

## Event Report

# Multi-Stakeholder Consultation on Policy Advocacy for Increasing the Revenue Budget for TTCs and DEMOs to Enhance Services of Migrant Workers Welfare

**Organized by:** WARBE Development Foundation in Partnership with the International Labour Organization (ILO)

**Supported by:** The Embassy of Switzerland in Bangladesh

**Date:** 26th November 2025 (Wednesday)

**Venue:** Conference Room, The Daily Star Centre

## Background

This multi-stakeholder consultation was convened to address critical institutional and financial gaps within Bangladesh's labour migration ecosystem, specifically focusing on the Technical Training Centres (TTCs) and District Employment and Manpower Offices (DEMOs). These institutions form the backbone of the country's overseas employment



system, providing essential services in skill development, certification, pre-departure orientation, counselling, and grievance redress. Their performance directly shapes the quality, safety, and global competitiveness of Bangladeshi migrant workers. The lack of operational resources hampers their ability to

support both outgoing and returning migrants, resulting in skill mismatches, lower wages abroad, and limited institutional protection throughout the migration cycle. Given the significant contribution of remittances to the national economy, strengthening these institutions is essential for enhancing migration governance and ensuring that workers are adequately prepared for global labour markets.

Against this backdrop, WARBE Development Foundation, in partnership with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and support from the Embassy of Switzerland in Bangladesh, organized the *“Multi-Stakeholder Consultation on Policy Advocacy for Increasing the Revenue Budget for TTCs and DEMOs to Enhance Services of Migrant*

*Workers' Welfare*" on 26 November 2025 at The Daily Star Centre, Dhaka. The consultation brought together government officials, development partners, civil society organizations, trade unions, private sector representatives, academia, media, and migrant community members. The event aimed to identify budget gaps, assess institutional constraints, and generate evidence-based recommendations to strengthen training and employment facilitation services for migrant workers. The discussion



underscored the need to modernize TTC training modules, improve practical and language readiness, expand digital and Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) skills, and enhance coordination between DEMO offices and training centres. Participants stressed the importance of stronger market research, better documentation,

transparent evaluation systems, and improved reintegration support for returnee migrants.

Speakers highlighted gaps such as insufficient alignment with international job markets, outdated curricula and equipment, weak TTC–DEMO coordination, inadequate language training, and the absence of national certification mechanisms. They emphasized the need for greater government leadership in welfare funding, more meaningful public–private partnerships, enhanced data systems, reform of BMET and recruiting agencies, and adopting successful global models such as industry-responsive training systems. Calls were made to strengthen monitoring mechanisms, improve budget utilization, and introduce competitive performance standards across TTCs. The consultation concluded with a strong consensus on the need for enhanced and strategically allocated revenue budgets to upgrade training infrastructure, diversify skill programmes, improve service delivery, and better integrate TTCs and DEMOs with global labour market demands.

## Objectives

- Identify current budget gaps and operational constraints of TTCs and DEMOs.
- Advocate for increased revenue allocation for skill development and employment services.
- Ensure TTCs and DEMOs can align training with international labour market demands.
- Enhance the quality of pre-departure orientation, grievance management, and migrant counselling.

- Strengthen coordination between MoEWOE, BMET, and relevant ministries for efficient budgeting.
- Recommend actionable policy reforms for improved migration governance.

Overall, the consultation produced clear, actionable, and consensus-driven recommendations aimed at strengthening the governance, financing, and market responsiveness of TTCs and DEMO offices, ensuring improved migrant skills, protection, and overseas employment outcomes.

