anyone who has just begun or is about to begin their ISP project journey?
- i Plan for staff illness or for staff leaving. Although a year is not a long time, staffing changes are possible within this timeframe. Ensuring regular communication to the whole project team will ensure a smooth transition if such a situation occurs.
- ii Infrastructure may be unimaginably different, keep plans flexible until you have visited each other and have a clear idea of challenges and issues that may impact on the project.
- iii Where possible plan a joint dissemination as this provides partners great opportunities to pool resources but also to meet key stakeholders and future potential partners or donors.

- iv Don't be over ambitious at the foundation stage. Keep ideas and outputs simple and achievable and conduct a thorough analysis of all the possible risks that may delay or change the direction of the project.
- v Allow for a settling-in period at the start of the project, be open minded and flexible. Be aware of each other's challenges and limitations and ask the local British Council contacts for help and advice if needed.
- vi Include all project participants (whether they have a big or small part to play) at the early planning stages. It is imperative to success to have buy-in from anyone who will be asked to contribute to the project.
- vii Set up frequent communication between partners and stakeholders.
- viii Plan your marketing, PR, dissemination, photos, press articles and social media content as early as possible in your project.

Case Study 6:

Title: Raising Quality and Standards – Vietnam/UK Advanced ISP Project



What are the factors that make an outstanding learning experience? The answer is that there are many: services, buildings, teachers, subjects, equipment, teaching and learning, leadership and so on. All of these factors are pinned on to one fundamental framework – QUALITY. If quality systems and processes are clear, well defined, workable and well supported then students will achieve and will be successful. Having good quality assurance and quality improvement processes in place is at the core of all outstanding education institutions.

<p>Coleg y Cymoedd, Wales (CyC)</p>	<p>Vietnam Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Agency (VETA), Hanoi Vocational College for Electro Mechanics, The Vietnam-Korea Vocational College, Hanoi Industrial Vocational College, Hue College of Tourism, Vietnam</p>
<p>Coleg y Cymoedd was formed in 2013, following the merger of The College Ystrad Mynach and Coleg Morgannwg.</p> <p>Over 10,000 learners study at Coleg y Cymoedd each year with sites in Aberdare, Nantgarw, Rhondda (Llwynypia) and Ystrad Mynach.</p> <p>The college offers a wide range of Full and Part Time courses from Entry to Degree</p>	<p>Vietnam Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Agency (VETA) assist the Directorate of Vocational Education and Training (DVET) in performing the function of management in the field of vocational education and training quality assurance nationwide. VETA assumes the responsibility for, and coordinates with relevant partners and submits to the DVET policies, plans, strategies and solutions for the development of vocational training quality assurance and quality management of vocational training and education.</p>

Coleg y Cymoedd, Wales (CyC)	Vietnam Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Agency (VETA), Hanoi Vocational College for Electro Mechanics, The Vietnam-Korea Vocational College, Hanoi Industrial Vocational College, Hue College of Tourism, Vietnam
<p>Level in over 15 Curriculum areas.</p> <p>Working in partnership with more than 800 employers, the college's Business Services team offer a wide range of Apprenticeship and Bespoke Commercial Training packages.</p> <p>The college has invested significantly in its facilities in recent years, including the Nantgarw Campus building (a £40 million award winning campus).</p>	<p>Hanoi College for Electro Mechanics was established in 2006 under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. The college provides training in multi-industry, multi-level programmes to a high quality in order to adapt to the rapid integration process of Vietnam into the world economy. The college contributes to the development of the country through providing a highly trained workforce, scientific research and products. It focuses on the importance of creativity and innovation and provides training to enable students with the ability to work in a competitive and inclusive environment.</p> <p>Vietnam - Korea Industrial Technology Vocational College (VKC) is a government funded college and benchmarks advanced international industrial clusters, strategically located in the centre of Vietnam surrounded by industrial complexes. VKC runs two and three year training programs. The college is building a comprehensive development strategy for enhancing the training capacity as a vocational training institution to meet the diverse needs of enterprises as well as the increasing training needs of students. While being a relatively young college, VKC is contributing to the industrial development of the nation with training in the field of engineering. It also uses a tailored curriculum reflecting the needs of the industry.</p> <p>Hanoi Industrial Vocational College plays a key role in providing high quality human resource for the economic development of Hanoi in particular and the country in general. The college has five functional rooms, seven specialized teaching faculties and one centre. The college currently provides training at three levels in 15 different areas. Besides partnerships with vocational training institutions and universities in Vietnam, the college is also a partner with training institutions in Korea, Japan, United Kingdom and Finland. The school offers the following occupations:</p> <p>International Level (five occupations): automotive technology, air-conditioning and refrigeration techniques, mechatronics and industrial electronics and welding</p> <p>ASEAN Level (two occupations): industrial electronics, material cutting.</p> <p>Hue College of Tourism was established in 1999 and under the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. Its mission is to provide vocational training service, to develop tourism human resources for the Middle and Central Highlands provinces at college level and lower, to meet the demand of tourism development in the region. Since 2013 the college has been a certified school meeting vocational training standards since.</p>

