



TVET PASIFIKA

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
AND TRAINING FOR THE PACIFIC



TVET in Fiji, *Focus on the Future*

REPORT ON STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK
NATIONAL TVET FORUM *14 April 2023*

Follow us on



www.fnu.ac.fj

Contents

Acronyms

Definitions

1.0 Executive Summary

2.0 Introduction

3.0 Discussions

- 3.1 FNU TVET
- 3.2 Concerns of stakeholders
- 3.3 Skills Gap
- 3.3 Reality and forms of Skills Gap

4.0 Causes of Skills Gap

- 4.1 Immigration / Emigration
- 4.2 Technological advancements
- 4.3 Lack of Soft skills and qualifications
- 4.4. Career Choices of Fiji's Young People and their parents
- 4.5 Coordination between the training institutions and employers
- 4.6 Lack of in-service training
- 4.7 Untapped talents and unrealized potential
- 4.8 Competency of TVET trainers
- 4.9 Career guidance in schools
- 4.10 Data recording

5.0 Suggestions for Bridging the Skills Gap in Fiji

6.0 Presentations by NTPC for improving industry workplace productivity

- 6.1 Department of Quality Awards
- 6.2 Department of Productivity & Industry Innovation
- 6.3 Department of Trade Test & Apprenticeship

7.0 Participant Recommendations & Suggestions

8.0 Conclusion

9.0 Annexes



Acronyms

CBT	Competency-Based Training
FIT	Fiji Institute of Technology
FNU	Fiji National University
FNPF	Fiji National Provident Fund
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ILO	International Labour Organization
ITAC	Industry-Training Advisory Committee (TPAF)
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
MOE	Ministry of Education
SMEs'	Small and medium-sized enterprises
NEC	National Employment Centre
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NTF	National TVET Forum
NTPC	National Training and Productivity Centre
SPARTECA	South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement
TPAF	Training and Productivity Authority of Fiji
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
USP	The University of the South Pacific



1.0 Executive Summary

Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) plays an important role in Fiji's social, economic development, hence TVET is recognised as a driver of industry. Unfortunately, TVET is still considered as the second choice behind academic education in Fiji. This perception is slowly changing as people realise the immense potential of TVET. Recently the concerns about climate change and the surge of economic activity post-Covid have caused TVET to gradually gain the attention it deserves in the formal and non-formal education spaces in Fiji. More people are participating in TVET, as noted by data from Fiji National University's TVET Pasifika with over 19,000 people trained in 2023. Education is considered the key to development, however, TVET is the master key because it can open all the doors supporting lifelong learning and improving our quality of living. The National TVET Forum (NTF) brought together over 150 stakeholders from across Fiji to discuss the critical issues surrounding skills gap in Fiji.

Concerns from government about Skills Gap in Fiji

Concerns from employers and industry stakeholders

Concerns about skills migration (NEC-PALM)

Concerns about foreign workers in Fiji

Concerns about TVET in Fiji

Concerns about the lack of TVET Policy



The NTF provided a platform for stakeholders to discuss their views, concerns and hopes about TVET, employment, migration and related themes. However, it became clear at the beginning of the forum, that the single biggest challenge was clarifying and agreeing on a definition about skills gap. Hence the organisers used a reflective approach during the discussion sessions. The organisers emphasised that it was important for stakeholders to clarify their thoughts and put their definitions about skills gap on paper. Then the next step was to discuss in small groups what they could do strategically, practically (as individual companies or executives) to improve their own situation. Therefore, the forum was an opportunity for stakeholders to dive-deep into their own situational scenarios, and to explore possible remedial solutions. It was also clear to the participants that there was no magic solution to the challenge of skills gap, because stakeholders had different experiences as they all came from diverse sectors. Some of the organisations were Method A and some Method B, and others from government departments. The participants however, agreed on common causes of skills gap such as overseas migration and new technology and some notable resolutions such as return of the 1% Levy to FNU, more collaboration and better data collation.

2.0 Introduction

This report sets out the findings of the National TVET Forum held at the Nasinu Campus on April 14, 2023. The Fiji National University (FNU) played host to this auspicious event, and it was quite fitting as FNU is the largest dual-sector university offering various qualifications from certificate to doctorate levels, from short courses, tailor-made programmes to apprenticeship. FNU is proud of its commitment to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and recognize that excellent TVET is essential for the economic and social development of Fiji and other Pacific Island nations. FNU has unrivaled experience and a proven track record of delivering relevant and responsive TVET programmes to meet labor market needs. FNU continues to strengthen its learning and teaching through regional and international accreditation of programs, investing in its staff, and enhancing its campuses and facilities.

The National TVET Forum was held for the first time face-to-face since the COVID-19 pandemic. TVET Pasifika is the overarching coordinating authority of TVET at FNU, emphasising FNU's commitment towards competence building, employability and fulfilling student experience.



