SABER Workforce Development

What is it?
How does it work?
What are the findings?
What is workforce development?

“... the coordination of public and private sector policies and programs that provides individuals with the opportunity for a sustainable livelihood and helps organizations achieve exemplary goals, consistent with the societal context...”

*Jacobs, R., & Hawley, J. (2008)*

Why do countries invest in workforce development?

A skilled workforce is a powerful asset for economic productivity and growth.

If employers can find the right mix of skills...

...and workers have access to the information and training options necessary to succeed in the labor market.

Can countries measure how well workforce development systems are doing?

Strong systems perform key functions for strategy, oversight and managing schools and training providers. The Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER-WfD) initiative provides a framework for benchmarking policy design and implementation in these areas against international good practice.
What drives an effective workforce development system?

**Strategic Direction**
- Setting strategic priorities

**Demand-led**
- Assessing skills demand

**Coordination**
- Organizing for policy implementation

**Pathways**
- Creating open pathways for skills acquisition

**Diversity and Excellence**
- Supporting diversity and quality of training

**Relevance**
- Promoting market-relevant public training

**Accountability**
- Using data to monitor and improve results

**Funding**
- Ensuring efficiency and equity in funding

**Standards**
- Setting relevant and reliable standards

**System Oversight**
- Service Delivery

**Strategic Framework**
1. Dimension 1
   - **G1** Strategic Direction
   - **G2** Demand-led
   - **G3** Coordination
   - **G4** Funding
   - **G5** Standards
   - **G6** Pathways
   - **G7** Diversity and Excellence
   - **G8** Relevance
   - **G9** Accountability

**What countries have used SABER-WfD?**

- **MALAYSIA**
  - Structural Transformation
  - Recommendations incorporated into government skills roadmap for transition to a knowledge economy

- **UGANDA**
  - Policy Implementation
  - Build stakeholder consensus on program implementation priorities under a new Business, Technical and Vocational Education Law

- **MOROCCO**
  - Strategy Development
  - Took stock of recent system reforms to inform new employment strategy

- **BULGARIA**
  - Policy Dialogue
  - Structured dialogue among diverse stakeholders designing a new law on pre-university education
How does SABER-WfD work?

**Examines**
three dimensions of workforce development systems

**Collects**
information on these dimensions through desk research, interviews and stakeholder workshops to establish

**Evaluates**
levels of system development
by coding collected information to produce a rating between 1 and 4

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**Strategic Framework**

**System Oversight**

**Service Delivery**

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**Institutional Design**

**Policy Implementation**

**System Learning and Adaptation**

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**RATING**

- 4: Attainment of highest global standards
- 3: Systemic good practice
- 2: Instances of good practice
- 1: Absence of good practice

**Stage**

- Latent
- Emerging
- Established
- Advanced
A framework for analyzing workforce development systems

High-level leadership to align workforce policy to national priorities

**Policy Goals**

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION**
- Range of workforce leaders and their actions to shape the skills agenda

**DEMAND-LED**
- Availability of high quality information to determine skills gaps
- Quality of employer and industry representative engagement in policy making

**COORDINATION**
- Government structures that enable critical coordination for policy implementation

**SYSTEM OVERSIGHT**
Governance arrangements that determine funding, quality assurance and learning pathways

**FUNDING**
- Efficiency of public funding for education and training
- Focus on equity in public funding procedures
- Mobilization of resources from private sector partners

**STANDARDS**
- Comprehensive-ness and robust-ness of competency standards
- Credibility of testing and certification
- Protocols for setting, enforcing and incentivizing accreditation of training programs

**PATHWAYS**
- Arrangements for progression and transfer in the pre-employment education system
- Promotion of continuing education and training and career development services
- Availability of programs for disadvantaged groups

**DIVERSITY AND EXCELLENCE**
- Regulatory environment for non-state institutions
- Measures to incentivize the performance of public institutions

**RELEVANCE**
- Links with industry
- Provider connections with research institutions
- Attention to quality through trainer recruitment and professional development

**ACCOUNTABILITY**
- Reporting of administrative data
- Periodic in-depth analyses of system performance
- Use of data to drive system improvement

**SERVICE DELIVERY**
Diversity, regulation and management of training provision to deliver market- and job-relevant skills

- Reporting of administrative data
- Periodic in-depth analyses of system performance
- Use of data to drive system improvement
Strategic framework aligns the workforce development system to the socio-economic goals of the country by setting the overall agenda for skills policy. This directs and helps coordinate the efforts of others in the system.

