

# A Buddhist Framework for Building Youth Capacities for Peace through Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

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## ABSTRACT

*In our world today, violence permeates every aspect of life from conflict to peaceful settings. Peacebuilding requires collective effort. Educating everyone to be capable peacebuilder is the fastest way to achieve this collective peace. Shaping all education systems toward peacebuilding is a way to do this. This paper deals with how to turn TVET into peace-oriented program. While existing studies that link TVET and peacebuilding focus on how the program itself contributes to addressing conflict drivers in the larger society, this paper contributes a framework for internal human cultivation of TVET learners to be capable peacebuilders in their world of work. Youth is the target group because they are the dominant participants of TVET programs around the world and they are seen as the future of their nation. Based on a grounded-theory approach and reinterpretation of the Buddha's teachings in the Sutta Pitaka, this paper constructed a Buddhist framework for holistic vocational training that builds youth capacities for peace. This framework has four components: job skills, work attitudes, work ethics, and wisdom. The paper also gives recommendations on how to apply this framework to improve TVET in the future. The paper argues that for the common goal of peace, future peace-oriented TVET needs wisdom from local cultures and religions to enrich the knowledge and be rooted in the local context.*

*Keywords: TVET, Buddhism, youth, peacebuilding, Sutta Pitaka*

## Introduction

In 2020, the world had 1.85 billion young women and men aged 10 to 24. One in four of them is affected by violence or armed conflict [1]. The essential role of young people in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and building sustainable peace was recognized and promoted by the United Nations with the Council Resolution 2250 in 2015 and reaffirmed with the Resolution 2419 in 2018. Yet studies and reports show that young people's peacebuilding efforts are still underacknowledged. They have faced many challenges and lack sufficient investment to develop their full capacities [2]. The 2020 UN report stated that "To create a peaceful, sustainable and prosperous world for all, young people need to be involved and conditions that enable them to unleash their full potential must be created" [3].

Investing in education is a key to building young people's capacities for peace.

According to a study by Lopes Cardozo and her research team in 2015, there was a growth of formal (government-led) and non-formal (other than government-led) education program initiatives in this direction [4]. However, for sustainable peace, more scholars are arguing that education for peace need to permeate all levels and all kinds of education [5]. In other words, rather than leaving the task of educating peace for a specialized group or program, all education programs should move toward building peace. In line with this argument, this paper will examine how to frame technical and vocational education and training (TVET) toward peacebuilding. Youth comprise the majority of participants in TVET programs around the world. They are the main workforce for economic development and nation-building.

The term TVET was adopted at the UNESCO Second International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education in Seoul in 1999 [6]. It is an umbrella term to cover all "education, training and skills

development relating to a wide range of occupational fields, production, services and livelihoods” [7]. In both conflict-affected areas and peaceful areas, TVET is argued to be well-suited to address the immediate needs of young people for employability to build livelihood and contribute to sustainable development and peacebuilding [8]. However, existing TVET has been criticized for its heavy focus on technical skills and lack of soft skills [9]. Moreover, it is also criticized as being narrowly framed within technical and economic area and do not address the wider historical, political and social problems that lead to conflict and peace [10]. My study will add to this critique that TVET needs to have a holistic framework to cultivate capable peacebuilders as the foundation for sustainable peace.

There have been few scholarly studies that attempt to explore the link between TVET and peacebuilding. Most of the studies use the 4Rs framework which refers to the social justice dimensions of Redistribution, Recognition, Representation and Reconciliation to empirically study how social inequalities as root causes of conflict are addressed in and through education including vocational education in post-conflict setting [11]. Others use the theory of change addressing the three drivers of conflict: lack of conflict, lack of opportunities, and grievances and sense of injustice through TVET program [12]. Besides this, there are a couple of studies that examine how TVET can become a form of peace education by looking at how it positively affects post-conflict livelihoods, creating a sense of national identity and unity, rehabilitating former militants, and incorporating peace activities [13] or analyze the benefits or positive impacts and challenges of TVET in fragile and conflict affected countries [14]. While all of the studies above explore how TVET as a program addresses conflict drivers in the society, this study feels the need to explore a religious contribution to enhancing TVET program for peace by focusing on internal human cultivation as the foundation for external peace. Specifically, this study wants to build a framework that enables TVET to cultivate a capable peacebuilder who is skillful, virtuous, and wise in work, family

life, and in society based on Buddhist wisdom in the Sutta Pitaka. This study assumes that a peace-capable person will be able to resolve conflicts whether big or small in a peaceful way. Our most frequent conflicts are not world wars or civil wars but conflicts between the good and evil inside ourselves, in our daily relationships in the family, at the work place, and in the small community where we belong.

