

GOOD PRACTICES, REPLICATION STEPS AND WAY FORWARD

Recognition of Prior Learning- Certification for self-learned skills



In developing countries such as Bangladesh, where the majority of jobs lie in the informal sector, most people acquire skills and knowledge through informal jobs or they inherit skills which has been traditionally practicing for a generations such as carpentry, iron work etc. This means that people have no formal recognition for what they can do. This is a challenge if they need recognition of their skills to find jobs in or outside the country.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) gives credit for competencies gained through previous learning, other training, and work or life experience as part of skills assessment. It formally recognizes the skills and knowledge that a person already possesses against competencies in the National Training and Vocational Qualifications Framework (NTVQF).

ILO's Canadian-funded Bangladesh Skills for Employment and Productivity (B-SEP) project has supported the Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB) to certify 2,500 workers, including migrant workers, through RPL. This publication looks at the steps taken so far, how the initiative can be scaled up and the steps to be taken to ensure sustainability.

According to the NSDP Action Plan- For major expansion of RPL during five year period (2017-2021), 80,000 persons (including migrant workers) will be certified through RPL system.



What has been done so far?

Earlier ILO skills reform efforts, supported by the European Union, established an RPL system as part of the National Skills Development Policy (NSDP) 2011. Once RPL was incorporated into the NSDP 2011, a quality assurance manual was developed to ensure assessment and certification of the skilled workers. A number of occupations were selected for piloting the RPL system at 20 assessment centres which were established in five districts across Bangladesh.

With support from the B-SEP project the Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB) developed an RPL Operational Guideline to guide Registered Training Organizations (RTO) in understanding necessary procedures to carry out RPL. Assessment can only be conducted by Registered Assessors who have completed training on skills assessment and certified by BTEB. This operational guide is on the BTEB website in both English and Bangla as a reference for Registered Training Organizations.

The project trained a number of TVET providers and professionals on RPL implementation process.

B-SEP project has supported 25 RTOs to operate RPL as guided by BTEB. By June 2018, 2,500 people became qualified through RPL from these institutions. As a result of project's support in developing BTEB's capacity, it issued the NTVQF certificates to more than 10,000 existing skilled workers, through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) method. This is a significant achievement for BTEB in terms expanding the NTVQF system both vertically (NTVQF levels of qualification) and horizontally (expanding occupations in diverse sectors).

The project has been successful in coordinating with the existing skills projects, such as the World Bank-funded Skills and Training Enhancement Project (STEP), on expansion of RPL.

The project jointly developed a draft version of an RPL action plan for migrant workers with ILO's Migration and Skills programmes.

The large jump in numbers of RTO, certified graduates, trainers and assessors indicate the significantly strengthened capacity of BTEB and the NTVQF Cell, in delivering quality assured market driven skills.

How can this approach be replicated?

The RPL system provides opportunities in helping workers having their skills acknowledged formally. The steps that any TVET Registered Training Organizations (RTO) can take to replicate this model include:



> The institute must first be a BTEB affiliated Registered Training Organization (RTO) to run the RPL process and act as an assessment centre.



> The affiliated RPL assessment centre should advertise through their notice board or local media asking interested and eligible candidates to enlist themselves for RPL. BTEB should develop linkages with websites/social media of other skills and industry organisations such as the National Skills Development Council (NSDC), BMET, Industry Skills Council's (ISC's), Directorate of Technical Education (DTE) and National Coordination Committee for Workers' Education (NCCWE). Any advertisements should actively encourage women and people with disabilities to apply.



> The RPL centre should carry out a primary screening of potential candidates through a short interview to gauge their basic literacy and numeracy levels as well as their skills as specified by BTEB. Once a candidate passes this screening they can then register for RPL assessment. BTEB has the orientation materials for RTOs to conduct orientation session.



> RTO should have trained staff/instructors who completed training on Competency Based Training and Assessment methodology as guided by BTEB.



