



**RESEARCH *AND* COMMUNICATIONS GROUP**

Endline Evaluation

**DFAT's 'Skills for Economic  
Growth and Prosperity'  
Investment in Bangladesh**

Implemented by UCEP Bangladesh

**Review report**

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## Acronyms

<b>BTEB</b>	Bangladesh Technical Education Board
<b>CSR</b>	corporate social responsibility
<b>DFAT</b>	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
<b>FGD</b>	focus group discussion
<b>GESI</b>	gender equality and social inclusion
<b>GoB</b>	Government of Bangladesh
<b>KII</b>	key informant interview
<b>M&amp;E</b>	monitoring and evaluation
<b>MEKM</b>	monitoring, evaluation and knowledge management
<b>MERL</b>	monitoring, evaluation, research and learning
<b>PEC</b>	Primary Education Completion
<b>PSEAH</b>	Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Harassment
<b>PWD</b>	People with Disabilities
<b>QUEST</b>	Quality Education and Skills for Transformation
<b>RMG</b>	ready-made garment
<b>ROLLS</b>	Remedial of Literacy and Life Skills
<b>SEIP</b>	Skills for Employment Investment Program
<b>TVET</b>	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
<b>UCEP</b>	Underprivileged Children's Educational Program

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Scott Rankin

## Executive Summary

The 'Skills for Economic Growth and Prosperity' project is an Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) funded program implemented by the NGO UCEP Bangladesh. Locally, the project has become more commonly referred to as the Quality Education and Skills for Transformation project (QUEST).

QUEST commenced in 2019 and concluded at the end of 2022. Overall funding of AUD 14.7 million was allocated over the implementation period, which includes additional funds provided in response to the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020. A second phase of QUEST has already been agreed to between DFAT and UCEP, and commenced in 2023.

The aim of the first phase of QUEST was to deliver 'second chance' education and technical skills training to disadvantaged children and youth (with a special focus on girls, persons with disability (PWD) and minority community members) to improve their socio-economic opportunities through improved access to education and facilitation of pathways to 'decent employment'.

The project has been implemented in 8 urban areas across Bangladesh, working through 10 Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutes and 35 technical schools. In addition to education and technical skills training, DFAT funding also aimed to support institutional strengthening of UCEP, with special focus placed on further evolving UCEP capacity for inclusion.

The project's aims were to:

- a. Provide equitable access to quality education to children and youth, including those from underprivileged families, especially girls, PWDs, minorities etc.
- b. Enhance employability of disadvantaged youth (including females, PWDs, minorities etc.) through TVET and Skills Development.
- c. Facilitate socio-economic empowerment of youth by ensuring self or wage employment.
- d. Contribute to the institutional strengthening and capacity building of UCEP.

The approach for this evaluation involved initial remote interviewing of key informants within UCEP and DFAT, followed by a seven day field visit during which a second round of meetings occurred with UCEP and DFAT staff, followed by a cross-section of key informant interviews, group meetings and focus group discussions with government, industry, employers, teachers, civil society and both current and past UCEP program participants.

A significant 'umbrella finding' of this review is the important and broad-based contribution to program implementation provided by the deep, longstanding roots that UCEP has established in its target communities. This context allows UCEP to enjoy sustained, trusting and respectful relationships with target communities, and strong understanding of individual community issues. It also quite literally means that UCEP counts within its alumni, the mothers, fathers and grandparents of children and youth who it is approaching to enter its program today.

A second 'umbrella finding' relates to the 'skills eco-system' which UCEP is fostering, and through which a confluence of key stakeholders come together in support of helping each other with their individual ambitions while also contributing to the common goal of providing opportunities pathways to employment for disadvantaged youth. While the 'skills eco-system' is still maturing, UCEP has been strategic and effective in building constructive relationships with industry, employers and government that help create an enabling environment and career pathway for UCEP graduates. This effort has also enhanced the reputation of UCEP for high quality skills development, responsive to needs expressed by industry and employers themselves. Strong government relations also support UCEP program implementation, with some informants (including within government) stating UCEP's importance as a model supportive of reform of the government's approach to technical education.

- Is the NIIP program effective?

In terms of headline numbers, the QUEST project provided technically focus education to 10,582 children and TVET & skill development interventions to 13,577 youth with a focus placed on inclusion - with disadvantaged girls and women comprising around 45% of participants, PWD 4.5% and minorities 2.5%.

UCEP's strong community standing and understanding placed it well in terms of identifying and including disadvantaged families, and provided a strong community based platform for advocacy on sensitive issues such as gender rights, the prevention of early marriage, child protection and the rights of PWD and other minority groups. Community connection also informed nuanced, community specific interventions required to nurture a willingness for a community to support girls inclusion in the program.

A key strength of the UCEP approach is the clarity of this pathway towards decent employment, commencing from efforts to encourage a family to support participation (and forego money that might otherwise have been accrued through actions such as child labour or early marriage) through to post employment monitoring to ensure the student is a good fit and safe in their work place. The reliability of this pathway is further underlined by the 'evidence' available within a community of UCEP alumni who have prospered from their UCEP education.

In terms of classroom performance, focus group discussions (FGDs) with students highlighted the importance of UCEP's programmatic approach in terms of:

- helping ensure a supportive and productive home environment for participation - through awareness raising efforts with parents, and systems aimed at ensuring the safety, dignity and welfare of girl students while attending classes and the workplace
- student and parents understanding the UCEP 'roadmap' and its various milestones towards employment
- trust instilled within the community in terms of the reliability of that 'roadmap' and the likelihood of 'decent employment' being a result of the family's investment in their child's education
- leveraging the history and positive experiences of alumni
- UCEP relationships with and engagement of community leaders

Students also spoke consistently and very highly of the teaching model, including the quality of the teachers, a focus on ‘working hard in class’ and avoiding the need for homework given the unsuitability of many family homes to study; the availability of trusted pastoral care, and the clear focus placed on a respectful school culture that values girls as equal.

Predictably, the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically impacted QUEST implementation. UCEP schools were closed for 543 days straight from March 17, 2020, to September 12, 2021. UCEP’s response to the pandemic can be said to be two-fold. It firstly worked to protect its student and teacher population through providing access to reliable information and strategies for personal protection against the virus. Secondly, UCEP worked to devise strategies to allow for learning (and other requisite parts of UCEP programming) to continue.

While some targets needed to be adjusted down due to COVID, these were appropriate and reasonable given the centrality of disruptions to the UCEP programming model. Overall, UCEP seems to have managed well in terms of program maintenance and results achievement, with 89% of UCEP students continuing to receive education support through the QUEST program in the COVID-19 period.

- What impacts has the QUEST program had?

While clear impact is difficult to assess at this stage, the QUEST project has helped support pathways to impact across UCEP’s four major areas of intervention.

In relation to **technical and life skills intervention**, QUEST has contributed to consolidation of a network of 35 UCEP technical schools with improved lab facilities that have helped provide a framework for training provision and a pathway towards decent employment for disadvantaged and underprivileged children and youth, with specific focus placed on women and girls, PWD and minority groups. In relation to **TVET and skills development training**, 13,577 people (38% women, 4% PWD) received vocational training, and competency based theory was used to develop learning materials and curriculum, including development of an online learning management system that was well suited to supporting people to formalise qualifications as a means towards more secure and better remunerated employment. The **Decent Employment** area of the UCEP model is absolutely integral to their overall offering and pathway to impact, since it brings rigour to ensuring a realistic roadmap towards employment, safety, respect and financial stability for UCEP graduates.

Overarching the QUEST intervention is UCEP’s **Social Inclusion** work which is multi-faceted in approach and effective in strengthening participation of historically under-served cohorts such as disadvantaged women, PWD and other minority groups.

