

## Youth in Adversity: TVET and Skills for Realizing Potentials

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### Abstract

*Bangladesh is one of the fastest-growing economies in the world with a high level of youth unemployment, a lack of decent working conditions, and inadequate higher-order skills to cope with the growth. School education is yet to provide graduates with required competencies that disproportionately affects the marginalized groups. Reducing the number of Not in Employment, Education and Training (NEET) population through an expanded vision of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and skills development programs, and smooth school to work transition are critical to deriving the benefits of the demographic dividend. The 21s-century skills, holistic development of youth, promoting entrepreneurship, promoting ethics and values among youth are also important considerations. A two-pronged strategy of simultaneous attention to (i) youth in adversity, and (ii) future of work could contribute to realizing the potential of exploiting the demographic dividend in Bangladesh. The study emphasized four industries and four groups of youth in adversity as a starting point; other industries and adversity groups may eventually be included. The industries are light engineering, hospitality and tourism, information and communication technology (ICT), and care services. The adversity groups are domestic workers, ethnic minorities, LGBT, and persons with disabilities.*

**Keywords:** *Demographic dividend; philanthropic investment in TVET; skills development; soft skills; Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET); youth in adversity; whole child development; and 21s-Century Skills.*

### 1. Introduction

Bangladesh is one of the fastest-growing economies globally, with a GDP growth of approximately 7.3% in 2019. With a goal to become a middle-income country by 2023, Bangladesh has made significant progress over the past two decades in advancing human development and bolstering economic growth. Bangladesh has also made remarkable progress in improving both access to education and the quality of education. On an important indicator of advancement towards ensuring quality education for all, Bangladesh has achieved universal access to primary education.

Bangladesh continues to face high levels of unemployment and underemployment. The Labor Force Survey 2016-2017 reports the unemployment rate as 4.2%, and youth unemployment at a staggering 10.6%, two and a half times the national average (BBS, 2018). One of the underlying factors contributing to the high levels of youth unemployment

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is that the Bangladesh educational system has not adjusted to addressing the dynamic, fast-changing labor market demands, resulting in a 'youth skills-gap.'

The path to becoming a middle and upper-middle-income country will have its challenges. Strengthening the labor market and employment opportunities through education and training opportunities will be pivotal to catalyze economic growth. Most skills training programs currently focus narrowly on technical and hard skills and have neglected soft skills training.

The education system in Bangladesh would benefit greatly from taking a holistic approach to education to embody the values of Whole Child Development through nurturing the creative abilities of children and youth to express themselves, navigate complex information and confidently cope with the challenges of a dynamic, fast-changing world.

This paper has examined the opportunity for the youth with an adversity lens to understand how state effort combining with the non-state actors and philanthropic partner could contribute to improving the situation of disadvantaged youth. The premise is that skills development program and TVET to foster school to work transition can create job opportunities and enhance employability of youth.

## **2. Objective and Methodology**

The main objective of this paper is to highlight some key issues that arose from a joint study carried out by Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) and Syanrgos on a mapping of youth in adversity in Bangladesh. As one of the research team members, I wish to share some of the lessons from the mapping exercise, encourage thinking out of the box and contribute to the discourse on interventions to benefit youth in adversity.

This paper has relied on the background work done for the mapping exercise, including literature review, key informant interviews, and discussion among the team members of the study. It also has drawn on a Rapid Response Survey on the work and perception of education NGOs in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic carried out by CAMPE in April-May 2020.

## **3. Major Finding and Observations**

### **3.1 Growth and Challenges in TVET**

Bangladesh has made significant progress in expanding access to primary and secondary education along with advancing gender parity in enrolment over the last few decades. These advancements in universal access to primary and secondary education can be attributed to support from the Government of Bangladesh as a constitutional obligation (GoB, 1972). The international commitments, charters, and treaties have also played an enabling role, particularly the activities related to EFA, CEDAW, MDGs, and SDGs, which have played a pivotal role in this development journey.

However, quality remains a big challenge in promoting children's cognitive development as well as the development of socio-emotional skills, including critical thinking, communication,

collaboration, problem-solving, leadership, among others. Dropout before and during secondary education remains high, and transition to tertiary level is low. Despite the substantial progress in ensuring access to education, it is alarming to note that 4 million school-age children remain out of school (GoB, 2018). Due to the COVID-19 effect the progress may be reversed due to long school closure, household economic pressure, and opportunity cost of education. All these will lead to increased absenteeism and dropouts. Girls may face increased gender based violence, early marriage and early pregnancy (CAMPE, 2020).