Project Overview

As a result of a successful ISP Foundation Project Coleg y Cymoedd were invited, by the British Council, to develop an Advanced ISP Project with partners: Hanoi Industrial Vocational College, Hanoi Vocational College for Electro Mechanics, The Vietnam-Korea Vocational College and in addition a new partner Hue Tourism College. Forty-five VET colleges were selected to participate in ISP projects and Coleg y Cymoedd was matched with four.

The project focussed on the quality assurance cycle with particular emphasis on the roles and responsibilities of managers and leaders within the process. Coleg y Cymoedd was able to share their own quality system tools and resources with the Vietnamese colleges and delivered face to face training. The aim of the training was to build capacity among colleagues in Vietnam to develop new skills and concepts that they could then adapt and implement within their own organisations.

All colleges in Vietnam submitted information on current quality assurance practices allowing staff from Coleg y Cymoedd to benchmark current practices, plan training in line with requirements and deliver training relevant to the colleges' needs. This allowed for the development of a training programme, tools and resources that was meaningful and achievable for partners to implement.

Working with college managers and leaders meant that the change and impact on each organisation was implemented by key decision makers. Our approaches also ensured that systems and processes were standardised across the organisations. Partners agreed that the best and most accessible way to share resources was through an e-platform. In considering a low cost, easy to use option the project team decided that Dropbox and Google Drive would be the best way forward. These platforms were proven to work successfully and have ensured an approach that is easily sustainable for many years to come.

Coleg y Cymoedd and all partners in Vietnam have successfully achieved the project outcomes and deliverables. The project has been well received in Vietnam and has positively impacted on partner organisations. As mentioned the project has been delivered to management and has had direct leadership input which has allowed for changes and new initiatives to be achieved quickly.

Impact on Participating Organisations

'Talking about achievements, I think there are many. Because in the integration world, international partnerships brought positive changes to our colleges, such as how to work with international partners, creating pro-active working environment between parties. Furthermore our teaching staff increased confidence in designing lessons and embedding employability skills in the teaching, which as a result makes learners more interested in the lessons and participate actively. Our students were introduced to new practices in giving feedback through learner surveys to improve the quality of teaching and they participated with responsibility'.

Nguyen Chinh Minh, Vice Principal, Hanoi Industrial College

- i Tools and resources that were shared with the partners in Vietnam were tailored to their needs. This has assisted the colleges in being able to adapt the information to improve policies, procedures and practices to meet their specific needs. The colleges in Vietnam agree that the training, support and resources received are very useful in enabling them to make positive steps in creating a quality assurance cycle throughout the whole organisation, ensuring that all staff recognise their roles and responsibilities and the need for a robust quality assurance system.