The idea of utilizing Buddhist wisdom to enhance TVET has been recent. There are two studies of this view. Terry Hyland studied vocational education and training (VET) in Britain and Europe and proposed a reformation of VET by incorporating the Buddhist concept of mindfulness [15]. The other study is by Prem Prasad Sigdel who proposes an incorporation of soft skills in TVET to produce competent and moral citizens by drawing from Buddhist philosophy of mental pollution, ethical discipline of love, compassion, and Buddhist meditation of mindfulness [16]. Unlike these studies which approach Buddhism via a particular concept or in a general manner, my paper aims to construct a framework for a holistic vocational training based on the Buddha’s teachings in the Sutta Pitaka through which the learner is cultivated to be a capable peacebuilder. This study does not deal with a specific context but focuses more on a general theoretical discussion grounded on existing literature on the topic. My study will address the following questions:

- (1) What is the Buddhist framework for holistic vocational training is like in the Sutta Pitaka?
- (2) In which ways does the Buddhist framework enhance the existing TVET framework for greater contribution to building youth capacities for peace?

The purpose of the paper is to construct a grounded theory of the Buddhist framework for holistic vocational training and give recommendations on how this framework can enhance the existing TVET programs to empower youth for peace.

## Literature Review

### *Youth capacities for peace*

There is no systematic definition of the concept 'youth capacities for peace'. This is understandable because such capacities must be rooted in the needs of each context. Scholars have different ways to understand it. For example, Lopes Cardozo and her team classify capacities for peace into 3 categories: knowledge, skills, and attitudes and group them into 3 areas: economic, socio-political and socio-cultural areas that move toward social justice and positive peace in term of reconciliation (building trust and cooperation), representation (encouraging participation), recognition (respecting differences), and redistribution (addressing inequalities) [17]. In another study by Ozelik and his team, 9 skills are listed as needed for youth to build peace: critical thinking, mediation, financial and project management, leadership, teamwork, communication, problem-solving, research, collaboration, socio-economic advancement [18].

In this study, based on the Buddhist teachings, capacity for peace means the capacity to lead a peaceful life and help others to lead a peaceful life. Concerning the working world, this capacity has four components: skills, attitudes, ethics, and wisdom. Wisdom is different from knowledge because it is the capacity to discern reality and apply knowledge skillfully in order to minimize suffering and maximize benefit whereas knowledge is neutral information available for people to use in whatever way. In Buddhism, wisdom is the outcome of applying right knowledge, reflecting on it, and practicing it. Right knowledge is knowledge that does not lead to harm for oneself, others, and living beings.

#### *TVET and peacebuilding*

Peacebuilding is "an overarching concept that describes the many processes and activities involved in resolving violent conflict and establishing sustainable peace" [19]. In this study, based on the Buddhist view, I define peacebuilding as a process of cultivating peacebuilders.

Scholarly studies have shown some positive impacts of TVET on peacebuilding. The obvious impact is that it helps to generate economic opportunities and livelihood for people. TVET also helps to provide

immediate assistance and integrate displaced youth, former combatants and others suffering from war into the society by providing them livelihood [20].

It has the potential to ensure the economy to develop in an equitable way by addressing inequalities of opportunities in education and employment and inequalities between different social groups [21]. Young people once gaining successful livelihood become less aggressive and local violence is significantly reduced [22]. Economic wellbeing is a stepping stone for young people's further participation in politics, and society [23]. Another important impact of TVET on peacebuilding is that it contributes to self-development. Studies have shown that TVET graduates experience enhanced interpersonal skills, and communication skills. They become more responsible, more mature, more self-esteemed and confident in their work and life [24].

Most of the studies above approach peacebuilding from an external or context-centered dimension. This study approaches peacebuilding from an internal and human-centered dimension. In other words, the study argues for the cultivation of the human character as the foundation of peacebuilding. In my observation, the self-development elements mentioned in the literature above are relevant but limited and mostly referred to the effects after students have gained their employment and livelihoods rather than something comprehensively designed in the training process. My study proposes a holistic framework that incorporating self-development elements into the training content and process based on the Buddhist wisdom in the Sutta Pitaka.