FGDs with UCEP graduates provides insight as to potential impacts for the DFAT supported cohort of graduates. These graduates perceive that they have graduated with superior skills compared to those emerging from other training institutions. This has helped consolidate them in employment and allowed more rapid progression than their workplace peers.

UCEP focus on promoting the importance of gender safe workplaces has opened more opportunities for women, including opportunities in ‘non-traditional sectors’ such as electronics, thus expanding areas of opportunity for women and PWD.

- Are monitoring and evaluation systems sufficient to ensuring full and transparent assessment of program performance?

UCEP’s monitoring and evaluation system require strengthening. A major concern with UCEP’s MERL approach is that it is overly reliant on quantitative monitoring in a program where qualitative approaches aimed at ensuring inclusion and overcoming entrenched disadvantage are absolutely key to program success or failure. Effort is required to establish a system capable of assessing and better presenting program quality as well as program quantity.

This weakness is reflected in UCEP reporting to DFAT, with insufficient qualitative analysis of program performance contributing to misunderstandings around program approaches and performance. One explanation for this is a clash of programming cultures. UCEP is a mid-sized national NGO implementing its largest ever grant, with a different reporting culture to that of the international NGOs that are more typically DFAT’s implementing partner. While this represents an immediate challenge, the relationship has the potential to be a great working example of DFAT supporting ‘localisation’ and ‘locally led development’, and should be seen as an opportunity to enhance understanding within both organisations around what constitutes effective collaboration.

Moving forward, there is a need for closer engagement between DFAT and UCEP in order to clarify reporting approaches and expectations. Heightened observation of day-to-day UCEP programming by DFAT would also assist in better understanding qualitative aspects of program implementation, and also program weaknesses and needs.

- How is UCEP Bangladesh working to ensure sustainability of the DFAT investment?

UCEP has used the DFAT grant strategically to consolidate an important range of key relationships, and is well positioned in terms of an emerging alignment that is placing greater priority on technical education as a component of maximising Bangladesh’s demographic dividend.

This has contributed to strengthened relationships and credibility in the eyes of both government and industry as to the contribution being made by UCEP to technical skills development. Furthermore, the Bangladesh Technical Education Board states its strong appreciation for UCEP in terms of its ability to showcase better standards and innovation, draw in much needed resources for technical education, and support training of government officials.

Efforts are also being made by UCEP to engage the ‘social enterprise’ space, including establishment of two privately funded Polytechnics and consideration of how to establish a niche as a broker for graduates wanting to enter overseas employment.



- Conclusion

Notwithstanding the complex challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the UCEP implemented QUEST program has been effective in developing, promoting and implementing strategies that address the complex challenges faced by underprivileged children and youth in securing the skills necessary to enter formal employment. Significantly, this endorsement of UCEP performance comes from government, industry, employers and community leadership who all express satisfaction with the program approach and the results it is achieving.

Importantly, these achievements have occurred with a clear-sighted program focus on social inclusion, and strategies aimed at further widening opportunities for disadvantaged women and PWD to enter decent employment.

Moving forward, UCEP needs to strengthen its monitoring and evaluation capability, especially in relation to reporting on qualitative aspects of its programming. If this can be done in close collaboration with DFAT – UCEP’s major funding partner - greater shared understanding and clarity around program implementation pressure points will be achieved, enhancing the likelihood for QUEST phase two to carry forward the achievements of phase one.

## Recommendations

### **Recommendation One: Undertake independent post-assessment of UCEP graduates**

While UCEP maintains strong relations with many of its alumni, there would be great value in a high quality independent post assessment to determine the current employment context of graduates, and to gather input about strengths and weaknesses of UCEP programming five years post program participation. This information should then be used to further strengthen program implementation, including that of QUEST Phase Two. A secondary benefit of recommendation one would be the opportunity to further strengthen and broaden the UCEP alumni cohort as an organisational resource supportive of program implementation, inclusion, improvement and advocacy.

### **Recommendation Two: Trial program concept in new districts**

While a major strength of UCEP currently is its long and well established relationships with its target communities (many of which now date back more than 50 years), consideration should also be given to trialling entry into new areas to test out UCEP capacity to commence program in new areas where it is not well established. The purpose of this trial would be to better prepare UCEP as it grows and expands, as is expected and desired by many key stakeholders – including government.

### **Recommendation Three: Develop a strategy aimed at clarifying needs and mobilising resources necessary for tech school refurbishment, including engagement of the corporate sector as a potential donor**

While UCEP teaching quality is high, the facilities available in classrooms and laboratories are mostly limited and dated. Given strengthening relationships with industry and employers, a strategy should be developed that aims to identify resources for lab refurbishment. This strategy should consider options for the business sector to ‘adopt a lab’ and/or donate obsolete equipment (such as sewing machines) to UCEP – given that even recently obsolete equipment will likely be far more technologically advanced than current equipment.

### **Recommendation Four: UCEP should broaden its entrepreneurship and business development offering for graduates**

A great hunger exists amongst graduates to develop their entrepreneurial and business skills, with a view to business establishment and self-employment. Add on training available online and through workshops to graduates could assist develop the skills necessary for business development, thus expanding options available to graduates in their pathway towards greater levels of economic security and advancement.

### **Recommendation Five: DFAT and UCEP should come together to workshop and reach agreement on reporting expectations, including consideration of support required to strengthen UCEP program monitoring and evaluation**

UCEP reporting is overly quantitative and fails to shed light on important qualitative aspects (strengths and weaknesses) of program implementation. This contributes to reporting that

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does not always meet DFAT standards. This tension should be viewed through the lens of both partners adjusting to the practice and expectations of the other, with the DFAT grant being UCEP's largest to date, and DFAT being the Australian High Commission's largest investment in a 'mid-sized' national NGO to date. By coming together to clarify expectations, capacity building needs can be identified and actioned.

**Recommendation Six: UCEP should deepen strategic partnerships with specialist GESI and PWD organisations**

While gender and disability performance in Phase One has been strong, there is both room and opportunity for UCEP to further strengthen their inclusion programming through strategic alliances with technically strong gender and PWD organisations that can both contribute to and benefit from UCEP's nationwide programming model.

**Recommendation Seven: UCEP should consider developing a disability focused skills unit that more deliberately works to identify PWD employment opportunities**

While strong progress and momentum has been achieved in relation to PWD, a more deliberately focused approach to creating employment pathways for PWD could be achieved with establishment of a specialised PWD focused skills unit, potentially in partnership with Access Bangladesh. Such an approach would also align well with DFAT's own global ambitions to strengthen approaches and progress opportunities for PWD.

**Recommendation Eight: DFAT and UCEP should revisit and review programming in relation to 'minorities' in order for there to be greater clarity around strengths, weaknesses and options in phase two.**

Currently there is a lack of clarity around QUEST programming in relation to minorities, despite minorities having been around 5% of phase one programming participation. It would be helpful for all parties to bring greater transparency and clarity to this complex issue to help ensure all parties are on the same page, and optimum approaches are being utilised.

# 1. Evaluation introduction

## 1.1 Investment context

In 2019, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) agreed to fund the Bangladeshi NGO UCEP Bangladesh<sup>1</sup> to implement the 'Skills for Economic Growth and Prosperity' project. Locally, the project has become more commonly referred to as QUEST - the Quality Education and Skills for Transformation project. (This report will from this point forward use QUEST to describe the contract reached between DFAT and UCEP).

The purpose of the investment was to support DFAT efforts towards achievement of the first objective of its Bangladesh Aid Investment plan (2015-19) – to improve educational access, equity, efficiency and learning outcomes in Bangladesh. Core funding of AUD 14.7 million was allocated to UCEP across the project implementation period, 2019 – 2022.

