

Pakistan has 23.9% of its population below the poverty line and it is very challenging for it to meet the MDG target by 2015. (<http://undp.org.pk/goal-1-eradicate-extreme-poverty-and-hunger.html>, 1st June, 2010). Pakistan has a galloping inflation of 21.1% and an official unemployment rate of 5.5%; however 73.3% of employed are unskilled, semi-skilled and working in the informal sector (Min. of Finance & Federal Bureau of Statistics, 2008-9).

<i>Technical and Management Capacities of Local Partners</i>		
Local Partners	Technical Capacity	Managerial Capacity
Government Teachers	Their technical skills require upgrading as they teach technical courses based on outdated curricula that are not market-oriented.	Mostly poor managerial skills due to lack of management-related academic background and no exposure to networking with the market. Nature of job is teaching oriented and no managerial tasks are generally delegated to teachers.
National, Provincial, District and Tehsil/UC Government Bodies	Though they are involved in provision of certification and accreditation, the technical content that these services are based on is outdated. To ensure they provide services that lead to quick absorption of their technical graduates, they need to be updated on the required market oriented skills so they can review and continuously update their accreditation, certification and teacher training standards.	They have the authority to manage but have limited managerial skills. Their focus is on the basic functioning of everyday operations, hence concentrating on administration and documentation. The need to develop into visionary entities that focus on strategic planning, quality, results and targets, strengthening HR, and efficient and effective usage of organizational resources is missing.
Government Run TVET Centres	Though they are involved in provision of training services, the content of the courses are outdated. To ensure they provide services that lead to quick absorption of their technical graduates, they need to be updated on the required market oriented skills so they can review and continuously update their training standards.	They have the authority to manage but have limited managerial skills. They are primarily engaged in the administration and coordination of delivering courses but lack focus on strategic planning, quality, results, customer (student and employer) satisfaction and continuous improvement through networking with potential employer organizations and professional experts. This is why their curriculum remains outdated, graduates remain unemployed, equipment is outdated and rural youth and PWDs remain ignored.
Local Private Enterprises	In relative terms, they have very strong technical know-how.	Managerial skills can be improved by prioritizing strengthening of HR component through linkages with training and government bodies and jointly devising a strategy towards quick absorption of skilled workforce that will help them to produce quality work and expand rapidly.

Major Findings of Survey Done by CHIP

The findings were pretty much consistent with the call for proposal. Our aim was to target the rural youth population since according to statistics, about 30% of the population comprises of the youth. What we also observed in these districts was that most of the VTCs were built in the urban areas hence they were still inaccessible to the rural youth. Also none of the VTCs were made exclusively for the disabled. The administration claimed that they were open for all but the disability quota in most of them was a meager 2%. Even this quota wasn't filled since the buildings were not disabled friendly and the society is not really inclusive of PWDs in general. The basic findings were:

- There is a high incidence of unskilled rural youth in rural areas
- There is a declining trend towards adopting indigenous means of earning livelihoods. The youth doesn't want to adopt traditional methods of earning livelihoods since they feel that they don't have much value in the society. This is especially true for professions like cattle farming, agriculture etc.
- There are low levels of education among the youth, especially PWDs in the rural areas.
- There is no career counseling in educational institutions hence the rural youth has no focus on what career to pursue or even what options they have. Many don't want to start a business so there is also the need to teach them enterprise development.
- There is a certain mindset about choosing certain professions, especially with regard to gender and social class. Many are eager to get computer literate not knowing and at times lacking the capacity to make it into a profession. They believe that by adopting computers they will seem modern not realizing that at time traditional professions like cattle farming may turn out to be more lucrative.
- There are limited examples of good role models that they can follow. Many are not daring or capable enough to make a reputable career for themselves that other can emulate. They feel no shame in being jobless.
- There is a lack of motivation for hard work, especially among the youth. Many want to take the easy way out of life. They don't want to work hard for the money that they want to earn but feel pride in making more by doing less.

We further classified the problems to be more specific to the VTCs.

Private Sector VTCs:

From our findings, we have assessed that the private institutions have the best services when it comes to vocational trainings. Most of their graduates also get employed, locally and internationally becoming a source of much precious foreign exchange inflow in Pakistan. They become the major source of foreign remittances. Given their high quality, they have their own share of problems:

- The private institutes are mostly very expensive. The average Pakistani, including most of the population are unable to afford them
- Since most of the students in these institutions belong to a certain class of people, those not belonging to that class are discriminated against.
- There is the problem of accessibility in terms of:
 - Distance; almost all of these private institutions are located in urban areas. Because of the distance, they are inaccessible to those living in rural areas.
 - Qualification. Most of the rural youth fail to match up to the entry requirements of these private institutions
 - Mindsets. There are very strict mindsets as to what sort of students will attend these institutions. Like for hospitality schools many believe that they teach demeaning courses like how to be a chef or an attendant.