The quality and relevance of higher education and training are inadequate to meet the labor market's skills demand. Outdated curricula and teaching-learning materials, inadequate teaching facilities, and limited opportunities for teachers' professional development, particularly in TVET and tertiary colleges, make them less capable of delivering the expected services.

State investment in education in Bangladesh has remained around 2.0% of GDP for more than a decade (CAMPE, 2019). The limited state investment, along with other confounding issues, has adversely affected the quality of education in terms of updating and modernizing curriculum for holistic development, to ensure an adequate supply of professionally trained and qualified teachers and their professional development, to maintain a robust assessment system, and facilitate school to work transition for youth.

To address the need to make skills training programs relevant to the labor market, the Government of Bangladesh has initiated the National Technical and Vocational Qualification Framework (NTVQF). The aim is to help youth become more employable and to supply emerging industries with workers by assessing skills of workers acquired by diverse means. The National Skills Development Authority and 12 Industry Skills Councils have been established. Other measures taken by the government include the establishment of technical schools and colleges (TSC) in every Upazila (sub-district) and the establishment of Engineering College at the divisional level. To promote girls' education, Upazila level TSC's will have a hostel to accommodate 200 girls each and one Engineering College in every division will be devoted to girls. Besides, the government is considering introduction of a common curricular track up to grade 10 and adding one technical subject as compulsory in secondary education.

The non-state actors, particularly the NGOs are playing a complementary role to supplement the state initiatives. This is to help the most marginalized to participate in skill training and prepare themselves for the world of work. Although youth unemployment and underemployment are a ubiquitous challenge across the country, unemployment disproportionately impacts particular demographics, referred to as youth in adversity, who are either implicitly or explicitly excluded from employment opportunities and training programs. Philanthropy, in this case, has a critical role to play to make TVET more inclusive of youth in adversity and to build on the momentum and support of the government initiatives.

### **3.2 Opportunities to Apply a WCD-based Approach to Advance Education in Bangladesh**

Like many other education systems across the world, Bangladesh has faced severe limitations in enabling children and youth to develop a broad range of competencies and values needed to lead productive and constructive lives. Rote memorization and an over-valuation of exam scores and assessments, amongst other systemic issues, have resulted in a myopic view of the role of education in the formation of children and youth. As illustrated by the limited mastery of foundational skills needed in the transition to the world of work, there is an urgent need to move towards a more holistic approach to education in Bangladesh.

Applying a 'Whole Child Development' (WCD) approach to education has the potential to empower children and youth to become creative and engaged citizens who can strengthen their communities' and societies' wellbeing. Whole Child Development values nurturing children and youth's creative abilities to express themselves, navigate complex information, and confidently cope with the problems of a dynamic, fast-changing world.

### **3.3 Demographic Dividend and the Need for TVET Education in Bangladesh**

Bangladesh is experiencing a demographic dividend, where the working-age population is now significantly larger than the non-working age population. Every year, around 2.1 million youth enter the job market and are seeking employment opportunities in Bangladesh. However, only 1.3 million youth are securing jobs each year, and the remaining 0.8 million youth are joining the pool of the unemployed population (The Financial Express, 26 Feb, 2019). Furthermore, over 27.4% of the total youth population are not in education, employment, or training (NEET).

This shift in the demographic makeup of the country is due to a significant reduction in fertility and mortality rates since the 1980s. The demographic dividend is not an induced phenomenon, rather it is a structurally given time bound phase, which requires 'quality' human resources endowed with education, health, and skills. Bangladesh will continue to experience a demographic dividend until at least 2031, and potentially until the late 2030s (Action Aid & SANEM, 2019). Although youth unemployment and underemployment are a ubiquitous challenge across the country, it disproportionately impacts particular segments of the population, who are either implicitly or explicitly excluded from employment opportunities and training programs.

The demographic dividend can be viewed as both a blessing and a curse in the context of the Bangladesh economy. If the proper support systems, including, but not limited to, skills training and job placement programs are put in place to harness the potential of the burgeoning youth population, the demographic dividend could stimulate economic growth by adding to the productivity of the labor market. However, if the problem remains unaddressed or inadequately addressed, the consequences of the untapped youth dividend in Bangladesh will turn to a catastrophe and exacerbate widespread unemployment rates.

