



Skills 21 Bulletin

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Skills 21 project is a joint initiative of the Government of Bangladesh and the International Labour Organization, funded by the European Union. The initiative seeks to increase productivity and employment opportunities by promoting market relevant, environment friendly and inclusive skills development system.

Skills 21 project highlights (March-October 2020)



COVID-19: 500 youth complete skills training

Online skills training in Welding, Graphic



Design, Electrical Installation and Maintenance, Plumbing, Refrigeration & Air Conditioning, Wood Working Machine Operation and Sewing Machine Operation has been ongoing throughout the pandemic in: BS Polytechnic Institute Kaptai; Feni Polytechnic Institute; Gaibandha TTC; IMT Bagerhat; Khulna Mahila Polytechnic Institute and Sylhet TSC.



E-Campus: 45 online training materials

A team of TVET teachers produced and uploaded 45 video materials on the TVET e-campus, Facebook and YouTube. Over 40 teachers have been trained to deliver distance learning programmes and develop online materials.



RPL: 355 workers assessed

During COVID-19, 355 (327 Male, 28 Female) took part in Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) assessments. In total, 238 (222 Male, 16 Female) obtained BTEB certificates.



Centres for Skills Excellence (CSEs): Online teacher training

60 teachers completed online training for distance learning and online material development. 30 video lectures have been produced and used in this training. All content will be available on e-campus and the BTEB YouTube page.



Workshop: Online skills policy review

To facilitate the policy review process, the Skills 21 project reached out



to partner TVET Institutes across the country to conduct online policy dialogues. The objective of the dialogues is to integrate the perspectives /inputs of the direct implementer (TVET institutes) of the NSDP into the upgraded policy.



Online platform trains 120 potential entrepreneurs

The Start and Improve Your Business Foundation (SIYB) conducted online Entrepreneurship Development Training for 120 entrepreneurs. SIYB aims to train 3,500 potential entrepreneurs across the country.



TVET COVID-19 Response plan

DTE, with technical support from the Skills 21 team, developed a COVID-19 TVET response plan. After mapping the effect of the pandemic in technical education, capacity of blended learning method, opportunities and challenges in online learning - the project structured the response plan with recommendations.



International webinar on RPL

Skills experts from the EU, Bangladesh, Jordan, the Philippines and Sri Lanka presented RPL 'good practices' to secure decent work for millions of workers in an international webinar on RPL organized by Skills 21 project & Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare & Overseas Employment. The webinar looked at the need to assess and certify the skills of millions of Bangladeshi migrant workers. Some 130 participants across nine countries participated.

INTERVIEW

Md. Jahangir Alam
 Director (Planning and Development)
 Directorate of Technical Education (DTE)



How much employment-oriented is the technical education and training system that exists in Bangladesh?

The potential for technical education for employment is immense. Technical education is included in SSC, HSC and Diploma level. In addition, the institutes run 360 hours' worth of short courses and Competency-Based Training and Assessment (CBTA). CBTA helps getting a competency-based job for potential workers. RPL is another job-focused approach to certify the skills and experiences of workers that do not have any formal learning experience or certification but only through an assessment.

The government also introduced and implemented a technical education framework - known as NTVQF, which helps make the TVET graduates employable.



How does DTE plan to expand the competency-based training system?

To expand, we need to equip more and more laboratories and increase the number of quality trainers and assessors. That's why we're setting up two Centre for Skills Excellence (CSEs) with the technical support from Skills 21 project. We also plan to increase the number of registered training organizations who can implement NTVQF.

The government is focused on building the capacity of TVET managers & trainers using national and international opportunities. In next 4/5 years, we hope to implement CBTA in all levels and streams of the technical education system.



How do you see technical education in Bangladesh in five years' time?

We have a severe shortage of TVET teachers and trainers compared to the number of students. The government has already committed to recruiting 12,607 more teachers and staff in the existing government polytechnics and TSCs in the next fiscal year - currently we have 7,000 teachers. Apart from this, recruitment of 6,400 teachers and staff will be started in 100 newly established TSCs.

