

TVET programme to boost manpower skills, competency



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VIEWPOINT

THE availability of highly skilled and technically competent manpower is a major criterion in attracting foreign investment into the country. An abundance of academically qualified personnel within the workforce, without the existence of a much larger pool of highly skilled workers, would not be able to support the nation's rapidly changing industrial environment.

The economic advancement of both under-developed and developing nations depends largely on their manpower development initiatives.

In this respect, nations with sound planning and implementa-

tion of their Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) will help to elevate the skills and competencies of their workforce.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco), through its Unesco-UNEVOC International Centre in Bonn, Germany, has been instrumental in helping its 195 member states to strengthen and upgrade their TVET programmes. The body is responsible for supporting education, training and capacity building for sustainable development in relation to the world of work.

Malaysia has been a member and an active participant in the Unesco-UNEVOC programmes. The World TVET Conference 2015 will be held in Kuching, Sarawak, from August 25-27.

Themed "Quantum Leap: Transformation and Globalisation of Technical Vocational Education & Training (TVET) — Living Skills in the 21st Century", the conference will focus on related issues such as

government policy, industry partnership, training centre programmes, industrial leadership and innovation.

The conference will benefit decision makers and practitioners from the industries, training institutes, skills centres, policy makers, educationist, administrators and planners of TVET.

The government, in the recently 11th Malaysia Plan (11MP) announcement, has given a greater emphasis on human capital development in the five-year plan.

An allocation of RM1 billion in the next five years for the Skill Development Fund will enable the incoming younger workforce to receive skills and vocational education.

The announcement will enhance

the implementation of TVET programmes by the multitude of vocational and training institutions in the government and private sectors in the country.

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11MP is targeting to create some 1.5 million new job opportunities by 2020 with high income and value-added employment in such sectors as the oil and gas, aviation engineering, shipping and automotive.

The TVET implementations are not without issues and challenges. Despite the many TVET providers in the country, there are industry voices that claimed the apparent demand-supply mis-

match of the TVET output. Another hindrance to TVET implementation is the issue of status, where too much preference is given to "aca-

demic" rather than vocational education. This has resulted in those who enter vocational training are those who do not do well "academically".

Malaysia Automotive Institute, in response to the claim of demand and supply mismatch of new automotive workers, has introduced stop-gap programmes to realign the skills requirements of the industry.

Under the Malaysia Automotive Human Capital Roadmap, programmes such as Digital Engineering Prototyping, Automotive Industry Certification Engineering, Automotive Industry Graduate Apprenticeship, Industry Led Professional Certificate, Review Occupational Skills Standard and Customized Human Capital Development have been implemented since 2014 at all levels within the local automotive industry.

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