



**Asia South Pacific Association  
for Basic and Adult Education**  
Learning Beyond Boundaries

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## Policy and financing options for skills for work of marginalised women

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**Background:** The rapid changes across the world have had a huge impact on the future of work and of learning. In the current scenario where there is a wide gap between people to be skilled and the opportunities available, it is vital to ask which people have access to skill building initiatives and who are left behind. Within the education and lifelong learning agenda however, the issue of skills for work for marginalised women in the informal sector has been neglected. Since 2015, the Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE), through its member organisations, has carried out two scoping papers, two country research studies on skills development for marginalised women (with Azad Foundation in India and PEKKA in Indonesia), and an overarching synthesis report.

These explored the following question:

*What are the policy, governance and financing options required to include and/or provide skill development and adult education for decent work and economic and social well being to the marginalised women in the Asia Pacific women – given the perspectives of 'no one left behind' and social justice?*

This explainer compiles information from these sources to provide insights into the interlinked issues, which are important to understand the world of women and work from an empowerment framework.

This is also prepared on the occasion of the High Level Political Forum 2019 which under the theme, "Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality" will specifically review SDG 4 (education) and SDG 8 (decent work) – the core areas of ASPBAE's study, along with gender and women's empowerment, the focus of SDG 5 (gender equality). It hopes to contribute to civil society organisations' efforts to hold governments and other decision-makers to account, in making equity and education for all, a reality in the important space of the SDG follow up.

Targets related to education for skills for decent work of women

SDG 4	SDG 5	SDG 8
Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all	Achieve gender equality and empowerment for all women and girls	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
4.3 By 2030 ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university	5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate	8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value
4.4 By 2030 substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship	5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life	8.6 By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training
4.5 By 2030 eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations		8.8 Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment

Situating Asia Pacific in a Global Context

The Asia Pacific region accounts for 54.8% of the world's total population, including five of the ten most populous economies of the world. The region is also home to 330 million people living in extreme poverty.<sup>1</sup> It is a complex and heterogeneous group of countries that vary significantly on indices like GDP, employment, poverty, health, education, etc. Countries from the region can be found on both ends of the World Economic Forum's (WEF) 2018 Global Gender Gap Report, with Philippines at #8, and Pakistan at #148. Despite these differences, all countries across the region still have significant gaps in gender parity scores, in society as well as at work<sup>2,3</sup>. Despite earlier increases in women's labour force participation, there has been little change in the Asia Pacific region over the last 25 years<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Asian Development Bank, 2017, *Key Indicators for Asia and the Pacific 2017 48<sup>th</sup> Edition*, ADB, Philippines. <https://www.adb.org/publications/key-indicators-asia-and-pacific-2017>

<sup>2</sup> World Economic Forum (WEF), 2018a, *The global gender gap report 2018. Insight report*. WEF, Geneva. <https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-gender-gap-report-2018>

<sup>3</sup> Asian Development Bank, 2018a, *Key Indicators for Asia and the Pacific 2018. 49<sup>th</sup> Edition*, ADB, Philippines. P.iii <https://www.adb.org/publications/key-indicators-asia-and-pacific-2018>

<sup>4</sup> Asian Development Bank (ADB) 2015. *Women in the Workforce. An unmet potential in Asia and the Pacific*. Asian Development Bank, Manila, Philippines. <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/158480/women-workforce-unmet-potential.pdf>

Asia Pacific in Numbers<sup>1</sup>

- ◆ The prevalence of informality in the region remains the highest globally, affecting close to 70 % of all workers.
- ◆ Unemployment rates will rise to 72.3 million people by 2020 despite improvements in education enrolment rates.
- ◆ Women in Asia are on average 70% less likely than men to be in the labour force, with the country-to-country percentage varying anywhere from 3% to 80%.