Enrollment in TVET has steadily been increasing, but TVET capacity is insufficient in addressing the needs of Bangladesh's youth. The number of students enrolled in TVET (grades 9 to 12) increased significantly from 476,000 in 2009 to over 1 million in 2018 due to the efforts of government and non-government actors.

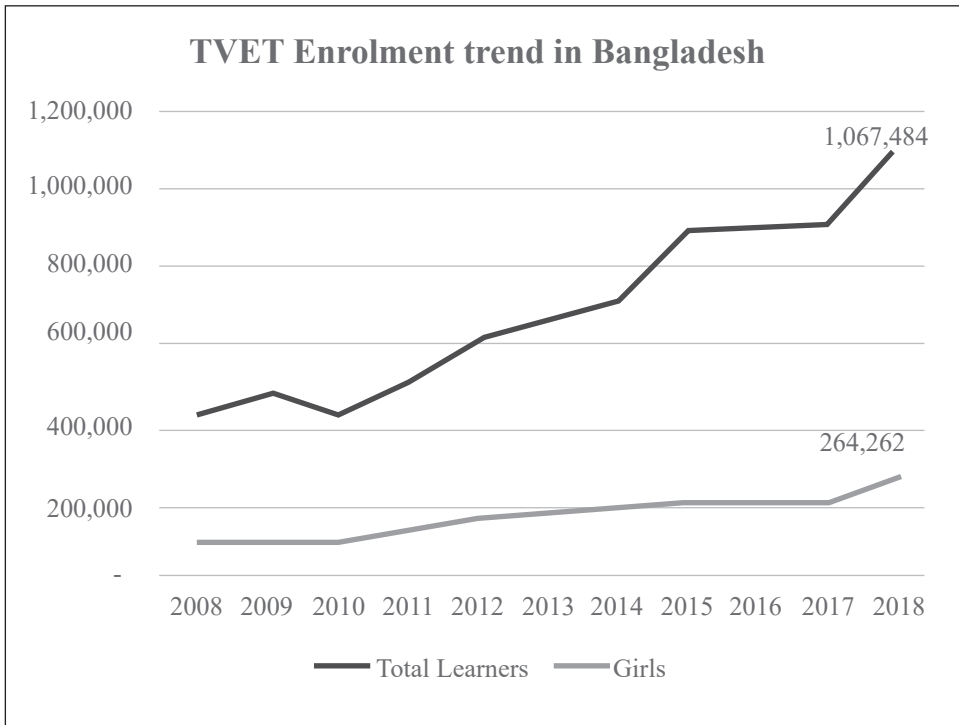


Figure 1: TVET Enrolment trend in Bangladesh (Source: BANBEIS, 2019)

However, the BTEB has provided alternative statistics that include the students of 360 hours basic course, which shows that the BTEB enrollment in Secondary and Higher Secondary Education was 13.1% in 2014 that has been raised to 16.1% in 2019 (BTEB, 2016 p.39 and BTEB, 2019, p.vi). The girls' participation has also rose to 24.8% (BANBEIS, 2019). Despite the substantial progress in increasing TVET enrollment, it remains low compared with developed countries. In the broader global context, TVET enrollment in South Asia remains low compared with developed countries. For example, in East Asian countries, TVET enrollment is substantially higher -- 43 percent in South Korea and 26 percent in Japan (Dewan & Sarkar, 2017 and Alamgir, 2019).

TVET institutions in Bangladesh are disproportionately distributed across the country. The largest number is located in the Rajshahi Division (24%), whereas the Barisal Division has the fewest (2%). An overview of TVET distribution is as follows:

