



Evaluation Summaries

Technical and vocational education training (TVET) reform in Bangladesh

Quick Facts

Countries: *Bangladesh*

Mid-Term: *February 2011*

Mode of Evaluation: *Independent*

Technical Area: *Employment*

Evaluation Management: *CO- Dhaka, EMP/SEED*

Evaluation Team: *Smawfield David, Leowinata Sevilla*

Project Start: *December 2007*

Project End: *December 2012*

Project Code: *BGD/06/01/EEC*

Donor: *European Union (US\$2,772,436)*

Keywords: *Technical training, Vocational Training, Employment*

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The purpose or specific objective of the project is "a market-oriented and flexible TVET system which responds to the demand for competitive skills of the modern sector as well as to the needs of youth and underprivileged groups". The project has five major components. Component 1 aims to review and strengthen TVET policies, systems and legislation at the central and decentralised levels. Component 2 seeks to enhance the flexibility, quality and relevance of TVET. Component 3 is concerned with the

strengthening of TVET institutions through improved knowledge and skills of managers and teachers. Component 4 endeavours to improve skills development and enhance productivity and competitiveness in key growth and export-oriented industries in the formal industrial sector. Component 5 is concerned with increased access to TVET for underprivileged groups.

Methodology of evaluation

Review methodology included study of documents, field visits, participant observation in project events, and a series of stakeholder consultations, individual interviews and focus group discussions, including the convening of a major stakeholder consultation workshop and three debriefing events for validation and sharing of findings. Evidence accumulated and feedback generated led to the following findings and recommendations.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Taking into account the challenges of the development context, the amount that has already been achieved by the project mid-term stage is impressive. This includes the high levels of stakeholder consensus that have been built up and are being maintained, and the

abundance and quality of materials generated together with best practices introduced. The project is among the very few development efforts in Bangladesh that exemplify a strong and active partnership among key stakeholders: government, industry, labour unions, civil society, training institutions, and development partners. Indeed, the project is serving as a public private partnership exemplar. The EU, together with its funding and implementing partner, the ILO, has won enormous respect for what it has already achieved with the TVET Reform Project and is now looked upon as a leader in the sector. The project is breaking new ground, including putting a national policy and qualifications framework in place, redefining TVET beyond its traditional boundaries – especially the way it is broadening inclusion; and its reorientation to prioritising industry needs and shifting emphasis from qualifications to competencies.

Component by component achievements are too numerous to list in full, but the following are among the most significant:

Component 1: The National Skills Development Policy that has been formulated and subjected to wide stakeholder consultation processes and which is on the point of being adopted; production of an important "Structure and Coordination" report and the development of a proposal for and current on-going development of the TVET data system.

Component 2: The National Technical and Vocational Qualifications Framework, on the threshold of becoming formalised; the development of impressive, fit-for-purpose, competency standards; the Standards and Curriculum Development Committees that have been established and which are

functioning effectively; the high quality Programme Outlines that have also already been developed in accordance with the new competency standards.

Component 3: the high quality of: training module design; training materials generated; and training delivery observed.

Component 4: the high levels of industry engagement that has been effected; the success achieved in establishing four Industry Sector Councils – the first of their kind in Bangladesh; the establishment of the Centres of Excellence, for Leather and the Agro-food Processing Sector. The progress made with CoEL, in particular, is an exemplar for other sectors.

Component 5: The creative models that are being successfully pursued for social inclusion, including the mainstreaming of the disabled; the high levels of outreach and links that have been developed with other projects, creating a very significant multiplier effect; the groundbreaking nature of many activities challenging many of the stereotypes associated with traditional TVET in Bangladesh.

Inevitably, any project as wide-ranging, complex, and ambitious as the TVET Reform Project will be faced with major challenges. The following are among the most significant: levels of GoB capacity; the attention that needs to be given to a timely strategic review of project spending to identify scope for project fine tuning, and to assist prioritisation and forward planning; inter component cohesion and inter-project coordination; strengthening even further promotion of gender issues; reconciling some professional differences of perspective within the project team regarding Grade 8 entry qualification

requirements for some courses; and further visibility and dissemination – especially in view of the fact that the MTR has itself helped to confirm that “there is a story to be told” with many outputs to be shared.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Main recommendations and follow-up

To the Project Implementation Team:

- The time is now right, to take a major step up in levels of emphasis and efforts regarding visibility and dissemination of the project’s impressive achievements. This is especially in regard to the many “best practice” resource materials and procedures the project has developed and put in place. Crucial in this regard will be an enhanced web presence and capturing best practice training activity electronically. (A set of specific detailed practical suggestions in support of this major recommendation can be found in Section 4.1.10 of this report).
- Revisit the wording of entrance requirements in course/programme documents developed by the project in order that “Grade 8” completion is not misinterpreted as being an absolute barrier to entry in all circumstances.
- Undertake, as a matter of priority, a financial review to obtain a fuller understanding and quantification of anticipated projected spending during the remaining lifetime of the project, in particular to:

- Assess the scope and appropriateness (if any):
 - for transfer of funds between budget lines;
 - for support of additional activities and interventions, judged to be priorities (such as the communications and dissemination activities recommended above, as well as the capturing and dissemination on video/DVD of exemplary training practice).
- Assist component advisers in formulating and prioritising further workplans for their own components.

To the European Union Delegation to Bangladesh:

- Lobby government regarding the urgency of needs (e.g. approval of the Skills Development Policy, addressing staffing issues, and setting up of the EC/NSDC Secretariat) and implications of delayed action.
- Help disseminate project outputs, lessons of success, and best international practice (e.g. encourage other projects to visit), and by decentralising Skills Development.
- Consolidate the position of advantage of the EUD in TVET and skills development in Bangladesh and take a

leadership role, including the promotion of a future sector wide approach, and by assisting the setting up of the National Skills Development Fund.

To Industry:

- Lobby government regarding the urgency of needs (e.g. approval of the Skills Development Policy, addressing staffing issues, and setting up of the EC/NSDC Secretariat) and implications of delayed action.
- Take note of what has been achieved (e.g. in the leather sector). Inspire other sectors and widen sphere of influence.

To Labour Unions:

- Continue to work with project on strengthening worker groups' appreciation of and capacity to benefit from the projects efforts in TVET reform, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), worker upskilling, etc.

To Government:

- Expedite as urgently as possible:
 - formal approval and adoption of the Skills Development Policy, and its integral National Technical and Vocational Qualifications Framework.
 - The re-activation of the National Skills Development Council as a vibrant body providing proactive leadership

support and guidance to the TVET sector through the new Executive Committee and setting up of its Secretariat.

- Take a strong leadership role in ensuring synergies, coordination, mutual reinforcement and lack of duplication of efforts between the TVET Reform Project, the Asian Development supported Skills Development Project and the STEP Project supported by the World Bank, and activating the National Skills Development Fund.
 - In this regard, the MTR strongly welcomes the proposal made in the 25th January 2011 PMCC meeting to consider constituting a Joint Steering Committee for all three projects. It recommends this course of action.
- Address critical shortages in staffing levels – particularly of BTEB and instructor cadres in training institutions. The project is unable to fulfil its commitment to build capacity without beneficiary human resources being in place. Moreover, it only has a one-time opportunity to do this, determined by the project lifetime.
- Take an active role in disseminating as urgently and widely as possible information about the TVET reforms, through all of the channels at government's disposal and especially through the national media to the District levels.

