EX-POST EVALUATION: "ENHANCED SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND QUALIFICATION RECOGNITION OF LABOUR MIGRANTS FROM BANGLADESH"

IOM UN MIGRATION

This evaluation brief is a summary of the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations, as identified by the evaluator for use by internal stakeholders (e.g. IOM Bangladesh, IOM Development Fund) and external partners (e.g. Government stakeholders, development partners). The full evaluation report is available upon request.

Evaluation type:	Internal Independent Evaluation
Evaluator(s):	*Reiko Matsuyama*, Regional Project Development Officer, IOM Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
Evaluation visit:	*9-13 September 2018*
Final Report Date:	27 November 2018
Commissioned by:	IOM Mission in Bangladesh
Managed by:	Sajjad Ahmed, Project Officer

Evaluation purpose: The main objectives of the evaluation were: To assess pertinent relevance of the skills development and qualification recognition of labour migrants originating from Bangladesh to the national strategies and priorities, SDGs, and IOM's mandates; To assess the extent to which the project achieved its stated objectives and results, and what factors contributed to the changes; To determine the value for money; To assess to what extent the project's results will be used by Government counterparts and benefiting migrants; and To establish key lessons learnt, and provide clear, specific and implementable recommendations to inform similar interventions in the future.

Evaluation criteria: Relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and partnerships. Human rights and gender equality were mainstreamed into each criterion, as relevant

Evaluation methodology: Document review, semi-structured key informant interviews, and online survey.

PROJECT SUMMARY

The Context

With a population of over 160 million, 50 million people remaining in poverty, a youth unemployment rate of 9.4%, and an estimated two million people entering the labour market annually, Bangladesh relies heavily on international labour migration as a strategy for livelihood and national development. On average, half a million Bangladeshi migrants leave to work each year in countries of the Gulf States, and to a lesser extent, South East Asia, joining an estimated stock of 12 million Bangladeshis already working overseas. However Bangladeshi migrant workers earn relatively less than their counterparts from other countries, due to lack of skills development and certification. This is exacerbated by high costs of migration and vulnerability to exploitation.

Recognizing the need to address skills development and recognition of qualifications of labour migrants, the Government of Bangladesh adopted the **National Skills Development Policy (NSDP)** in 2011, with Chapter 18 on "Skills Development for Overseas Employment" explicitly addressing the issue of migration.

The IOM Project

In 2015, IOM Bangladesh initiated the project **"Enhanced Skills Development and Qualification Recognition of Labour Migrants from Bangladesh"** with the aim to

Project Information

Geographical coverage:	Bangladesh
Project type:	Labour Migration
Project code:	LM.0290
Project period:	1 Dec 2015 – 31 Jan 2018
Donor:	IOM Development Fund (IDF)
Budget:	USD 200,000

contribute to improving migration outcomes through a more effective skills development system for overseas employment in Bangladesh. There were three expected outcomes:

1) The Ministry of Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment (MoEWOE) effectively coordinates the implementation of NSDP Chapter 18 through its line agencies and training centres;
2) Labour migrants increasingly take advantage of tailored services of the National Skills Development System; and
3) National Skills Development System is more responsive to the demand of overseas labour markets.

To achieve the above, the project, in close cooperation with key Government partners namely the MoWOE, Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET), National Skills Development Council (NSDC), and Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB), among others, promoted the development and adoption of an comprehensive **Action Plan** for NSDP Chapter 18 implementation.

KEY FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

RELEVANCE was extremely high.

- The conceptualisation of the project emanated from an identified need in the implementation of the NSDP, and was also aligned with other national policies, regional consultative processes, IOM mandate and strategies, and global commitments.

- While direct consultations with migrants and affected communities were limited, the project nevertheless reflected their needs via extensive consultations with stakeholders.

- Most importantly, the project was highly responsive to stakeholder inputs and guidance.

EFFECTIVENESS was mixed.

- The project contributed significantly towards strengthening the implementation of the NSDP through provision of **evidence**, an **Action Plan, communication tools** and a **coordination mechanism.** However, utilization of skills development services by migrants did not increase as expected, and achievements towards making the National Skills Development System more responsive to the demands of overseas labour markets, was moderate.

- Subsequently, the project provided significant benefits to Government counterparts (outcomes 1 and 3), but limited benefits to individual migrants and technical training providers (outcome 2).

- Gender concerns were not adequately taken into consideration, as most deliverables focused on the male-dominated construction sector.

EFFICIENCY was good, with some room for improvement.

- All project outputs were delivered within budget, and all resources were available at planned cost to implement the project activities. However, the initial 5-months implementation delay negatively impacted on activities, leading to non- or partial achievement of results under outcomes 2 and 3.

- The project managed to undertake numerous activities and produce outputs, in a professional and consultative manner with relatively modest funding (USD 200,000), which suggests a degree of "value for money".

SUSTAINABILITY: There are strong indications that the benefits of the primary project deliverable, the BMET Action Plan, and corresponding implementation mechanisms, will be sustained.

- Due to IOM consultations and awareness raising efforts, there is evidence of stakeholders initiating interventions related to skills development of migrant workers. IOM itself was successful in obtaining funding for a follow-up project in 2017 to support BMET on overseas market information and strengthening recognition of prior learning for migrant workers.

PARTNERSHIPS: A key success factor of the project was its focus on partnerships.

- The strategic partnerships nurtured throughout project implementation not only deterred possible duplication (efficiency), but also ensured alignment to stakeholder priorities (relevance), enhanced the quality of the results achieved (effectiveness), and ultimately increased ownership and self-mobilisation by other actors (sustainability).

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Follow-On Interventions**: Recommendations include further dissemination and use of project outputs (i.e. evidence, implementation and monitoring framework, communication tools and coordination mechanisms), institutionalizing collection of comprehensive data on migration trends/dynamics, and raising awareness among migrants on the importance of vocational training and certification for overseas employment.

- **Gender:** It is strongly recommended that similar studies and interventions in the future focus on female-dominated sectors and/or focus on gender dynamics related to skills development and migration. Initial interventions may include providing evidence and case studies (e.g. domestic work, Ready Made Garment, hospitality), raising awareness among Government and other service providers, and ensuring relevant and effective interventions are in place.

- **IOM Niche:** It is recommended that IOM's added value and niche in the area of skills development in Bangladesh be clarified. Some recommendations include strengthening linkages with migration governance, Regional Consultative Processes, ethical recruitment and counter trafficking.

- **Stakeholder Engagement and Consultations:** From the beginning of the project, IOM solicited inputs and guidance from key stakeholders, primarily Governmental counterparts to strengthen understanding and solicit recommendations, which were used to revise project activities and implementation approach. In addition, the project was highly successful in engaging with stakeholders and establishing strategic partnerships throughout project implementation. Particularly in this type of project where results are contingent on changes (behavior and performance) at the stakeholder level, the focus on stakeholder engagement and consultations was a good practice to be taken forward.