PURPOSE OF THIS FORUM & FORMAT

- Bring** • Bring all stakeholders together to a national conversation about critical issues
- Focus** • Focus on a few choice topics of conversation
- Organise** • Organise the forum in an interactive engaging format – everybody talks, all voices are heard, all views are expressed
- Continuity** • Make it an annual FNU Forum with clear achievable outcomes

THEMES

1. Skills gap in Fiji
2. Productivity in the workplace
3. National TVET policy development
4. Open session about FNU TVET and how we can improve our courses, programmes and services

3.0 Discussions

3.1 FNU TVET

This section highlights the contributions of participants at the forum. FNU had some academic and TVET staff that participated in the forum and so they expressed the commitment of the university in ensuring that FNU students were well trained, competent and employable. Work readiness is an FNU aspiration and graduates acquire the motivation to become lifelong learners. There are also opportunities for reskilling and up-skilling at FNU to meet new challenges and to take advantage of new opportunities throughout their years of work. There are over 200 TVET programmes that allow individuals and organisations to upskill and reskill, particularly after the pandemic.

TVET Pasifika combines the full range of TVET programmes under a single, dedicated space. This means that TVET Pasifika is a one-stop shop where students and employers – local, national, and regional – can browse, research and enrol in programmes and courses to boost their employability and fulfill their personal and professional aspirations. TVET Pasifika enables students, employers, and development partners across the Pacific to select the technical and vocational education and training programmes that meet their needs. Our extensive portfolio is adaptable to support diverse industry sectors relevant to our region, including agriculture and the marine sector, hospitality and tourism, business and commerce, engineering and technology, education, and community care.

In the past, fewer graduates of vocational trainings aspired for further education. But times have changed, and higher-level qualifications are now a common expectation among young people, reflecting the increased ambition, labour market demand for higher-level skills, and a need to upskill and reskill throughout their lives. It is crucial to demonstrate that TVET programmes also offer a gateway to life-long learning, including higher education and higher qualifications.



3.2 Concerns from Stakeholders

The National TVET Forum brought together key stakeholders to engage in an open reflective discussion of skills development in the country—focusing on key factors, including a growing realisation of the importance of skills development for equitable national growth. Skills are essential to individuals and organisations for income generation, productivity and competence of the workforce. Hence, workforce skills are critical when enterprises are seeking to compete in a globally competitive environment. In short, skills support greater efficiency in production and ensure income growth for enterprises and the country.

TVET has suffered from being considered the fall-back option or safety net option for those who did not do well academically. It was only in recent decades that this perception was challenged both in the national and global level. A significant reason for this change has been the changing role of work and its impact on national and international economies. With employment becoming more technologically-based and more diverse, the opportunities for unskilled labour has reduced, so TVET has assumed a critical educational role to boost competence and knowledge. Transforming unskilled into semiskilled workers. Training has been identified as the key driver of the industry.

According to the NTF stakeholders, from automotive, mechanical, electrical, and construction industry, employers had noticed that core skills such as **communication, work attitude, self-discipline, and use of technology** were lacking. The anecdotal lack of **qualified tillers, building painters, joiners, and carpenters** in the construction industry are examples of a clear gaps in job-related technical skills.



3.3 Reality and forms of Skills Gap

Skills shortage exists when organisations experience difficulties in filling employment opportunities or explicit work undertakings in a certain field. These work deficiencies normally deteriorate over time and impacted by external forces such as migration, climate change and natural disasters. Fiji has seen examples of these forces over the last ten years with the impact of Cyclone Winston in 2016, the PALM initiative by the National Employment Centre and the impact of COVID-19 in 2020-2022. The pandemic increased the demand for specialised occupations like skilled tradespersons, nurses, teachers and others.

The workforce and skill levels are declining for various reasons. Employers are becoming more aware of the growing skills gap in the workforce as skilled professionals relocate locally or abroad for better pay, working conditions, and better family life. Though there are instances of adequate paper-qualifications, however the lack of practical experience and work-readiness have become a labor market concern. In summary, Skills Gap can come in various forms and these are five of them:

1. Mismatch in qualifications and the task/job at hand.
2. Absence of skilled workers to do the task/job.
3. Lack of competence and/or experience for a particular task/job.
4. Lack of training, upskilling and refresher programmes.
5. Lack of knowledge about on-the-job technology.





4.0 Causes of Skills Gap



4.1 Immigration / Emigration

Several factors have fueled migration flows. Workers looking for better-paying jobs overseas are associated with the common supply-side push factors. These are mainly caused by the fact that wages in developed nations frequently remained higher than Fiji for both skilled and unskilled employment. Secondly, similar demand-side pull factors attract migrants to developed countries. Skilled tradespeople are migrating (as in the NEC-PALM Scheme) due to the lack of incentives and low wages in Fiji.

According to participants of the forum, there is notable shortage of **carpenters, plumbers, electricians, mechanical engineering technicians, painters, tile layers, and many jobs in the tourism and hospitality industry, as well as nurses, doctors, teachers and IT technicians.** There are various reasons why people migrate, but low wages and poor work conditions seem to be the prevalent ones. People feel they are stagnant in certain jobs and there is a lack of incentive, so they consciously gravitate to new environments and explore new opportunities. Some people are traumatised by poor work conditions, injuries, intimidation and bullying. The pandemic further deteriorated the situation in Fiji leaving people unemployed, helpless and hopeless. These combination of reasons became the catalysts for people's determination to move overseas for better opportunities. The departure of thousands of skilled tradespeople from Fiji estimated at over 50,000 in 2023 was a massive blow to local industries. Hence overseas migration is the biggest cause of skills gap in Fiji.

