

Higher Education and Leadership Development for Sustainable Textiles in Bangladesh (HELD)

Background

Bangladesh is the world's second largest producer of clothing and textiles. While the industry has seen impressive growth in past decades, the country's future prosperity is closely linked to a continued sustainable development of the textile sector.

Objective

The HELD project seeks to strengthen application-oriented competencies of future specialists and managers of the textile industry in sustainable corporate management.

Our approach

The HELD project partners with the Ministry of Education (MoE) and its authorities. It implements sustainability curricula in higher education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), and in further training on-the-job. Capacity building of teachers and policy makers always goes hand in hand. The HELD project cooperates with national and international organizations, institutes and universities. It links the academia and industry through networks for demand-oriented and industry attached quality education. Integrated solutions are in place both with the private sector projects Engelbert Strauss Chair for Sustainability and Textile Innovation (CSTI) and KIK Makes the Difference scholarship program, as well as with the regional technical cooperation project Digital Skills to Succeed in Asia (DS2S).

Project name	Higher Education and Leadership Development for Sustainable Textiles in Bangladesh (HELD)
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Commissioned value	€ 7.78 million
Project region	Bangladesh
Partner ministry	Ministry of Education (MoE), Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Implementing agency	University Grants Commission (UGC)
SDG contribution	Quality Education (SDG 4), Gender Equality (SDG 5), Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8), Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12)
Duration	01.01.2021 – 30.06.2025

The primary beneficiaries are students, along with the specified target groups. The workers of the textile industry are benefitting, too, as their working conditions will steadily improve if factory management is committed to sustainability.

Areas of intervention and activities

1. Higher education

In higher education, the Bangladesh University of Textiles (BUTEX) and the German Hof University of Applied Sciences are co-designing in cross-border expertise social and





ecological sustainability modules for Bachelor courses and a Master's degree programme in Sustainable Textiles. The contents are also mirrored in the curricula of the BUTEX-affiliated Colleges, widening the circle of benefitting students. Within HELD and DS2S, the CSTI of the Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology (AUST) develops and teaches microcredentials on just transition issues, such as digital fashion or women leadership.

2. Technical and vocational education and training

In TVET, the HELD project works together with the Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB) of the MoE and the ICON-Institute Consultancy Group to modernize the Diploma education in Textile Engineering. Four new learning modules on Sustainability, Compliance, Environment Studies and Industry Relations plus one overarching TVET pedagogy module are being developed and piloted at seven public Textile Diploma Institutes and one Polytechnic Institute of the Underprivileged Children's Educational Programs (UCEP) with the involvement of KiK.

3. On-the-job leadership training

In the area of leadership training, the HELD project cooperates with various public and private actors: A new multi-module course on Sustainability Management is being put together with the Bangladesh Institute of Management (BIM) under the Ministry of Industries (MoInd). By that, the target group of middle managers extends beyond textiles to all industries. Under the programme 'Inno-Lead@Work', the HELD project has brought together the Technical University Dresden (TUD) and the Centre for Innovation, Efficiency and Occupational Safety and Health (CIEOSH) of the Bangladesh Garment

Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA). With this academic project, led by TUD, CIEOSH expands its training portfolio on leadership and modern work design, coupled with research on entrepreneurial resilience through innovation. Parallel in the field of leadership training the HELD project collaborates with the International Labour Organization (ILO) to skill young executives from trade unions to raise labour and human rights demands in social dialogue.

4. Academia-industry nexus

As a connecting element, the HELD project forms nexus platforms across the educational and industrial landscapes to elaborate academia-industry linkages for apprenticeships and employability. Special emphasis is placed on specific needs of girls and women in the education as well as female workers in the textile sector to foster women empowerment, e.g. through innovative mentorship models when entering the work life.

Preliminary results

As of now during the ongoing HELD project, already around 1.800 university and vocational students have taken the new curricula modules. In parallel 130 teachers have been trained in technical and pedagogical terms, mainly through a master-trainer concept. As a result of the cooperations with BIM, CIEOSH and TUD, more than 500 professionals have benefitted from various leadership trainings. The majority of them simultaneously forms the largest network of sustainability management practitioners in Bangladesh. Finally, 67 trade unionists have completed the Academy of Work programme of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), supported by HELD. The number is rising through the new cooperation with the ILO.

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