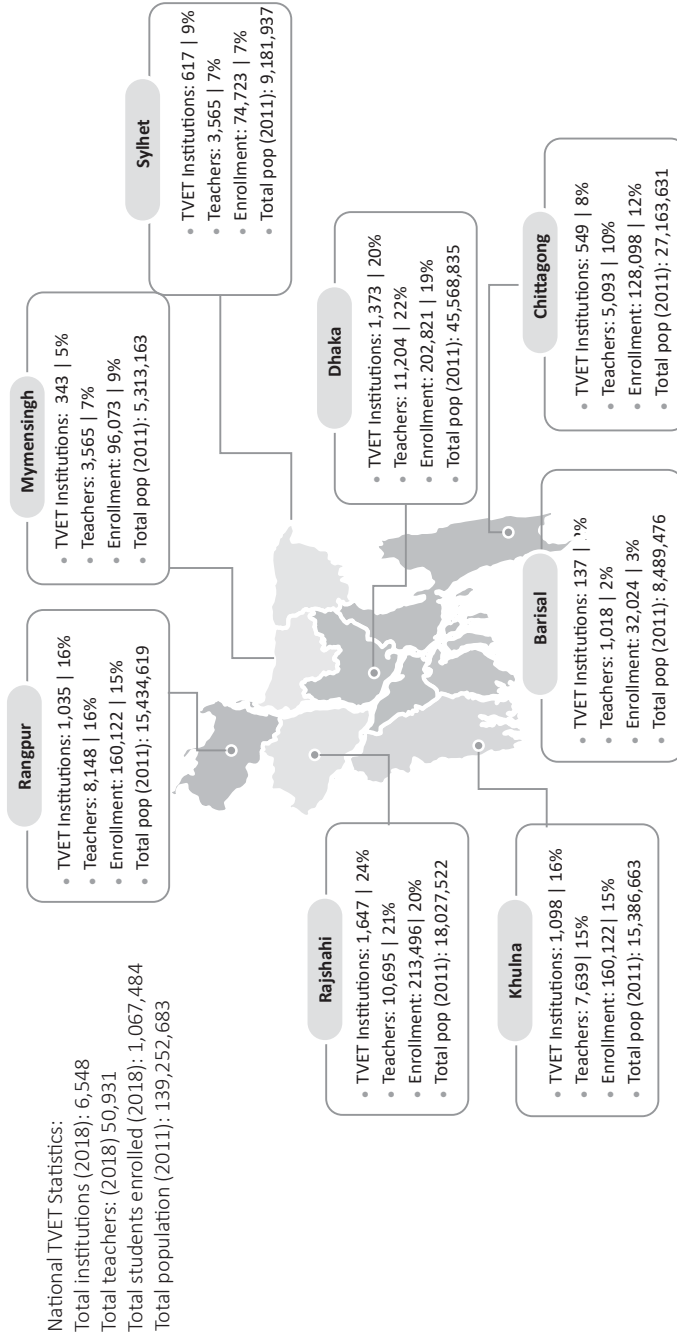


Figure 2: Distribution of TVET institutions and learners in Bangladesh. (Source: BANBEIS 2018, CAMPE & Synargos 2020)

### 3.4 Challenges in the TVET Sector

It is crucial for Bangladesh to incorporate skills for the future of work and ensuring that TVET programs are inclusive of youth facing adversity to address the needs of society.

#### The Future of Work challenges

- **Curriculum and pedagogy of TVET institutions are not aligned with the workforce demands:** Advances in technology and the fourth industrial revolution are rapidly changing the jobs and types of skills needed in the workforce, both in Bangladesh and globally. As routine tasks become automated, employers across industries are increasingly interested in hiring youth with soft skills, critical thinking skills, ethics and values, leadership skills, and 21st-century skills, which are characteristic of Whole Child Development.
- **Inconsistent implementation of the National Technical and Vocational Qualifications Framework:** Despite progress to develop a consistent National Technical and Vocational Qualifications Framework (NTVQF), designed to ensure that TVET education is relevant to the world of work, the implementation across geographies has been fragmented and inconsistent.
- **Limited career development and practical learning opportunities:** TVET institutions have limited capacity to offer career development and job placement services. In addition, education programs are often limited to theoretical and rote learning rather than based on practical on-the-job training, such as apprenticeship opportunities.

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- **Limited access to TVET institutions in hard-to-reach areas:** Out of the 6,865 TVET institutions reported by BANBEIS, a large proportion of them serve denser, metropolitan areas; the distribution of institutions has caused limited service delivery in rural areas and certain divisions (e.g. Chattogram).
- **Limited support services to provide youth with psychological support:** Due to limited resources, most TVET institutions are unable to offer psychological and counselling services. These support services are disproportionately needed by youth facing adversity, who have often endured traumatic life experience.
- **Curriculum and pedagogy are not tailored to serve the diverse needs of youth in adversity:** Low capacity for teacher training and course design often results in a one-size-fits-all model that is unable to equip teachers with strategies and tools to better serve a larger range of needs for youth in adversity.
- **Limited networks to connect graduates with the right job opportunities:** Many programs lack the finances and resources to provide adequate job-seeking skills or networks to help graduates in adversity find jobs suitable to their needs, upon completing training.

