

# CHAMPIONING TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ALLEVIATING POVERTY IN ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

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## ABSTRACT

*The increasing global economy is having profound effects on the labour market in the countries of the Asia-Pacific region. At the same time, technological advances have contributed to heightened income inequality and changed nature of the labour market. As a result, across the world, all policymakers are focusing their efforts towards generating jobs and increasing productivity as one of the top agendas. Developing countries in the Colombo Plan region are seeking to grow in an inclusive way to reduce poverty, and addressing the challenge of expanding population. Despite the marked progress made in reducing poverty over the last decades, the number of people living in extreme poverty globally remains unacceptably high. While poverty rates have declined in all regions, progress has been uneven. The effort to end extreme poverty is far from over and a number of challenges remains to be addressed in the changing context of the labour market.*

*Consistent with the aims and aspirations placed in the 2008 Manila Declaration on Skill Development for Poverty Alleviation and in the context of the needed developments across the region, this paper presents a framework of Championing Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Skills for poverty alleviation.*

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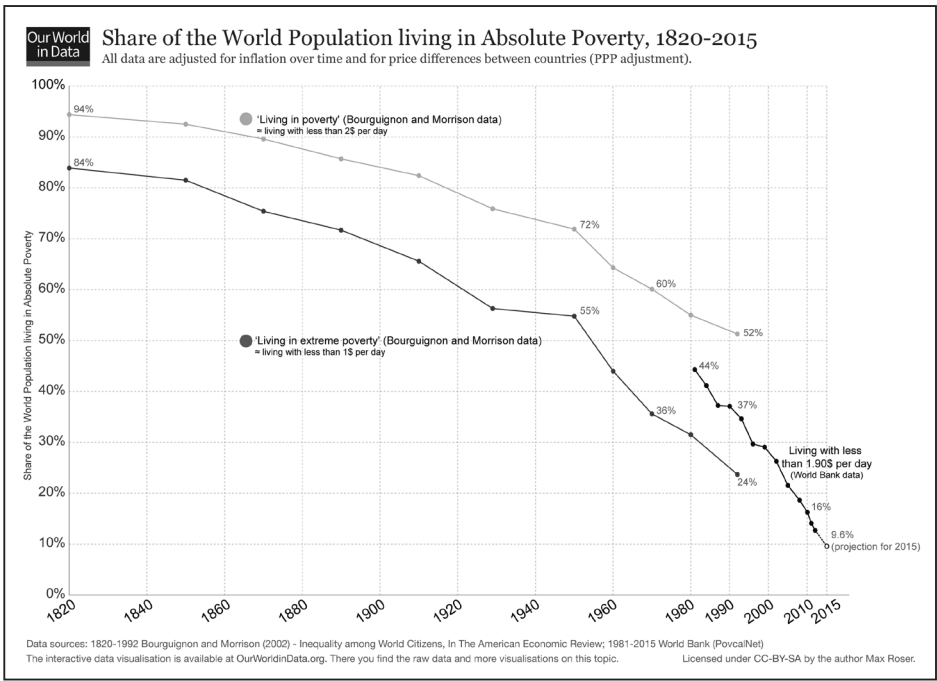
## Introduction

Demographic structures in Asian economies vary, presenting different developmental challenges. Over the past few decades, economic growth of the Asia-Pacific region was exceptionally fast. The region has undergone a dramatic transformation and its economy expanded manifold. Average per capita income almost doubled or tripled. Hundreds of millions of people were lifted out of poverty. The region is now home to almost two-thirds of the world's population. In its sheer size and potential, the global community is closely monitoring the level of progress achieved by the countries in this region, since it is a critical factor in determining efforts to achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG).<sup>1</sup> The recent trend shows that it is experiencing an unprecedented growth and vibrant economic transformation, reflected by the increase in trade and wealth of Asian nations as compared to their counterparts in other regions. However, despite the impressive economic progress, a growing body of evidence points to serious human resource development related problems that require urgent attention to sustain the continuous economic might it currently enjoys. The World Bank<sup>2</sup> reported that 1.2 billion people are still living in extreme poverty across the world, a state of affairs that is morally unacceptable given the resources and technology available today. Sub-Saharan Africa still accounts for more than one-third of the world's extremely poor. This figure should serve as a rallying cry to the international community to take the fight against poverty to the next level. We have made strides in cutting down poverty, but nearly one-fifth of the world population is still below the poverty line. If the poverty benchmark is \$2 a day, the number rises to 1.64 billion, revealing a high degree of vulnerability.

Using data released in the latest World Development Indicators, Figure 1 shows that extreme poverty headcount rates have fallen in every developing region between 1981 and 2015. At the same time, rising inequality and social exclusion seem to be accompanying rising prosperity in many countries (Figure 2).

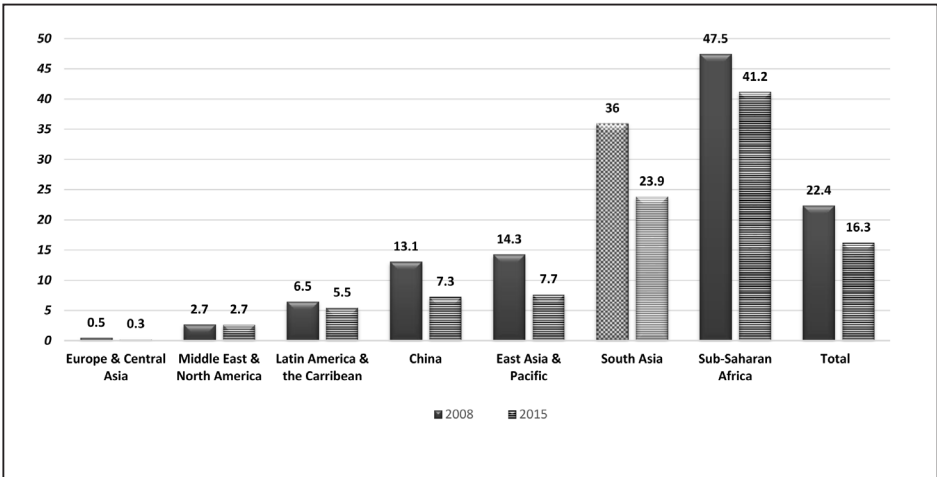
So far, the progress has been scattered with some countries reporting significant improvements while some lagging behind the targets. Similarly, (Figures 3 and 4) show the dynamism of poverty as it is directly linked with income threshold.

