



***‘We are
learning
by working’***

Perspectives, Experiences and Motivations of Youth on
Employment and Vocational Training in Bangladesh, 2016

Disclaimer

Disclaimer: The work is a product of the Reality Check Approach+ project, a project of The Palladium Group. The findings, interpretations and conclusions therein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of SUDOKKHO, Palladium, British Council, Swisscontact, UK Aid or Swiss Development Cooperation

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Acknowledgement

The Reality Check Approach study has been made possible by the work of an enthusiastic team as well as the commitment and support of many. The Reality Check Approach (RCA) was originally an initiative of the Swedish Embassy in Bangladesh where it was first commissioned in 2007 and has since been adopted in other countries and other contexts. The study was undertaken by a team of local and international researchers and led by an international team leader (see annex 1).

The dedication of the team members in taking part in this study and carrying out their work with professionalism, motivation, and respect for their host communities, is much appreciated.

Most importantly, this study was only possible thanks to the many families, their neighbours and communities who welcomed our researchers into their homes and shared their lives with them for a short while. We are grateful to them for this opportunity, and for openly sharing their lives, activities, perspectives and aspirations.

We hope that the report reflects well their views and experiences and helps to inform the design and implementation of the SUDOKKHO project.

Glossary and Acronyms

DFID	Department for International Development (UK Aid)
EPZ	Export Processing Zone, is a specific type of free trade zone, set up generally in developing countries by their governments to promote industrial and commercial exports.
FHH	Focal household; neighbour of the host households
Hajj	Islamic pilgrimage
HHH	Host households; where members of the study team stayed with families
HSC	Higher School Certificate; national examination for class 12 students in Bangladesh.
Lakh	An unit in the Indian numbering system equal to one hundred thousand. It is widely used both in official and other contexts in Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.
Mamo	Uncle
Miking	Promotion carried out through loudspeakers usually mounted on bikes or baby taxis which pass through communities
Mistry	Artisan such as carpenter, mason
RCA	Reality Check Approach
Saree	Traditional woman attire in Bangladesh.
SSC	Secondary School Certificate national examination in Bangladesh on completion of class 10.
SUDOKKHO	Programme that supports private-sector led training for the poor, and in particular training that effectively supports women and disadvantaged populations into decent employment within the Ready Made Garments (RMG) and construction sectors in Bangladesh.
Tk	Taka (Bangladesh currency)
Ustad	Boss

Currency Exchange Rate

1 GBP = 110 BDT

(one poundsterling = 110 Bangladesh Taka)

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Executive Summary

This Reality Check Approach (RCA) Study was carried out between February – April 2016. The study is intended to provide insights to better understand the perspectives, motivations and experiences of youth in relation to employment and work related training. It is intended to assist the SUDOKKHO programme in the continuous learning and improvements in the design and implementation, and is planned as a longitudinal study which will accompany the 4-5 year programme. The emphasis on inclusive development in the programme design requires it to specifically address the barriers faced by people living in poverty and disadvantaged groups in accessing skills training and sustained employment.

The study is commissioned by Palladium in collaboration with the British Council and Swisscontact, and is funded by the Department of International Development (UK Aid).

The Reality Check Approach is an internationally recognised qualitative research approach to try to understand context, people's aspirations, their behaviours and day to day lives through their lenses. It involves researchers staying in people's own homes for several days and nights and using this opportunity to 'hang out' and interact informally through chatting and two way conversations. This approach encourages relaxed ordinary interactions and builds trusted relations for open dialogue. This approach encourages relaxed ordinary interactions and builds trusted relations for open dialogue. Researchers work alongside the hosts wherever possible, working on construction sites, garment factories, brick fields, factory workshops to experience and observe the working conditions and environment. The approach provides opportunities to iterate informal conversations and triangulate findings through observations, own experience and multiple conversations with different people living together as well as neighbours.

The study locations were purposefully selected to ensure the study participants included recent trainees from SUDOKKHO courses and youths of similar backgrounds who have not undertaken training with SUDOKKHO. The first 2 rounds were conducted in February 2016 in 3 districts in Greater Dhaka and the focus was primarily on understanding the perspectives of the trainees and those who recently enrolled/completed the private training provided led training. The third round was conducted in April 2016 in a district 50km from Dhaka and designed to explore further the experiences of people who have not undertaken SUDOKKHO training courses.

The study team lived with a total of 29 host households, which included 15 recent trainees (6 women, 9 male trainees) from SUDOKKHO courses. The host households (see Annex 4) varied considerably with some being the family house in more rural locations, some living in temporary cramped compounds with their families, some living in shared dormitories, and in some cases the 'household' was a shelter on the construction work-site. In some locations it was not possible to stay overnight due to the cramped conditions or security, but the researchers had intensive discussions throughout the day and returned early in the mornings. As well as the hosts and their families, the researchers also had extensive neighbours, other youth in the community, trainers, employers and wider community members, resulting in purposive conversations with more than 1,000 (480 women, 611 men) people during the course of the study (see Annex 2).

Many young men and women shared dreams of having a permanent '*proper job*' which would bring security and respect. They typically wished for government jobs, working for private companies. Young men told us they dreamt of jobs in the army, police and fire service and young women dreamt of being a nurse, teacher or other government jobs. However these 'opportunities' require academic qualifications. Those with limited education shared they had given up on dream jobs and the next best options many young men and a few young women told us was working overseas. They shared many reasons for going overseas from better pay, better working conditions, better health

and security and improved social status.

People shared the importance of gaining respect and money through your job. Young men and women who had just left school, saw this period (15-25 years old) as generally less about starting a career but rather earning respect and money. Respect could be gained through *'contributing to the family'* and this also endows opportunities to influence family decision making. Money people explained is a necessity for supporting the family for education costs and marriage. Youths also shared that they prefer to have flexibility in the working hours and place of work so they could plan their days as they like and fit in leisure activities, such as a game of cricket.

Parents told us that they had moved to Dhaka to earn money and support their families, but there was every intention to move back to their villages where the living conditions are less cramped. They were therefore not seeking career progression opportunities, but for as much cash as possible and to *'settle their children'* before moving back home. Back home people talked about setting up their own businesses, building concrete houses and the working life being more flexible and relaxing. In the city people shared they felt isolated and excluded from their families.

Young men and women shared that what type of job they could seek is often determined by their network and money, and not any skills training. Job opportunities often came through informal networks, through friends, family members or neighbours. Those with academic qualifications that wished to pursue their preferred job, explained that they would still need money for bribes and the network to find jobs. As one male student who is just about to graduate explained, *'I have nobody who can help me get a proper job'*. For overseas jobs, people also told us they preferred to draw upon their personal and family networks rather than using brokers.

Young men and women who had not completed their HSC or SSC were resigned to the fact that their options are limited, and as one young woman told us we *'are destined to work in the garment industry'*. Although the conditions in the garment industry have improved, in general these jobs are not sought after.

People explained the hours are long (12 hour days), there is *'a lot of pressure on the head and body'*, strict regulations that serve to benefit only the owner and also incidences of verbal and sexual harassment. Working in the garment sector one young woman described as like working *'in a jail'* and that you *'cannot come home until they give you permission'*. Some people shared that it was not right for women to work and that *'those men that push their wives to work in the garment industry are not human'*. Whilst other people explained it is now more accepted for women to work and the garment sector is the most appropriate as *'it is inside and she has more security inside'*.

In the construction industry, many helpers described the work as *'in-humane'* and they did not want their children to have to do this type of work. Many shared stories of injuries and accidents on the site and poor safety and security provisions. Some had been forced to quit working due to injuries, whilst others were still fighting through pains of previous accidents. People told us they had to regularly take medicine and when accidents happened were only partially compensated if at all. The conditions in the construction sector overseas young men described as being better, and that was one of the main reasons to seek opportunities overseas.

People shared that obligations to their family has a significant impact on their opportunity for getting a job or training. The eldest and youngest son or daughter are often the most affected. Often youngest children, irrespective of gender, have special obligations to their families such as looking after the children of the family, caring for the parents and family assets which, in turn, constrains their choice of work. Whereas the eldest, irrespective of gender, is often pressurized to support the family's income and education costs for their siblings. These responsibilities and burdens people also sometimes described skipped siblings and the strain of them changed over the family lifecycle.

Most young men and women in the study shared that the primary reason for choosing SUDOKKHO training was to get a regular job rather than any particular skills development. Jobs they told us improved their social status, provided them

the needed cash and the youths (15-25year old) were not planning career paths. In cases where trainees had got jobs after completing the training course then they appreciated the opportunities that the training course provided. However, if they could not get a job after the training course, and in some cases they had left employment for the course, then they felt frustrated and let down. This was particularly the case due to the promises of employment which trainees told us they had been given by the training centres and through 'miking'.

Some trainees said that attending the course was often not an active decision, but they had *'fallen into it'*, either through family recommendations and networks or pressures. The training people shared was therefore viewed as a 'filler' while waiting for a job or to extend their time before *'we have to find jobs now'*. As one young man explained 'until your 20 years old it's playing age'.

The over-riding preference people shared is to *'learn by doing'*. This was true not just in terms of people's preference for practical classes over theoretical training, but also in related to their preference for informal on the job experience rather than formal training. Many young men and women explained the best way to learn is by working, *'we learn by working'*. It's best to learn on the job and specialize in a particular area, rather than have short term training which *'does not give you a step up in your career'*. People shared that they had benefited most from informal training on the job from their boss, work colleagues or family members. This environment they told us is more supportive and friendly and allows them to learn while working.

Trainees told us that the training environment, facilities and the timing of the course are important factors to ensure the relevance and attractiveness of the course. One training centre in particular people praised as the training room is set up so that the lighting is exactly the same as the garment factory. At other centres sometimes not all the equipment was working. People also shared that costs for attending the training courses varied and seemed to be open to negotiation.

Overall people shared they were satisfied with the training received. Many trainees said that they had learnt new skills and some managed to get new jobs. For some the skills they learnt on the training were not directly applicable to the local job needs but people said that they still 'enjoyed' the training and made new friends.

The study report concludes with a number of study implications that have emerged from the insights gained. These are structured around the assumptions in the design and are summarized below:

Assumption - Relevance: (trainees) choose the options (offered by the programme) over alternative work or life choices.

This study suggests that options are actually chosen for young men and women based upon:

- Searching for any job which well and preferably gives some status (the much used and liked phrases 'in business' or 'working abroad' conceal much but confer status compared to working for others in garments or construction).
- The desire for immediate cash rather than working with a view to developing a career.
- Recognising that networks and bribing are more likely to return the kind of work they really want.

Assumption: (potential trainees) have ambitions for promotion to semi-skilled and skilled status

This study suggests that the youth do not on the whole think that acquiring skills in addition to those acquired in the workplace correlates to better paid work as networks and bribes trump this. Nevertheless, some youth were enthusiastic about their skills potential but only where there are role models and proven paths to getting better wages through skills acquisition.

Assumption: need to have confidence in the training providers and value of the training provided

Most young men and women in the study indicated that skills obtained in work were more valuable than those from any training courses

run externally. The overriding motivation for joining the training was the prospect of securing a good job. This suggests that improved relations are required to be developed between local industries and the training providers to ensure the training is geared to their specific needs and that there is work available for skilled graduates. People said SUDOKKHO is not geared towards skills training for overseas work but felt that this could be relevant and useful for them.

Assumption: Be attracted to training packages offered

At present the courses seem to be being sought by those with some work experience rather than school leavers which explains the importance of the promise of securing a better paid job. The short nature of the courses is attractive for this client group especially compared to many of the Government offered vocational courses which are considered very long. But the timing is less than optimal, with some male trainees suggesting that the courses could be conducted alongside part time employment in the afternoons or evenings or between shifts so that they can continue to earn while learning.

Assumption Being able to access the training opportunities offered

The more disadvantaged young men and women in the study (orphaned, with some disability, low education or economic responsibility for siblings) shared with us that they had or would have difficulties accessing the training. There are expectations of literacy skills and passing written exams. The full time nature of the courses, albeit short, mean that opportunities to earn money at the same time are limited and the financial costs of availing the training are not always clear.

The lack of clarity over costs of training, resources and equipment acts as a barrier to access. Clear documentation outlining the costs would be beneficial, and where fees are the equivalent of a month's income to be paid up front, phasing payment and provision of education loans for the costs may enable others to access to courses.

Assumption: (potential trainees) attracted to non traditional occupations (e.g. women in construction)

Despite interacting with over 1,000 people (611 men, 480 women), we did not come across many in non traditional occupations, expect for some female construction workers in the pilot. Some young women complained that if they were to work in the construction sector they get paid less than men, eventhough they shared that they thought they worked harder as the men *'go off smoking while we don't'*.



