

REALISING THE NATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT POLICY (NSDP)



Industry-driven skills training for the readymade garments sector

Gazipur Technical School & College

One of the first public institutions in Bangladesh to replicate a model for employing underprivileged people in the readymade garments sector.

THE MODEL

The model which was replicated was developed in 2010, through a partnership between the Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed (CRP), Interfab Shirt Manufacturing (part of the Viyellatex Group) and local non-government organisations. It partners training directly with employment, combining off-the-job training in an institute with on-the-job training in a workplace. Trainees are given the chance to graduate with a nationally-recognised NTVQF qualification, comprehensive work experience and, most importantly, a job.

Competency Based Training and Assessment methodology is used; meaning skills taught have a practical, hands-on focus and ensure that graduates are ready for full-time work in the industry. In-demand skills (as identified by industry) are taught, on the same equipment currently used in factories. Trainees' work is recorded in Competency Skills Log Books, so they have a tangible record of their competency to keep.

The first three batches of trainees from CRP, a total of 39 underprivileged females including 19 persons with disabilities, were trained and successfully employed. The next two batches, supported financially by the Manusher Jonno Foundation, resulted in another 23 graduates (including 13 persons with disabilities) also trained and successfully employed. CRP is now continuing with the model, partnering with local industries to ensure employment opportunities and with local non-government organisations to ensure financial viability.

REPLICATION OF THE MODEL: GAZIPUR TSC

Encouraged by the success of the model, the Directorate of Technical Education (Ministry of Education) is now encouraging more technical training institutions to offer a sewing machine operators' course using this modality. So far, Gazipur TSC and Chittagong Women's Polytechnic Institute have replicated the model, with five more institutions in the wider Dhaka region to commence by the end of 2013.

Gazipur TSC is a government technical school under the Directorate of Technical Education (Ministry of Education) and is situated in Gacha in the Gazipur district. It was established in 2003 and runs two-year SSC Vocational (Grade 9 and 10) and two-year HSC Vocational programmes in four trade areas; refrigeration & air conditioning, general electrical works, building maintenance and poultry rearing & farming.

Using a collaborative approach to ensuring the trainees' success, underprivileged students are recruited with the help of CARE, financially supported by Far East Knitting and IDLC, trained off the job by Gazipur TSC and then trained on the job by Far East Knitting. They are then employed by Far East and also a selected group of local employers. All trainees selected are from ultra poor families, mostly from poverty-prone regions of North Bengal such as Gaibandha. As CARE, a large international non-government organization, has a long history of working with ultra-poor communities in this region, they are able to effectively handle trainee recruitment, making sure the opportunities go to those who will benefit the most, and ensuring high rates of success. In addition to Far East and IDLC, CARE has also now pledged their support for the next two years, and SHIRREE, an organisation funded by the UK-based Department for International Development, has also offered assistance.

LINKAGE TO THE NSDP

A key element of an effective skills development system is that the skills delivered meet the changing needs of employers, both locally and internationally. Gazipur TSC's course is an important step towards meeting the growing skill needs of the quickly expanding readymade garments industry; its nationally-recognised qualifications are developed in close dialogue with employers to clearly define and match their skill needs. Its delivery and assessment models emphasize practical skills so that graduates are job-ready and held in high regard by industry.

DURATION & DELIVERY MODE

The course runs for three months; two months off the job training and one month on the job training. The curriculum covers topics such as; industrial sewing machine operation, what to do in case of a fire/emergency, occupational safety and health and general literacy and numeracy.

COSTING

There are two costs in replicating the model; initial capital costs and the ongoing costs of running courses (inclusive of repairs and maintenance). For 20 trainees, these are the approximate costs:

Initial capital costs = 22.5 lac BDT

This includes: 20 basic sewing machines (8 lac BDT)
Upgrading/renovating of the training venue (4.5 lac BDT)
30 KVA generator (10 lac BDT)

Operating cost (one course) = 7 lac BDT

This includes: Participant allowances, trainers salaries, logistics support, generator fuel and consumables. This can be reduced to approximately 5 lac BDT if industry supplies cut fabrics.

The cost of the sewing machines will vary depending on whether the focus is on knit or woven apparel, which affects machine configuration. Costing is based on plain single needle lockstitch machines. It is important also to consider the running cost of a generator, which can be prohibitive as trainees commonly have no prior experience on sewing machines and need many practicing hours.

In Gazipur TSC, the ILO covered the initial capital cost, which included 26 industry-standard sewing machines so that both knit and woven skills could be accommodated, and the running cost for the first batch. An MOU was then signed between Fareast Knitting (a well-known local employer) and the Industrial Development Leasing Company (IDLC) to cover the running costs of subsequent batches for the next two years. Costs are shared by Fareast Knitting (80%) and IDLC (20%).

UPSCALING AND REPLICATION

The overall goal of reforming the skills development system in Bangladesh, and of training and employment models such as this, is to reduce poverty through strengthening national competitiveness. New, flexible models for training will focus on mainstreaming disadvantaged groups to combat extreme poverty, and bring industry and government closer together to reduce gaps between skills supply and demand. The Government of Bangladesh is now encouraging all training institutions in Bangladesh to follow the lead of institutions such as Gazipur TSC in providing flexible, demand-driven training.

STORIES OF CHANGE: HALIMA AKTER HASHI



"I am proud every day to go to work with my husband and be able to support our families"

Halima and her husband currently work together in the garments industry. It is not only financial independence that her training and her new job has given her; it is also practical skills and confidence.

The TVET Reform Project is an initiative of the Government of Bangladesh, executed by the ILO and funded by the European Union. For information on how you can get involved in skills, contact the ILO Dhaka via email: tvetreform@ilo.org or visit us on the web at ilo.org/tvet