



uttoron
Skills for better life

final report

phase-I (2016-2019)



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acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank	MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
BPI	Bangladesh Partnership Initiative	SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
BTTDC	Bangladesh Technical Training & Development Centre	SEIP	Skills for Employment Investment Program
BTEB	Bangladesh Technical Education Board	TMSS	Thengamara Mohila Sabuj Sangha
CEC	Continuing Education Centre	ToT	Traning of Trainers
IDE-JETRO	Institute of Developing Economics Japan External Trade Organization	TSPs	Training Service Providers
IDEA	Institute of Development Affairs	TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
INGO	International Non-Government Organization	UCEP	Underprivileged Children's Educational Programs
MRM	Monitoring and Results Measurement		



| about chevron

Chevron is one of the world's leading integrated energy companies, involved in virtually every facet of the energy industry. Through Chevron subsidiaries in Bangladesh, the company operates three fields in the northeast of the country - Bibiyana; Jalalabad and Moulvi Bazar- under production-sharing contracts with the Government of Bangladesh, represented by Energy and Mineral Resources Division under the Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources. Chevron is the largest producer of natural gas accounting for over 55% of total domestic production of natural gas. We also produce about 85% of the domestic condensate from its facilities.

Chevron is working on projects to harness the country's homegrown resources for its future energy security. For all our operations, we strive to demonstrate our commitment to safety and environmental stewardship, which are among Chevron's core values. Innovative technology plays a key role in helping us deliver affordable, reliable energy that fuels human progress and economic growth. The technologies we deploy not only help us cost effectively find and commercialize new oil and gas fields, but also help us recover more resources from existing fields.

Corporate Social Responsibility is a core value of Chevron's global business practice. In Bangladesh Chevron has been sponsoring social investment programs since 2006. Our community development initiatives focus on economic development, education, and health.



| about swisscontact

Swisscontact, founded in 1959 as a Swiss private and independent operating foundation based in Zurich, works exclusively in international cooperation and development. It has maintained close ties with the private sector since its inception. With the support from various international donors, Swisscontact is currently implementing over 100 projects in 36 countries across the globe. In Bangladesh, Swisscontact is registered as an international non-governmental organization (INGO) under the NGO Affairs Bureau, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Swisscontact promotes economic, social, and environmental development by supporting people in their efforts to integrate into local economic life. Swisscontact acts as facilitators in project implementation by supporting the creation of an entrepreneurial environment and access to information, skills, and markets. Swisscontact implements its own as well as mandated projects in the following core areas:

- **Skills Development:** Productive employment and earning an income through market-oriented vocational training and improved labor market access.
- **Enterprise Promotion:** Strengthening productivity and competitiveness of small and medium sized enterprises through sustainable value chain interventions, improved market access and local economic development.
- **Inclusive Finance:** Empowering entrepreneurially minded people by improving their access to financial products, services and financial literacy trainings.
- **Climate-Smart Economy:** Creating green jobs through the efficient use of natural resources and clean production.



| about uttonon

Uttoron- skills for better life was a three-year (2016-2019) skills development project, funded by Chevron under Bangladesh Partnership Initiative (BPI) and implemented by Swisscontact. The goal of Uttoron was to support 1,400 youths from three north-eastern districts of Bangladesh (Sylhet, Moulvi Bazar and Habiganj) by providing training on industry demanded skills and positioning them for new or improved employment opportunities.

To achieve the goal, Uttoron has raised awareness of the community members on the benefits of participating in skills training. With Uttoron's support, interested community youths received training on technical skills as well as relevant soft skills. A combination of these trainings has prepared the community members for jobs in regional and national industries or to start their own businesses. A portion of the target beneficiaries was supported in their acquisition of higher skill set and gain access to formal trainings offered by 'Skills for Employment Investment Program (SEIP)'. SEIP is being implemented by Ministry of Finance, Government of Bangladesh and funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). Uttoron's inclusive approach focused on suitable employment opportunities has encouraged women and minority (ethnic or religious) community members to participate.

