

Establishing Career Guidance and Job Placement Cells under the Skills-21 Project in Bangladesh

Scoping mission to Bangladesh: Review of career guidance and job placement cells

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS (DRAFT)

1. Background

The overall objective of the career guidance component of the Skills-21 project is to establish career guidance and job placement cells in seven institutions to be operational by 2019 with at least 20% of students making use of these services by 2020. This objective has been subdivided into three specific tasks summarised as follows:

Excerpt from project document:

The first task (T13): a five-day scoping mission to Bangladesh, to review the operations of the career guidance and job placement cells. The findings of T13 would inform the second task (T14). The second task (T14): a five-day tailored training activity in Dhaka for staff operating the career guidance job placement cells on global good practice in job placement services by way of public private partnerships. The third task (T15): one-week mission to render technical advisory services for the career guidance job placement cells operators on how to consolidate their monitoring and evaluation processes and tools.

This report presents findings emerging from a five-day scoping mission to Bangladesh (T13) and makes recommendations based on these findings.

The guidelines that were followed for the execution of the scoping mission are briefly outlined below:

2. Establishing a career guidance and job placement service

At a broad level, the overall purpose and objectives of any career guidance programme could be viewed from two levels:

A. Person-Course Fit:

Over the last decade an increasing number of employment oriented/vocational courses are being made available in a large number of developing countries. However, many young people do not have the skills to select courses for which they are suitable. Hence they opt for “whatever is available”. This often results in a poor person-course fit leading to large numbers dropping out of courses. Career guidance provides support to make accurate educational choices, *before* the choice is made.

B. Person-Job Fit:

The trends in a number of countries that offer vocational courses show that a significant proportion of those who do complete a course often do not enter a job for which they are trained. This may be because of poor person-course fit. It could also be because of poor career management skills such as self-presentation skills, job search skills, inadequate understanding of the labour market or absence of a long term life-career plan. Career guidance could play a vital role in *preparing* the young person for the world of work, by fostering career management skills as an integral part of their vocational training.

The approach to this mission has been guided by a *general* model and an *applicational* model for the establishment of career guidance and job placements services. These are models that have been used successfully by the consultant for similar assignments in other developing countries.

2.1. A general model to guide the establishment of career and job placement services

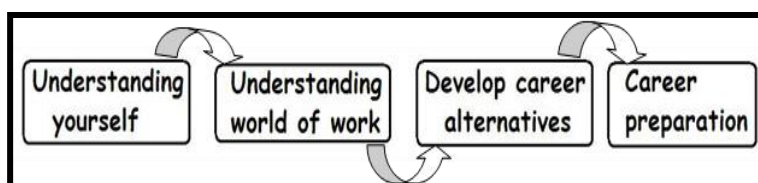
As shown in Appendix 1 three key factors are required to mesh together for the establishment of an effective career guidance and job placement service.

- A. Policy Mandate.
- B. Culture Specific Teaching-Learning Resources for Career Guidance.
- C. Trained Personnel.

2.2. An applicational model to guide the establishment of career and job placement services

As shown in Figure 1, an effective career guidance programme is usually composed of 4 key elements.

Figure 1: Key elements of career guidance



A brief summary of the steps and the tools required for each element is provided in Table 1 below. The Tools Required column in the table indicates the contents of the tool kit described in section 2.1.B above.

Table 1: Key Elements of Career Guidance

	Key Element	Tools Required
1	<i>Understanding Self:</i> Helping the career chooser identify his/her interests and aptitudes. A further element here refers to career beliefs: ideas, attitudes and opinions about occupations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A culturally relevant, simple to use tool to identify interests and aptitudes. • Exercises to help the individual understand how his/her career beliefs affect career development.
2	<i>Understanding the World of Work:</i> Activities that orient the career chooser to different career options, with specific reference to the courses being offered through this project. These activities would also orient the student to life long career development through ongoing qualifications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about educational pathways, career definitions, and the tasks that are linked to a particular occupation. This information set would be developed as simple career dictionary.
3	<i>Developing Career Alternatives:</i> Identifying 3 to 4 careers suited to one's interests and aptitudes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercises that bring the outcomes of the above two steps together to arrive at a clear list of most suitable careers and related courses.
4	<i>Career Preparation:</i> Developing a career-life blue print to realise one's career alternatives and developing career management skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercises realise one's career alternatives. This would include skills for course selection, course completion, understanding the labour market, self-presentation skills, and job search skills.

2.3. Inclusion of parents

Parents and significant adults in the young person's life have a strong influence on career decision making. It is important therefore, to include parents in the guidance process. An effective career guidance programme would address parents' career beliefs and educate them about the career development process. The objective is to bring the parent and young person together for effective career decision making.

3. Implementation of the mission

Information was collected with two objectives:

- A. To throw light on the operation of the career guidance and job placement cells and provide insights into the present status of career guidance and job placement services in these institutions.
- B. To reveal the present status of students' preparedness and readiness to enter the world of work. This also includes background details that could throw light on the type of career guidance tools needed to meet the objectives of Tasks 14 and 15.

3.1. Modalities

The mission was implemented through the following modalities:

- A. Briefing to consultant by Skills-21 project leaders.
- B. Desk review by consultant of project documents provided by the Skills-21 project leaders.
- C. Field visits organised by ILO-Dhaka. The visits were to three of the seven institutes where face-to-face discussions with varied stake holders were held. The other institutions could not be visited due to logistical reasons.
- D. Email questionnaire from the consultant to the five institutions that could not be visited.
- E. Briefing to consultant by leaders of the B-Sep project which precedes the Skills-21 project and is now in its final phase.

3.2. Sample

Purposive sampling was used to meet the objectives of the mission to ensure that the individuals from whom such information could be collected were present. The shortlisted institutes were given advance information and asked to ensure that two groups of individuals were available. Group 1 comprised a small group of students (8 to 10 per institute) from the different departments of these institutions. Group 2 comprised leaders of the institution, teachers, parents and community representatives.

An overview of the sample that was interviewed during the face-to-face interactions is provided in Table 2.

