

Priority Research Themes Identified by the Human Resources Research Group

Presented by

Aveeraj Peedoly
Research Officer
Mauritius Research Council



Acknowledgements

Representative	Designation	Institution
Dr A. Ramgutty Wong	Dean, FoL&M	UoM
Dr K. Sukon	Research manager	HRDC
Mrs T. Vaghjee Rajiah	Research & Development Officer	HRDC
Dr H. Chitto	Associate Professor	UTM
Mr S. Ragavan	Director, ES	MLIR&E
Dr V. Ragobur	Senior Economist	MEF
Dr A. Moorgawa	Research Officer	TEC
Mr S. Bhowon	Director, HRM&D	ME&HR
Mr V. Luximon	Acting Director	MoTERST
Dr H. Neeliah	Research Coordinator	MRC
Mr A. Peedoly	Research Officer	MRC

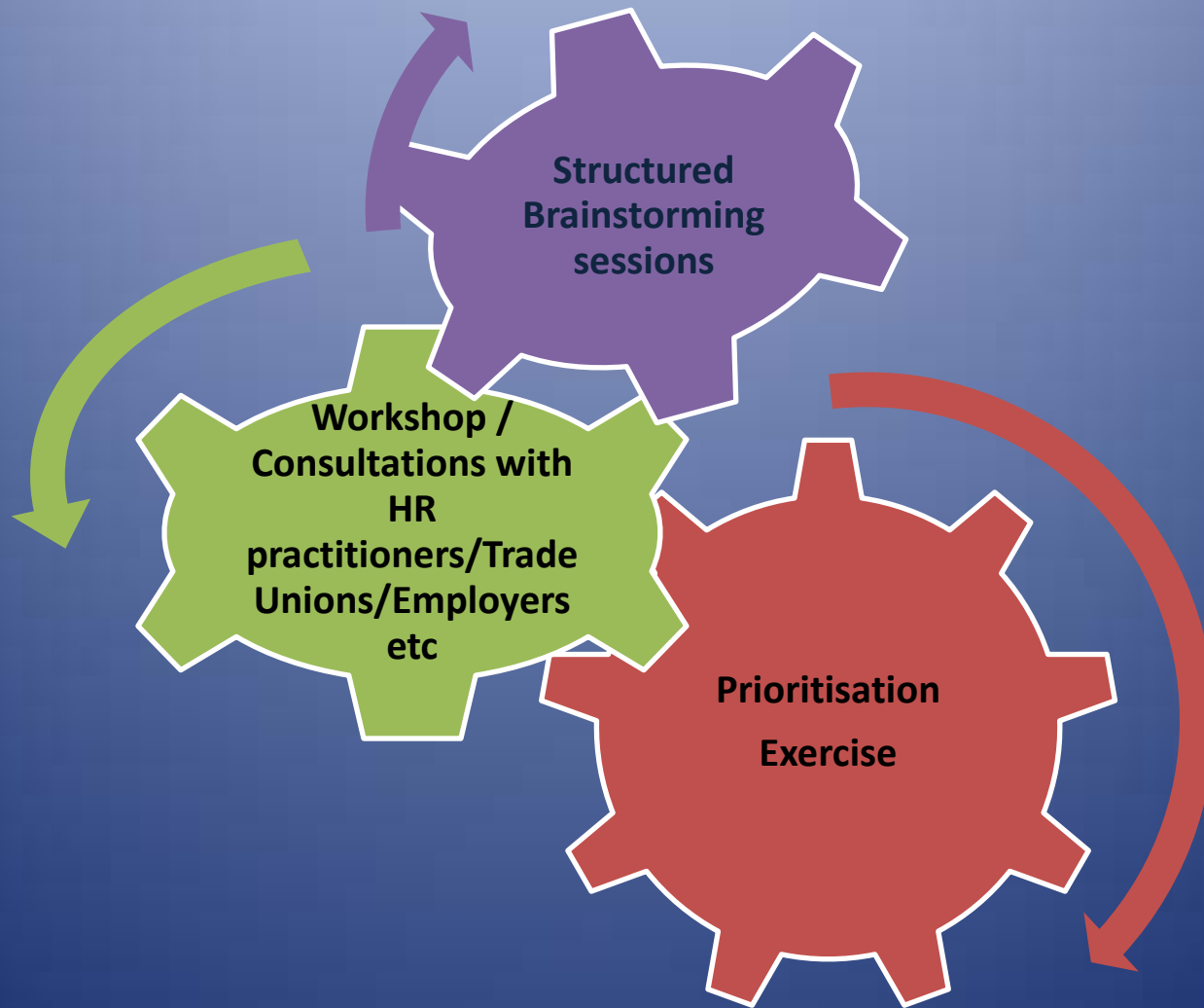
Outline of presentation

- ❖ **Main aims and objectives of the HRRG**
- ❖ **Methodological Approach**
- ❖ **Priority Research Themes Identified**

