

# TVET Reform Project Bangladesh Newsletter

Issue 4/Jan-Aug 2012

## BANGLADESH MOVING FORWARD - CABINET APPROVES NATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT POLICY

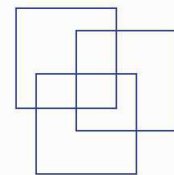
The approval of the National Skills Development Policy by Cabinet heralds the start of a new era in skills development for Bangladesh, and this means huge opportunities for apprentices across Bangladesh, like the ones pictured below. The policy includes a National Training and Vocational Qualifications Framework, ensuring consistency in qualifications delivered and assessed across the country. Skills development is imperative to Bangladesh achieving its national goal of middle income status in 2021, providing a way to mobilize the huge population of the nation. The policy recognizes the need to rationalize the current disparate efforts in skills training and presents a single regulatory framework to provide a unified and coherent direction.

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*Proud young female students learning the skills needed to become motorcycle mechanics in Dhaka Photo: ILO/Sarah-Jane Saltmarsh 2012 ©*



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## WHAT IS THE TVET REFORM PROJECT?

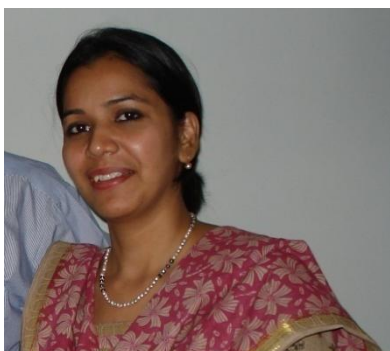
The BDT 136 Crore Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Reform Project is an initiative of the Government of Bangladesh, funded by the European Union and executed by the International Labour Organization.

The Directorate of Technical Education (DTE), Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB) and the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) are the primary government agencies executing the project.

The project recognizes that to reduce poverty and mitigate the limitations of inadequate school education, more people need to have access to both formal and informal TVET training to develop skills that will lead to employment.

TVET reform will ensure Bangladesh's competitiveness in the global market by improving the quality of vocational education and training. Skill development is essential for raising the standard of living for workers, especially women, ethnic minorities and other disadvantaged groups.

## MEET A MEMBER OF THE TVET REFORM PROJECT:



Augustina Diaz is the project's senior secretary. She is always on hand to answer our questions and help to keep all of our staff organized.

**You were from a remote area and were married at a young age, but you have managed to continue your education and pursue a successful career. Tell us your story:**

I was born in Dinajpur and was married young, like many Christian girls in Bangladesh, but I was determined to finish my education. It is important for women in Bangladesh to pursue education and get jobs, for

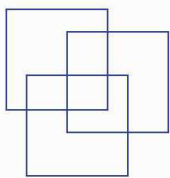
themselves as individuals but also because women can make a significant contribution to the development of our country. Women face challenges in every country balancing work as well as family life, but if you are dedicated then it is definitely possible to manage both.

**Tell us about your family life:**

My close family live in Dhaka now; however we also have our village homes in Dinajpur and Nohakhali. I have a very supportive husband, a teenage son and a beautiful daughter who is just two years old.

**What attracted you to working at the ILO?**

We have a really good team here in the office and we are working on a project which is really important for Bangladesh. Technical education is the key to ensuring the futures of many of our young people and I feel very privileged to be working with a project that is fulfilling a great need in our country.



*Trainees in a rural vocational training centre. Photo: ILO/Sarah-Jane Saltmarsh 2012 ©*

## NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR PROMOTION OF GENDER EQUALITY IN TVET IN BANGLADESH PRESENTED

**Almost 50% of Bangladesh's population is female, representing a significant potential skilled labour force. The Government of Bangladesh is advocating for an increase in the number of female students in public TVET institutions through the development of a gender equality strategy for technical and vocational education. This strategy will be part of the wider Bangladesh TVET Reform Project. In the first quarter of 2012, we have seen two huge developments in the development of this strategy for gender equality.**

In January, a national consultation workshop was held with strong attendance by representatives from both public and private sectors. The workshop consolidated weeks of discussions with stakeholders from a wide range of organizations and ministries. Consultation findings were discussed and further opinions on current issues facing women in TVET were gathered.