The aim of the QUEST project was to deliver 'second chance' education and technical skills training to disadvantaged children and youth (with a special focus on girls, persons with disability and minority community members) to improve their socio-economic opportunities through improved access to education and through facilitation of pathways to 'decent employment'.

The project has been implemented in 8 urban areas across Bangladesh (Dhaka, Chattogram, Khulna, Sylhet, Rangpur, Rajshahi, Barishal, Gazipur), working through 10 TVET Institutes and 35 technical schools.

In addition to education and technical skills training, DFAT funding also aimed to support institutional strengthening of UCEP, with special focus placed on supporting evolution UCEP capacity for inclusion.

DFAT currently frames its development program support to Bangladesh around the pillars of health security, stability, and economic recovery, placing strong emphasis on protecting the most vulnerable, especially women and girls and people with disabilities (PWD).

While support to UCEP is positioned under DFAT's 'stability' pillar, the QUEST project was also identified as having clear potential to contribute to Bangladesh's post COVID-19 economic recovery. The project is also consistent with the Australian development program's focus on inclusion of women, girls and PWD.

## 1.2 Project objectives

Through its support to UCEP, Australian assistance aimed to tackle challenges faced by out of school children and dropouts, particularly amongst the urban poor. Success in addressing these challenges was foreseen as having multiple benefits through addressing disadvantage,

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<sup>1</sup> Established in 1971, the name UCEP originally stood for Underprivileged Children's Education Program. However, the organisation is now referred to simply as UCEP due to its program focus having evolved from children, to include youth as well.

promoting inclusion, helping address skill shortages, and contributing to a strengthened Bangladeshi economy.

The project aims were to:

- a. Provide equitable access to quality education to children and youth, including those from underprivileged families, especially girls, PWDs, minorities etc.
- b. Enhance employability of disadvantaged youth (including females, PWDs, minorities etc.) through Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Skills Development.
- c. Facilitate socio-economic empowerment of youth by ensuring self or wage employment.
- d. Contribute to the institutional strengthening and capacity building of UCEP.

### 1.3 Evaluation context

A mid-term review of the QUEST project occurred in March 2021. Occurring at the height of the pandemic, the review was generally positive and endorsed UCEP's management of the dramatic impact on project implementation caused by the pandemic. It also proposed that UCEP proposals for adjustment to its approach to the pandemic be supported by DFAT.

The end of program evaluation occurred in the context of DFAT having already decided to fund a second phase of the QUEST project, with AUD 12 million allocated for implementation across Jan 2023 to June 2026.

Despite agreement on Phase 2 already being reached between DFAT and UCEP and implementation commenced, this evaluation was also tasked with casting an eye to the future and considering needs and options related to optimising phase two programming, including consideration of any ongoing institutional strengthening opportunities. Specific focus was placed on UCEP 'safeguarding' capacity, given the commitment of Australia to ensure the welfare and inclusion of women, girls and PWD throughout all Australian supported programming. There was also interest expressed in reviewing UCEP monitoring, evaluation and learning approaches, and reporting capacity.

As part of completion of Phase One, UCEP have already provided DFAT with project completion reporting. Given the light touch nature of this review, the quantitative data contained within the Project Completion Report will be accepted as accurate, since its accuracy could not be meaningfully investigated through this evaluation. This means that the primary focus of the evaluation was on more qualitative aspects of UCEP programming, considering structures, policies, human capacity and options for strengthening as the DFAT-UCEP relationship moves into Phase 2.

### 1.4 Evaluation purpose

The primary purpose of the evaluation was to provide a systematic and objective assessment of the first phase of the QUEST project in delivering its program objectives.

The primary objective of the evaluation was to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the QUEST implementation approach and compile lessons learned. The evaluation also

considered institutional strengthening efforts undertaken through the DFAT investment, and the degree to which these have been effective.

The evaluation also involved assessment of the appropriateness and efficacy of adjustments undertaken by UCEP Bangladesh with regards to:

- changes in the light of the global COVID-19 pandemic
- navigating changes in the domestic development and policy landscape
- UCEP's own changing organisational context
- leveraging experiences gained during the implementation process, and
- changes in project risks and assumptions

## **2. Evaluation Methodology**

### **2.1 Review Methodology**

#### **Overview**

The methodology proposed for the evaluation was focused upon ensuring a blend of qualitative and quantitative evidence from which evidence based conclusions could be reached with regards to the overall performance of the QUEST project.

The approach was framed around consideration of the overall effectiveness of the collective approaches initiated by UCEP, given their inter-dependence, and their contribution to achievement of the:

- Intended impact - improved socio-economic opportunities for youth, especially females through market oriented skills for disadvantaged youth contributing to building Bangladesh's skilled workforce, resulting in reduced poverty
- Intended outcome - underprivileged youth, especially females, having improved opportunities for higher education and formal employment

Efforts were made through the evaluation to consider UCEP's overall implementation approach, with specific focus placed on UCEP capacity to manage and leverage its multi-stakeholder approach. Focus was also placed on UCEP's navigation of the COVID-19 pandemic which arose early in the implementation period. Initial consultations with DFAT also highlighted their interest to better understand progress on safeguarding and broader inclusion issues. UCEP's results framework was a key reference point for the evaluation, including comparative analysis of COVID related revisions to determine their appropriateness.

Another guiding approach was that evidence presented in reporting be triangulated through consultations with 'UCEP users' – disadvantaged Bangladeshi youth. Efforts were also made to assess the adequacy of UCEP monitoring systems to objectively trace outcome pathways – while noting that impact is generally very difficult to assess in the short or medium term. Effort was also made to consider the efficacy of UCEP reporting in accurately reflecting what was observed during the field work, given DFAT had expressed concern around the quality of the reporting presented by UCEP.

## Evaluation approach

- *Preliminary desk-based document analysis*

Thorough review was undertaken of available project documentation, including:

- Design and Implementation documents
- UCEP reporting
- Internal DFAT documentation
- M&E documentation

- Evaluation Plan

An evaluation plan was developed based in the Terms of Reference and initial consultations with DFAT. This was presented to DFAT and approved in June, including endorsement of a list of key evaluation questions and sub-questions to help guide the review. Interview guides were also developed to guide interviewing with different key informant cohorts.

- Remote preliminary key informant interviews

Following the document review, an initial round of interviews were undertaken with DFAT and a cross-section of UCEP representatives. The UCEP interviews were primarily aimed at fully understanding how QUEST was managed; flagging issues emerging from the literature review, and tabling areas of interest to be followed up once the evaluation reached Dhaka. It was agreed early on that it was not practical to try and engage government representatives remotely.

- In-country mission (and key informant interviews)

Field work occurred over seven days (including a one day side trip to Chattogram). During this time, a broad cross-section of key informant interviews and focus group discussions occurred with:

- DFAT post representatives
- Government representatives of relevance to education, employment and youth affairs
- Other youth interested donors and development agencies
- Private sector, industry and employer groups
- Civil society organisations of relevance to improving socio-economic and employment opportunities for youth, including women and girls, and PWD

- Participatory sense making

During the course of the evaluation, time was taken to pause and debrief with UCEP staff to discuss observations, seek clarification, and also develop emerging findings, with the aim of benefitting from local input and helping evolve and shape actionable recommendations.

An exit meeting was also undertaken with DFAT to present initial findings and allow an opportunity for feedback and agreement on next steps.