Main aims and objectives

- ❑ Platform to brainstorm on the main issues affecting local human resource development, management and retention in the context of current opportunities and challenges
- ❑ To identify priority research projects of topical relevance to human resources which are of current and future significance to the country
- ❑ Contribution of research-based evidence to address problems affecting HR

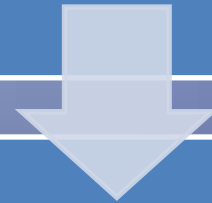
Methodological Approach: Multi-phased and Participatory



Structured Brainstorming Sessions (1/3)

Starting Point:

Insights from panel of experts
(academia/research
institutions/private sector/Govt)



Brainstorming:

Stock-taking

**Locating the COMPLEX AND
MULTIDIMENSIONAL thematic of HR within
current social and economic context**



List of HR problems/issues

**Identification of Main Cluster Working Groups for the
consultative workshop**

Salient Points raised at the Structured Brainstorming Sessions (2/3)

- ❑ Widespread consensus that there was a problem with **the employability of fresh graduates.**
- ❑ There was an alleged outcry among employers that the universities are not producing graduates that have the technical capabilities required to **'land on their feet running'.**

Salient Points raised at the Structured Brainstorming Sessions (3/3)

- There was a need to review training strategies and to encourage close linkages between the private sector and the Universities in order to enable the match between demand from enterprises with supply from the universities.
- **Importance of longer-term visions to reconcile the needs of industry, the state and what the TEIs are offering in a fast-evolving context of globalisation processes.**

The Consultative Workshop: Rationale

- In line with the idea of a 'national' research group and to avoid imposing the subthemes coming from a relatively small group albeit of experts in Human Resources
- Bottom-up and participatory process
- Enable wider and real-life perspectives on the challenges facing the thematic area of HR in Mauritius.

The Consultative Workshop: Organisation

- **Selection of Participants**

- Wide coverage (HR practitioners, Representatives of Association HR Professionals, Trade Unions, Govt officials, Representatives of Employers , HRDC, academics)

- **Method**

- Focus Group Discussions
- Focus : WHAT ARE THE MAIN ISSUES AFFECTING THE AREA OF HR AT PRESENT?

- **Sub-Themes**

5 CLUSTERS DETERMINED BY HRRG :

- Labour Market Issues
- Employment Relations
- Training Learning and Development
- Strategic and Effective Human Resources Management
- Leadership and Culture

Post Workshop Prioritisation

- ☐ Exhaustive List of main issues identified by the 5 cluster working groups
- ☐ Some issues came up recurrently (e.g: mismatch between what industry requires and education/training are provided)

Cluster working groups	Areas & issues that have been identified, that could be researched	Rank
<u>Strategic & effective HR management</u>	Reward & recognition opportunities	
[18]	Skills & capability development	
	HR function & business strategy	
	HR policies, processes & practices	
	Performance management in different sectors	
	Performance-related pay (performance appraisal, performance improvement,	
	Change management (resistance to change, change strategies,...)	
	Implementation of flexitime, compressed time,...	
<u>Employment relations</u>	Impact of introducing equal opportunities on employment relations legal &	
[9]	Employment law & dismissal	
	Impact of the payment of a minimum living wage in Mauritius	
	Impact of employment of foreign labour in Mauritius	
	Terms & conditions of (contractual) employment	
	Discrimination at work	
<u>Leadership & culture</u>	Competencies of the leader (leadership qualities, personal attributes & style)	
[18]	Investigate the work culture nationally (public v/s private, across industrial	
	Investigate the work culture nationally (public v/s private, across industrial	
	Investigate how work culture is shared across generations	
<u>Training, learning & development</u>	Understanding the Mismatch between education & learning systems & the	
[18]	Improving the employability of school leavers & university graduates	
	Mechanisms to evaluate the quality of trainees & graduates	
	Influence of gender on training, learning & development	
	Identification of training needs, design & delivery	
	Assessing the impact of female labour on the education system	
	Assessing life-long learning programmes	
<u>Labour market issues</u>	Mismatch of skills in terms of demand & supply of labour	
[11]	Understanding, assessing & devising strategies for minimising HR wastage	
	Mapping human resources requirement to meet the country's skills &	
	Reactivity to labour market demand (priority list of studies & courses offered	
	Factors affecting mobility & flexibility in the labour market	
	Dependancy on foreign labour	
	Dissemination & absorpton of labour market information	
	Job creation & unemployment	
	Brain gain v/s brain drain	



SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

Priority Research Theme 1:

Characterising the mismatch between the education /learning systems and the world of work



Characterising the mismatch between the education and learning systems and the world of work (1/3)

Context

Perceived mismatch in terms of what the TEIs and are offering as courses and putting on the labour market as compared to the requirements of industry (e.g: local shortage of engineers, technologists and other highly skilled workers)

- Education v/s Employability
- Careers Guidance
- Job/Career Aspirations: Do they match the ever-changing reality of the labour market?

