**38th APEC Human Resources Development Working Group (HRDWG)**

**Education Network (EDNET) Meeting**

**25 - 26 May 2021**

**Draft Summary Report**

The 38th APEC HRDWG Education Network Meeting (hereinafter referred to as the EDNET meeting) was held virtually on 25‐26 May 2021. The Meeting was chaired by Ms. Tara Thurlow-Rae, New Zealand EDNET Co-Chair for 2021 and EDNET Coordinator, Dr. Wang Yan.

Delegates from 18 member economies – Australia; Chile; China; Hong Kong, China; Indonesia; Japan; Korea; Malaysia; New Zealand; Papua New Guinea; Peru; the Philippines; Russia; Singapore; Chinese Taipei; Thailand; the United States and Viet Nam – and representatives from OECD, UNESCO, Massey University of New Zealand, Charles Darwin University of Australia and Singapore Institute of Technology attended the meeting.

**Reflection on the Outcomes of APEC 2020 Malaysia**

1. Malaysia presented on the overall **outcomes of APEC 2020 Malaysia** including APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040, highlights of 37th EDNET Meeting held in 2020 in Putrajaya and the way forward for APEC education cooperation. Malaysia also informed that EDNET has produced a Synthesis Report of EDNET Survey on Impact of COVID-19, wherein APEC economies have acknowledged its usefulness and relevance. As a way forward for EDNET, Malaysia emphasized on the significance of innovation and digitalisation of education towards an e-enabled recovery.

**Introduction to the Education System in New Zealand**

1. New Zealand presented an introductory video about the education system in New Zealand that encouraged diversity, innovation, partnership, with the commitment to enable all children and young people to learn and grow, and to become guardians of the world of the future.

**Discussion on the HRDWG Strategic Plan 2021-25 and TOR**

1. EDNET Coordinator briefed on the HRDWG 2021-25 Strategic Plan. New Zealand suggested taking out the projects from the document. China also suggested to only include HRDWG initiatives and initiatives of three networks. Chile suggested producing two separate documents out of the Strategic Plan – one short summary for higher-level officials to review, and one concrete work plan with the timeline and projects. **(See Annex 1)**
2. EDNET Coordinator briefed on the HRDWG Terms of Reference and the proposed addendum on the functions of network coordinators. The USA welcomed the addition of the functions of the network coordinators to define the roles for future candidates. China noted support for the proposed addendum. **(See Annex 2)**

**EDNET Projects and Initiatives**

1. Australia gave a brief update on the **APEC Guiding Principles for Research Integrity** initiative which was completed through consultations with Chile, Indonesia, Malaysia, Peru and Viet Nam and contributions from across APEC economies. The Guide includes seven guiding principles including honesty, responsibility, rigor, transparency, respect, fairness and diversity. It will contribute to implementation of the APEC Education Strategy Actions by promoting cross-border research and academic mobility.

Korea presented on **the Institute of APEC Collaborative Education and Its Projects** (AeLT, AFEF, ALCom, AEEP, CEDI, ASLP). Korea invited member economies to join the upcoming events in 2021. Chile, Indonesia, the Philippines, Chinese Taipei and Thailand thanked Korea for the projects implementation and acknowledged the educational values.

**Discussion on Modality of Education Cooperation across Systems**

1. Ms. Maki Katsuno-Hayashikawa, Director of the Division for Education 2030 from UNESCO presented on the global consultation process of rethinking of global education cooperation in the context of COVID-19 and joint actions initiated by UNESCO in response to COVID-19, focusing on global education cooperation mechanism, which connects the dots of global education architecture on political, technical and financial levels through collaboration of various stakeholders to foster an enabling environment for effective delivery and results and accelerate progress towards 2030.
2. Mr. Andreas Schleicher, Director for Education and Skills of OECD presented the findings from OECD studies regarding the state of education after one year of the pandemic, including the challenges of lost instruction days and distance-learning solutions during 2020 and/or 2021 measures targeting populations at risk of exclusion from distance education platforms, and four scenarios for the future of schooling as result of changes ranging from skill demand and the risk of automation to effects of digitalisation.
3. The delegates and guest speakers discussed the changes in education and new modalities of multilateral education cooperation during COVID-19 and in the post-pandemic era. China emphasized the priority of education as well as the usefulness of collaboration among APEC, UNESCO and OECD. Japan suggested to continue the dialogue between APEC, OECD and UNESCO in the future.
4. Ms. Maki Katsuno-Hayashikawa and Mr. Andreas Schleicher answered the questions from New Zealand, Australia, Malaysia and the Philippines and EDNET Coordinator, highlighting enduring changes in education in the post-pandemic era, the ways to mobilize technology to augment learning outcomes, the impact of COVID-19 on higher education sector as well as initiatives to help last mile learners.
5. Chile, China, Japan, Malaysia, Chinese Taipei, the USA expressed thanks to the presentations. Both Maki and Andreas thanked the organizer for the invitation and expressed hope for further collaboration in the future.