Introduction

This Report presents the main findings of the Reality Check Approach (RCA) study which was conducted in February-April 2016. The study is designed to provide insights to improve design and implementation of the SUDOKKHO program through a better understanding of the perspectives, motivations and experiences of the youth concerning employment and work related training . The emphasis on inclusive development in the programme design requires it to specifically address the barriers faced by people living in poverty and disadvantaged groups in accessing skills training and sustained employment. These barriers need full understanding and insight. The RCA involves developing close, trusted and informal relationships with individuals from the primary target groups as well as those who choose not to participate in the programme in order to explore with them their motivations, perspectives and aspirations.

The design for the SUDOKKHO RCA outlines a number of assumptions that the programme relies upon associated with the primary target groups. In order for the programme to be successful, potential trainees (mostly new workforce entrants)

- Need to have confidence in the training providers and the value of the training they receive.
- Be attracted to training packages offered.
- Be able to access the training and opportunities offered.
- Be attracted to non-traditional occupations (e.g. women in construction).
- Have ambitions for promotion to semi skilled and skilled status.
- Choose these options over alternative work or life choices.

The intention is that the RCA will become a longitudinal study which will accompany the 4-5 year SUDOKKHO programme. For the first year of SUDOKKHO, the RCA study is intended to assist in providing insights on the perspectives, motivations, experiences and lifestyle choices of the youth, including some of the trainees from the programme. In order to understand the different perspectives of young people in relation to work, skills, aspirations and lifestyle, three different cohorts were chosen, namely:

1. Those enrolled/completed the SUDOKKHO training courses;
2. Those with a similar profile but who have not availed similar employment or skills training opportunities;
3. Those already in the ready made garments (RMG) and construction industries but are not part of the SUDOKKHO programme.

The first two rounds of three rounds of the 1st year of the study were conducted in February 2016. The focus was primarily on understanding the perspectives of the trainees and those who recently enrolled/completed the private training provided led training¹. The third round was conducted in April 2016 and designed to explore further the experiences of people who have not undertaken SUDOKKHO training courses, and either work in the same industry or different industries. In particular, this round aimed to further explore and unravel perceptions and experiences related to:

- Factors that influence what is perceived as a desirable job;
- Opportunities outside the garment and construction industry;
- Perceived benefits and costs (opportunity and actual) of being skilled;
- Anticipated benefits and trade-offs between seeking job opportunities versus training;
- The decision making process, lifestyle choices and options when searching for jobs;
- Ambitions for promotion to semi-skilled and skilled status;
- Perceptions on different training course provisions.

Structure of this report

This report begins with an overview of the Reality Check Approach (RCA) methodology (section 2). Section 3 and 4 outline the insights and findings which are the perspectives and experiences of the youth, their families and the wider communities. Section 3 uncovers their Dreams Jobs, Necessities, Respect and Constraints. Section 4 explores the perceptions and experiences with trainings. The report then concludes with implications drawn from the perspectives and experience of the youth and structured around the initial assumptions from the study design.

¹The industry led training was not included as this training started March 2016.



Methodology

The Reality Check Approach (RCA) is a qualitative research approach involving trained and experienced researchers staying in people's homes for several days and nights, joining in their everyday lives and chatting informally with all members of the family, their neighbours and others they come into contact with. This relaxed approach ensures that power distances between researcher and study participants are diminished and provides the best possible conditions for rich insights into people's context and reality to emerge. By building on conversations, having multiple conversations with different people and having opportunities for direct experience and observation, confidence in the insights gathered is enhanced compared to many other qualitative research methods. RCA is often used to understand longitudinal change through staying with the same people at approximately the same time each year over a period of several years.

The Reality Check Approach differs from most other approaches to research. Firstly, it is not theory based so that there are no pre-conceived research frameworks or research questions. This is deliberate as the approach seeks to enable emic (insider) perspectives to emerge and to limit etic (outsider) interpretation or validation. The premise for researchers is one of learning directly from people themselves. Secondly, RCA is always carried out in teams in order to minimise researcher bias and to optimise opportunities for triangulation. Thirdly, and importantly, RCA teams are independent and make this explicit with the people who participate in the study. Our objective is to ensure that the views, perspectives and experiences of people are respectfully conveyed to policy and programme stakeholders. The researchers become a conduit rather than an intermediary. This is why RCA studies do not provide recommendations but promote the idea of sharing implications which are grounded in what people themselves share and show us.

The approach builds on and extends the tradition of listening studies (see Salmen 1998 and Anderson, Brown and Jean 2012²) and beneficiary assessments (see SDC 2013³) by combining elements of these approaches with researchers actually living with people and sharing their everyday lives in context.

RCA is sometimes likened to a 'light touch' participant observation. But while it is similar in that it requires participation in everyday life within people's own environments, it differs by being comparatively quick and placing more emphasis on informal, relaxed and insightful conversations than on observing behaviour and the complexities of relationships. It also differs by deriving credibility through multiple interactions in multiple locations and collective pooling of unfiltered insights so that emic perspectives are always privileged.

Important characteristics of the Reality Check Approach are:

- **Living with** rather than visiting (thereby meeting the family/people in their own environment, understanding family/home dynamics and how days and nights are spent);
- **Having conversations** rather than conducting interviews (there is no note taking thereby putting people at ease and on an equal footing with the outsider);
- **Learning** rather than finding out (suspending judgement, letting people take the lead in defining the agenda and what is important);
- **Centring on the household/place** of residence and interacting with families/people rather than users, communities or formalised groups;
- **Being experiential** in that researchers themselves take part in daily activities (working, cooking and house chores with the family) and accompanying people (to meetings, to market, to place of work, where possible working alongside them);
- **Including all members** of households/living in units;
- **Using private space** rather than public space for disclosure (an emphasis on normal, ordinary lives);
- **Accepting multiple** realities rather than public consensus (gathering diversity of opinion, including 'smaller voices');
- **Interacting in ordinary daily life** with people (accompanying people in their interactions with local service providers and village government as they go about their usual routines);
- **Taking a cross-sectoral view**, although each study has a special focus, the enquiry is situated within the context of everyday life rather than simply (and arguably artificially) looking at one aspect of people's lives.

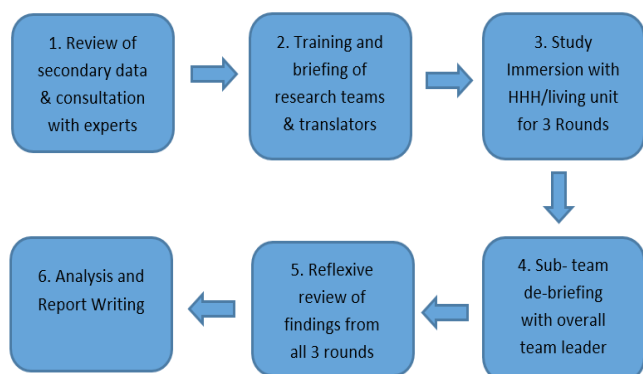
²Salmen, Lawrence F. 1998. "Toward a Listening Bank: Review of Best Practices and Efficacy of Beneficiary Assessments". Social Development Papers 23. Washington: World Bank.

Anderson, Mary B., Dayna Brown, Isabella Jean. 2012. Time to Listen; Hearing People on the Receiving End of International Aid. Cambridge MA:CDA.

³Shutt, Cathy and Laurent Ruedin. 2013. SDC How-to-Note Beneficiary Assessment (BA). Berne: Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation.

Scope of the study

Below is an outline of the various steps in implementation of the first year of the SUDOK-KHO RCA.



1. Review of secondary data & consultation with experts

The study team leader and quality assurance advisor reviewed secondary data and developed the design for the SUDOKKHO in consultation with the project team. The RCA was also incorporated into the projects M&E framework.

2. Training and Briefing of research teams and translators

In the first year of the RCA SUDOKKHO a new team of field researchers needed to be trained. In early February 2016 a team of 11 Bangladeshi researchers were trained to Level 1 RCA Training. This comprised of a 6 full days training activity (including a two day village immersion) as follows:



RCA level 1 training is intended to provide participants with:

- A thorough understanding of RCA and how it differs from other approaches
- Understanding and practice of key elements of RCA
- Direct experience of living with people living in poverty/study participants
- An opportunity to reflect on their own position, behaviours, attitudes and biases in order to mitigate the adverse effect of these during actual future RCA studies
- An opportunity to experiment with different approaches to engaging families and community members

The ‘in field training’ was conducted in Narsingdi where both garment and construction workers can be found in large numbers, where the RCA team already had connections and knowledge (from earlier RCAs) and where, so far, there is no project presence. As well as providing a training experience, the immersion for trainee researchers was able to provide some baseline insights into youth attitudes and aspirations offering a potential to include this location in the longitudinal study in the future. During the two night immersion in Narsingdi, the sub team leader/trainer buddies (Peter Riddell- Carre, Nurjahan Begum and Joost Verwilghen) as well as the technical advisor (Dee Jupp) piloted the areas of conversation, gathering insights and testing out some of the complementary visual materials for use in the main study. (see Annex 3).

The study team was composed of 13 researchers (all of whom have Anthropology or Sociology backgrounds) , including 2 international researchers and 11 Bangladeshi researchers (see Annex 1) working in teams of four to five members. Two international researchers were accompanied by Bangladeshi researcher/translators who had also fully participated in full Level 1 RCA training. The two sub-teams were led by International RCA practitioners and one sub team was led by an experienced Bangladesh RCA practitioner.

3. Study Immersion with HHH/living unit for 3 Rounds

Most researchers stayed with their host families/ host groups for 2- 4 nights⁴ and spent the entire four days in the community, interacting with others if they could not accompany the hosts to the workplace. Researchers worked alongside the host household people wherever possible, to experience and also observe the working conditions and environment. Researchers worked on construction sites, garment factories, brick field, factory workshops and on the farm (see box story 15 for researchers experience as a construction worker). They accompanied the hosts during recreational periods and were able to iterate informal conversations and triangulate findings through observation, own experience and multiple conversations with different people living together as well as their neighbours.

a) Study Location

The locations were selected based on the location of SUDOKKHO training institutes. In order to see different perspective and capture a bigger picture, the study team differentiated the locations of the study. In the first two rounds, the study team selected the districts where SUDOKKHO training institutes were located. This criteria was chosen to gather insights and experience from people that enrolled in SUDOKKHO program and the perspective of people around the training institute.

For round 3, all of the researchers went to a district where there was no SUDOKKHO training institute. In that district, researchers were divided into three sub-teams and each sub-team went to different locations of the district (rural, urban, peri-urban). By going to different types of location, it enriched the insights for how people see SUDOKKHO program and also aimed to understand the aspiration of the youth from these different locations.

The study was conducted over 3 rounds. In each of the 3 rounds the study team was divided into 3 sub-teams comprising of 3-5 researchers and translators. These sub-teams were located in different locations. The location for the first 2 rounds were in three districts of Greater Dhaka. The 3rd round the teams were located in a district some 50 km from Dhaka and included rural, peri-urban and urban locations. Below is the contextual profile of the locations. Below is the profile of the locations, the housing characteristics and training centre provisions in the areas.

Table 1: Locations Profiles

Descriptions of study locations; rural ■ peri-urban ■ urban ■

code	Community	Housing	Training centres
A1	Part of the Dhaka urban sprawl. Although officially not part of the municipality, since factories have multiplied here and there are very many incomers working here the area has become urbanised. Most factories are quite small (and include workshops) but there is a large garment factory and much construction activity as this is a rapidly growing area.	Most people live in rented rooms within compounds where cooking and washing facilities are shared. Rents	Many private training centres
A2	Urban Dhaka, an area dense with garment factories. this area has long been an area with a high concentration of garment factories so most people work in this industry. There are also transport providers and vegetable sellers especially as there is a large market in the area. There are many mechanic workshop and cooked food providers.	Most people live in rented rooms within compounds or apartment blocks or in rooms above shops	Some training centres.