Table 2: Overview of sample interviewed

S.No	Institute and mode of contact	Group 1: Students		Group 2: Institution/Community Representatives	
1	Barisal Technical School and College, Barisal Face-to-face interactions	Male: 6 Female: 2	<i>Educational Level:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher Secondary • Diploma • Certificate <i>Subject Specialisation:</i>	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principals • Chief Instructors and Instructors • Community Representatives • Job Placement Officers • Employment Providers
2	Institute of Marine Technology, Bagerhat Face-to-face interactions	Male: 5 Female: 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronics • Electrical • Civil • Automobile • Computer and Information Technology 	12	
3	Khulna Mahila Polytechnic Institute, Khulna Face-to-face interactions	Male: 0 Female: 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refrigeration and Air-conditioning • Welding and Fabrication • Marine Engineering • Ship Building • Environmental Studies • Architecture • Interior Design 	10	

S.No	Institute and mode of contact	Group 1: Students		Group 2: Institution/Community Representatives	
	Sylhet Government Technical School and College, Sylhet. Email questionnaire	Not applicable		1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal of the institute
5	Bangladesh Sweden Polytechnic Institute Kaptai, Rangamati Hill Tracts. Email questionnaire	Not applicable		1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal of the institute
	Total	13 Male + 13 Female = 26		34	

3.3. Methods used

Established templates were used to evaluate the current provisions available for the implementation of an effective and sustainable career guidance and job placement service. These templates guided the discussions with the institution leaders and community representatives. A semi-structured interview was conducted with the student group to collect information pertaining to the present status of students' preparedness to enter the world of work.

Appendix 2 provides an overview of the questions that guided the semi-structured interviews with Group 2 (Institution/Community Representatives).

In summary, the information was collated through questionnaires, a verbatim record of the discussions and field notes maintained by the consultant. Where necessary, material was translated from Bangla to English by ILO officers.

4. Findings

Findings are reported under two themes. Theme 1 presents findings pertaining to the present status of career guidance and job placement services in the target institutions. Theme 2 reports findings pertaining to students' preparedness and readiness to enter the world of work.

The general and applicational models described above are used as the framework within which these findings are interpreted.

4.1. Theme 1: Present status of career guidance and job placement services in the target institutions

Finding 1. Policy Mandate:

The Skills-21 Project clearly mandates the establishment of career guidance and job placements services along with the provision of supports to operationalise these services. However, each of the project's target institutions are a part of the government vocational training system and therefore are controlled by the policies of the ministries they fall under. The Skills-21 project is aiming to integrate with the broader system in the following ways:

- A. Allocation of personnel to carry the duties of the career guidance and job placement officer.
- B. Allocation of infrastructure.
- C. Integration of career guidance and job placement services.
- D. Links with employment providers.

Finding 2. Culture specific teaching-learning resources for career guidance and job placement:

Very few tools for career guidance were seen during the field visits as well as in the documents reviewed through the desk review. The gap in resources was noticed in the following areas:

- A. Self-Understanding: A culturally relevant, simple to use system to identify interests and aptitudes was not found. Career choices were made as per course availability, hearsay, convenience or as per the reputation of the institution (hearsay). Similarly, job placements were made mainly on the basis of job availability.
- B. World of Work: Some material production related to the world of work is available. The following tools were seen:
 - In one case an internet based job portal had been developed. However, closer examination showed that the portal was not up to date. Students had not been taught how to use the portal.
 - Career and employer directories have been printed. But this information did not address the actual career development needs of students.
- C. Developing career alternatives: Students' awareness of the links between the course they were studying and job prospects was low. None of the students interviewed demonstrated skills to link information about personal talents and qualifications with available jobs and career paths.
- D. Career Preparation: In some cases, the institutes had introduced a system whereby all students had the option of registering their CVs with the institute's job placement service. About half of the students had done so. However, a closer look at the CVs indicated that self-presentation skills (e.g., CV writing, writing a cover letter) were poorly developed. In addition, most students were not aware of job search skills.
- E. Follow up and record keeping. Some institutions maintained a list of students who applied for jobs. But clear information as to whether they had obtained a job was not available.

Finding 3. Training of personnel:

The delivery of career guidance and job placement services is a specialised activity requiring proficiency in a specific set of skills. None of the job placement officers interviewed had been trained in any way to fulfil their duties in an informed manner.

Summary:

- The Skills-21 Project has a clear policy mandate for the establishment of career and job placement cells, and the project is aiming to integrate this mandate into the overall technical and vocational training system of the country.
- Training and capacity building of a workforce for the delivery of career guidance and job placement services is absent.
- Relevant teaching-learning material development is minimal. In cases where tools have been developed they are not directly linked to the actual career development needs of students.
- At the same time, it must be noted that all job placement officers interviewed were well motivated and enthusiastic. They were handicapped by the absence of training and access to teaching-learning tools with which to deliver career guidance and job placement services in a systematic and structured manner.

4.2. Theme 2: Students' preparedness and readiness to enter the world of work

This assessment was conducted exclusively with students on three specific career development themes:

- Awareness of the linkage between personal interests and aptitudes and career choices.

- Awareness of the influence of socially mediated career beliefs, opinions and stereotypes on personal career choices.
- Knowledge of the world of work and career management skills

The assessment was conducted by drawing upon items from standardised questionnaires and using them in semi-structured interviews. It must be noted here that the information presented below is drawn from a very small, purposively drawn sample of students. In some cases the opinion of a single individual is reported. Hence the objective of presenting this information is not to generalise to all Bangladeshi youth but to provide illustrations of the career decision making environment within which the target group could be making career decisions.

Finding 4. Awareness of the linkage between personal interests and aptitudes and career choices:

A person is more likely to be successful at careers that draw upon his/her interests and aptitudes. Awareness of personal interests and aptitudes is therefore an essential part of preparedness to make career choices. Interviews conducted with the students in this sample indicated that their awareness of their personal abilities and interests was low. In many cases their career interests and their personal interests were not linked to each other at all. *For example, one student indicated that she was aiming to be a police officer. At the same time however, her responses to an interest inventory indicated that she did not like activities that required physical fitness, physical exertion and working outdoors.* This is an example of students making career choices that were not linked to their personal work preferences.

