

Mark Disney, COO (Asia), London Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) International Qualifications

London Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) International Qualifications organised the "Nepal 2010 - LCCI International Qualifications Seminar" on 25 August. The seminar was organised to demonstrate the credibility, reliability and quality of professional and vocational qualifications offered by LCCI in Nepal. LCCI claims to be one of the world's largest providers of business related vocational qualifications, and has been one of the popular vocational qualifications in Nepal too. LCCI currently offers its programmes in 120 countries. Mark Disney, COO, LCCI Asia was in Nepal to conduct the seminar. **the boss** talked to Disney about LCCI, its activities in Asia and particularly in Nepal. Excerpts:

What is LCCI qualification?

Employers are looking for people with knowledge and skills but at the same time there is always a lack of experience among students which is the deciding factor. Our qualifications are geared towards the needs of the workforce and are work-ready from the moment they start their job, which helps save time and money to train workers for many companies. We provide a strong practical foundation. It provides the 'missing link' of academic knowledge and the practical experience. This is why LCCI International Qualifications are known as international 'Passports to Employment'.

How is the market for LCCI in Nepal?

Nepal is one of the emerging markets for LCCI. We have four major markets in Asia - Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and Myanmar. And we are trying to expand in the South Asia region. At present, we are mainly focusing on India, Sri Lanka and Nepal. We recently increased the number of centres and are planning to expand further in the future. Though it is a relatively new market, it follows the same pattern as that of countries like Malaysia and Singapore. Employers in Malaysia and Singapore ask for LCCI certificates and also train their employees in LCCI centres to upgrade their skills. We hope to eventually develop that in the Nepali market.

What are the programmes that you offer at present and what do you plan to introduce in the future?

There are four main areas that LCCI is focusing on. At present, employable skills are proving popular in Nepal. These are the

programmes that basically prepare students and graduates for the workplace. People are interested in acquiring knowledge about Financial Qualifications, Business English, Marketing, Customer Service, Secretarial Skills and General Business. However, Financial Qualifications have a major demand in Nepal as well as the whole Asian region. Unlike in other countries, in Singapore and Malaysia, bookkeeping is much more popular. In those two countries, if you ask students then the benchmark for account executives is the LCCI Qualifications. In general, Business Administration, Secretarial Skills, Marketing and Customer Service are becoming increasingly popular in Asia because these kinds of skills are very employable. Our focus in Nepal will be on different English programmes like English for Tourism, English for Business, English for Commerce and so on.

Have you thought of some tie-ups with the government like you did in Sri Lanka to train people in sectors like tourism?

Last year, the Ministry of Tourism in Sri Lanka entered into an agreement with LCCI and signed a MoU to provide training to 15,000 youth on Travel and Tourism. The courses offer elements like Marketing, English for Tourism and Travel and Tourism programmes which will provide them with immense skills. Skilled human resource is a key area of concern in the tourism sector as well as other sectors in Sri Lanka as well as Nepal. I think there is a certain parallel between Sri Lanka and Nepal. Nepal is also a tourist's paradise. I believe if we can give international qualifications like LCCI, students coming out of school or fresh graduates, will be immediately qualified for working in the burgeoning tourism sector. Nepal too requires skilled labour to ensure quality service in the tourism sector, and LCCI can ensure the production of quality manpower.

Nepal is a remittance based economy. How can people benefit from LCCI Qualifications?

LCCI provides you an 'International Passport to Employment'. Our main focus is providing vocational and supplementary trainings so that people are prepared for jobs. It is complementary to normal education so that people will be better trained and be ready to work from day one. We have trainings for different people at different levels. I believe that if people who



© The boss photo: Nile/Shankar Byonjenkar

go abroad for low-paid jobs can acquire specific skills which LCCI provides it is obvious that they are going to get better paid jobs. If you acquire simple knowledge of Bookkeeping, you can be a bookkeeper in a Supermarket rather than being a guard there and your salary will also be twice as much. We have hundreds of examples like that especially in countries like Myanmar. They get high paid jobs in countries like Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia.

Where will your focus lie in Nepal?

Our focus in Nepal as well as in other parts of Asia will be on employable skills. You have many students who are good academically and with a good technical know-how, but companies have to train them a lot to actually make them eligible for work. They are not capable of taking on responsibility from day one. The one big advantage of LCCI is that from day one students come in and know what s/he is meant to do because it is a mixture of providing academic and technical know-how. We believe that teacher's trainings for English will also be popular here. There has been a huge demand for English language teachers in Hong Kong, China and even in Malaysia and if Nepalis acquire better English language skills, they will get better job opportunities. Other subjects of focus will be Sales and Marketing, Customer Service Management, Secretarial and perhaps in the future Finance and Accounting too.