

AICTE UKIERI Forging new partnerships

Facilitating new linkages between 11 UK and 17 Indian Community colleges, UKIERI has developed a pilot community college institutional collaborations programme. This programme aims to support skills development, capacity building and institutional improvement in the vocational sector. Working across diverse sectors such as fashion, construction, automotive, manufacturing; these collaborations will be jointly funded with All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and will focus on sharing of best practice around teacher training, quality assurance and accreditation, curriculum development and integration of ICT and industry engagement.

The UK Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Indian Ministry of Human Resource and Development (MHRD) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in February 2013 for the development of community college partnerships to be facilitated under the aegis of UK India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI).

Through a call for expression of interest for the UK Further Education Colleges, UKIERI has facilitated these collaborations based on sector priorities and areas of mutual interest between the two countries. The participating colleges from the Indian side were selected jointly by AICTE and MHRD.



The collaboration was initiated with a planning workshop which has helped in scoping the needs and identified key areas of engagement and delivery. Representatives from UK Further Education Colleges visited India and engaged with partner Indian colleges to firm up joint work plans and timelines.

“Such kind of workshops are required and very much helpful to Indian Technical institutions to enhance the skills of staff and students employability for students” – G Balasivarama Subramanian, Principal Thiagarajar Polytechnic College

UKIERI also invited representatives from Hackney Community College and Mehr Chand College Jalandhar to share their collaboration experience. Hackney Community College UK has been collaborating with Mehr Chand College Jalandhar under UKIERI Skills partnership strand. The collaboration has been focussing on developing ideas on strategic management, management information systems, use of ICT in teaching including use of smart-boards,

websites, quality assurance and curriculum development. The Government of Punjab is already considering this partnership for development of capacity and systems for technical education, supported outside and beyond the current UKIERI project.

Post extensive discussions and brainstorming sessions, the colleges shared their detailed plans which were reviewed by Dr Avinash Pant, Acting Chairman, All India Council for Technical Education and feedback provided.



For example, the collaboration between **Glasgow Kevin College and Government College for Women Guntur** is working on the theme of fashion and apparel with specialisation in garment design and production. Through the collaboration, they aim to engage learners in entrepreneurial skills development leading to accredited and non-accredited certificates leading to gainful employment. They will develop on-line learning materials such as video demonstrations and notes for skills development in: CAD garment design and pattern construction, manual pattern making, pattern grading, draping, Zardozi

work, hand embroidery, textile surface enrichment and dyeing techniques. Employer visits will also be included to enrich the learning experience and link with entrepreneurial possibilities.

Both student groups in India and Scotland will work together on a common design brief and gain accreditation for an SQA Higher National Fashion Design / Manufacturing unit and a college devised business/entrepreneurship certificate. A showcase fashion event will be the culmination of the programme to celebrate the learning experience, collaboration and partnership.



Dr Pant reiterated that all facilitated partnerships should focus on employer engagement, quality assurance procedures and tools for blended learning. He also strongly encouraged both student and staff involvement in the collaboration through innovation.

Based on feedback and review, key focus areas identified across collaborations include:

- application of pedagogical strategies
- joint sessions with students on entrepreneurial skills, community engagement
- technology enrichment with focus on blended learning
- strengthening quality assurance mechanisms
- developing industry partnerships



It is expected that through these pilot partnerships, 320 master trainers would be trained directly benefitting 27000 students enrolled in the Indian colleges; which currently operate both as polytechnics and community colleges. A significant spin off expected from these partnerships would be capacity building of other polytechnics in the region who would participate in training workshops.

Follow up scoping visits are being planned in the coming months which will further corroborate the key deliverables and milestones.