#### Adverse affects of the COVID-19

- **Lack of Protection of the learners and guardians:** The COVID-19 pandemic leads to the school closure from 18 March 2020 with no preparation to ensure support to the learners in terms of standard protection practice. The COVID-19 was a different type of emergency that restricts the mobility of people through social distancing and lockdown. Consequently, the learner lack psycho-social support to keep their mental health and extend support.

- **Learning Loss that may take several years to recover through organized response mechanism:** Due to extended school closure and inadequate support through the distance learning mode, particularly by television and the internet. As the TVET is highly practical oriented education, it was quite challenging to accommodate the change due to the pandemic.
- **Economic hardship leads to the vulnerability of the TVET learners:** the stakeholders' opinion shows that the economic hardship due to the COVID-19, there will be increased absenteeism and irregular attendance due to the engagement of learners in paid or unpaid work to reduce the financial pressure at the household level. An early signal on gender-based violence, combining with absenteeism, early marriage, particularly for girls and early pregnancy becoming senugin. Besides, due to economic slowdown, a significant number of youths are at risk of losing jobs or loosing the working capital.
- **Digital divide:** In general education, learners are engaged in the organized teaching-learning process online. But designing courses for TVET using the online platform is quite challenging. Catching-up with the expansion of science, technology, and innovations, TVET in Bangladesh faces a huge challenge in facilitating TVET with high-tech industries.

### **Government Prioritization of TVET Education and Recent Developments**

- **Established National Skills Development Authority (NSDA):** Government strategies for expanding TVET education emphasize on raising the number of post-primary and secondary education students in TVET, improving the quality and relevance of TVET education, involving the industries in designing and carrying out skills development courses, better coordination among all actors (government and non-government agencies), and a larger investment. These objectives and principles were incorporated in the National Skill Development Policy 2011 (NSDP), being implemented by the National Skills Development Authority (NSDA), established in 2019.
- **Integration of Vocational education in the mainstream education in Bangladesh:** The Ministry of Education plans to introduce technical education courses in junior secondary education from class VI to VIII, starting from 2021. All Class IX and X students enrolled in general education (not in the technical education stream) will have to take a course on technical skills. All schools and madrasahs are being encouraged to establish labs and classrooms for TVET education, and the government would provide teachers through a monthly pay order agreement. The work has started to take shape with 640 schools and madrasahs expected to introduce technical education in 2020. Besides, the government has pledged in its manifesto to set up one technical college in every Upazila/sub-districts (492 in total).
- **Developed an integrated TVET plan and the TVET SWAP is under process:** An integrated TVET action plan has been formulated by the Technical and Madrasah Education Division (TMED) of the Ministry of Education in 2018. The Integrated Plan focuses on (i) free textbooks distribution, (ii) TVET Stipend Program, (iii) 5% quota preserved for persons with disability (differently-abled students) and 20% quota for girls, (iv) establishing ramps in TVET institutions and (v) establishing specialized TVET institutions for girls to ensure Leaving No One Behind. Development of a



TVET sector Wide Approach (TVET SWAp) based on the lessons learned from Primary and Secondary SWAp would benefit the TVET sector for harmonized and result oriented planning process.

- **Integration of TVET with Five-year planning and ESD:** Considering the improved policy environment, the government of Bangladesh has strengthened the linkage between the Five-Year Plan of the government with the National Skills Development Policy. It has developed policies to promote and bring Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into the mainstream. As a new vision, the government is considering the formulation of special recruitment policy for government and private TVET teachers with a provision of 100% recruitment from pre-service trained graduates. Government also has developed a qualification framework for teachers, trainers, and associates.
- **Infrusture development, coordination and knowledge transfer:** Establishing mobile technical workshops, ensuring separate physical facilities for female students, and establishing more TVET institutions for women, and persons with disabilities are in government plans. The promotion of the National Qualification Framework, establishing the National Skills Development Authority (NSDA), increased collaboration and partnership with institutions in Singapore and China are also some of the initiatives. For better harmonization withing the different streams, a comprehensive education sector plan is under the process of development. It is expected to help in alignment among the streams and also facilitate in providing an equivalency framework.

