



Evidence-based e-government policies for advancing governmental service delivery and accountability in support of the Sustainable Development Goals

A joint project of

-United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), and

-Access to Information Programme, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Youth Employment, Education and Training in Bangladesh A Concept Note

Foreword

This concept note is prepared as part of an ongoing action-oriented project entitled 'Evidence-based e-government policies for advancing governmental service delivery and accountability in support of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).'¹ It is a joint initiative of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and the Access to Information (a2i) Programme at the ICT Division, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. The broader goal of the project is to identify how people, processes, tools, and techniques related to information communication technology (ICT) can support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by concerned lead ministries and agencies in Bangladesh, including through identifying data and policy gaps. The project team has identified decent work and economic growth, amongst others, as a priority area for Bangladesh. Engaging the youth in employment, education or training is critical to achieving sustainable economic growth.

Data for this concept note came from from five sources: (a) desk research on open source materials such as published reports and SDG tracker data; (b) consultations with the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Lead Ministry for promoting social inclusion in Bangladesh; (c) SDG Action Plan of the Lead Ministry; (d) interactions with field level officials and social protection beneficiaries in Kishoreganj district²; and (e) focus group discussion with concerned officials conducted during the second national capacity development workshop held in Dhaka in June 2018.³

This concept note has six parts as stated below:

1. Background;
2. Issues and Priorities;
3. Measuring progress with available data;
4. Lead agencies and actors;
5. Data collection and data gaps;
6. Implementation Strategy: Recommended actions.

¹ For the UN system, the project code is DA 1617B-Bangladesh.

² The field visit was conducted on 5-6 June 2018. During the field trip, the project team met concerned officials from the district, sub-district, and union council levels, and beneficiaries of social safety net allowances at the union council level.

³ The second national capacity development workshop on 'Building Institutional Capacity for E-Government Data Analysis and Evidence-based Decision-Making to Support Sustainable Development Goals' was jointly organized by UN DESA and a2i on 26-27 June 2018.



1. Background

According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), about 8 million people in Bangladesh, aged 15-24, are not in employment, education and training (NEET).⁴ A study by ILO finds that 40 per cent young people in Bangladesh are NEET population. This certainly shows a low labour force participation rate (LFPR) for the young people in the country. The problem is more precarious for women than men. In 2016, the ILO claimed NEET rates were 62 per cent for young women and 14 per cent for young men.⁵ Drawing on updated data, the SDG Tracker shows about 47 per cent women and 10 per cent men are NEET population in Bangladesh and the total NEET population in the country is 28.8 per cent of young population.

Table 1. SDG Target and Indicators related to Decent Work and Economic Growth (for this project)

SDG 8
Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.
Target 8.6
By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training.
Indicator 8.6.1
Proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment or training.

The Department of Youth Development (DoYD), under the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS), is responsible for “transforming the disorganized and unproductive youth into a disciplined and productive workforce.”⁶ In addressing the issue of NEET population, the 7th Five Year Plan (FYP) envisions youth engagement in disaster management, primary healthcare, social awareness, and training-and-funding for self-employment. The 7th FYP also set an ambitious task of providing training to 1.9 million youths of which 30 per cent would be involved in self-employment activities. In addition, the government will establish more youth training centres. These targets will be achieved by forging Public-Private Partnership, resource allocation for human development, improved linkage between training and job market, creation of opportunities for employment and enterprise development.⁷ As part of its global commitment, the GoB is committed to reducing the NEET population, which is part of a broader goal (SDG 8) that focuses on inclusive and sustainable

⁴ Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), *Report on Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLSF) 2015-16* (Dhaka: Statistics and Informatics Division, BBS, 2017), p. 212.

⁵ International Labour Organization, *Statistical Report of the Decent Work Decade 2006-2015: Asia-Pacific and the Arab States* (Bangkok: ILO, 2016), p. 20.

⁶ Ministry of Planning, *7th Five Year Plan* (Dhaka: General Economic Division, Ministry of Planning, 2015), p. 601.

⁷ Ministry of Planning, *7th Five Year Plan*, p. 603.



economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. Table 1 shows the relevant SDG target and indicator for the purpose of this concept note.