#### *Sutta Pitaka*

The Sutta Pitaka is the second basket of Buddhist Pali Canon, The Tipitaka, which means 'three baskets [of teachings]'. This canon has been generally considered as the oldest, most original, most complete and most accurate record of the Buddha's teachings until today. The first basket of teachings is the Vinaya Pitaka (the collection of monastic rules laid down). The Sutta Pitaka contains the Buddha's discourses or specific teachings, sermons, and explanations of the Buddhist path, together with

compositions, narratives and stories of early Buddhism. It has five major divisions: Digha Nikaya 'Collection of Long Discourses' (3 volumes), Majjhima Nikaya 'Collection of Middle Length Discourses' (3 volumes), Samyutta Nikaya 'Collection of Connected Discourses' (5 volumes), Anguttara Nikaya 'Collection of Numerical Sayings' (5 volumes), and Khuddaka Nikaya 'Collection of Minor Works' (9 volumes). The third basket of teachings is The Abhidhamma Pitaka. This is the collection of teachings that are purely substantive or academic, without reference to any individuals or events, and without any supplemental material [25]. My study draws from the three collections of the Sutta Pitaka: Digha Nikaya (DN), Samyutta Nikaya (SN), and Anguttara Nikaya (AN).

*Buddhist perspective of human cultivation and peacebuilding*

There are many ways to peace. However, the dominant view in scholarly writings tends to focus on fixing the external and structural dimensions of the problem to the point of overlooking or making light of other dimensions such as the internal and individual dimension of peacebuilding. This internal individual dimension is mostly left to the religious realm, yet religious education for moral and spiritual formation has been seen as problematic due to the rise of religious extremism and terrorism [26]. As for Buddhism, Buddhist cultivation is often criticized as being indifferent to peacebuilding because it is viewed as only focusing on individual achievement of the deal of arahant (the highest fruit of Buddhist sainthood) and ignoring the social and political activism [27]. I think all views above are only part of the big picture.

In my study of the Sutta Pitaka, unlike the view that self-cultivation is irrelevant to peacebuilding, the Buddha views human cultivation as the foundation for external peacebuilding and in return external peaceful condition is necessary for successful human cultivation. Human cultivation and external peace are mutually reinforced. First, the Buddha sees that in order to build peace, a person needs to be peaceful as the precondition. In Majjhima Nikaya 8, Sallekha Sutta, the Buddha taught Ven. Cunda, his disciple:

Cunda, that one who is himself sinking in the mud should pull out another who is sinking in the mud is impossible; that one who is not himself sinking in the mud should pull out another who is sinking in the mud is possible. That one who is himself untamed, undisciplined, [with defilements] unextinguished, should tame another, discipline him, and help extinguish [his defilements] is impossible; that one who is himself tamed, disciplined, [with defilements] extinguished, should tame another, discipline him, and help extinguish [his defilements] is possible [28].

Therefore, for successful peacebuilding, a person is required to possess the peace capacity first. In return, the Buddha also taught that a peaceful environment is conducive to successful cultivation of a peacebuilder. In Digha Nikaya 33, Sangiti Sutta, in the sets of nine unfortunate, inopportune times for leading the holy life, the unpeaceful living condition (in the border regions among foolish barbarians) is one of them; whereas living in the "Middle Country" or peaceful and affluent areas is a great and rare advantage [29]. During the Buddha's time, the Buddha already faced the skeptical attitude toward his way to peace. In Anguttara Nikaya 3.60, Sangarava, a brahmin criticized the Buddha that his cultivation only benefited a person while the brahmin way of collective practice benefited many. The Buddha showed the brahmin that this was a wrong view because the Buddha's successful cultivation did become inspiration for hundreds of thousands of people to follow the good path. Additionally, the way of individual cultivation for peace, for the Buddha, is simpler, less harmful and more beneficial than the collective way [30]. Once a virtuous, wise and skilled person is born, this person can resolve violent conflicts without any weapon but with superior virtue and wisdom. This is exemplified in the life of the Buddha when he resolved violent conflicts non-violently and skillfully during his time (DN 5 & 16; MN 86). Once this life model is multiplied by the many, automatically collective peace is achieved and can last for a long time.

Therefore, this paper is built upon the Buddhist perspective of human cultivation

and peacebuilding by applying this idea to the context of TVET. It tackles the question of how to create an appropriate framework for human cultivation in TVET that leads to both internal and external peace and how to apply it in a practical way.

