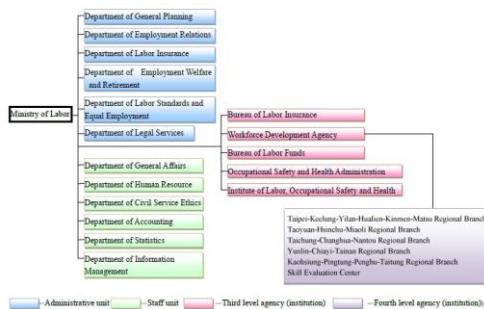


International Insights captured from the 53rd Chinese Taipei National Skills Competition, 14th – 16th July 2023, Taipei City

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1. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Model in Chinese Taipei

In Chinese Taipei, the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system is dual governed by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour (MoL), each overseeing distinct aspects. Post junior high school, the education system bifurcates into general education and vocational education, allowing students flexibility to transition at semester ends. Vocational high schools and universities of science and technology serve as gateways for further education after three years of vocational high school studies. Identification of a school as vocational is evident in its nomenclature, such as "vocational high school" or "university of science and technology." Six training centres, known as Regional Branches, managed by the Workforce Development Agency (WDA) of MoL, deliver three to six-month skill and vocational training to enhance job prospects for those currently unemployed. Graduates from vocational institutions or WDA Regional Branch training programs obtain graduation qualifications based on completed credits and meet school-specific requirements. A robust certification system, administered by the Skill Evaluation Centre, offers A, B, and C skill certifications for numerous skills, enhancing employability and industry relevance for students who pass the exams. This comprehensive TVET framework in Chinese Taipei aims to ensure a seamless transition from education to employment, fostering a skilled and adaptable workforce. Qualifications are developed and renewed based on the national economic strategic plan by the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labour in consultation with stakeholders from industry, TVET education institutions and universities.



(Minister of Labour Chinese Taipei organisational chart: <https://english.mol.gov.tw/21139/21145/49294/post>)

2. Collaboration between education sector and employers

In vocational schools, including vocational high schools and universities of science and technology, a construction-teaching cooperative class is established. Through a cooperation agreement between enterprises and educational institutions, approved by the Ministry of Education, students engage in practical work for approximately 32 hours per week and attend school classes for around 25 hours weekly. Following a comparable study duration as conventional students, participants qualify for graduation.

In universities of science and technology, students are encouraged to undertake industry internships during their senior year, either in the summer or for a semester. Enterprises select suitable candidates through interviews, enabling students to complete internships lasting between two months and half a year. This initiative aims to bridge the gap between theoretical learning and practical application.

The Regional Branches of the Workforce Development Agency (WDA) are strategically situated near industrial parks, fostering robust interactions with industries. These branches tailor their classes to align with industry needs, often resulting in students being sought by industries for employment before completing their training.

3. Development of new skill areas / competitions

The Technical and Vocational Education Act, established by the Ministry of Education in Chinese Taipei, mandates that teachers within the technical and vocational system maintain active engagement with the industry. This involvement may entail spending six months in the industry every six years or implementing a minimum number of industry-university cooperation projects within a six-year period. Consequently, teachers exhibit a heightened awareness of emerging skills. Despite the flexibility of training courses in the Regional Branches of the Workforce Development Agency (WDA) compared to schools, they adhere to the Ministry of Education's skills course regulations. While skills training in schools often aligns with certificates and competitions, the process for developing certifications or competitions involves the Skills Evaluation Centre of the Ministry of Labour forming a committee. After committee evaluation, skill or occupation standards are drafted, subjected to further review and approval by another committee. Competitions can be promoted following this procedure, but if the participation remains below ten teams for three consecutive years, a review may lead to cancellation. Certification procedures are more intricate, requiring several years before official announcement and acceptance of registrations for the test.

4. Promotion of new skills to young people

Teachers at vocational high schools in Chinese Taipei play a pivotal role in driving the adoption of new skills, primarily due to the strong motivation of students within the school environment, who are incentivized by factors like additional points on university entrance applications.

This heightened motivation, combined with the ease of training teachers while they are on campus, underscores the influential role of vocational high school educators.

Consequently, universities of science and technology in Chinese Taipei actively engage in training programs for higher vocational teachers, exemplified by initiatives such as a two-week teacher training camp conducted in collaboration with companies during the summer holidays. The Ministry of Education provides financial subsidies for such programs, alleviating participating teachers from any associated fees. Upon returning to school, teachers can seamlessly integrate the knowledge acquired during the training camp into their teaching content, further enhancing the impartation of new skills to students.

During the academic year, teachers at vocational high schools continually enhance their skills through workshops and maintain close connections with the industry. This commitment to professional development is complemented by a requirement for teachers to visit students regularly during their industrial practice. These visits include discussions with company executives, providing teachers with valuable insights into industry needs and opportunities to refine their skills. This collaborative engagement not only supports the professional growth of teachers but also ensures a dynamic and responsive approach to aligning educational practices with the evolving requirements of the industry.

5. Vocational education / skills challenges in Chinese Taipei

Chinese Taipei struggles with the significant challenge of a declining birth rate, impacting various aspects of its socio-economic landscape. This demographic shift has facilitated easier access to higher education for students, resulting in a diminished motivation for academic pursuits. Despite concerns over job opportunities being taken by foreign workers, there is a reluctance among locals to engage in demanding labour. Consequently, unemployment persists, even as industries face a shortage of workers. This, in turn, contributes to increased manufacturing costs and prompts industries to relocate to Southeast Asian regions like Vietnam and Indonesia.

The declining birth rate has also triggered a notable rise in the average education level, with a preference for traditional universities among most students. Unfortunately, this preference has diminished the quality of students enrolling in technical and vocational schools. Consequently, there is a marked decrease in the number of students aspiring to become technical talents. The intricate interplay of these demographic shifts underscores the multifaceted challenges and changes Chinese Taipei is navigating in its education and labour sectors.

Commented [KK1]: I could add Austria and Romania insights (maybe at a later date) and soon - Luxembourg; but I want to move on for now. I think each of these countries have their particularities that could be mentioned.