

SKILLS FOR DECENT EMPLOYMENT

Empowering the youth and marginalized groups at home and abroad with 21st century skills



To achieve Vision 2021 and propel Bangladesh further towards emerging as a strong middle income country, empowering citizens at home and abroad with 21st century skills will be crucial. Inward remittances made by millions of hard working Bangladeshis abroad amounts to USD 12.77 billion (FY2017) – which is 7 times greater than Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). However, since as many as 80% of those migrating abroad are untrained, unfortunately they are only able to secure menial, low paying jobs. This is reflected by the fact that inward remittance per capita is a meagre USD 1,310 – to put this in context, for Philippines, it's USD 4,000; even Nepal boasts a much higher average of USD 3,000 per capita.

Re-inventing the image and branding of Technical and Vocational Education & Training (TVET) to make it more appealing to the youth and catalyzing affirmative action in favor of marginalized and disadvantaged groups thus constitute critical steps that need to be taken forward and completed under the new sustainable development framework.

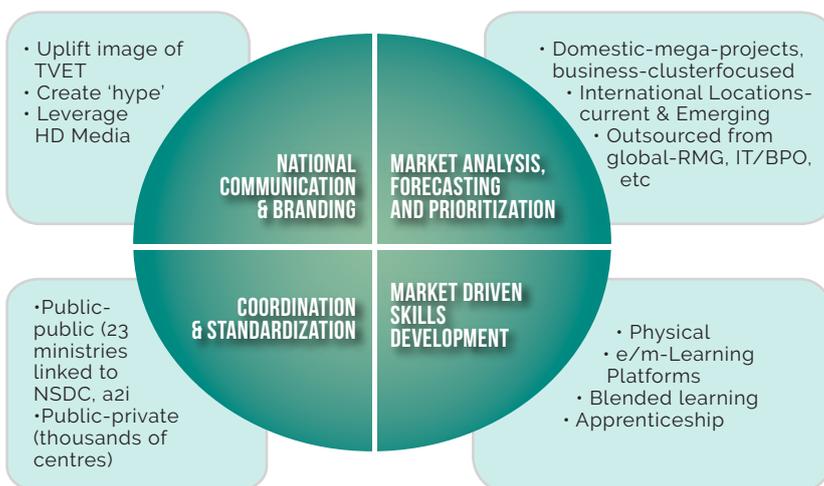
PROLOGUE

a2i's Holistic Strategy

a2i is the key driver from the Prime Minister's Office of the government's public service innovation agenda. Aligned with the importance of skills development in the context of Bangladesh and the high priority accorded to this issue by Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina herself, a2i is working with a whole-of-government approach applying behavior change methodologies and leveraging the rapid expansion of technologies to create an enabling environment for the development of 21st century skills in Bangladesh.

a2i Programme of the Prime Minister's Office is spearheading efforts to **1) Increase remittance per capita, 2) Ensure decent work for everyone**, particularly the youth, migrant workers and disadvantaged groups such as:

- Women and girls
- People with disability
- Ethnic minority communities
- Out-of-school adolescents
- Qawmi madrasah students
- Imams and Muazzins





Market Analysis, Forecasting and Prioritization

According to ILO, Bangladesh's labor force is growing at a rate of 2.2% which means there are 1.8 million new entrants in the labor forces each year. However, only 1.4 million of them are being trained by government operated skills development agencies leaving an unmet need for skilled human resources by both local industries and international markets.

This can be attributed largely to a lack in communication and coordination between employers and skills development agencies. As a result, the rates of youth unemployment (10.9%) and underemployment (18.7%) are creeping up (ILO, 2016).

Thus, a2i is conducting a study jointly with Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (BEZA) for the local market; and with the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment for the international markets to:

- o Analyze demand and prioritize skills development
- o Particularly, with a strategic focus on meeting the demand for skilled workers in mega projects like the construction of the Padma Bridge, Metro Rail, Chittagong Expressway and the expansion of the Export Processing Zones (EPZs), Economic Zones (EZs) and so on.