Finding 5. Influence of career beliefs and stereotypes on career choices:

Career Beliefs are attitudes, mind-sets and opinions that influence the person's engagement with career development. Career Psychology research in other parts of Asia has shown that career beliefs have a powerful impact on the success of vocational training projects. For example, lower levels of *prestige* are attributed to vocational courses than university based courses. Similarly, *persisting* at a career goal through the qualifications that one has obtained, has often been noted to be low amongst vocationally trained Asian youth. In addition, the tendency to shift jobs and move away from one's qualifications is high. A summary of the findings with the students interviewed during this mission is provided below. Appendix 3 presents the details of the findings.

Findings point to the strong possibility that, as in other Asian countries, career beliefs, gender and occupational stereotypes have an influence on career decision making, in Bangladesh too. Of particular importance is the tendency to place vocational education and training at a lower level of value and prestige than university based courses. Career guidance therefore should address these mind sets and attitudes.

Finding 6. Knowledge of the world of work and career management skills:

A student with an adequate level of preparedness to make career and occupational choices would have sufficient knowledge of the links between the course he/she is studying and related jobs and occupations. Interviews with the students in this sample showed that their knowledge about the world of work was vague and sometimes inaccurate. Very few of them were aware of sources of employment information (e.g. newspapers, websites). Most of them did not show the career management skills related to job search, self-presentation (e.g., CV writing, facing an interview) and ongoing engagement with career development activities.

Summary:

- Students have low self-awareness, their knowledge of the world of work is vague and their skills for job search and career management is low or even absent in some cases.
- It is also likely that their career choices are affected by particular career beliefs rather than a sound knowledge of self and the world of work.

While these finding cannot be generalised, it seems students' overall preparedness to enter the world of work is low.

4.3. Findings from the outcomes of other, similar initiatives in implemented in Bangladesh

Other career guidance and job placement initiatives have also been implemented in Bangladesh in the recent past. The reports of the outcomes of these initiatives were reviewed through desk reviews as well as briefings from officers of these projects. The summary of these findings is as follows:

- A. *Allocation of personnel to carry the duties of the career guidance and job placement officer.* It was noted that while specific individuals (and in some cases a committee) had been tasked with this responsibility, these individuals also carried the full load of their duties as teachers and instructors. Their work as career guidance officers seemed to be informal and largely voluntary. Formal job descriptions were not in evidence. Incentives for carrying these extra duties did not seem to be offered. One officer for example remarked: *“I have been given a committee. But I am the only one functioning in that committee. I do this voluntarily, because I want to do my best for my students. I have no job description. I am not even recognised or acknowledged for my work.”*
- B. *Allocation of infrastructure.* Some of the institutions had a substantial allocation of infrastructure for career and job placement services, such as two large rooms with computers and internet access. However students did not seem to know how to use this infrastructure in a systematic manner. By and large, allocation of space was not integrated into the overall infrastructure management system of the institution.
- C. *Integration of career guidance and job placement services.* At present it seems that the service is not integrated into the overall timetable of a given institution. Career guidance and placement related activities are offered as per the availability and convenience of the person who has been given the responsibility and this is sometimes in a random manner.
- D. *Links with employment providers.* A critical limitation of many career guidance and job placement services is that they focus almost exclusively on the supply side of the process. The demand side, namely, links with employment providers are often inadequately addressed. Interviews with the stakeholders indicated that in some cases, the institution had forged formal links with local employers (for example, through MoUs). However, this level of formal protocol seems to be sporadic and largely left to the discretion of the head of the training institution.
- E. *Availability of Instructional Material to build students’ skills for career development and job finding.* Attempts have been made to develop career guidance and job placement material. However this material is not based on a *system* of guidance. While some material has been developed, the validity and relevance of much of this material is weak. Given below are some examples.
- In one case an internet based job portal has been developed. However, closer examination of the portal revealed that information posted was not up to date (e.g., job announcements that had expired were still on the website) and contact information was difficult to track. From the side of the beneficiaries, none of the students interviewed knew how to navigate the website and apply for the jobs advertised.
 - Career and employer directories have been printed. To be an effective career guidance and job placement tool such material should present information about educational pathways, career definitions, tasks linked to a particular occupation and occupational specialisations. The material reviewed had descriptions about designations (e.g., general manager, assistant general manager, supervisor, apprentice worker) and information about companies and factories (e.g., main product/service, number of employees). While this is useful information, it does not tie in with the immediate job placement requirements of graduating students. Information that would educate students about career areas and occupations related to these areas was not found.
 - In some cases attempts have been made to track job placement outcomes. However these systems did not follow a consistent framework and did not seem to go beyond a listing of students and their job finding status immediately after they left the institute.

It seems therefore that earlier projects have left the development of material and resources more or less to the skills and expertise available within a given institution.

5. Recommendations

The following recommendations draw upon the findings reported above and make an assumption that the trends noted in the quick survey could be reflective of broader trends in the Skills-21 project sites. The findings are presented within the general and application models for establishing career guidance and job placement services described above.

5.1. Recommendation 1: Clarify and establish a clear policy framework (Reference: Finding 1)

The requirements of the Skills-21 Project must be formally integrated into the provisions in the broader systems through an MoU, with specific reference to the following:

- A. Allocate *personnel* to carry the duties of a career guidance and job placement officer, provide them with training, clarify their job description and make provisions that will give them time and authority to deliver their duties as career guidance and placement officers. This is an essential requirement and details are discussed amongst the final recommendations below.
- B. *Mainstream* career guidance and job placement services into the overall timetable of a given institution. This would involve allocation of a certain number of periods/hours/person days in the annual calendar for workshops to be conducted. Career guidance could also be instituted as a “non-technical” course on par with other non-technical courses, particularly for final year students.

Risks and risk mitigation:

It is possible that time allocated for career guidance workshops are not given sufficient priority and this time could be appropriated by other classes and course work. This risk could be mitigated in the following ways:

- The importance of career guidance and job placement could be endorsed by the head of the institution.
- Career guidance could be introduced as a “compulsory” subject in the non-technical section of the curriculum.

C. Allocate *infrastructure*. Two types of infrastructure are required:

- Allocate a clearly defined *space* within the institution for the career guidance and job placement service.
- Provision of computers and access to the internet is an important requirement.

