

ANNUAL REPORT

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Prepared by: Swisscontact



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list of abbreviations

BPI	Bangladesh Partnership Initiative	MRM	Monitoring and Results Measurement
BTTDC	Bangladesh Technical Training and Development Centre	NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
CBLM	Competency Based Learning Materials	NGOAB	NGO Affairs Bureau
CBT&A	Competency Based Training & Assessment	RMA	Rapid Market Assessment
CEC	Continued Education Centre	TIM	Training Implementation Manual
DC	Deputy Commissioner	ToT	Training of Trainers
EIM	Electrical Installation and Maintenance	ToR	Terms of Reference
Eoi	Expression of Interest	TMSS	Thengamara Mohila Sabuj Shangha
GFO	General Finishing Operation	TSP	Training Service Provider
KII	Key Informant Interview	UNO	Upazilla Nirbahi Officer
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety		

executive summary

Uttoron – skills for better life is a three-year project implemented by Swisscontact and funded by Chevron through their Bangladesh Partnership Initiative (BPI). Uttoron is a prime example of a successful partnership between the private sector and NGOs to make a sustainable impact in the lives of people. The project is providing skills training to develop the human capital of the target population in Sylhet, Moulavibazar, Habiganj and selected locations of Dhaka to increase their income. Our tremendous success in phase I made us ambitious, and we expanded our work by including national-level goals. The three-year-long phase II of the project started in August 2019 with two new components. The objectives of Uttoron phase II in brief are:

- Increase skills and human capital of youths in Dhaka and Sylhet region by imparting industry demand-oriented skills training.
- Establishing a permanent training institute to create easy access to skills training and help improve the life and livelihood of community people where Chevron is working.
- Work collaboratively with government and support them in achieving national youth and skills development objectives.

Component 1 of phase II is focused on providing training on different types of trades. A specific focus of the Uttoron project has always been keeping up with the latest trends and industry demands for skills. With that in mind, the first initiative of the phase II was to conduct a Rapid Market Assessment (RMA) to analyze the skills

demand in the Sylhet region. The study identified seven trades with higher demands among employers and trainees. It also found that there is a dearth of skilled workers in the area of packaging and quality control. Unfortunately, no such training exists in the market that can currently meet the required needs of employers. Hence, Uttoron designed a new trade entitled General Finishing Operation (GFO) for the first time in Bangladesh.

After the trades were selected, Uttoron project partnered with three Training Service Providers (TSPs) namely, UCEP Bangladesh, Thangamara Mohila Sabuj Shangha (TMSS) and Bangladesh Technical Training and Development Centre (BTTDC) in Sylhet, Moulavibazar and Habiganj respectively to provide the training. Uttoron also focused on capacitating the selected TSPs and improving their expertise and knowledge in different tools and techniques that would help them in selecting trainees. Previously the trainee selection process, namely Boot-camp, was organized by Uttoron team, but during this phase, the initial trainee selection task has been delegated to the TSPs. The Uttoron team provided direct technical support for organizing the preliminary selection process and monitored for quality assurance. The first Boot-camp of phase II successfully selected 153 trainees and then the training started on February 15, 2020.

Component 2 includes facilitating the establishment of a sustainable training centre near Bibiyana. BTTDC was selected through a competitive process for this component and an agreement was signed with them on January 22, 2020. Unfortunately, the partnership

with BTTDC had to be cancelled for non-compliance issues. The process of identifying a replacement of BTTDC is on-going. However, some of the preparatory work of Component 2 has already been completed. The primary draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for the governing body structure has been developed. Besides, the team has already completed the investment plan for building the training centre.

Component 3 of the project entails upgrading a government TSP and introducing an advanced welding training course in Bangladesh. This component will initiate a partnership with the government to contribute to national goals related to youth and skills development.

The team has done an initial assessment of several government TSPs for potential partnership. Institutes outside of Dhaka will also be assessed for this purpose. Chevron proposed to review the feasibility of providing health training instead of welding. However, after extensive field analysis it was clear that health training cannot be an option given the time frame and budget of the project.

The pandemic situation has hampered normal pace of project activity. The Uttoron team is monitoring the situation and taking all necessary preparation to regain the momentum that persisted during pre-COVID-19 pandemic.

introduction

Uttoron-Skills for better life is a skills development project, funded by Chevron under Bangladesh Partnership Initiative (BPI) and implemented by Swisscontact.