4.2 Technological advancements

The forum participants talked about skills gap that come in the form of mismatch is current skills of workers as compared to advances in industry standards, operating procedures, and the use of new technology, software, equipment, and tools. There are anecdotes of disparities in the practical components, and workshop equipment used by training institutions to those used in industry. Hence, students (graduates) are perceived to have received substandard training and are unable to perform up to the expectations of employers. Technology is driving many businesses that are now moving towards automation, so it is essential that our Fiji TVET institutions have the right standard of TVET workshops, qualified lecturers and regularly consult and collaborate with industry regarding their course contents.

In many cases as articulated by forum participants, relevant technologies and equipment are often absent; infrastructure is poor; if they exist, skill standards are obsolete and not well aligned to a sector's current and future skill needs.

4.3 Lack of Soft skills and qualifications

One of the common discussion points from the forum was the lack of soft skills, which refers to the personal attributes needed for success at a job. Some explanations included the assumption that people face numerous daily socioeconomic challenges, which may cause them to have negative cooperative skills.

As a result, the transition from school to work is not as smooth as many would like. People may feel disoriented and confused when entering a new work environment which may lead to the disconnection between qualifications and jobs. Some people feel overwhelmed by the tasks given to them, and may feel inadequate and unprepared. Hence, it is essential that these challenges are understood well once one joins the workforce. It could also be the result of a lack of soft skills or experience in the workplace. So there are anecdotal examples of mismatch between qualifications and the tasks or job which may be a form of skills gap.



The other is the lack of soft skills which limit people's ability to adapt and perform up the expectations of their employers. This also raises the question about the responsibility of employers to mentor and guide new employees and give them adequate time to develop and fit-into the work environment. The high expectation of employers to have university graduates who are work-ready maybe unrealistic and may contribute to frustration of both employees and employers.

4.4. Career Choices of Fiji's Young People

The career choices of young people determine the supply of workers in the various sectors. Sometimes the availability of scholarships may push people towards in-demand areas, but most of the time it depends on aspirations and career ambitions of school leavers and their parents. Hence, TVET is often the second choice because of its association with blue collar career pathways, as compared to Higher Education academic pathways which leads to white collar career paths. In Fiji, the common opinion from the forum is that although there is a sufficient supply of highly educated individuals in Fiji, these individuals lack the skills and practical experience necessary for crucial sectors and businesses, particularly in key growth industries like construction, tourism and other service areas. New graduates are often in this category as they may be qualified for certain positions but are disadvantaged by their lack of experience. Hence employers often opt to hire someone with experience to train new recruits. A new challenging area is the poor attitude and poor work ethics demonstrated by younger workers in the workforce today. This is often demonstrated by fake sick-leaves, unexplained absences from work, and other unethical behaviors. Anecdotes from the FNU Apprenticeship department show that some new recruits get terminated for offences such as stealing, unexplained absences and insubordination.

In terms of career path, it is often an uphill battle for TVET providers such as FNU to convince parents and school-leavers to opt for TVET because of parents' high expectations and aspirations. Some parents hope their children would join the white-collar sector rather than the blue-collar because they have the perception that technical and vocational-related training may be too labor intense for their children and produces less wages and results in lower social status.

These cultural factors like societal expectations and traditional stereotypes tend to have a stronger influence on young women's choices for career progression rather than men.



4.5 Coordination between the training institutes and employers

Forum participants share the view that employers and the training providers ought to have a stronger and better working relationship, so that they can collaborate on training contents for more relevance to the workplace. They could also coordinate upskilling and professional development needs of industry. This also includes marketing of TVET courses and programs. Method B organisations and SMEs often have situations where they have no formal career path/succession planning for their employees because of their smaller sizes. These small organisations are often also unaware that training providers such as FNU's NTPC offer a wide array of upskilling short courses and could even tailor-make trainings to suit their business needs. A fundamental challenge remains when employers and workers are unaware of the training opportunities and options provided by TVET institutions like FNU which could improve their efficiency, productivity and profitability.



4.6 Lack of in-service training, upskilling and refresher programs

There was consensus that the FNU 1% Levy ought to be returned to FNU, and to be used only for its original purpose which are: in-service training, apprenticeship, trade testing and productivity. In addition, special subsidized trainings ought to be provided for Method B employers who have never accessed their levy funds for training. This is especially for critical sectors such as Tourism and Hospitality, Construction, Retail, Manufacturing, IT, Food processing, Clothing and Textiles and Agriculture.

The situation has become critical as some organisations do not have the capacity to retain their qualified workforce any more due to their inability to compete, inability to provide in-service training or upskilling their workforce. This is a significant concern for many Method B and SMEs because they cannot access their Levy funds for training. Increasing labor costs & overheads (high inflation after the pandemic) reduces margins and discourages employers from spending on training costs. Employees can upskill/reskill themselves personally, but the Fiji National Provident Fund (FNPF) is not funding competency-based short courses.