In March all the findings from the workshop, as well as during the entire consultation process, culminated in the presentation of a draft National Strategy. The

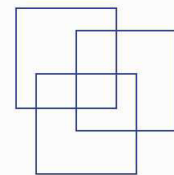
such as affecting attitudinal shifts in family, community, employers' and workers' organizations towards women's role in traditional and non-traditional skills; strengthening linkages between skills availability and labour market demands and promoting gender-responsive environments. The strategy was presented at a roundtable discussion attended by members of both the public and private sectors and was heralded by all as a comprehensive draft policy document addressing an issue that needed to be resolved.

**We are talking about balancing numbers of women and men as well as the quality and diversity of their skills for the betterment of both. We are talking about gender balance and equality of rights and opportunities.**

*Dr Jyoti Tuladhar, International Gender Expert*

The National Skills Development Council will now take the discussion further and we look forward to sharing their progress in upcoming issues. For a copy of the workshop paper or the draft strategy, please contact our team.





## ILO & UCEP COLLABORATE TO TUNE UP THE FUTURES OF YOUNG MOTORCYCLE MECHANICS: INAUGURATION OF MOTORCYCLE SERVICING COURSE FOR UNDERPRIVILEGED YOUTH IN DHAKA



Apprentices at UCEP Mirpur  
Photos: ILO/Sarah-Jane Saltmarsh 2012 ©

The global youth unemployment rate is at a record high and is expected to keep climbing. Of the world's 620 million economically active youth between the ages of 15 and 24, 81 million were out of work at the end of 2009, the highest number ever, said a recent ILO report.

In developing economies, home to 90 percent of the world's young people, youth are even more vulnerable to unemployment and poverty. In 2008, nearly 30% of all of the world's young workers were employed but remained in extreme poverty in households surviving on less than \$1.25 a day.

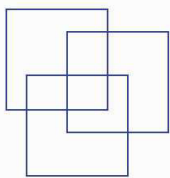
The issue of rising youth unemployment in Bangladesh is not an easy one to solve, but the Government of Bangladesh and the ILO are hoping to improve the statistics through reforming the skills development system. The TVET Reform Project, in collaboration with Underprivileged Children's Education Programs (UCEP) recently inaugurated an apprenticeship training program which will broaden the prospects of youth in Dhaka.

Opening the ceremony, Executive Director UCEP Bangladesh Brig. Gen. Aftab Uddin Ahmad (Retd.) said

"Bangladesh has a huge potential workforce but the majority lack formal qualifications or education. We have a lot of informal skills; look on the footpaths and you will see people repairing everything from cars and bikes, to televisions, but we need a more formalised system that can recognise and certify this. Skills development is the answer and the government is putting a lot of effort into developing an effective system."

Before cutting the ribbon, Chairperson, UCEP Board of Governors, Dr. Ubaidur Rob, said "for Bangladesh to become a middle income country, we need effective skills training options that provide pathways to employment. The goal of UCEP in the next four years is to see 10,000 young people trained each year."

This program is one of the first courses trialling flexible apprenticeship models, an initiative included in the National Skills Development Policy recently approved by Cabinet. The policy offers a market-oriented skills development approach and was developed by the Government of Bangladesh.



# EUROPEAN UNION DELEGATION VISITS YOUNG TRAINEES IN ILO/UCEP PILOT PROGRAM IN DHAKA

Recently, the trainees in the ILO TVET Reform Project's Apprenticeship Pilot Motorcycle Service Mechanics Course were given the chance to share their stories of success with visiting Members of the European Parliament. The Delegation for Relations with South Asia included a visit to Underprivileged Children's Education Programs (UCEP), where the pilot program is taking place.