It has been decided that 30,000 educational institutions will introduce at least one course on technical education from the sixth grade onwards in the curricula by 2022. With the vision of establishing at least one quality technical education institution in each upazila, admission and academic activities in six grade onwards are going to start from next January 2021. The government already approved and started the establishment of one TSC in each of the remaining 329 upazilas under the ongoing TSC establishment project in 100 upazilas. A 200-bed dormitory will also be set up in each TSC to increase the enrollment of female students.

All the districts will have at least one polytechnic institute - besides the existing 49 government polytechnics are being set up in the remaining 23 districts.



About 2 million young people enter the job market in Bangladesh every year. How is the government planning to expand the TVET system to cater for these new market entrants?

The government is planning to establish TVET institutes at upazila (sub-district) levels to reach out to more students and expand the NTVQF through CBTA for immediate employment. We are also encouraging students who are in SSC and HSC VOC, diploma and short-courses to assess their skills level through CBTA courses and get a certificate to demonstrate their competency.



To reduce the demand and supply gap, what measures are in place to make stronger linkages between institutes and industry?

DTE emphasizes the linkages between the institutes and industries to reduce the skills mismatch. Institutional Management Advisory Boards (IMAB's), careers guidance and job placement cells are some initiatives that DTE has taken to create better linkages. Till date, more than 581 MoUs have been signed between various industries and TVET institutes under DTE. The IMABs create a platform where industry experts provide valuable support to the institutes on issues like the latest machinery and new skills sets required by industries.

Furthermore, dual training systems - introduced in the model TVET institutes - give students practical experience on modern production systems.



How has DTE responded to the disruption to skills delivery caused by the ongoing pandemic?

We have taken a number of rapid response initiatives to reduce disruption in training and education in TVET. With support from the Skills 21 team, DTE has developed a COVID-19 response plan for the TVET sector. With the direction from the Technical and Madrasah Education Division (TMED), DTE has been screening video classes on Shangshad TV for all SSC and HSC students since April 2020. This was followed by online classes in May 2020 using social media platform like Facebook, Youtube, Google and Zoom for HSC, Diploma, and short form courses. DTE-Skills 21 project supported TVET team to develop and upload the content, and to deliver the online training through the CSEs.



What other innovative changes is DTE preparing to future-proof the TVET sector?

We (DTE) are working towards a 'blended' teaching and learning system for the future. Online classes are playing a crucial role for TVET and we now have 1300-plus content on the online platform. DTE is also developing studios to prepare regular video content for these practical classes in eight divisional polytechnics.

The government is trying to ensure the quality of technical education and increase its need and acceptance to the youth in Bangladesh. For this, several steps have been taken for quality enhancement and development of technical education.

Based on the six level NTVQF, formulation of Bangladesh Qualification Framework (BQF) with 1-10 level including higher education is ongoing with the support from Skills 21 project. With the support from ADB six new technical teacher-training institutes will be set up in the location of the existing polytechnics in those six divisions. A model polytechnic will be set up in Bangladesh to support the public and private diploma in engineering course providers following the Nanyang Polytechnic Singapore with the support from World Bank.



Success Market relevant quality skills training ensures employment

Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, Skills 21 job placement officers have been in constant touch with many employers to secure placements for students who graduated in March 2020.

To date, 21 graduates (welding, EIM and graphic design) have been hired by companies like BSRM, Uttara Motors, Arc Technologies and Steps 21.

Here are three success stories from graduates who have secured jobs/training:



Sujan Marma Kaptai, Rangamati

Sujan Marma is 18-years-old and lives in Kaptai, Rangamati. In 2019, he appeared for the higher secondary exam but failed to pass. He was devastated and

could not afford to register himself for the examination again. That is when from a leaflet he found out about the training courses offered in Bangladesh Sweden Polytechnic Institute, supported by the ILO's EU-funded Skills 21 project.