⁴Unlike other RCA studies, researchers found it was not always possible to stay with the hosts (see limitations)

A3	Rural village about 30 minutes from large town. Situated along a river it is an old community with strong family ties. River flooding makes the land quite fertile for vegetables as well as staple crops but increasingly people are turning to wage employment either locally or overseas. Many factories (especially garment and textile) within commuting distance nearby.	Most people living in own homes on own land	Large Government training Institute and many private providers in/near town.
B1	Small city (population 0.25 million) near to Dhaka which has long been renowned for being a centre of the textile and jute industries. The study locations are very congested and comprise many factories including some very large garment factories. A lot of construction going on as the area has rapidly changed from clusters of villages to burgeoning urban locations which have attracted many domestic migrants, especially from Borisal, Mymensingh and Noakhali.	Most rent single rooms or share dormitories. Few original households remain now.	Many training centres
B2	A peri-urban sprawling location characterised by brick weave streets, ongoing construction everywhere, quantities of garbage and persistent mosquito problems. Men mostly in trade such as grocery, spices, timber or mechanics or working in construction. Women mostly garment factory workers who travel to the factories some 10 minutes away (some in the Export Promotion Zone (EPZ)).	Rented houses (often just tin sheds) and some rented apartments	Training centres closer to town.
B3	Considered a peri-urban area as fewer industries and mix of agriculture and small enterprises including mustard mills and saw mills. There are shops and commercial enterprises as well as thriving transport providers. There is a steel company nearby which employs many. The land is not considered very fertile and this has resulted in many people working overseas in construction, catering and as drivers.	Mixture of own homes and rented. Monthly rents about half the amounts in the city	Training centres only in main town.
C1	More rural than A1, these areas still retain some feeling of being villages but the employment patterns are more representative of peri-urban locations, including many involved in transportation and there are good cement roads. Most older people are still farmers and fishermen but young people migrate to Dhaka or abroad for employment.	People living in their own houses on their own land.	Training centres only in main town

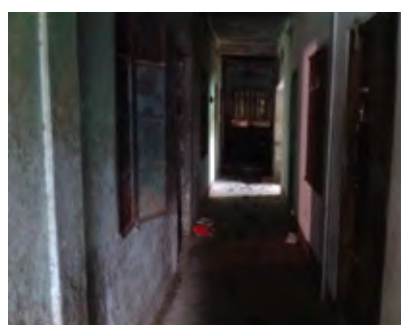
C2	Within Dhaka city , this location comprises shopping malls and high rise apartments. It is densely populated and has attracted many people form rural areas who have migrated for work in garments industry, construction, transport and shops.	Rented apartments (2-3 rooms)	Many training centres
C3	Spread across a major city about 50 km from Dhaka, the area is congested and cramped. All study locations were categorised as urban slums with very high crime rates and large numbers of unemployed. There are many factories and mills but growing numbers now work overseas with many telling us as many as 1 in 5 now work abroad.	Rented rooms within compounds and some factory dormitories	Many private training centres all over town , with many specialising in preparing people for work overseas.



Living on the construction site

**b) Study participants:
Host Households / People**

The primary focus of the study were the Host households.⁵ A total of twenty nine households were included comprising about 110 people with whom the team had intensive conversations and interaction. As indicated in Table 3 some members of these host households were enrolled in SUDOKKHO training courses, whereas some of them are not enrolled in SUDOKKHO program but work in the same industry. There are also some households that are not enrolled in SUDOKKHO and work in different industry. The host household varied considerably with some living in their family homes with the whole family, some living in temporary cramped compounds with their families, and some young men and women living in shared dormitories with other workers. In some cases the 'household' comprised of a shelter on the work-site where the construction workers lived and our researchers lived with them.



Cramped conditions at a shared dormitory



Temporary accommodation in cramped compound



Still living at the family home

⁵ in addition further insights were gathered for the immersion during the training and also from 4 additional households in round 1 which provided more contextual understanding.

Normally in RCA studies none of the households are contacted in advance of the study and all host households are selected by individual team members through informal discussions with people in the community (e.g. at teashops) in situ. This is done so that no special arrangements are made and the initial interactions can be a lot more spontaneous and informal. Care is taken to ensure that people understand the nature of the RCA and the importance of not being afforded guest status. The third round was conducted in this manner as in this round the focus of the host households was more broadly youth who had not been trained by SUDOKKHO.

However, for the first two rounds SUDOKKHO trainees were contacted directly by phone by the researchers. It was explained to the trainees that the study is seeking to learn from them about the aspirations, motivations and ambitions of youth. Trainees were given the option if they wanted to be included in the study and reassured that their confidentiality would be maintained. It was decided that this more direct approach was necessary as it would have been very difficult to find the limited number of SUDOKKHO trainees through a more iterative informal approach. Many of the trainees we realised were not from Dhaka or the surrounding area and may have returned to their home. This more direct approach did have its limitations though, as it increased suspicion among the trainees and also created some frictions with the training centres (see limitations). In the 2nd round efforts were made to discuss the study directly with the training centres prior to the field work, however this still had some adverse impacts (see limitations).

Each team member discreetly left a 'gift' for each family (host household) on leaving, to the value of about Tk 1,000 to compensate for any costs incurred in hosting the researcher. This typically consisted of rice, cooking oil, sugar, tea, biscuits and simple foods. As researchers insist that no special arrangements are made for them, they help in domestic activities and do not disturb income-earning activities, the actual costs to 'hosts' are negligible. The timing of the gift was important so people did not feel they were expected to provide better food for the researchers or get the impression that they were being paid for their participation.

Neighbours (focal households)

In the course of the study, team members interacted closely with over 50 neighbouring households (on average about 3-4 additional households to their own host household). These covered a mix of young men and women working in the same industries, different industries and also different generations.

Trainers and Employers

Researchers also had opportunistic encounters with trainers from the research centres, supervisors and employers. Some of the researchers also were shown the training facilities and were able to observe classes, as well as to have informal discussions with the trainers.

Other community members

In addition, the teams had further opportunistic conversations with other members of the community including tea shop owners, teachers, farmers, religious leaders and other people from the community. (See annex 2 for List of People Met). This amounted to over 1000 people (611 men, 480 women).

Table 2 Summary of study participant numbers

Host Household	Focal Households	Others (see Annex 2)
15 Enrolled/completed the SUDOKKHO training courses (9 men, 6 women)	>50 HH	>1000 people
7 Not enrolled/completed the SUDOKKHO training courses, work in different industry (5 men, 2 women)		
7 Already in the RMG and construction industries but are not part of the SUDOKKHO programme (5 men, 2 women)		

c) Study areas for conversation

RCA is not a theory based research method although it often generates people's theories of change and contributes well to grounded theory approaches. It does not have a pre-determined set of research questions relying as it does on iterations from insights gathered in situ and building on progressive series of conversations. However, as part of the briefing process for researchers areas for conversations were developed to act as a guide to ensuring that conversations are purposive. The outcome of the deliberations with the research team are provided in Annex 3 and 4; Areas for Conversations. For the 3rd round an expanded Areas of Conversation was adopted to probe further into understanding broader perceptions on youth's motivations and aspirations.

4. Sub- team de-briefing with overall team leader

Whilst researchers never take notes in front of people, they do jot down quotes and some details in field note books in situ as needed. Each sub team of three to four researchers who have been in the same study location but have not met during their stay spends a least a full day debriefing with the team leader as soon as they come out of the study location. This involves sharing all their conversations, observations, experiences related to the areas for conversation as well as expanding the areas for conversation based on people's inputs. This process enables extensive triangulation as the same topics are explored through different researchers, from different people's perspectives, from different locations, from different times and through different research methods (conversations, observations, direct experiences, use of visuals including photographs). The de-briefs are recorded in detail in written debrief notes combined with other important archived material providing detail on households, villages and case studies as well as diagrams created with people and their photographs (often taken by the families themselves).

5. Reflexive review of findings

Following completion of all sub team de-briefs, all sub teams meet together as one full team again for the first time since the briefing and are asked to take the position of study participants and identify emerging narratives from their studies. This process enables sense making and ensures that researchers do not overlay their own interpretations on the findings.

The senior team uses established framework analysis procedures involving three of the typical four stages process i. familiarisation (immersion in the findings), ii. identification of themes (from the sense making workshop and from the data directly) and iii. charting (finding emerging connections). The conventional fourth step is 'interpretation' which we purposely eschew. The key emerging narratives from these processes are used as a basis for the report writing. Quality assurance is carried out through internal peer review with special concern to ensure the research retains positionality of people themselves.

Ethical considerations

Like most ethnographic based research, there is no intervention involved in RCA studies. At best the study can be viewed as a way to empower the study participants in that they are able to express themselves freely in their own space. Researchers are not covert but become 'detached insiders'. As per American Anthropological Association Code of Ethics, RCA adopts an ethical obligation to people 'which (when necessary) supersedes the goal of seeking new knowledge'. Researchers 'do everything in their power to ensure that research does not harm the safety, dignity or privacy of the people with whom they conduct the research'. All researchers are briefed on ethical considerations and Child Protection Policies before every field visit (irrespective of whether they have previously gone through this). All researchers sign Code of Conduct on Confidentiality and Child Protection Policy declarations as part of their contracts. All data (written and visual) is coded to protect the identity of individuals, their families and communities. As a result the exact locations and identities of households and others are not revealed in this report.

Study limitations

As with other research methods, this study has a number of limitations as follows:

- **Limited time or difficult environment for in-depth conversations.** People working, particularly those in the garment industry, work very long hours (8am-8pm) so there were limited opportunities for relaxed informal conversations. People were often too tired or preoccupied with chores which had to be done before the next day. Researchers who accompanied people to their workplace (construction, garment and other similar industries) also found the working environment was very noisy and not conducive to having conversations. To mitigate this, in all rounds we tried to ensure at least one day in the field was over the weekend, and the 3rd round was conducted over the Bengali New Year so for some people they were not working. However, overall the research teams felt that future years could benefit from slightly longer duration in the field to 'hang out' further and have more in-depth conversations with the host household and family.

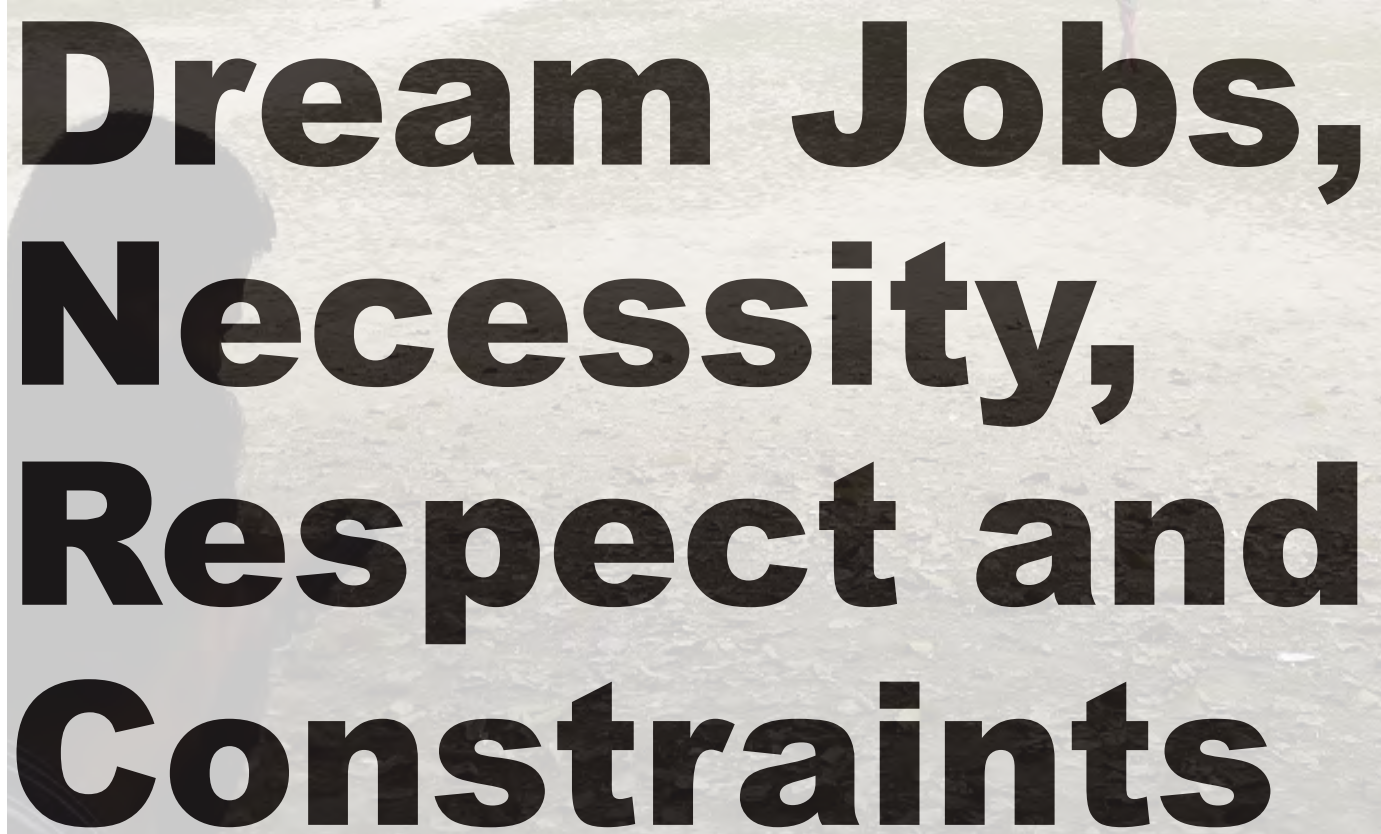
- **Difficulties to stay overnight.** In the locations of the study, most of the people live in a small compounds where they rent rooms with their family (see photo). Compound landlords or neighbours sometimes would not allow visitors to stay. Some of the researchers managed to negotiate this in their respective locations, whereas others stayed in dormitories where trainees lived, slept on the construction site with the workers, or in some cases could not stay overnight in the location. This impacted for some researchers the extent of the in-depth interaction with their study participants. However, where 'overnighting' was not possible, researchers joined their 'hosts' early in the morning and stayed until late in the evening .