It was only a short visit to UCEP Mirpur Technical School, but that was enough for the trainees to show the parliamentarians how much of a worthwhile investment funding skills development programs in Bangladesh is. All of the students at UCEP come from underprivileged backgrounds and many have heartbreaking stories to tell, but through technical and vocational training, they are now looking forward to big futures and the ability to pursue decent work opportunities.



Rabeya, Farjana, Halima, Bristy and Pinky were especially proud to tell their stories; these five female students all previously worked in the informal sector and are now looking forward to challenging gender stereotypes by becoming motorcycle service mechanics, a non-traditional trade for women in Bangladesh. Farjana Akter was only able to finish class five in her education and, at just 16 years of age, was previously confined to karchupi, the informal trade of hand embroidery used in making traditional saris. She is now becoming a skilled worker and broadening her job options.

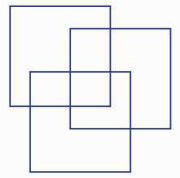
Members of the Delegation included Mr Thomas Mann, Vice Chair, South Asia Delegation, Mr Niccolò Rinaldi, Committee on International Trade, Mr Salvador Sedo i Alabart, Committee on Industry, Research and and Mr Slavi Binev, Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs.



EU delegates speaking to UCEP students  
Photos: ILO/Sarah-Jane Saltmarsh 2012 ©







## GREENING SOUTH ASIA

Energy security is a fundamental issue in the development of Bangladesh. Gas shortages already impact many industries and the size of the country's gas reserves remains highly uncertain. In many areas, coal, kerosene and firewood are still being used which carry significant environmental risks. The Government of Bangladesh, supported by the ILO, are working to change the focus from non-renewable energy sources to a sustainable solution; renewable energy.

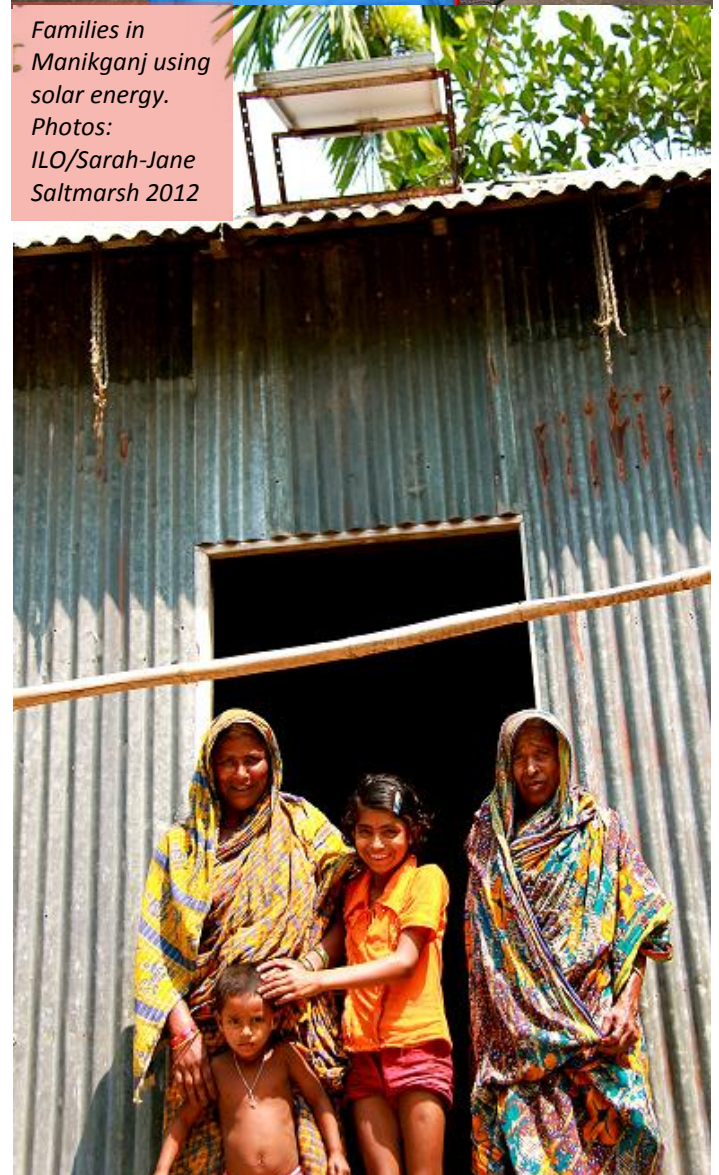
Green Jobs Initiatives is a regional programme of ILO covering five countries: Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nepal, the Philippines and Sri Lanka. Funded by the Government of Australia, it is a joint initiative of the governments of those countries and the ILO and focuses on empowering women and men at the local level by creating green jobs to reduce poverty and environmental damage. In Bangladesh, the TVET Reform Project is working with Green Jobs to promote renewable energy by developing nationally-recognized qualifications for solar home technicians. So far, in collaboration with the Skills Development Project funded by the Asian Development Bank, both NTVQF Level 1 and NTVQF Level 2 courses have been developed which will be available in the mainstream vocational education and training system.