Over the past few decades, economic growth has spurred substantial developments including the reduction in extreme poverty. However, across the world and in the region, the push for unbridled economic growth has also resulted in more income inequality, wage stagnation and precarious work, all of which threaten future expansion<sup>5,6</sup>. This is exacerbated by structural transformations in labour markets associated with global changes. CSIRO research<sup>7</sup> identified that factors like internet, big data, increasing automation and the adaption/adoption of AI, a rapid digital-technological transformation, are driving rapid transformation of labour markets across the globe<sup>8</sup>. While digitization provides efficient and faster work for employers and companies, it has led to flexible work, contractual employment with no social protection. The risks are shifted from the employer to workers. Good quality education, which should provide people the foundations and means to navigate well the massively changing world of work, is however denied to millions in the Asia Pacific. While literacy rates for the population over 15 years of age has increased through the years in Asia-Pacific and across the world<sup>9</sup>, there are wide disparities across countries and sub-regions with South Asia tailing behind. It is home to 390 million illiterate adults. Women have generally lower literacy

rate than men with South Asia (except Maldives and Sri Lanka), Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea, Lao PDR and Cambodia being below the world average. Women continue to be significantly disadvantaged when it comes to accessing and participating in educational opportunities both as children and as adults where the GPI for adult literacy in South and West Asia was very low in 2012 at only 0.70, slightly improving to 0.76, according to 2015 estimates.<sup>10</sup>



<sup>5</sup>Ibid, p.46

<sup>6</sup> Yalnizyan A & Johal, S., 2018, 'Race to the top: Inclusive growth is the new growth model' in *The Globe and Mail* April 25<sup>th</sup> 2018 <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/commentary/article-race-to-the-top-inclusive-growth-is-the-new-growth-model/>

See also: <https://live.worldbank.org/inclusive-growth>

<sup>7</sup> Hajkowicz, S.; Reeson, A.; Rudd, L.; Bratanova, A.; Hodggers, L.; Mason, C. and Boughen, N., 2016. Tomorrow's digitally enabled workforce. Megatrends and scenarios for jobs and employment in Australia over the coming 20 years. January 2016. CSIRO, Australia. <http://www.data61.csiro.au/Our-expertise/Expertise-Strategic-insight/Tomorrows-Digitally-Enabled-Workforce>

<sup>8</sup> Berger, T. and C. Frey (2016), "Structural Transformation in the OECD: Digitalisation, Deindustrialisation and the Future of Work", OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers, No. 193, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/5jl9068802f7-en>.

<sup>9</sup> Figure 2.1: Literacy Rate for 15+ Population in Govinda R., "Progress of Adult Learning and Education in Asia-Pacific Region: Implementing Belém Framework for Action", 2016.

<sup>10</sup>Govinda R. "Progress of Adult Learning and Education in Asia-Pacific Region: Implementing Belém Framework for Action". 2016



Who are the marginalised women in work? What are gendered notions of work?

Definitions of and approaches to the concept of marginalisation are numerous, contested and continue to evolve. Cruwys et al (2013) offer this understanding:

Marginalisation describes a state in which individuals are living on the fringes of society because of their compromised or severely limited access to the resources and opportunities needed to fully participate in society and to live a decent life. Marginalised people experience a complex, mutually reinforcing mix of economic, social, health and early-life disadvantage, as well as stigma<sup>11</sup>.

For women, marginalisation should be viewed through a lens of intersectionality. Factors like poverty, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity, religion, indigeneity, race/ethnicity, caste, age, and others intersect with gender to create vastly different experiences of marginalisation. This is especially important with a view to provide more holistic solutions.

Poverty for example, is not gender neutral; its impact is cumulative given the many other factors that shape the lives of women especially. Gender differences are among the most important for understanding how poverty is experienced differently with compounding inequalities making women and girls more vulnerable to poverty across their life cycles.

ASPBAE's two country studies characterised marginalisation based on the experiences of CSOs working with women on the ground.

The India Study:

- Poor urban women, mainly young.
- Women who are left out or pushed to the sidelines by a single factor or the intersection of many such as gender, age, education or non-educational attainment, status as single or married or divorced, economic status, geographical location, caste, religion, etc<sup>12</sup>.