Figure 1: Current Population living in Extreme Poverty



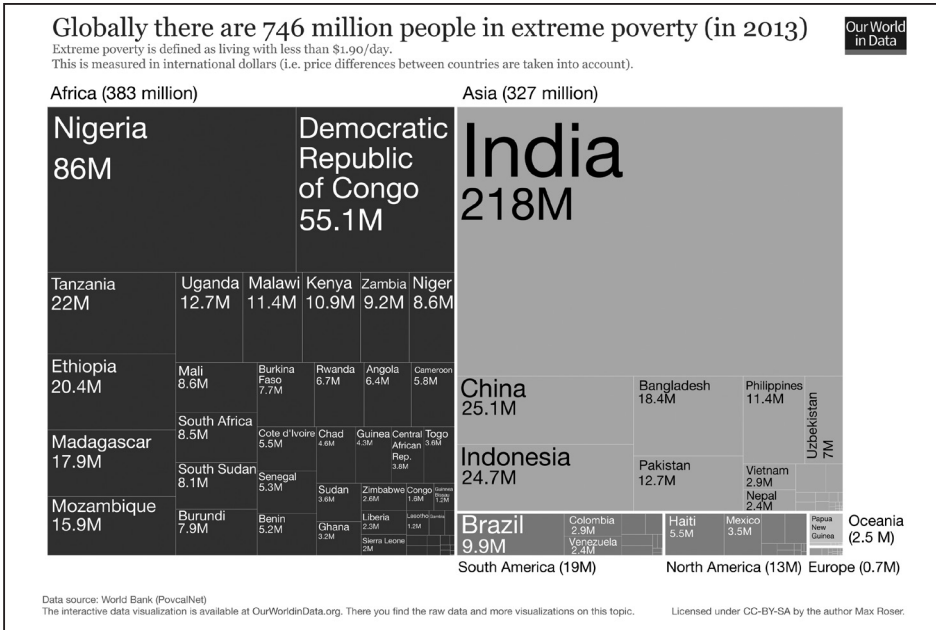
Source: <https://ourworldindata.org/world-poverty/>

Figure 2: Global Distribution of Poverty Percentage



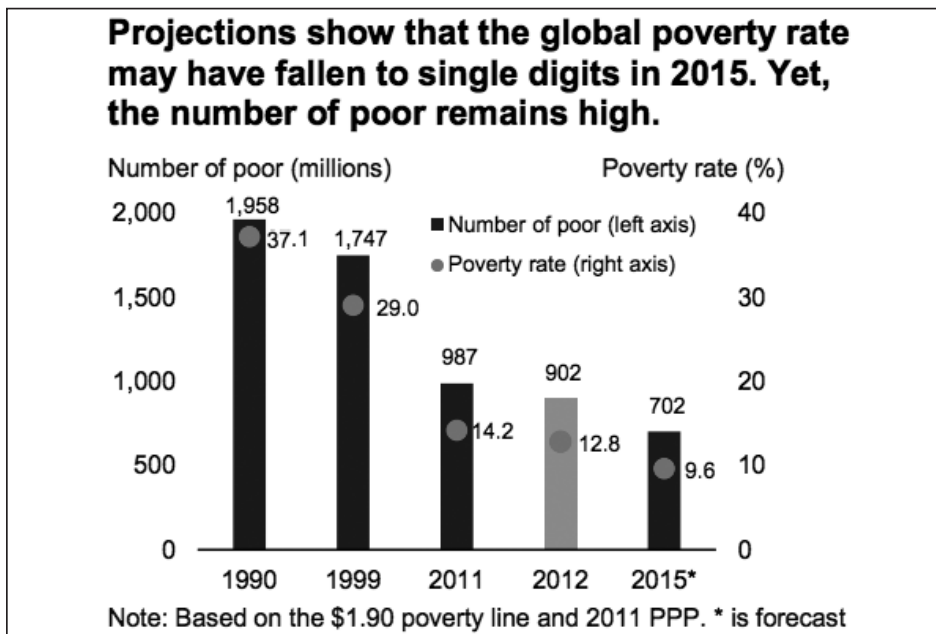
Source: <http://tomorrowseconomy.wordpress.com/2012/05/17/the-world-bank-responds-on-chinese-poverty-forecast/>