To date, 1.2 million solar home systems have been installed in Bangladesh. Solar home systems significantly improve the living standard of rural families by providing light for children's education and allow people to spend more time after dusk on home based businesses. The reduction in indoor air pollution also means healthier homes.

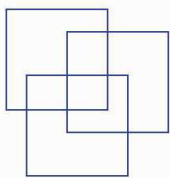
The Government of Bangladesh's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2009 emphasizes energy efficiency including renewable energy development. Renewable energy will address the current energy crisis in 51% of areas in Bangladesh not connected to the national grid and will thus contribute to overall reduction of poverty.



*Families in Manikganj using solar energy.  
Photos:  
ILO/Sarah-Jane Saltmarsh 2012*







# TRAINING THE MASTER TRAINERS OF BANGLADESH

In order for quality training to be delivered and assessed in Bangladesh, TVET teachers and trainers need to have the capacity to deliver flexible, competency-based training and assessment (CBT&A). The TVET Reform Project is making this happen by training instructors in competency-based methodology and then supporting them to develop their own competency-based learning materials.

A new instructor training model has been developed with encompasses both a Certificate IV in CBT&A in TVET and a Certificate V in Advanced CBT&A in TVET. The qualifications are based upon identified competency standards that a teacher/trainer is required to have to work effectively within a reformed TVET sector. The qualification is inclusive of competencies from a range of learning fields including learning environment, learning design, delivery & facilitation.

The new model is a shift away from the current teacher-



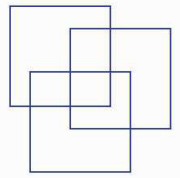
centred, lecture-oriented method towards a learner-centred, interactive and performance based learning environment. This emerging paradigm shift in TVET teacher/trainer training helps them to apply and manage the learning process. To date, one hundred teachers have been trained using the new model.

**Competency-based training and assessment prescribes a change in the role of the teacher from the traditional information giver to that of a learning support person.**

**It is a shift to a participatory and learner centered approach. In a competency-based training environment, trainees and trainer are equal partners in the trainee's process of learning and trainees are required to take more responsibility for their own learning and progress.**

*(Above) Development of CBT&A materials and (Below) Newly trained CBT&A instructor Anawara Sarker uses her skills  
Photos: ILO/Sarah-Jane Saltmarsh, Sandra Chan, 2011 ©*





## TOURISM TAKES CENTRE STAGE IN CHITTAGONG

Tourism is being quickly recognized as an effective method to bring developing countries into the global economy and reduce poverty. To maximize the role the role of tourism in helping countries to reach their development goals, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) is collaborating with the ILO as well as a number of other UN organizations globally. The agencies will work together to promote tourism as an important tool for development.