- **Increased suspicion and lack of trust in urban settings.** As with other RCA studies that have been conducted in urban settings, there tends to be a higher degree of suspicion and less trust in urban locations compared to rural areas. This was often not so much with the study participants, but with the neighbouring households, local authorities or political leaders. Although the aims and objectives of the study were repeatedly explained, difficulties were experienced in some of the locations to stay overnight or have relaxed encounters with the communities.

- **Directly contacting study participants.** Directly contacting the trainees in the first 2 rounds created increased suspicion and concern among the men and women trainees. This resulted in the research team members to repeatedly reassure the trainees on the purpose of the study, confidentiality and to continually make efforts to broaden conversations so that the full context could be understood. Some of the trainees also contacted directly the training centres, which caused some confusion and in some cases resistance from the training centres. This was mitigated to a certain degree in the 2nd round through visiting the training centres prior to the field work to explain the purpose of the study, however in the 2nd round it was still evident that some of the training centres still contacted trainees to discourage them to be part of the study.



An urban living compound



Dream Jobs, Necessity, Respect and Constraints

DREAMS

During conversations people were encouraged to share their dreams and aspirations for their families and for themselves. Dream jobs, many youth told us, are those which are permanent and offer security. Youths typically said they wished to have government jobs or work for private companies, an aspiration often endorsed by their parents when we chatted to them. These jobs they told us bring respect to the family and are more skilled so *'you will never be jobless'*. Young men told us they dreamt of jobs in the army, police and fire service (see Box 1), as one explained these jobs show *'your power'*. Young women on the other hand shared the dreams of being a nurse, teacher or other Government employee. However, these dreams require academic qualifications, networks and bribes to achieve.

Others told us about their dreams to work overseas and regarded these as more realizable than the salaried employment in private or public sectors. Although it was mostly young men who wished to go overseas, some young women also described their ambitions to go overseas. Many male construction workers shared they are planning to or had previously worked overseas. They all described the conditions overseas as much better. For many this is seen as a short term plan to get more money to support their parents, support their siblings to have a better education, start their own business or to build their dream home in their village. By going overseas people shared it is possible to earn a lot more money and make considerable savings. One construction worker who had previously worked overseas in Dubai estimated that he managed to save Tk 20,000 per month. This was possible also partly because when overseas his dependent family returned to the village so they did not have to pay the monthly rent of Tk 5,000 for accommodation in town. Many young men and few women shared that there are also a broad range of other incentives and reasons for wanting to work overseas such as better working conditions (see box 2), better health and security benefits (see box 3) and improved social status (see box 4).

People shared the importance of gaining respect through your job and how a dream job included how people treated you and referred to you in the workplace. A factory worker dreams that in the future people will call him 'ustad' (boss) and people will look up to him and work for him. He looks up to his boss who now earns Tk 40,000 a month and has worked his way up to the top as a steel worker over the last 18 years. A mechanic told us that one reason he liked his job is that clients 'call me mamu' (uncle) and this is 'very different to the garment sector where supervisors are abusive and shout at you'.

The respect people associated with different jobs also varied depending on the context. In rural areas, people shared that an auto-rickshaw driver is seen as a key part of the community and a well-respected job. As one driver explained, echoing others, 'people deal with me very cordially as I am the man they need in emergencies'. Whereas, in urban areas, although people told us auto-rickshaw drivers

Box 1: To be a Fireman

Naeem's dream is to join the Fire Service Department like his cousin. A few months ago there was a circular from this department but he could not apply because he does not have a national ID card. He is currently studying in a vocational college and will take the HSC exam in April. He said he will get the ID card in April and then get a job. He always keeps in contact with his cousin who works in Fire service department. He is only 5'2" but should be at least 5'4" to get a job in the fire service. He has a bar in his room to hang from upside down in a desperate hope to increase his height.



The bar fixed to the ceiling is used daily as an attempt to increase his height so he can apply for the fire service

Box 2: Better Working Conditions Overseas

Sabbir worked in Saudi Arabia 8 years ago for 2 years. For the first 6 months he worked in construction as a tiler, and then moved to work in a factory for 1 ½ years. He recalls that in the construction site the working conditions are much better than those in Bangladesh, and described to us 'in Saudi the working environment is very nice, its much cleaner and they have safety equipment that we have to wear. In Bangladesh we don't have this'.

Another man, Abir worked in Dubai for 21 months and recalls the better pay, living conditions, and hours (9-5pm). He was forced to leave Dubai when a fight between the Pakistani and Indian labourers kicked off one day and as a result everyone who was on site working that day got sent home. Back in Bangladesh working as a construction helper for the last 3 years, he complains he has no holiday or vacations, works everyday including public holidays, the living conditions are cramped, there is no safety precautions, and the pay is less and irregular. After 3 years of working he is still paid on a daily basis. Everyday he is meant to receive Tk300 but has been told that Tk160 is being saved to be paid at the end of the month. However he was angry that he still has not received the Tk160 for the last 3 months work.

Box 3: Better Health and Security Benefits

Shamin sliced his finger while working in Dubai on a construction site. The company he worked for paid for all the medical costs and he also got full pay with overtime for this recuperation period of 9-10 days. When he was in hospital the police came to visit him to check if the accident had been due to any negligence in safety from the company. If he had said yes he could have received compensation payment of 50,000 dirham (around Tk 10 lakh). However he said he was very happy with how his company treated him and did not believe it was any fault of the company.

By contrast, a construction helper shared his story that he fell from 6 storeys 4 months ago in Bangladesh. From the fall he broke his hand and damaged his back. His company paid for the medical bills but he received no compensation for lost income and couldn't work for 6 weeks. He still has pain in his wrist but has to work to maintain a living.

Box 4: 'A better image a better wife'

This garment worker (26) has been working in Mauritius for the last 5 years earning Tk 20,000 per month. He explained that the living costs are much higher in Mauritius so he could not save much money, however he wanted to live overseas 'so I get a better image and get a better wife'. He has now come back to Bangladesh to get married, and hopes that his work in Mauritius will help him find a 'better wife'. After he gets married he plans to return to Mauritius as he feels the working environment and conditions are better there. The accommodation is more luxurious and he recalls that if they ever complained about any conflict in Mauritius the boss would listen and deal with the issue, whereas in Bangladesh if you complain 'you will lose your job'.

Box 5: Burdens of Bringing up Children – Education, Marriage and Securing Jobs for Them

Father told me he worked overseas for 12 years as a mason, first in Saudi Arabia. He wasn't paid properly so he spent Tk 70,000 to move to Malaysia. Through working overseas he saved enough money to build a concrete house in his village. He and his wife plan to go back to their village and live in their concrete house and work as farmers. But first they must repay the loans that they took out to pay for their daughter's wedding and to send their son abroad to Malaysia. They think if they can settle their children they will feel fulfilled.

could earn good money, they are referred to just as '*the driver*' rather than by their name, and frequently have to quarrel with people over the route and fare.

NECESSITY

The need to earn cash, especially to support the costs of education and marriage, is the key driver for employment and moving into the city. People explained that earning money, even if through what some described as '*in-humane*' work, is necessary to support their families for a brighter future. Many parents told us that they had decided to move to Dhaka for the job opportunities with incomes to support their children. They shared that they want their children to have '*proper jobs*' such as government jobs or working in private companies and to do this they need their financial support to complete their education. As one parent explained, '*they will understand what is a good job when they are educated*'. They also told us they want to ensure that they can '*settle their children*' and support them with the cost of marriages. Many parents explained to us about the strains of paying for marriages and the dowries, with some struggling to pay back loans they had taken out (see Box 5).

Once families feel that their obligation to their children are fulfilled their aspirations shift to living a better life back in their rural communities. Working in Dhaka is seen as a means to an end and not a longer term objective. When they return to their villages many shared they wanted to establish their own business and to live in bigger concrete houses which they plan to build or had already built through their savings (see Box 5 and 6).

Parents told us that they preferred life back in their villages because the living conditions are less cramped and they don't have to share the cooking, washing and toilet facilities. In the shared compounds our researchers experienced the long morning queues for the toilet or shared bathing area. In one family our researcher stayed with, the mother woke up at 3am to cook breakfast because the gas pressure is too weak later in the morning to cook. She then went to work in a garment factory for 12 hours a day. As one parent described to us, '*in the city it's busy and chaotic, in the village it's*

quiet and calm'.

Also in rural locations people told us the working day is more relaxed and flexible. As one male mason worker explained you can come to the site when you want and leave to play cricket in the day then come back later. In the city many people described how they had less free time and limited available options for leisure. Young men and women told us they liked to listen to music in the evenings, watch Bangla movies on their phones, play cards or sometimes just watch people on the street. Many said they don't go out of their cramped compounds often as it costs money to buy meals. All in all, men and women described urban living as constrained and their long work days leaving little for recreation and family life.

As well as the better quality of life, people also told us they wanted to return to their villages so that they would be closer to their wider family so they could provide support to their parents. Away from the family people shared that they also felt excluded from family decisions related to matters such as land allocation or inheritance. A male construction worker we lived with shared one evening that he needed to return to his home village as his brothers were fighting over the land. He had kept on delaying the trip each day as he wanted to finish his contracted work first, but as soon as he got a break he said he needed to return back to his village which was 7 hours away and cost TK 1,000 for the round trip.

For many with the option to return to their villages, working in the city is simply a temporary 'means to end' and related to particular point in their family life cycles. This temporariness affects how people view getting further skills and promotion since their long term future is often not tied to living in the city.

RESPECT

Young men and women shared they moved to Dhaka for the job opportunities and in some cases to prove they could '*turn their life around*' following family allegations of being lazy or being involved in illegal activities. Work which is seen by the family as 'employment' rather than casual unskilled day labour is valued and contribution to the family income generally endows opportunities to influence decision

Box 6: Working in Dhaka only to save to start a business

'I want to go back to village to set up my own shop'. The woman is currently working as a machine operator earning money and planning for this. 'I do not want my daughter to have to work in the garment sector, I want her to become a nurse or sales girl'. She plans to stay in Dhaka for 2-4 years to save enough for this as she and her husband lost money when had to repay the mortgage for her father in law. 'We are working so hard to get land back home for our business'.

Box 7: Proud to wear a Uniform and Support my family

Chaity's father passed away when she was 8 years old so she had to give up school and take care of her youngest sister so that her mom could work and feed her 6 children. Eventually the family had to sell the land, move to the city and rent a one-room house in a slum. Her 3 older brothers started earning money to help mom. She says days were good until the three brothers got married, had their own separate families and stopped communicating with the family. Mom became sick and her earning was not enough to feed the family and pay for house rent. Eventually the family ended up with Tk 9,000 debt to the land owner.

Now 14 years old, her dream is to work in the nearby Jute mill as an officer. The jute mill is owned by the government with many facilities for the staff members, such as pension, gratuity, annual leave, event based bonus. Mom asked everyone to get Chaity a job. Her age was a barrier for getting work but after a month, Chaity managed to join a factory by falsifying her birth certificate. She is now the only earning member in the family to pay for food, house rent, sister's education cost, mom's medicine cost and other expenses. She gets Tk 7,000 per month and within two and a half years she hopes to repay the debt.

It makes Chaity happy when mom says she feels proud when she goes to work wearing her official uniform. She says community people look at her with respect when they see her in her uniform. She says she 'feels a proud and delighted daughter'.

making regardless of gender. Youths also told us that having a regular job improves their social status and influence in decision making within their family and community. For example, a male teenage construction helper shared that he has now become the main earner in his family in the village and, despite his youth, has influence in decision making like the buying of land and the education of his younger siblings. This he says '*makes me feel wonderful*' that he can contribute to his family and when he now visits his village he says, '*important people like elites give me respect*'.

Likewise, a sewing machine operator said she feels she has influence in decision making in the family and '*loves to contribute to the family with her money*'. Similarly, a plastics factory worker says she '*feels a proud and delighted daughter*' when she goes to work and she feels the community now look at her with respect when they see her going to work in her uniform (see box story 7). For some though the reasons for working is more self-motivated, with one garment worker explaining that she does not work to contribute for her family, but works for her own pocket money as '*ladies have lots of things to buy*'. She went on to explain her dream was to be happily married, but although she got married a year ago she had '*bad luck in marriage*' and they are not together. She shared that '*I don't have dreams anymore, as I have seen whatever you dream of does not always take place*' and elaborated further that another reason she is working is because '*it keeps me busy, so no bad thoughts come to my mind*'.

CONSTRAINTS

Job related constraints

Young men and women mostly shared that they preferred jobs where there is more flexibility so they can determine their own schedule like construction and sales. This they told us enabled them to see their families and friends more than those working in factories and also so they can plan leisure time during the day when they desired. A freelance electrician explained his flexible start time is '*when I wake up*' whilst a contracted steel worker told us he liked to start very early and have more leisure breaks in the day to see family, friends and

play cricket. (see boxes 8 and 9). This flexibility people shared is not possible in factory jobs, such as the garment industry (see box 12 later).