Figure 3: Declining of Poverty Incidence



Source: <https://ourworldindata.org/world-poverty/>

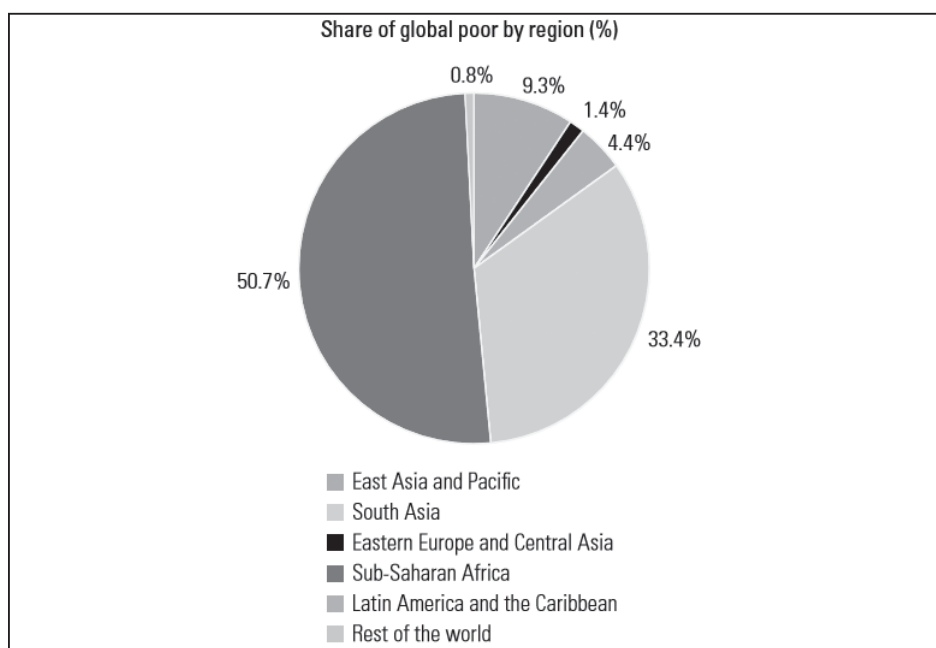
Figure 4: Trends in Poverty Rate and Number of Poor



Source: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/global-poverty-world-bank\\_us\\_561199814b0af3706e12d67](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/global-poverty-world-bank_us_561199814b0af3706e12d67)

The above projections show that the global poverty rate may have fallen to single digits in 2015. Yet, the number of poor remains high. The world population sits today at around 6.9 billion people. Asia<sup>3</sup> being the largest continent is also the home for almost 1.7 billion people, who are living below US\$2 a day. Roughly about half of the world's population is still mired in poverty despite its tremendous economic transformation and even in rapidly developing countries there are still significant cases of poverty incidence and widespread unemployment. Poverty is still the number one enemy in the region as seen in Figure 5 below.

**Figure 5: Where are the Global Poor living?**  
**The Global Poor by Region, 2013**



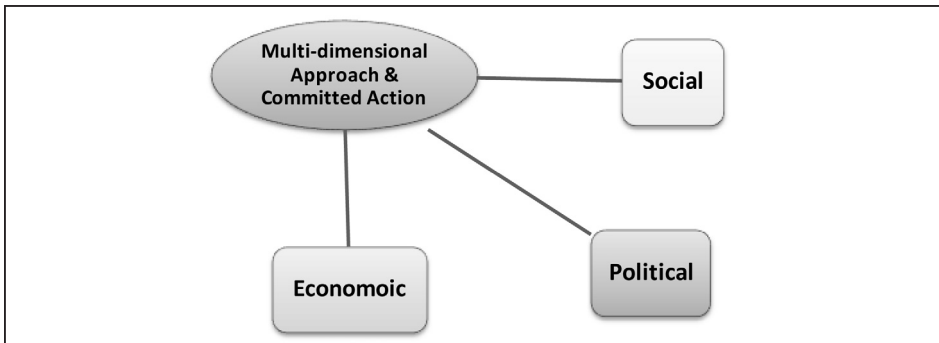
Source: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/25078/9781464809583.pdf>

Asian economies are expected to show improvements in their poverty levels given their unprecedented and continued economic and population growth. As per Takehiko Nakao, Asian Development Bank (ADB) President “The challenge for ADB is to help developing member countries to eradicate remaining poverty, support greater inclusiveness to address inequalities, and become more relevant and effective in middle-income countries”.<sup>4</sup> It is a sad reality though that many Asians are yet to benefit from the economic miracles experienced by their respective countries.<sup>5</sup> However, Asia and Pacific region have a global success story

in terms of reducing poverty, but gains have not been uniform across the region. Prosperity has spread to the cities much faster than the countryside. Vulnerable groups such as minorities and women are still more likely to be poor despite reductions in national poverty rates. Some areas in otherwise prosperous countries retain stubbornly high levels of poverty.<sup>6</sup>

These trends, as shown in the data above, reflect that poverty is still a pressing issue. The regional governments have launched many programmes and special efforts across the region to address this through various schemes, strategies and programmes aimed at extending basic services to the poorest of the poor. However, much is left to do for catching up with the developed countries' social progress and ensure the equitable share of the country's wealth and opportunities. It is therefore a major concern of each nation to formulate strategies, plans and ideas to address the issues regarding poverty alleviation. In this perspective, the World Bank has set two ambitious goals to push extreme poverty to not more than 3 per cent by 2030, and to promote shared prosperity and greater equity in the developing world.

**Figure 6: Interaction of the Nation's Sectors to fight Poverty**



Source: Generated by author

Poverty characteristics are described into two types: rural poverty which includes Agro-based economy and urban poverty which comprises substantial slum dwellers and marginalized poverty encompassing women, aged, and physically challenged people. The starting point is essentially a comprehensive examination of the constraints and opportunities for poverty reduction in each country. This will help us in understanding the nature, intensity and spread of poverty in the region. The fight against poverty requires a multi-dimensional approach and committed action by multiple stakeholders on various fronts. The interaction among the key sectors of a country in its fight against poverty is illustrated in Figure 6.