## Introduction and Objective of the Consultation

The event began with registration, followed by introductory remarks from **Ms. Jasiya Khatoon, Director, WARBE Development Foundation**. She explained that the discussion aimed to identify the existing budget gaps and operational constraints faced by TTCs and DEMO offices. She highlighted the need for increased revenue allocation for skill development and employment services and emphasized that TTCs and DEMOs must align their training with international labour market demands. She stated that



enhancing the quality of pre-departure orientation, grievance management, and migrant counselling was essential. She further stressed the importance of strengthening coordination among MoEWOE, BMET, and relevant ministries to ensure efficient budgeting. She noted that the session was expected to produce actionable policy reform recommendations, including a

clear assessment of institutional and financial gaps, policy recommendations for increased and efficient revenue allocation, a proposed roadmap for upgrading training infrastructure, equipment, and curricula, and a policy brief to be submitted to the relevant ministries. She stated, "Without adequate revenue budgets, TTCs and DEMOs cannot function efficiently or deliver effective services to aspiring migrant workers."

## Welcome Remarks

**Syed Saiful Haque, Chairman of WARBE Development Foundation**, delivered the welcome remarks. He highlighted the interconnected roles of the Ministry, TTCs, and DEMOs in national-level training and service delivery. He expressed gratitude to Ms. Rahnuma Salam Khan for her support from the ILO, noting that the team had progressed



and accomplished various tasks because of ILO's assistance. He reiterated that TTCs provide essential training and emphasized the need for proper utilization. He also mentioned that a policy brief would be prepared and submitted to the ministry. He stated, "Our evaluation of previous work shows clear gaps, but also strong potential. Strengthening TTCs and DEMOs requires consistent engagement, clear accountability, and better budgetary support."

**Ms. Rahnuma Salam Khan, National Project Manager at the International Labour Organization (ILO)**, contributed several substantive observations during the discussion. She mentioned that they often heard the same issues repeatedly and requested that the discussion be narrowed to specific recommendations to prevent key messages from



losing significance. She pointed out that although there were 110 TTCs, only a limited number provided appropriate feedback, referencing a pilot survey she had recently conducted. She asked whether strengthening existing TTCs could be prioritized instead of establishing new ones and questioned whether institutions were truly adapting to the Fourth Industrial Revolution. She added that reports often appeared negative but noted that this reflected existing realities. She emphasized that

job placement should remain a major focus area. She stressed the need to "filter and design training programs according to destination countries and the specific job categories demanded there." She also noted that although a significant portion of Bangladeshi migrants work in the construction sector, "TTCs currently do not provide construction-related training, which creates a major skills gap." She added that instead of offering generic basic computer courses, TTCs should prioritize specialized technical and job-specific skill development aligned with market demand.

## Keynote Presentation

**Mr. Abu Saleh Md. Shamim Alam Shibly, Senior Research Associate, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)** delivered the keynote address, offering an in-depth analysis of the institutional and structural challenges within the revenue budgeting process. He explained, "*Revenue allocations for TTCs and DEMOs have remained stagnant due to low human resources, structural limitations, and persistent service-delivery challenges.*"

He highlighted several critical gaps, including the mismatch between international job market demands and local training, outdated equipment and insufficient procurement capacity, lack of language training, fragmented distribution of responsibilities, challenges related to the Tk 1100 assessment fee, and inadequate data systems and oversight mechanisms.

Shibly further noted, *“Every year 10–11 lakh migrants are leaving, yet only around 40 TTCs are equipped to serve them. This mismatch is producing unskilled and semi-skilled manpower who struggle abroad.”*

He recommended several key reforms, including immediate reallocation of unused funds and ensuring predictable revenue budgeting, revising BMET and TTC terms to align with contemporary market needs, modernizing training curricula to meet national and international job requirements, and transforming TTCs into hubs for skill assessment, NSDA coordination, job fairs, and pilot overseas employment programs.

## Open-Floor Discussion

Participants from various sectors shared practical challenges and policy recommendations during the discussion.