### Research Methodology

This study employed a grounded theory approach to study the Buddha's teachings relevant to vocational development in the Sutta Pitaka. Grounded theory approach is "a systematic, qualitative procedure used to generate a theory that explains, at a broad conceptual level, a process, an action, or an interaction about a substantive topic". It is grounded in the data and suitable where the existing theories do not address the problem that the researcher wants to study [31]. Therefore, this method was appropriate for this study which aimed to construct a comprehensive framework for holistic vocational education that enhances youth's capacities for peace. The process of data analysis followed three processes: first, the Buddha's teachings relevant to vocational development in the three collections - Digha Nikaya, Samyutta Nikaya, and Anguttara Nikaya – were selected. In total, 12 suttas (or a complete discourse) were chosen (DN 26, 31, 33; AN 5.33; 8.49; 8.54; 10.91; SN 3.6, 7, 19; 37.30; 42.12). Second, related themes on the topic were abstracted from the 12 suttas and grouped together into broader categories from selected teachings. Third, a comprehensive framework was constructed that show the relationship between the categories.

Beside the grounded theory method, I also reinterpreted the Buddha's teachings to suit the modern context. During the Buddha's time, there was no such concept as vocational education and training. The Buddha's teachings were addressed to young householders both males and females in different roles as husband, wife, master, servant, and friends on how to be successful in their economic life, live in harmony, and plan well for their future so that they will enjoy the material prosperity, happiness, and peace for a long time. In my interpretation, I abstracted the principles from the teachings and applied accordingly to the modern context. For example, when the Buddha gave

advice to the relationship between master and servant, the principle can be applied to a similar relationship between superior and subordinate in the workplace in the modern time.

### Research Findings

#### *Buddhist framework for holistic vocational training*

The research findings from the Sutta Pitaka show that a Buddhist framework for holistic vocational training includes four areas of capacities for youth to develop themselves into capable peacebuilders. These areas are (1) job skills; (2) work attitudes; (3) work ethics; and (4) wisdom. According to this framework, these capacities are ranked from lower to higher levels with skills as the lowest and wisdom as the highest. This framework is holistic because it addresses the whole process and purpose of human cultivation rather than only the parts. It covers all the major components from the work domain both skills and attitudes, to virtue, and wisdom with the ultimate purpose of cultivating a capable peacebuilder who is skilled, virtuous, and wise to face and resolve problems not only in work but in the family and society. It aims at long term rather than short term benefits. Below is the Buddhist framework for holistic vocational training.

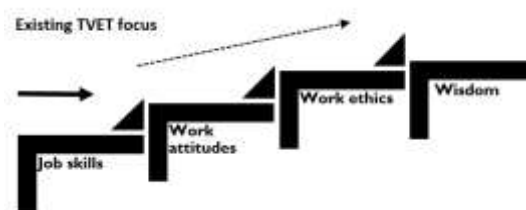


Figure 1: Buddhist framework for holistic vocational training (The framework is constructed by the author. It shows a comparative view between Buddhist framework and existing TVET framework. The evolving stairs symbolize the cultivated capacities from lower to higher in Buddhist perspective. The thick arrow symbolizes a strong focus of existing TVET framework; the dash arrow symbolizes the weak focus of it).

#### 1. Skills

Concerning job skills, the Buddha taught that a capable worker is not only skilled in whatever work he or she does (or technical

skills) but also good at judging the work in order to find ways to do it well by oneself and also to arrange it for others to do well (or soft skills) (DN 31; AN 5.33; 8.49, 54). Embedded in the brief teachings of the Buddha are several skills: technical skills, critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, self-learning, self-reliant, work management, and communication. In managing work, the Buddha taught that a good manager of the work is the one who knows well the strengths and weaknesses of the workers and gives work according to each individual's capacity (DN 31; AN 5.33; 8.49). Using the right person for the right work will increase productivity and avoid wasting resources. Today all these skills are increasingly recognized as necessary for a successful TVET graduate. In this sense, the Buddhist understanding converges the most recent knowledge in TVET field.

