



European Union



International
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BREAKING THE BARRIERS:

ENSURING DECENT WORK FOR ALL

**Pilot Ready Made Garment Sewing Machine
Operators Course for Disadvantaged Women
and Persons with Disabilities**



INTRODUCTION

Disability and poverty are closely linked. In the developing world, disabled people account for 15-20% of the poor according to World Bank estimations. The Asian Development Bank states that approximately 800 million people (25%) of the Asia-Pacific region's population are impacted by disability in their families¹.

About the ILO

The ILO is the international organisation responsible for drawing up and overseeing international labour standards.

It is the only 'tripartite' United Nations agency that brings together representatives of governments, employers and workers to jointly shape policies and programs promoting Decent Work for all. This unique arrangement gives the ILO an edge in incorporating 'real world' knowledge about employment and work.

Many people with disabilities face major barriers to social inclusion in their communities. Many are not able to access mainstream training or decent education and this leads to significantly decreased employment opportunities.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is committed to achieving decent work for all and has a particular focus on promoting the employability of underprivileged groups in Bangladesh through the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Reform Project. The project is a five year initiative that works towards ensuring Bangladesh's competitiveness in the global market by improving the quality of vocational education and training.

This booklet gives an insight into the pilot Ready Made Garment Sewing (RMG) Machine Operators course which the TVET Reform Project recently launched. The course gives disabled women the

opportunity to acquire the technical competence required to become multi-skilled RMG workers. There is a huge demand for skilled workers in Bangladesh and these participants will prove that, through a quality training and assessment process, underprivileged persons can play a vital role in Bangladesh's ability to meet the global demands of the RMG export industry.

The pilot will provide a model for industry that demonstrates how underprivileged groups can be mainstreamed into TVET programs and gain formal TVET qualifications.

This course is the result of a partnership between the TVET Reform Project funded by the European Union, the Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed (CRP), Interfab Shirt Manufacturing Limited and the Directorate of Technical Education with the involvement of Technical School and College (TSC) under the Government of Bangladesh.

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.

The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders.

SUMMARY OBJECTIVES

- Demonstrate that underprivileged women and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) can become skilled workers through quality off and on-the-job training;
- Demonstrate that underprivileged people can be mainstreamed into formal TVET training programs and decent work for all can be achieved;
- Prove that underprivileged people with low formal education can become skilled workers;
- Develop the capacity of two TVET institutes; CRP Ganakbari Vocational Training Centre and Technical School and College (TSC) Gazipur VTC to deliver skills training programs following competency-based training and assessment (CBT&A) methodology

It is hoped that the success of this pilot initiative will encourage other organizations to ensure that their courses are accessible for PWDs and disadvantaged groups, so that decent work for all can be achieved in Bangladesh.

¹ TVET Reform Project, ILO Dhaka (2010), Assessment of Training and Employment opportunities for PWDs in Bangladesh

WHY THE RMG INDUSTRY?

The ready-made garment (RMG) industry is one of the biggest sectors in the export market in Bangladesh. World textiles and clothing industry was worth USD 527 billion in 2009 and Bangladesh exported USD 12.75 billion, making up 79.33% of its total exports. The Bangladesh Export Promotion Bureau forecasts more than USD 16 billion export this year and USD 25 billion by 2013. It is estimated that the RMG sector contributes 11-15% to GDP of Bangladesh adding 38% of value to the industrial sector².



“The training at CRP led to my employment at Interfab. It has changed my life”

Sultana (hearing impaired)
Machine Operator
Interfab Shirt Manufacturing Ltd.

Approximately 4.5 million workers are employed in the textiles and clothing industry in Bangladesh, of which around 80% are women³. According to research studies, the success of the export-oriented clothing industry relies on quality, price, lead-time and reliability, which means huge opportunities for disabled women, who are widely considered to retain their jobs for longer periods of time and work hard in their positions.

WHY PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES?

Data from the World Health Organisation and the World Bank’s research into developing countries suggests that as many as one in ten people in Bangladesh are disabled⁴. This equates to over 15 million people⁵ and the exclusion of these people from the mainstream workforce is costing Bangladesh as much as 18% of their GDP⁶. The situation is literally costing the country billions of dollars each year.