Fighting against poverty is a complex task where the interaction of the social, political and economic sectors of each country is crucial in the formulation of the appropriate strategies and modalities for programmes centred on poverty alleviation. We are at a unique point in history where it is necessary to investigate the root of poverty, apply the necessary interventions and monitor the progress. In doing so, serious commitments by the stakeholders are essential as they secure not only the funding and logistical requirements of the programme but also its sustainability beyond the intended duration of any time-bound initiative. For that reason, recognising productive employment is a major route out of poverty and social exclusion (ILO, 2003). Skill development is itself a key element of a comprehensive strategy for the promotion of employment-intensive growth and decent work. Skill development together with other social protection measures can certainly constitute a powerful tool for poverty reduction. An increasing number of countries are designing innovative strategies in this direction (Atchoarena, 2006).

### **Capitalising TVET for Poverty Alleviation**

The importance of growing human and social capital through the development of skills is progressively recognized throughout the world; hence, skills are back on the main development agenda in many countries. The capacity of the people to innovate, to achieve new ecological livelihoods and to contribute to economic competitiveness is best realized by equipping them with the necessary skills.

As the ILO's Declaration of Philadelphia *Working out of Poverty* (2003) notes, "poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere".<sup>7</sup> The ILO promotes poverty reduction at the policy level and in practice through its Decent Work Agenda:

"Poverty elimination is impossible unless the economy generates opportunities for investment, entrepreneurship, job creation and sustainable livelihoods. The principal route out of poverty is work."

Therefore, the most effective strategies to combat the problem of poverty are to develop the nation's workforce through massive development in human capital as well as investments in education and skills development.

This was recognized and reflected in the Bonn Declaration on Learning for Work, Citizenship and Sustainability (2004) which specified that:

"...Since education is considered the key to effective development strategies, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) must be the master

key that can alleviate poverty, promote peace, conserve the environment, improve the quality of life for all and help achieve sustainable development.”

As the *World Development Indicators (2004)* quoted:

“Education is the most important support to all the three dimensions. It is the basis of reducing poverty, inequality, increasing productivity, enabling the use of new technologies and creating special knowledge.”

The skill sector is by its very nature fragmented and is difficult to manage. It still faces the same broad issues as other sectors of education: those of equitable access of quality provision of appropriate curricula, of qualified and committed teachers, of forward looking management, and of a clear purposeful strategy.<sup>8</sup> These issues should be central to all skill agendas. Developing a system that delivers high quality training in appropriate skills to benefit a large section of society is a challenging task.

Within this perspective, an International Symposium on Skill Development for Poverty Alleviation was organized in January 2008 by the Colombo Plan Staff College for Technician Education (CPSC) in Manila, Philippines. This landmark symposium deliberated on the use of models, frameworks, modular designs and best practices for TVET skills which could reduce poverty such as employable skills, life skills, entrepreneurship skills and ICT skills, among others.

The 2008 Manila Declaration<sup>9</sup> pushed for a 12-point strategy for poverty alleviation “to fast-track initiatives in achieving the United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goals (MDG) UN MDG”. This pushes for the commencement of a massive capacity building for the training of the trainers in CPSC member countries to address the developing TVET skills needed for poverty alleviation.

The 2008 Manila Declaration draws special attention to the following specific recommendations:

- Strengthen and expand capacity building for the training of trainers in member countries in developing TVET skills needed for poverty alleviation;
- Build strong, broad-based coordinated ICT skills for education and gainful employment towards developing information capital;
- Strengthen and expand capacity building programmes especially for women, rural youth, informal economy workers and unorganized



sectors towards gainful employment;

- Increase human capital and induce self-employment and entrepreneurship development to address the problem of poverty in all sectors;
- The international donor community also increasingly recognizes skill development through capacity building training programmes for educational leaders as well as for Master trainers/teachers as an important approach to poverty reduction.

### **CPSC's Strategic Focus and New Initiative**

CPSC for Technician Education along with partner organizations has advocated the skill formation and training through Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as an effective platform to execute capacity-building approaches. This will be made possible through innovative strategies to build technical capacity of the human resources through technical teachers and other agents of development. This is imperative to address overarching issues such as poverty, gainful employment and decent work.

Consistent with the aims and aspirations placed in the 2008 Manila Declaration on Skill Development for Poverty Alleviation and in the context of the needed developments across the region CPSC made a call for assistance to its member governments to fulfil these enormous goals and strategies. The Government of India (GoI) favourably responded to this call and came forward to support the Skill Development for Poverty Alleviation Project (SDPA) under the Asia-Pacific Capacity Building Project for Technical Human Resource Development Initiative of CPSC. Under the GOI's Technical Cooperation programme, a one-time financial grant had been earmarked for the project. The project aimed to build capacity on TVET and related skills that will qualify the potential workforce, especially those from the rural sector to greater employability and decent work. TVET as the area of focus of CPSC has the capacity to build a nation by pushing its people towards efficiency and productivity, enabling them with skills that can answer the demands of employment. With employment comes a steady income that can help alleviate poverty. Improvement of pre-acquired skills through continuing/follow-on TVET matters was expected to ensure sustainability of opportunities that can be explored through this project.