He applied and got a spot on the Electronic Installation and Maintenance course in November 2019. It was a four-month long competency-based training programme which he successfully completed in February 2020.

Sujan said: "Even during the pandemic, the careers guidance and jobs placement officer supported us with preparing applications to get jobs. I actually got two job offers in Narayanganj but could not join, due to the nationwide lockdown."

Finally, Sujan secured a job with BSRM company, one of the largest steel companies in Bangladesh, as a technician's helper on BDT9000 (US\$110) per month.

The company is 120 kilometres away from Kaptai, Rangamati but he is thankful to the project for helping him turn his life around.

Rubaya Farhana, Khulna

19-year-old Rubaya is studying a Bachelors degree at Khulna BL College. and like many fellow students, is constantly worried about finding a good job when she graduates.

Rubaya received a circular from Khulna Mahila Polytechnic Institute (KMPI) seeking applications for a short-course (four months) on graphic design.

After discussing it with her parents, she enrolled on the course in November 2019. After finishing the course in February 2020, she managed to get a one-month industrial attachment. This was at the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic yet her Jobs Placement and Careers Guidance Cell at KMPI were determined to find her a placement.



She is now working her probationary period at Arc International, a graphic design and IT-company in Khulna. She works there as a graphic designer and can also work from home.

Rubaya loves graphic design and during the last few months, has designed a lot of awareness and safety materials on COVID-19. She is now thinking about setting-up her own online-based business, where she can offer jobs to other girls who have computer, IT and graphics skills and want to work from home.

Once her probation and training is over (two more months), Arc International will pay her BDT10,000 (US\$120) a month.

Fashiul Islam, Gaibandha

Fashiul Islam lives in Sundarganj, Gaibandha with his four siblings. Their father is a small farmer with a tiny land holding. Fashiul's education stopped at the HSC and - without any qualifications - , he was struggling to find a decent job.

Luckily, he stumbled upon a circular from Gaibandha Technical Training Centre advertising a short course in welding. He enrolled and completed the NTVQF level 1 certificate course. He then enrolled on a Level 2 welding course, spending BDT3000 (US\$35) from his own pocket to upgrade his welding skills.

With support from Gaibandha TTC, he soon landed a welding job at the local Uttara Motors factory, earning BDT8,500 (US\$100) per month.

He now wants to keep on learning and improving his welding skills to get a better paid job and continue to support his family.



Online Quiz Competition

World Youth Skills day 2020

Online competition for TVET students

To mark World Youth Skills Day 2020, 3000 students took part in the first TVET online quiz competition. 1200 qualified for the final round where 10 winners in the graphic design category and 10 more in electrical installation & maintenance were awarded apprenticeships, graphics cards, and electrical toolboxes.



Md. Tarikul Islam Tarif
EIM
Rangpur polytechnic institute



Sourov Chondro Sarker
Graphic Design
UBEI, Gaibandha



Md. Najmul
EIM
Bangladesh Sweden Polytechnic Institute



Fairuz Nowshin
Graphic Design
Bangladesh Korean Technical Training Center

Photo Contest

Skills in Action

In July, Skills 21 launched a photo contest "Skills training in action" for all project partners. We have received two submissions - from Feni Polytechnic Institutes and Bangladesh Sweden Polytechnic Institute. Skills 21 wishes to thank Samia Mahbin (Project Coordinator, FPI) and Md. Kamrul Hasan (Project Coordinator, BSPI) for their participation.



Md. Kamrul Hasan
Project Coordinator, BSPI



Samia Mahbin
Project Coordinator, FPI

Publications

Skills 21 project published training materials on career guidance and job placement.



Stay in touch

The Skill 21 Bulletin aims to inform our stakeholders about all project activities taken by Skills 21 in Technical and Vocational Education and Training and share success stories. from partner TVET institutes.

Readers can find out more about the Skills 21 project on our website.

The Bulletin is published every quarter and available in English and Bangla.

If you have any feedback/suggestions on the bulletin, please contact Farhana Alam: alamf@ilo.org