## 2. Work attitudes

Being excellent in job skills is not enough to achieve a successful and happy life. A person needs to cultivate good work attitudes which make work productive and the work environment pleasant for all people involved. The Buddha taught the attitude of diligence and tirelessness (commitment) in work (DN 31; AN 5.33; 8.49, 54). This attitude will lead to increase of wealth. It is also pleasing to people around. The Buddha also gave concrete advice on what attitudes to have for different kinds of relationship. This study singles out three relevant types of relationship. First, for a subordinate person, who seeks happiness and has compassion for the superior, should go to work early and be the last to rest. This person shows willingness and contentment in work and does not do anything unlovely but tries to bring good reputation to the superior. In return, a superior should treat the subordinate well by providing food and salary, treating their sickness, sharing special things with them, sometimes giving them holidays, and being fair in sharing of gain to people according to their contribution (DN 31; AN 5.33; 8.49). For work companions, a person with good attitude should be trustworthy, use kind speech, and care for the welfare of his or her work companions including their family members in trouble time (DN 31).

Based on the Buddha's teaching about the work attitudes above, there are embedded values developed through the process: diligence, patience, compassion, willingness, contentment, respect, care, fairness or justice, trustworthiness, and kindness. This means that working is not merely working but the cultivation of different virtues. These virtues are essential for people's mental health in work and bring positive energy, harmony and peace to the community. Today, studies of TVET have shown that one of the main reasons for the mismatch between TVET and the world of work is the lack of behavioral skills of the graduates [32]. Therefore, this component of work attitudes should be an integral part of the TVET curriculum.

## 3. Work ethics

Work ethics, which deals with right and wrong conduct, is an important capacity to cultivate through vocational training. The Buddha taught that in order to be happy on earth, a person must avoid evil livelihood, evil conduct and evil motives. In Digha Nikaya 31, Sigālovada Sutta, the Buddha listed four types of evil conduct to avoid: the destruction of life, the taking what is not given, licentiousness, and lying speech. This means that any job or conduct that violate these moral principles are evil and will lead to suffering for oneself, others, and all living beings. Such jobs or conduct should be avoided. The Buddha also went deep into the heart of people to reveal the four evil motives to be avoided when doing things: greed, enmity, stupidity, and fear. If a person is motivated by one of these motives, the person will do evil and create suffering. The Buddha also taught that wealth must be sought lawfully and non-violently (SN 42.12; AN 8.54; 10.91). Though the main purpose of TVET is to provide skilled labor for the market and help to develop the national economy, ignoring ethical principles in the process will not lead to sustainable development and peace. Today, because of the lack of this ethical awareness, our world is facing increasing problems of weapon production and war, human trafficking, violence against animals, environmental pollution, robbery, thieves, alcohol and drug addition, corruption, exploitation, sexual harassment at the work place, and so on. TVET programs tend to overlook or do not

have a comprehensive and concrete framework on teaching ethics. My reading of TVET literature, terms such as “morality”, “a good moral character”, “good behavior”, “good citizen” are often mentioned but there is no concrete framework found on ethical development for TVET students [33]. In this sense, the Buddhist ethical framework can be an inspiration for TVET educators.

#### 4. Wisdom

The final capacity to be cultivated in a holistic vocational training according to the Buddhist framework is wisdom. There are four types of wisdom to be developed: (a) wisdom on use of wealth; (b) wisdom to avoid harm to one’s wellbeing; (c) wisdom to associate with good people; and (d) wisdom about the nature of wealth and higher realities.

##### *a) Wisdom on the use of wealth:*

The Buddha taught that after having gained wealth with one’s own labor and by lawful means and without violence, a wise person needs to guard the wealth well from thieves, robbers, fire, water, and ill-disposed heirs (AN 5.33; 8.49, 54). This wealth should be divided into four portions: one for work, one for building friendship, one for self-pleasure, and one for needy time (DN 31). A wise person is the one who uses his or her property to benefit not only oneself but one’s family members, relatives, servants, friends, and does meritorious deeds such as making offering to virtuous religious recluses and giving to the needy. For the Buddha, this type of person is praiseworthy and best among worldly people (AN 10.91; SN 3.19; 42.12). The Buddha also taught that a wise person knows well the gain and loss, income and spending, and makes sure that outgoings will not exceed the income. A moderate way of life is the best life to balance between the two extremes: too extravagant and too frugal (AN 8.54).

In our modern time, due to the lack of this wisdom, many people run after life comfort and materialism by spending more than their earning and paying capacity, which results in increasing debt, stress, desperation, and suffering for themselves, and their family in a long time. Careless or irresponsible attitude to guard well the property of oneself, of

others, or of the workplace can lead to great damage and waste of resources. Many people are used to accumulating wealth rather than sharing wealth. The selfish lifestyle and lack of sharing have widened the gap between the rich and the poor in our society. Therefore, the wisdom on the use of wealth is important for the welfare of oneself and the society. However, this capacity is rarely found in TVET curriculum. The importance of teaching sharing capacity to students is recently recognized by some scholars [34]. This is the gap for future TVET to fill in.