4.7 Untapped talents and unrealized potential

The forum participants expressed that many talented and skilled individuals lived around us, especially in rural and maritime areas. While searching for tradespersons, industries or institutions have not ventured into rural areas, or peri-urban areas. Many people who live in rural settlements and villages construct, paint, and maintain their own homes. Some rural dwellers can conduct house wiring, plumbing, and complete mechanical works on their vehicles, showing their talents, skills, knowledge and abilities. These individuals maybe unaware of local skills-based training in institutions such as FNU's NTPC, where there is a specialised section called Trade Testing, where they could come for testing and certification. There is a modest estimate that as many as 50,000 untapped skilled workers exist around us in Fiji. So Skills Gap exist because we have not effectively reached many corners of Fiji. Funding for Trade Testing is essential, hence the urgent need to return the 1% Levy to FNU.

The other subgroup of untapped talents involve those who could be persuaded to undertake skills training so they could transition from one field to another. FNU has been working on this pathway over the last 2 years but have only produced 1,000 trained people each year. These include those left unemployed by Covid, retirees and those wanting to transition to other trade areas. More funding could be diverted into this area to help fill the skills vacuum in Fiji.

4.8 Competency of TVET trainers

When participants with prior experience in the industry attend training, they expect to see and hear from a knowledgeable instructor with concrete examples. Participants with disabilities also participate in TVET programs but are restricted and limited due to lack of appropriate resources and trainers who cannot facilitate these individuals. Skilled trainers/teachers are also leaving the country for a better and brighter future. New trainers tend to be perceived to have more theoretical rather than practical teaching. So this brings to the fore the issue of quality lecturers and trainers in our TVET institutions. If these institutions such as CATD, Navuso and FNU are not adequately funded, they would in turn not have the capacity to pay their trainers well. The other expectation is that TVET trainers and lecturers ought to be knowledgeable about latest industry trends and practices and use a variety of engaging teaching methods in their deliveries.

4.9 Career guidance in schools

Career guidance teachers do not provide accurate information and advise on the TVET career pathways in schools. Some potential students can fit into TVET programmes, but details of the program, training, and future for growth are not highlighted by teachers. It is the opinion of the forum that teachers do not have accurate information from industry and government to accurately advise students of careers that would be available urgently needed in Fiji in the immediate term, medium 5-9 years or longer 10-20 years. This gap in information is the main cause of the challenge for teachers, students and their parents.

4.10 Data recording

There is a lack of a consolidated database on the labor market and skilled immigrants leaving the country. Data from the automotive, manufacturing, construction, electrical, and many other technical fields are missing, resulting in skills gap. There are limited records of employment and unemployment data from key sectors, other than the consolidate date in Fiji Bureau of Statistics. In other words many of the exclamations, and claims made in newspapers about skilled migrations are based on inaccurate data. Some could be based on anecdotal information for unreliable sources. There is no central coordinating role for any national body in data collection, research, and analysis where one can audit and analyse the number. This used to be part of the role of the National Planning Office at the Ministry of Economy. Training providers such as FNU, CATD, APTC and others need accurate workforce needs forecast so they could plan and dedicate training resources accordingly.



5.0 Suggestions for Bridging the Skills Gap

5.1 Strategic marketing

There is the common view that without marketing there is no business so different marketing platforms ought to be utilised for maximum outreach to potential TVET students. Some suggestions included carrying out targeted marketing campaigns through careers fair day, Open Day, Mini open day at campus, roadside marketing, industry visits, face-to-face and virtual forums, and holding TVET conferences. Have billboards done, flyers and booklets developed and delivered to organisations, schools, NGOs, Unions, and Ministries. Marketing via e-mail, mass media marketing, and social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Tik Toks, and reels. Releasing columns in newspapers and have commercials running at university reception areas. Institutions ought to carry out community outreach programs in rural and remote areas of Fiji as well.

5.2 Training benefits

The Government, training institutions, FNPF, Levy & Grants Scheme, Scholarships, TELS loan and sponsorship, and employers are to strengthen collaboration and promote TVET programs. To ensure that courses offered are relevant to the required skills in the market and match students' interests and those of industry.

The stakeholders would need to validate and assess the qualifications produced by the educational system and reconcile these with the skills and competencies demanded by the industry, as this would allow stakeholders to determine the country's oversupply in certain areas or lack of skills in others.



5.3 Policy Implications – National Employment Centre

There is a need to establish a council for technical and vocational education and training – Skills Council. This will ensure financial accountability, and compliance with the Fiji Qualifications Framework, and coordination and monitoring of TVET efforts are aligned to national priorities. Set up an advisory council of stakeholders to focus on and develop ways to close the skills gap. The following are some of the roles that a Skills Council can play.

It is important for the Skills Council to have regular meetings with stakeholders and advisors from the industry to make sure institutions are aware of shifting technology and systems and that training meets the needs of the industry. In addition to formulating the national employment policy, the panel is to meet regularly and discuss labor market issues and monitor the implementation of the proposed employment policy.

Regular evaluation and monitoring of institutional and industry-specific training programs; and regular analysis of the industry's skills gaps and training needs to help institutions and training programs better respond to the needs of the industry and labor demand.

Enhancing the relevance and quality of technical and vocational education and training (TVET), encouraging greater coordination between institutions and industry sectors to ensure curriculums align with industry requirements, and improve labor market policies and institutions.