The Indonesia Study:

- Socially marginalised women who are socially and economically vulnerable, including communities prone to disasters and climate change.
- Economically marginalised women who have less than the minimum standard of living a decent life. It counts those who earn below Indonesia's poverty line set by Indonesia's National Bureau of Statistics (BPS) at IDR 361,990 per capita per month or around USD \$25+ (as of September 2016).
- Marginalised women based on size of their businesses running micro and small-sized businesses with limited capital, home based industries, and poor women without jobs or businesses.
- Marginalised women working in the formal & informal sectors working in factories, and as home-workers, based on the extent to which they earn a decent salary as mandated by Indonesia's Labour Law (Law No. 13/2003). These women are at risk of discrimination, have no protection, and vulnerable to gender-based harassment or violence<sup>13</sup>.

Gender wage gap (difference of male and female monthly earnings as a proportion of male monthly earnings), selected countries in Asia and the Pacific, latest available year (%)



Source: Annex 2, Statistical Table 8.2.

ADB/UN Women 2018 Gender equality & the SDGs in Asia & Pacific<sup>19</sup>

Gender differences in labour force participation and employment impact women's ability to access and manage resources. Despite educational attainment and labour force participation, women in Asia and the Pacific are still more likely to earn less than men, be in insecure low-level jobs including jobs in the informal economy, and are less likely to advance in their careers<sup>14,15</sup>. In many countries women still carry deficits (increased in low income families) through lower educational investment in them early in their lives<sup>16</sup>. This burden is often exacerbated by age. There remain sectoral and occupational segregation along with gender gaps in the distribution of unpaid household and care work<sup>17</sup>. As argued by UN Women:

When women are poor, their rights are not protected. They face obstacles that may be extraordinarily difficult to overcome. This results in deprivation in their own lives and losses for the broader society and economy, as women's productivity is well known as one of the greatest generators of economic dynamism<sup>18</sup>.



<sup>14</sup> OECD Women still struggling in labour market in Asia Pacific, says OECD <http://www.oecd.org/newsroom/women-still-struggling-in-labour-market-in-asia-pacific.htm>

<sup>15</sup> Rodriguez, Barbara, 2015. 'Women's labor rights: The road ahead'. In Asia. Weekly Insights and Analysis. The Asia Foundation. April 29, 2015.

<sup>16</sup> Boudet A.M.M., Buitrago, P., de le Briere, B.L., Newhouse, D., Matulevich E.R., Scott, K & Suarez-Becerna, P., 2018, Gender differences in poverty and household composition through the life-cycle. A global perspective. March 2018. World Bank Group. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/135731520343670750/pdf/WPS8360.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> International Labour Organization (ILO), 2016. Women at work. Trends 2016. Executive Summary. ILO, Geneva Switzerland.

[http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_457086.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_457086.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> UN Women, 2018, Women & Poverty <http://beijing20.unwomen.org/en/in-focus/poverty>

<sup>19</sup> Asian Development Bank (ADB) and UN Women, 2018a, Gender Equality and the Sustainable Development Goals in Asia & the Pacific. Baseline and pathways for transformative change by 2030.

<https://www.adb.org/publications/gender-equality-sdgs-asia-pacific>

<sup>11</sup> Cruwys, T.; Berry, H.; Cassells, R.; Duncan, A.; O'Brien, L.; Sage, B. & D'Souza, G., 2013, Marginalised Australians: Characteristics and predictors of exit over ten years 2001- 2010. University of Canberra, Canberra, p.4. [https://melbourneinstitute.unimelb.edu.au/assets/documents/hilda-bibliography/other-publications/2013/Cruwys\\_et\\_al\\_marginalised\\_Australians.pdf](https://melbourneinstitute.unimelb.edu.au/assets/documents/hilda-bibliography/other-publications/2013/Cruwys_et_al_marginalised_Australians.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Oraa, Josephine YF & Ali, Adil, 2017, India Study. Financing options for skills for work of marginalised women. A research project of ASPBAE & Azad Foundation, India. 2017. Final draft. Unpublished document

<sup>13</sup> Yayasan Pemberdayaan PEKKA, 2018, Report. Financing options for skills for work of marginalised women. PEKKA-ASPBAE Research in Indonesia 2018. PEKKA/ASPBAE Unpublished report.