As well as flexibility in working hours, some youths also shared that they preferred to have jobs which allowed them mobility in the workplace rather than being stuck in one position the whole day. As a jute mills worker explained his current role is a lot 'freer' and he can 'move around the factory more', whereas when he worked in the garment factory he was stationary all day long in the same area in the factory.

People shared that what type of job they could seek is often determined by their networks and money. Specific job opportunities people said typically came through informal channels such as family members, friends and neighbours. A 20 year old student told us he is 'not worried as has lots of networks so will be able to get a job', while a garment worker shared 'I have nobody who can help me get a proper job'. Others, told their stories of how they managed to get their jobs through friends and neighbours. A steel worker described how he dropped out of school in class 8 as he told us 'study was very painful for me' and he was jealous that he friends were earning money at the nearby factory. He therefore decided to join his 3 friends who worked in a nearby factory and when he initially joined the factory earned Tk 50-100 per day which he used for betting and hanging out with his friends. Whereas, 'Amena' told us she 'fell into her job' at the factory to support her family with the help of her neighbor (see box 10).

For overseas work, people told us that they draw upon personal and family networks to find opportunities, rather than go through brokers. People said that family network and relatives are more reliable and cheaper than brokers. Several people shared bad experiences going through brokers with money being lost, documents falsified and opportunities overseas not meeting expectations when they arrived. For example, one family shared that their relative paid Tk 4 lakh to a broker to get a job in Malaysia and has now been in Malaysia for 4 months but still hasn't got a job. Another family explained they are particularly cautious with brokers, especially after her husband could not find opportunities through brokers then as soon as his wife enquired they said they had a job for her overseas. She was suspicious so did not

Box 8: The Flexibility People Like - Day in the Life of Contracted Steel Worker

Jubayer works in a steel workshop. At 5.30 am he wakes up and starts his day. At 6 am he opens his workshop, he likes to work early in the morning before everyone else so he has a spare key from his employer. At 9 am his co-workers arrive at the workshop, and he returns to his dormitory, which is only 3 minutes by walk. After finishing his breakfast he returns to the workshop. He continues his work until 1 pm and then he returns to his dormitory, takes a bath and eats lunch with his friends who are also living in the same place. After lunch they relax and chat, one of his friends is an amateur cricket commentator and he practices his commentary. Everyone listens and they say it gives them a lot of pleasure. At 2.30 pm Jubayer has a rest and wakes up at 4 pm to play cricket with his friends. After 6 pm he returns to work and goes to his employer to collect the daily money. At 9 pm he returns to the dormitory, has dinner with his friends, then listens to music and watches some Bengali drama on YouTube, before going to sleep around midnight.



Playing cricket in free time

Box 9: The Flexibility People Like: Now I have Choice and Freedom

When I had a full time job I had no choice, no leave and mandatory overtime. Now I have choice and get more money, I work as a contract electrician and so do my brothers so we can coordinate working hours together. I can do 2-3 jobs at the same time and coordinate the schedules. If I'm not well I don't have to go to work. In between jobs I can also pick up small jobs such as repairing refrigerators. My work is now more varied and more flexible.

Box 10: Neighbour opens the door for new opportunities

Amena had always been a housewife before. She and her husband lent a big sum of money to her niece's husband but they disappeared with the money. This forced her to live with her sister's family in the same apartment sharing two rooms.

One morning she jokingly asked her neighbour whether he could help her find a job to earn some money. The man was a supervisor at a nearby factory and asked whether she was serious or not. The next morning her neighbour took her with him to his factory and found her a job. She now earns Tk 10,000 per month and can help support her family.

Box 11: The Bribe that didn't work

Najim has a post graduate degree and wanted a government job as he says it is a well respected job. He could not get the job so he went to his maternal uncle who worked at the airport. He gave TK 3 lakh as bribe to his uncle to get a job at the airport. His uncle promised Tk 20,000 per month and a good opportunity to earn extra money. However, when he started work he was shocked to find out that he is to work as a porter and he only got Tk 12,000 per month. One day a paternal uncle saw him carrying his luggage when he went to Hajj. When the uncle returned to the village he told others that Najim works 'as a coolie in the airport'. Najim's brother said it had a bad impact on their family's social status. But Najim is not able to quit the job because of the TK 3 lakh bribe.

take the job.

People shared that if they wished to pursue preferred jobs then this often involved money. They told us that bribes are often required and these also normally need to be facilitated through family connections. One father shared the hopes for his son to join the army, and explained that if his son passed his HSC exams then '*I will manage the bribe to get the army job*'. Another youth shared his story of how he managed to get a job at the airport through a bribe via his uncle, but the job he ended up getting didn't meet his expectations (see box story 11).

Youths who had not completed their HSC or SSC were resigned to the fact that there options are more limited. Garment workers explained '*people without HSC are destined to work in the garment industries*', whilst another garment worker questioned in despair '*what other jobs can I get?*', *I just passed my SSC examination, this is not enough to get a better job, with this kind of qualification I can only work as a garment worker*'. Some youths shared that studying was not for them, as described above the steel worker who dropped out in class 8 explained that '*study was very painful for me*'. Some parents likewise agreed, but this was not just explained due to a lack of interest in studying but also a lack of money. As one parent shared with us '*Everybody does not go for education. My son must do something. To be educated needs money and brains. My son cannot catch everything.*'

In the garment industry, people shared that the conditions have improved over the years with better wages, more regular payments, improved safety and a better working environment. In a debate in a tea stall that our researchers observed, people said that '*there are a lot of good things going in the garments*'. They explained that it has created a lot more employment, '*people can get food 3 times a day*', the money is good and it is easy to get a job. In particular people described how the working conditions in the Export Processing Zone (EPZ) factories are much better in terms of regular pay, overtime, bonuses, shorter working hours, maternity facilities and staff transport. People shared that those who managed to get jobs in the EPZ tended to obtain these through their social networks rather than as a result of any training received. Some other garment

workers shared that they *'feel proud working in the garment industry'* as the pay is quite good, at least TK 6,000 – 6,500 per month, and the job is safer than other jobs.

However, many other people complained that the work days are still long, and as a garment worker explained, echoing other people's concerns, *'the start time is fixed, but there is no fixed time to come back home, it depends on the garment authority, you cannot come home until they give you permission'*. People shared that the long hours (see box story 12) had significant impact on their family life and health. One woman explained how this had affected her family, and her daughter who is 6years old and has not talked for the last 2 years while she had been working long shifts in the garment industry. Her auntie explained that the child *'doesn't have her mother's love, she doesn't see her mother'*.

Many shared the intense pressure they are under in the garment factories with tight deadlines and *'a lot of pressure on the head and body'*. A lady explained that she had quit her job as a quality checker in the garment factory last month as she had considerable pains in her calf from standing all day. Another garment factory worker complained that the long hours standing caused her discomfort on the stiches she had recently after the surgery for the birth of her daughter.

People shared that the working conditions in the garment factories are very strict and it is *'disciplined with rules and regulations'*. The rules people told us are to *'serve the benefit of the owner'* not the employees. A garments worker told us she was mildly sick one day and got prescription drugs herself, but her boss would only accept a doctors certificate so she was marked down as *'absent with unpaid leave'*. In another factory, a worker explained that if you are absent for one day then Tk 500 is deducted from your salary and if you are late in the morning you are also fined. Another garment worker described the environment as *'like in a jail when in the factory, you are always under observation'*. Even at lunch time he explained, because the factory now has a canteen and smoking area, you cannot leave at all.

Workers shared they did not receive holidays, even on public holidays. One embroidery

Box 12: Typical Long Hours for Garment Worker

A regular day for Nur usually starts early in the morning, around 5.30am. She wakes up, freshens up. After that she prepares breakfast for herself and her husband Shahin. She cooks only once a day as she knows that she will not have time to cook for the rest of the day. They share the two burner stove with other families, dividing the use time between themselves. She has the dawn time slot. She finishes her cooking and household chores before 7am and, after having breakfast, she takes a bath and usually walks to her factory at 7.30am. She has to reach before 8am as the gate of the factory is closed at 8.05am. Normally she has to work for twelve hours until 8pm. But she has to work overnight sometimes. The day I arrived at her house, the previous night she had to work for the whole night. In a normal working day she returns home at 8.40pm. Her husband pulls a rickshaw and comes home around noon. At night they have their meal together. They usually sleep around 10-11pm.

Box 13: Just One Day Off

'During the Bengali New year, we requested the owner to give us a day-off. But the owner refused as he believed if the embroidery machines are off on the first day of the year, then they will remain off for the rest of the year. However, coincidentally two of the machines broke down and the repair men were unable to fix them. The owner was forced to grant us all the day off'. Mousumi whom I stayed with, along with other workers was very happy. She quickly returned home, put on her best saree, applied makeup and her favourite jewelry and set off for the nearby New Year fair.



Dressed up for the Bengali New Year

factory worker however was lucky enough to get the Bengali New Year off due to good fortune rather than any good will (see box story 13 and photo).

Young men and women confided that verbal harassment and abuse is common, as explained by a garment worker the supervisors frequently shout at us and *'you won't believe how much bad language they use'*. One woman garment worker told us she had quit her job due to the abuse and misbehavior of her supervisor who screamed at her calling her a *'bitch'*. Five other female colleagues also resigned with her and they are seeking new jobs but don't think they will be able to find any other opportunities outside the garment industry. People also confided that some woman workers experienced sexual harassment from their supervisors, and that some of the senior male workers in garments delayed marriage because they are *'having fun with the garment girls'*. Some workers clarified this by claiming this was only with the *'notorious girls'* who flirted with their supervisors to get attention.

Both men and women expressed divergent views on the appropriateness of women working in the garment factories. Some people criticized those people who forced their wives to work in the garment industry saying that *'those men that push their wives to work in the garment industry are not human'* and explained the *'duty of the women is to look after the house.'* Whilst others said that garment work is more suited for women as *'they can work inside'* and nowadays they need to work as *'money is more important'*. As highlighted earlier many male and female garment workers liked that the fact that now they contributed to the household income. However, some women also explained that they work *'to make my husband happy'* and are forced by their husbands to do overtime. This pressure people shared came from the strains to make money to either support their families through education or to achieve their longer term goal to return to their village home sooner.

People told us that new safety procedures have been introduced in some factories, however these are often felt to be *'just for show'*. A garment worker explained even though her factory now has fire extinguishers, *'no worker can ever use them as the instructions are written in English'*. The factory now has fire

drills, but none of the staff know what to do so when the siren goes off as she explained *'I will go down those stairs and then back up the other stairs'*.

In the construction industry, many helpers and masons complained that *'construction work is inhumane'* and did not want their children to do this type of work. They explained the work is tiring, long hours and poorly paid. Some people told us wages differed between male and female helpers with one worker explaining that men receive TK 200 while women only received Tk 150 per day. This, she believed, is particularly unjust as she said the women work more than the men who *'have smoking breaks the whole time'*.

Construction workers also shared the hard and arduous days and that they often suffered work related illness and injuries (see box story 14 and photos). If mason workers fell sick then they would lose their jobs, as explained by a construction worker *'we are poor people if we are sick for 1-2days we will be in debt'*. Our researchers also accompanied construction workers and worked alongside them, experiencing at first hand the physical exhaustion, pressures and living conditions of the workers (see Box 15 and 16).



Steel worker with no protective goggles or equipment while welding.

Box 14: Too sick to work means losing your contracts

In the corner of the room on top of a drum barrel is a selection of medicines and drugs that our mason worker keeps. He tells us that he regularly has sore thighs from kneeling down all day, and takes pain killers at night time. On the day we leave he is sick with diarrhea. We had built 4 floors together over the previous 3 days, and he still had 2 more to do under his contract. He couldn't go to work for the next 2 days and he later phoned and told us that he lost the contract for the remaining floors.



Construction worker's medicines for regular use

Box 15: Researcher immersion as a construction worker

Living with and working with a construction worker, I learnt a lot about the trade and also the physical demands of the job. We worked for 3 days on the construction site, cementing and layering 4 floors. Although it was meant to be the 'cooler' season the heat in the middle of the day was blistering, and there was no shade on the construction site. We worked from 8.30am until around 5pm, stopping briefly for lunch in the middle of the day. The hardest skill I found was manually mixing the sand, cement, stones and water. It required strenuously tossing and flipping with a shovel the sand, cement and stones together to try and get the right mix and consistency. After several attempts, my fellow workers decided it was best for me to be a 'helper' and carry the ready mixed cement mix to the skilled mistri who layered the floor.

Each evening of my stay I tried to bend and massage my wrist to relieve the strains of the day. At night time I slept with the family in the tin shed room with a weak ceiling fan on. The family told me in the summer the temperature would be over 40 degrees Celsius – I couldn't imagine how hot it would be in the tin room in the summer, let alone out on the construction site.