## Nature of The SDPA Project

The following describe the nature of the CPSC-India SDPA Project:<sup>10</sup>

- a. **Objective:** The aim of this project was to build capacity and facilitate skill formation of a select target group based on the skill needs and priorities within the country.
- b. **Approach:** The project to be conducted in a series of in-country capacity building initiatives will adopt a modularized type of programmes on employable skills.
- c. **Methodology:** Programmes to be conducted will train Champion Leaders or Master Trainers who are expected to transfer the skills and knowledge in localized groups. Curriculum design, methods of instructions will suit the needs of the target groups for better adoption. The master trainers in return will be designing suitable training programme modules for the target beneficiaries with a view to gaining beneficial multiplier effect.
- d. **Expected Outcome:** The programme mainly addresses capacity-building needs at the community level. Masters' skill training enable them to possess the know-how in appropriate skill training and facilitation techniques, content development based on community-level needs, determination of target groups who can significantly benefit from the project and in turn benefit the others to make them employable and ready to create opportunities for employment.
- e. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** The progress of the programme's impacts to the communities will be evaluated through a structured periodic assessment of its activities based on pre-determined key result areas.
- f. **Output:** The project will have trained Master Trainers/Champion Leaders with the capacity to train others and by employing skill training techniques for a wider community beneficiary group. A demonstrated commitment of each of the countries on this project is also a reflection of the achieved aims of the project. Moreover, publication of print and non-print materials based from the programme's implementation, curriculum and best practices were also anticipated.

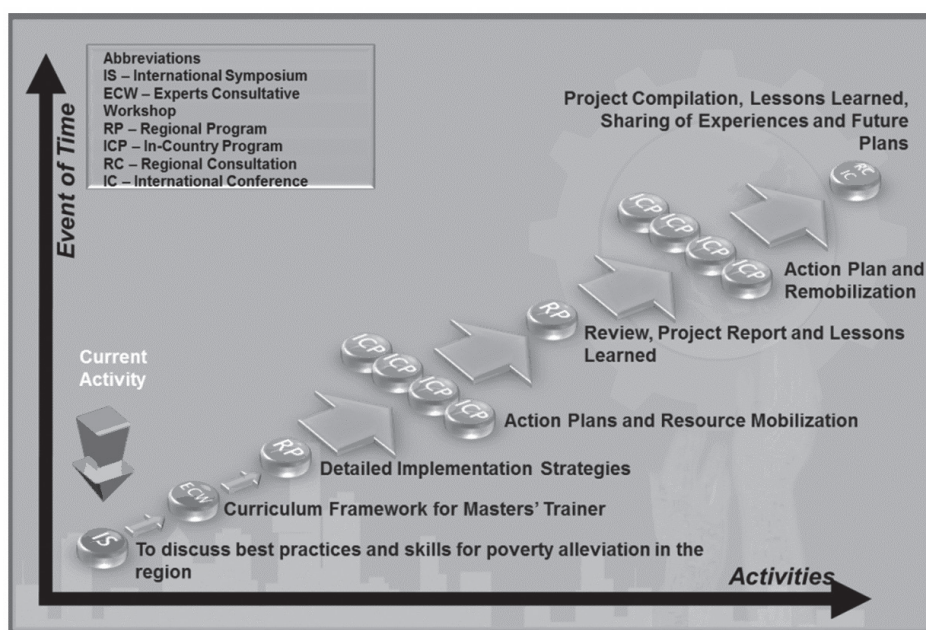
The overall scope and milestones of the project included:

- **International Symposia and Experts' Consultation Workshop** – Experts from the different TVET institutions from the CPSC member countries were invited to share the best practices/models adopted in their countries for poverty alleviation. They contributed to the inputs needed to examine the framework for capacity building, project modalities and selection of guidelines.

- **Regional-Level Consultation Workshop** – Based on the broad curriculum framework for regional coordination and synergy, a regional workshop was organized to collate the best practices from the participants and the attendees of the project, which are vital for further enhancement of the project and identification of the specific country needs.
- **Country-Level Capacity Building Training Programme** – The project implementation at the country-level would be the application of the curriculum framework, guidelines and modalities discussed during the aforementioned workshops and meetings.

The implementation of the project was divided into several stages as shown in Figure 7.

**Figure 7: SDPA Project Roadmap**



Source: Generated by author

### Preliminary Project Implementation

Poverty is an enduring obstacle across the region. Although this problem is universal, the challenges and issues in dealing with poverty are unique to each country. CPSC in support of the collective interest to take up Skills for Poverty Alleviation (SDPA) recognized the need for TVET skills particularly in developing member countries. With the active support of International and Regional organizations, CPSC organized a two-day

International Symposium on TVET Skills for Poverty Alleviation. A consultative workshop of the country representatives and TVET experts was held subsequently to process the gains and lessons learned from the symposium that were relevantly applied in mapping out the plans for the project.

Both the International Symposium and Experts' consultation workshop on SDPA served as a platform to exchange and share experiences, research results, creative ideas, innovations and new initiatives in exploring and using TVET as an effective platform to develop human capacities and potentials that would enable them to land in decent jobs and increase employability. Furthermore, discussions were held on practical models and frameworks inclusive of best practices in this area in the CPSC member countries. This assisted on a new understanding of poverty and its underlying factors and initiatives have achieved a broad consensus on the issues related to poverty and the challenges ahead.

Based on the examination of the issues and challenges in developing TVET skills to pursue concrete actions at the national, regional and international levels as well as the unique experiences and approaches adopted by different organizations/agencies, there is a strong rationale for continued CPSC thrust on developing TVET skills for poverty alleviation. Across the region, the need for skill development for dealing poverty is intensifying. TVET skill development has a high dividend in the context of building communities and societies empowered to confront the challenges and fight poverty. At the end, few guiding principles were formulated as a basis for the way forward to the SDPA project.

### **Strategic Recommendations**

Strategic areas of intervention were identified in consultation with the representatives from the Member Countries in which CPSC can make the greatest impact and contribution. Because countries differ greatly, the strategic perspective for TVET Skill development for poverty alleviation would also differ depending on a country's need and development plans.