Most women work, especially in Asia and the Pacific. Whether the work they do is 'official' and so counted or not, impacts on both - female labour force participation (FLFP) data and also on their access to opportunities for skill development and decent work. While women's (official) labour force participation has increased in most countries, gender disparity in labour markets continues to prevail globally. Despite earlier increases, there has been little change in the Asia Pacific region over the last 25 years<sup>20</sup>. Key empirical findings of an ILO gender analysis of school to work transition surveys in 32 developing economies<sup>21</sup> include:

- The roles of young women beyond the household remain limited to a much greater extent than for young men
- The struggle for universal basic education continues, with young women still more likely to be excluded
- Gender gaps continue in the job search and in the quality of jobs attained
- The labour market transitions of young women are less certain than for young men
- Too many young women move directly into inactivity (outside of education) and remain there

The concentration of women in the informal (or unorganized) economy is a further disadvantage. The informal economy is a 'shock absorber' in times of economic downturn and structural shifts in economies and labour markets. While vulnerable employment saw



modest declines 2007–2013, it remains high in Asia Pacific region.

The ILO advises that '... almost half of the world's employed population are still working in vulnerable conditions, pre-dominantly women, and are thus prevented from accessing basic necessities and decent work'<sup>22</sup>. This is exacerbated by the global trend of passing risk down to the lowest end of global value chains and the new ways that women are being incorporated into global production systems in Asia<sup>23</sup>. Improving the lot of informal workers will necessitate a gendered approach in development planning<sup>24</sup> and in vocational and adult learning and education (ALE) policies to explicitly provide and promote access to relevant quality skills education and training.

There are three (3) 'sticky' areas resistant to transformative change for women's economic empowerment in Asia:

- The gendered division of housework and domestic care
- The general reluctance to recognise women's immediate authority to ownership and management of property, land and other forms of production
- The gender lag in the labour market – the segregation of women and men in market work and occupational structures.

The norms associated with these inter-related areas impact economic behaviour from household level to manifestation in the labour market. In turn, this results in women investing in skills for jobs that are seen as appropriate to their (labour market) gender identity. 'Women are kept out of skilled categories or their labour, even though skilled, is classified as unskilled'<sup>25</sup>. Gender disparity inhibits progress for national economies as well as its potential negative impact on the socio-economic wellbeing for women (and men). As such gender-inclusivity continues as a very important

policy issue for skill development programs including those offered by Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and/or ALE in the Asia Pacific region as it does globally.

Skills training including upgrading skills for women – especially those in the informal economy or vulnerable work is a 'key channel to improve productivity and incomes' as well as acting as a support mechanism for pathways from informal to decent work<sup>26</sup>. However, as recognised by ILO,

... a multitude of challenges must be overcome at policy, institutional and micro levels to enable skills training to improve productivity of enterprises, the employability and competences of workers, and contribute to their integration into the formal economy<sup>27</sup>.

This then, is the opportunity and the challenge for TVET and ALE, to fulfil its core obligations and so progress the economic and social wellbeing of women through gender sensitive and inclusive provision of accessible, relevant and quality vocational education and training.

#### Provisioning and Financing for skills for work for marginalised women

Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is the sector charged with the responsibility for training and skill development for employment, given its links with industry and labour market demands for skilled workers. This responsibility has been accompanied by a global focus on the capacity enhancement and transformation of TVET for more than three decades now.

The UNESCO re-conceptualisation of TVET is cross-sectoral and inclusive of formal and non-formal education, and training and skills development delivered in a variety of contexts. It is cognisant of LLL being central to learning for work; relevant to both the formal and the informal economies and embraces a multi-stakeholder approach.

The regional scoping paper, and the India and Indonesia studies reveal that most national TVET strategies remain more 'traditional' in their conceptualisation and regulation, focused more on the needs of the economy, big business and demand/supply issues for the labour market. There has been slow progress in 'greening TVET', as well as incorporating ICT and adapting training and career support systems to technological change. They do not validate, accredit and recognize learning acquired through non-formal and informal channels<sup>28</sup>.