## 2.2 Risks and limitations

The primary risk and limitations associated with this evaluation are identified as follows:

**Table One: Risk and Limitations**

Risk or Limitation	Potential impact on the Evaluation	How it will be managed
The evaluation is relatively time limited for an investment of this scale, meaning that decisions will need to be taken in terms of what can and cannot be included in terms of evaluation methodology.	It is likely that only one city in addition to Dhaka will be able to be visited during the evaluation, which could result in a 'Dhaka-centric' perspective of program performance.	Strongest possible effort will be made to disaggregate understanding by Divisions, as a means of identifying specific areas of interest to the valuation and development of key lessons learned.
UCEP programming is vast in terms of program breadth and participation.	Given the breadth and scope of the program, there is a risk that there could be an exception to every finding – raising questions over the credibility of the evaluation.	Frequent contact with team members and 'sense-making' efforts will assist in identifying exceptions to proposed findings, and allow for their consideration and inclusion within findings summary.
Assessing program contribution to women's empowerment is complex, and made more difficult in the context of an evaluation in a country with conservative gender norms.	While efforts will be taken to consult with women beneficiaries directly, the evaluation will also inevitably need to draw on secondary sources to fully understand overall program performance in this area	The evaluator will work with UCEP to determine an approach that helps ensure the evaluation includes clear representation of the voice of a sample of women participants. It is also proposed that a woman interpreter be appointed for FGDs.
Government duty bearers will unlikely have detailed understanding of the detail of the DFAT support to UCEP.	Ascertaining a clear government assessment of UCEP investment performance could be difficult	Preliminary research will be undertaken to help ensure the evaluator meets with Government representatives that are genuinely well informed of UCEP work.



Risk or Limitation	Potential impact on the Evaluation	How it will be managed
		Government interviewees will be provided information of the purpose and intent of the evaluation well in advance of the meeting.
Key stakeholders may not be available for consultations during the in research period	Limited data from the right people to draw on	Efforts will be made to ensure the widest possible period for interview scheduling to help ensure options for interviewees

## 3. Key review findings

### 3.1 Introduction to findings

A significant ‘umbrella finding’ of this Review is the important and multi-faceted contribution to program implementation of the deep, longstanding roots that UCEP has established in its target communities – many of which now involve a more than fifty-year relationship with. Established in 1972, UCEP more or less remains focused on the same core areas of operation as when it was founded – providing education and technical training to under-privileged children and youth who either did not enrol in school or either dropped out or were at risk of dropping out before completing primary education.

While the program aims to evolve with the times, including placing greater focus on specific aspects of disadvantage such as social inclusion, a foundational advantage remains in terms of UCEP still working within communities with which it has a sustained, trusting and respectful relationship. It also quite literally means that UCEP counts within its alumni, the mothers, fathers and grandparents of children and youth who it is approaching to enter its program today.

Furthermore, many of these alumni are now respected community leaders whose opinions matter when families are deciding whether or not to entrust the welfare of their sons and (especially) daughters to the various risks posed by a program of school based technical training and job placement. These alumni are now important advocates for UCEP programming and drawn upon by the UCEP team to promote opportunities within their communities; directly engage and work to reassure families that might be hesitant to participate due to socio-cultural reasons; and more generally work at community level to help motivate an enabling environment for education and social inclusion – including acting as a vehicle through which child protection issues can be raised and acted upon.

The trust engendered by this cross-generational relationships and networks achieved through UCEP’s longevity in a cross-section of communities across Bangladesh is an absolutely fundamental foundation from which program implementation can occur, and through which social inclusion, girls and women’s empowerment and actions to redress inter-generational poverty can all be progressed.

Another key finding relates to the concept of a skills eco-system through which a confluence of key stakeholders come together in support of helping each other with their ambitions. While still maturing, UCEP has been strategic and effective in ‘skills eco-system development’, building constructive relationships with industry, employers and government that help create an enabling environment and career pathway for UCEP graduates. This effort has raised UCEP profile and enhanced its reputation for high quality skills development, which in turn has helped consolidate UCEP’s position within the eco-system given its responsiveness to needs expressed by industry and employers themselves.

### 3.2 Effectiveness: Key Evaluation Question One - To what extent did the investment contribute to improved socio-economic opportunities for youth?

UCEP provided a Project Completion Report to DFAT in early 2023 which includes extensive quantitative detail on performance against agreed outcomes and outputs. This data is not particularly reader friendly in its presentation, and also contains some hard to understand quantitative data. The aim of Table Two below is to extract highlights from that data, while also providing comments that help to explain in summary form the quantitative data and indicators applied to different outcomes and outputs contained in the QUEST Results Framework. Where possible, the report will also direct the reader to where different issues are discussed in more detail.

The more complex question of the degree to which UCEP and DFAT's QUEST investment have contributed to improved socio-economic opportunities will be answered throughout this report and through the use of select case-studies capturing the perspectives of program participants, and also other key stakeholders such as the families of students, industry representatives and employers, and government bodies responsible for education, employment and social welfare.

### 3.2.1 Did the project have robust systems in place for identification and inclusion of hard-to-reach, disadvantaged youth?

As already mentioned, UCEP has long maintained trusting and multi-faceted relationships with the many communities across Bangladesh that it works with. By determining to drill deeper in the communities that it has long worked in rather than working 'light touch' in a larger number of communities, UCEP is in the privileged position of enjoying long-standing, multi-generational relationships that facilitate depth of understanding.

UCEP also works to develop key relationships with community leaders (both women and men), Madrassa and other people active in areas relevant to a program promoting opportunities for disadvantaged families. UCEP alumni are another important cohort who are commonly active in promoting the values of UCEP, including the respect for and enhanced focus it is now placing on the safety and welfare of female participants.

#### **Case Study One: Alumni and Leaders**

#### **Matijharna Village, Chattogram**

*While in Chattogram, an opportunity arose to attend a UCEP facilitated community meeting, where UCEP community mobilisers were busy promoting and describing the UCEP program and opportunities for local youth to learn more and potentially participate in the program. While the meeting was clearly orchestrated with the evaluator's visit in mind, it was still notable in terms of the proportion of community leaders (including the locally elected government representative) who were now in their 40s or 50s who previously participated in the UCEP program.*

Through its relationships and depth of understanding of community dynamics, UCEP is able to differentiate with nuance the social, cultural, religious and economic characteristics of each different community that it draws students from. This in turn allows UCEP to target, calibrate and focus its approaches to ensure transparency and an enabling environment for inclusion of children and youth from under-privileged households, irrespective of the issues at play at community level.

Another dimension of such longstanding relationships is that it allows a strong platform for UCEP to advocate on sensitive issues such as gender rights, the prevention of early marriage, child protection and the rights of PWD and other minority groups. It further allows UCEP to push back against long held stigma around technical education compared to general education.

An emerging challenge for UCEP is that it is in some respects at risk of becoming a victim of its own success, as community members observe the experience and socio-economic outcomes enjoyed by previous program participants. This is resulting in over-demand for places in some areas, running the risk of the most disadvantaged being squeezed out of an opportunity to participate in the QUEST program. UCEP manages this by trying to vet the socio-economic status of applicant families. While this is not an easy assessment to make, the trusting, deep and textured understanding that longevity allows UCEP in understanding community dynamics, leaves them well placed to identify and include more disadvantaged students.

UCEP's community roots also allow it to identify and collaborate with other community focused organisations of relevance, including those promoting child rights and the rights of PWD. As necessary, these organisations are drawn upon to triangulate understanding of disadvantage, and to assist in vetting applications in contexts where demand outstrips supply.

UCEP is also able to financially support 'most disadvantaged' households with fee and cost relief. However, there is no clear formula or approach for how or when this support is triggered, meaning that it is a somewhat vague lever to help ensure the program is accessing 'hard to reach' and seriously disadvantaged households.

