



# ► Skills Development for Overseas Employment

October 2020

## Policy Recommendations for promoting skilled migration and skills recognition

### Key suggestions

- Establish and operationalise an information cell in embassy for accurate labour market information.
- Continuous capacity development of training providers providing training to aspirant migrants.
- Strengthen industry-institute linkage for practical working skills.
- Create awareness on how skilled migration help to get decent work
- Introduce online training and learning provision for workers as a response to pandemic or similar global emergencies in future
- Make NTVQF mandatory for migrant worker's training
- Motivate the overseas employers to recruit certified skilled workers
- Emphasise RPL for aspirant and returnee migrants.
- Initiate establishing Mutual Recognition Agreement with destination countries.
- Introduce destination country-specific extensive language training especially for women.

## Background

Skills 21 – Empowering Citizens for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth project of ILO has undertaken capacity development initiatives for TVET officials of government technical schools, colleges and polytechnic institutes on policy dialogue, policy review and analysis, and policy communication and advocacy to strengthen their engagement in policymaking.

## The event

The project provided a five-day long in-depth training to selected 40 TVET officials on policy review and analysis through illustration of reviewing and analysing the National Skills Development Policy (NSDP) 2011. As an output

of these capacity development interventions, the participants organized online policy dialogues and provided their opinion in a systematic manner on issues to be addressed in the NSDP review. One of the policy dialogues conducted by these TVET officials was focused on 'Skills Development for Overseas Employment'.

## The discussion

The training on policy review and analysis brought out different issues relevant to Skill Development for Overseas Employment of NSDP. The participants highlighted varied issues to improve skill development initiatives for Bangladeshi migrant workers that can be addressed through NSDP.

The issues included - need for migrants, including returnee migrants, data base, establishing an information cell at the ministry for accurate labour market information database collected through trained staff of the embassies, accreditation of TVET courses in the destination country, strengthening industry-institute linkage for market relevant skills of potential migrant workers, introduction of destination country-specific extensive language training, aligning TVET course curriculum to international standards, and promote Mutual Recognition Agreement with destination countries and continuous capacity development of training providers for quality training to aspirant migrants.

Realising the crucial need for information at the CoDs, suggestion to **set up an overseas employment wing at the Bangladeshi high commissions/ embassies** in destination countries came up. Though there are currently help desks and labour attachés available at the high commissions in different CoDs, but there is a lack of system and capacity for collecting and disseminating accurate labour market information. This will help TVET providers in Bangladesh to deliver market relevant training. Such information may also support the Bangladeshi migrant workers in exploring better opportunities and switching jobs.

**Continuous capacity development of training providers and strengthening industry-institute linkage** for practical working skills also came up as pre-requisites to ensuring quality and market relevant training to aspirant migrant workers.

Demand for Bangladeshi migrant workers at the Countries of Destinations (CoD) can be created through sending batch of skilled workers performing beyond their expected standards. However, Bangladeshi aspirant migrants lack motivation to get skilled prior to migration, rather they are more inclined towards the notion of learning while working abroad. **Role of skill training and skilled migration for getting decent employment** was highly emphasised in the dialogue. NSDP could guide social campaigns through policy so that potential migrants are interested to receive skills training rather than desperately trying their luck through migration for low wages in informal sector without any negotiation capacity. In COVID 19 context, migration with overseas employment almost came to a halt. However, the potential migrant trainings could continue online. **Online training and learning provision** should be introduced and acknowledged through the revised policy for potential migrants as well as for the overall TVET sub sector. This provision in policy should be applicable to any similar global context in future according to the participants.

Quality of training for the migrant workers came up in different contexts during the policy dialogue. Realizing the necessity of ensuring quality training for migrants, participants suggested to **make NTVQF mandatory for migrant worker's training**. Coordination among Bureau of Manpower, Employment and

Training (BMET), Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MoEWOE) and Directorate of Technical Education (DTE), Technical and Madrasah Education Division (TMED) should be emphasized in the policy to ensure NTVQF consistent training to migrant workers.

Discussants also emphasized **motivating the overseas employers to recruit certified skilled workers**. Since certification has direct impact on the quality of employability, this will ensure quality and higher wage for the qualified Bangladeshi migrant workers.

Overseas employment is mostly contractual service for 2 to 3 years with extension in some cases. Upon the return of migrant workers after completion of the agreement period or early return in emergency situations like the global pandemic, they need to be integrated in the domestic market to benefit the local economy with their skills they acquire or develop in CoD. The skills and experiences these workers return with, could be widely recognised through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). NSDP 2011 already lays emphasis on RPL provision. However, **more emphasis on Certification through RPL** will create a greater impact on the economy for absorption of the returnee migrants in the domestic as well as for remigration to other overseas labour market with higher wage. This was particularly found crucial during this pandemic period when large number of

Bangladeshi migrant workers are losing their jobs and returning to their home country.

The participants laid emphasis on **Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) between Bangladesh and Countries of Destination** for skills recognition and decent work opportunities.

The participants at the dialogue emphasised the issue of communicating the standard of certification under NTVQF to the overseas employers and international recruitment agencies.

As many of the destination countries are offering skill certificates under their own qualification framework, level and competency standards under NTVQF needs to be compared with that of the Country of Destination's (COD's) in order to reach an MRA between Bangladesh and them. Establishing MRAs would ensure easier access, higher wage and higher demand of Bangladeshi migrant workers in international labour market. The revised NSDP should take into account establishment of MRAs between Bangladesh and other potential migrant receiving countries.

The discussion recommended special attention to gender inclusion in overseas employment. **Safe migration for women** could be ensured to some extent by providing them skill training including extensive language training along with awareness and emergency response training.

## Policy concerns and recommendations

Concerns	Recommendations
Lack of up to date information about labour market of destination countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Establish/ operationalise an information cell in embassy for accurate labour market information.</li> </ul>
Lack of motivation of Bangladeshi migrant workers to receive skills training prior to migration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Social campaign of skills to motivate the migrant workers receive skills training while encouraging the overseas employers to recruit certified skilled workers</li> <li>▶ Promote quality skills training and its benefit to the aspirant migrant workers in getting decent employment</li> </ul>
Lack of readiness to confront emergency situations like the pandemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Introduce online training and learning provision for workers as a response to pandemic or similar global emergencies in future</li> </ul>
Quality of training for migrant workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <i>Strengthen industry-institute linkage</i> for practical working skills.</li> <li>▶ Continuous capacity development of training providers providing training to aspirant migrants.</li> <li>▶ Make NTVQF mandatory for migrant worker's training</li> <li>▶ Emphasise RPL for aspirant and returnee migrants through the policy</li> <li>▶ Initiate establishing Mutual Recognition Agreement with destination countries.</li> <li>▶ Introduce destination country-specific extensive language training especially for women.</li> </ul>

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