> RPL centers should make arrangements and/or accommodations for women and people with disabilities in terms of toilets, accessibility etc. In certain cases people with disabilities may require physical assistance while those with vision or speech impairments may need specialized support. Information on making centres accessible to those with disabilities can be found at Directorate of Technical Education(DTE) website.



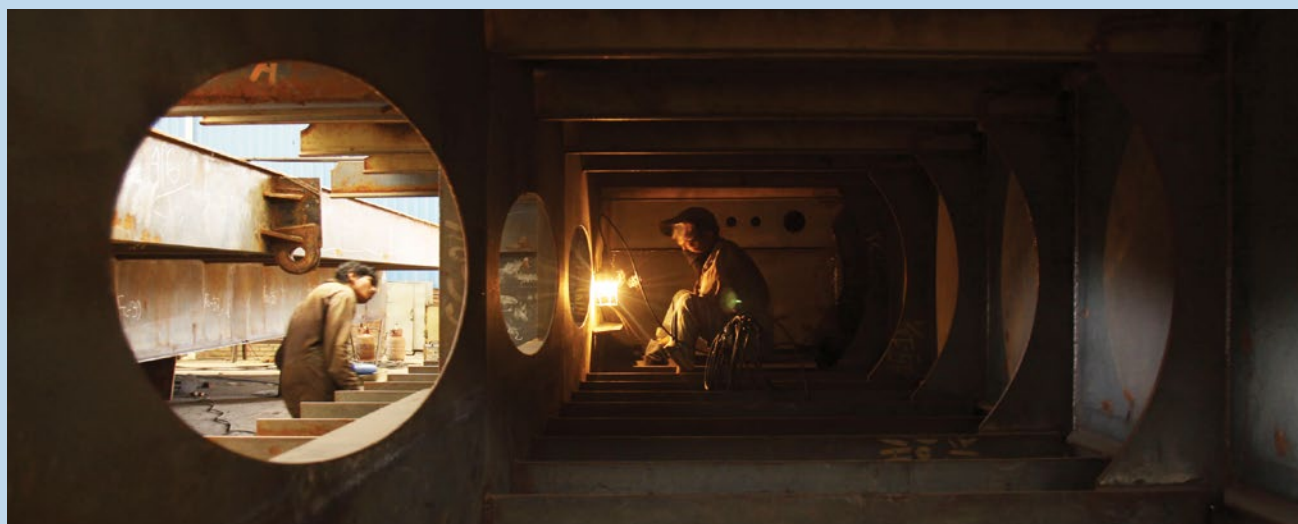
> Each RPL assessment centre should organize a 2-3 day orientation on competency standards, elements and performance criteria, required skills and knowledge and assessment process (dummy assessment is to be demonstrated).



> The RPL assessment centre should notify or contact enlisted candidates directly or through their enterprises/employers, worker associations, informal training providers or NGOs to participate in an orientation session.



> The assessment is to be conducted by the instructor, BTEB representative and industry assessors. After the assessment BTEB will provide a certificate.



What needs to be done for upscaling and sustainability

While RPL offers excellent potential to strengthen the skills system and forge links between institutes and enterprises, a number of challenges still need to be addressed if the system is to be scaled up. The current challenges include the following:



NSDC, BTEB and the departments running skills programme should create awareness among the workers having skills without any formal training, so that they know which RTOs they can be certified at. This would also help workers, employers and TVET providers become more aware of this new certification system. Steps should also be made to engage social partners in efforts to create awareness and make the system accessible to disadvantaged groups such as poor women, persons with disabilities, indigenous youth etc. NSDC should have budget allocation for these awareness activities.



Increase the number of assessment centers, assessors and occupations across the country, especially in remote areas and enhance the capacity of these assessment centers to enable them to comply with the quality assurance system.



NSDC with the support from the concerned government agencies should establish a uniform unit cost for RPL certification. It should also promote cost-sharing and a sustainable, equitable funding mechanism for RPL.



NSDC should establish an effective monitoring and evaluation system, to collect and disseminate information about the impact of RPL. This can sensitize/advocate employers to recruit workers with NTVQF certificates.



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