

Press Release

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## Partnerships are key to promote youth skills development during COVID-19

Hands-on technical training has become almost halted in Bangladesh since the outbreak of COVID-19. The physical classes in educational institutions are closed sine die while there are still many challenges in remote learning. In such a challenging time, government and stakeholders should look forward to multiple pathways to ensure that children and youths get different opportunities to continue their learning.

The suggestion came up from a panel of speakers at a webinar titled “Invest in skills to build resilient youth” today, Wednesday, July 14. In celebration of World Youth Skills Day (July 15), BRAC Skills Development Programme (SDP) organised the webinar to generate awareness among all stakeholders, especially strategic players in skills ecosystem to acknowledge and work together on the importance of skills training and subsequent employment opportunities considering the pandemic employment demand and emerging employability sector.

Tasmiah Tabassum Rahman, Current In-charge, BRAC Skills Development Programme moderated the event where Md. Aminul Islam Khan, Secretary, Technical and Madrasha Education Division, Ministry of Education attended as the chief guest.

Veera Mendonca, Deputy Representative of UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office, Shahriar Islam, Senior Program Manager at Australian High Commission in Dhaka, and Syeda Afzalun Nessa, Head of Corporate Sustainability at HSBC Bangladesh was the panelists at the discussion.

In her opening speech, Tasmiah Tabassum Rahman emphasized on the need for more partnerships and collaborations to work towards building a resilient ecosystem for youth skills development.

Veera Mendonca, Deputy Representative of UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office, said government and partners are looking at multiple pathways to ensure that children not in school will access opportunities for learning, may not be in the standard school structure, but with different opportunities for learning.

“Beyond changing skills and schools, beyond looking at reform, beyond looking at innovative partnership, we do need to look at the scale and to the most vulnerable. And this is why partnerships are critical,” she said.

Even amid the COVID-19 pandemic, there are a lot of opportunities there as well, but we need to work together for an efficient and sustainable solution, said Shahriar Islam.

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Syeda Afzalun Nessa called upon the youths to be adaptive to the situation for the greater benefit. “Have problem-solving mechanisms. Be adaptive with this kind of situation, and try to be adaptive to change,” she said to the youths.

Secretary to the Technical and Madrasha Education Division Md. Aminul Islam Khan said this has been a very difficult and challenging time because of COVID-19 with no one knows how long it is going to continue and how deep it is going to affect our lives.

“I think it is very challenging that education and training systems are yet to return to normal and I am not very sure how it is going to look like. The government is trying hard to popularize technical education to create resilient youth. For popularizing technical education, we need to demonstrate the value of technical education,” he added.

The secretary said the government is working for collaborative and community learning and also focusing on blended learning, to continue education and necessary trainings.

Since 2012, BRAC SDP has reached out 349642 people with different skills intervention and decent work knowledge. SDP has provided skills training to 83,883 youth across Bangladesh. Among them, 58.07% were women, and 7.09% were persons with disabilities. 84.53% were placed in jobs, and 58,899 people received employability and entrepreneurship training.

With regards  
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