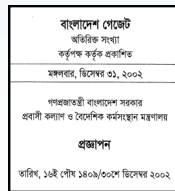


Promoting Decent Work through Improved Migration Policy and its Application in Bangladesh

The Labour Migration Project *NEWS*

Revision of existing Rules initiated

The Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MEWOE), with technical cooperation of the International Labour Organization (ILO), is currently in the process of reviewing and revising the existing Rules, i.e. Wage Earner's Welfare Fund Rules; Recruitment Agents (License and Conduct) Rules; Migration Rules; as well as a new Migrant Workers Registration Rules. A number of consultations were held with MEOWE, BMET and Wage Earner's Welfare Board (WEWB) officials and relevant CSO stakeholders prior to development of the first draft. Currently, consultations are underway on the first draft of the revised rules.



Rules under review.

Recruitment Agency Code of Conduct and Classification System

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is currently providing technical support to the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MEWOE) and Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET) to support in: (a) Setting up a classification system in the BMET for the regular grading of the recruiting agents; and (b) Development of a Code of Conduct (CoC) for recruitment agents to promote compliance with the laws and rules of the GoB and for the protection of the workers. Business for Social Responsibility (BSR), a global nonprofit business network has been engaged to assist in the process. BSR has had substantial experience in supporting other countries, such as Vietnam, Cambodia and Sri Lanka in similar work.

A technical committee, comprising of MEWOE and BMET officials as well as representatives from Migrant Associations, National Coordination Committee for Worker's Education (NCCWE) and Bangladesh Employer's Federation (BEF) was set up by the MEWOE to work on these two agendas. The first meeting of the Technical Committee was held on 30 June 2014 and a number of multi stakeholder consultations and meetings with BAIRA officials are planned in the coming months to develop the two documents. Until June, a benchmarking exercise was completed in order to review the codes of other countries, existing relevant conventions, laws, rules and codes recommended by apex bodies of the recruitment industry, etc.

The Project in brief:

Objectives:

- ◆ Strengthened policy and institutional frameworks to improve migration management and the protection of migrant workers
- ◆ Improved operational efficiency and effectiveness in overseas employment promotion under protected conditions, including the reduction of migration costs
- ◆ Strengthened social protection for migrant workers available in the countries of destination and upon return.

Beneficiaries

Potential, outgoing and returning migrant workers are the ultimate project beneficiaries. Women migrant workers constitute a specific target group and are given special attention in the overall project delivery.

Main partners

- ◆ Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MEWOE)
- ◆ Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET)

Other Key Partners

- ◆ Employers' organization
- ◆ Workers' organizations
- ◆ IOM
- ◆ UNWOMEN
- ◆ CSOs

Donor



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DECENT WORK

A better world starts here.

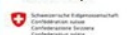
Key
Implementing
Partners:



International
Labour
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Promoting Decent Work through
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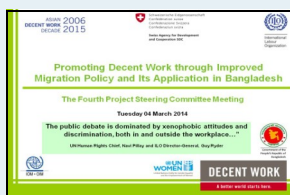


ILO Constituents:
Workers
Government of Bangladesh
Employers

4th Project Steering Committee (PSC) meeting held

The fourth Project Steering Committee (PSC) meeting was held on 04 March 2014 in the conference room (Level 5) of the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, Probashi Kalyan Bhaban, Dhaka. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Khandoker Shawkat Hossain, Secretary, MEWOE.

Representatives from sixteen different ministries, departments, and national and international organizations including Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, IOM and UN Women attended the Project Steering Committee meeting held in Dhaka.



Project updates presented at the PSC meeting.

Standardized Pre-departure Orientation Services

ILO partnered with the Refugee and Migratory Research Unit (RMMRU) to work closely with the BMET to develop standardized pre-departure orientation modules.

The work primarily included the: (a) review all existing Pre-departure orientation (PDO) manuals/modules for potential migrants; (b) development of two types of PDO manuals to be used by the BMET, TTCs and/or any other government and non government agencies, to subsequently provide standardized pre-departure training to the potential migrants; (c) consensus building amongst the MEWOE, BMET, TTCs, CSOs, International Organizations, etc. to ensure national ownership and adoption by different stakeholders in the field; and (d) identification and setting up of a core group of trainers from the GoB, which would not only include from BMET, TTCs and DEMOs who would provide the standardized trainings to potential migrants at the district level, but also other stakeholders from CSOs, trade unions and BAIRA to be made aware of the manuals and encourage its use at the field level.

For this work, a Core Technical Group (CTG) was set up which included members from MEWOE, BMET, ILO, IOM, UN WOMEN, OKUP, WARBE Development Foundation, BRAC, BOMSA, a representative from the National Coordination Committee for Workers' Education (NCCWE), a representative from the Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (BAIRA) and a representative from the Bangladesh Employers' Federation (BEF). The CTG played an advisory role and set the modalities for implementing the assignment. The Core Technical Group did not only help to create multi stakeholder ownerships of the pre-departure orientation manuals but also endorsed the research for developing manuals, 'take away' materials and decentralization plan.