The project supports the youth by providing training on trades which are currently in demand in the industry and facilitate job placement for the training participants. The first phase of the project started in 2016 and ended in 2019. During the first phase, more than 1,400 community youths in Sylhet division were trained in seven different

trades, and upon finishing the training, 70% of the trainees achieved gainful employment. To continue the development momentum of the first phase of Uttoron, Chevron extended the project for three years (2019-2022). In phase II, the project will be working in three districts of Sylhet division (Sylhet, Habiganj, Moulavibazar) and North and South City Corporation of Dhaka.

Phase I of Uttoron had only one component, But, this phase has incorporated two new components.

Objectives

Component 1:

Skills training for community youths



To support community youths from the selected areas within Sylhet division in securing gainful employment by equipping them with market-demanded skills

Component 2:

Facilitate establishment of a sustainable training centre near Bibiyana



To facilitate establishment of a skills training centre for the community youth around Bibiyana with an aim that the centre will run beyond the project period

Component 3:

Upgradation of a welding training institute



To support upgrading a national level training institute to offer training in advanced welding skill

accomplishments

Continuing the momentum: launch of Uttoron phase II

On the launching event, Uttoron project showcased the success of phase I. A total of 120 representative from public, private and development sector attended the event. Among other dignitaries, US Ambassador to Bangladesh- H.E. Earl R. Miller attended the event as guest of honor.

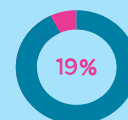
The news of the event was covered by the Dhaka Tribune*. A web news was published on Swisscontact website*.

Other accomplishments

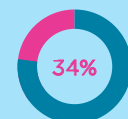
- Introducing a new trade for the first time in Bangladesh entitled General Finishing Operation (GFO).
- Curriculums for different trades were reviewed, adjusted, updated and finalized after consultation with experts.
- Training Implementation Manual for the TSPs has been improved and updated to ensure the quality of the training.
- A two-day curriculum review and development workshop was organized with industry experts to incorporate industry needs and demands in the exiting curriculums for selected trades.

Awareness campaign and Boot-camp

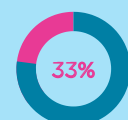
The first round of awareness campaign and Boot-camp for phase II has been conducted in January 2020 in Sylhet and Habiganj districts.



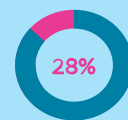
The awareness campaign reached ~18,000 community members (19% female)



A total of 445 applicants (34% female) appeared for registration



After the initial screening process using the project criteria, 214 youths (33% female) were primarily selected, to attend the two-day long pre-training motivational workshop



A total of 167 youths (28% female) participated in the motivational workshops



After the motivational workshop, 153 youths were selected to participate in the three months long training on EIM and GFO

* News of the launch event on [Dhaka Tribune](#)

* News of the launch event on [Swisscontact Website](#)

activities under component 1

New partnerships during phase II



Agreement with UCEP Bangladesh

A partnership agreement has been signed with UCEP Bangladesh for delivery of quality skills training at Sylhet. UCEP Bangladesh is one of the most esteemed training institutes and have been a direct partner of Uttoron since last phase.



Agreement with BTTDC

A partnership agreement was signed with BTTDC for delivery of skills training at Sylhet and Habiganj and establishment of a permanent training centre. Contract with BTTDC had to be terminated for non-compliance issues. Selection of a new TSP for replacing BTTDC is under process.



Agreement with TMSS

A partnership agreement has been signed with TMSS to deliver training in Moulavibazar. TMSS is the second largest local NGO in Bangladesh. They were a partner of Uttoron during the first phase.



Agreement with CEC

A partnership agreement has been signed with Continuing Education Centre for design and delivery of pre-training and pre-employment motivational workshops as well as Training of Trainers (ToT).

Operational activities

Rapid Market Assessment (RMA) in Sylhet for trade selection:

Uttoron carried out a rigorous market assessment in Sylhet to identify the trades that are most in demand in the industry. During the RMA, 48 employers, 18 TSPs, community members and potential training candidates were surveyed. Based on the findings from the survey, following seven trades were selected.



Electrical Installation & Maintenance (EIM)



General Finishing Operation (GFO)



Machinist



Refrigeration & Air Conditioning (R/AC)



House-Keeping



Plumbing and Pipe Fitting



Welding

RMA for Dhaka market:

Like Sylhet region, Uttoron project planned to conduct RMA in Dhaka as well. The objective of this assessment was threefold.

- Developing an in-depth understanding of the impact of COVID- 19 on skill development landscape and existing demand for different skills.
- Gathering primary data through a survey of experts, TSPs and employers.
- Identify the top five trades that are least affected by the pandemic situation, recession and has high demand among employers.

