

Improving the effectiveness of VET reforms in Pakistan

As part of VET Toolbox, the British Council delivered four short-term interventions and facilitated two mentoring partnerships in Pakistan.

Interventions one and two: promoting apprenticeships

Aim: to support training providers and employers implement the new Apprenticeships Act

Partners: British Council and the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission in Pakistan

Results:

- A dedicated handbook for employers for implementing the new Apprenticeship Act
- Workshops and seminars on effective use of the handbook
- Step-by-step support for training providers to implement the new Act in Punjab

As part of its long-term strategy to boost work-based learning, Pakistan's government passed the Apprenticeships Act 2018, in order to enhance training and improve employability by enhancing apprenticeships in TVET.

To support this, VET Toolbox delivered two initiatives to raise awareness and understanding of the law and provide practical support to TVET institutions and businesses on implementation.

Guidance on implementing quality apprenticeships

In 2018, the British Council worked with the Pakistan National Vocational and Technical Training Commission to develop a practical handbook providing detailed advice on implementing the country's new Apprenticeships Act, which could act as the primary resource for building capacity across the TVET sector.

Particular focus was given to engaging the private sector, by highlighting the opportunities apprenticeships can offer, providing practical guidance on the design and implementation of new apprenticeship schemes and describing the apprenticeship journey from recruitment to assessment and certification.

To raise awareness across the sector, the handbook was launched at a high-level event for employers, industrialists, chambers of commerce representatives, training providers and donor organisations.

Targeted training

Next, a series of targeted workshops and seminars was delivered to training providers and employers on how to use the handbook within their own contexts. This training programme reached 250 participants in eight cities across Pakistan and has been a critical factor in raising awareness of the importance of apprenticeships among TVET providers and private sector employers.

A focus on implementation

In 2021, the British Council provided capacity building support to TVET officials, training providers and employers in Punjab – the first province to implement the new Act – to help them establish and strengthen apprenticeship schemes and ensure the new law could achieve the desired change.

This covered the step-by-step process of planning and delivering apprenticeships, and on supporting delivery staff to overcome challenges associated with implementation.

To build on this crucial initiative, Punjab's Technical Educational and Vocational Teaching Authority is planning further events to build the capacity of companies currently running apprenticeships schemes and to demonstrate the value of apprenticeships to even more employers.

Intervention three: enhancing accreditation in TVET institutions

Aim: to improve the process of accreditation in TVET institutions and support the international recognition of TVET qualifications

Partners: British Council and the National Accreditation Council for Technical and Vocational Stream (NAC-TVS) in Pakistan

Results:

- A revised accreditation manual for TVET centres

In 2021, the British Council supported Pakistan's National Accreditation Council to improve the accreditation process in VET institutions, in line with international best practices, with the aim of increasing confidence in the quality of TVET training and supporting the journey towards international recognition of qualifications.

A key output was a revised accreditation manual, piloted in four TVET institutions in Islamabad. They received training on using the new manual from UK and local TVET experts, with a focus on establishing a common understanding of the purpose of accreditation, and related roles and responsibilities.

Pakistan's National Accreditation Council believes the new process will help to accelerate accreditation across the country, with the aim of accrediting 2,000 training providers in the coming year.

Intervention four: making TVET more inclusive

Aim: to develop guidelines and an assessment methodology for the inclusion of people with disabilities within TVET provision

Partners: British Council, Special Talent Exchange Program and the National Accreditation Council for Technical and Vocational Stream, in Pakistan

The most recent VET Toolbox intervention in Pakistan is focusing on increasing the participation of people with disabilities in the workforce, by improving disability mainstreaming in TVET.

Building on previous work to enhance accreditation of TVET institutions, this initiative reviewed TVET sector policies and practices in Pakistan and developed guidelines to initiate an inclusive change process that enables more persons with disabilities to enrol and achieve at TVET colleges. In addition, the project aims to develop an assessment methodology to evaluate inclusivity in TVET institutions, which can be integrated in the revised accreditation process.

Mentoring partnership: paving the way for international accreditation

Aim: to help TVET institutions work towards international accreditation

Partners: Dudley College of Technology, in the UK, and Karachi Tools, Dies and Moulds Centre, Construction Technology Training Institute, Shipyard Training School and Government College of Technology in Pakistan

Following a UK NARIC assessment of a number of Pakistan's training institutions, initiated by Pakistan's Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority, Dudley College of Technology participated in a VET Toolbox mentoring partnership to support four of the assessed colleges address the assessment findings.

With support from the British Council, Dudley College worked with each college to develop and implement an action plan and strategy to address gaps and weaknesses. They also delivered a series of workshops covering strategic planning, continuing professional development, resource and finance planning and employer engagement.

These workshops included Q&A sessions, to enable participants from Pakistan gain insights into Dudley's approach and consider how they might adapt this to their own context.

Results across the cluster of partner colleges include the development of teaching studios, improved self-assessment systems, and increased employer engagement.

Mentoring partnership: improving employer engagement in TVET

Aim: to support TVET institutions improve employer engagement

Partners: South East Regional College, in the UK, and Aman Institute of Vocational Training, Step Institute of Art, Design & Management, Technical Training Centre and Government Advance Technical Training Centre, in Pakistan

A mentoring partnership supported by the British Council saw South East Regional College, in the UK, support four Pakistani colleges to strengthen their approaches to employer engagement, particularly within the private sector.

Through virtual training sessions, the UK college shared their own systems and processes for engaging with businesses to inform training and curriculum development, and explored a wide range of themes related to employer engagement. They also explored the current approaches to private sector collaboration, existing employer relationships, and needs and requirements of the Pakistani colleges, to create a baseline of employer engagement.

As a result, the participating colleges have developed their understanding of:

- the value of engaging with employers' federations to get input into the design of programmes, including apprenticeships
- the use of labour market information at both national and local levels to identify future vacancies
- analysing government strategies to identify priority areas, such as the Green Energy sector.

About VET Toolbox

VET Toolbox is a partnership of leading European development agencies – British Council (UK), Enabel (Belgium), Expertise France (France), GIZ (Germany), LuxDev (Luxembourg) and AFD (France). It is co-funded by the European Union and the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The consortium is led by Enabel.