- ii Staff in Vietnam, working across all colleges gained a better understanding of quality assurance systems and were able to apply new approaches in lesson planning, teaching assessment and learner surveys which resulted in improvements in the quality of teaching and employability skills for students.
- iii Participation in the British Council Foundation and Advanced ISP has enabled Coleg y Cymoedd and us to enhance our reputation, credibility and presence in Vietnam. Furthermore this project has allowed us to further develop links with other colleges and expand on our existing international activity. We have had a presence in the international education sector for approximately 11 years working mainly with partners across four countries, mainly from the UAE and the EU.
- iv This project has provided staff at Coleg y Cymoedd with a unique professional development experience and we have been able to disseminate findings across the college, reaching a wider audience. Staff at Coleg y Cymoedd are able to gain insight into different processes and procedures and implement best practices within their own areas. Staff have also been able to network with professionals in Vietnam and the UK, through dissemination, therefore expanding links with peers in their field allowing them to share and also gain knowledge. Internally, this project has impacted on creating an international ethos within the organisation and this in turns ensures our college community is inclusive and embraces all cultures as well as raises awareness of global opportunities.
- v Due to the work undertaken in Vietnam, Coleg y Cymoedd was invited to attend a high-level Welsh HE Event where delegates from Vietnam visited the UK. Coleg y Cymoedd was invited to present the details of our project to event delegates, thus increasing a wider UK and Vietnam awareness and reputation of the colleges.
- vi Coleg y Cymoedd participated in a British Council Trade Mission to Vietnam in November 2017 and it was evident that the work delivered through the project is still having a positively impact on colleges in Vietnam.

Overcoming Challenges during Project Delivery

Due to unforeseen circumstances the project team experienced some staffing issues; this delayed the start of the project. Having a wider pool of people to call upon and having clear roles, responsibilities and project plans in place helped to put the project on track and to catch up quickly and smoothly. Having the support of senior managers, in our case the Assistant Principal, was key in ensuring that staffing and any other issues were easily solved. Alerting the British Council to any difficulties was also a great help as they were able to guide the project team which helped to alleviate some of our pressures.

Language was a challenge on this project. The British Council team in Vietnam were instrumental in supporting with language issues. Having the e-platform went some way toward helping as staff on both sides were able to read and translate at a pace that suited individuals.

Tips, Advice and Lessons Learned

Project partners were asked the following questions and their insights are captured in the numbered list below:

- Q1 - If you were able to go back in time, what would you have done differently and why?
- Q2 - What factors do you consider to be key in the success of our project?
- Q3 - What advice would you give to anyone who has just begun or is about to begin their ISP project journey?

- i Throughout the project there has been open dialogue and desk-based support to be able to continuously provide support and guidance on agreed areas such as lessons planning and assessment; capacity development for teachers to enable them to embed employability skills in teaching; teaching assessment tools and learner walks. Keeping communication channels open and clear is key.
- ii Working with a limited and finite funding pool and time commitment meant that all project partners needed to ensure that funds were not wasted, and we needed to be creative in how we delivered the project through low cost means. Ultimately these approaches will better enable a long-term sustained communication channel between all partners. If time and funds are limited consider how you can deliver your project at a distance, perhaps using e-platforms.
- iii Take time to really understand the nuances of the cultures that you are partnered with. In addition to the overarching culture of any country also take time to understand the culture that exists internally within your partner organisation, for example – the relationship between partners, their staff and their managers, how they prefer to work, take breaks, length of day, decision makers, how to make approaches and requests etc.
- iv Lay clear expectations not only of project deliverable but behaviour and communication, make sure all partners have the same understanding and view. Be clear and agree terminology. It is possible that some terminology may be completely new to your partner, this is true particularly where you are introducing new concepts perhaps concepts that do not yet exist in your project partner's country.
- v Translation and interpretation take time, if your project needs translation all the way through then ensure a more realistic and manageable timeframe for project outputs.
- vi Manage expectations; be clear about what the project can deliver and what it can't. This takes great skill and must be approached in a respectful and diplomatic way. Having a clear, detailed and mutually agreed project work plan will help to ensure that expectations are managed well.

Acknowledgments

The British Council would like to thank everyone whose commitment, dedication and co-operation have made International Skills Partnerships possible.

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In addition to the expertise of Afshan Baksh, thank you to the team at British Council who made the production of this report possible –

Alex Abel, Brian Wilson, Miro Fernandez, Dessislava Stoitcheva and Galia Dzhamulova

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