Uttoron Final Report: Uttoron has completed its phase-I journey on July 2019. This final report contains the key achievements, approaches, innovations, success factors and lessons learned from phase-I. Some selected life changing stories of the beneficiaries have also been included in this report.



“Now I can finally contribute to my mother’s healthcare expenses, something I have been meaning to do for a long time”

Fahima Begum

Assistant Machine Operator
Pran-RFL Group
Digholbak, Nabiganj, Habiganj

Fahima lost her father when she was just a little girl. In a family of seven, Fahima is the middle child. As long as she can remember, her mother has always been ill and it was all her siblings who looked after each other and the necessities of the household. Fahima is a History honours student at Moulvi Bazar Government College. She always stayed at home and sometimes tutored school students, but the pay was insufficient and irregular. She was looking for better work opportunities when she came across the training prospect by Uttoron project. After completing her training as a machinist at

the TMSS Habiganj training center, Fahima was promptly employed at the Pran-RFL Group. Instead of staying at home, she is now working, earning and supporting herself and others. “Now I can finally contribute to my mother’s healthcare expenses, something I have been meaning to do for a long time. I am thankful to Swisscontact and Chevron for this excellent initiative and paving a pathway for unemployed people like me. Everyone I know is happy for me. I want to finish my graduation soon and hope to progress with my work experience.”

| key achievements



Approx.
53,000 community members reached through
awareness campaign



Over
1,300 youths received
motivational training



Over
1,400 youths enrolled in
skills training



female
21%



<1% rate of
dropout



Over

1,400 trainees
completed training



female
21%



Over

950 graduates obtained
employment



trainees were trained in

8 different trades

“I picked up
work at the
company
must faster
than my
co-workers
who had
no training”



Giaul Islam

Machine Operator, Pran-RFL
Bagha, Gopalganj, Sylhet

Like any other unemployed young man, Giaul was looking for a job. The eight members of his family were all looking towards him to get a job and run the family. But where were the jobs? He had applied to many places but in vain. Then one day he saw a banner about the Chevron-supported Uttoron project – a chance for free training. He wasted no time in coming to the UCEP training institute in Sylhet. The two-day motivational class filled him with hope. He chose to take the electrical trade course. Within two months of completing the training, he got a job

earning a monthly wage of BDT 8,300 as a machine operator at Pran-RFL Group. Speaking about his work experience, Ziaul says, “When I joined this training course, I realised that there is a much higher demand for technical education than conventional education. I picked up work at the company much faster than my co-workers who had no training. The Chevron-supported Uttoron project brought me to this stage in such a short span of time and at no cost. I wouldn’t have had to face the pains of unemployment if I had taken this training earlier.”

| approach



facilitating role

To ensure sustainability, Uttoron project played a facilitative role by developing capacity of the local training centers for delivering industry demanded quality skills training. Uttoron's facilitative approach has linked the Training Service Providers (TSPs) with potential employers assisting job placement of the graduates within a short period of time. The partner TSPs have successfully placed 70% of the graduates in jobs within 3 months from their training completion.

customization

Preparing the youths to meet the skills demand of the industries was the priority of Uttoron project. To ensure this, Uttoron project has customized the curricula and the training in reference to the available curricula from Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB), BSkillFUL, Sudokkho and SEIP projects, according to the need of the relevant industries. For instance, a blended training course on 'electrical & electronics' was designed to meet the skills demand of the modern industries. The customization has resulted in increased job placement performance and satisfaction of the employers.



কম্পিউন্সি বেইসড লার্নিং ম্যাটেরিয়ালস (সিবিএলএম)



contextualization & adaptation

Keeping in mind the sociocultural characteristics of the targeted communities, Uttoron has contextualized and adapted its implementation strategy. For instance, use of Sylheti dialect in communication materials in awareness campaigns has been proven to be useful to boost interest of the community about skills training. Organizing the registration camps at the local union parishad complex resulted in strong participation of the community youths.