##### *b) Wisdom to avoid harm to one’s wellbeing*

In Digha Nikaya 31, the Buddha advised young people to avoid six channels for dissipating wealth: addiction to intoxicating liquors, frequenting streets at unseemly hours, haunting fairs, gambling, associating with evil companions, and habit of idleness (DN 31). In Anguttara Nikaya 8.54, he added another channel: looseness with women. These are the ways that not only make wealth go away quickly but also bring trouble and danger to oneself, one’s family, and the society. These teachings of the Buddha are practical for our society today. Many families are suffering and broken up just because their family members have one of those habits.

Concerning bad types of friends, the Buddha advised young people to avoid four types: an aggressively greedy friend, a friend of words not deeds, a flatterer, and a fellow-waster companion. An aggressively greedy friend is the one who only pursues his own interests, acts out of fear, gives little but asks much. A friend of words not deeds is the one who speaks empty sweet words to gain your favor but runs away in the face of responsibility. A flatterer is the one who encourages wrongdoings and discourages right-doings, speaks praises in the front but talks ill in the back. A fellow-waster companion is the one who accompanies you to do wrong such as drinking, gambling, etc. (DN 31). These types of friends are unprofitable and harmful. The Buddha advised these people should not be considered as friends. Trust and friendship once placed in the wrong people will bring much suffering and damages. The idea of self-protection from harm has already been incorporated into TVET but quite limited.

For example, in Thailand, TVET educated self-protection by teaching about personal safety skills such as to avoid sexual harassment, HIV/AIDS, drug prevention [35]. The Buddhist wisdom of self-protection is more comprehensive because it includes not only harmful ways but also harmful relationships to be avoided.

*c) Wisdom to associate with good people*

The Buddha listed four types of good friends: a helper, loyal friend in happiness and adversity, a friend of good counsel, a friend who sympathizes. A helper friend is the one who protects you and your property when you are off your guard; she is the refuge and provides you a double supply when you ask for. A loyal friend is the one who shares his secrets and does not reveal your secrets, never abandons you in your trouble and even dies for your sake. A friend of good counsel is the one who prevents you from doing evil and encourages you to do good, reveals to you the way to heaven. A friend who sympathizes is the one who is happy with your fortune but unhappy with your misfortune; restrains anyone who speaks ill of you and encourages anyone who speaks praises of you (DN 31). For the Buddha, these four types of friends are precious and should be considered as dear friends to the heart. Beside choosing good friends, the Buddha also advised young people to engage in talks with people both young and old who are full of faith, virtue, charity and wisdom. These people will give good influence on self-development (AN 8.54). For the Buddha, being able to find a good companion is not half but the whole success of the cultivation of a holy life (Samyutta Nikaya 45.2). Similarly, if TVET wants to cultivate capable peacebuilders, this wisdom should be part of the training process. This type of Buddhist wisdom is still unfamiliar in TVET. People often say “business is war”. People entering the world of work are like combatants. Finding good companions to struggle through the darkness of the world of work and of life is important.

*d) Wisdom about the nature of wealth and higher realities*

Knowing the nature of wealth means knowing the attraction, danger, and exit from it. Wealth is attractive because of its many

benefits. Many people in the world seek it. However, wealth has its danger because people can get indulged, attached to it, and commit evil conduct such as stealing, lying, corruption, abusing and exploiting others, and so on. Consequently, they will bring suffering for themselves and others in this life and in the life to come (SN 3.6-7). The Buddha taught that a wise person knows clearly the attraction and danger of wealth, so this person enjoys wealth without greed, without sin, and with a mind detached from wealth (AN 10.91; SN 42.12). It is not enough just to seek wealth and enjoy it, for the Buddha, there are other superior things for a wise person to pursue such as virtue, faith, learning, charity, and wisdom (AN 8.49, 54; 10.91; DN 26, 33 SN 37.30; 42.12). These are higher realities that bring more fulfillment than wealth for householders. If they cultivate those virtues, their life will be full of success, happiness and peace in this world and in the world to come. In Buddhism, there is still higher stage, which is complete liberation from suffering or nibbana. This ultimate goal is for those who are ready to renounce the worldly life.