- a) ***Content of the Master Training Programme:*** The project needs to have significant economic implication and will have to be in line with the national agenda on poverty alleviation of each country for being more meaningful and relevant to the society. There is no "one size fits all" programme and CPSC is therefore encouraged to assist and provide a plethora of choices for everyone. In addition, this particular project helped to identify specific niche areas that were focused to alleviate poverty of the poorest of the poor.

b) ***Selection of the Member Countries for the Implementation of the Project:*** The selection of the member countries for implementation of the project was based on severity of the poverty incidence. Country beneficiaries should give ample support to the project by providing logistical requirements of the programmes and the participants (e.g. venues, etc.) to spread the principle of co-owning the initiative and sharing the responsibility of ensuring the project's success in a long-term perspective.

c) ***Selection of the Participants and Programme Execution:*** The most important aspect of the flagship project was the selection of Master Trainers to be educated. It was agreed that trainees need to be carefully selected on the merits of their past involvement in training, education, commitment, motivation and capacity to handle task-oriented requirements of the training. Some of the general requisite qualities to be possessed include, but not limited to, are as follows:

- Understanding of the broad poverty-reduction strategies and of the specific objectives and goals of the project;
- Ability to work with others to implement the skill training programmes; and
- Knowledge and participation in previous TVET in-country programmes.

Each country nominated specific focal person to support project execution and facilitate necessary local coordination related to implementation. In addition, country involvement in the selection of participants was safeguarded, based on the guidelines provided by CPSC. At the initial implementation, selected participants had undergone preliminary one-week in-country training. The programme execution included relevant approach in determining the suitable skills that will be needed in a certain area.

d) ***Identifying the Country-specific Niche Areas for the Programme:*** There is no uniform curriculum that can be applied to all countries. There is a need to have some room for development of specific curriculum for each country to tailor-fit the programme according to the unique needs of each country.

e) ***Augment Budget in the Local Level:*** Given the budget limitations of each country, it is important that the project optimizes the existing resources (facilities, equipment, trainers, etc.). CPSC had taken the lead role in conducting the capacity building programme, while each of

the country serving as a host were encouraged to contribute additional local funding, making the project more collaborative in nature and to be more effective.

- f) ***Encourage Partnerships and Linkages with Others:*** CPSC explored the possibility of creating a consortium with other organizations with similar goals, such as ADB, UNESCO, UNDP and UNICEF among others to unify the efforts, especially in funding the projects. Further, inspiring people to work towards one goal, master trainees need to take a role in community participation projects where everyone in the community must give a helping hand. It is also important to use their local wisdom or knowledge based on their needs.
- g) ***Sustaining and Monitoring the Project:*** Regular monitoring and evaluation of the master trainers will have to be in place to ensure that the project is being implemented properly and that each country is achieving their goals set.
- h) ***Proposed Curriculum Framework for Capacity Building Programme:*** A new term was adopted in replacement of the “Master Trainer” which was commonly used in the regional context. With this, the name Champion Leaders Training Programme was adopted to encourage and give strength to the project. The broad curriculum composed of three modules, namely Module 1: Modular Employability of TVET Skills for Poverty; Module 2: ICT Skills for Poverty Alleviation; Module 3: Technical & Social Entrepreneurship Skills. In addition, emphasis was placed to integrate generic skills during programme delivery, though the programme focus was largely to train them to transfer these skills to their trainees.
- i) ***Programme Delivery and Follow-up Activities:*** Because ICT skills were utilized in the delivery of the programme, contact and online programme activities were aptly developed. These included group exercises, online assignments, simulation exercises, and so forth. In addition, using ICT-based platform for project monitoring, reporting and for follow-up activities proved to be a cost effective intervention.
- j) ***Guidelines for Selection:*** A separate guideline for the selection of Champion Leaders was drafted by CPSC. However, member countries were made responsible in implementing the guidelines on the premise that they select those who possess the important qualifications such as the willingness and ability to work with others, participation and experience of previous TVET projects and a full understanding of the goals, aims and expectations of the present project.

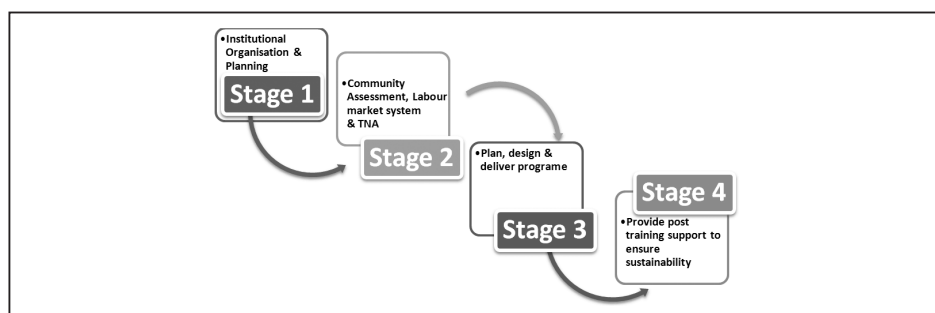


- k) **Project Implementers and Local Experts:** Top calibre professionals and experts were tapped to utilize their expertise and experience in implementing projects related to poverty alleviation. Developing linkages between the TVET institutions were equally vital in the implementation phase.
- l) **Website and Publications:** The CPSC website acted as a resource centre, where there were links and instruments to provide online documents, data and references to all of the stakeholders of this project. It also served as a database that documented the best practices and progress of each country during the programme's execution. Print & non-print materials for instruction and reference purposes were developed to provide a glimpse of the programme's implementation, modality and impact.