The database from the Skills Council should be accessible to government agencies, employers, students, teachers, career advisors, community leaders, parents, and guidance.

5.4 Practical based assessments

Graduates who are ready to work ought to have a good balance between theory, knowledge, and practical on-the-job experience. Industries suggested that training institutions collaborate closely with the industries and keep up with the most recent technology, equipment, machines, and methods so that students can participate in more practical programs and will not experience technology-shock by reviving apprenticeship and technical and TVET programs to instill skills that are relevant to certain jobs.

5.5 Staff retention strategies

An appreciation certificate, for example, can be awarded as part of a recognition program. Sending employees for refresher training and have fringe benefits for staff retention to prevent brain drain within the organisation and across the nation. Allowing flexibility for work, life, and balance to boost employee morale. Incentives provided by the employers, such as salary increments, improvement in teaching conditions and workloads, and refresher courses, are likely to contribute to better performance. Leadership training of workers at all levels is also urgently needed. Workers are unlikely to achieve their full potential without effective leadership and support.

In-house training - More in-house skill-based training is to be carried out by organisations to boost employee morale. Refresher training has proved to be most effective for employees who do not find time to study in a full-time mode. Combining in-house training and tailor-made programs for staff/trainers creates more bonding and enhances teamwork.

5.6 Support a more healthy minimum wage

The country already has a new minimum wage of \$4, but the process for setting it needs to be stronger, based on objective evidence, and considering the interests of workers and employers through social discussion. Additionally, the procedure can be enhanced by incorporating the current minimum wage arrangement into a legislative framework that permits periodic evaluations.

5.7 Incentives and apprenticeship

Reversal of the Levy Policy so that 1% Levy is returned to FNU, but it must be used for its original purpose. Smaller businesses will find it easier to conduct employee training if the levy system is able to facilitate their training needs. Employers participating in Fiji's Levy and Training Grants Scheme pay 1% of their gross payroll to receive employee training grants. Identify ways of reinforcing apprenticeship and workplace attachments, including evaluating apprentices' and employers' comments regarding the training's conditions and duration.

5.8 Mandatory industrial attachments

All trainers should carry out mandatory industrial attachments in their relevant training field. Ways of doing work change over time, and this is because of various factors, such as technological advancements. Industry attachment allows the trainers to re-equip and improve their competency level.

“Let us not replace our trainers. Let us re-equip” – is a phrase from participants of the forum. Workers can improve their competency, if we take them to the industry, and have focused on-job training. Some questions that arose from the forum included: What is the industry’s demand? And what is our industry, and what will our trainers go and gain? Can we bring the same setup, workshops, and training institutions into our lives? The quality of programs, lecturers, duration, and evaluation of industry-based attachments for the trainers will be costly. Supervisors and trainers should conduct a training needs analysis to identify staff members’ unmet training requirements. New training programs must be introduced to keep up with the industry’s technological advancements for teachers and trainers.

It is necessary to consult with representatives of employers and the industry on a regular basis regarding program development, review, and evaluation.

5.9 Industry Partnership

Strengthening the partnership between the institutions FNU, USP, CATD & APTC to collaborate and engage in industry partnership. All training providers must maintain consistency, have international benchmarking, and standardize the programs across all TVET institutes. Discussions with relevant stakeholders, industry partners, Ministries, and NGOs provided positive critical findings during the TVET Forum.

Employers and TVET institutions must sign a memorandum of understanding to strengthen their efforts to prevent brain drain. Considering the movement data given by the Ministry of Employment, Bureau of Statistics, National Employment Centre, and immigration services, the training institutes and employers will be better able to work on a plan to retain skilled people within the country. This will also require adequate budgetary provisions from government for institutions like FNU, USP, CATD and Navuso.



5.10 Quality of training and alternatives

Changes will always happen; demands in the industry are also evolving. Most teaching methods, like a projected note, must be used. Use of laptops for presentations and data be saved on iCloud—provision for online assignment and assessment submission. Additionally, the machines, equipment, training rooms, and technology used during the training ought to be updated to the industry level. Working with secondary schools to utilise their workshops and classrooms after contact hours for TVET training. Theory classes can be conducted online to reduce traveling time and save on fuel costs.

5.11 Skills mismatch, education & careers guidance

Provide alternative pathways from school to employment. A few more prominent schools now have professional focuses; however, they are not revamped and restructured. Students start to branch off from form five (year eleven), and these will be the genuine students and some school dropouts who want to do skills education and TVET courses but are not guided accordingly. This means that FNU ought to revisit its Franchise Model as some secondary schools are well equipped to delivery franchise programs.

To address the skills mismatch and better understand the needs of businesses, industry partners can assist in developing, reviewing, and updating training programs in Fiji with FNU and other providers. They advise on technological advancements, global business trends, and new industry challenges, as well as assist in maintaining healthy connections between training providers and the sector.



The educational and industry training systems need to align the quality of training based on the labor market needs. To enhance the quantity and quality of education and training, the Government can provide scholarships as an alternative stream from Year 9 or 10 for those who want to pursue TVET.