The project already finished Key Informant Interview (KII) of TSPs and industry experts and based on that data made a shortlist of industries that has been least impacted by COVID-19 and shows potential for growth and job opportunity. The study will provide us with analytical insight about the pandemic impact on skills sector and help us identify the right trades.

Training Implementation Manual (TIM):

The project developed a TIM for the TSPs to ensure the quality of the training, timely implementation and proper execution of the training process and shared the final guideline with the TSPs.

Curriculum for EIM trade:

In the previous phase, the project followed SEIP curriculum for the EIM trade, and three different TSPs ran the training under three different titles. To synchronize the curriculum across the board, Uttoron developed one curriculum and designated a common title for this trade. Also, the new curriculum incorporated additional content that was gathered through a workshop with industry experts. The project has shared the new curriculum with the TSPs.

Competency Based Learning Materials (CBLM) developed:

Since GFO is a new trade in Bangladesh, there is no CBLM available for it. Hence, Uttoron project, in consultation with employers and in collaboration with industry experts, has developed a CBLM for GFO trade so that Uttoron can impart superior training. The CBLM is in the process of printing and soon will be shared with the TSPs.

Orientation on TIM:

An orientation for the management staff of TSPs were planned and scheduled on March 30, 2020 on the TIM, so that they have a better understanding of this guideline. Unfortunately, the orientation needed to be cancelled at the last moment since the government imposed a lockdown nationally. However, the project has developed all the materials required for carrying out the orientation and we are anticipating that the activity will be carried out during first quarter (Aug-Oct) of second year of the project.

ToT for instructors:

To ensure quality teaching the project planned and scheduled a five-day-long ToT on Competency-Based Training & Assessment (CBT&A) from 23 - 30 March 2020. The event had to be postponed at the last moment due to Coronavirus pandemic. The project has finished all the preparation and developed all the materials required for carrying out this ToT in collaboration with CEC. We are anticipating that we will be able to organize this ToT during first quarter (Aug-Oct) of second year of the project.

Health and safety assessment of partners:

The project carried out an assessment of Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) standards of UCEP Bangladesh and TMSS. A report has been developed and TSPs are provided with recommendation to mitigate the shortcomings before training resumes. Based on the assessment the project is planning to develop safety training for the TSPs.

activities under component 2

Activities under component 2 has been seriously hampered because of COVID-19 pandemic. From mid-March a national level lock down was imposed by government. Hence, the land procurement was suspended. In addition to that, Uttoron project had to cancel the partnership with BTTDC who was responsible for this component. The process of identifying new partner has started and Uttoron expects to finalize that process very soon. There are two major activities that has been done under this component.

01

Developed a draft governing body structure of the permanent training institute

Uttoron has developed a draft of the governing body structure. Before it could be finalized in consultation with the partner and Chevron the lockdown for pandemic started. The draft governing body structure will be finalized after a new partnership agreement is signed.

02

Developed investment plan

An investment plan for establishing the permanent training institute has been developed. The investment plan has a detail analysis of equipment cost and ratio of the budget that will be spent on infrastructure development.

activities under component 3

Activities under component 3 was affected by pandemic as well. All government institutions were closed since March, 2020 so the project could not finalize the selection process of government TSP for partnership. However, the project has done some preparatory work under this component so when the government training centres resume their work, the process of partnership could be expedited.

01

Develop partner assessment tool

Uttoron project developed an assessment tool to assess the government TSPs that has potential for hosting an advance welding training.

02

Identify training institutes and conduct interview

The project identified three government TSPs in and around Dhaka which has capacity to host an advance welding training. Interviews with officials of these institutes were conducted and using the assessment tool the training institutes infrastructural and management capacity was evaluated.

stakeholder engagement

Uttoron project emphasizes on stakeholder engagement and project visibility for effective project implementation. The following section summarizes the visibility and stakeholder engagement activities during the first year of phase II of the project.

Project launching event of Uttoron phase II:

Official launching of phase II of Uttoron project took place on 11 December 2019. The chief guest of the event was Mr. K M Ali Azam, Secretary, Ministry of Labor & Employment, Government of Bangladesh. Among other Honorable dignitaries, US Ambassador to Bangladesh- H.E. Earl R. Miller, President of Chevron Bangladesh- Neil Menzies, Director- Corporate Affairs, Chevron Bangladesh- Ismail Chowdhury and Regional Director -South Asia, Swisscontact- Mr. Manish Pandey were also present at the event.