It is widely known that in developing countries around the world, disabilities are closely interlinked with poverty and economic hardship. It is a vicious cycle, with poverty also raising the possibility of impairment through exposure to poor nutrition, dangerous living conditions, limited access to healthcare, poor hygiene and sanitation. One of the solutions to

breaking this cycle is integration into education and training, opening up pathways to decent employment.

The main goal of the ILO is to assist member countries to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all. The ILO’s Disability Programme promotes equality of opportunity and treatment for PWDs in vocational rehabilitation, training and employment, under **ILO Convention No. 159** concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons (1983).

The UN unanimously adopted the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) on 13th December 2006, which entered into force on 3rd May 2008. Being one of the pioneering countries to ratify the Convention, Bangladesh is pledge bound to implement the human rights treaty in its entirety ensuring the rights of persons with disabilities in the country.

In pursuit of realising the objectives of the international conventions, the TVET Reform Project in Bangladesh is working on methodologies for enabling access of underprivileged groups to technical and vocational training courses. This pilot course is an important step in encouraging employers to consider the rights of disabled persons.

Do you need **expert advice, programme support, counselling** on how to ensure that a programme or service is **inclusive** of persons with disabilities?

No matter your question, the people at the ILO’s Disability Hotline are happy to help you work through the situation and develop solutions that are inclusive of all constituents.

Call the ILO Disability Hotline on +41 022 - 799 6192 or write to disability@ilo.org

² <http://www.steinandpartners.com/bangladesh-ready-made-garments-rmg-sector-at-a-glance/>

³ <http://www.steinandpartners.com/bangladesh-ready-made-garments-rmg-sector-at-a-glance/>

⁴ <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DISABILITY/Resources/Regions/South%20Asia/DisabilityinBangladesh.pdf>

⁵ *State of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities In Bangladesh*, 2009, Disability Rights Watch Group Bangladesh

⁶ Robert L. Metts (2000), *Disability Issues, Trends and Recommendations for the World Bank*

PRE-PILOT PREPARATION

Firstly, extensive consultation was undertaken to identify potential employment opportunities for disabled and underprivileged women in Bangladesh. The RMG sector was identified and a skills analysis was then conducted to ensure that the course content matched the real needs of the industry. Quality learning and assessment materials were developed and thoroughly reviewed and instructors were given quality training in CBT&A methodology. Principals were also supported through management training which included a significant focus on CBT&A.

Pilot facilities were carefully selected and upgraded as needed, nutritional needs of the students were addressed and recreational activities were structured to build a sense of community for the trainees. Partners were carefully chosen to ensure that all parties were genuinely interested in achieving real change and could ensure a supportive and nurturing environment.

PILOT STRUCTURE

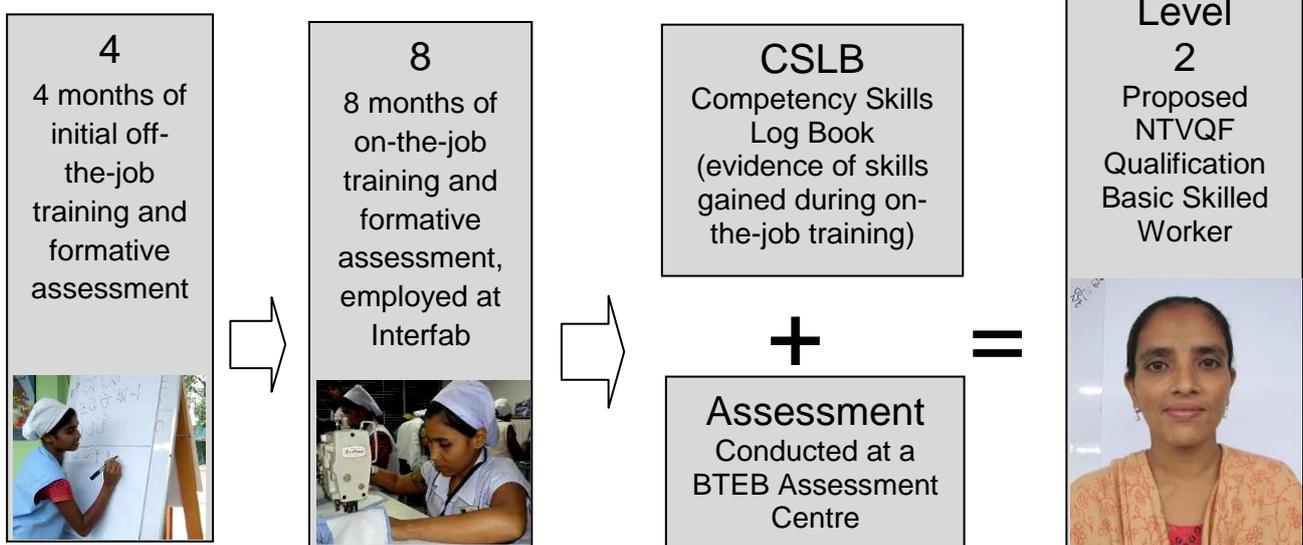
Twelve women, including eight PWDs and four underprivileged people with low education levels, are being trained at the CRP-VTC over a 4 month period. Upon completion, the trainees will undergo 8 months on-the-job training at Interfab Shirt Manufacturing Ltd. and record their skills learnt in Competency Skills Log Books (CSLBs).