The National TVET Policy is taking shape. This will pave the way for industry consultations with training providers, and maintaining regular training needs assessments, practical human resources planning, and providing job forecasts and career guidance for TVET students. The nation's universities host career fairs and Open Days annually throughout Fiji and give information to industry partners, teachers, trainers, ministries, and various groups. The best person to provide information to these students is the Careers Guidance Teachers in schools. Teachers can invite TVET training providers to disseminate information to students and have a mini careers day fair in schools.

6.0 Presentations by FNU's NTPC Departments

6.1 Department of Quality Awards

Role of Fiji Business Excellence in nation building

FBEA has the vision to enhance productivity through business excellence in Fiji. The mission of FBEA is to help Fijian organisations attain world-class quality in the products and services.

Provide recognition to excellent organizations

Provide a framework for sustainable improvement through quality management

Productivity Tools 5S - is one of the productivity tools for continuous improvements. 5S is a systematic way of organising workplaces by eliminating waste, improving flow, and reducing the number of processes. It applies the five principles: Sort (seiri), Set in order (seiton), Shine (seiso), Standardize (seiketsu), and Sustain (shitsuke). 5S is a launching pad for success in the global economy—when done right. Implementing 5S is essential in the workplace because it can result in more efficient ways of getting the job done.

Green Productivity – The Asian Productivity Organisation (APO) introduced the concept of Green Productivity following the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. Green Productivity is an umbrella concept covering a hierarchy of improvement opportunities for your business to meet or exceed the needs and expectations of the marketplace. Green Productivity attempts to answer society's needs for a better quality of life by increasing productivity through environmentally sound manufacturing practices and management activities.

Fiji Business Excellence Awards – The Fiji Quality Awards (FQA) was launched in 1998 and later rebranded as the Fiji Business Excellence Awards (FBEA) in 2004. The Fiji Business Excellence Award helps organizations enhance their performance. Organizations that adopt the Fiji Business Excellence Awards framework can put in place systems and processes that aid them in improving their performance. It also equips an organization with the capabilities to manage its performance to continue improving and ultimately improving its results.

Quality Circles – Helps in continuous improvements. QC is a group of individuals who meet regularly to discuss work-related problems; generally, the quality circles are small group gatherings led by the supervisor or the manager who presents the management solutions. The purpose behind forming a quality circle is to motivate employees to share the problems affecting their work area and help improve the organisation overall performance. Generally, the quality circles focus on occupational health and safety, improving the working environment, and manufacturing processes.

Six Sigma - is a set of management tools and techniques designed to improve business by reducing the likelihood of error. It is a data-driven approach that uses a statistical methodology to eliminate defects. Specific methods or roadmaps drive Six Sigma to improvement. One of the most widely used is a framework with the acronym DMAIC: Define, Measure, Analyse data, Improve processes, Control future implementations



6.2 Department of National Productivity & Industry Innovation

ISO Standards Implementation

ISO9001 Quality Management Systems - This is a recognised standard for creating, implementing, and maintaining a 'Quality Management System' for any company. It applies to an industry of any size or capital.

ISO14001 Environmental Management Systems - This is a guide on what needs to be done to implement an environmental management system (EMS). It comprises policies, processes, plans, practices, and records that define the rules governing how your company interacts with the environment. ISO 14001 requirements provide a framework and guidelines for creating EMS for any organisation.

ISO22000 Food Safety Management Systems - This standard specifies requirements for a food safety management system (FSMS) to enable an organisation that is directly or indirectly involved in the food chain to plan, implement, operate, maintain, and update an FSMS providing products and services that are safe, following their intended use.

ISO45001 OHS Management Systems - This standard states what needs to be done to implement an occupational health & safety management system. It comprises policies, processes, plans, practices, Hazard identification and Risk Assessment, and records defining health and safety rules.

ISO50001 Energy Management Systems - This voluntary International Standard provides organizations with an internationally recognised framework to manage and improve their energy performance. This standard addresses Measurement, documentation, and energy use and consumption reporting. It also includes design and procurement practices for energy-using equipment and other factors affecting energy performance that the organisation can monitor and influence.

ISO27001 Information Security Management Systems - an information security standard specifies a management system intended to bring information security under management control and gives specific requirements. Organisations that meet the conditions may be certified by an accredited certification body after completing an audit.



6.3 Department of Trade Test & Apprenticeship

The National Apprenticeship Scheme was introduced in 1963 under the Ministry of Labour and is known as the Fiji Apprenticeship Council. In 1974, the responsibility was passed to the Training and Productivity Authority of Fiji (then Fiji National Training Council) for expansion. The transformation of FNTC to TPAF was carried out in 2003. The National Apprenticeship Training Department was passed on to the National Standards and Accreditation Council.

The role of the National Apprenticeship Training Scheme is regulated and administered by the National Training & Productivity Centre through support from the Industries to address the skills required and to produce a competent and certified workforce for the organisations. The Scheme aims to develop a more skilful Fijian workforce that delivers long-term benefits for our nation and international competitiveness.

The Scheme is a tripartite agreement between the Apprentice, employer, and NTPC. The apprentices are monitored and trained by a competent personnel from the industry for three to four years. It allows the individual (Apprentice) to be paid as an employee while they learn on the job, simultaneously studying for academic awards part-time at the University.

