

ACTION BRIEF

Mainstreaming Gender Equality in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Yemen

The following action brief describes ILO activities undertaken in 2009-10 with the Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training (MoTEVT) targeting young unemployed women in Yemen, in line with the Decent Work Country Programme outcome on advancing gender equality and access to income-generating activities in the labour market.

Background

More TVET graduates are needed

Yemen has a predominantly young population that has high levels of unemployment. The education system is not sufficiently preparing young people for the labour market. The pyramid of graduates is from TVET and tertiary education is the reverse of is needed by the labour market. At the base are high numbers of university graduates, while at the summit are the small numbers of graduates from vocational institutes. TVET institutions only absorb 0.2 per cent of each annual cohort in upper secondary education. The international standards for developing countries indicate that for three graduates from the TVET, higher education should provide one graduate. For Yemen there are seven graduates from universities for one graduate from the TVET system.



Participation rates are low and concentrated in saturated fields

Women's enrolment in TVET institutions in Yemen was estimated at a low 9.6 percent (www.motevt.info). Young women in TVET are often concentrated in sectors that are traditionally associated with their gender roles - mainly in community, social, and personal services. In vocational training subjects, women constitute only 2.2 percent of graduates. All of the women graduates are concentrated in sewing and beautician courses. These traditionally "feminine specializations", such as sewing, embroidery, and beautician, are oversaturated and have limited income opportunities after graduation. Despite evidence of women entering some non-traditional specializations, with 15.5 percent women graduates at technical diploma level, including courses such as computer programming, accounting and administration, the low participation rates persist. Young women's low enrolment rates in TVET institutions mainly stem from the perception that these institutions provide skills associated with manual labour dominated by men.

Increasing women's participation is a challenging task

The sector shows weak linkages between the different departments. At the central level, the different departments of the MoTEVT lack both the autonomy and direct contact with the different TVET stakeholders. At the regional level, the regional offices are geographically and operationally separated from the four headquarter directorates concerned with TVET design and provision. As such, they are confined to conducting bureaucratic and administrative tasks, instead of serving as a linkage between the policy and operational domains. Despite being a main objective of the ministry's strategy, targeting women remains minimal, with most courses and general infrastructures still not accommodating nor attracting women.

Steps undertaken

Involving stakeholders

A situation analysis was conducted, in the first quarter of 2009, across three governorates in Yemen (Aden, Sana'a, and Taizz) with interviews held with over 100 MoTEVT stakeholders and 100 TVET students. Subsequently, a policy brief was developed, outlining the main policy recommendations for the integration of women in TVET in Yemen. The results and recommendations of the situation analysis were presented and discussed with key stakeholders, including workers' and employers' organizations, national women's machinery, gender advocates, along with NGOs involved in skills training, at a policy round table at MoTEVT in July 2009.



A key set of recommendations were identified

The situation analysis identified a key set of recommendations for higher and more effective participation of women in TVET institutes. These recommendations were also meant to be an entry-point for ILO intervention in this sector.

Recommendation 1: Change the negative perceptions associated with the TVET system to encourage more participation of young women by launching a media awareness campaign featuring both young men and women; launching a school campaign that attracts young schoolgirls to TVET institutes, and; improving the TVET promotional materials by avoiding stereotypes of men in industry and women in traditional crafts.

Recommendation 2: Improve the capacities of

the MoTEVT to better mainstream gender equality issues in its policies and programmes through: strengthening its Women Training Department to mainstream gender issues in their work and policies; strengthening a gender sensitive Monitoring and Evaluation system in the MoTEVT and improving qualitative and quantitative data on young women graduates.

Recommendation 3: Improve the relevance and efficiency of the TVET system in Yemen for young women through: creating an appropriate infrastructure for young women to enter the TVET institutes; strengthening the current TVET curricula with training in Life Skills and: strengthening the current TVET curricula and system with training in Basic Business and Self Employment skills.