Characterising the mismatch between the education and learning systems and the world of work (2/3)

Research Questions

- ☐ To map the skills acquired by school leavers and university graduates
- ☐ To identify the main skills-set required by employers
- ☐ What are the measures and initiatives that can be adopted to ensure optimal HRD

Characterising the mismatch between the education and learning systems and the world of work (3/3)

Research Objectives

- ☐ To bridge the gap between employer requirements and skills which school leavers and university graduates possess when they get into the labour market
- ☐ Sharing the responsibilities to close the gap: The importance for employers to think strategically and be less short-sighted wrt HRD.
- ☐ To learn from and adapt Initiatives/ Good Practices elsewhere

Priority Research Theme 2:

Understanding, assessing and devising strategies for minimising HR wastage along the educational system

Understanding, assessing and devising strategies for minimising HR wastage along the educational system (1/3)

Context

Pyramidal Structure of the Educational System

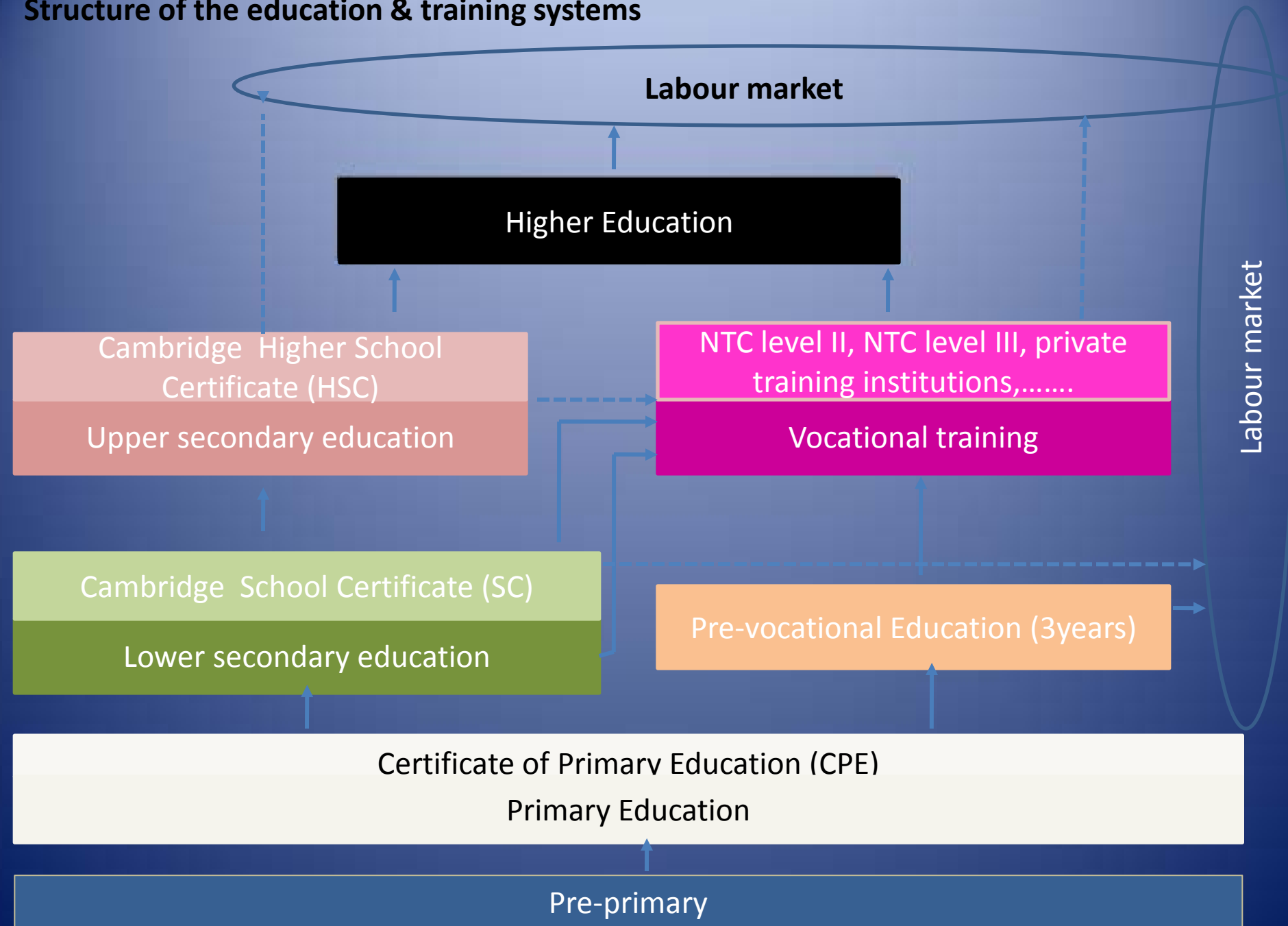
(E.g: Of a cohort of 100 students joining Std 1, how many actually take the HSC? And move on to Tertiary Education?