## 4. Elements of a Program for Enhancing TVET Capacity to Reach Youth in Extreme Adversity

### 4.1 Understanding and Identifying Youth in Adversity

Exclusion serves both as a cause and effect of adversity, both causing and reinforcing layers of adversity to jeopardize human dignity, social justice, and the common good. The primary dimensions of exclusion in Bangladesh are socio-cultural, economic, political, and geographic, overlapping, and interrelated.

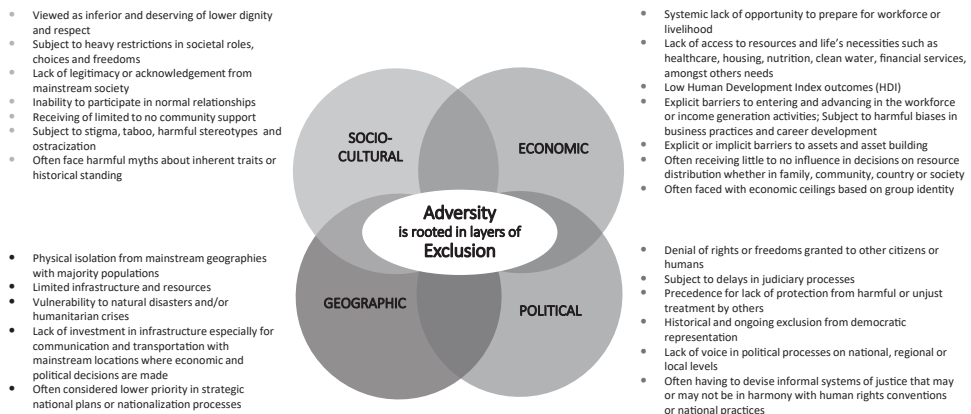


Figure 3: Extreme adversity is underpinned by exclusion from society. (Source: A Mapping of Youth in Adversity, CAMPE & Synargos 2020.)

The skills for youth in adversity program is intended to serve demographics that have been disproportionately excluded by mainstream society. It intends to elevate those facing extreme adversity and build a just society. It takes several key themes that are at the heart of ethical social values: life and dignity of the human person, community and participation, an opportunity for the poor and vulnerable, the dignity of work and the rights of workers, and human solidarity. And it is aligned with the ambition of Sustainable Development Goals to ensure access to quality education (SDG 4) and decent work (SDG 8) for all, among others.

This program strategy is bold in its ambition to influence systemic roots of adversity-exclusion that serves as both a cause and symptom of adversity. The strategy promotes philanthropy and civil society movement complement each other that, over time, can influence Bangladesh society to be more inclusive and just.

This strategy has a systemic impact across the education system. Philanthropic investment with an adversity lens serves demographics with significantly lower access to education, and especially supports whole child education. TVET investment in youth facing adversity contributes to systemic improvement in their access to quality skills, meaningful employment opportunities, increased incomes, and realize their full potential. Strengthening skills building and TVET programs for youth on the margins of society has the power to systemically impact policies and practices for improving outcomes for all youth in Bangladesh. Similarly, an adversity centered approach allows for collaboration and sharing of best practices across sectors.

The major excluded groups are as follows:

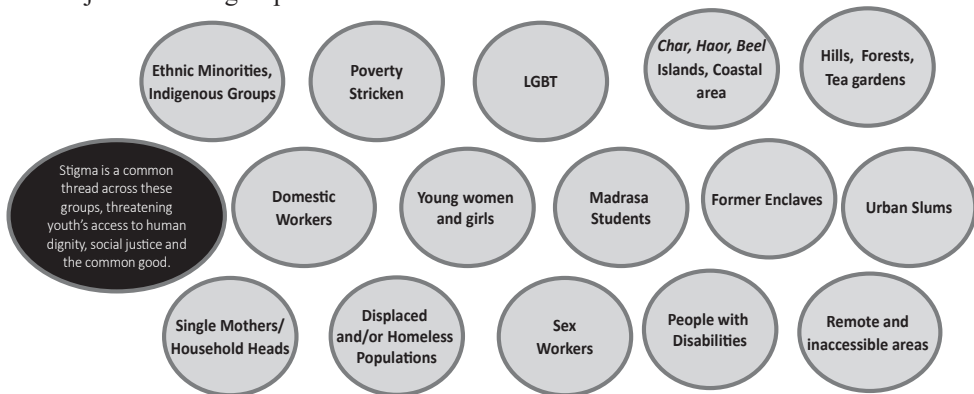


Figure 4: Factors contributing youth in adversity. (Source: A Mapping of Youth in Adversity, CAMPE & Synargos 2020. )