Box 16: Day in the life of Construction Worker

Shah is working as a mason and lives on site. At 6 am he wakes up and he waits in the queue to get his chance to use the toilets and tap. At 7 am he goes to the local market where he buys fish. At 8.30 am they finish their breakfast of fried potatoes and bread. At 9 am he starts work at the edge of 3rd floor, standing on the platform made of bamboo and tied with a rope. He and his co-worker are finishing cementing the wall. At 11 am they have their first break and came down to get the tea and biscuits. After the break they start working again and at 1 pm they have their lunch break. At lunch they eat rice, fish with vegetables and fried egg. At 2 pm they return to the hanging platform to continue cementing the wall. By 5 pm they finish their work for the day and return home for a bath. After that Shah and his co-workers go to the Foreman's office and collect their daily money Tk 450. They head to the local market and go to the snacks shop for some snacks. After that they went to the tea-stall, while drinking tea they watch the movies on the TV. At 7 pm they come back to their room and have dinner at 8pm. After dinner for some time they played card, at 9.30 pm they started to arrange their bed for sleeping.



Rod binding worker with a self made belt hanging from the wall as he worked

Box Story 17: The eldest supporting his whole family as there is 'no way for income from my father'

As one eldest brother of 4 siblings explained to us that his parents are farmers with limited income so 'I am the one who is working from morning to night to support the family'. He left school in class 8 and has been working in a jute factory. He sends his whole income, except for a small amount for his living costs, to his family. His 3 brothers are studying in the Madrasah and he 'wants my brothers to have a better position than me'. He has a younger sister too, and shares that he is delaying getting married himself until he has arranged and paid for his sister to get married.



A brick field site – parents say they children 'look like death' after working on these sites

Box Story 18: The eldest supporting the family after his mother died

Nazir's mother passed away 3 years ago. He had passed his HSC exams and wanted to go to university but decided instead to become an auto-rickshaw driver. His relatives wanted him to marry after his mother passed away so that there would be a woman in the house to look after the family and so they could receive the dowry. However he told us 'I didn't want to have my mother replaced'. He now gets enough money from his work as an auto-rickshaw to support his family.

Workers described that there is very little safety or security provisions on sites. Accidents happened frequently, and when they did occur the worker would normally only be partially compensated, if at all, and therefore was put at risk with lost income and medical expenses. A steel worker explained that his job is a 'very accident-prone job'. He has had lots of injuries, 3-4 months ago he ended up in hospital after the tin that he was cutting fell and went straight into his foot. The factory paid for half the hospital costs and his family had to pay the other half. A colleague of his also recently ended up in hospital for 2 months too. He couldn't work for 6 months and his company only paid him compensation for 1 month off work. A painter shared that he had fallen from the 8th to the 5th floor as the rope holding him was rotten. A rod entered his collarbone and he ended up in hospital. The man who had the rotten rope was not his own contractor so they blamed him and he lost 1.5 months of income. As a result of frequent accidents and poor compensation, some people explained that they are trying to change jobs to something safer. A day construction labourer who used to work as a seasonal fruit seller, shared that he is trying to find ways to return to fruit selling as he felt he currently faced unacceptable 'physical risk' at work.

Within one urban slum study location where this is a very high level of crime and gangster activity, people shared that physical security is an important. In this location people told us that they 'hate outside job' such as construction work, as they have to pay protection money to local syndicates. One construction worker shared that this equated to Tk 5,000 – 6,000 per month which was more than a third of his salary. In this same urban slum area, the plastics factory worker (see box 7) told us she used to walk to work but got attacked twice by gangsters, so now she takes the company bus and has to pay Tk 600 per month for the service. In this location parents explained that 'we don't really have any dreams or aspirations'.

Family constraints

Understanding the family dynamics, the position within the family and the changes over the family lifecycle are important for understanding the opportunities and constraints that individuals may have in pursuing their dream jobs or training opportunities. People shared that obligations

to their family based on their position within the family has a significant impact on their opportunity for getting a job and training. The eldest and youngest are particularly affected. Often youngest children, irrespective of gender, have special obligations to their families such as looking after the children of the family, caring for the parents and family assets which, in turn, constrains their choice of work.

Typical of others, a recent trainee sewing machine operator, explained that as the youngest in the family she is obliged to stay at home and look after not just her own children but also those of her siblings. She cannot take up full time work in the garments industry and explains, *'my family think if I work (as a volunteer assistant) in the school it will be a lot more comfortable – only 2-3hours a day'*. She received a sewing machine when she got married, and completed the sewing machine operators training course provided by SUDOKKHO. However, because of the family circumstances she is not allowed to work in the garment factories. Instead she sews occasionally at home doing odd jobs for neighbours whilst looking after the children for the family. (see photo)

Whereas, the eldest in the family often is pressured to support the family's income and the cost of further education for his/her younger siblings. This is particularly the case if the parents are elderly, deceased or are not earning much money (see box stories 17 and 18). These 'eldest children' often leave school early in order to bring the much needed cash for the family so their younger siblings benefit.

The responsibility and the opportunities occasionally skip siblings depending on circumstances and the lifecycle of the family. An eldest brother who now works in a brick field shared that his father had originally wanted him to go overseas but he got married 5 years ago without telling his parents. So now he told us his father doesn't trust him and has taken a loan out which they have invested in land and cattle to raise the funds of Tk 2-3 lakh to send his younger brother abroad instead.

In Chaity's case (see box 7) she is actually the 4th oldest sibling of 5 children, but when her 3 older brothers got married and her father passed away the responsibility for looking after her mother rested on her shoulders. In a similar

case, Dina is the 9th oldest sibling of 12 children, but her older brothers she told us only 'share problems not money'. They are all farmers and have children of their own, so she is the only one who is supporting her parents through her job in a Pran factory.

Often the desire to go abroad for work does not come from the person him/herself but as strong pressure from their parents. The parents see the opportunity to go overseas as a chance for their children to help in supporting the family. A furniture worker explained to us that he enjoys his flexible working hours and shared that even though his father wants him to go overseas that *'I love my country, I don't want to leave it for money'*. Another younger brother had wished his older brother had gone overseas as he wanted to stay back with his friends and play cricket and said if his older brother had gone he would have been able to use the money that he sent back to buy a motor bike.



A trainee sewing at home – the only place she can



Training Experiences, Expectations and Perceptions

During the pilot study which was undertaken outside SUDOKKHO catchment areas, young men and women told us that compared to the past more expected to enter some form of vocational training immediately after school (SSC) before seeking employment. Peer groups felt that this has become quite normalized and expect their parents to agree to this. The agency seems primarily to emanate from the youth themselves. As well as providing certification for applying for jobs, it is often regarded as a way to extend their childhood and delay work and marriage (especially for girls). As one person said *'until your 20 years old it's playing age'* and then *'we have to find jobs'*. These young men and women told us that they preferred Government training centres to private ones as they felt the certification process was more legitimate and recognized and know that these centres are supervised and checked by the Government. They told us they were well staffed and equipped *'unlike the past'* and some provided opportunities for work experience placements. Nevertheless, as mentioned before training does not substitute for the need for networks and bribes to secure employment.

Unlike these young people who regarded continuation to vocational training as a norm post school, the majority of those we met who had participated in SUDOKKHO training had some work experience or had left school longer ago. The possibility to train with SUDOKKHO was considered by them because of the publicity (especially 'miking') in their communities. Although these are private courses, the promise of employment which was a main focus of the advertising and the endorsement by the UK Government through the use of recognizable flag logos on all publicity, led people to trust this programme. These are not youths wanting to delay their entry into the world of work but eager to start to earn regular incomes.

However, some trainees said that attending the training course had not been an active decision but they had *'fallen into it'*, either through family recommendations and networks or pressure. As a result, they were not interested in applying their new skills to find jobs. The training was viewed as a *'filler'* while waiting for a job or, in some cases there had been no intention to work in the industry or due to family obligations did not have the opportunity to work after completing the course (see photo p24). At one centre, over half the trainees left a particular course after it was clarified that the training was meant to be for disadvantaged families who were seeking job opportunities in the garment sector and they did not fulfill these criteria, most of whom wanted to work at home.

At another training centre, additional steps are taken to screen potential trainees through a thorough pre-enrollment process with detailed discussions with each youth on their background and future aspirations and providing them information on the course. They call back only those who meet the criteria. This training centre is run by man who has a training and diploma degree from a vocational training centre and established his own electrical workshop before establishing the training centre and on meeting him researchers found him quite inspiring. His practical life experience in training and working in the vocational sector has provided him a good understanding on the needs of trainees, their challenges and how to create a nurturing environment.

Most young men and women in the study shared that their primary reason for choosing SUDOKKHO training courses was to get a regular job rather than taking the training course per se. As mentioned before a regular job improves social status and influence

Box 19: 'Training Changed My Life'

Rasel received 6 months training from a German training provider in class 9. It was a mobile technical training covering 3 topics: tailoring, mobile repairing and electrician. He chose the electrician course. Admission was free and he received TK 80 a day stipend to attend the training which started with practical class in the morning (9-1pm) followed by theoretical classes in the afternoon (2-4pm). Before the training he said 'I had no idea what I wanted to do. The training changed my life and gave me direction'. He now works as an Assistant Technician in a food and beverage factory. His basic salary is TK 8,000 per month but including overtime and other facilities I normally receive around TK 14,000 per month.

Whilst, some trainees told us the training centre had helped them find jobs, the jobs had not always met their expectations as the salary was too low or it was too far from their home (see boxes). Trainees who had not got 'the promised' job after their training course were frustrated and felt let down. As one trainee explained the 'training was a loss' for her, as she quit her previous job to join the training and expected better work opportunities (see box 20).

Box 20: 'Training was a Loss'

The training gave me no opportunity for better work. I left my job in the garment factory where I was being paid TK 3,000 per month. I expected that after completing the training course I would be able to find a job in the garment industry with a wage of about TK 10,000 per month. My 2 months training finished in early January 2016 and I couldn't find a job. I ended up getting a job by standing in front of the garment factory at the beginning of the month in February. I don't have a certificate and they didn't require or prioritize anyone who had training. You just needed a national ID card, birth certificate and photos. They told me that 'these trainings are useless because people who have not been trained in anyway are better than those who have been trained'.

In effect I was jobless for 3 months, 2 months for the duration of the training course and 1 month trying to find a job. During this time I would have developed new skills in my previous job and progressed. The training was a loss for me, it wasn't fruitful. My new job I receive TK 3,200 per month. The pay is less regular, I haven't received my pay for the last 2 months. My friend who also took the same training course and previously received TK 3,000 is now only receiving TK 2,600 per month. We are trying to change jobs again and move to the Export Zone garment factories.

Box 21: Job Opportunity too far from home

Apon was offered an electrician job in a shop in Tongi by the training centre. The salary was TK 4,000 per month however, it is far from his home and would have cost him TK 50 per day for transport which would have been a quarter of his salary. He told us his parents wanted him to take the job but he refused as it was too far away. He is still looking for a job.

in decision making within their family and community (see Chapter 3). Trainees shared that they had been assured that after finishing these short training course they will get a job. Promotional 'miking' and leaflets indicated that employment was '100% guaranteed'.

In cases where trainees managed to get a job after the course then they appreciated the opportunities that the training course had opened up for them. An ex- trainee from a similar programme remarked that 'the training changed my life' (see box 19).

However, trainees who had not got a job after their training course ended were frustrated and felt let down. As one trainee explained the 'training was a loss' for her, as she quit her previous job to join the training and expected better work opportunities (see box 20). Whilst, some trainees told us the training centre had helped them find jobs, but the jobs had not met their expectations as the salary was too low or it was too far from their home (see box 20 and box 21).

Trainers from one training institute shared that trainees sometimes would not finish the course if a job opportunity came along in the meantime, and would 'only do essentials to get jobs', choosing the most relevant sections of the course which enabled them to gain the key skills for finding a job. Many trainees shared that they found the practical sessions most relevant and directly useful for their future employability and confirmed what the trainees told us about picking and choosing parts of the course. Theory sessions were less useful, particularly for those with limited literacy. As one illiterate mason trainee explained 'in class I looked up at the sky because I could not get anything', and he dropped out of the theory lessons and only joined the practical sessions.

The preference shared by many young men and women was to learn skills which are directly applicable and relevant to the local industries with work opportunities. Several trainees told us that they had learnt how to sew T-Shirts and shirts, whereas the local factories currently needed people who could make pants and trousers. As a result one of the trainees left the course after 15 days as he thought the training 'was meaningless, not useful for practical factory work'. Others complained about the relevance of 'soft skill development' classes saying 'why do we learn this useless talking, we already know about this'.

People generally understood the training courses provided by SUDOKKHO are for people to *'get employment in Bangladesh not overseas, so that is why the certificate they receive is only in Bangla'*. However, many trainees complained that they had not received a certificate, although one trainee shared that he preferred that he didn't have the certificate *'because if I bring it to my home the rats will eat it'*. As highlighted in Chapter 3, many youths shared that they actually wanted to get jobs overseas and therefore complained that they still wanted to have the certificate in English to help them find overseas jobs. Some told us that *'training is most important for going overseas'*. This is particularly the case with courses that have the international seal of approval. Some told us about the Singapore Training Centre course, where training was for those who wished to go overseas.

