

Technical and vocational education and training: Powering Asia's skills future

When Nikita decided to retrain after becoming a mother, she returned to the classroom with her books and a new determination. At the [Global Skills Park](#) in Madhya Pradesh, India, she found state-of-the-art facilities and a modern learning environment that felt like a place of new beginnings and opportunity. Balancing her family life with hands-on training in advanced mechanical technology was not always easy, but she soon secured a job with a leading manufacturer and began a new phase of her life.

Nikita's journey reflects a growing reality across Asia. Until recently, technical vocational education and training (TVET) was seen mostly as an option for young school leavers. However, as increased automation has caused traditional jobs to disappear, many adult learners and mid-career workers have come to realise the importance of building a new set of skills.

Across the region, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) is helping countries reimagine TVET as a flexible, modern system linking vocational education with job opportunities. By upgrading TVET institutions and equipping teachers with industry-standard skills, ADB is supporting the development of agile, dynamic workforces, ready for the challenges of the future.

Linking skills to livelihoods

Madhya Pradesh has one of India's largest and fastest-growing labor forces. Yet, with most of its workforce still rooted in agriculture, industries struggled to find both young and experienced workers with the skills employers needed.

The Global Skills Park is changing that story. Backed by ADB, the park offers industry-aligned programs in manufacturing and advanced agriculture. Its classrooms and workshops are spaces where young graduates and adult workers can retrain and learn new skills. An innovative 'train-the-trainer' model has helped share teaching methods across other campuses and graduate placement, which has always been high, reached 100% by end-2024. These impressive results have established the park as a benchmark for job-ready training in India and ADB is helping the government to scale this approach nationally.

On India's eastern coast, the Odisha [Skills Development Project](#) has helped around 200,000 people aged 15-34, including women and disadvantaged groups, to access training for higher skills jobs in industry and services. Together, these initiatives demonstrate how access to relevant upskilling not only strengthens economies, but transforms lives, one learner at a time.

TVET opening doors for everyone

For decades, TVET was seen as a male-dominated, second-choice pathway. Today, ADB is helping to shift that perception with its programs that are improving access for women and learners with disabilities.

In Papua New Guinea, the [Improved TVET and Training for Employment Project](#) is partnering with local industries to upgrade ten colleges, encouraging the participation of women in priority sectors of construction, agriculture, and tourism. In Vanuatu, ADB's project, [Supporting the Delivery of Skills Development](#), will help the island respond to its urgent need for skilled workers. By enhancing accessibility to training opportunities at the Vanuatu Institute of Technology, the project will target women, disengaged youth and people with disabilities.

In Bhutan, ADB's [Skills Training and Education Upgradation Project \(STEP UP\)](#) has strengthened technical training institutions to improve the design, quality and relevance of programs across key industrial and emerging creative sectors. With rising enrolment and completion rates among young men and women, the growing pool of skilled graduates looks set to boost Bhutan's labor force and drive its push for economic diversification.

Innovations in TVET programs are helping tackle issues of exclusion and encourage countries to recognise the potential of all human capital. When everyone in society has the chance to gain practical, in-demand skills, workforce capacity is strengthened, and communities become more inclusive and economically sustainable.

Empowering teachers, inspiring students

Modern buildings and upgraded equipment can transform a training centre, but it is a skilled teacher that can bring learning to life. ADB investments support teachers with modern pedagogical skills, digital know-how and real-world industry knowledge to ensure classrooms become places where expertise and ambition grow.

In Bangladesh, the [TVET Teachers for the Future Program](#) is doing just that. By strengthening digital teaching skills, connecting educators with local employers, and introducing modern training approaches, the program is already reshaping learning outcomes. Completion rates are rising, employers are more confident in graduates' capabilities, and students feel better prepared to step into the world of work. By the time the program is complete, more than 10,000 teachers will have been trained in high-demand fields such as IT and construction, benefitting more than 250,000 future workers.