### 3.2.2 What factors enabled and constrained student performance in terms of participation and performance?

'Participation' and 'performance' are clearly related. The platform and factors that enable regular and active participation, and result in satisfactory performance all need to be set up early in a student's experience of the UCEP program.

As mentioned, an important and understated aspect of the UCEP approach is its ambition to be holistic, commencing from efforts to encourage a family to support participation (and forego money that might otherwise have been accrued through actions such as child labour or early marriage) through to post employment monitoring to ensure the student is a good fit and safe in their work place.

Focus group discussions (FGDs) with students during this evaluation highlighted the importance of UCEP's programmatic approach in terms of:

- helping ensure a supportive and productive home environment for participation (through i/ awareness raising efforts with parents around how best they can support the student, and ii/ setting in place systems aimed at ensuring the safety, dignity and welfare of girl students while attending classes and the workplace)
- student and parents understanding the UCEP' roadmap' and its various milestones towards employment
- trust instilled within the community in terms of the reliability of that 'roadmap' and the likelihood of 'decent employment' being a result of the family's investment in their child's education
- leveraging the history and positive experiences of alumni
- UCEP relationships with and engagement of community leaders, and the subsequent de facto endorsement they provide to the program, and helps makes enrolment with UCEP a common occurrence, including for girls

FGDs with students consistently raised the comparative quality of education on offer at UCEP schools compared to government schools as an absolutely key factor related to their performance. Factors repeatedly cited by current students in terms of 'what they liked about the UCEP model of teaching' included:

- the quality and commitment of teachers

- teachers' methodological approach – in terms of being diligent and demanding in class, and expecting all work needing to be done to be completed in class i.e. there was rarely need for work to be done at home
- the absence of homework, since i/ often their homes were not conducive to study due to over-crowding or issues with electricity, light and/or internet connectivity, and ii/ many were required to work either domestically or in paid employment when not at school
- pastoral care, and the ability to approach teachers on all types of matters, not just curriculum related
- the connection maintained by the school with students' parents and community leaders
- the respectful culture demanded by the school, notably that boys are expected to treat girls and women as equals, and that bullying is not tolerated
- the availability of a designated Gender Focal Point within each school for girls and women to approach

These various attributes were also observed by the evaluator across the course of the evaluation which included visits to five different schools. However, a further observation was the varied capacity of different schools in terms of their ability to facilitate a clear enabling environment that recognises the many challenges posed by the disadvantaged backgrounds of students (and the fact that it is common for the student to be the first in the family to be pursuing a formal education).

A much-stated comment is that:

“UCEP teachers are as much social workers as they are academic teachers”

Across the different schools visited, significant variability was observed with regards to the capacity of a school to nurture, provide pastoral care, and facilitate an environment that was clearly responsive and understanding of the disadvantage and risk that students faced at home and in their community. While none visited were regarded as inadequate and not in synch with UCEP values, some simply felt better equipped and more understanding of the sensitivities involved in working with extreme disadvantage. If teachers are to be as much social workers as teachers, there is a need for strong and inclusive school leadership that has capacity to both provide educational leadership and high level pastoral care.

Two schools visited provided bookended approaches. One, where the school Principal (Head Mistress) was a woman, was very active in promoting UCEP values and safeguarding systems in place to ensure child wellbeing. In our meeting, she deferred to her staff for input – in particular the Gender Focal Point, who clearly was empowered and provided the time necessary to show great leadership in the school on gender issues – to boys as well as girls. In another, more strictly and traditionally run school, the Head Master was the sole point of contact for the evaluation and unconvincing in his ability to describe safeguarding measures, beyond the policy and list provided to him by UCEP.

This highlights the extraordinary importance of school leadership in promoting and bringing to life the values and policies of UCEP in relation to safeguarding, gender and child

protection. While all schools visited had clear systems in place, it was easy to feel differences in ‘school culture’, which were in turn reflected in student satisfaction and willingness to speak openly and freely.

Moving forward, there might be value in UCEP further investing in ‘school leadership’, possible drawing from resources developed by leading international NGOs that focus on such issues such as Global School Leadership ([www.globalschoolleaders.org](http://www.globalschoolleaders.org)).

Another reference point regarding student performance is industry itself, with businesses commonly referring to UCEP graduates being far better placed to ‘hit the ground running’ or ‘advance through our system more quickly’ than graduates they are receiving through other sources. They put this down to the ‘general intelligence’ that is fostered by UCEP in terms of problem solving, workplace behaviours, presentation and work ethic.

### 3.2.3 What interventions did UCEP apply to ensure ongoing achievement of results (e.g. remote learning) during the pandemic? Were these interventions effective?

Predictably, the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically impacted QUEST implementation, despite the fact that lockdowns were irregularly and intermittently applied in Bangladesh. UCEP schools were closed for 543 days straight from March 17, 2020, to September 12, 2021.

As described above, the UCEP approach is multi-faceted and heavily engagement focused, including a heavy reliance on classroom-based learning. Furthermore, the nature of technical education is to strengthen ‘hands on’ capacity around specific skills, making e-based learning systems difficult.

UCEP’s response to the pandemic can be said to be two-fold. It firstly worked to protect its student and teacher population through providing access to reliable information and strategies for personal protection against the virus. Secondly, UCEP worked to devise strategies to allow for learning (and other requisite parts of UCEP programming) to continue.

In specific relation to QUEST, negotiations were entered into with DFAT to consider options and agree on an emergency response to be implemented for as long as the pandemic was impacting implementation. These negotiations were framed within an additional output, defined as follows:

<p>Output Six: UCEP Program in Emergency (during COVID Pandemic)</p>	<p>Indicator 6.1. Alternative learning and training materials and models developed and implemented</p> <p>As appropriate and possible, education was delivered to existing students through a blended model of e-learning, online classes and interaction with group leaders and teachers, with 84% of the total reached and participating regularly.</p>
	<p>Indicator 6.2. Skills graduates supported towards ‘decent employment (retention and reintegration)</p>

	Support was provided to recent graduates who had lost their jobs due to the pandemic.
	Indicator 6.3. Particularly vulnerable children and youth supported through psychosocial interventions  An extensive program of remotely applied psychosocial support was initiated that was able to reach 7,327 students thought to be at higher risk – 40% of whom were female, 5.2% PWD, and 4.7% other minority groups.
	Indicator 6.4: Staff supported to develop skills necessary to deliver program in emergency context  A key approach was to support staff in rapid development of the skills necessary to deliver remote learning. 521 staff received this training, equalling 72% of all staff.
	Indicator 6.5: Students receive social safety net support  Agreement was reached between DFAT and UCEP to provide social safety net support to 585 students following a rapid onset flood in Sylhet in 2002.

More generally, agreement was reached on a revised set of indicators and targets to guide implementation, given the impact of the pandemic on the program. Where applied, these are noted and discussed in Table Two above. In particular, employment related components of the QUEST program were particularly compromised due to the rapid slow-down of the economy and reduced need for new labour.

### **Protecting the UCEP population**

Soon after the COVID-19 virus emerged, UCEP prepared health related materials that were shared with teachers and students around transmission, diet, nutrition and mental health. With regards the latter, UCEP quickly provided training to its teacher in relation to psychosocial support and counselling, and put in place systems to help students and staff to reduce mental stress, recognise indicators of depression, and navigate economic hardship.

UCEP’s Social Inclusion team was also tasked with monitoring the student cohort and identifying and supporting those most in need. The Social Inclusion team also prepared digital content and flyers on health-related matters for distribution.

A negative consequence of the pandemic was dramatically reduced interaction at community level, which had formerly been used to track the situation of child labor, child marriage, PSEAH, and identification of at-risk. Instead, interactions were undertaken with community leaders to try and support them to manage any issues they observed arising.