The National Apprenticeship Scheme has proven to be a successful model globally as it offers systematic on-job practical learning and off-job study. National Apprenticeship Department administers 22 programmes at the Trade level and 7 Technician level programs which are Certificate IV and Diploma programs, respectively, which various organisations and apprentices are taking up. The National Apprenticeship Training Scheme is a systematic on-job practical learning and off-job classroom study. It offers students a unique opportunity to master the industry's required trade skills and earn while learning. A tripartite agreement is signed between the Apprentice, employer, and NTPC to train apprentices per the Apprenticeship guideline. Apprentices are monitored and prepared by competent personnel from the industry for a duration of three to four years.

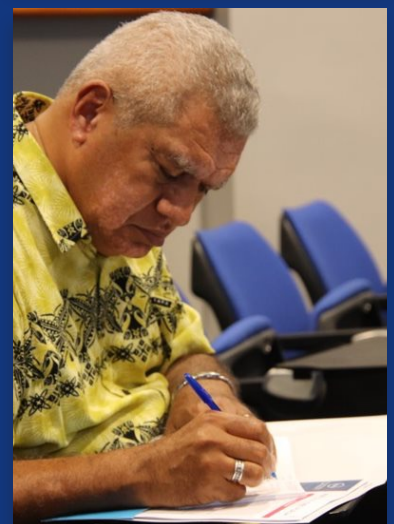


7.0 Participant Recommendations/ Suggestions

The National TVET Forum will be held annually as a platform to discuss critical issues facing TVET providers and stakeholders in Fiji. The most pressing issue in 2023 is skills gap and how stakeholders can strategically work together to close the skills gap in Fiji.

Key finding from the elaborate discussions of stakeholders focused on issues of enhancing quality TVET by introducing a qualifications framework to improve the quality of TVET training and delivery in Fiji—including the developing TVET policy document which also includes a comprehensive review of technical and vocational courses from primary to secondary schools. Suggestions include the setting up more vocational centers nationwide including reviving the FNU Franchise Model and the Ministry of Education to assist with funding of students. There was general consensus that the 1% Levy scheme ought to be returned to FNU for the benefit of employers.

Additionally, youth in rural areas who are unemployed must be given special consideration in order to equip them with income-generating skills.



Conclusion

There is a dire need to establish and reorient a TVET policy towards education for sustainable development. The pathway between TVET and further higher education is of genuine concern for those who participated in the National TVET Forum. Several points/tools of improvement have been submitted and discussed, including the national framework, reasons for skilled migration, marketing and visibility TVET, and the qualifications framework. None of these tools discussed are effective if taken in isolation. TVET has the potential to enhance the employability of secondary school and vocational center graduates by developing specific skills.

The forum identified elements of skills gap and participants also made suggestions about how these could be bridged. However, the forum was meant to be a reflective exercise for individuals and not so much for reporting purpose. There is an expectation that participants from corporations would go back to their workplaces equipped with at least one or two ideas which they could implement in their own time to reduce skills gap in their organizations. The important thing is to make one small step forward towards the mark, rather than jumping forward and missing the mark altogether.