### Challenges of Programme Development

The Champion Leaders Development Programme execution involved mainly four key stages of programme development. First, planning and organization of the needed strategies were done to ensure the quality and effectiveness of the programme. A community assessment and review of the labour market system, as well as training needs analysis were employed to identify the country specific needs. These were used as a basis for formulating methodologies targeted to address each of the country's problems, recognizing that each of them has a specific challenge to address and a regional solution to solve these.

**Figure 8: Four Key Stages of Programme Development**



Source: Generated by author

Planning, designing and implementation of the programme commenced once a suitable country-specific programme was designed. To ensure that the lessons will be applied even after the programme's conclusion, a post-training strategy in sustaining its effects was conducted. The details of the key stages of programme development are presented in Figure 8.

## **Programmes organised and Beneficiaries**

CPSC played its role and maximized its expertise in capacity building of trainers to be Champion Leaders through conduct of 13 Special In-Country Programmes for Capacity Building of Champion Leaders for TVET Skill Development for Poverty Alleviation in line with the SDPA Champion Leaders Development Programme of the project. Additionally, two international conferences and four regional seminars were held within these special in-country training programmes. Around 400 champion leaders benefited from the programmes. The details of Regional symposiums, regional workshops, regional and in-country programmes are given in Table 1.

The project was launched in the month of August 2010; three major programmes were successfully conducted under the SDPA project up to January 2011. It included the (1) First International Symposium on TVET Skills for Poverty Alleviation (August 2-3, 2010) which achieved the successful assimilation of experiences, research results, ideas, innovations, initiatives, practical models and frameworks, including best practices from multiple sectors and leaders in strengthening TVET skills of the human resources for employability and decent work that impact on poverty alleviation, outcome of which later served as input to the subsequent discussions in regard to the planning for SDPA project; (2) First International Experts Consultation Workshop (August 5-6, 2010) which achieved the identification of cross-cutting issues in poverty alleviation in the CPSC member countries and brainstorming on the initial Project Roadmap, curriculum framework and initial modalities and arrangements as envisaged by CPSC with the help of regional TVET experts, taking the lessons gained from the international symposium deliberations as input; and (3) First Regional Consultation Workshop (November 5-6, 2010) which gathered senior administrators and liaison officers of CPSC from the participating countries to essentially validate and confirm the roadmap as the fulcrum of the project and to study, agree upon and refine the working modalities and arrangements for the SDPA project implementation at country level.

Based on the recommendations and suggestions, in the first phase, Six Champion Leadership for TVET Skills for Poverty Alleviation programmes were planned and organised in the member countries (see Table 1).



**Table 1: Details of the Programme organised and Number of Beneficiaries**

No.	Programme	Duration	Beneficiaries	Conference Attendees
<b>I</b>	<b>Regional Conference &amp; Experts' Consultation Workshop</b>			
1.	International Symposium on TVET Skills for Poverty Alleviation, <b>Manila, Philippines</b>	August 02-03,2010	76	-
2.	International Experts' Consultation Workshop, <b>Manila, Philippines</b>	August 05-06,2010	24	-
<b>II</b>	<b>In-country Programmes (1st Phase)</b>			
1.	Champion Leaders Development Programme for TVET Skills for Poverty Alleviation, <b>Dhaka, Bangladesh</b>	February 22-27,2011	30	-
2.	Champion Leaders Development Programme for TVET Skills for Poverty Alleviation, <b>Colombo, Sri Lanka</b>	March 28-April 02, 2011	29	200
3.	Champion Leaders Development Programme for TVET Skills for Poverty Alleviation, <b>Manila, Philippines</b>	May 30 –June 03, 2011	31	-
4.	Champion Leaders Development Programme for TVET Skills for Poverty Alleviation, <b>Thimphu, Bhutan</b>	August 22-27,2011	22	-

(contd.)

No.	Programme	Duration	Beneficiaries	Conference Attendees
	Champion Leaders Development Programme for TVET Skills for Poverty Alleviation, <b>Kathmandu, Nepal</b>	November 13-17,2011	30	50
6.	Champion Leaders Development Programme for TVET Skills for Poverty Alleviation, <b>Yangon, Myanmar</b>	March 18-22,2012	30	-
<b>III</b>	<b>Mid-term Review Workshop</b>			
1.	Regional Consultation Workshop on Skill Development for Poverty Alleviation Project (A Mid-term Review), <b>Manila, Philippines</b>	November 12-14,2012	15	-
<b>IV</b>	<b>In-country Programmes (2nd Phase)</b>			
1.	Champion Leaders Development Programme for TVET Skills for Poverty Alleviation <b>Perlis, Malaysia</b>	November 26-30,2012	28	103
2.	Champion Leaders Development Programme for TVET Skills for Poverty Alleviation, <b>Male, Maldives</b>	March31 -April 04, 2013	25	-
3.	Champion Leaders Development Programme for TVET Skills for Poverty Alleviation, <b>Kabul, Afghanistan</b>	Sept 28-October 02,2013	26	-

(contd.)