Subsequently, four Training of Trainers (ToT) were held with: (1) TTC and DEMO officials; (2) CSO partners; (3) Trade union partners; and (4) BAIRA officials, over the month of May 2014.

Data sharing between BMET and the Airport Immigration

Data collection, sharing and analysis are integral to improving the migration management system in Bangladesh. All migrant workers going abroad are required to register with the BMET. This data is then shared with Airport Immigration, where the officers can verify that a migrant worker traveling abroad is adhering to the correct processes. This data sharing has ensured that the Government of Bangladesh are able to closely monitor migrants leaving the country and thereby safeguard against illicit acts by unscrupulous recruitment agencies.

While data on migrants leaving the country is abundant, there is no data available on migrants returning to the country. To drive policy issues, IOM, BMET and the Special Branch of Policy (in charge of Airport Immigration) agreed that collection of data on returnee migrants and their cause of return is important. The International Organization for Migration (IOM), under the project 'Promoting Decent Work through Improved Migration Policy and its Application in Bangladesh' facilitated the linkage between Airport Immigration and BMET so data could be collected and shared with both parties. Additionally, the Airport Immigration database was altered to include data on returnee migrants, with a specific focus on female migrants.

The process was completed through a host of consultations between SB, BMET and IOM and data has been received by BMET since March 2014.



BMET officials at the Data Linkage Sharing Workshop.

National Communication Strategy on Safe Migration

With the greater aim to spread awareness of safe migration channels, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) undertook the development of a National Communications Strategy under the project “Promoting Decent Work through Improved Migration Policies and its Application in Bangladesh”. The National Strategy is being developed in collaboration with Asiatic 360 and the Government of Bangladesh and assesses the most effective mediums, messages and information to disseminate at the grassroots level to ensure that all migrant workers are aware of the safest and most beneficial channels of migration thereby reducing incidences of exploitation and abuse.



Interactive Theatre show in Cox's Bazaar

In preparation for the strategy development, a baseline assessment was completed by the team which included key informant interviews, focused group discussions, questionnaires and consultations with government officials and migrants. The consultations were held in October in the DEMO offices of Rangpur, Khulna, Sylhet, Chittagong, Rajshahi and Barisal and consisted of participants representing the GoB and civil society as well as potential and returnee migrants. The information collected during the consultations determined the number of migrants from each respective district; the common countries of destination; the popular professions of employment; the migration information sources; the awareness of GoB services; types of media exposure; and the types of communication that would be most effectively received in the district.

The consultations served as an outlet to prove and disprove any preconceived notions about the levels of awareness of migration issues around the country. It appears that the most viewed media still remains to be television and middlemen and family members are still the biggest proponents of migration at the divisional levels. Many participants admitted awareness of the GoB's services but felt that an increased capacity of the DEMO offices would encourage more participation in these services. It was also suggested that billboards, docudramas and miking be used to deliver effective migration-related messages.

The divisional consultations have proved to be an important source of information of the reality of peoples' awareness. The consultations will be followed by a national sharing workshop culminating the findings of the baseline to create a comprehensive national strategy with multi-stakeholder involvement and ownership.

Theatre for Development

UN Women (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment) has partnered with Bangla Communications for a 9 month campaign on safe channels of overseas employment. The launching of the campaign was held at the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare on 9th March, where a huge number of migrant workers gathered to see the first TFD (Theatre for Development) event of the campaign.

Since the official launching in March 2014, there have been 15 shows held in different parts of the country, including Dhaka, Munshiganj, Comilla, Naryanganj and Gazipur, which drew attention of targeted audiences. It is estimated that approximately 4,440 people including 3,990 male and 450 female have attended the shows. The key messages conveyed through TFDs are related to the risks involved with the migration if using the irregular channel and what opportunities are available through the Government institutions for the female and male aspirant migrant workers going to destination countries of their choice. Thirteen more shows are planned to be staged in the areas, namely Manikganj, Naryanganj, Gazipur and Dhaka until December 2014.



Artists during a TFD show

Trade-specific Arabic and English language training for workers

The BRAC Institute of Languages (BIL) in close collaboration with the ILO and the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET) under the Labour Migration project, has completed the development of four trade based English/Arabic language modules on caregiving, housekeeping, construction and electrical work.

Following the development of the modules, training of trainers (ToT) are to be held in the Bangla-Korea Technical Training Centre (TTC) in Dhaka. The ToTs are expected to train close to 89 trainers from TTCs all over the country.

It is expected that Arabic and English languages courses would improve and enhance the language skills of potential migrant workers in line with the trade based demands of their work abroad. Following the ToTs, the courses would be available to potential migrant workers in TTCs across Bangladesh, in order to better prepare them for their specific work abroad.



Brainstorming with TTC trainers during the development of the modules.