Skills for a greener, more digital future

Technology and climate change are reshaping Asia's labour markets, with automation transforming industry and the green transition creating new professions. Every country across the region, regardless of its own development journey, faces the challenge of preparing people for jobs and sectors that have only just emerged.

In the Philippines, ADB and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) are placing TVET at the heart of this transformation. Their partnership, as part of the [Supporting Innovation in the Philippine TVET System Project](#) ensures workers can build skills in new and emerging sectors. This isn't just about preparing the next generation of talent - it's about helping today's workforce transition into new types of jobs as industries evolve.

A similar shift is underway in Cambodia, where the [Skills for Competitiveness Project](#) is helping move the economy from low-skilled, labour-intensive work toward high-skilled growth. New training centres, industry-led curricula and innovative financing models allow learners to gain skills in manufacturing, electronics and other key sectors.

Meanwhile, in Lao PRD, the [Skills Enhancement for Inclusive and Green Economic Development](#) projects aims to expand training in electric vehicle maintenance and green technologies. In Viet Nam, the [Skills and Knowledge for Inclusive Economic Growth](#) project targets partnerships with industry, incorporating innovation and digital skills into national training programs.

In every case, ADB's goal is to create relevant and accessible TVET systems that help the transition to greener, smarter and more knowledge-based economies.

Learning together, moving forward together

Countries across Central Asia are proving that when nations learn from each other, everyone moves forward faster.

As part of the [Regional Cooperation on Skills Development under the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation \(CAREC\)](#) program, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and the Kyrgyz Republic are piloting a network of centres of excellence that will connect industries, institutions and talent across borders. By delivering training, aligning qualifications and jointly investing in high-potential sectors such as logistics, digital industries and green technologies, this project will support economic diversification and help the shift to a knowledge-based economy.

A future of skills and opportunity

There is no doubt that TVET has the potential to deliver training that enables individuals to build better lives and stronger communities. Its success should not be measured by the number of graduation certificates, but rather by real outcomes such as secure jobs, higher earnings, and an increase in the number of companies and employers. ADB’s focus on real-world results ensures that training programs leads to opportunity, and that this opportunity leads to transformation.

From India’s Global Skills Park to inclusive TVET programs in Bhutan and Papua New Guinea, TVET is the vehicle helping countries to grow not only faster, but more fairly. By investing in TVET systems that welcome learners at every stage, ADB is helping Asia and the Pacific to shape a future that is more skilled, resilient and inclusive.

Case study details

Project	US\$	Status	Link to project data sheet
Global Skills Park Project, India	150 million	Active	https://www.adb.org/projects/48493-002/main
Skills Development Project, India	85 million 2 million TA	Closed	https://www.adb.org/projects/46462-003/main#project-pds
Improved TVET and Training for Employment Project, PNG	66 million	Active	https://www.adb.org/projects/53083-001/main
Supporting the Delivery of Skills Development, Vanuatu	16.5 million	Active	https://www.adb.org/projects/54045-001/main
Skills Training and Education Upgradation Project (STEP UP), Bhutan	0.95	Closed 2021	https://www.adb.org/projects/50296-001/main
TVET Teachers for the Future Program, Bangladesh	150 million	Active	https://www.adb.org/projects/56291-001/main
Supporting Innovation in the Philippine Exchange Program, Philippines	100 million	Active	https://www.adb.org/projects/54332-001/main
Skills for Competitiveness Project, Cambodia	60 million	Active	https://www.adb.org/projects/50394-002/main

Skills Enhancement for Inclusive and Green Economic Development Project, Lao PRD	36 million	Active	https://www.adb.org/projects/57206-001/main
Skills and Knowledge for Inclusive Economic Growth Project, Viet Nam	78 million	Active	https://www.adb.org/projects/49122-004/main#project-pds
Regional Cooperation on Skills Development under the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Program (CAREC)	2 million	Active	https://www.adb.org/projects/54234-001/main#project-pds