Compared to many other developing countries around the world, the income, employment and revenue from Bangladesh's tourism sector is very small. The Government of Bangladesh and the ILO want to promote sustainable growth of the tourism sector and the TVET Reform Project has started this by developing a Tourism Industry Skills Councils (ISC). This council will bring together major stakeholders in the private and public tourism sector to monitor, review and develop skills development policies, deliver skills training and provide leadership and advice to the TVET system. Three chapters will also be added to the council; in Chittagong, Cox's Bazaar and Sylhet.

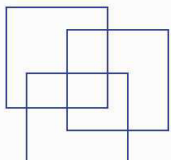
The Chittagong chapter held its first establishment meeting in May at the Well Park Hotel in Chittagong and members were full of enthusiasm for the upcoming months. As the chapter is still very new, the TVET Reform Project has also been delivering professional development courses while the chapter gathers momentum to offer its own courses. Most recently, this included a one-day course for staff at the Peninsula Hotel Chittagong on Customer Focus Service Excellence.

I would like to see this training delivered to our production-orientated staff as well as our service staff; everyone is really motivated and looking forward to trialling the new approaches they have learnt. It is very helpful to have some different faces and international experience, and the skills learnt are not only professional but also personal ones. Thank you for helping us to keep our standards high.

Zaber Huda, Human Resources Manager  
The Peninsula Chittagong







# DARWIN TO DHAKA: BEING AN AUSTRALIAN YOUTH AMBASSADOR FOR DEVELOPMENT AT THE ILO

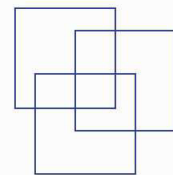
From red dirt to red curries, and sunsets to salwar-kameezes - moving from Darwin to Dhaka for twelve months to work with the ILO has been an experience like no other. The people I have met, the families I have become a part of and the team I have worked with will shape the way that I look at the world forever. The Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development (AYAD) Program aims to strengthen mutual understanding between Australia and the countries of Asia, the Pacific and Africa and make a positive contribution to development. The program is the youth stream of Australian Volunteers for International Development, an Australian Government, AusAID initiative that deploys skilled volunteers to live and work in developing countries.

From the first phone call, deep in the outback in an Aboriginal community in the Northern Territory, I knew that I was looking forward to an interesting year. During the interview, I did some quick comparisons – the place I was in had 0.2 people per square kilometre and the place I was moving to had 1250 per square kilometre! From the first day on the job I was inspired by these people though; in a country which faces many issues, Bangladeshis are incredibly hospitable to visitors, resilient no matter what is thrown their way and, so many that have so little still give so much. I was welcomed into the TVET Reform Project team immediately and quickly began working with each of the reform components to improve their communication tools and share their incredible stories of change.

The highlights have definitely been the projects I have been able to complete in the field – capturing the stories of the first female motorcycle apprentices in Rajshahi, interviewing trainees in the beauty industry in Chittagong and celebrating the graduation of the first batch of disabled and underprivileged ready-made garment trainees in Savar. The photo below is one of my favourite memories; meeting the children in Manikganj who have benefited from the installation of solar home systems and are now able to pursue education without relying on candle light.

My year as an AYAD has ended but I am back with the ILO and looking forward to continuing to tell your stories. Thank you for everything! Eid Mubarak, abar dekha hobe ebong bhalo thaken – Sarah-Jane Saltmarsh





**This edition, we want to introduce you to the European Union, the major donor of the TVET Reform Project.**

**We asked Ambassador William Hanna, the Head of the Delegation of the European Union, to speak to us about the EU's vision for skills development in Bangladesh.**

**The European Union is the world's largest humanitarian aid donor and the primary donor agency for the TVET Reform Project. Why is the area of skills development, particularly in Bangladesh, important to the EU?**

TVET and skills development in particular are consistent with the new European Union (EU) priorities for development cooperation as set out in the *Agenda for Change*, especially the emphasis on inclusive and sustainable growth for human development.