Government Sector VTCs:

There are many governing bodies for the public sector VTCs. There exists the National Vocational and Technical Education Commission (NAVTEC) in Pakistan. Not only to they train students in various courses, it is also the main body providing curricula and syllabi to most government sector institutes. There is also

Technical and Vocational Authority (TEVTA) which provides commerce, technical and vocational trainings all over the country. The main problems of the government sector VTCs have been identified as:

- The image of the government institutes has been extremely compromised. Even though most of the government institutes are in a bad shape, recently some good institutes have emerged like Construction Technology Training Institute (CTTI) and Petroleum Technology Training Institute (PTTI), but even their image is quite negative.
- There exist weak or no monitoring mechanisms in the government sector which leads to a high incidence of fraud and pseudo institutes. In some cases institutes exist of paper but there is actually no institute. This is because of a lack of follow up mechanisms.
- There is a lack of bench marks. They have nothing to match up to. There are no standard operating procedures (SOPs) hence there is no governing body to measure quality and standards. This has led to low quality products being produced.
- The curriculum is not compatible with the market hence the skills taught are not marketable.
- Most centers are located in urban areas which makes accessibility to the rural population a problem.
- There lacks compatibility between the competence level of teachers and the market demand. Even the teachers are not up to date with the market requirements. There are no refresher courses to even bring them up to date with the market. They teach age old ways with age old methods.
- Similarly there are no mechanisms in place to bring the competence level of teachers up to par. Either they are not given refresher courses, and in some cases where they do get refresher courses (like in Khairpur, Sindh), the course material taught to them are outdated.
- The existing centers don't cater to or provide a friendly environment for PWDs. There don't exist any VTCs in the target project areas that cater especially to PWDs. Others mostly are non inclusive. Some have a quota of 2% for PWDs but even that is not fulfilled due to the lack of infrastructure conducive to the needs of PWDs.
- Even the general environment of most of these government run VTCs is not conducive to effective learning. The premises are dirty and unkempt, and there is a lack of maintenance for the infrastructure in place.
- There is inefficient pre training recruitment processes like there are no aptitude tests or career counseling to guide the youth into various career paths. Many don't even know if their aptitude is in the field they have chosen, while others don't know what career options they have after graduation.
- Similarly, no training or guidance is given to the graduates regarding job hunting techniques which leads to many finding not very lucrative jobs, provided they do get a job.
- There is no training or guidance for enterprise development either. Many people have the aptitude of becoming successful businessmen but they are not trained to become entrepreneurs, which is why many don't think on the lines of starting up their own small or medium enterprise (SME).
- Most of the government run VTCs have outdated equipment. For example they are still teaching their students analog circuits and not digital circuits. In television courses, they are still teaching their students the vacuum tube whereas the current market has moved onto plasma televisions.
- The teachers have indifferent attitudes and lack dedication and concern for the students. This is probably because of the low salaries (most are getting lower than the what the government has declared as the minimum wage i.e. Rs.7000) and high job security.

NGO run VTCs:

The VTCs that the NGOs have made have better standards than most of the government run VTCs but they too have their share of problems:

- NGO run VTCs have a very limited capacity. They cater to only a small number of students, hence they produce a low number of graduates.
- They have very limited funds. Their funds are very project oriented which is because of the fact that they are donor dependant. They need a diversity of funds so that they can increase their services. Since they want to show themselves as being low cost, at times they end up compromising quality over quantity. Most of the time even they have out dated equipment and because of limited funds lack the knowledge, exposure and availability of materials required for the maintenance of equipment.
- Most of the times, the location for these VTCs are very UC specific hence they are only able to cater to specific Union Councils (UC) which is why many potential students do not have access to these VTCs which is another reason for the low number of graduates that they produce. This is especially true for National Rural Support Program (NRSP) VTC initiative in Sindh.

- Even in the NGO run VTCs there is limited compatibility between the course content and the market, hence most of the skills taught are not marketable and most of the graduates fail to find employability.
- Also almost negligible efforts are invested on creating a link with the market. Therefore a lot of the courses taught or the products made are not marketable.
- Similarly most NGOs lack the capacity or the expertise for developing business linkages or entrepreneurial set ups for their VTCs. Like the government run VTCs, NGOs often don't show their trainees that there are ways to start small businesses for self employment.