How many students from the pre-vocational join the vocational system?

Functional Literacy



Structure of the education & training systems



Understanding, assessing and devising strategies for minimising HR wastage along the educational system (2/3)

Research Questions

- What are the factors that push **which** students out of the system?
- What do they do when they drop-out?
- How can the system take them back in the mainstream?
- Can links be made between employers and the educational sphere (technical/vocational training)

Understanding, assessing and devising strategies for minimising HR wastage along the educational system (3/3)

Main research Objectives

- ☐ Mapping exercise of the education and training systems
- ☐ To identify and quantify wastage along the system
- ☐ To propose practical recommendations to address this wastage

Priority Research Theme 3:

To investigate the factors that favour/hamper movement across the labour market

To investigate the factors that favour/hamper movement across the labour market (1/3)

Context

**Globalisation and Labour:
Opportunities and Challenges**

**Diverse Impacts on diverse
sectors**

Precarious Employment

Redeployment

**Need to constantly acquire
new skills**

Lifelong learning

Rights at work



To investigate the factors that favour/hamper movement across the labour market (2/3)

Research Questions

With the spectre of unemployment looming over

- ☐ **What are the challenges for redeployment/employability?**
- ☐ **Psychological, social, educational and economic factors that deter movement across different sectors (E.g Textile to Hotels...)**
- ☐ **Coping Mechanisms of workers**

Within employment,

**To what extent and how do employers retain workers/talent?
(mechanisms/conditions of employment/which sectors...)**

What accounts for perceived risk averseness/resistance of workers to change

To investigate the factors that favour/hamper movement across the labour market (3/3)

Research Objectives

Enable reskilling and improve access to employment opportunities for retrenched workers

Empowerment of retrenched workers to set up microenterprises/SMEs

Evaluation of existing institutional support and empowerment strategies offered to unemployed/retrenched in view of improving on-going programmes

Priority Research Theme 4:

Exploring the impacts of brain/competencies gain v/s brain/competencies drain on the Mauritian economy.

Exploring the impact of brain/competencies gain v/s brain/competencies drain on the Mauritian economy (1/3)

Context

Reliance on Foreign Labour
(low skills – construction/textile)
(high skills –
IT/Tourism/Services)

How many Mauritian students studying abroad come back to work for the country?

Local Perception that greener pastures exist elsewhere (especially graduates)



Exploring the impact of brain/competencies gain v/s brain/competencies drain on the Mauritian economy(2/3)

Research Questions

- ☐ To locate and quantify the phenomenon of brain/competencies-drain in the local context
- ☐ To characterise the phenomenon of brain-drain, diaspora effect and other advantages of migration in the local context
- ☐ To investigate whether emigration is temporary or permanent and what are the ramifications?
- ☐ How far does expatriate labour (especially in high skill jobs) transfer skills/know-how to local labour
- ☐ Pros and Cons of recruiting Expatriate Labour v/s Local labour across different sectors

Exploring the impact of brain/competencies gain v/s brain/competencies drain on the Mauritian economy(3/3)

Research Objectives

- ❑ Setting-up of an up to date and reliable information system to monitor brain-competencies gain & drain across sectors and occupations
- ❑ Inform policies to retain local brain/competencies in strategic sectors

Concluding Remarks

- ❑ This exercise is best seen as a Work in Progress
- ❑ Variety of Research work to be done (ranging from desk research, empirical investigations, identification and adaptation of good practices elsewhere e.g SPUR Programme in Singapore, Leitch Report in UK , etc)
- ❑ Multidimensional – gender/activity sector etc...
- ❑ ‘Wastage ’ – full fledged multidisciplinary
- ❑ ‘Mismatch’ – simple review of best practices/basic competency matrix skills requirements / courses offered at TEIs
- ❑ Applied Research can contribute to real-life improvements

Thank you for your attention