Community participation:

The community members are the most critical stakeholders of the Uttoron project. The awareness campaign and the Boot-camp successfully ensured sound involvement with the community members and made them aware about benefits of skills training. A good working relationship with the local government has allowed the project in gaining continuous support from them. The local leaders and local government representatives have become a strong advocate of the project because of continuous and pro-active communication and information sharing from the project. Their endorsement strengthened the credibility of the project among the local community.

Coordination with Chevron:

Chevron's Dhaka and field offices were consulted during planning and implementation of project activities. A total of 11 coordination meetings

were conducted with Chevron Dhaka office during the first year of phase II of the project. Chevron USA office was copied during the submission of major reports.

Engagement of government representatives:

Stakeholders such as District Chairman, Upazilla chairman, Upazilla Nirbahi Officers (UNOs), Union Chairman, local leaders and Village Development Organization (VDO) leaders were consulted and invited to visit the Boot-camps. Member of the Parliament from Habiganj district- Gazi Mohammad Shahnawaz, also visited Uttoron sites during campaigns and Boot-camp.

During the second quarter, Chevron requested Uttoron project to explore possibilities other than welding training under component 3 of the project. Chevron team suggested to explore possibilities of working in the health sector. While doing this assignment, Uttoron team had meetings with high-level government officials at Dhaka and Sylhet. Multiple meetings were held with Director General, Director- Hospital, Director of Community Based Health Care (CBHC) clinics under Directorate of Health, Government of Bangladesh to sensitize them on Uttoron project and explore possible options of collaboration. In addition, civil surgeons of Sylhet, Moulavibazar and Sreemongal were also consulted through meetings.

communications

Newsletter



Uttoron will be publishing a newsletter during this phase to increase visibility of the project and keep the relevant stakeholders updated about activities and achievement of the project. In order to reach out to a wide range of audience, the newsletter will be published in both Bangla and English language. The hard copy of the newsletter will be disseminated at the community level and the digital copy will be shared with national level stakeholders.

Project flyer for phase-II



Project flyer for phase II has been developed and shared with the relevant stakeholders to inform them about the targets and objectives of phase II.

Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) video



To aware the trainees about the necessity of occupational safety and security, Uttoron project started developing an OHS video. The production work of the video is under progress. The safety video is being developed as a Behavioral Change Communication (BCC) material, so the trainees adopt safety behavior more naturally at their workplace and are aware about the consequence of not following the safety directions.

Educational and learning material on occupational safety



Safety related education materials have been developed and approved by Chevrans' Health Environment and Safety (HES) team. These materials will be used in classrooms to emphasize the occupational safety issues and reinforce the knowledge of the trainees on the topic. All finalized learning materials are under process of printing.

Monitoring and Results Measurement



Workshop

A workshop was organized to develop project results chain and measurement plan in Sylhet from 20-23 October 2019.



Tool for trainee registration

Tool for trainee registration has been developed and shared with the TSPs.



Survey for RMA

Multiple survey tools have been developed to conduct the RMA in Dhaka.



Reporting tools

Reporting tools and templates have been developed and the training implementation manual has been upgraded accordingly.



Survey of government training institute

Uttoron team has developed a questionnaire to do survey of three Government TSPs located in Dhaka. The data will be used to identify the most viable candidate for the partnership for component 3.



Developed OHS checklist

A detail OHS checklist has been developed in collaboration with Chevron HES team. The purpose of the checklist is to assess the safety standards of the TSPs and based on the finding take necessary steps to ensure maximum safety standards.

impact of COVID-19 and response

The outbreak of global pandemic COVID-19 has dramatically impacted the day to day activity of people and the economy. The situation has created unforeseen challenges for the Uttoron project, and it may adversely affect the project target. Hence, the project has undertaken some steps to mitigate some of the challenges of this situation.

Short, mid and long-term impact of COVID-19 on the project



Due to the lock-down, the project suspended training at all three TSPs from March 20, 2020, and cancelled scheduled events (management workshop, ToT).



There might be a difficulty in meeting 70% gainful employment goal for the graduates within three months. Also, self-employed graduates may face difficulty in establishing new businesses.



The first batch of Uttoron was expected to graduate by June 2020. Since, the training suspended unexpectedly, it will not be possible to meet the previously proposed deadline of graduation for first batch and upcoming batches.



Land procurement process for the second component had to be postponed due to COVID-19 and cancellation of partnership with BTTDC. Thus, the establishment of the permanent campus in Habiganj is likely to miss the predetermined deadline.



The project is anticipating a higher drop-out because of sudden training suspension which would set a higher trainee target for the second round of Boot-camp.