This comprehensive process will ensure that the learning of each person is documented and will allow trainers to effectively assess students against required competencies. This process, with the support of skilled trainers and supervisors, will give the women the opportunity to acquire the technical competence required to work in all facets of shirt manufacturing.

The institutional part of the competency based training is being conducted jointly by the CRP-VTC and Technical School and College (TSC), Gazipur. Two Competency-Based Training & Assessment and industry (Interfab)-trained instructors from CRP-VTC and TSC-Gazipur are delivering the training course. It is proposed to include the course in the new National Technical & Vocational Qualifications Framework (NTVQF) at Level 1 in agreement with the Bangladesh Technical Education Board.

During first two months, the syllabus will be based on competencies covering basic sewing machine operations, basic literacy and numeracy in Bangla and English and workplace occupational safety and health. Trainees will then progress onto learning general sewing skills and specific shirt attachments, as well as time management and quality assurance. This skill combination will ensure that the trainees can meet the high productivity demands of the industry.

PILOT DIAGRAM



*Definition of Basic Skilled Worker: Work under direct supervision in a structured context.

OUR PARTNERS



**Centre for the
Rehabilitation of
the Paralyzed**

Founded in 1979 in response to the desperate need for support for spinal injuries, the Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed (CRP) has developed into an internationally respected organisation.

Ensuring capacity building, this pilot will train a CRP coordinator on Competency Based Training & Assessment (CBT&A) training management, continue to develop their skills after certification and upgrade the training venue, accommodation, IT equipment and generator support for future courses.



**Interfab Shirt
Manufacturing
Limited**

Interfab is a leading RMG company in Bangladesh, operating within the umbrella of the Viyellatex Group and committed to global corporate social responsibility.

Ensuring capacity building, this pilot has conducted a Skills Analysis for Units of Competency needed, used this analysis to develop course curriculum and created Competency Skills Log Books (CSLBs) for students. Industry needs on topics including occupational safety and health, literacy, numeracy and hygiene have been ascertained and materials have been developed to address these areas.



**Gazipur Technical
School & College
Directorate of
Technical Education
Ministry of
Education**

Ensuring capacity building, an instructor will be dispatched to CRP for four months to learn CBT&A methodology. This will ensure that at least one instructor will be able to deliver future off-the-job training using CBT&A methodology. There will also be a weekly education session for the Gazipur TSC Principal at CRP to ensure that management has first-hand exposure to the training and can effectively oversee future CBT&A training.

Hands-on participation by all parties will equip the government technical vocational school and college with the skills and experience needed run similar programs in the future.



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**ILO TVET
Reform Project**

The TVET Reform Project is an initiative of the Government of Bangladesh (GoB). It is funded by the European Commission (EC) and executed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) with support from the GoB.

It will strengthen economic development by ensuring that technical and vocational education and training in Bangladesh is of a consistently high quality, accessible to students, internationally recognised, relevant to the needs of industry and accessible to all.