Leadership meeting of NCCWE Members



Current Chairman and Member Secretary of NCCWE with Labour Migration Focal Person.

A leadership meeting was held to exchange views on NCCWE's proposed work on labour migration in 2014 as well as the roles and responsibilities of the NCCWE Labour Migration Committee, which was set up to oversee the work on labour migration in Bangladesh.

Speaking at the meeting, Ms. Nisha highlighted the importance of labour migration as a labour issue that should be taken up by the trade unions. It was further emphasized on how trade unions can come together to help address the various labour concerns of this

population. Awareness about basic entitlements, both before as well as after migration through worker's education is also an area where NCCWE can play a vital role.

Reiterating this point, Mr. Zafrul Hasan, Chairperson, NCCWE also emphasized on the need to help organize labour migrant workers, in light of the fact that they move from the



NCCWE members at the meeting.

country of origin to the destination and back. The next meeting of the NCCWE was proposed to be held in the following month, in July.

DAM provides life-skills training to potential migrant workers



Participants at a skills training.

The Dhaka Ahsani Mission (DAM) has been providing lifeskills training to potential migrant workers from three selected areas in Jessore, Jamalpur and Dhaka.

Between 08 -24 June 2014, three batches were trained, reaching a total of 99 potential migrants- 46 women and 53 men.

The 3 - day training course included the following elements:

- A) First day covered basic concept of migration, which included responsibilities of employers and employee; rules and regulations; remittance management; etc..
- B) In the second day, topics covered included lifeskills, effective communication, decision making, coping with emotion and stress management.
- C) In the last day, important issues such as HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, gender discrimination, etc. were covered.

Three more trainings are scheduled to be held in August 2014. Apart from life-skills training, DAM will also introduce four trade courses on: (1) electrical house wiring; (2) industrial sewing machine operation; (3) general electronics; and (4) beautification & care, in the coming months.

Employer's Visit 2014



Visiting employers with GoB and IOM officials.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) facilitated an Employers' Visit Programme in collaboration with the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MEWOE). The visit took place on the 15th and 16th of April, 2014 in Dhaka, Bangladesh. During the visit, employers from Japan, UAE, Singapore and Azerbaijan met with officials from the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) and MEWOE, including H.E. Engr. Khandker Mosharraf Hossain MP, Honourable Minister, MEWOE. Representatives from three

companies representing four countries (Japan, Azerbaijan, Singapore and the UAE) participated.

The programme was designed to introduce company representatives from destination countries with government officials to inform them of the migration management mechanisms in place in Bangladesh. The process of migration from the registration in the BMET database to the issuance of the SMART Card and the pre-departure orientation was described and the facilities displayed. Particular emphasis was placed on the training facilities available to students enrolled at the 38 BMET-run Technical Training Centers (TTCs). The employers were also made aware of the procedures that have to be undertaken to hire foreign workers, including the issuance of a demand letter attested by a Bangladeshi mission in the destination country. The visit was also designed to assist the Government of Bangladesh and IOM to better understand the needs of foreign employers in an attempt to improve existing processes.

Sharing workshop on the complaints cell

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has been working to enhance the capacity of the BMET to address migrants' complaints and grievances through the revamping of the Complaints Cell.

In June 2014, IOM held a sharing workshop for project partners and the BMET Complaints Cell officials. The workshop, chaired by Begum Shamsun Nahar, Director General, BMET, was held to present the findings of a comprehensive Needs Assessment, which was prepared by IOM through a consultative process including officials from the complaints cell, BMET and MEWOE.

The training of the officials associated with the Complaints Cell is planned for August 2014.

National Sharing of Research Study on 'External Market Analysis'






UN Women arranged a National Sharing of a Research Study on 'External Market Analysis' on 9th April 2014 at the MEWOE premise. The study was intended to provide information on market opportunities for one important destination country for women migrant workers in order to provide a model which Government of Bangladesh can replicate for other destination countries as well. The UAE was selected as one of the priority countries for assessing market opportunities for Bangladeshi women workers. This study attempted to capture some of the root level information on the experiences of Bangladeshi women migrant workers and what changes are needed to make a positive difference in their lives so that the whole process of safe migration can be truly self-empowering.



Participants at the sharing meeting.

One of the key findings of the study include that the government should advocate for improved working terms and conditions as well as introduction and inclusion of new trades (such as beautician, drivers, cleaners, shop assistants etc.) to match the demand of foreign employers at both bilateral as well as regional levels through the GCC forum.

This study will be used as an advocacy tool for agency specific actions to promote safe migration of Bangladesh women migrant workers (focusing on the most excluded women) to UAE as well as other destination countries.

DECENT WORK <i>A better world starts here.</i>	 International Labour Organization	Promoting Decent Work through Improved Migration Policy and its Application in Bangladesh	Funded by:  Government of Bangladesh
Key Implementing Partners:   			ILO Constituents: Workers Government of Bangladesh Employers