**Panel Discussion: Has COVID-19 Accelerated the Need for Better Quality Assurance and Increased Recognition of Online Qualifications?**

1. The panel discussion on how COVID-19 has accelerated the need for better quality assurance and increased recognition of online qualifications. It was led by a distinguished panel of guests who spoke about both local and regional experiences of new modes of education delivery. The guests included Professor Giselle Byrnes, Massey University of New Zealand; Professor Michael Sankey, Charles Darwin University of Australia; Professor Chua Kee Chaing, Singapore Institute of Technology; and Dr Wang Libing, UNESCO.
2. Professor Byrne’s began by highlighting the 3 objectives of the APEC Education Strategy that are focused on Society, Innovation and Employability, noting their relevancy in the COVID-19 recovery context. Increasingly people are working outside of traditional physical workplaces, with flexibility and time management skills increasingly sort after, and education systems need to adapt to these trends.
3. Other speakers noted that institutions that focus on applied learning have a need to produce graduates that are ‘job ready’ and that includes adapting to societal, labour market and technological changes. Professional bodies are becoming more open to shifting away from exams as the only valid form of accreditation and assessment. Online and blended learning, if tailored to specific contexts, can contribute to these new modes of assessment (e.g. micro-credentials).
4. A strong message from all the presenters was that student learning outcomes must not be compromised; teachers need to be able to intervene when necessary to assist at-risk learners; learning transferable skills like teamwork and broader social skills are important and should not be lost.
5. The speaker from UNESCO noted that economies need to develop supportive ecosystems to mainstream online and blended learning, as this is particularly needed to address inequities and gaps. Policy support from the government across all aspects of this space is essential. Additionally, the national qualifications mechanisms, including qualification frameworks, specific quality standards, templates for programme development of online and blended learning programmes are also essential.
6. After the initial discussion, panelists briefly answered several questions from the delegates, before shifting into three breakout groups. Key questions that the groups looked at were:
* Understanding the new trends of on-line learning
* Ensuring the quality of new modes of delivery
* Releasing the potential of online education for inclusive and quality education.
1. During the report back from breakout groups, some distinct key themes emerged:
* Flexibility in modes of delivery is essential
* Social accountability and ensuring equitable access to achieve social license
* Ensuring necessary infrastructure is in place
* Professional development for teachers to ensure they are able to enhance their practice in online and blended learning environments
* Developing curriculum and pedagogies that are specific and fit for purpose
1. It was clear from the discussion that the shift towards online and blended learning will stay with economies during and beyond recovery from COVID-19 and that policymakers should be ensuring that education systems adapt to this.

**Presentation on APEC 2022**

1. Thailand introduced their preparatory work for APEC 2022 and three priority areas including trade and investment facilitation, reviving of connectivity with APEC region, particularly travel and tourism, and promotion of inclusive and sustainable growth driven by digital technology innovation.

**Announcements of Forthcoming EDNET Events**

1. New Zealand presented on the forthcoming EDNET events as follows:

The 2nd Special Project Session of EDENT on 10 June 2021 at 2:00 – 4:00 pm New Zealand Time, hosted by New Zealand:

The other forthcoming EDNET Events are as follows:

* Policy Discussion on Digital Wellbeing and Digital Citizenship scheduled on 17 June 2021 hosted by New Zealand.
* The 17th APEC Future Education Forum tentatively scheduled in September hosted virtually by Korea.
* The 10th APEC Conference on Education Cooperation in Higher Education in Asia Pacific Region scheduled in autumn hosted by Russia.
* The APEC Digital Economy and Innovative Entrepreneurship Online Forum scheduled in October hosted by Chinese Taipei.

**Looking to the Rest of 2021**

1. EDNET Coordinator consulted the economies on the convening of the 7th APEC Education Ministerial Meeting. No economy volunteered to host the 7th AEMM. EDNET members will try to utilize the EDNET Meeting for presentation and discussion of commonly concerned topics that engage in high level officials.
2. EDNET Coordinator introduced the results from the Virtual Meeting on Knowledge Platform on Education Response to COVID-19 held in April 2021. China suggested incorporating the Baseline Report on Current Education Status in Asia Pacific Region and Synthesis Report on Education Response to COVID-19 in Asia Pacific Region and set up a Task Force for the development of the knowledge platform. Chile supported China’s suggestion and called for commitment from all member economies to fulfill this long-cherished dream of EDNET. The USA noted support for knowledge sharing across EDNET and expressed interest in more information about the proposed Task Force. It is agreed that the survey will be conducted first, followed by setting up a Task Force to work on the establishment of the knowledge platform.
3. Aiming at a transition towards outcome-oriented cooperation, EDNET members will work together to explore the possibility of producing some outcome documents on cutting-edge education topics and issues as products of education cooperation of APEC. New Zealand has offered to take the lead in producing the first booklet which will focus on quality assurance of online learning.

**Concluding Session**

1. The meeting was concluded with summary and closing remarks by the EDNET Coordinator and the Co-Chair, Ms. Tara Thurlow-Rae. New Zealand Co-Chair thanked all the participants for joining the meeting and expressed the hope to meet everyone again in person. The EDNET Coordinator concluded by acknowledging the innovation and breakthrough made in education cooperation through leadership of New Zealand and joint efforts of EDNET members and encouraging the EDNET members to embrace changes for more effective education cooperation in APEC.

Annex 1: Proposed Revision to the HRDWG Strategic Plan 2021-2025

Annex 2: Proposed Addendum to the HRDWG TOR