Stigma is a common thread across these groups, the social taboo about TVET, not valuing (not affirming social dignity) of all forms of works, threatening human dignity, social justice, and the common good. The major category of populations facing adversity includes ethnic minorities/indigenous groups, people in poverty/extreme poverty, LGBT, domestic workers, young women and girls, madrasah students, single mothers/women household heads, displaced and/or homeless populations, sex workers and persons with disabilities among others (CAMPE and Synargos, 2020).

This strategy approach entails:

- Supporting partners whose programs are inclusive of youth facing extreme adversity;
- Deepening the impact of TVET programming by providing a specialized curriculum, new pedagogical approaches, and tailored support to youth facing adversity;
- Widening the reach of TVET programming, including proactively recruiting more youth in adversity and opening additional programs;
- Surfacing stronger data and insights into the challenges faced by youth in adversity and best practices and models to improve their access to meaningful employment;
- Taking a systems view to identify key bottlenecks in TVET programming for youth in adversity, such as stigma or limited human rights protection;
- Providing proof of concept for programming to increase enrollment, graduation, and job attainment for youth in adversity; and

Collaborating with other system actors, funders, and government to test, iterate, and replicate proofs of concepts into new geographies and contexts.  
Best Practices: Promising models to capacitate TVET to be more inclusive of youth facing adversity.

#### 4.2 Enhancing TVET to Prepare a Stronger Workforce for the Future

Technological advancements and automation are changing the labor market, requiring new models of skills training for youth. We recommend that philanthropic institutions should partner with organizations that focus on equipping youth with core competencies and values needed for the future of work through TVET programs. The key characteristics of the future of work call for responding to emerging circumstances as described below.

**Demand for certain occupations and sectors are changing:** Manufacturing jobs are on the decline as more routine tasks become automated - jobs will require a new set of skills to operate machinery and take decision based on monitoring data, for example, the readymade garment manufacturing industries traditionally relied on the labor-intensive mass-production model. However, to cope with the demand for higher quality standards, technological innovations, global competitiveness, and changing context, the apparel market and fashion industry are giving more importance to the adoption of newer technologies (World Bank, 2018, p.7). In addition, there is a shortage of good mid-level managers across the board who can steer operations in changing the business environment, particularly as the demands for service jobs and middle management have been on the rise in Bangladesh.

**New skills are required in the evolving workforce:** ICT and technical skills are becoming a pre-requisite across sectors (World Bank, 2018, p. 8). Employers are increasingly interested in non-technical skills and recognize the importance of soft skills aligned with the tenets of Whole Child Development.

**Contract and freelance work are on the rise:** The digital economy is progressively reshaping the global employment landscape because of shifting demographics, increasing digitalization, and a desire for greater job satisfaction. Bangladeshi youth, driven by a lack of productive employment opportunities, followed the market trend and made Bangladesh a preferred destination for outsourcing online jobs with a 16.8% share of all such work (Lehdonvirta, 2017), ranking second in the world after India and before the United States, which ranks third.

**Globalized economy opens up opportunities:** Barriers to working across geographies in a globalized economy have been reduced. Similarly, the proliferation of technology and

ICT-jobs has increased opportunities to work abroad. It's worth mentioning that Bangladesh has also been attracting the world's attention as a fast-growing destination of Business Process Outsourcing (BPO).

This strategy approach entails supporting partners whose programs focus on equipping youth with the skills needed for the Future of Work. Key rationales for suggesting this strategy are:

- Systemic impact across the education system to provide an opportunity to strengthen the tenets of whole child development in Bangladesh's TVET ecosystem and curriculum, with potential knock-on effects of bringing whole child development into the mainstream education system;
- Strengthen collaboration with diverse stakeholders to improve the systems that affect training, recruitment, hiring, compensation, job retention and promotion within specific sectors;
- Sharpen focus secondary (for pre-voc and voc elementary levels) and post-secondary up to diploma levels;

Strengthen industry-linked TVET course planning, particularly the demand of industries inside Bangladesh and oversee the job market, specifically the Middle-East, East Asia, Europe, and America, will benefit the most marginalized youths.