TVET programmes remain gendered, and are mainly in line with professions traditionally undertaken by men. The Indonesia study found that most training programmes for developing business skills reinforced gender roles by offering courses like food processing, handicrafts, sewing, agriculture, among others. The India study further suggests that encouraging women to participate in non-traditional livelihoods (NTL) trainings is one of the only ways to pave the way for jobs that pay well and have room for growth. Timings, infrastructure and the location of TVET courses pose difficulties for women. Teachers are mostly men who may be oblivious to gender issues. In India though the National Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Policy 2015 recognises the special effort to increase women's participation, it falls short on taking into account the different approaches required to skill women, men and other genders.<sup>29,30</sup> Overall, TVET is male-centric thus, male-dominated. So, while there are no explicit barriers for entry by women to TVET courses, their low participation in TVET cannot be isolated from their social, economic and political realities

As the India study recognizes, more work remains to be done, especially to formulate policies that can guide the transformative shift required for making gender rights a reality, addressing women's issues in all their facets, capturing emerging challenges and ultimately positioning women as equal partners of sustained development progress that the country is experiencing presently.

<sup>20</sup> Asian Development Bank (ADB) 2015. *Women in the Workforce. An unmet potential in Asia and the Pacific*. Asian Development Bank, Manila, Philippines.

<https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/158480/women-workforce-unmet-potential.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> Elder, Sara; Kring, Sriani, 2016, *Young and female - a double strike? Gender analysis of school-to-work transition surveys in 32 developing economies*.

(Work4Youth publication series; No. 32) International Labour Office (ILO) Geneva, Switzerland.

[http://www.skillsforemployment.org/KSP/en/Details/?dn=WCMSTEST4\\_165258](http://www.skillsforemployment.org/KSP/en/Details/?dn=WCMSTEST4_165258)<sup>22</sup> International Labour Organization (ILO), 2015. *World employment and social outlook. Trends 2015*. ILO, Geneva, Switzerland.

[http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/@publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_337069.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/@publ/documents/publication/wcms_337069.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> Kelkar, Govind, 2013. *At the threshold of economic empowerment: women, work and gender regimes in Asia*. ILO Asia-Pacific Working Paper Series. International Labour Organization (ILO) New Delhi, India. [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-new-delhi/documents/publication/wcms\\_233096.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-new-delhi/documents/publication/wcms_233096.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> Bertulfo, Lota, 2011. *Women in the informal economy. A think piece*. November 2011. Australian Government AusAID Office of Development Effectiveness. <https://dfat.gov.au/aid/how-we-measure-performance/ode/Documents/women-informal-economy-lota-bertulfo.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> Kelkar, 2013, Op cit pp30-32

<sup>26</sup> International Labour Organization (ILO) 2013. *The informal economy and decent work: A policy resource guide*. Supporting transitions to formality. International Labour Office, Employment Policy Department, ILO, Geneva, Switzerland.

[http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/---emp\\_policy/documents/publication/wcms\\_212689.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_policy/documents/publication/wcms_212689.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, Section 7.2 'Enhancing skills and employability: facilitating access to the formal economy'. p.2<sup>28</sup> Sakamoto, A., & Sung, J. (Eds.), 2018, *Skills and the future of work. Strategies for inclusive growth in Asia and the Pacific*. p.2. ILO.

<sup>29</sup> Yayasan Pemberdayaan PEKKA, 2018, Report. Op cit.

<sup>30</sup> Oraa, Josephine YF & Ali, Adil, 2017, Op cit.

<sup>31</sup> Yayasan Pemberdayaan PEKKA, 2018, Report. Op cit., pp 10-12



The Indonesia study, through interviews and information accessed from websites revealed three distinct policy models of providing skills for work training to marginalised women<sup>31</sup>:

Model-1	Model-2	Model-3
Government run programmes where policies are determined at the national or ministerial level, and implementation is done at the district level. For example the Ministry of Cooperatives and Micro- and Small-Scale Enterprises gives aid for women's cooperatives through local cooperatives offices	Programs run by corporate and donor agencies based on policies determined by corporations, and joint implementation with non-governmental organisations. For example Unilever runs a program with NGO partners on motivation, management and business skills training.	Non-governmental organisations formulate policies as well as execute program. For example those run by TURC, AISYIAH, Bina Swadaya, PEKERTI, and PEKKA.