European Union

The European Union is established in accordance with the Treaty on European Union. There are currently 27 Member States of the Union. It is based on the European Communities and the member states co-operation in the fields of Common Foreign and Security Policy and Justice and Home Affairs. The five main institutions of the European Union are the European Parliament, the Council of Ministers, the European Commission, the Court of Justice and the Court of Auditors. The European Union is a major player in international co-operation and development aid. It is also the world's largest humanitarian aid donor.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE



OUR BENEFICIARIES

	Asma Akter, 20 Disadvantaged		Mahmuda Akter, 25 Disadvantaged		Shajeda Begum, 23 Hearing impaired
	Dolena Khatun, 19 Stunted growth from birth		Najma Akter, 23 Weak right hand		Shakina, 21 Disadvantaged
	Fahima Akter, 19 Disadvantaged		Salma Akter, 18 Short and weak right hand		Sheuly Akter, 23 Left leg paralyzed due to polio
	Khadija Akter, 21 Weak legs due to polio		Taslima Akhter, 28 Short and thin right leg		Shabana Begum, 19 Burns to hands and face

MEET SHEULY, ONE OF OUR TRAINEES

Sheuly Akter was just nine months old when she became a victim of polio, a devastating viral disease which resulted in the paralysing of her left leg. Sheuly did not let this restrict her however and with the strong support of her family, she began working with Joyer Pathe Protibondhi Sangstha, a local NGO funded by ADD (Action on Disability and Development) in her hometown of Khulna. After working in the organisation for five years, she hoped to move to Dhaka.

What motivated you to join this pilot training course? I contacted with one of the staffs working in the CRP centre, and he introduced me about this course.

Have you ever experienced using any sewing machine before? Yes, I usually used simpler sewing machine at home, but I have never used this sewing machine, which is the same one that garment industry uses. Also, the machine I used to use at home was not automatic but here we learn with the automatic sewing machine with more rapid speed which I like.

Has this course changed the way you feel about yourself? I am now more confident and self reliant. Through the training process, my thought changed and I learnt different ways of training. I used to feel that as a disabled person I could not do anything in life, but I no longer think that way. I used to suffer mentally a lot of times, but now I feel more self confident.

How has the training course made you think of your future career? I know that I can prove my worth as a good worker and I can work in a reputed factory after joining training course.

What is the positive thing that you've got after the training? I have learnt the six types of machines, their operations. I now believe that I can also operate other machines used in the factory, given training. I have also learnt the process of making a complete shirt.



MEET MS. SARKAR, INSTRUCTOR

How did the first month of training go? I am generally satisfied with most of the trainees' result up to now. My only concern is 1 or 2 trainees who cannot catch up the training very well, but it is very first time for them to learn using the sewing machine. Our social mobiliser, Umme Farzana, is helping them to understand the training and catch up.

What are the differences between before and after starting the training? The trainees obey the OSH system rules when using the sewing machine, punctually attend the classes according to the timetable, and practise well with technicians. I can see the improvements every week. Mental (mindset) improvement is something I found interesting. They are more calm and concentrated and cooperate with each other.

What have you learnt, as an instructor, through this pilot training course? My accountability about maintaining high standards and my sense of responsibility has been increased. In perspective of the capacity development of instructors I feel this exposure, related to CBTA methods, will enhance my competence and capability.

What do you see as the benefits of the training course? For the trainees, I believe they have acquired a much better level of skill compared to other training, adopting a confident attitude. Personally, very few people knew about what I do, but now I am under the observation of a third party, ILO, my contribution will be recognised.

What do you expect trainees' future in terms of employability and their career? The trainees are accustomed to feedback and being told of the gap in skills to be attained. They are under three separate observations by another body to improve their interpersonal skills as well. They will leave CRP centre after four months with a firm footing on sewing machine operation and processes and will improve those skills substantially after 8 months of on-the-job training. I expect that at least 70% will have significantly higher skill after the training at CRP, and I am sure they will have better progress in their careers.



CONTACT US

We hope that this booklet assists public and private technical vocational centres and garment industries in running courses which are inclusive of all potential trainees, including PWDs and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Institutions interested in replicating this training course or seeking advice or further information are more than welcome to contact any of the organisations involved, or the TVET Reform Project, details below:

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“When we started to learn, it was not easy to follow the lessons and learning to use the sewing machine, but now I feel it is easy than I thought and interesting. As I worked as a helper in the garment industry before, I only could see how sewing machine operator working. At that time, I could not imagine I now could use this machine like them”

Shakina, trainee

We thank the following professionals for making this programme happen:

Instructors

Ms. Anawara Sarkar (CRP) and Mr. Syed Farid Ahmed (TSC, Gazipur)

Institutional Coordinator

Mr. Arif Abdullah (Interfab) and Mr. Ramesh Halder (CRP)

Social Mobiliser

Ms. Umme Farzana (CRP)

