



Policy recommendations from dialogue on

▶ “The National Skills Development Policy 2011- Major imperatives to reflect”

June 2020

The National Skills Development Authority (NSDA) is currently reviewing the National Skills Development Policy (NSDP) 2011 in order to upgrade it ensure its relevance in the changing context of policy environment, market demands and future of work. The EU funded Skills 21 project of ILO is providing technical support in this endeavour of the government of Bangladesh. In this context, to facilitate the policy review process, Skills 21 project is reaching out its partner TVET Institutes across the country to conduct a series of online policy dialogues. The objective of these policy dialogues is to integrate the perspectives and inputs of the direct implementers (TVET institutes) of the NSDP into the upgraded policy.

Background

ILO Skills 21 conducted a series of orientation workshops on ‘Organizing Policy Dialogue’ at nine partner TVET Institutes in 2019. Because of project’s capacity development interventions, these institutes are now organizing online policy dialogues and systematically providing their opinion on issues to be addressed in the NSDP review.

The Event

The first online policy dialogue of this series titled “The National Skills Development Policy 2011- Major imperatives to reflect on” was held with the Directorate of Technical Education (DTE) and principals of 9 TVET institutes on 19 May 2020.

The Discussion

The policy discussion brought out different issues relevant to the NSDP. The issues ranged from mainstreaming NTVQF in public TVET institutes, linkage between local industries and TVET institutes, income generating strategy for TVET institutes, adaptation strategy to global pandemic situation, inclusion of soft skills in curriculum, comparison of traditional and CBT&A teacher Training courses to implementation mechanism of the policy, among others.

Recommendations at a glance

- **Flexible and appropriate financing** for supporting the implementation
- **Strengthen industry-institute linkage**
- **Prioritise soft skills** in curriculum
- **Modernize curriculum and compulsory NTVQF** for any skills training
- **Acknowledge online learning methods as COVID Response**
- **Mainstream inclusion**
- **Trade specific hands-on training** for all teachers
- **A detail action plan indicating responsible authorities** required for effective policy implementation

Views were expressed that, for effective implementation of the NSDP, **financial flexibility** to a certain extent should be given to the institute principals to promote innovative ideas. Currently, the centralized budget does not leave room for that. The financing mechanisms should also be result-oriented and demand-driven.

Enforcing industry engagement and strengthen industry-institute linkage was raised as policy priority to attain the skills development goal. While the revised skills policy should prioritize skills gap analysis, both identification of the gaps and addressing the gaps would require industry's engagement. Industry-engagement with training institutes should be pivotal in the policy to support skills training and enhancing job prospects of the trainees. Discussants emphasized that the policy can incentivise the industry to recruit certified skilled workers. This can make the industry owners engage more closely with the training and education system in TVET. As a part of private sector engagement in TVET, setting up of Institutional Management Advisory Board (IMAB) at the TVET institute level with representation from reputed industries was also suggested. .

“The revised NSDP must be complemented with an Action plan containing specific responsibilities for skills-relevant ministries and agencies”

- Md. Jahangir Alam Director (Planning and Development)

Directorate of Technical Education

Deliberating on the potentials of the TVET institutes for self-generating resource, in consideration of financial sustainability of the institutes, the idea of introducing **income generating business model for TVET institutes** was suggested to support the students transform their theoretical knowledge into practical one while helping the local market. One proposed workable model was to promote the collaboration between the institutes and the private sector where the private sector invests in raw materials and receive products from the institutes.

One strategy to enforce industry-institute linkage is to **modernize the curriculum according to industry demand**. Changing the TVET curriculum according to changing industry demands should, thus, be accommodated in the policy. The institutes should run courses that have demand in the local job market. Despite NSDP 2011 adopting the National Technical and Vocational Qualifications Framework (NTVQF), institutes lack both trained teachers and equipment to implement NTVQF. Saidur Rahman, Principal, Sylhet Technical School and College attested the idea, *“The revised policy can make the NTVQF mandatory for any skills training. DTE and the ministry should emphasize this and take necessary initiatives for implementation.”*

Prioritising soft skills along with the competencies is another important policy concern. Some institutions are voluntarily teaching soft skills along with the existing courses such as leadership, communications, and innovation despite these not being included in the curriculum. Given the demand for soft skills in industries, the policy needs to emphasize soft skills for the youth.

“Occupation specific skills training course should integrate creativity, leadership, and communication skills. This should be emphasized as a different section in the revised policy.”

- Md. Samim, Principal-In-Charge, IMT

Trade specific hands-on training for teachers

was brought up and recommended to be made compulsory through the reviewed policy. Currently there are CBT&A courses for teachers as well as traditional teacher education courses like Diploma and BSC in Technical Education. However, what needs to be changed in the policy to produce qualified TVET teachers is to ensure that trade specific hands-on training is

provided to subject specific teachers. This will ensure that they will thoroughly understand their subject areas and are fully able to provide hands-on training to their trainees in turn.

Acknowledging alternative learning methods as a COVID Response is the demand of time. Addressing this issue in the policy would make it adaptive to any global emergency or humanitarian crises. The policy should promote innovative and alternative training delivery methods along with the introduction of different types of learning platforms such as online platform. This will enable TVET system to be more responsive to global emergencies like the Covid-19. Engr. Md. Zinder Ali, Principal of the Vocational Teachers’ Training Institute, Bogura emphasised that the revised policy should have a provision for online learning and training.

Mainstreaming Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) into the NSDP action plan was a significant issue raised through the policy dialogue. From the perspective of inclusion, quota provision for girls’ enrolment in TVET has been introduced by the government. However, the socio-economic context may create hurdles for female student enrolment despite the quota system. Introducing other complementing affirmative actions may produce better results in achieving the goal of producing at least 20% female graduates. Bringing diversity in courses with scope of self/wage employment for women and equal salary irrespective of gender were also highlighted as crucial issues for considering in the policy review. Ensuring access through inclusive learning materials or facilities for People with Disability (PWD) and women were also identified as inclusion indicators to be acknowledged through the policy.

“Traditional teacher education courses like Diploma and BSC in Technical Education should be complemented with mandatory hands-on training for specific trades relevant to different subject teachers.”

-Ramjan Ali, Principal,
Technical Teachers’ Training
College (TTTC)

A well-written policy may not always lead to successful implementation due to various strategic reasons including the absence of a detailed action plan and lack of ownership. Thus, ***one of the key suggestions emphasized on ownership of different government agency through*** a detailed action plan with clear roles and responsibility of relevant government institution for policy implementation.

Policy recommendations from the discussion

- ▶ Promote mechanism for skills gap analysis in terms of demand and supply
- ▶ Emphasise Industry- Institute engagement
- ▶ Create provision for continuous changes in TVET curriculum according to changing industry demands
- ▶ Ensure adequate budget provision for the countrywide scale-up of NTVQF, teacher's capacity development, classroom equipment,
- ▶ Promote a blended approach in TVET and skills training is a demand for adapting to unexpected situations like global emergencies and NSDP should reflect on that.
- ▶ Make soft skills mandatory in response to market demand. This should be acknowledged and prioritised while revising the skills policy.
- ▶ Ensure trade specific hands-on training to dedicated teachers
- ▶ Revised NSDP must emphasize on women-focused courses for wage/ self-employment and equal salary for better female participation in the skills sector.
- ▶ A detailed action plan with names of responsible government agencies to create ownership and assign roles and responsibilities for policy implementation.