Tripartite committee established

Out of these policy roundtable discussions, a tripartite Technical Committee was established. Committee members were recruited from MoSAL, MoTEVT, Yemeni Women's Unit, General Federation of Trade Unions, Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Business Women Committee), and relevant NGOs. The committee members were selected from among staff of TVET institutions with a mandate on promoting young women's entry in the labour market, as well as individual professional expertise in gender equality and/or TVET development in Yemen. The committee's mandate was to provide insights to promoting young women to enter the labour market. Furthermore, the committee were to contextualize the TVET training materials to ensure their relevance in the Yemeni context, and take a leading role in the planning and effective delivery of the pilot initiative.

The technical committee, based on their discussions, selected two areas to target with bespoke interventions:

- 1) TVET institutions' administrators' understanding and engagement with admissions procedures.
- 2) Campaigns targeted at parents and the wider society, making the field of TVET a more accessible, attractive, and acceptable education option for young women.

Gender mainstreaming in admissions procedures

The subsequent work focused on the development of a gender mainstreaming training manual, targeting curricula developers/planners and heads of TVET institutions (August-October 2009). The training manual addresses issues including using the media as a tool to promote young women, and emphasizing entrepreneurship as an option for young graduates breaking into the labour market. The training manual also dealt with accessing donors and key stakeholders in TVET development in order to devise strategies and projects promoting TVET for young women.

The Training manual was used in a workshop in November 2009, gathering 25 institutional stakeholders, including MoTEVT staff (curricula department, women departments and planning and curricula departments), Heads of Vocational Training Courses, trade union and employer organization focal points, and directorate general of women workers. Participants were also selected from 3 governorates (Aden, Taizz and Sana'a). The participants were trained in approaches on how to better promote and integrate young women in TVET institutions.

Box 2: Objectives of the media campaign

- Promote TVET as suitable for women and change perceptions of TVET associated with manual labour and male oriented fields;
- Promote non-traditional specializations (i.e. graphic and interior design, IT, architecture) for young women;
- Reach out to parents to encourage them to allow their daughters' training in these fields;
- Promote entrepreneurship in TVET and highlight its importance for young women.

Media campaign for changing perceptions and attitudes

The Media Campaign took place between March and June 2010, in coordination with MoTEVT. The ILO produced six TV spots and a 30 minute documentary film. The TV spots were aired on Yemeni TV seven times in June 2010 and continue to be aired. The documentary film was used in school campaigns across Yemen, and aims to sensitize parents and the wider society on the opportunities and benefits of TVET, and its relevance for young men and women alike.

Assessment of impact and development of TVET strategy

During this pilot initiative, significant efforts have been made to improve the accessibility of TVET for young women to enter the Yemeni labour market. The goal is to see an increase in numbers of women entering TVET institutions and an increase in the number of women graduates from TVET institutions finding jobs or starting their own businesses. Toward that end a number of areas need attention from existing TVET donors and key TVET providers, governmental and non-governmental, in the country.

Assessing the impact to inform future delivery

- The impact and consequence of the training sessions conducted need to be investigated and measured. Questions that need to be answered by MoTEVT are:
 - How much of the learning have TVET administrators implemented post-training?
 - How can the TVET administrators be best supported to implement their learning?
- The media campaign is an important tool, however small in scale. Regarding such campaigns, some questions that need to be answered include:
- What is the impact of the media campaign and how can the impact be best tracked and measured?
- How can the media campaign form a part of a media strategy for MoTEVT Girls' Education Department?



Capacity needs to be built

- Capacity-build TVET administrators to be able to implement measures to make admissions procedures more conducive to women's enrolment in TVET institutions.
- TVET staff needs skills training in donor-relations including proposal writing and results-based budgeting as well as further training on business communication and developing a sense of professional initiative as part of communication.
- A focus on entrepreneurship at all levels of TVET and relations with business incubators need to be fostered, including a stronger focus on accessing the labour market for TVET graduates at all levels of TVET delivery.

Up-scaling and strategies for real impact

- The pilot needs to be scaled up and expanded in order to have a real impact on actual numbers of women entering TVET institutions and accessing labour markets.
- Based on the above factors, a larger girls' education strategy needs to be devised involving all relevant government and non-government actors.

August 2011

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