stakeholders engagement

The rigorous effort of Uttoron to involve its stakeholders, including community members, TSPs, partners, and relevant government authorities in every step of the project has allowed Uttoron to have them as advocates of the project and generated a sense of ownership towards the project among the stakeholders. Involvement of stakeholders has helped to achieve greater visibility and credibility of Uttoron at regional as well as national level and made the project implementation smoother.





encouraging women into technical trades

Uttoron's inclusive approach encouraged women to participate in skills training. Uttoron's female participation rate (21%) is higher than the national average (9-13%, source: ILO Fact sheet) in public TVET institutions. Uttoron has continuously worked towards breaking the stereotype of women being unable to do technical work by motivating women to enroll in technical training, making the training courses women-friendly and placing female graduates into suitable jobs. Uttoron's strategies to encourage women into technical training includes:



01 selection of trades suitable for women

During market assessment, strong emphasis was placed on identifying the preferences, needs and challenges of women enrolling in skills training and entering employment. Trades for women were selected taking these factors into consideration.



02 targeted approach to reach women during awareness campaign

To encourage women to enroll in skills training, various targeted approaches such as courtyard meetings, consultation sessions with guardians, documentary drama shows etc. were used during the awareness campaign. Stories of successful female graduates from the community inspired the women to enroll in skills training. Uttoron project team also relaxed the selection criteria, where necessary to incentivize women to participate.



03 ensuring women friendly training environment

To increase female participation and retention in skills training, Uttoron has supported the partner training providers to offer training courses during both morning and afternoon shifts and ensure separate washroom facilities for women.

“I am trying
to earn well
and help my
family”



Metaly Rani Das

Machine Operator
JIC Suits Ltd.
Inathganj, Nabiganj, Habiganj

After failing the secondary school exams, Metaly was despondent and depressed. Her father tried to get her to take the exam again, but she refused. She imagined herself to be useless, a burden to her poverty-stricken family. It was then that she had the opportunity for a two-month long training in garments machine operation at the TMSS training centre under the Chevron-supported Uttoron project. Not only was this free of

cost, but she received travel costs too as an added incentive to complete the training. Upon completion of her training, Metaly got a job at the JIC Suit Ltd. factory in Aushkandi with help from the project. Metaly says, “The training experience has given me self-confidence. I am trying to earn well and help my family. My family is now proud of me. I shall be ever grateful to Chevron and Uttoron.

| innovation

boot-camp

Boot-camp is one of the key and unique interventions of Uttoron project. The objective of boot-camp is to select youths having the right aspiration for skills training. 2,138 youths attended boot-camp and 1,176 of them were selected for skills training. The multilayered trainee selection process has resulted in exceptionally low (less than 1%) dropouts from training. The process of boot-camp involves three steps-

01 awareness campaigns



The first step comprises of awareness campaigns in the project areas, which aims to inform communities about the opportunities and benefits of skills training. Various types of communication tools are used such as public service announcements, arranging documentary and drama shows, distributing leaflets, displaying posters and banners etc. Uttoron project has reached approximately 53,000 community members through these campaigns.



02 preliminary selection

Four-day long trainee selection camps are organized immediately after the awareness campaigns. Youths appeared in the registration camps are interviewed and primarily selected for two-day long motivational workshops based on their age, educational qualification, financial status etc. Usually, these camps are arranged at the local union parishad complex.



03 motivational workshop

The two-day long motivational workshops are organized for the preliminary selected candidates. The objectives of the motivational workshop are to build self-confidence and enhance motivation of the participants, and at the same time assess their level of aspiration. The workshop comprises of various interactive sessions such as debates, group exercises, individual

assignments, games etc. Based on the results of the motivational workshops, youths having the right aspiration are finally selected for skills training.

recognition of Uttoron's trainee selection approach

Having heard about Uttoron's boot-camp, Institute of Developing Economies, Japan External Trade Organization (IDE-JETRO) conducted a study and found that the boot-camp has had a significant positive effect of on employment and income. IDE-JETRO has published a discussion paper titled **“Does motivation matter in vocational training? Evidence from a natural experiment”** covering the results of their study.