## Progressing learning

UCEP worked with DFAT to determine a strategy for continuance of program implementation during the pandemic. UCEP staff set a target of weekly communication with at least 95% of all enrolled students to help facilitate distance learning, and also initiate psychological first aid as required.

Staff were also put to work developing digital content, with teachers provided training on how to use the emerging UCEP digital platform, understand the content and how best to navigate it, and develop skills for e-learning.

When asked about the COVID period, students spoke of the complex problems it posed, but also that they were in consistent communication with UCEP and appreciative of the digital content. Many in FGDs spoke of the comfort provided to them through teacher contact and interaction, and also teacher efforts to deal with psychosocial issues that were emerging due to the general context of the pandemic and lockdowns.

## External factors

Understandably, there were myriad external factors that impacted program implementation and were beyond the control of UCEP, related to government decrees and decision-making and also the context of employers and their ability to continue operating during the pandemic.

School closure was the most obvious impact, which seems to have generally been managed well in terms of program maintenance and results achievement. Certain government decisions, such as the decision of BTEB to cease its 'recognition of prior learning' certifications could not be navigated around, and subsequently resulted in significantly reduced targets and achievement.

### 3.2.4 What other factors supported or hindered results?

An important finding of the evaluation was the perception within government and industry that the quality of education on offer within UCEP schools is high when compared with other similarly focused schools and initiatives. This was primarily attributed to more committed staff and a holistic programming framework that is very student focused.

A related factor in terms of programming quality is appreciation for the dynamic way that UCEP applies the many different programming resources available to it. While this 'programmatically approach' draws heavily and benefits greatly from the availability of DFAT resources, the DFAT investment itself also benefits from the availability of complementary 'add ons' available to QUEST supported students in areas such as 'entrepreneurship training', or access to better facilities coming through UCEP's 'model Laboratories' support (from a German philanthropic).

Staff retention is another important factor enabling results. While UCEP salaries are not high, staff remain committed to the organisation due to factors beyond remuneration such as UCEP's organisational values; high quality in-service training; and, a strong system of

human resource management. This provides schools and communities with continuity and experience. It was also noted in the course of the review that many former UCEP staff are now in positions of influence within government and multilateral institutions.

The reverse is also the case, with UCEP Executive Director Dr Md. Abdul Karim, having worked at the most senior echelons of the Bangladesh public service, including time as the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister. This context supports UCEP in terms of its relations with government, which facilitates ease of access and allows strong and strong engagement with key government institutions

While some schools have been fortunate enough to receive upgrading of facilities through different modalities (including corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives), it is generally the case that facilities are very dated and limited, meaning that they are of decreasing relevance to technology currently used by industry (especially in areas such as garment sector, automotive and electronics. Information technology, while still mostly very dated, is one technical area where slightly more modern facilities are available.

As with teacher quality, the degree to which facilities and equipment are dated is relative, with government TVET said to be in an even more distressed situation than UCEP labs. There is also general appreciation within industry as to the quality of UCEP graduates, which may suggest that teaching quality is a more important enabler than up to date facilities.

### 3.3 Inclusion: Key Evaluation Question Two: To what extent has the investment succeeded in helping promote inclusion?

#### 3.3.1 How effective was the project in facilitating inclusion of disadvantaged women, people with disabilities and other minority groups?

As already indicated, the nature of UCEP's relationship to its target communities facilitates strong engagement and trust. This is conducive to advocating on behalf of disadvantaged and excluded groups within the community.

Generally speaking, UCEP is out-performing comparable organisations in terms of gender inclusion. The Industry Skills Council (an ILO initiative) which also aims to create career pathways for disadvantaged people has set itself a target of 30% women's participation. UCEP's overall women's participation rate sits around 43%. In a meeting with ILO, it was stated that "UCEP renowned for providing high quality training for girls in a safe and secure environment."

UCEP capacity for inclusion of disadvantaged women stems from innovative and strategic approaches aimed at addressing constraints to girls and women's participation. Outreach centres that take training to the community in contexts where women refuse to travel to government training centres due to lack of facilities and concerns are one good example of creative strategy resolving constraints to participation.

Broadly speaking, UCEP's focus on disadvantaged young people in general, and the specific focus on disadvantaged women of QUEST is understood and appreciated by the more than one thousand businesses that UCEP partners with. They value it from a corporate social

responsibility perspective, while also appreciating that it demonstrates effort for businesses to be more 'inclusive'. While this could be viewed cynically, interviews with participating employers demonstrated that UCEP is in many cases helping resolve the challenges businesses encounter in terms of workplace culture and inclusion, through being an available and knowledgeable resource that they can draw upon.

Recognising the centrality of the clothing and garment sector to the Bangladeshi economy, UCEP has established a strong working relationship with the Cotton Group, a progressive and socially responsible garment producer that aims to be at the forefront of addressing market concerns around labour and environmental issues in the Bangladeshi ready-made garment sector.

### **Case Study Two: Building strategic alliances – UCEP and Cotton Group**

*Globally renowned consulting firm McKinsey noted in a 2021 report that “the ready-made garment (RMG) industry is a mainstay of (Bangladesh’s) economic success story: with Bangladesh today being one of the world’s largest garment exporters, with the RMG sector accounting for 84 percent of Bangladesh’s exports. This comes on the back of the sector’s rapid growth and modernization over the past decade—as well as the strides it has made in improving conditions for the country’s approximately four million garment workers.<sup>2</sup>*

*Within that sector, the Cotton Group is an influential actor that aims to provide leadership in terms of corporate social responsibility, recognizing the need for the whole sector to progress and address issues related to the wellbeing of female staff. Cotton group like to see themselves as a trailblazer on gender issues, and view women’s participation in their factories as an opportunity to break inter-generational poverty and for progression of gender roles and opportunities.*

*UCEP has benefited from Cotton Group participation on its Employers Committee for more than ten years. They value UCEP’s focus on under-privileged youth, and note that UCEP graduates arrive better prepared for employment than graduates of private training institutes.*

*Cotton Group’s longstanding participation on the Employers’ Committee also allows them to hear the perspective of other employers in other sectors, and they say that feedback is remarkably uniform in terms of the quality and work ethic of UCEP graduates, but also in UCEP’s commitment to ensuring a safe and appropriate work environment for its female graduates. They also value support received from UCEP in terms of the training they provide to Cotton Group Welfare Officers through an SNV funded ‘Workplace Wellbeing Management’ program, highlighting UCEP’s*

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<sup>2</sup> See <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/retail/our-insights/whats-next-for-bangladeshs-garment-industry-after-a-decade-of-growth#/>

*programmatic approach and the benefits that QUEST supported graduates enjoy from ancillary UCEP programming.*

UCEP inclusion of PWD has broadly met targets, but perhaps more importantly has achieved momentum across the implementation period, with higher rates of PWD participation as the program progressed.

This in part reflects heightened understanding of PWD within UCEP, and also application of the Washington Group questionnaire which shed light on the prevalence of disability within target communities.

As part of QUEST, a special drive was undertaken to ensure PWD targets could be met in QUEST skills training. Through a program wide assessment process, a total of 1,072 students were identified as PWD in UCEP Technical Education using the Washington Group questionnaire.

Supportive actions were also undertaken including sign language training and general training to UCEP staff in how to most effectively support PWD in programming.

Strengthened relationships were also sought with Disabled Peoples Organisations at both national and local levels, that both provided insight and access to PWD prevalence and issues at different locations, but also allowed linkages in terms of Disabled Peoples Organisations being able to provide opportunities to those they work with.