**Mr. Asif Ayub, Joint Secretary General of the Bangladesh Employers' Federation (BEF)**, stressed the need for market-driven training and stronger institutional accountability. He questioned whether the certificates provided by TTCs were accepted abroad and whether TTCs were meant only for preparing outgoing migrants or also responsible for assessing post-migration capacities. He offered several suggestions, noting that TTCs should be more industry-friendly, aligned with the local market, supported by an MoU between BMET and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and guided by a proper performance evaluation system. He stated, *“TTC certificates must be internationally acceptable. Without market-oriented curricula and proper KPIs, performance-based budgeting won't work.”* He added, *“We need MoUs with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for authentic job opportunities and better international collaboration.”*

**Principal, Bangladesh German TTC Dhaka** responded that TTC certificates were not internationally recognized but were generally accepted. He noted that some migrants going to Bulgaria had recently been asked if they had any formal training. He mentioned that some TTCs already followed good models, but overall BMET required reform. He observed that Singapore was currently demanding construction workers and emphasized that training should reflect migrants' perspectives, as many workers needed two or three rounds of training to pass overseas exams. He also stated that TTCs should not be blamed for unauthorized certificates, arguing that other affiliated actors were responsible. He pointed out that teachers were often labelled “unskilled,” yet many had been working

in the same position for 15–20 years without promotion or permanent status, which affected motivation and quality. He suggested focusing on structural issues rather than individual blame.

**Ms. Tipu Sultan, Member of BAIRA** stated that certificates could often be obtained without proper training. He argued that TTCs must be upgraded to international standards and pointed out that no TTC currently had the authority to send workers to Singapore.

**Mr. Nafiz Intiaz, Consultant** discussed the role of DEMO and emphasized the importance of organizational trust between TTCs, BMET, and other institutions. He said that adequate financing would naturally follow improved coordination. He stressed the need for reintegration support for returnee migrants, explaining that DEMO offices lacked sufficient capacity. He proposed establishing counselling services, survival centers, and reintegration circles.

**Mr. Prabir Kumar Biswas, Assistant Director** questioned whether current TTC training modules were updated, stating that major upgradation was needed. He highlighted that many of the trades offered by TTCs were ineffective and suggested that while establishing country-specific TTCs might be difficult, country-specific training could be introduced. He added that driving training needed modernization, TTCs in migration-prone areas were not fully effective, and there were gaps in DEMO recommendation letters for 2022–23.

**Mr. Nahidul Hasan Nayan, General Secretary, Sommilito Sramik Federation (SSF)** said that many migrants lacked cultural knowledge of destination countries, and this system gap pushed people toward private agencies rather than TTCs.

**Mr. Premangshu Shekhar Sarker, Project Director (Interim), Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation Bangladesh** observed that laws were frequently drafted but seldom implemented. He said that, at the local level, DEMO and TTC often acted in competition rather than cooperation and argued that opportunities needed to be identified more proactively. He identified structural inefficiencies, noting, *“The roles and responsibilities of DEMOs and TTCs are still unclear. Resource wastage at TTCs is a serious concern.”*

**Mr. Lutffor Rahman, Principal, Bangladesh Korean TTC** acknowledged existing skill gaps and said that although fieldwork was underway, the real challenge was developing genuinely skilled workers. He argued that employment assurance should come before budget increases. He stressed the need for effective training design, proper curriculum maintenance, adequate tracking of graduation and employment data, and greater investment in training materials. He added that national capacity-building remained difficult given the scale of migrant demand.

**Ms. Sumi (Returnee Migrant)** shared real-life challenges of unprepared migration journeys. She said, *“I could not operate kitchen equipment properly. I didn’t receive*

*mental counselling, and the language and culture were totally unfamiliar. If there was a proper database based on returnees' experiences, new workers could be better prepared."*

**Mr. Razequzzaman Ratan, Member of Trade Union-CSO Action Alliance (TUCSAA)** emphasized essential skill gaps. He remarked, *"Jordan requires at least one year of experience. Yet 80% of our workers are unskilled. Basic digital skills, using a phone, internet navigation, basic calculations are not optional anymore."*

**Ms. Najiba Nourin, Manager (Policy & Advocacy, Migration Programme), BRAC,** spoke on migrant preparedness, emphasizing that *"Financial literacy, digital content, follow-up mechanisms, and career counselling must be built into both pre-decision and training phases."*

**DEMO Official** added concerns regarding operational challenges. She stated, *"Online registration fees, PDO awareness, and budget constraints limit our ability to support workers effectively."*

## Panel Discussion

The panel discussion gathered insights from leading experts and practitioners.