No.	Programme	Duration	Beneficiaries	Conference Attendees
4.	Champion Leaders Development Programme for TVET Skills for Poverty Alleviation, <b>Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia</b>	November 04-08,2013	30	60
5.	Champion Leaders Development Programme for TVET Skills for Poverty Alleviation, <b>Bangkok, Thailand</b>	November 25-29,2013	37	100
6.	Champion Leaders Development Programme for TVET Skills for Poverty Alleviation, <b>Suva, Fiji</b>	December 02-06,2013	29	60
7.	Champion Leaders Development Programme for TVET Skills for Poverty Alleviation, <b>Bhopal, India</b>	December 16-20,2013	32	135
<b>V</b>	<b>Regional Conference (Concluding)</b>			
1.	International Conference on TVET SDPA Entrepreneurship and Employability, <b>Manila, Philippines</b>	June 22-23,2015	-	165

Note: '-' Not Applicable

In assessing the progress and achievements of the CPSC-Government of India Project on Skill Development for Poverty Alleviation (SDPA) during the past two years of its implementation, and in further enhancing the project's framework and operational strategies, CPSC conducted a Regional Consultation Workshop on Skill Development for Poverty Alleviation (SDPA) from November 12-14, 2012 at CPSC in Manila,

Philippines. The three-day workshop came up with a thorough assessment of the SDPA programme implementation from 2010 until 2013, as well as the experiences and lessons learned during its implementation. The extensive deliberations supported to enhance the existing project framework and formulated new strategies for successful implementation of TVET skills programmes.

This mid-term review workshop was aimed at bringing together delegates from the member countries, who have been actively involved in the implementation of the SDPA programmes through the lens of TVET in the respective countries since its inception. The consultative workshop facilitated the exchange of experiences and best practices in TVET skills programmes among the member countries. The workshop also examined practical models, frameworks, innovations and initiatives relevant to skill development for poverty alleviation, among other important agenda.

Based on the suggestions and recommendations given by the mid-term review workshop, the Champion Leadership for TVET Skills for Poverty Alleviation programme was suitably modified. Subsequently, remaining programmes were organised in the remaining member countries (for details see Table 1).

### **Project Benefits and Outcomes**

The two-year capacity building skill development for poverty alleviation project aimed at providing multiple benefits as well as outcomes. The major project outputs and benefits of the Champion Leaders' training programme included a pool of Trained Champion Leaders, resource materials in various digital forms, increased opportunity for gainful employment, entrepreneurship for self-employment and lastly, demonstrated commitment on TVET skills for poverty alleviation by member countries. In addition, CPSC also initiated compilation of the best practices in the form of case studies in their respective areas.

### **Lessons Learnt**

The CPSC member countries constitute about one-fifth of the world population in an area of the globe that is poised to become the next centre of growth. Irrespective of the extent of developmental inequalities that exist, all these countries are giving recognition to the important role that TVET can play as an engine of growth in their respective environments. Various approaches have been initiated for addressing poverty alleviation that is intended to give the TVET systems the much-needed impetus.

Many countries realized the need to bring about a new mind-set on how TVET programmes and courses are perceived by its target clients, starting from the parents, who usually lead the way on how TVET is regarded, to the students – both the youths and adults who may need re-training and the TVET implementers as well as policy makers. The problems that beset the TVET systems in these countries seem to be of the same nature. The challenges on how to develop curriculum and training programmes that will respond to the skills needed by industry seem to be a common concern. There is a growing responsiveness to fill the gap between the skills needed by industry and those that the students acquire at the end of the training programmes.

For achieving the ambitious targets of poverty alleviation, there is a consensus that industry has to be actively involved in the training programmes that will produce the kind of workers who are equipped with the desired skills. There is also the need to provide workers with the skills, credentials and personal work ethics that can make them competitive in the global work arena. There is also the necessity to evolve new teaching-learning materials that will keep in step with the latest developments in the international context. Overall, the CPSC-India TVET Skill development project provided a great opportunity for appreciation of the role of TVET skills in its member countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

### **The Way Forward**

The most important mechanism to translate poverty reduction in growth is by promoting employment and productivity through skill development. The main way out of poverty is work and this can be assured by generating employment or promoting self-employment. TVET plays a crucial role in generating the skills that are necessary for poverty alleviation. The CPSC's initiatives on TVET skill development for poverty alleviation is expected to rise in the agenda of policymakers, analysts and researchers' tools and mechanisms that will help design the systems to impart skills that enhance productivity and growth.

As the World Bank aptly advocates:

...pulling together what is known about the components of a successful TVET skill development strategy can guide the provision of diagnostic work on skills and subsequently the design of policies across member nations to create productive employment and promote economic growth”.

CPSC as an advocate of TVET skills development believes through this flagship project, delivering relevant capability building programmes

with focus on TVET created a successful model for poverty alleviation that can be realized.

## **Conclusion**

The reduction of poverty is complex and needs to be approached from multiple perspectives. Given the complexity, CPSC stresses the importance of TVET and different dimensions of complementarities and partnership to address the lingering poverty. Much-needed interventions are required to support country-led initiatives that will further identify and align the TVET skill training intervention in the expected areas/aspects.

CPSC and the Government of India jointly envisaged that this project is the Colombo Plan Region's link and response to the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals(MDGs). It is a challenge to the CPSC-partner governments as well as member countries to connect the ongoing reforms in their TVET systems with greater attention to poverty alleviation. The lessons learned and best practices that emerged from this Flagship Project will bring awareness among both the beneficiaries and the policy makers on the urgent need to build competence in skill development as a fully integrated instrument for poverty reduction and social cohesion.

While it is realized that given the gamut of challenges no one solution can exist, in view of the concerns and the magnitude of resources that may be required in order to implement the desired reforms through skills training. The fact remains that almost all of the member countries recognize the need for certain drastic changes so that TVET skills can take its rightful role as the engine of growth in addressing unemployment and alleviating poverty in their own countries. There is a need to gear up and intensify our efforts towards building the Asia-Pacific region through technical and vocational education and training for peace, harmony and sustainable growth in the era of new global knowledge-based economy.

## Notes

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