Risks and risk mitigation:

It is common that the infrastructure described above is not easily available. This risk could be managed in the following ways:

- Large group workshops could be conducted in the students’ class rooms and the career guidance room could be reserved for smaller group workshops or individual sessions. Therefore the space allocated for the career guidance and placement centre need not be large.
- If the institute has a larger computer centre or lab for all students, internet-based career development activities could be conducted in the same computer centre/lab.
- The career guidance intervention could consciously include cell phone-based interface with the internet (e.g., accessing relevant websites through the cell phone rather than computer).

D. Establish formal links with *employment providers*. Rather than leaving this important demand side component to the discretion of the institution heads, the project itself could provide templates and skills to the institution to establish links with employment providers. The following points could be focused upon when making partnerships with employment providers:

- Systematic provision of internship opportunities for all students.
- Provision of internship certificates to all students who complete the internship.
- Engagement of the employer with the institute to provide career information.
- Regular and up-to-date intimation of all job opportunities emerging from within the employment provider’s company.

Risks and risk mitigation:

Employers may not take the requests of the institution seriously. It is also possible that employers may hesitate to engage formally with such requests, since this would require acknowledging broader laws and regulations (e.g., minimum wages). The following points may be kept in mind to optimise relationships with employers:

- It is important that employers too accept and value internships and apprenticeships. The training institute could therefore lay a stronger emphasis on forging links with larger companies who may be more committed to the work ethic required for such engagements.
- Relationships could be established with the wider employment provider community such as industry associations, chambers of commerce and similar organisations.
- Relationships with the bigger companies of the region could be directly established through the project, rather than through individual institutes. For example, if the Skills-21 Project, as an initiative of the ILO approaches employment providers, the impact is likely to be stronger than if a lone principal of an institute attempts a similar engagement.
- Parents of students are often strong supporters of such internship and career information sharing programmes. Therefore, the institute could approach parents to become a part of the pool of employment providers.

5.2. Recommendation 2: Develop a culturally grounded assessment system whereby students could gain sound insights into their interests, aptitudes and career beliefs (Reference: Findings 2A, 4 and 5)

An essential element of career guidance is the assessment of interests and aptitudes. However the use of psychometric tests are to be viewed with a great deal of caution. When tests are implemented without adaptation to the local culture, economy and language, they could at best be ineffective and at worst be counterproductive. In response to this situation, the consultant has developed a culturally mediated, mixed methods model for the assessment of student's interests and aptitudes, called the Strengths and Accomplishments Questionnaire (SAQ). This tool is developed specifically for each country and is based upon the day-to-day activities that student's are engaged in at home, in the community and in school/college. The method blends self-administration by the student with the supervisory support of a career guidance officer. It is therefore easy to administer and carries no extra costs once it has been developed. The statistical validity and reliability of the method has also been established and vetted through peer reviews and published in scientific journals. SAQ's have been successfully developed and deployed in other Asian countries. Such a tool could be developed for the Skills-21 Project. However the following risks and requirements must be considered.

Risks and risk mitigation:

- Developing an SAQ for Bangladesh requires a substantial sample, randomly drawn from each target institution, amounting to a total of about 1500 individuals. Data collected from this sample will be analysed by the consultant and his team to create a culturally sound, statistically reliably and valid tool for assessment of interests and aptitudes. This requires an investment of time and resources as follows.
 - A team of 3 to 4 individuals who will collect the data.
 - Tool development which would require 2 to 3 months, of which the consultant's time would be about 15 days.
 - Sampling of students from all Skills-21 institutions.
 - English to Bangla translations would be required at two stages in the process.
- This tool (as with any other form of assessment) is most useful when the individual is *making* a choice. This would mainly be *before* the student chooses a course or when the student is making a job choice. The students in the Skills-21 Project have already made their course choice. In some cases this choice is induced by the overall system and the student may not have any real decision making opportunity. Therefore the SAQ may not play a useful role when students are making course choices. However, it could be highly useful when the student is making a *job choice* toward the end of his/her course.
- Once the SAQ is developed it would be relevant for a wide range of students across the country, as well as for students who have not yet made career decisions. Therefore other projects that work with high school students could also use this tool.

The decision on whether an SAQ would be relevant for the Skills-21 Project must be made keeping the above advantages and limitations in mind.

The impact of career beliefs on the outcomes of TVET and career guidance is well established. For example, particularly in Asian countries, a significantly higher value and prestige is attached to university, rather than

TVET courses. This is also seen in the case studies reported in Finding 5 above. It is important therefore that the self-understanding component of the career guidance intervention planned for the Skills-21 Project includes activities and exercises that would help students gain insights into how their career beliefs affect their career development.

5.3. Recommendation 3: Develop teaching-learning material related to the world of work (Reference: Findings 1D, 2B, 2C and 6)

Develop activities and material about world of work that educates students regarding the following:

- Career name, career definition and career tasks of all possible careers open to students in the target group.
- Information about careers linked to the courses they are studying.
- Educational pathways and milestones specific to Bangladesh.
- Qualification and eligibility criteria.
- Information pertaining to occupational possibilities abroad (e.g., information related to immigration).
- Understanding the difference between a job and a career.

This material could be made available on websites or in the form of self-access cards or dictionaries made available to students in the institute library or career guidance centre. See Appendix 4 for a sample.

Risks and risk mitigation:

- It is important that any career information provided is accurate. This could be ensured by drawing upon standardised information from documents such as the ILOs International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO).
- It must be kept in mind that many other careers are possible in Bangladesh over and above the courses offered through the Skills-21 Project. A decision must be made as to whether the information provided through this project will only focus on careers emerging from the courses offered through this project or whether all possible careers available in Bangladesh will be covered.

5.4. Recommendation 4: Develop teaching-learning material related to career preparation and job placement (Reference: Findings 2D and 6)

Train students in skills for seeking and maintaining employment and develop and maintain an employment data base. The following are to be kept in mind.

- Train students in job search skills.
- Engage students in activities that prepare them for employment such as preparing a CV, learning to write a cover letter, self-presentation and facing an interview.
- Develop an employment database that is dynamic and seeks to be up-to-date.
- Develop a placement system to link employers/employment providers with job seeking students.
- Develop a record keeping system that tracks students' job seeking and provides follow-up.