| innovation

digital training content



With the enhancement of digital technology, the mode of teaching and learning has evolved significantly. To enhance effectiveness of skills training, Uttoron project in partnership with REPTO, an online-based digital training platform, has developed and published digital training content on electrical trade. These digital training contents have assisted the instructors of different training centers and helped the graduates from electrical trades to refresh their learnings as and when required. The digital training content titled **“Motor control using DOL starter”** and **“Automatic star delta starter”** are accessible on YouTube.

| partnership



partnership with Government

Uttoron has a unique partnership with ‘Skills for Employment Investment Program (SEIP)’. SEIP is being implemented by Ministry of Finance, Government of Bangladesh and funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). Total 697 youths were selected and supported by Uttoron to receive SEIP training on different trades under Construction and Light Engineering sectors.



partnership with NGO

Uttoron partnered with several NGOs such as Thengamara Mohila Sabuj Sangha (TMSS), Caritas and Institute of Development Affairs (IDEA) for delivery of skills training and organizing awareness raising campaigns in the project areas.



partnership with private sector

Involving private sector actors was at the core of Uttoron. Thus, Uttoron partnered with PRAN-RFL group, one of the largest industries in Bangladesh, for development of industry-demanded curricula, training of the trainers and job placement of the graduates. Uttoron has supported the training centers to establish linkages with large industries which made the transition of graduates from training to jobs much faster. Thus, a total number of 983 graduates were placed in job in different sectors. For the design and delivery of motivational workshop for the trainees, Uttoron has partnered with a private consulting firm called Continue Education Center (CEC).



“Uttoron has helped my family come out of poverty”

Md. Miyar Miah

Welding and Fabrication Fitter
Fresh Plant, Meghna Industrial Park
Kalapur, Srimangal, Moulavibazar

I want to acquire these skills, work and be something in my life. I want to help my family out of poverty,” Miah had said during the motivational class. Miah has kept his word.

After his father died, Miah desperately wanted to help his mother and five siblings to come out of poverty and despair. He had passed the madrasa fazil exams, but couldn't get a job in two years. Then one day over the megaphone in the local market he heard about free technical training being provided by the Chevron-supported Uttoron project. He eagerly registered himself and took training in welding at Caritas, Srimangal training centre.

He then got a job as a welding and fabrication fitter at Fresh plant in Meghna Industrial Park in Sonargaon, not far from Dhaka. He earns a starting monthly wage of BDT 8,000 and there is ample scope for promotion and a raise in his wages. His family's financial troubles have been assuaged to a great extent.

Miah is now confident. He says, “One must pay full attention to the training in order to acquire practical education. Time can't be wasted. One must keep one's eyes on the goal.” He expresses his gratitude to Chevron and Uttoron for giving him this opportunity to change his life, “Uttoron helped my family come out of poverty.



| success factors



right selection of trade, trainee and qualified trainer

The first step of Uttoron was to identify trades having job opportunities and suitability of the targeted beneficiaries for skills training. The selection of market-demanded trades has resulted in job placement of the graduates within a short period of time after graduation. The selected trades for skills training were- plumbing and pipe fitting, tiles and marble works, electrical installation and maintenance, electrical, machinist, welding, electrical and electronics, garment machine operation. Due to selection of trainees having the right aspiration through the multi-layered trainee selection process, the project has achieved exceptionally low drop-out rates (below 1%) and increased motivation of the trainees. Moreover, the involvement of qualified instructors and Training of Trainer (ToT) provided have been proven to be useful to enhance the capacity of teachers and has resulted in better learning outcome of the trainees and greater employability.



ownership of local government authorities and local communities

The meticulous and continuous effort in involving local government representatives at every step has allowed Uttoron to have them as advocates of the project amongst the community. The project engaged local government authorities during planning and execution of interventions, such as awareness campaigns, boot-camps and trainings. This resulted in strong level of ownership among the local government representatives and has made the project implementation smoother.



effective communication and visibility

Uttoron has placed a strong emphasis on communication issues and developed a range of communication materials, such as leaflets, posters, banners, festoons, documentary drama, success story booklet etc. customized according to the target groups. These communication materials have contributed in raising awareness amongst the community members and increasing project visibility. Organizing events both at regional and national level at regular intervals has helped to involve the stakeholders and to earn their buy-in. Moreover, positive media coverage and regular social media updates have also contributed to enhance the visibility and credibility of Uttoron.



effective use of Monitoring and Results Measurement

Uttoron has prioritized on result-based monitoring. Continuous measurement of results and monitoring of project activities were conducted in accordance with the monitoring and results measurement (MRM) guideline of the project. The systematic use of the MRM system has been proven to be beneficial to make informed project decisions and has contributed in the achievement of more cost-effective and efficient results.