Market driven skills development

Skills Development Through Apprenticeship Programme

a2i, in partnership with ILO, completed skills development through apprenticeship in informal sectors in 30 Upazillas with 600 informal industries and 1200 rural youths are employed. Into its second phase, the apprenticeship program has started in 1000 informal industries in 50 Upazillas and 100 formal industries countrywide:

- o After graduating, the participants receive internationally recognized National Technical and Vocational Qualifications Framework (NTVQF)'s Pre-Vocational Level 1 and NTVQF Pre-Vocational Level 2 certificates from Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB) and Apprenticeship Certificates from the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET).
- o Important trades include: Electrical House Wiring, Welding, Glass and Mirror Fitting, Masonry Works, Carpentry, Wood Carving, Lacquer Polishing, Mobile Phone Servicing, Motor Cycle Servicing, Painting, Plumbing, Tailoring and Dress Making, Tiles Fitting and Steel Furniture Fabrication.

Skills for Employment Programme on Readymade Garments (RMG)

a2i, with the support from the Skills for Employment Investment Programme (SEIP) of the Finance Division and Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), has started two 2-month long skills development programs. One for creating mid-level managers and the other for knit or woven machine operators. The target group of the programs includes youths from ethnic minorities of the plains. After successful completion of the training, the participants are placed in decent jobs in the garment industry under BGMEA.

This program is creating extensive employment opportunities for the unemployed youths in rural communities.

Empowering Millions of Orphaned Youths with Skills to Transform Their Own Lives

a2i designed an intervention to potentially revolutionize the mindset of youths in the Qawmi madrasa system in Bangladesh. The situation at present is one where millions of orphaned and under-privileged youths under the madrasa system are exposed to a curriculum that does little to impart useful education and knowledge. The result is they end up learning some Arabic; that's all.

a2i and the Qawmi Madrasa Education Board 'Iqra' signed an MoU to empower hundreds of thousands of youths to turn around their lives through skills development and job placement. They are receiving at least one skill that is in great demand in local and foreign markets alongside their traditional curriculum.

Imam Portal: Collaboration Hub for Imams and Muazzins

In Bangladesh, Imams and Muazzins earn very little as monthly salary. Imam Portal (ইমাম. বাংলা) has thus been developed to bring all Imams and Muazzins of Bangladesh under a common platform. The objective of this portal is to:

- Ensure collaboration and co-creation among Imams and Muazzins;
- Provide proper explanation of Islamic texts and prevent misleading information about Islam;
- Provide necessary information about income generating skills so that Imams and Muazzins can register themselves in different trades, increase their earnings and uplift their position in society

Income Generating Skills Development through Stipend Project

a2i in collaboration with Higher Secondary Stipend Project (HSSP) of Ministry of Education has undertaken an initiative to integrate income generating skills with the stipends that higher secondary students receive. Important trades include: Refrigeration and Air conditioning, Electronics, Embroidery and Nokshi Kantha, Motor Mechanic, Graphics Design and Multimedia, Tour Guide, Photography, Sweet Making, Mobile Servicing, Block Boutique and Screen Printing and Beautification. The objective of this initiative is to create avenues for income generation for the students alongside their education and to reduce drop out.

Women Empowerment through Skills Development

a2i has launched a project with the SME Foundation and Bangladesh Women in Technology (BWIT) with financial support from the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA). The target of this project was to create 3,000 woman entrepreneurs from 64 Districts. The trades include Graphics and Web Design.

Tourism and Hospitality Management Programme

Bangladesh boasts unique natural beauty, places of historical significance and several UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Proper branding and presentation of these assets is not happening due to the lack of skilled and efficient tour guides. Thus, a2i in collaboration with District Administration and Technical School & College is creating tour guides in Bandarban, Moulvibazar and Satkhira Districts as a pilot. a2i also partnering with Industry Skills Council for Tourism and Hospitality to create 4,000 youths skilled in Tourism and Hospitality Management.