Risks and risk mitigation:

Career information (described in point 5.3 above) is relatively *static* since it mainly describes careers and associated tasks. Career information is provided as educational material for students making career choices. By contrast, employment-related information is much more *dynamic* and *changes* rapidly. It is important therefore that employment information is kept current. Expired information should be removed and current information should be put up regularly. This aspect of career guidance and job placement falls in the area of Public Employment Services (PES) and requires the development of a Labour Market Information System (LMIS). The development of a LMIS falls outside the purview of this project. However, as a run up to the development of an LMIS, the following targets are possible to achieve:

- Establish a simple MS Exel based system whereby employers/employment providers continuously provide the Skills-21 institutes with information about vacancies in their organisations.

- Identify a specific person from within each Skill-21 institution (e.g., the career guidance officer/job placement officer). This person should be formally tasked with the responsibility of managing the employment-related information. The person's responsibility would include interface with local employment providers as well as the Bangladeshi labour market at a broader level. If a Public Employment Service (PES) has already been established for Bangladesh it is essential that formal links are forged between the Skills-21 Project and the Bangladeshi PES.

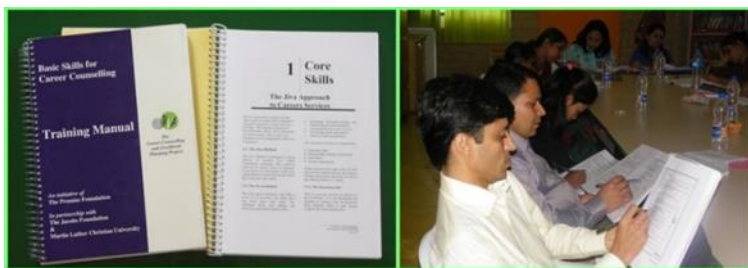
5.5. Recommendation 5: Develop a career guidance and job placement kit (Reference: all findings reported above)

A theme that runs through each of the findings reported above is that career guidance and job placement services *are* being delivered. However, these services are not based on a *system* of guidance and counselling and they are not supported by a comprehensive set of teaching-learning material to deliver a consistently high quality service. The review conducted through this mission showed that while earlier projects have tried to address the issue of materials and resources, the development of material has more or less been left to the skills and expertise available within a given institution. As indicated above, while some material has been developed, the validity and relevance of much of this material is weak.

Hence an overarching recommendation is that the Skills-21 Project develops a Career Guidance and Job Placement Kit that can be used in all the seven target institutions.

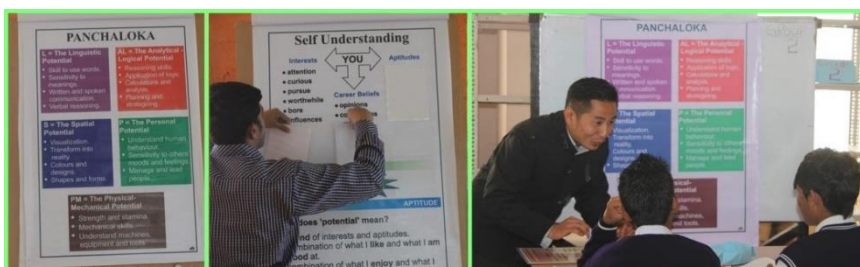
The composition of such a Kit is listed below with pictures of similar Kits developed for other countries:

A. A Facilitator's Manual.



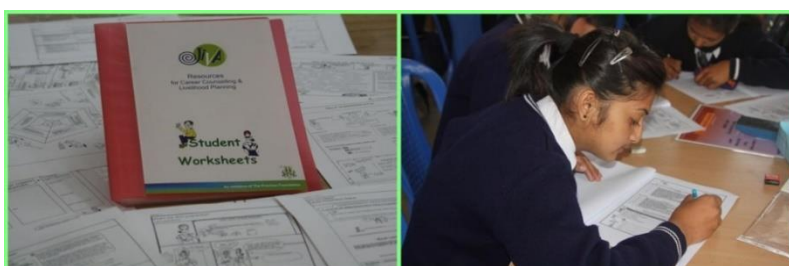
- A comprehensive handbook covering key themes and a detailed explanation of career guidance and job placement from the Bangladeshi context.
- Detailed notes on how to use Kit.

B. Flip Charts



- A set of large, durable charts that the facilitator can use for each of the sessions.
- Large enough for a class room of about 30 to 40 students.
- Allows the facilitator to conduct the programme with a minimum of resources.

C. Student Worksheets



- The model of career guidance proposed is activity based. All sessions are supported by worksheets.
- Students compile all the worksheets into a workbook at the end of the programme. A completed workbook is a permanent resource for the student's further thinking about career development.

D. Learning Cards



- Peer learning through small group discussions are integral to the proposed model of career guidance.
- The Kit provides large Learning Cards containing career and employment information with specific emphasis on Bangladesh
- Students use the cards for their discussions and to support the completion of their worksheets.

E. Career and Job Information



- Comprehensive career information for all the careers available in Bangladesh OR the careers emerging from the courses offered through the Skill-21 Project, based on the International Standard Classification of Occupations.
- Each card carries easy to understand information about career paths, specialisations possible within each career, qualifications and eligibility.

Developing such a Kit would contribute significantly to a stable and systematic career and job placement service. This requires a significant investment of time and resources.

Risks and risk mitigation:

It is critically important that the Career Guidance and Job Placement Kit is culturally relevant to the target group. It should also be simple enough for use in the classroom, also offering the possibility of self-access by students. There must also be a strong sense of ownership of the Kit by the career guidance and placement officer who will use the Kit. The following points outline the requirements to be met and the steps to be followed to ensure that these aspects are addressed.

- Developing a Career Guidance and Job Placement Kit for Bangladesh requires a 5 to 8 member Career Guidance Working Group (CGWG).
- The CGWG could be composed of the same persons who will finally take up the designation of career guidance and job placement officer.
- This Working Group would will be trained and then deputed to work along with the consultant to develop the material for the Kit.
- All material must be available in Bangla.
- Such an effort usually requires 3 to 4 months of full time effort on the part of the CGWG.
- The developed material will need systematic trial tests. The role of these Pilot tests is twofold: a) to ensure the material are comprehensible to all beneficiaries and b) to ensure that facilitators can be trained through short term training courses to use the material with a high degree of fidelity.
- Once finalised, a small number of Kits must be produced. A total of 12 to 14 Kits would be sufficient: 1 for each of the seven Skills-21 institutions and the rest for training, demonstration and archival purposes.
- Budget provisions have to be made for the development, trial testing and production of the Kit.