Continuous guidance and support from Chevron were crucial to better understand stakeholders' expectations and to take timely and effective initiatives.



“I am grateful to
Uttoron project
for enabling me
to support my
family”



Sharmin Begum

Assistant Operator
Habiganj Industrial Park (RFL)
Khadimpara, Sylhet Sadar, Sylhet

Sharmin is the middle child among her five brothers and sisters. Two of her sisters are married but Sharmin wanted to study further and she did study hard. Her father did various kinds of work as a contractual carpenter, but his earning opportunities dwindled with age. Her father's income fell sharply and Sharmin couldn't attend her high school final exams due to their financial hardship. After that, she registered for training under Uttoron project and successfully completed the two-day motivational workshop. From there, she confidently enrolled in the electrical trade with the intention of financially helping her family, and completed the four-month long training course.

After the training, with the support from the project, she joined Switch Socket Section of PRAN-RFL group at the Habiganj Industrial Park. She has been working there as an Assistant Operator for seven months and earning well. After keeping aside a portion of money for her expenses, Sharmin is able to send home Tk. 5000-6000 every month which is extremely useful for her family's daily expenses. She is currently able to support her family only because of the training she received through Uttoron project. Sharmin says "I am grateful to Uttoron project for enabling me to support my family. I am especially thankful to Chevron for funding the project and to Swisscontact for implementing it."



| **lesson learned and way forward**



safety measures

The training centers and trainees lack awareness and measures to ensure safety during the training. Additional measures need to be taken to ensure that both the training centers and the trainees have awareness, orientation and support which will help to better comply with safety measures and procedures during the training.



job retention

Uttoron has been successful in placing the graduates in gainful employment within a short time. After graduation, however, retaining the graduates in jobs was a challenge. The mid-term evaluation reported that 17% of the employed graduates could not retain their jobs. The main reasons for high turnover included expectations of higher salaries and difficulties such as unwillingness to work far from home, unaccustomed with long working hours, physically demanding work environment etc. To increase job retention rate, graduates need to be oriented in the market reality and work environment.



participation of women in non-traditional trades

Female participation in skills training is substantially low. The rate is even lower for trades perceived as non-traditional for female, such as electrician, machinist etc. It is evident that to ensure greater participation of young women and for them to secure jobs, skills development alone is not enough. It requires a multi-faceted approach, including changing the traditional mindsets of family members through counselling, arranging more rigorous assessment of trades, which will determine suitability for female trainees and ensuring female-friendly working conditions.

“I’m enthusiastic to do more for my family with my earnings”



Jahed Ahmed

Tiles Fitter
Digholbak, Nabiganj, Habiganj

Jahed's father passed away almost a decade ago without leaving behind any inheritance. His old mother worked as a domestic helper to support the family. Jahed, with his minimal education skills, earned a low income as a carpenter in Habiganj. He looked for opportunities and was eager to enhance his technical skills. When he got to know about the Chevron-funded skills training initiative supported by Uttoron project, he appeared at the boot-camp. Later he was selected for the "Tiles and Marble Works" trade. After

completing his training, he went to Dhaka where he earned around Tk. 12,000 per month. He worked in Dhaka for three months and afterwards, with the financial support from his sisters, went to Dubai. He is now abroad to pursue opportunities that will help him achieve his goals. His mother doesn't have to work as a maid anymore, Jahed is able to send money back home to his mother. He has also started to pay back his sisters. Jahed says "I'm enthusiastic to do more for my family with my earnings"





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