### 4.3 Scaling up Capacity Building Initiatives

The scaling up of TVET capacity building initiatives will require actions noted below.

**Developing a vision of scale from the beginning:** Articulate the definition of scale from the outset. What does "scaling" mean - how big, how far, for who, what timeframe? Consult with thought leaders and key informants, especially from the target geography, to define the scale and the possible routes to achieving it. Develop a bigger vision for scale first, and use the vision as a design element for field-level pilots and programs.

**Understanding the landscape:** Identify and assess the other players in the field – who is doing what, where, and how. Identify the existing structures and networks that can be leveraged for scale. Explore the models and learnings from what has (and has not) worked in the target context. Analyze the potential tailwinds for scale (e.g., political will, leadership, existing infrastructure), and the potential headwinds (e.g., policy gaps, apathy, resource constraints).

**Developing the competency model:** Together with local counterparts, develop a roadmap for achieving the scaling vision. Most large-scale efforts will require an integrated set of activities that include research, advocacy/policy change, leadership development, public information campaigns, partnerships, monitoring/evaluation, and community engagement. Based on the roadmap, develop a competency model for scaling – what capabilities are needed to achieve scale?

**Co-creating, partnering, & communicating:** Co-create and co-develop the intervention in partnership with others - government, NGOs, communities, etc. - to generate ownership, political support, and legitimacy. The ability to scale may be proportional to the strength (and sometimes the size) of the base of co-ownership. Communicate regularly with key stakeholders, so they are well-informed of steps taken and ways to engage.

**Getting the economic model right:** Define the benefits and costs of the proposed intervention, clarify who should pay for what, and identify who benefits and how. Develop the business

case for investment and tailor the case for alternative funders – government, foundations, bi-lateral donors, beneficiaries. Prototyping, piloting, then mainstreaming: While the specific intervention needs to be tested for effectiveness, one should also develop and pilot the program around the intervention to ensure it will integrate into and benefit the community. Try alternative delivery or partnership models, at a small scale, to see what works best before going mainstream.

#### **4.4 Coordination and Management**

**Ensure Coordination among stakeholders:** Coordinate the works and division of labour in 23 Ministries, divisions and agencies who are providing TVET. Adopt with a dynamically changing situation to meet the 21st-century challenges and the fourth industrial revolutions. Also, extend the collaboration in skills development with the private sector to facilitate the job placement of TVET graduates in the industry and identify skills gap between skills of workers and what is demanded by the market, due to automation, robotics, artificial intelligence, and new technologies induced by the 4IR.

**Development of the TVET sector plan:** The Technical and Madrasah Education Division to develop a SWAp for TVET in collaboration with the Directorate of Technical Education, Bangladesh Technical Education Board, and the National Skills Development Authority. Also, ensure the involvement of other concerned government agencies, non-government and private sector stakeholders

**Strengthening of decentralized management of TVET:** Its critical to strengthening division and district level functions and the capacities of the Directorate of Technical Education and Bangladesh Technical Education Board. Ensuring delegation of authority and promoting local level planning could also contribute to maximizing benefits to the most marginalized and facilitate the informed decision process.

**Strengthened institutional leadership among the concerned stakeholders:** A sustained effort for the development and application of institutional leadership capacity at a deferent level will benefit the sector, particularly to address the youth in adversity to cope with the emerging needs of the market. In addition, the development and implementation of the standard operating procedures (SOP) will contribute to better planning and implementation of the sector plan. The leadership is crucial for raising funds, engage the private sector, attract philanthropist and engage NGOs by ensuring transparency and accountability as well as improving value for money.

### **5. Conclusion**

Bangladesh has a high potential to transform the youth population into a productive workforce through enhancing their capabilities and ensuring the TVET education is more inclusive of youth facing adversity. The TVET and graded skills development programs could contribute to fill in the gaps in the education-related policy and practice change discourse by providing skills that respond to the needs of the future market, promoting values and ethics and entrepreneurship. Philanthropic funding could play a catalytic role in reaching the most marginalized and providing them marketable skills and helping in linking them to decent work opportunities. Besides service delivery, evidence-based policy advocacy, at the policy level, action research, and continuous public advocacy is critical to realizing the potential of skills development for youth in adversity.

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