2. Issues and priorities

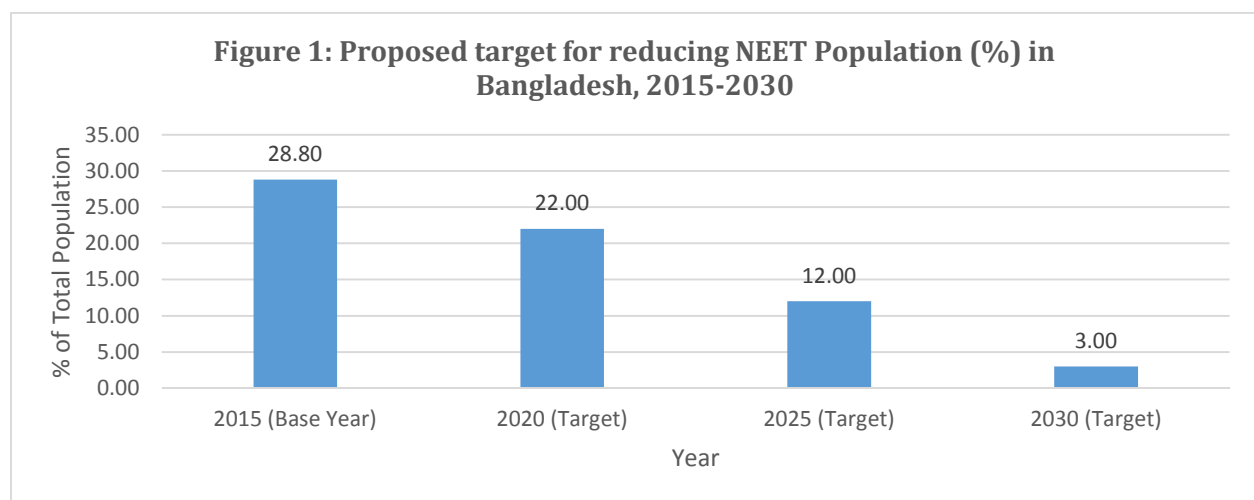
The National Youth Policy 2017 focuses on several target groups such as welfare of unemployed youths, young females, young entrepreneurs, expatriate youths, rural youths, school dropout youths, illiterate youths, unskilled youths, youths with special needs, youth with drug addiction problem, homeless youths, and youths suffering from epidemics.

Through the Department of Youth Development, the MoYS provides more than a dozen services including self-employment and entrepreneurship development training, ICT training, micro-credit scheme. On a pilot basis, the MoYS has introduced some digitized service delivery at the district and sub-district level. Out of 14 services given by Youth Development Directors, the GoB has fully digitized 8 services on a small scale in several districts.

MoYS has 22 ongoing development projects, aligned with the 7th Five Year Plan. Out of these 22 projects, six are implemented by the Department of Youth Development (DYD), and the rest are related to sports. Most of the sports-related initiatives are either event-based, or related to the construction and renovation of sports facilities. In addition, Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Pratisthan (BKSP, Bangladesh Sports Education Institution) has long-term plans and programs for youth and sports development.

3. Measuring progress with available data

Figure 1 shows the baseline data and projected data for SDG 8.6.1. Drawing on data from the Quarterly Labour Force Survey, the Ministry of Youth and Sports claims that in 2015, the 28.8 per cent youth population aged 15-24 were NEET. MoYS plans to bring down to 3 per cent in the next 15 years.



Source: Ministry of Youth and Sports, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, “SDG Action Plan through National Mid-Term and Long-Term Development Plan,” pp. 6-8.



4. Lead agencies and actors

The Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS) is the lead agency and the Ministry of Labour and Employment is the co-lead agency responsible for implementing SDG 8.6.1. The associate agencies are the Ministry of Education (MoE), Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MoEWOE), Statistics and Informatics Division (SID), Ministry of Industries (MoI), Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME), and Information and Communication Technology Division (ICTD) of the Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications, and ICT.

MoYS was established in 1984. It operates with five constituent organizations such as the Department of Youth Development (DoYD), National Sports Council (NSC), Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan (BKSP), Department of Sports (DoS), and Bangabandhu Krirashebi Kallyan Foundation (BKKF).

DYD is the lead actor for providing skills training, human resource development, and creation of employment opportunities for the youth. NSC controls the sports foundation, and BKSP is a premier sports training facility. DoS promotes sporting activities at the grassroots level, and BKKF works of promoting the welfare of sportspersons and their families.