The private sector is positioned as a key stakeholder and contributor to TVET and skills development broadly, both supplementing and utilising (often diminishing) public funds through a variety of mechanisms, including user pays. Private-public- partnerships (PPP) and national training funds have been both used extensively in South Asia as means of funding.

Currently, the following sources for financing skills development are available in India

<p><b>Government-supported training:</b></p> <p>Most skills development training in India is financed through the government tax revenue. The resources are deployed for training through the various schemes of multiple Ministries. The National Skills Development Mission has the target of skilling 500 million people by 2020. It functions through the National Skill Development Fund, a public trust primarily funded from general tax revenues, and through the National Skills Development Corporation, with 51% investment by the private sector and 49% by the public sector. They enhance, support and coordinate private sector initiatives for skill development through appropriate PPP models.</p> <p><b>Employer-based training:</b></p> <p>These are job specific trainings based on specific requirements of the firm and may not translate beyond the current work engagement of the workers. These focus on technical skills and 'soft skills' related to a particular domain.</p>	<p><b>Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funding:</b></p> <p>Every qualifying company in India is required to spend at least 2% of its average net profit for the immediately preceding 3 financial years on CSR activities. Companies fund initiatives by NGOs, or have set up their own foundations to undertake their own programmes with communities in and around the areas where they operate on different programmes, e.g. education, livelihoods, health, etc. The government is now actively seeking the participation of the corporate sector in financing of skills through contributions to the National Skills Development Fund to finance skills development programmes in India.</p> <p><b>Development aid:</b></p> <p>Skills development in development funding is generally subsumed under broad program categories as economic empowerment or livelihood. Most funding organizations are of the opinion that skills development programmes for marginalized women must be self-sustaining or, they must be connected to government-funded initiatives.</p>
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Another example of PPPs is the Franchising-SKILL programme in Nepal, funded by the Swiss, UK and US governments and other donors. It provides training in trades for 16-30 year-olds from lower-caste, indigenous and conflict affected backgrounds who have dropped out of secondary education.

Many countries in Asia Pacific, are promoting Community Learning Centres (CLCs). These are local institutions outside the formal education system set up and run by local people to provide communities with opportunities to improve their lives. Here learning is understood as an investment in people themselves, on different aspects of their lives rather than teaching 'no-returns skills'. Two pilot projects run by UNESCO in Bangladesh demonstrated success through an integrated network of policy, commitment, funding, good quality, relevant programs and high participation. The learning centres were linked with both, the government and communities of trainers and skill providers. The emphasis lay in understanding the needs of the community.



The market provision for skills development is being promoted with mixed outcomes. Skills development courses vary from formal apprenticeships to work place learning to community based non-formal non-accredited provision. They have varying quality, and status and recognition of the learning undertaken. Some are linked to work experience and job opportunities, many are not. For marginalised groups including women and girls, for those seeking to 'get a foot on the ladder', and/or improve their life opportunities, this variation in cost and efficacy of skills development is of great concern.

Truly achieving inclusive growth through skills development requires a simultaneous focus on who can access trainings along with how the skills imparted create better employment and business outcomes. It is important to acknowledge that providing relevant skills does not automatically lead to better jobs, wages and working conditions or even productivity. The perspective that skills do not exist in a vacuum, and that their impact is mediated by the context and conditions of work, is often missing<sup>32</sup>.

From Marginalisation to Self-Actualisation

Best practice programs such as those included in the India and Indonesia country studies do not focus solely on a narrow set of technical skills. Rather, they develop and utilise holistic approaches that maximise learning. A combination base of at least three skill-based domains is required: 1) the knowledge base of practice 2) the technical base of practice 3) the attributes needed for transition to and retention in the job/occupation.

