



YOUNUS

Prior to the introduction of the National Skills Development Policy, entry into formal skills development programmes required a minimum Grade 8 general education level. This meant that young people who could not afford to continue education had little option but low-paid, low-skilled jobs in the informal job market.

Mohammad Younus is a confident young welder at Western Marine Shipyard who is looking forward to one day opening his own business. At a recent vessel launch, he proudly shared with attendees that he played a role in building the parts that were used in the construction of the vessels. He is so interested in building his skills that when he has any time off from his apprenticeship he arranges work in other shipyards. The youngest sibling of four in a family that previously lived below the poverty line, he is now able to provide for his entire family.

The situation was not always like this however. When Younus started Class 5, his father died in a horrific accident. The family, relying solely on the father's income, were plunged almost immediately into extreme poverty. Traditionally, in Bangladesh, when the father is unable to support the family financially, it is the responsibility of the older brother but as Younus' siblings could not help, the responsibility fell on young Younus' shoulders. He started the first job he could find as an unskilled 14 year old which was holding ladders for workers installing internet cables. With a starting salary of 1800 taka per month (USD 22 equivalent), after over a year he had only progressed to making 2000 taka per month. His dream was to get a technical job, as his father had been a fitter, but established workplaces do not take unskilled workers in Bangladesh and because he had not finished his general education, he was unable to enter into formal technical education.



"When I found out about the programme, I realised that it was a chance for me to do something not possible in Bangladesh; get skills without formal education. I explained that I am small but I am strong and I will work hard. I am proud to have this job, for me and for my family and my country. It feels really good to have a job and be skilled. It was hard at first and I faced challenges like how scary it was to hold the welding arc at first but I put in my full effort and now I am a skilled welder. I always do different things; sometimes I am cutting, sometimes I am grinding. When I see a big ship that we have finished, I am proud to have been part of it. I am part of a team and in this program there are other people that had low education too but we are now all skilled and all treated the same. There are so many unskilled people in this country and no one cares for them but they can change Bangladesh."

Younus a young apprentice now employed in the shipbuilding sector, taking part in the TVET Reform Project, an initiative of the Government of Bangladesh, executed by the ILO and funded by the European Union. For more information, contact the ILO Dhaka via email: tvetreform@ilo.org or visit us on the web at ilo.org/tvet