Many young men and women shared that is it *'best to learn by hand'* and as one young man explained *'experience is of greater matter for any kind of job'*. Through gaining on the job experience *'we learn by working'* and as one youth elaborated *'training will go on until I am fully skilled, I am still training on the job'*. Those who already had basic skills within an industry shared that they had no need for training. As a woman garment worker explained *'why do I need training when I already know how to operate a machine. I learnt from my co-workers'*.

People explained they would learn on the job and specialize in a particular area, rather than want any training to learn new skills. Short term training they told us *'does not give you a step up in your career'*, as you still need to work through the levels from operator to supervisor. If they were to do any training, people explained that they benefited most from informal training and mentoring from work colleagues, their boss or family relatives (see boxes 23 and 24). This environment they shared is more supportive, friendly and allows them to learn while working.

Trainees also told us that the training environment, facilities and the timing of the course are important factors to ensure the relevance and attractiveness of the courses. The training environment people said should be directly relevant to the workplace needs and it should look and feel like a genuine workplace. For example, people appreciated that one

Box 22: A Job But Training did not Lead to Better Salary

I left school at grade 8 and worked in the park as a ticket master receiving TK 8,000 per month. I left the job as I didn't get any holiday and had to work from morning to night time. My cousin told me about the training course to be a mason. 10-15 days after the training course had finished, the training centre called me and offered me a job on a contractor's site. I worked there for 4 days, TK 50 for the first day, TK 100 on the 2nd day and on 3rd day TK 150. This was less than half of what I earned before. I decided to stay as I just 'wanted to work there for learning'. The training centre came to take photos of me on the 3rd day and brought safety equipment for me to wear. On the 4th day I left the job after I found out that the assistant who had no certificate or training was receiving TK 350 per day. I have now joined my uncle to work in his shop.

Box 23: Learning from my boss

Atif works in a steel factory painting wardrobes. He says he doesn't need any formal training, as he will learn from his boss. For the first 5 months he wasn't paid, he was learning and training on the job. He says his training was a risk as he received no money and no food. He now gets TK 10,000 – 12,000 per month and he says his boss will next teach him how to spray paint. Another worker learnt 2-3 years ago how to spray paint and now gets more money. He told us "My boss learnt this way, and I will learn this way too".

Box 24: Learning from my brother

I received electrical training 2 years ago. It was useful although I already knew most of it from practical experience. My younger brother instead got trained by my brother. This is more effective than formal training. It is a more friendly way to learn, if you can't do it then there is no fear. It took my younger brother 2 months to learn from my brother what would have taken 6 months to learn from a training centre.

training centre made special efforts to set up the training room so that the lighting is exactly the same as the garment factory. When we met the owner of the training centre he told us that this helped his trainees with transferring their skills to the work environment and that people came to take photos of the training centre as a role model.

Elsewhere, SUDOKKHO training facilities were sometimes lacking functioning equipment and resources. At one training centre although there are 20 sewing machines, the trainees said that only 4 worked. *'How can you expect me to learn, if we only have 4 machines for 20 people'*. So those without *'just learnt the names of the equipment'* rather than actually using the machines. Safety equipment trainees also shared could not be taken out of the class room at some centres, and the shoes did not always fit. One trainee described to us that he fixed the shoes by tying the laces around his legs to keep them up. At other locations the resources were sufficient but as one trainee explained, echoing others, *'we paid Tk 6,000 so the books should belong to us, and the tool box – but we have to give it back'*.

Trainees also shared that the timing is best in the morning rather than in the afternoon. When the course is from 1-4pm, trainees explained that it would clash with other courses and sometimes the teachers had commitments so they would finish the training early. Lunch is normally provided at the training centres, however while many felt it was ok others complained about the food. One trainee explained he *'couldn't eat the food'* so went home every weekend.

People told us that the costs for attending the training course and admission fees varied and seemed to be *'open to negotiation'*. Some said the courses were free, others said they were going to be paid to attend the course. Those who paid for the courses gave different figures for what they paid and some indicated that the fee could be negotiated. The box 25 illustrates the diversity of different experiences in paying for the training courses.

From all the trainees who attended the SUDOKKHO courses nearly three quarters said that overall they were satisfied with the course. Many trainees said that they had learnt new skills and some managed to get new jobs. For some the skills they learnt on the training were not directly applicable to the local job needs but people said that they still *'enjoyed'* the training and made new friends. As highlighted earlier it is through networks that people said jobs are often found therefore these new networks developed from the training courses may have considerable impact in their futures.

Box 25: 'Variable Costs for the Training Courses'

- *Several trainees shared that they paid TK 6,000 for the short course (45 days), and received a receipt for only TK 5,000. One trainee was told this included the accommodation costs, while another trainee said was just the cost for the course.*
- *A trainee who is currently enrolled in the 5th semester of a textile course told us he was encouraged to join the short course too at the same centre. The centre explained that although he should pay a TK 1,000 registration fee when he finished the course he would receive TK 1,500. However, as it turned out he didn't have to pay anything to enroll on the short course, and nor did his friend he told us.*
- *For one trainee the cost was TK 3,120 for the training and accommodation per month, and he was told they are meant to get back TK 300 on the 3rd month but didn't receive anything.*
- *A trainee said she was told 'the training is free' by her niece. After getting an application form she was told she would have to pay TK 1,000 but will get TK 500 back at the end of the course.*
- *A trainee said he was told the registration fee is TK 500, whilst he said his friend negotiated with the training centre and arranged to pay the TK 500 later – he still hasn't paid this fee.*
- *For another trainee the total cost of the course was TK 3,000, however he said he only had to pay TK 2,000 now and the remaining TK 1,000 could be paid later.*
- *A trainee told us he had to pay TK 10,000. TK 5,000 for registration fee and TK 5,000 to the broker who provided him the information on the course.*



Study Implications

This study is intended to be a baseline for a longer longitudinal study of the experiences and perceptions of the trainees of the SUDOKKHO programme as well as those who are similar but not beneficiaries of the programme. The first year of the study is undertaken to provide the views of youth themselves on the relevance of, access to and their own experience of the programme with a view to provide insights which can help shape the programme as it goes forward. These study implications are presented from their perspectives and are structured around the assumptions which underpin the project design.

Assumption - Relevance: (trainees) choose the options (offered by the programme) over alternative work or life choices

Work choices for those with limited education are constrained and many young men and women in this study shared that they have already given up on dream jobs in civil service (military, police, medicine, teaching, nurse etc) by the time they reach their mid-late teens after failing to complete school. The next best alternative is regarded as work abroad (especially by young men) and even knowing the risks that this can sometimes entail, the lure of better wages and conditions than are generally available in Bangladesh is strong and many shared with us positive experiences of friends and relatives. It is clear talking with so many youth in this study that it is the wage rather than the nature of the job which is the pull factor. For example, trained construction workers indicated that they would work in factories, shipping or the catering industry abroad if the job was offered and the wages were good.

Unpacking the many conversations held during the study suggests that young men and women with limited education see the period immediately after leaving school as an opportunity to earn and gain respect so that they can make some cash for themselves to enjoy first and then to make savings to establish themselves and make good marriages. This period of their lives (from 15-25 years) is generally less seen as the start of a career but rather a period of relative freedom to earn from whatever source pays them best. Much store was given to the importance of jobs conferring respect so that youth could be taken seriously as adult decision makers and potential marriage prospects, including reversing negative perceptions of family that they might be lazy, worthless or troubled.

Training is often seen as a 'time filler' or as a way to prove to family that they are taking responsibility for their future (and was often arranged by other family members) but less often as a start of a career. Very few could map out their ambitions or future paths and those that did rarely related these to the training they had received. The exception were some of those trained as electricians (and to a lesser extent masons). The prospects of being self-employed as an electrician or skilled mason are valued from several aspects; the potential income, flexibility in work hours and place of work and the potential to be able to supervise others. This last aspect of being able to be ones' own boss and 'boss others' was echoed by many of the youth in the study not just those in these industries but also in textiles and garments. While this was a strong sentiment among boys, girls also indicated this preference. Their current experience of work directly or through peers and relatives which often involves twelve hour shifts, demanding bosses and inflexible conditions, strongly shapes this preference for self-employment.

Garment industry jobs, except those in the EPZ, are not particularly sought after mostly because of the long hours, considered 'doable' for women before they marry but very difficult to continue after marriage and with children. This circumscribes the potential to make a career in garments. Construction related work is often regarded as reasonably well paid, especially if skilled, but with extreme health risks especially considering the poor attention paid to health and safety on construction sites and fabrication works. Young men and women indicated that being employed in either of these industries was not ideal and many shared that they continue to search for alternative, less hard and less risky work.

Securing a job is highly correlated to having networks and this overrides any skills training or previous work experience. Having the ability to bribe is also a key to getting the work or opportunities wanted. Even with networks the bribe amount may merely be reduced or phased more sympathetically if relatives are involved.

In sum, this age group

- Is searching for any job which pays well and preferably gives some status (the much used and liked phrases 'in business' or 'working abroad' conceal much but confer status compared to working for others in garments or construction).
- Sees this period as one to have freedom to work and earn for themselves, often (but not always) with less responsibilities. This further drives the desire for immediate cash rather than working with a view to developing a career.
- Recognises that networks and bribing are more likely to return the kind of work they really want.

Assumption: (potential trainees) have ambitions for promotion to semi-skilled and skilled status

As indicated above, the young men and women in the study do not on the whole think that acquiring skills in addition to those acquired in the workplace correlates with better paid work as networks and bribes trump this. Nevertheless, some youth were enthusiastic about their skills potential but only where there are role models and proven paths to getting better wages through skills acquisition. The nature of construction work whereby much is distributed through very small contractors and work groups provides evidence of the potential to quickly lead these groups and negotiate contracts directly. A worker has the prospect of leading a group which fulfils their desire for authority and flexibility. Through their own efforts they can become work group leaders, can fix wages for the group and decide on their own profits. As well as working in this way in construction sites, youth also explained that with these skills they are also in demand for small works (with immediate cash payments) within their own community.

By contrast, promotion in the garments industry as a result of skills acquisition is considered less possible, with fewer opportunities anyway and reliance on others making the decision (so relying again on networks and bribes).

As mentioned above, women shared they still find it difficult to imagine a career because of their expected roles as wives and mothers, even though many men shared that they encourage and even require their wives to work. Their work is still largely seen as an additional source of income to ease cash flow.

Assumption: need to have confidence in the training providers and value of the training provided

Most young men and women in the study indicated that skills obtained in work were more valuable than those from any training courses run externally. They like the coaching provided in the workplace and the chance to learn from practical experience and from practitioners. They also say that is the best way to build a reputation and networks for further work and promotion.

Those who attended the SUDOKKHO training said the trainers were good and helpful and the facilities were in general good (and especially appreciating the efforts of one training provider to mimic during the training the actual conditions they would work under in the future) but still rued the opportunity to learn by doing. Few were more critical and said the training was not relevant for the local industry requirements and felt they had wasted time and money.

The overriding motivation for joining the training was the prospect of securing a good job and the promotional activities for the training courses trade on this promise, legitimised by the international branding which youth told us they felt assured by. Although a few had got slightly better paid positions after training brokered by the training centres, several indicated that they were disappointed with the low paid jobs they were offered or ones far from where they lived while others had not been offered anything even after several months.

This suggests that improved relations are required to be developed between local industries and the training providers to ensure the training is geared to their specific needs and that there is work available for skilled graduates.

People said SUDOKKHO is not geared towards skills training for overseas work but felt that this could be relevant and useful for them.

There was much confusion among trainees and potential trainees over eligibility for training, costs of training and the courses themselves and they could not share any standard documentation suggesting there is a need for more information rather than just promotional material to be supplied so that potential trainees can make more informed choices

Assumption: Be attracted to training packages offered

As indicated above the main attraction of these training packages shared was the prospect of a job ('100% guaranteed'), something which other training providers do not always offer and which they trusted because of the international endorsement.

At present the courses seem to be sought by those with some work experience rather than school leavers (who tell us they prefer to continue in Government vocational schools with longer courses partly to delay employment and continue with their peer group in education) which explains the importance of the promise of securing a better paid job.

The short nature of the courses is attractive for this client group especially compared to many of the Government offered vocational courses which are considered very long. But the timing is less than optimal, with many suggesting that the courses could be conducted alongside part time employment in the afternoons or evenings or between shifts so that they can continue to earn while learning.

The most valued of the training packages was the electrical training, which can provide useful practical experience (wiring, refrigeration etc) easily within a classroom setting. It also provides training to those who want to work independently and can do so as soon as they get their licenses. This was likened to learning to drive which immediately provides one with a marketable skill and opportunity for self-employment.

Certificates were not much valued, again reflecting on the greater value of networks and bribes to secure work and promotion.

Assumption: Being able to access the training opportunities offered

Access refers to physical access as well as eligibility, inclusion, cost and opportunity cost.