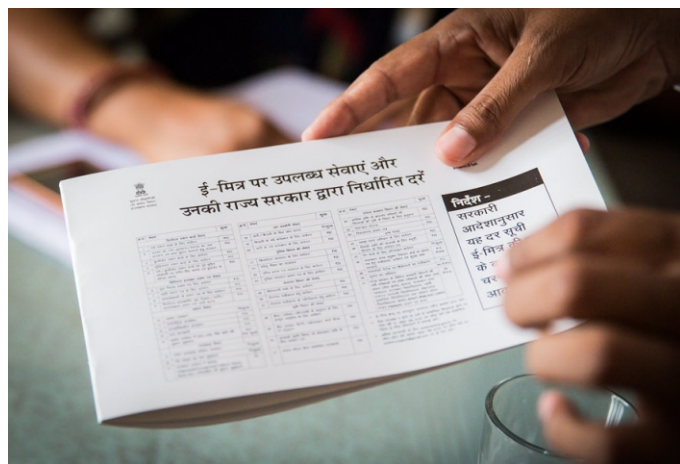
These programs provide information to enhance and support the transition of participants into their wider socio-cultural, political and economic contexts, from a position of marginalisation to that of citizen. While such a holistic approach has been demonstrated to provide the best outcomes for women in general, it is especially important for those entering 'non-traditional' male dominated fields of work. Economic empowerment that is not accompanied with social empowerment will still leave women in a weak position, without strong bargaining power in the family and society.

<sup>32</sup> Sakamoto, A., & Sung, J. (Eds.), 2018, Skills and the future of work. Strategies for inclusive growth in Asia and the Pacific. p.2. ILO. [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms\\_650239.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_650239.pdf)  
Concept note on the CSW side event 2019 Tapping the potential of Non Traditional Livelihoods for social transformation: A Dialogue with Donors, Experts and Practitioners



There is a growing number of women's groups across the country which provide NTL training for women like driving, masonry, carpentry, electrical work, etc. to marginalized women to facilitate decent work. The training is purposively geared towards women engaging in professions that are not conventionally associated with women. They can explore new avenues of employment which increase their income and opportunities for growth. Emerging curricula and modules in this regard encompass a range of knowledge inputs, both technical and practical, as well as building the confidence and facilitating agency of the women being trained.

NTL training, however, is time and investment-intensive and financing in this regard is hard to come by. NGOs and women's groups working on NTL in India are generally not accredited with the government's skills development and entrepreneurship programmes thus, unable to access financing from those sources. Instead they rely mostly on grants by funding agencies local and international, CSR contributions or donations from individuals.



#### Women on Wheels Academy, Azad Foundation, India

The Academy is an exemplar in a form of work-related education and training that links women with employment and careers; women from disadvantaged backgrounds, most often marginalised, living in poverty and with low education levels. Importantly, the program integrates both gender-informed adult education and technical skills development (vocational training). The technical training (in a 'non-traditional' male dominated industry) focuses on skills deemed as essential by the industry, while the education modules that focus on self-empowerment (legal rights training and sessions on women's rights, reproductive and sexuality information and gender awareness) and self development (financial literacy, first aid, self defense, spoken English for those seeking to be professional chauffeurs), communications skills and counselling. The program is industry recognised in the contexts where it is delivered, and enjoys the benefit of social partners including public private participation (PPP) involvement, along with mentors and champions - all hallmarks of best practice vocational education and training for women. It is also certified.

#### PEKKA (Women Headed Household Empowerment), Indonesia

The organization provides livelihood opportunities to challenge the discrimination and stigmatisation women without husbands face. The group consists of widows, divorcees, abandoned women and migrant women. They all technically run their households but are not recognised as such by the society at large.

PEKKA's uses the five-point women's empowerment framework based on the Caroline Moser framework (1993): 1) increase welfare 2) increase access to resources; 3) build critical awareness 4) increase participation 5) increase control towards decision-making.