5.6. Recommendation 6: Develop a career guidance and job placement workforce (Reference: all findings reported above)

At the heart of this project lies a well-informed and skilled workforce that will actually deliver the career guidance and job placement services. The present review indicated that although all the institutions do have a career guidance and job placement officer, none of them are trained in career guidance. Hence the overarching recommendation made is that the Skills-21 Project invests in the training of career and job placement officers. This training should orient them to the basic concepts of career guidance and job placement and give them skills

to use the Kit (as described in Recommendation 5) to deliver the services. The following points are to be kept in mind:

- The job description for this person should be drawn from *all the recommendations* made above.
- Such a job description would qualify for a *full time* position. Hence the appointment of the career guidance and job placement officer should be for a full time position.
- All job placement officers are to be trained in the method of career guidance and job placement promoted by the Skills-21 Project and through this training become proficient in the use of the Career Guidance and Job Placement Kit.

Risks and risk mitigation:

Two options are possible for the appointment of the career and job placement officer. The first would be that the person is selected from within the institution. The second would be that the person is appointed on a contractual basis for the duration of the project. The risks and advantages pertaining to both options are discussed below.

- Appointment from within the institution: At present the career guidance and job placement officer is an employee of the institute. His/her duties are *secondary* to his/her main duty as an instructor or teacher in the institute. If this arrangement is to continue, the extent of guidance-related targets that can be met would be limited to about 20% of what is required. On the other hand, if it is decided that this is a full time position, then the following points are to be considered:
 - The officer should be relieved of his/her duties as an instructor/teacher.
 - Job descriptions have to be contracted such that the full time officer has sufficient time and authority to deliver all aspects of the career guidance and job placement service.
 - If this is not possible, a proportion of the teaching duties must be reduced. The recommended ratio of teaching duties to guidance and placement duties could be 20% for teaching and the rest for the guidance work.
- Appointment on a contractual basis for the duration of the project: The main advantage here is that the contracted officer would be tasked exclusively with career guidance and job placement duties. Hence *all* duties pertaining to this service could be included in his/her job description. The significant disadvantage is with regard to sustainability. Once the project reaches its conclusion, funds may not be available to sustain the position of a career guidance and job placement officer. A *curriculum based model* of service delivery offers one way of mitigating this risk. The details are as follows:
 - Activities that support students to make effective career and job decisions could be embedded into the existing system of training of instructors and teachers. These would be additional skills and knowledge in the pre-service and/or in-service curriculum. This could be done through the Centres for Skills Excellence (CSEs) which are a part of the Skills-21 Project. That is, career guidance and job placement could be introduced as a “course” or a “subject” for all instructors and teachers through the CSE. The seven institutions in the project could be used as models that showcase how the service could be delivered. In this way, in the long run, career guidance and job placement services could be embedded into the overall curriculum of the TVET system.
 - During the project period, the career guidance and job placement officer could be trained to be a trainer. The officer could then train all other appropriate members of staff of his/her institution on how they each could integrate activities for making effective career and job decisions into their regular teaching practice.

In this way, career guidance does not remain a “special” activity, but gradually grows into a “mainstream” activity integrated into the overall curriculum.

It must be noted, however, that this is only an alternative approach. Ideally, career guidance and job placement services must be budgeted for and a person appointed for this purpose in the same way that teachers are appointed for non-technical subjects in the Skills-21 institutions.

- Dilution in the long term: A further risk to be noted is the possibility that the project might lose the trained career guidance and job placement officer. The person for example might move on to another job or may retire from service. The following points may be kept in mind to reduce this risk:
 - If selection is to be from within the institute, two persons may be trained, rather than one.
 - An important criteria for selection would be that the person selected has a sufficient number of years of service left.

5.7. Recommendation 7: Integrate monitoring and evaluation systems into the career guidance and job placement intervention (Finding 2E)

The career guidance and job placement intervention focuses on two key outcomes: a) improving students' career development skills to make effective career and job decisions before they leave the institute and b) facilitating job placement and ongoing career development after students complete training and leave the institute. Whether the intervention is achieving these outcomes could be monitored in the following ways:

- Implement the intervention using a pre-intervention-post-intervention design. That is, all students could be assessed for their career development skills before the intervention and then assessed again after the intervention. If the intervention is working, students' career development skills must improve after the intervention. If a matched group (control group) that is receiving business-as-usual services do not show the same improvement then it is probably the intervention that is making a positive impact.
- Institute a systematic record keeping method that would follow up students after they leave the institute to monitor their job placement and ongoing career development.

Standardised tools and evaluation designs for controlled trials are available for this exercise which could be adapted for the Skills-21 Project.

Risks and risk mitigation:

Career guidance by itself cannot improve job placement. A wide variety of other cultural, social and labour market forces influence ongoing career development. It is important therefore that outcomes are not measured only as successful job placement. The following points may be kept in mind:

- The tool that is used for measuring outcomes must be grounded in the method of career guidance and job placement instituted through this project.
- Outcome data should comprise both quantitative (e.g., questionnaire) and qualitative (e.g., narrative reports) information.
- Along with job placement, other outcome criteria should be included (e.g., improvement in knowledge of self and the world of work, skills to manage and develop one's career on an ongoing basis).

5.8. Recommendation 8: Expand the type of TVET courses offered

This is a recommendation that falls outside the purview of the present project. However it is an important point and hence is included in this report. A common lacuna in most TVET programmes is that courses offered focus almost exclusively on occupations that require *physical/mechanical* abilities. Not all students would possess the aptitudes to be successful in occupations that draw upon these abilities. Hence, students are required to take up a course merely because it is available, not because it suits their ability profile. This invariably results in poor outcomes. The Skills-21 Project is also at risk for committing a similar error. It is therefore strongly recommended that, if the opportunity presents itself, the Skills-21 Project introduces courses that tap other abilities and talents. This could include courses that draw upon linguistic, analytical-logical, interpersonal and design related talents and potentials.

This recommendation may be considered, if there is scope to introduce new courses.

6. Implementing the Recommendations

This section presents broad ideas of how these recommendations could be implemented. Detailing a work plan would be done separately once the recommendations made above have been finalised and adopted.

