



## Skills for a resilient workforce programme

### Promising Practice

*Implemented by:* Maldives Polytechnic and other private training providers

*Where:* Maldives

*Status:* Launched in July 2020

*Summary:* The government-sponsored skills for a resilient workforce programme supports industry in addressing the sudden demand for technical employees following the departure of many foreign workers due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Overview

Maldives Polytechnic was created in 2010 as the national government institution responsible for developing, managing and providing training facilities for technical and vocational education and training. The institution has evolved since it was founded as a vocational training centre in 1975. Maldives Polytechnic operates within the Maldives Qualification Framework, which is aligned with the principles and practices of partnerships with industry and communities to provide demand-driven skills development for economic growth and employment.

## Description

### Training youth in various technical areas

The **skills for a resilient workforce programme** aims to train 2,400 Maldivian youths in various technical areas in tourism, transport, construction, ICT, fisheries and agriculture, and other sectors. The programme is planned by and executed by the Ministry of Higher Education. As Maldives Polytechnic is under this Ministry and has the national responsibility for providing the much-required technical workforce to industry, both parties came to an agreement to train 50% of the target programmes while the rest of the programmes are to be outsourced to private training providers.

### Financial support for participants

All participants under 35 and unemployed are provided a stipend of approximately US\$ 130 per month during the maximum six-month training period. All programmes offered under this initiative are based on the National Competency Standards, and those who successfully complete the assessment conducted by Maldives National Skills Development Authority are awarded a Level 3 National Certificate. All participants are registered in the employment portal, which is maintained by the Ministry of Economic Development.

## Objectives

The programme's main objective was to support industry in coping with the sudden labour shortages that arose when a significant number of foreign workers returned to their respective countries due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the pandemic, the Government of the Maldives decided to support the youth population with a stipend to ease financial challenges while getting trained in a vocational area that leads to employment.

## Outcomes and impact

Under the project, Maldives Polytechnic has conducted various skills training programmes and 400 students graduated from the programme in the 2021-2022 cohort.

The initiative:

- Provides financial support to get trained and achieve a qualification that leads to employment;
- Caters for the existing labour demand by incentivizing locals; and
- Raises awareness of the importance of TVET for workforce development and youth empowerment in the Maldives.



*Trainee in the skills for a resilient workforce programme*

## Challenges

### Geographical limitations

Since Maldives has small islands and populations, conducting such training in each island would be challenging. Hence, students must travel to the islands where the training is conducted. The polytechnic decided to use online resources to deliver the theoretical component of the programme. Students living in different islands can participate in the theory classes online and only travel to the main campus for the practical component.

### Lack of resources

Another challenge was the need for more training resources, such as instructors, training facilities, tools, and equipment. To address this, Maldives Polytechnic hired qualified professionals working in industry as part-time lecturers to teach in the programmes. For the skills that cannot be offered at Maldives Polytechnic, students are sent to different workplaces where they can acquire them by working on real-world projects.

### Lack of assessors

A final challenge was the lack of assessors in certain areas, which prolongs the time to complete the assessment and finish the programmes. While some programmes got delayed in completing the assessment activities, the assessment component was never compromised.

## Next steps

The Ministry of Higher Education plans to conduct a tracer study of the programme to evaluate its outcomes, including the employability of those who have completed the programme.

Maldives Polytechnic will continue to conduct TVET programmes on its campuses, and as long as the government continues to financially support this initiative, it is committed to continuing to play a major role in implementing the programme.

### Learn more

**Mohamed Hashim**, CEO, Maldives Polytechnic, helped to compile this document.

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To learn more about Maldives Polytechnic, visit:  
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