To improve well-being, PEKKA uses the four pillars of community organising. Enable women to build a vision. Improve their business development capacity through training, assistance and linking them up with the supply chains and credit unions. Connect with other stakeholders, such as the industry to access skills training, local trade offices or NGOs and government to develop product design and marketing. PEKKA also helps women advocate for change in values and policies. For instance PEKKA members in West Java, Central Java, Aceh and South Sumatra have managed to access

#### Framework and recommendations for gender-just skills education for marginalised women

A collective of practitioners, educators, advocates, entrepreneurs, artists, youth, women, academicians and development partners, came together at the Azad Foundation organised "International Conference on Making Non Traditional Livelihoods (NTL) Work for the Marginalised", in New Delhi, India in January 2019, and deliberated on ways to overcome existing gender disparities in learning opportunities and skills for decent work of marginalised women. The outcomes from the deliberation have been proposed as a charter of recommendations to ensure equitable technical and transferable skills (Target 4.4 of SDG 4), access to employment and decent jobs (as outlined in SDG 8). The following recommendations are based on this charter as well as those from the India and Indonesia studies.

##### For Governments:

1. A clear gendered analysis within the policy framework that is incorporated right through – from access, mobilization, types of trainings made available, learning pedagogy and placements. All relevant policies and projects must explicitly state marginalised women as beneficiaries.
2. Policy frameworks need to promote non-traditional livelihoods, which are clearly more remunerative and have a greater potential for initiating transformative changes in women's lives.
3. All economic empowerment and skills training programmes for women must include social empowerment and women's leadership development, including efforts to boost self-confidence, enhance negotiation skills, and trainings on rights and structural barriers, among others. Correspondingly, funds allocated should allow for more comprehensive training programmes that extend over flexible periods of time.
4. Put in place social protection policies and conducive social infrastructure that can ensure women and gender minority workers in the informal sector and the formal sector are able to live a life of dignity. This includes crèches, safe workspaces, hygienic toilets, etc.
5. Institutionalise a gender disaggregated data system that monitors access, quality and outcomes of skills trainings. It must be collated, made available to all stakeholders and inform policy formulation and programme development by the Government.
6. Implement education and skills development on NTL that help women and adolescent girls break stereotypes related to gender, caste, class, religion, sexual orientation, disability and other forms of marginalization and oppression<sup>33</sup>.
7. Institutionalised mechanisms for women's participation in education governance, policy discussions that relate to women's issues and decision-making processes in the world of work and community.

##### For Donors and Non-State Private Actors:

1. Funders, donors need to realize the long-term benefits of investing in non-traditional livelihoods, supportive social protection policies and the missing link of a rights-based agenda in the context of skill building of women, girls and gender minorities.
2. Thoughtful financing of programs using a paradigm of rights and empowerment will help bridge the gap between these unequal power structures.
3. The private sector needs to have a lens of inclusion, by facilitating more open markets, promoting and accepting women's leadership across different roles, and governance around safe work spaces and parental leaves.

##### For Civil Society:

1. Members of the community need to build alliances with each other. Organise in order to explore various accessible resources for expanding their economic potential, as well build a strong body of thought leadership for maximum impact.
2. Members of the community need to organise themselves to advocate for policies and budget allocations needed to strengthen the capacity of marginalised women.
3. Women's organisations need to work alongside the private sector and community groups to develop programmes that generate benefits for marginal groups.



<sup>33</sup> Concept note on the CSW side event 2019 Tapping the potential of Non Traditional Livelihoods for social transformation: A Dialogue with Donors, Experts and Practitioners





## About ASPBAE

The Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) is a regional association of more than 200 organisations and individuals working towards promoting quality education for all and transformative and liberating, lifelong adult education and learning. It strives to forge and sustain an Asia-Pacific movement dedicated to mobilising and supporting community and people's organisations, national education coalitions, teachers' associations, campaign networks, and other civil society groups and institutions in holding governments and the international donor community accountable in meeting education targets and commitments, ensuring the right of all to education, and upholding education as an empowering tool for combating poverty and all forms of exclusion and discrimination, pursuing sustainable development, enabling active and meaningful participation in governance, and building a culture of peace and international understanding. ASPBAE publications form an integral part of ASPBAE's information, education, and advocacy activities and efforts, and seek to support sharing and learning among education stakeholders, advocates, practitioners, analysts, and policymakers. The reader is therefore encouraged to write to ASPBAE if they wish to use the material contained herein for reproduction, adaptation, and translation and to provide feedback that could help in further improving these publications.



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