- Complete the formulation of a policy that will guide the career guidance and job placement component of the Skills-21 Project.
- Create a Career Guidance Working Group (CGWG) that will be formally tasked with the responsibility of developing the various components of the project. Members of this working group could also be the project's career guidance and job placement officers.
- Select a leader for the CGWG who will be the focal person for the project's activities.
- Train the CGWG. It is suggested that Task 14 (a five-day tailored training activity for staff operating the career guidance and job placement cells) be dedicated to the training of the CGWG. If possible, this training should be extended to a period of 8 days. This training would involve the following:
 - basic inputs in conceptual foundations related to career guidance and job placement.
 - orientation to all the components of the career guidance Kit.
 - demonstration of Kits developed for other countries.
 - training in skills to develop material for the Kit for the Skill-21 Project.
- Develop, trial test and finalise the career guidance and job placement Kit. The consultant will supervise the work of the CGWG to develop the Kit. This supervision would be done off site, using IT-enabled tools such as email, skype and shared online folders.
- Produce sufficient quantities of the Kit once it has been finalised.
- Prepare to mainstream the intervention into the target institutions, under the supervision of the consultant. This preparation would be done through a 5 day workshop with the persons who are to be trained as career guidance and job placement officers. It is suggested that Task 15 (consolidate monitoring and evaluation processes and tools) be dedicated to this final aspect of the project.
- Roll out the career guidance and job placement service across the seven target institutions.
- The data that emerges from the monitoring and evaluation tools integrated into the system (Recommendation 7) could be analysed at relevant milestones to fine-tune the intervention.

7. Conclusion

The recommendations made above provide, a comprehensive description of all the components of the career guidance and job placement intervention that could be brought into place within the Skills-21 Project. An *implementation plan* has been provided in a separate document for the implementation of these recommendations. Changes, inclusions and adaptations could be made as per the provisions and resources available to the project.

Submitted by,

Gideon Arulmani,
International Consultant,
International Labour Organisation,
Bangalore, India.

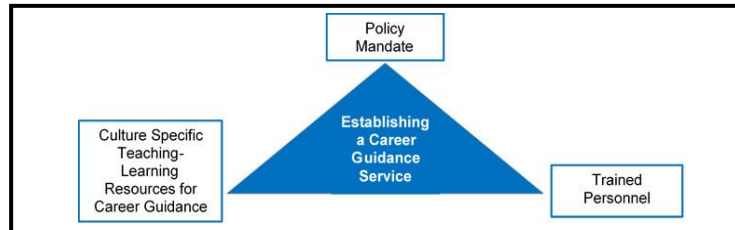
Date: 11th November, 2018.

APPENDIX 1

A general model to guide the establishment of career and job placement services

As shown below three key factors are required to mesh together for the establishment of an effective career guidance and job placement service.

Figure 1: Establishing a career guidance and job placement service



These factors are briefly explained below:

A. Policy Mandate:

It is essential that the programme is formally endorsed and authorised by the system that it is a part of. This would include, formal allocation of budgets, time for training of career guidance facilitators, development of material and allocation of time slots for the delivery of career guidance within the overall skills development framework.

B. Culture Specific Teaching-Learning Resources for Career Guidance

This would comprise a culturally grounded Career Guidance and Job Placement Tool Kit based on which the service would be delivered. The kit provides the framework as well as locally developed tools that career guidance officers would use to deliver the career and job placement service.

C. Trained Personnel

This would comprise a group of persons identified by the project, who would be trained in the basic concepts of career guidance and who would be trained in skills to use the Career Guidance and Job Placement Tool Kit.

APPENDIX 2

Overview of the questions that guided the semi-structured interviews with Group 2 (Institution/Community Representatives).

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Skills-21 Project is designed to offer support to further strengthen the technical and vocational training offered by your institution. One of the objectives of the project is to help you improve the career and job placement cell in your institution. In this connection we are listing a few questions below. Kindly answer them, to help us understand the status of career and job placement services in your institution.

Name:

Designation:

Name of Institution:

Institution Address:

1. How many students are enrolled in your institution at present?

2. Please list all the courses offered through your institution at present.

3. What is the infrastructure you have in your institution for career guidance and job placement. For example, do you have a counselling room, computers and so on.

4. Has anyone been appointed as a career guidance and job placement officer in your institution? If yes, kindly answer the following questions:

4.a. Is this a full time appointment? Or does this officer also carry other duties?

4.b. What is this person's training or qualifications for career guidance?

4.c. What is this person's job description?

4.d. Has a budget been allocated for this person's salary and other expenses related to career guidance and job placement? If yes, what is the source of these funds?

5. How is career guidance delivered? For example, is career guidance offered through classroom workshops, one-to-one counselling or any such methods?

6. Are parents included in the counselling process?

7. Are any tools available for career guidance and job placement services? This could include tests, career information, labour market information and so on.

8. How is job information made available to students? Do you have a link to employers and job providers?

9. Do you have any system of keeping records of your students' job finding and job success?

10. Who are the main employment providers in your area?

APPENDIX 3

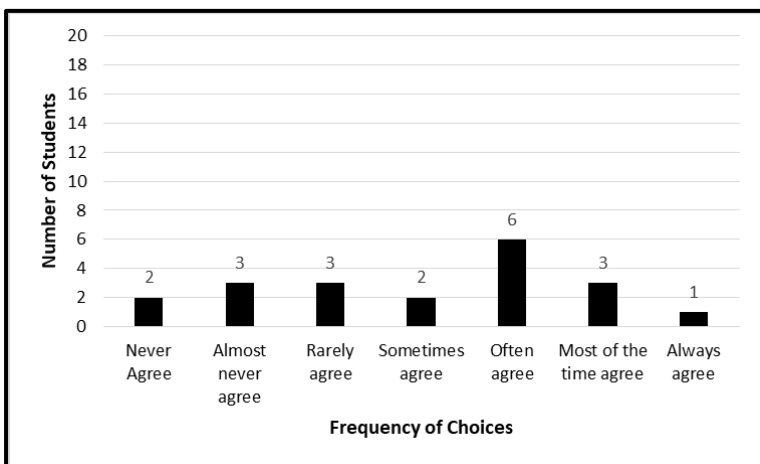
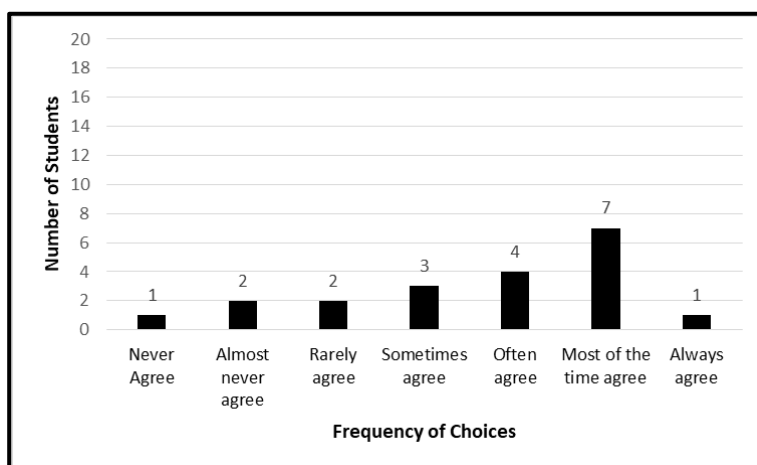
Influence of career beliefs and stereotypes on career choices:

