

E-discussion on YOUTH – summary of preliminary results

Day 1: Who are the groups of young people we are dealing with? Are there new target groups and which? Which challenges and opportunities do exist?

Age group: in *Bangladesh* young people are aged 18 to 35 years, in some cases as of 16, in *Nepal* the official definition of youth is between 16 to 40 years, in *Handicap International*, youth are defined as people between 18 to 35 years old.

Target groups of projects: in general, young people in transition school to work and, in terms of quantity, they represent an enormous potential as well as challenge. The specific target groups differ among projects: while some projects specifically target poor and disadvantaged young people, school drop-outs and people with risk of marginalization (e.g. teenage mothers, disabled, internally displaced persons, former children soldiers, youth in refugee camps, LGBT, Indigenous and Tribal People (ITP)), other projects include all young persons as they work with the public VET system. People with disabilities need support to identify personalized and concrete solutions.

Challenges such as low job creation, low wages of employed people, scarcity of jobs in agriculture, TVET system failing to deliver to the needs of the industries, migration as well as lack of basic literacy and numeracy as necessary basic competences were mentioned.

Changes in recent times with regard to young people: the education level is better than before for most of the youth, however, there are still many excluded from the beginning. Youth today are much more connected (phones, internet) and this impacts their learning. In some projects, the geographic focus has changed from poor geographical areas to more urbanized centers. Many VET schools do not use new technological possibilities, they have a rather restrictive approach to new media.

Exchange on VET system development: inclusive systems have to be developed with all in mind, not with the most disadvantaged alone. An area-based approach (only specific districts/provinces/states) and focus on only poor and disadvantaged groups stands in conflict with a systemic approach. VSD can be an effective tool for poverty alleviation if there are jobs available. Therefore, the jobs need to be considered before deciding on the intervention. Need to define who is trained/educated in the sector-based VSD projects because many sectors require good literacy, numeracy and life skills.

Conceptual reflections on projects and their focus: diverse inputs on conceptual issues in VET, such as need to start thinking from the employment side of the market, (self-) Employment where no jobs are, poverty reduction through VSD where sufficient jobs are available. Some initiatives build on new realities and try to apply new ways of learning. The development of technical skills, personal or social skills has been neglected, but extracurricular activities would provide valuable inputs for personal and social skills. For disadvantaged young people skills development means often short term courses, providing them with the necessary skills to find decent jobs or income and to go that extra mile to integrate this very vulnerable group.