The MoYS acquired competency as the lead agency for implementing SDG 8.6.1 simply because NEET population concerns the youth. However, the tasks of promoting employment, education, and training fall into the jurisdictions of multiple government agencies such as the MoLE, MoE, MoEWOE, MoI, MoPME, and ICTD. This is why MoLE has been designated co-lead and the rest as associate ministries for implementing SDG 8.6.1.

5. Data collection and data gaps

The Statistics and Informatics Division (SID) of BBS is responsible for collection of data related to SDG 8.6.1. The Report on Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS), published by the BBS, provides updated data on average monthly income. Since SID is responsible for producing the data, it has been listed as an associate agency for implementing SDG 8.6.1.

The SDG Monitoring and Evaluation Framework drafted by the MoYS has assigned targets for concerned co-lead and associate ministries to reduce NEET population (Appendix 1). There are no publicly available data on whether the co-lead and associate ministries and divisions have agreed on this projected reduction in NEET population as assigned by the MoYS.

6. Implementation Strategy: Recommended Actions

Concerned stakeholders consulted for this joint project recommend the following actions to implement the SDG 8.6.1:



- I. **Identify data gaps**, especially those related to ongoing projects and their outputs in engaging the youths in education, employment, and training. Concerned stakeholders agreed that lack of disaggregated data and the availability of partially digitized data for NEET people constitute a major challenge that needs to be addressed in achieving the SDG target.⁸
- II. **Assist lead agency—the Ministry of Youth and Sports—to development plans and strategies** for systematic collection, analysis, publication, and visualization of data related to SDG indicator 8.6.1. The District Youth Development offices may be directed by the Department of Youth Development to collect, collate, and analyse data on their loan, training, and other programmes, in the digital format. Such data also needs to be visualised in an unrestricted platform.⁹
- III. **Promote inter-agency collaboration** between the Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Labour and Employment, and other associate ministries, and **promote public-private partnership** in designing projects to reduce NEET population.
- IV. **Conceptualize and implement one ICT-enabled application and service** to support the implementation of SDG 8.6.1. Among the ongoing projects, the Training on Information Technology (TIT) currently uses some ICT tools. There is a need fro developing appropriate policies and tools for a NEET youth data management and information (MIS) system to enable the MoYS to track the career paths of TIT graduates, and overall progress in achieving SDG 8.6.1.¹⁰

Appendix 1

NEET Population Reduction Targets by Lead, Co-Lead, and Associate Ministries

Ministries/Divisions	Status (Lead/Co-Lead/Associate)	Target Year 2020	Target Year 2025	Target Year: 2030
		Projected NEET Population Reduction		
Department of Youth Development (DYD), Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS)	Lead	9,98,314	14,29,200	16,44,500
Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE)	Co-Lead	80,000	1,00,000	1,00,000
Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MoEWOE)	Associate	3,50,000	5,00,000	6,00,000
Ministry of Industries (MoInd)	Associate	3,50,000	5,00,000	6,000,000

⁸ This view was shared by various stakeholders at the field level as well as during the second national capacity building workshop, both of which were mentioned before.

⁹ This view came from the project team's consultation with the lead ministry and field level officials.

¹⁰ This recommendation came from senior officials from the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and other delegates who attended the second national capacity building workshop.



ICT Division (ICTD)	Associate	60,000	1,00,000	1,50,000
Ministry of Education (MoE)	Associate	51,871	1,05,821	83,648
Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME)	Associate	50,000	1,00,000	80,000

Source: Adapted from Ministry of Youth and sports (2018), “SDG Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework.” Annex A, pp. 3-4.

Note on authors and correspondence: This concept note is the product of a team work carried out by Wai Min, Ramiz Uddin, ASM Ali Ashraf, Ronan Gomes, Tito Chakma, and Sadia Afrose Shampa. ASM Ali Ashraf produced the first draft with substantial inputs from all of the team members. The authors acknowledge inputs from the Ministry of Youth and Sports, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh for useful comments on an earlier version. Inquiries regarding the content of this concept note can be directed to: kwok@un.org, ramizuddin@a2i.pmo.gov.bd, aliashraf79@gmail.com.