The importance of skills development is recognised in all national policy documents, especially the National Skill Development Policy (NSDP) to which the Sixth Five Year Plan refers. The NSDP mentions that the vision for skills development is recognized by government, industry, workers and civil society. They identify it as a coordinated and well planned strategy for national and enterprise development, as well as a way of empowering all individuals to access decent employment and of ensuring Bangladesh's competitiveness in the global market.

Skills development is related to private sector development, one of the priorities of the EU. Many skilled workers are needed to produce high quality products that meet European standards. So more and more investors in Bangladesh will need hundreds of thousands of skilled workers in many trades: from shipbuilding, to footwear, agro processing and solar panel maintenance.



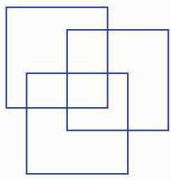
(Pictured) Ambassador William Hanna, Head of the Delegation of the European Union in Bangladesh

**The primary aim of the European Commission's own development strategy is the eradication of poverty and this is done through concentrating on six priority areas. The TVET Reform Project crosses a number of these, namely trade and development, support to macroeconomic policies and equitable access to social services and institutional capacity building. Have you seen any improvements in these areas in Bangladesh since the project began in 2007?**

Over the past few years Bangladesh has continued to grow at rates of over 6% per year, and poverty has declined significantly. During this period Bangladesh' exports to the EU have shot up, reaching new records each year. Europe has relaxed its rules of origin resulting in a 28% increase of exports in 2011 alone. Europe now accounts for over half of Bangladesh exports. This is a great success story. To achieve even better results skills development will be crucial.

I have noticed that there has been greater interest in skills development in the past two years, especially since the adoption of the National Skill Development Policy in January 2012. Many development partners are now willing to invest in skills development, including the Department for International Development (UK Aid), Asian Development Bank, World Bank, Swiss Development Corporation, GIZ, CIDA, JICA, etc ...)





### Could you tell us about the EU's priorities for Bangladesh in the coming years?

Our new programmes will be based on Bangladesh's Sixth-Five Year Plan (SFYP). Here skills development is a key issue: skills development features in all chapters of the SFYP as expressed in over 300 quotes. In most of the sectors, strategies for skills development have been developed. However the plan does not identify the real challenges that come with this new approach. For instance, who is going to provide the training for the thousands of workers needed in all sectors, and who is going to provide the finance? What methods will be used to overcome all the obstacles that changes of mentalities/ changes of training system imply? Specific actions, targets, indicators and milestones are still needed.

Despite the financial crisis in Europe, Bangladesh will remain a significant partner for EU development cooperation. We still have to define the priorities to be supported over the coming years, but we think that the issue of skills development is likely to feature largely.

**The European Union is a major player in international cooperation and development aid, assisting in the implementation of innovative programs across the world. How do you think Bangladesh is progressing towards becoming a middle-income country by 2021?**

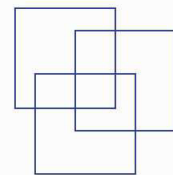
Bangladesh has made great progress in recent years. However, if Bangladesh is to continue to grow to meet this goal, it has to address a number of issues. Providing good infrastructure, tackling corruption, providing sustainable energy supply, and ensuring political stability are all important. Bangladesh is strategically well placed in the main region of growth in today's world. It is fortunate to have a young dynamic work force. Giving them the skills for future employment will be the key to success.



*EU staff involved in project activities across Bangladesh.  
Photos: ILO/Sarah-Jane Saltmarsh 2012 ©*



## FURTHER READING



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### ABOUT THE ILO

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is the only tripartite UN agency with government, employer, and worker representatives. This tripartite structure makes the ILO a unique forum in which the governments and the social partners of the economy of its 183 Member States can freely and openly debate and elaborate labour standards and policies.

### ABOUT THE EU

The European Union is made up of 27 Member States who have decided to gradually link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, during a period of enlargement of 50 years, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms.



*Successful female apprentices, trainers and supervisors in Bangladesh*

*Photos: ILO 2012 ©*

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