Country Ratings for Dimension 1

- Tajikistan
- LAO PDR
- Georgia
- Egypt
- Tunisia
- Morocco
- Bulgaria
- Jordan
- Timor-Leste
- Moldova
- Ukraine
- Macedonia
- Sri Lanka
- Turkey
- St. Lucia
- Grenada
- Malaysia
- Iraq
- West Bank and Gaza
- Solomon Islands
- Armenia
- ST. LUCIA
- LAO PDR
- GEORGIA
- EGYPT
- TUNISIA
- MOROCCO
- BULGARIA
- JORDAN
- TIMOR-LESTE
- MOLDOVA
- UKRAINE
- MACEDONIA
- SRI LANKA
- TURKEY
- GRENADA
- MALAYSIA
- IRAQ
- WEST BANK AND GAZA
- SOLOMON ISLANDS
- ARMENIA
- LATENT
- EMERGING
- ESTABLISHED
- ADVANCED
Most countries have workforce development strategies in place.

Mechanisms to involve employers in setting strategy are fragmented, often resulting in weak engagement.

Implementation of strategic initiatives lack effective coordination.

But the leadership needed to generate ownership and take action on key strategic initiatives is often lacking.

Only eight countries in the sample have routine formal meetings where employers provide input on policy direction.

Only Malaysia has put in place robust incentives for employers to invest in upgrading employee skills.

In strong systems responsibilities for the public and private sector are clearly defined...

...and procedures to coordinate and monitor policy implementation are formal and routinely used.

Reports to Taoiseach on key competitiveness issues facing the Irish economy including skills.

Includes a large number of business leaders from major sectors and trade union representatives.
**System Oversight**

**Policy Goals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>G4</th>
<th>G5</th>
<th>G6</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ensuring Efficiency and Equity in FUNDING</strong></td>
<td><strong>Assuring Relevant and Reliable STANDARDS</strong></td>
<td><strong>Diversifying PATHWAYS for Skills Acquisition</strong></td>
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**What do we look at?**

- Efficiency of public funding for education and training
- Equity in public funding procedures
- Mobilization of resources from private sector partners
- Comprehensiveness and robustness of competency standards
- Credibility of testing and certification
- Protocols for setting, enforcing and incentivizing accreditation of training programs
- Arrangements for progression and transfer in the pre-employment education system
- Promotion of continuing education and training and career development services
- Availability of programs for disadvantaged groups

**Why do we look at this?**

*System oversight* defines the rules that influence the activities of the workforce development system’s main participants – individuals, training institutions and employers – in seeking skills and supplying training to ensure access, equity and system efficiency.

**Country Ratings for Dimension 2**

LATENT 1

EMERGING 2

ESTABLISHED 3

ADVANCED 4
Public funding for workforce development programs does not do enough to promote efficiency or equity. This is true even for programs targeted to the poor and disadvantaged in strong systems, budgeting processes direct resources toward providers and programs that achieve targets for efficiency and equity.

Quality assurance procedures are relatively well developed but vary in terms of coverage and reliability. Formal frameworks are commonplace but vary widely in coverage. Testing and certification in major occupations is often seen as reliable but competency-based standards are often not yet system-wide.

Support for continuing and on-the-job learning is weak. Recognizing prior non-formal learning so that workers’ get credit for the skills they have is especially weak. Recognition of formal pre-employment education is more developed. In many countries students in the formal education system benefit from relatively open pathways to higher levels of education.
High quality service delivery produces the skills needed for productivity and growth. The quality of regulation, management and monitoring of public and private providers has a strong influence on the quality and relevance of education and training delivered.

Why do we look at this?

Country Ratings for Dimension 3
Findings

**SERVICE DELIVERY**

**F1**

**G7**

Vibrant markets for private education and training exist in most countries

- Number of countries: 3
- At each level of development: 18

**F2**

**G8**

Staff quality receives modest attention despite its importance for delivering industry relevant education and training

- Number of countries: 7
- At each level of development: 14

**F3**

**G9**

Few countries collect more than basic administrative data from education and training providers

- Number of countries: 7
- At each level of development: 14

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- But regulation of these markets is often weak
- Agencies managing public providers struggle to strike the right balance between institutional autonomy and accountability for results
- Strong systems attract instructors with industry experience
- Regular in-service training – often done in partnership with industry – keeps instructors’ technical and teaching skills up-to-date
- In many systems even this is not yet done reliably
- Few countries are able to effectively monitor, analyze and improve workforce system performance
Systems Approach for Better Education Results – Workforce Development

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