Formal agreement with a government TSP has been delayed since all training institutes were closed.

Response to COVID-19



Project is continuously in touch with our TSPs, local administration and monitoring government policy directions so the training could be resumed as soon as we get clearance from government and local government authority. All the necessary safety preparations are in place.



The project has developed a humanitarian response plan which entails additional measures to ensure the achievement of the project target. For instance, Uttoron will provide job search allowance and subsistence allowance to the phase II graduates. The plan has been approved by Chevron team.



The project plans to conduct double batch of training concurrently (first batch and second batch) to cover the lost time.



The project is expediting the process of identifying a new partner for component 2. As soon as the partner is selected, all the necessary support will be provided for land acquisition.



To minimize the drop-out rate, project is communicating with the existing trainees via phone on a bi-weekly basis and motivating them to continue their training when it resumes. Continuous communication with the trainees may help in minimizing the drop-out rate. Additionally, the project is also checking on the health status of the trainees and sensitizing them about hygiene behavior to avoid infection.



Uttoron project has developed and shared a guideline on conducting training activities aligning with the health and safety rules of COVID-19 with the TSPs.

key highlights and target for next year

Component 1: skills training for community youths in Sylhet and Dhaka region

Key highlights of the year

- After a rigorous market assessment, seven trades were selected for skills training.
- Initiated a new trade for the first time in Bangladesh.
- Selected partners and signed partnership with three different TSPs in three districts.
- Curricula of all trades (except house-keeping) has been developed, reviewed and adjusted.
- Through a successful awareness campaign 153 candidates were selected for training in Sylhet and Habiganj and training at both locations started.
- Potential TSP and trade selection is under process for Dhaka.
- ToT and Management training event were cancelled due to COVID-19.

Target for next year

- Select trades through RMA for Dhaka.
- Select TSP in Dhaka through competitive process
- Organize a ToT for the instructors and organize an orientation workshop for the management staff of the TSPs.
- Conduct four rounds of awareness campaign and Boot-camp
- Start training at Moulavibazar.
- Find replacement for BTTDC in Habiganj for providing training.
- Ensure health and safety standards of the TSPs as per assessment report recommendation and organizing safety training for TSPs.

Component 2: Establishing a permanent training centre in Habiganj

Key highlights of the year

- Uttoron partnered with BTTDC for establishing a permanent training centre in Habiganj. However, the partnership with BTTDC was terminated.

Target for next year

- Select suitable partner and location to establish a permanent training centre in Habiganj.
- Sign contract with the selected partner.
- Oversee land acquisition process of the partner and ensure all government procedures are followed. Initiate infrastructure building.
- Arrange inauguration ceremony.

Component 3: Upgrading a welding training institute to achieve excellence

Key highlights of the year

- Considering the current situation for COVID-19, it is impossible to meet the timeline of updating a government-run welding institute to provide training in advance welding skills. Moreover, it is difficult to predict the demand and relevance for such training under current circumstances. Hence, Chevron suggested considering new health-related specialized trainings/skills development courses and requested to develop and share a plan with a budget. However, after extensive field analysis it was clear that health training cannot be an option given the time frame and budget of the project.

Target for next year

- Multiple options are currently being explored for component 3. After all the options are explored, most viable choices will be shared with Chevron for final decision.

concluding remarks



This pandemic situation has made us realize that plans made during the pre-COVID-19 era might be obsolete now. We need to come up with new tactics to handle the challenges that are arising every day.

Uttoron project is devising new strategies to encounter the challenges and experimenting with options that will help us achieve the set targets without compromising quality. Developing a health and safety video is one such initiative that will help us in achieving the desired quality of the training. In addition to that, we are exploring possibilities of digitizing some of the steps for component 1 for making the trainee selection process robust. Unexpected catastrophes are always waiting to happen, and this pandemic has given Uttoron project a whole new perspective to achieve the objectives by working more closely with TSPs and Chevron. Through cooperation and collaboration, we believe we will successfully achieve the greatness we aspired to.

photo gallery



Chief and special guests with Uttoron graduates at launching event



Preliminary interview of youths



Awareness campaign in Sylhet



Consultation with community people during RMA



Focus Group Discussion with youths during RMA



Participants of pre-training motivational workshop



Curricula review and development workshop at PRAN



Curricula review workshop at RFL



MRM workshop in Sylhet



Visit of Uttoron's new Team Leader and Business Administration head of Swisscontact at UCEP



Uttoron trainees at BTTDC training center in Habiganj



Female trainees of EIM trade at UCEP