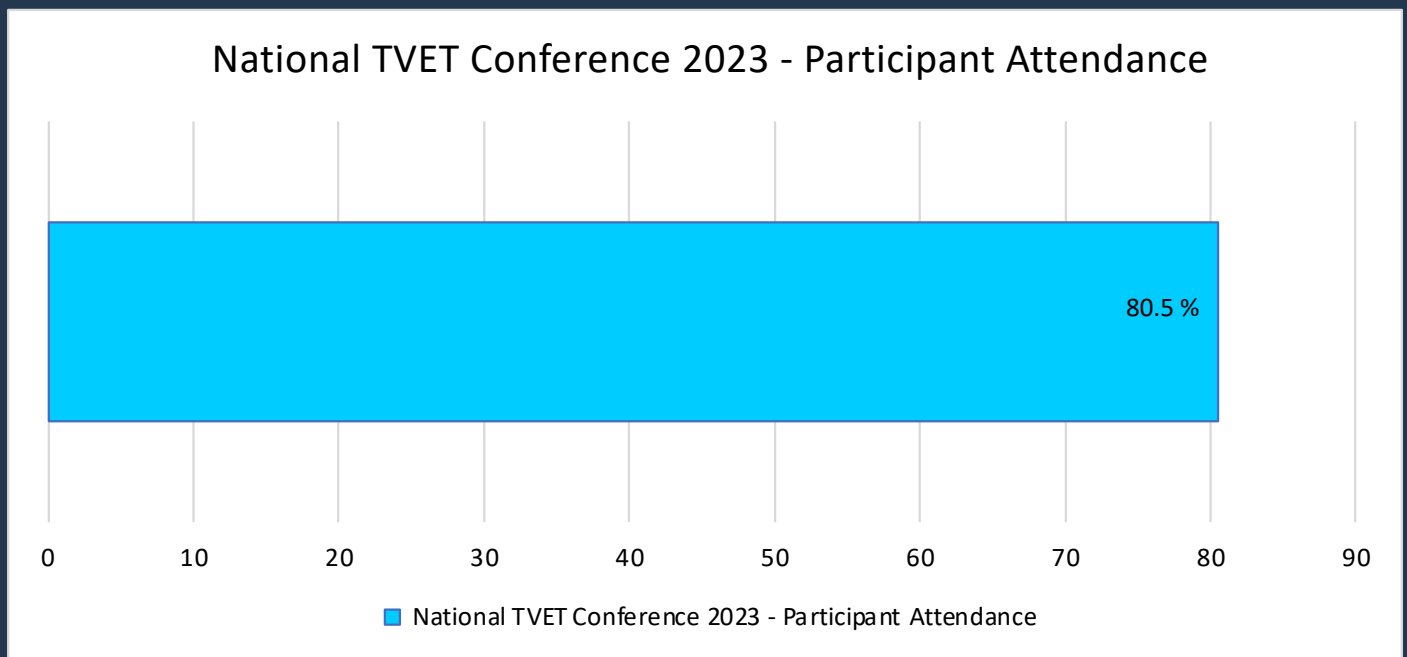


Annexes

Evaluation Analysis

The National TVET Conference 2023 was a success, whereby stakeholders from public sector, private sector, NGOs, training providers and TVET supporters were part of the conference. A total of 155 people.

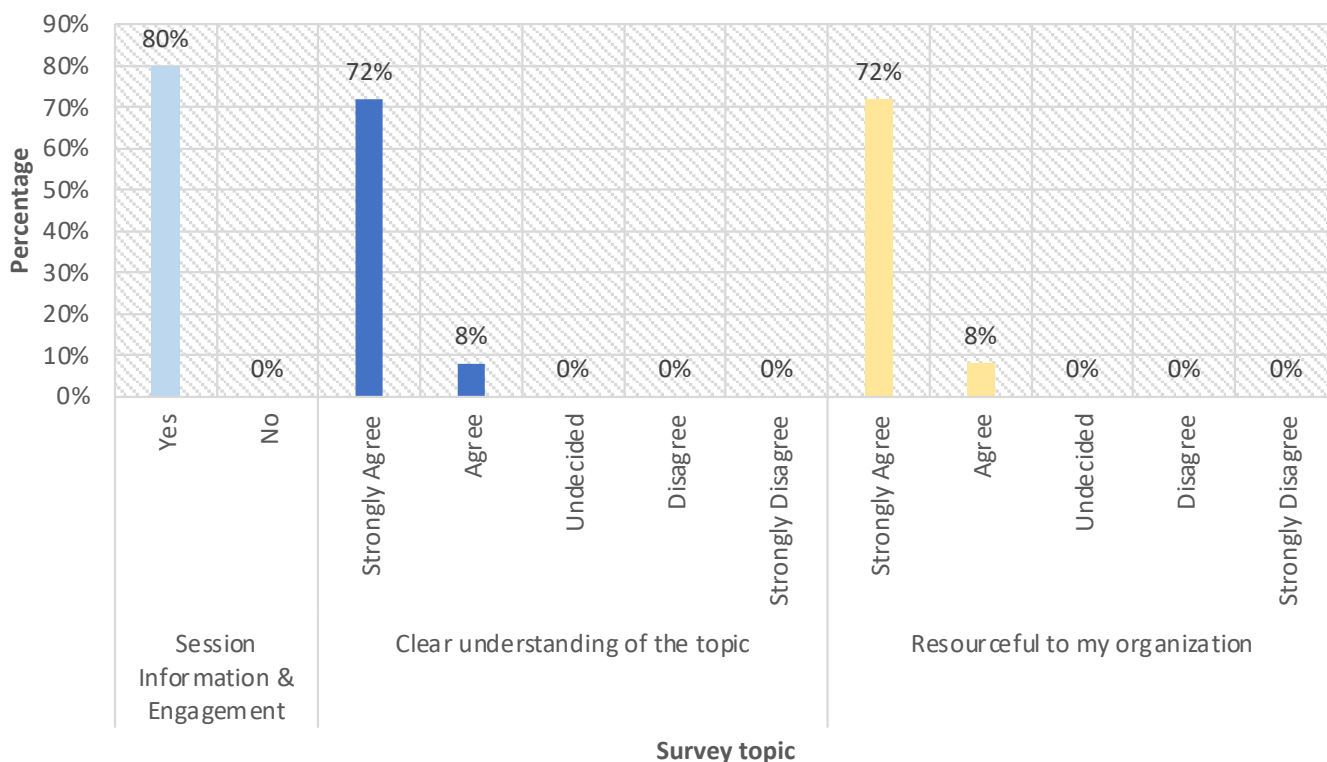
Graph 1.0



Graph 1.0 illustrates that the total attendance for the Phase 2 workshop at 80.5% of 155 registered.

Graph 1.1

The National TVET Forum Survey 2023



About graph 1.1, the survey data is analysed. 80% of the 155 participants found the forum to be informative and engaging. Various topics were discussed during the conference, and 72 % of the members strongly agreed that the issues discussed were clearly understood and resourceful to their Organisation.



TVET PASIFIKA

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
AND TRAINING FOR THE PACIFIC

www.fnu.ac.fj