### **Case Study Three      Strategic alliances in support of PWD**

*UCEP has established a highly strategic and mutually beneficial relationship with disability focused organization Access Foundation, including a memorandum of understanding. Established in 2008, Access Foundation focuses on rights based approaches, inclusion and disability inclusive budgeting. Access has been called upon to provide training to UCEP staff nationwide focusing on both the philosophy and practice of inclusion, and how to adapt approaches to become more disability inclusive as an organization.*

*In turn, UCEP is a valuable vehicle through which the Access Foundation is able to progress its own agenda. By being nationwide, skills and employment focused, with actual facilities open to PWD inclusion, UCEP schools offer a great platform for collaboration.*

*Executive Director, Albert Mollah, noted that the primary strength of Access Foundation's relationship with UCEP is that it is bigger picture, and focused on changing people's attitudes towards PWB and inclusion. However, at the same time, the relationship can be applied practically and with a project focus that benefits both organisations. Access Foundation networks support UCEP in identifying PWD (particularly severely disadvantaged people), and promote what it is that UCEP is able to offer. At the same time, they can work collectively to advocate to government in*

*terms of the need for facility upgrading. Mollah stated in closing the interview that “projects like QUEST can be a role model for Government on inclusion of PWD in schooling.”*

QUEST programming in relationship to ‘minorities’ is confused, and in need of review. Currently, targets have been set for inclusion of minority groups with only limited clarity regarding what that actually means. Options do exist for creative approaches to minority inclusion, but these are not currently reflected in the program design. Moving forward, DFAT and UCEP should meet to reach agreement on how best to progress this sensitive inclusion challenge.

### **3.3.2 What more could be done to strengthen gender and disability inclusion in UCEP work?**

While there are encouraging indications on UCEP’s performance in relation to disadvantaged women PWD, progress reporting fails to adequately describe approaches and relies solely on progress towards quantitative targets. Moving forward, UCEP should provide more qualitative description of its efforts around inclusion to better reflect progress, obstacles and opportunities.

#### **Case Study Four      One family’s experience of UCEP support for PWD**

*At the Ambagan TVET Institute in Chattogram an older woman was observed sitting in a textiles class at a sewing machine. When queried as to why someone of her age was participating in a youth focused program, it was made clear she was there to support her participating son, who had a learning related disability. In an interview with the mother and son, they spoke of knowing of UCEP’s commitment to PWD through multiple sources - a local disabled people’s organisation, television and through the Bangladesh Garments Association.*

*The mother and son had long wanted to identify an opportunity for him to be supported towards employment, but knew that there needed to be the right blend of mainstreaming and specialised understanding and support for this to have a chance of succeeding. While other opportunities had arisen, the mother was concerned as to how her son would fit into a training or workplace context where no specialised support was available.*

*The QUEST program was seen as responsive to both these needs, with the mother pleased that UCEP had taken time to understand her son’s individual needs. While she was happy to be sitting there in support of her son, she was also hopeful that she soon wouldn’t need to, such was her confidence that teachers were sufficiently skilled to provide the specialised support her son needed (also noting that it was a challenge for her to find the USD3 per day required for transport to and from the TVET).*

While inclusion in training is important, it is important to remain focused on finding decent work for marginalised program participants. This will require ongoing engagement and

education of employers around inclusion, and support to relieve concerns employers' might have around more inclusive practices.

Further evolving relationships with related civil society organisations in relation to gender and disability will also further consolidate UCEP's reputation and capacity for inclusion of disadvantaged cohorts.

While strategic, mutually beneficial relationships have been entered into with Disabled People's Organisations, there would seem to be an opportunity to establish similarly structured relationships with gender focused organisations – especially given the near total absence of women in senior leadership positions within UCEP.

In FGDs, women graduates spoke of challenges posed by their need to access start-up capital to bring to life the opportunities provide through skills development. Strategic relationships with facilities able to respond appropriately to this need should be considered – recognising that not all micro-finance programs would suit such contexts.

In relation to PWD, inclusion of people with severe physical disability is difficult or not possible due to structural deficiencies of UCEP schools. While expensive to redress, options for retro-fitting facilities to be more physical disability inclusive should be considered and shared with potential donors.

### 3.3.3 What steps has UCEP taken to ensure safeguarding of program participants? Is more needing to be done?

Following on from a recommendation of DFAT, action plans have been developed in relation to UCEP's Child Protection Policy, Gender Policy, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) Policy and Strategy on Disability Inclusion policy. As is commonly the case, these policies are well written and appropriate to context, but their effectiveness can only be determined in their application.

In terms of safeguarding, the following features are noted:

- A focus exists on strengthening capacity through training, with twice yearly safeguarding training provided to UCEP staff, Child Protection committees, suppliers industry partners and employer committees.
- Complaints handling is led by a 'Safeguarding Committee' comprised of internal (3 members) and external (2 members) people, and which include lawyers and expert on PSEA.
- Multiple means exist for submission of complaints, with clear focus placed on ensuring confidentiality of the complainant.
- Mechanisms for complaints include a complaints box, a 'safeguarding' email address, access to a dedicated phone number for submission of complain over phone (including emphasis for complains to go through the Gender Focal Point if appropriate).
- An appeals mechanism is in place, involving a UCEP ombudsman who is external and unrelated to the independent Safeguarding Committee

- UCEP staff especially members of the Safeguarding Committee are aware of the need to notify donors of incidents occurring within their programs.

Other elements of UCEP’s safeguarding approach include awareness-raising sessions with all staff, students and parents, parents and teachers, and also application of a risk assessment tool and risk register which helps identify vulnerable students requiring increased levels of support.

IEC materials on safeguarding, child labor and child marriage have also been developed to support awareness raising and community engagement.

#### **Case Study Four      Oxfam Bangladesh - a partner’s view of UCEP**

*Oxfam has long had the reputation of being one of the world’s leading and most outspoken advocates on gender and worker rights. Oxfam Bangladesh have contracted UCEP to support a program aimed at supporting extremely vulnerable and disadvantaged women to develop the skills necessary to be considered for overseas domestic work. In this program Oxfam has sought UCEP assistance to support interested women – who are generally vulnerable women with limited literacy – to achieve grade 8 qualifications and relevant technical competencies, as now stipulated by the Ministry of Employment and Training for aspiring domestic workers.*

*Oxfam values UCEP for the quality, technical strength and practical nature of its teaching staff; their flexibility in filling gaps where Oxfam funding is restricted; and the quality and appropriateness of its facilities. Oxfam also places primacy on safeguarding and views UCEP’s approach to safeguarding as strong, clear and holistic, while also seeing room for further strengthening of trainer capacity in working with extremely vulnerable women.*

*Overall, Oxfam views UCEP as a valuable and reliable partner that is able to work in alignment with Oxfam values and procedures.*

### **3.4 Efficiency: Key Evaluation Question Three: How well did UCEP manage and use project resources?**

#### **3.4.1 To what extent did the COVID-19 pandemic impact the ability of UCEP to achieve intended results?**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, UCEP schools remained closed for 543 days, from March 17, 2020 to September 12, 2021. During this period, UCEP adopted technology-based distance learning and provided psychosocial counselling using mobile phones and online digital platforms.

Inevitably, COVID-19 related school closures, business disruption and economic interruption impacted the ability of UCEP to achieve intended results. School closures prevented in-class access and participation, restricting the ease with which skills transfer could occur. Business disruption and economic interruption suppressed the employment market, making job placement more difficult.

Given the centrality of these disruptions, UCEP seems to have managed well in terms of program maintenance and results achievement, with 89% of UCEP students continuing to receive education support through the QUEST program in the COVID-19 period.

### 3.4.2 Were the revisions proposed by UCEP in the results framework justified?

Table Two above details where revisions were proposed, and the results subsequently achieved at project conclusion. Reductions in targets were generally no more than 15% in magnitude, which seems reasonable given the severe disruption caused by the pandemic.