A section of the students (20 students) in this sample were asked to rate their opinions on statements reflecting such career beliefs. They were given a career belief statement and asked to mark their level of agreement on a seven-point rating scale tagged as follows: 1 = Never agree, 2 = Almost Never Agree, 3 = Rarely Agree, 4 = Sometimes Agree, 5 = Often Agree, 6 = Agree most of the time, 7 = Agree Always.

Given below are illustrations of the sample's responses to some of these career belief statements.

Statement

“Work is for earning a livelihood. After receiving wages it is alright to go back to work only when the money is finished and we need more money”

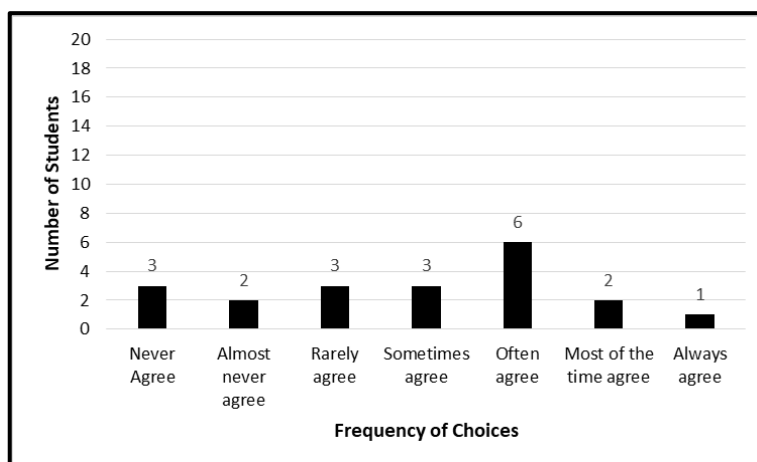


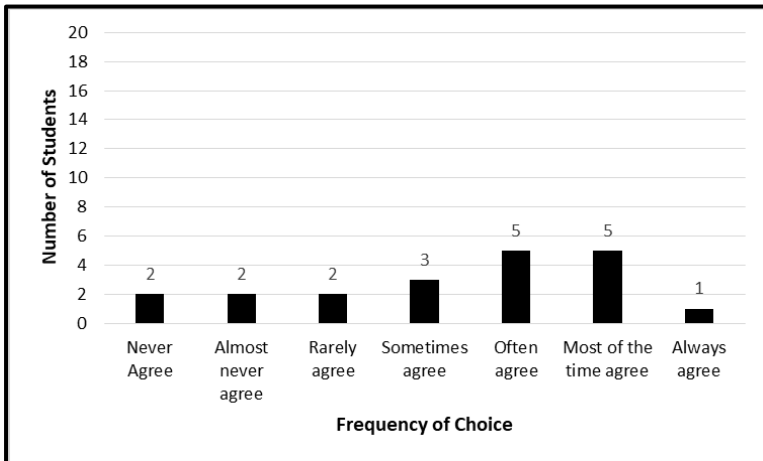
Statement

“Jahanara has taken up a course that will give her a good job. But after joining the course she found that she does not like many of the subjects in the course. So she is thinking of dropping out of the course”.

Statement

“Sunita wants to study. She wants to have a good status in society. Status and prestige come from one's education. Therefore it is better for Sunita to go to college than for Vocational Training”.





Statement
“Boys are better at earning a living and girls are better at taking care of the family. So career preparation is mainly for boys.”

While this information from the questionnaire cannot be generalised, it points to the strong possibility that, as in other Asian countries, career beliefs, gender and occupational stereotypes have an influence on career decision making, in Bangladesh too. Of particular importance is the tendency to place vocational education and training at a lower level of value and prestige than university based courses. Career guidance therefore should address these mind sets and attitudes.

APPENDIX 4

Sample of Career Information Card

Career Name: Auto Mechanic Technical Name: Motor Vehicle Mechanics and Repairers						
Career Definition	Primary Potential	Secondary Potential	Eligibility	Career Path	Specialisations	
<p>Auto Mechanics maintain, service and repair engines and the mechanical parts of motor cycles, passenger cars, trucks and other motor vehicles.</p> <p>Tasks include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. fitting, examining, testing and servicing motor vehicle engines; 2. replacing engine components or complete engines; 3. fitting, examining, adjusting, dismantling, rebuilding and replacing defective parts of motor vehicles; 4. installing or adjusting motors and brakes, and adjusting steering or other parts of motor vehicles. <p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">(Source: Adapted from ISCO 88)</p>	Physical - Mechanical Potential	Analytical- Logical Potential	Class 10	<p>Option 1:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete Class 10 or Higher Secondary in any stream. 2. Qualify as a mechanic through the relevant diploma / certificate courses offered through Industrial Training Institutes / Polytechnics and private organisations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm Vehicles. • Four wheelers. • Heavy Vehicles. • Sports / Racing Vehicles. • Two wheelers. <p>Examples of where you could work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in workshops run by department of road transport of the government. • Work in transport section of military, paramilitary and other security services. • Work in private garages. • Work in factories and companies that own fleets of vehicles. • Work with transport companies. 	

Sample of Career Dictionary