This last type of Buddhist wisdom is quite unfamiliar for a TVET program. Though it might be seen as specialized knowledge of Buddhism, what the Buddha revealed is practical in the here and now. In our society today, the issue of indulgence in wealth, committing evil to gain more wealth, and finally ending up in prison and destruction of one’s own career and family is popular. There are also rich and famous people who were depressed and committed suicide for they did not know higher realities to pursue beside chasing after sensual pleasures and suffering due to it. In the Buddhist understanding, a meaningful and profitable life is the life that transforms from ordinary to holy, from inferior sensual desire to superior virtue and wisdom. Without higher goals for pursuit and cultivation, human beings will fall into indulgence and go backward. Therefore, the Buddhist wisdom on nature of wealth and higher realities is critical to cultivate capable peacebuilders.

In short, this section has explained in details the four components of the Buddhist holistic framework for vocational training that empowers youth for peacebuilding. It has



also analyzed and compared some gaps between this framework and the existing TVET framework and argued for the importance to incorporate the Buddhist knowledge. The following section will give concrete suggestions on how to improve future TVET that aims to build youth capacities for peace.

*Recommendations for enhancing the existing vocational education framework*

Based on the gaps between existing TVET framework and the Buddhist framework for holistic vocational training, this study has the following recommendations for future TVET design:

First, TVET programs should move from short-term market orientation to long-term human development toward sustainable development and peace. To do this, TVET needs to cultivate graduates who are capable of building peace. This requires more than job skills. There is a need to revise TVET framework to meet this need. This paper presented the Buddhist framework as a contribution. Though the Buddhist framework might not fit all contexts, most of its elements can be universalized.

Second, among the four components of the Buddhist framework, existing TVET systems have strength in the first component which is job skills. Even within this area, TVET in many places are still seen as struggling to move beyond technical skills. Other skills - critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, self-learning, self-reliant, work management, and communication skills require more investment. However, this should not be the reason to ignore other important areas for cultivating youth for peace. Work attitudes, work ethics, and wisdom can be simultaneously cultivated through TVET in various ways.

Third, the Buddhist teachings of work attitudes that embody various values namely diligence, commitment, compassion, willingness, contentment, respect, care, fairness or justice, trustworthiness, and kindness are universal. It is indeed a waste of time for TVET graduates to learn these values from their work experience. If these values are taught as part of TVET curriculum and forums are created for students to share

experiences and reflections on the importance and effects of those values on the life of work, this can help to avoid a lot of problems when they enter into the real world of work.

Fourth, concerning work ethics, it is important that TVET has a comprehensive view of work ethics which takes into account not only specialized issues of the work but also wider issues of the society in order to raise awareness of unethical development problems and how to move toward ethical development. The Buddhist ethical framework of avoiding evil livelihood, evil conducts, evil motives, and seeking wealth lawfully and non-violently can be an example for TVET's ethical framework. TVET students should learn not only the job skills but also the ethical problems in the work and the society and how to act wholesomely throughout one's career.

Finally, wisdom is not a luxury but necessity for a happy and peaceful life, and it can be learned according to Buddhism. Capable peacebuilders need not only skills and virtue but also wisdom to go through the darkness of life. Buddhism contributes four types of wisdom: wisdom to use wealth, wisdom to avoid harm to one's wellbeing, wisdom to associate with good people, and wisdom on the nature of wealth and higher realities. Though the knowledge is specialized knowledge from Buddhism, it has universal implication and can be reinterpreted according to each context and local wisdom. This also means that TVET needs local wisdom from cultures and religions to enrich the knowledge and be rooted in local context.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, based on a study of the Buddha's teachings in the Sutta Pitaka, this paper has proposed Buddhist framework for holistic vocation training to empower youth for peace as a contribution to TVET development in the future. This Buddhist framework has four types of capacities ranging from lower to higher levels: job skills, work attitudes, work ethics, and wisdom. This framework is created for cultivating capable peacebuilders who is skilled, virtuous and wise in work, in family and society.

The paper has also given five recommendations on how to apply this framework for TVET in the future. While human societies are looking for ways to solve evil problems and improve life standards and human relationships, Buddhism is one of the available resources that can be utilized to benefit humanity. Peacebuilding needs collective effort and educating everyone to be peacebuilder is the fastest way to achieve

collective peace. Utilizing available sources of wisdom is an advantage.

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