Skills Training Access in General Education (STAGE)

a2i established a partnership with BRAC to provide Skills Training Access in General Education (STAGE). Under this STAGE Project, NTVQF qualifications are integrated in SSC/Dakhil curriculum. Now, students of class IX are getting additional technical and vocational skills alongside their general education.

Strategic Coordination & Standardization

There are 28 departments under 23 ministries directly involved in skills development or TVET. The National Skills Development Council (NSDC), led by the Honorable Prime Minister, has been founded to coordinate and accelerate the skills development initiatives to make a bridge between different organizations engaged in skills development and employment generation. a2i is supporting NSDC to:

- Bring together all players from across the ecosystem
- Drive the dialogue by discussing key issues, challenges and opportunities
- Moreover, a2i and NSDC are jointly developing a 'Skills & Employment' dashboard to coordinate and monitor all the skills development initiatives of the country.

National Communication & Branding

Re-inventing the Image and Branding of TVET in Bangladesh by Leveraging a2i's Human Development Media (HD Media) Initiative

TVET has a stigma associated with it in Bangladesh. It is widely perceived as a poor alternative for students who are unable to "make it" or, achieve success through mainstream education.

a2i is developing a 360 degree Human Development Media platform leveraging both new and traditional media to not just "uplift" the image of TVET but actively engage the youth and guiding them to see it in a whole new light – as an appealing avenue that can lead to exciting opportunities, success, prosperity and most importantly, dignity and recognition.

Dhaka Summit on Skills, Employability and Decent Work 2016

a2i co-organized the 'Dhaka Summit on Skills, Employability and Decent Work 2016' held from 11-13th December 2016 with Ministry of Labor and Employment (MoLE), Bangladesh Employers' Federation (BEF) and National Coordination Committee for Workers Education (NCCWE). Considering the importance of skills development in the context of Bangladesh and the high priority accorded to skills by the government, private sector and development partners, the summit had an overarching skills agenda geared towards the promotion of decent work. Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the three-days long Summit at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium in Dhaka.

International Conference on Skills for the Future World of Work and TVET for Global Competitiveness 2017

a2i is co-organizing the 'International Conference on Skills for the Future World of Work and TVET for Global Competitiveness 2017', to be held from 27-29th July along with the Institution of Diploma Engineers, Bangladesh (IDEB) and Colombo Plan Staff College, Philippines (CPSC). Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has kindly consented to inaugurate the conference and to be present in the inaugural session as Chief Guest.





Way Forward

In the last 8 years, the boldness of vision embodied by the dynamic leadership of Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, established a new development paradigm in Bangladesh. The country is progressing towards becoming a strong middle income country but, more importantly, by human development indicators, it has already achieved a level of development commonly predicted for twice its per capita income.

However, today's globalized economy is undergoing major changes. To harvest the demographic dividend that the country is poised for and consolidate the gains of Bangladesh's development miracle, a2i will continue its strategic interventions to deepen understanding of this transformation and its implications for empowering citizens - particularly the youth, ethnic minorities and those working abroad - with 21st century skills, formulate supportive policies and initiate strategic efforts to achieve SDG 8 - decent work for all.

A2I'S SKILLS FOR DECENT EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE AT A GLANCE

APPRENTICESHIP IN **40** TRADES
100+ FORMAL INDUSTRIES
1600+ INFORMAL INDUSTRIES

5,000+ APPRENTICES

10,000+ QAWMI MADRASAH STUDENTS RECEIVING SKILLS

4,000+ YOUTHS RECEIVING SKILLS ON TOURISM & HOSPITALITY

2,00,000+ IMAMS & MUAZZINS IN IMAM PORTAL

1,500 HIGHER SECONDARY STUDENTS RECEIVING INCOME GENERATING SKILLS

1,000+ JOB PLACEMENT IN RMG

3,000 RURAL WOMEN RECEIVED SKILLS



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