The more disadvantaged young men and women in the study (orphaned, with some disability, low education or economic responsibility for siblings) shared with us that they had or would have difficulties accessing the training. There are expectations of literacy skills and passing written exams. The full time nature of the courses, albeit short, mean that opportunities to earn money at the same time are limited and the financial costs of availing the training are not always clear.

Most of the early batch trainees we interacted with had been linked to the centre through an intermediary, a relative or a broker. Most we met were already living in the vicinity of the training centre (up to 45 minutes journey) but we did follow up on some of the many who had come from outside Dhaka and had been residential in the centre during their training. Facilities were generally regarded as adequate and food provision adequate or good and provided free or subsidised costs suggesting that access to those living outside of the area is considered good.

The lack of clarity over costs of training, resources and equipment acts as a barrier to access. Where fees were taken this is equivalent of a month's income to be paid up front. Phasing payment and provision of education loans for the costs may enable others to access.

Assumption: (potential trainees) attracted to non traditional occupations (e.g. women in construction)

Despite interacting with over 1,000 people (611 men, 480 women), we did not come across many in non traditional occupations. The only exception was during the pilot where we met a group of girls on a Government vocational school welding course. These were feisty girls who said their parents had let them make their own choice about training and work and were happy that they might get well paid work. Otherwise, opinions about women working at all let alone in non traditional occupations diverged widely from traditional views of remaining at home to encouragement to work wherever there was cash opportunities.



Annexes

Annex 1
RESEARCH TEAM

STUDY TEAM LEADER

Peter Riddell-Carre

TECHNICAL ADVISOR

Dee Jupp



TEAM MEMBERS



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Md. Abdullah Al Amin
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Md. Abir Hossain
Kamrul Hasan
Abdullah Al Amin
Mehdi Salman
Tarannum Munia
Tazin Ananya
Md. Golam Naser
Md. Naimul Amin
Shah Alam

Annex 2
PEOPLE MET



1	<i>Not Working (Trained by Project)</i>	-
2	<i>Working in Other Industry (Trained by Project)</i>	-
8	<i>Working in Construction (Trained by Project)</i>	-
2	<i>Working in Garment (Trained by Project)</i>	6
44	<i>Working in Construction (Not Trained by Project)</i>	4
35	<i>Working in Garment (Not Trained by Project)</i>	65
40	<i>Working in Other Industry (Not Trained by Project)</i>	33
479	<i>Ordinary People</i>	372
611	Total	480

**Total met
1091 people**

Annex 3 AREAS FOR CONVERSATION

Chat, explore, probe, present scenarios 'what if', introduce debate 'some people think', listen, draw, explain, dream, play

ROUND 1 AND 2

Context

Urban/rural/peri-urban. main livelihoods –alternatives and local trends(incl. international and domestic migration), local job opportunities

Your household/family/living unit

Profile of the trainee/worker: age, education, gender, culture, religion, skills, dependents, disability, position in family; diversity of incomes (remittance, renting rooms/land, inherited wealth). Job / Lifestyle preferences and pressures

Family (family tree), ages, gender, education, livelihoods;

House/living unit ; location, building materials, layout, renting/permanent HH, toilet/drinking water facilities, key assets (land, livestock, work related equipment, electrical equipment, phones etc)

Motivations for work/skills acquisition

Aspirations; better income, promotion, better work (regular and reliable), work experience, adventure, international experience, skills, connections, (life cycle issues in work choice/aspirations) status (economic/social), incentives, secure futures, savings, marriagability, asset accumulation

Family circumstances, pressure /coercion, limited job opportunities, 'running away', new relationships, family preferences, obligations in family (status, responsibility, family decision making)

Influence on choice? Role models, peer pressure information, media, culture, family expectations/pressure, local exposure

Influence / reasons for choosing

Networks & information

(work and training)

Sources of information (potential training opportunities, wages, conditions etc), social media, TV, Reliability, extent /sufficiency of information. Access /barriers to information on training and employment opportunities. Ability to make informed decisions. Quality of information and understanding

Networks/connections (family, local, past trainees, commercial, education providers. other),community based organisations. Issues/costs of being un-networked, external networks (political parties, village leaders).

work experience

Experience of transition to work-placements, conditions, expectations, cleanliness, toilets, breast feeding facilities. Work conditions; contract, regulations/ restrictions, hours, leave, wages (amount/regularity), benefits, nature of work, supervision, insurance, risks (health & safety), non-contract demands, freedom of movement/ communication, harassment, compliance, deductions, late payments.

Perceived benefits of being skilled – wage changes, promotion prospects

Living arrangements; distance from work, rent/provided/other, amenities, arrangements for cooking, washing, sleeping, leisure (range). Costs/ expenses spending.

Peer relations; support, harassment, bullying, grievance mechanisms, savings, language/culture/skills barriers, helpful colleagues.

Psychology; feelings about work, living

Training experience

Entry: choices, qualifications, needed, process of entry (ID cards), connections / network for entry, selection process

Conditions in training. Costs (opportunity/financial, loss of daily income, overt/covert, incidental /hidden), Fee payment, uniforms, transport, sources of finance, debt. Willingness to pay. Residential training – env, resources,

Type of training residential vs day training, on site/release/course, length, duration, safety in training and after procedures, insurance, special support, performance assessment, grievance processes.

Process:Help/support/training available/accessed. (types/preference ; on the job, PTP, peer to peer, apprentice, mentoring , preference for practical/theory other) pitch and pace of training, level of engagement, classroom dynamics, learner centredness, testing and feedback, equity and fairness

Family support, psychological issues – living away from home, loneliness, communication, childcare

Relevance/appropriateness of the training. Expectations met? Understanding and confidences to apply.

Connections future jobs and post training follow up

Future and Lifestyle

Dreams for themselves and children (short term and long term). Job/career aspirations (achievable/ideal). Domestic/international work, temp/long term work preferences and feasibility.

Process / Plan for achieving dreams

Anticipated benefits/negative consequences. Trade off between factors.

Independence, impact on family dynamics, divorce, family decision making, role changes

ROUND 3

Perceptions on training and types of jobs

Factors that influence what is perceived as a desirable job: working hours, working conditions, salary, flexibility, social status, position in family, gender

Opportunities outside the garment and construction industry: different options, feasibility, desirability. Overseas opportunities.

Decision making process, lifestyle choices and options when searching for jobs: balances between lifestyle and job conditions; role models, peer pressure, influence of the family or other peers.

Family Obligations and Position: impacts on opportunities for training; impact on opportunities for jobs; impacts on types of jobs possible. Decisions on who in the family 'investment' is made in.

Perceptions on different training provisions: government training, private training, length of training, the need for training.

Perceived benefits and costs (opportunity and actual) of being skilled: the benefits or not of being skilled; ambitions for promotion and needs for furthering skills v on the job experience

Anticipated benefits and trade offs between seeking job opportunities v training: desire for taking training rather than having to work;

Networks & information

(work and training)

Sources of information (potential training opportunities, wages, conditions etc), social media, TV, Reliability, extent /sufficiency of information. Access /barriers to information on training and employment opportunities. Ability to make informed decisions. Quality of information and understanding

Networks/connections (family, local, past trainees, commercial, education providers. other), community based organisations. Issues/costs of being un-networked, external networks (political parties, village leaders).

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Perceived benefits of being skilled – wage changes, promotion prospects

Living arrangements; distance from work, rent/provided/other, amenities, arrangements for cooking, washing, sleeping, leisure (range). Costs/expenses spending.

Peer relations; support, harassment, bullying, grievance mechanisms, savings, language/culture/skills barriers, helpful colleagues.

Psychology; feelings about work, living away, loneliness, isolation. Excitement/adventure/independence

Annex 4 KEY STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Key Study Participants

Round 1

Rural/ Peri- Urban / Urban	M / F	Age	Job		Wage (Tk)		Options	How they get the job	Education	Training
			Before Training	After Training	Before Training	After Training				
U	F	14	None	Unemployed (Has been offered a job but too young and far from home)	X	X	Cannot afford further school	Unable to get a job	Class 7	✓ *
U	M	19	Tiffin box carrier		4,000		Supports his younger siblings for education		Class 3	X
U	M	24	Computer shop salesperson	Same	5,000 (+ 7,000 from family)	Same	Only wants job offering salary > Tk 20,000. So, does not want to work in garment	Owner of shop	Class 10	✓ *
PU	M	31	Tea boy	Mason	6,500	10,000 - 12,000	Hopes to work with contractor	Connections at training centre	None	✓ *
PU	F	19	None	Garment factory	X	5,900	Wants to be garment supervisor	Training centre	Class 10	✓ *
PU	M	25	Construction worker	Same	N/A	10,000 - 12,000	Supports his younger siblings for education		Class 6	X
R	M	25	Manual labour in india	Electrician (self- employed)	N/A	4,000 + gifts	Wants government job or works abroad as electrician	Relatives	Class 8	✓ **
R	M	18	None				Wants to be government employee		Class 12	X
R	M	17	Farmer				Wants an employment in forces or fire services		Vocational	X
R	M	16	Student				Wants to join army or works abroad		Class 10	X

* = SUDOKKHO Training

** = Non-SUDOKKHO Training

Key Study Participants

Round 2

Rural/ Peri- Urban / Urban	M /F	Age	Job		Wage (Tk)		Options	How they get the job	Education	Training
			Before Training	After Training	Before Training	After Training				
U	F	35 (though listed as 24)	Quality check helper in garment factory	Sewing machine operator	N/A	7,000	Works to help paying marriage costs of daughter		Limited	✓ *
U	F	24	Quality checker	Sewing machine operator (but quit to go back to her old job)	5,000	6,500	Wants to work in retail or nursing		SSC	✓ *
U	M	19	Shop assistant	- (unfinished course)	7,000	N/A	Orphaned. His uncle promoted the idea of further skills training. He wants to be an accountant	Uncle promoted him	First year of University	✓ *
U	M	16	Student	Occasional electrical work		N/A	Wants to become electrical engineer		Class 9	✓ *
U	F	24	None	Volunteer teacher at BRAC school			Wants to be a teacher (because has less working hours)		HSC	✓ *
U	M	28	Ticket master	Employed by uncle in shop	8,000	N/A (left job after 4 days)	Wants to go overseas as does not want to work in uncle's shop	Uncle organized	Class 8	✓ *
U	M	21	Volunteer in shop	Unemployed			Gets license to practice as electrician	Friends arranged that	Diploma in electrical	✓ *
U	M	20	None	Part-time construction worker		3,000	Wants to go overseas	Cannot get from training centre, he used network to go abroad	HSC (failed)	✓ *
PU	F	20	Sewing machine operator	Same	3,000	3,200	Wants to work in EPZ		None	✓ *
PU	M	28	Labourer in Dubai	Mason	N/A	N/A	Wants to move to Maldives to work as a waiter		Class 6	✓ **
PU	M	38	Caretaker	Caretaker	10,000	10,000	Happy with this as he has plenty of leisure and family time		HSC	✓ *
PU	M	20	Student	Student			Needs job to fund study, then wants to work in private sector		Diploma in textiles	✓ *

* = SUDOKKHO Training

** = Non-SUDOKKHO Training

Key Study Participants

Non-Project Youth

Rural/ Peri- Urban / Urban	M/ F	Age	Current Work	Wage	Options	How they get the job	Education	Training
R	M	23	Brick field labourer	8,000	Injured in factory accident, no ID card so factory work denied	Factory work through relative, brick filed through father	Class 3	
R	M	20	Mason	12,000*	Happy to continue	Started as apprenti ce Helper	Class 8	
R	F	24	Confecti onary compan y machine operato r	4,000**	Husband sends irregular remittance and she was forced out of in laws home	Through family connecti ons	Class 10	
PU	M	17	Factory steel worker (welding)	6,000	Become skilled through on-job- learning	Through friends	Class 5	OTJ
PU	M	23	Factory steel worker (sprayer)	10- 12,000*	Self-supporting at college. After complete college wants to become teacher	Knew the boss and where his friends work	2 nd year of College	
PU	F	20	Embroid ery factory worker	4,000**	Works for own income, own consumption goods	Formerl y domesti c worker	Class 4	OTJ
U	M	25	Jute mill worker	6,800	Happy to continue supports younger siblings	Arrange d through family	Class 8	Unpaid OTJ

U	M	25	Electrician (on contract basis)	>16,000*	Happy and feels lucky. He will apply for license so able to work for government	Through contract	Class 10 (pending)
U	M	25	Biscuit factory machine operator	8,500 - 13,000*	Work at jute and sugar mills. Before that he worked in construction	Through relatives	Class 8
U	F	17	Plastic factory worker	7,000	She has no father, so she supports her younger sister. She hopes to be supervisor but worried about her low education	Falsified age on work card (20). She got the job through relatives	Class 3

* = Less than minimal wage in garment factory

** = double minimal wage in garment factory

Minimum wage in Bangladesh is 1,500

Minimum wage in RGM is 5,300