**Ms. Sumaiya Islam, Executive Director, Bangladesh Nari Sramik Kendra (BNSK),** noted that TTCs could not independently manage the full spectrum of responsibilities—training, market assessment, and migration processing. She suggested adopting the South Korea EPS model, where employers share responsibility, and emphasized strengthening public–private partnerships. She observed that although the TTC in Manikganj had capacity, its scope remained limited, and false partnerships often led trainees to seek training outside their own districts. Highlighting the need for evidence-based training design, she stated, *"Labour-market analysis must come before training. Employer responsibility, PPP models, and market-specific manpower creation are essential. We must also create domestic jobs for our skilled workforce."*

**Mr. Naimul Ahsan Jewel, Member Secretary, NCCWE and Convening Committee Member, TUCSAA,** stated that there were 12 national federations under the World Trade Federation and that they maintained an MoU with the ILO. He remarked that although WARBE, the ILO, and other organizations had long been implementing quality programs, many outcomes were not translated into practice. He noted that stakeholders often failed to raise their voices in the right spaces and recalled advising industry integration a decade earlier—yet little implementation followed. He added that NSDA was not fulfilling its responsibilities and emphasized the need for a national certificate for migrant workers, arguing that reintegration of returnees must be government-led. Highlighting structural gaps and the role of trade unions, he said, *"Migrants remain distant from their fundamental*

*rights because policies are not implemented. Providing opportunities to trained workers can help reduce unemployment.” He further added, “NSDA must ensure proper certification, industries should participate actively, and TTC operations should be centralized and transparent, like in the Philippines, where the government trains dropouts and sends them abroad.”*

**Mr. Shameem Ahmed Chowdhury Noman, Former Secretary General BAIRA** stated that the intent of the discussion was not to blame or criticize any actor. He noted that up to the previous year, around 4.2 million Bangladeshis had migrated abroad. He argued that the government should contribute to the welfare fund just as workers did, and added that if responsibilities needed to be delegated to agencies, they were prepared to accept them. He criticized the practice of repeatedly drawing funds from the welfare fund, despite it being fully financed by workers. Highlighting the scale of migration and the need for performance-linked allocations, he said, *“In the past four years, 42 lakh people have gone abroad. The budget must align with performance, and TTC–DEMO–worker coordination must be strengthened through government leadership.”*

**Mr. Kazi Abul Kalam, Former Joint Secretary, MoEWOE**, acknowledged that BMET had several shortcomings. He proposed establishing a Migration Institute run by non-government experts, explaining that it could conduct continuous research on global labour markets, demand trends, and related issues. He further noted gaps within recruiting agencies and suggested that Bangladesh should strategically target countries offering labour incentives. He emphasized that institutional research and proper needs assessments must be prioritized alongside increasing the budget, stating, *“A dedicated Migration Institute is essential for continuous research and market analysis. Removing intermediaries must be a priority.”*

### **Guest of Honour: Mr. Zia Hassan, Policy Advisor, MoEWOE**

**Mr. Zia Hassan** began by thanking the organizers for the invitation and acknowledged the detailed presentation by Mr. Shibly, CPD. He highlighted three key points. First, he described a major disconnect between training and actual market demand, sharing an example from Japanese recruitment where language mastery simplified technical training. He questioned whether Bangladesh was achieving true efficiency and stressed



prioritizing language training in TTCs, noting that current incentive structures required rethinking. Second, he asked whether TTCs needed new adaptive approaches, pointing



out that nearly 3 million Bangladeshi women were working abroad without ever receiving TTC training. He stressed the need for TTCs to be more adaptive, better aligned with market demand, more engaged with the private sector, and responsive to overseas opportunities. Third, he raised the issue of financing and expressed disappointment over declining budget

allocations, contrasting this with large investments made in areas like ground security and karate by private actors such as Asif Mahmud. He questioned why similar levels of investment were not made in TTCs, arguing that changed global realities demanded greater support. He added that TTCs should introduce competitive mechanisms among themselves to enhance performance and effectiveness.

