

## **Executive Summary of ASPIRE Committee's Recommendations Report**

Our polytechnic and ITE system has been successful in enabling students to develop themselves and fulfil their potential. Its main strength is the emphasis on applied learning and its relevance to work and the careers pursued by its students. However, to meet the demands of the future and the aspirations of our students, the system must continue to evolve in an innovative and dynamic fashion.

All Singaporeans should have opportunities to realise their potential and progress in life, no matter what their starting point. Such opportunities can only come about with a strong economy. The recommendations focus on equipping our polytechnic and ITE graduates for the future so that they can seize opportunities and realise their aspirations.

We must support young Singaporeans to acquire the skills that they need to do well in their careers. In order to do so, we must create a strong skills system and industry linkages that support the alignment of the skills individuals have with what the job market needs. The education system must also evolve to keep pace with global developments.

We must create good skills-based progression pathways, help students and working adults make well-informed education and career choices, support learning on the job, and promote Continuing Education and Training (CET). We should build on our strong polytechnic and ITE system and our unique tripartite system to achieve these outcomes.

We need the right mind-sets so that everyone and every job is valued, employers take ownership of skills development, and lifelong learning is embraced.

These changes will require time and a concerted national effort, with many stakeholders involved.

### **Recommendations**

#### **Helping students make well-informed education and career choices**

We must empower our youths to make well-informed decisions for their future. Our students should have accurate and up-to-date information to enable them to make good choices about their education and careers. Working adults should be similarly empowered and equipped. Thus, we recommend the following:

- **Recommendation 1**: Strengthen education and career guidance (ECG) efforts in schools, polytechnics and ITE.

## Strengthening education and training in polytechnics and ITE

Our polytechnics and ITE must continue to provide a strong applied education, and equip their graduates with a strong skills foundation to join the workforce. We must also provide adequate support to help every student succeed in their studies. We therefore recommend the following:

- Recommendation 2: Enhance internships at the polytechnics and ITE.
- Recommendation 3: Increase *Nitec* to *Higher Nitec* progression opportunities so ITE students can deepen their skills.
- Recommendation 4: Establish polytechnic and ITE leads for each key industry sector to strengthen linkages with industry and help enhance programme offerings.
- Recommendation 5: Expand online learning opportunities to make it easier for individuals to learn anywhere and anytime.
- Recommendation 6: Provide more development and support programmes for polytechnic and ITE students to help every enrolled student succeed.

## Helping polytechnic and ITE students deepen skills post-graduation

We need to provide more avenues for our polytechnic and ITE graduates to deepen existing skills or acquire new skills. We also need to better bridge the transition from school to work and enable our youths to apply the skills they have acquired, and build upon them further in their jobs. Hence, we recommend the following:

- Recommendation 7: Launch new programmes that integrate work and study, such as place-and-train programmes, to provide an additional skills-upgrading option for polytechnic and ITE graduates.
- Recommendation 8: Increase post-diploma Continuing Education and Training (CET) opportunities at our polytechnics to refresh and deepen the skills of polytechnic graduates.
- Recommendation 9: Support vocation-based deployments during National Service (NS) to help polytechnic and ITE graduates maintain their skills.

## Helping polytechnic and ITE graduates progress in their careers

The changes to our applied education system will need to be well-supported by clearly articulated pathways of progression. These progression pathways and skills frameworks can also serve as benchmarks for hiring and progression practices within the industry. Thus, we recommend the following:

- Recommendation 10: Develop sector-specific skills frameworks and career progression pathways in collaboration with industry to support progression based on industry-relevant skills.

### Conclusion

The ASPIRE Committee believes that these recommendations will help create more opportunities for our polytechnic and ITE students to progress and to achieve their aspirations. At the same time, they will help businesses with their manpower needs, and grow and develop talent pipelines. In so doing, we hope to secure a brighter future for each individual, and for our nation.