He stated, *“This consultation is both timely and essential for planning and resource allocation.”* He identified core bottlenecks such as operational limitations and a lack of institutional dynamism. Emphasizing language training, capacity enhancement, and stronger linkage between TTCs and job markets, he said, *“We must filter and prepare specific skill categories, not rely on general training.”*

## Vote of Thanks: Syed Saiful Haque, Chairman, WARBE Development Foundation



Mr. Haque thanked all participants, offering special appreciation to the two TTC principals present. He noted that he had expected two specific points from them: first, whether TTC staff members were familiar with the full process of air travel, emphasizing that such knowledge and experience were essential; second, that TTC principals should proactively request the budgets required for their institutions. He concluded by saying that the discussion had been

highly productive and generated valuable recommendations, even if some stakeholder interests occasionally diverged.

The event concluded with a collective commitment to translate the discussions into actionable recommendations, advocate for stronger and more predictable revenue budgeting, and continue joint efforts to strengthen the TTC and DEMO systems for the benefit of current and future migrant workers.

## **Recommendations**

### **1. Increase and Strategically Allocate Revenue Budgets**

- Expand revenue allocations for TTCs and DEMOs with predictable, multi-year budgeting.
- Prioritize upgrading training infrastructure, equipment, and digital monitoring systems.
- Introduce performance-based budgeting linked to training quality, job placement, and market relevance.

### **2. Modernize Training, Curriculum, and Market Alignment**

- Update TTC curriculum to match the international standards and specific destination-country job requirements.
- Integrate language training, 4IR (Industrial Revolution) skills, and specialized technical courses.
- Conduct regular labour-market assessments to ensure that the training reflects global demand.

### **3. Strengthen Coordination and Institutional Governance**

- Improve operational collaboration among MoEWOE, BMET, NSDA, DEMOs, and TTCs.
- Establish clear roles, responsibilities, accountability mechanisms, and inter-institutional connection across the institutions.
- Introduce stronger monitoring, evaluation, and transparent reporting systems.
- Improve pre-departure orientation, grievance management, and psychosocial counselling.
- Ensure valid and internationally acceptable certification systems and recognition standards.
- Expand documentation, tracking of trainees, and employment follow-up.

### **4. Prioritize Reintegration and Returnee Support**

- Strengthen DEMO's capacity for counselling, reintegration services, and community-level support.
- Establish reintegration centres, survival circles, and career-counselling units.

## **5. Promote Public–Private and International Partnerships**

- Strengthen MoUs between the MOFA and destination-country governments for skills recognition and job placement.
- Engage trade unions, civil society, and the private sector to enhance training design and delivery.

## **6. Improve Certification, Accountability, and Standardization**

- Introduce national certification for migrant workers aligned with international standards.
- Prevent unauthorized certificate issuance and enforce stricter oversight.

## **7. Invest in Human Resources and Institutional Capacity**

- Provide career progression, incentives, and skill-upgradation for instructors and staff.
- Ensure TTC personnel receive proper training on migration processes and overseas job systems.

## **8. Strengthen Data, Documentation, and Market Research**

- Regularly update the national database, capturing returnees' experiences to inform training improvements.
- Improve data collection on training outcomes, job placement, and returnee experiences.
- Establish a dedicated Migration Institute for continuous global market research.

## **9. Ensure Worker Protection and Access to Information**

- Promote better financial literacy, digital literacy, and cultural orientation for migrants.
  - Improve PDO access, online registration systems, and reduce hidden costs.
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