Reduced targets were also contained to a relatively small percentage of the overall indicators, highlighting that efforts were made to continue on with ‘business as usual’ despite a highly unusual implementation context.

### 3.4.3 Were the impact of the revisions on the outcomes of this project positive or negative?

Predictably, most of the revisions resulted in reduced targets and could therefore be construed as negative. However, given the relative modesty of the cuts to initial targets, compared against the severity of school and business closures, it could be argued that UCEP was largely successful in navigating the pandemic.

One indicator that did increase due to the pandemic was the number of participants who chose to continue with their education, given the soft labour market.

### 3.4.4 Are systems in place for precise and thorough management of DFAT allocated resources?

Systems in place for financial management seem appropriate, though could not be interrogated in any meaningful way within this review.

Within the Bangladeshi context, DFAT’s contribution is considered to be a ‘foreign donation’ requiring approval of the NGO Affairs Bureau. Once approved, the NGO Affairs Bureau will advise the relevant ministry of the programming intentions of the activity, who in turn must assure that the activity does not overlap any current activities. Heads of target districts must also approve the activity.

Once approved, foreign funds are allocated to what is known as the UCEP ‘mother account’ where they are converted to Bangladeshi taka.

Funds are then allocated from the ‘mother account’ to a project bank account, which is held and managed through UCEP Head Office, and then disbursed to ten regional offices based on an annual budget allocation approved by the UCEP Board. Actual disbursements to regions are based quarterly budgets prepared by each region, with funds disbursed to the region monthly based on the approved plan.

All transactions are managed through Quickbooks, and align with the overall QUEST project budget agreed between DFAT and UCEP.



UCEP retains a three person Audit Team who ensure that all cost centres are checked at least once annually. The Audit Team then report to a Finance and Audit Committee, which is a sub-committee of the Board, and comprised of Board members.

UCEP ability to operate smoothly in Bangladesh is enhanced by strong relations with the NGO Affairs Bureau. UCEP know NGO Affairs Bureau processes and know how to comply regulations that foreign NGOs often struggle to manage.

### 3.5 Impact: Key Evaluation Question Four: What impacts (intended, unintended, positive and negative) has this program had?

#### 3.5.1 What were the major impacts of the intervention?

Drawing on the OECD DAC criteria for evaluating development assistance, impact is considered as the positive or negative changes produced by the QUEST intervention—directly or indirectly, intended or unintended—in the context of the project’s implementation environment, and as it interacted with the multiple factors affecting development change in that context.

While ‘impact’ is difficult to clearly determine in relation to the QUEST program given its focus on technical education delivery, this section will look at headline achievements, pathways to impact, and try and position those achievements within the potential for impacting the lives of QUEST beneficiaries.

The QUEST project operated across four major areas of intervention:

- Technical and life skills intervention
- TVET and skills development training
- Decent employment
- Social inclusion

In relation to **technical and life skills intervention**, QUEST has contributed to consolidation of a network of 35 UCEP technical schools with improved lab facilities that have helped provide a framework for providing training and a pathway towards decent employment for disadvantaged and underprivileged children and youth, with specific focus placed on women and girls, PWD and minority groups. 10,582 students received technical education support through 35 schools across eight of the ten districts in which UCEP works.

In relation to **TVET and skills development training**, 13,577 people (38% women, 4% PWD) received vocational training. This occurred through UCEP offering skills development training in 42 market driven trades in 10 TVET Institutes, 35 Technical Schools and 8 Outreach Centres. Competency based training was used to develop learning materials and curriculum, including development of an online learning management system. Recognition of Prior Learning was another element of this approach, supporting people to formalise qualifications as a means towards more secure and better remunerated employment.

The **Decent Employment** area of the UCEP model is absolutely integral to their overall offering and pathway to impact. Without this component, UCEP is just another technical education provider. By having clear systems in place to link trainees to employment, UCEP is able to provide a realistic roadmap towards employment and financial stability. Through provision of career guidance and counselling, trainees are well placed to move to employment. Work with 1,043 different employers also provides facilitated workplace opportunities for trainees. Appreciation for the model amongst employers is a strong indicator of project performance, as is their satisfaction with the workplace suitability of UCEP graduates.

Overarching the abovementioned areas of intervention is UCEP's **Social Inclusion** work which is multi-faceted in approach and focused on strengthening participation of historically under-served cohorts such as disadvantaged women, PWD and minority groups. This has occurred through extensive community engagement, strategic partnership development and work related to safeguarding and child protection.

In terms of the impact of UCEP on participants lives, FGDs with graduates of the program highlight a range of important impacts for people. These include:

- A perception amongst UCEP graduates is that they have graduated with superior skills compared to other graduates they have been recruited alongside. This has allowed them to consolidate their position in the business to which they have been recruited, and also to progress 'up the ladder' faster than peers. (This perspective was also stated by employers.)
- UCEP has facilitated entry of graduates into major organisations, such as Nissan, where they are well placed to progress based on their relatively strong understanding of workplace culture and expectations
- UCEP focus on promoting the importance of gender safe workplaces has opened more opportunities for women, including opportunities in 'non-traditional sectors' such as electronics, thus expanding areas of opportunity for women and PWD.
- Entrepreneurship training is widely regarded as effective in supporting graduates to consider self-employment as a viable option

### 3.5.2 What could have been done differently to achieve better outcomes from this investment?

When asked what more could have been done to strengthen the impact of the UCEP program, the following themes were common across FGDs:

- UCEP lab facilities are dated, and not in synch with the 'modern economy' in terms of key industries such as RMG, automobile, information technology and electronics. Upgraded facilities would strengthen results
- Facilities are unsuitable to people with significant physical disability
- Improved and easier to navigate opportunities for ongoing learning are sought, that better align with people who are employed (!), including evening classes

### 3.5.3 Are monitoring and evaluation systems sufficient to ensure full and transparent assessment of program performance?

UCEP's monitoring and evaluation system require strengthening. Currently, there are only three staff dedicated to UCEP's model for 'monitoring, evaluation, research and learning (MERL) – all based in Dhaka. UCEP philosophy is for MERL to be mainstreamed within the organisation.

A UCEP Program Management Information System is under development and near completion. This will progress data entry from hard copy to an online system, which will be an important time saving intervention and also an environmental improvement. It will also use biometric data to monitor attendance of staff and students.

A major concern with UCEP's MERL approach is that it is overly reliant on quantitative monitoring in a program where qualitative approaches aimed at ensuring inclusion and overcoming entrenched disadvantage are absolutely key to program success or failure. Effort is required to establish a system capable of assessing program quality as well as program quantity.

A greater focus on qualitative performance would provide more entry points for DFAT management and understanding of the QUEST program, allowing for greater collaboration around program implementation and more responsive management responses to challenges faced.

Currently, UCEP reporting to DFAT lacks sufficient qualitative analysis of program performance and is overly reliant on quantitative reporting. One explanation for this is a clash of programming cultures. UCEP is a mid-sized national NGO implementing its largest ever grant, and has a different reporting culture and approach to that of the international NGOs that are more typically DFAT's implementing partner. While this represents an immediate challenge, the relationship has the potential to be a great working example of DFAT supporting 'localisation' and locally led development. However, it comes with challenges, especially in its earliest stages.

Moving forward, there is a need for closer engagement between DFAT and UCEP in order to clarify reporting approaches and expectations. Heightened observation of day to day UCEP programming by DFAT would also assist in better understanding qualitative aspects of program implementation, and also program weaknesses.

## 3.6 Sustainability: Impact: Key Evaluation Question Five: How is UCEP Bangladesh working to ensure sustainability of the DFAT investment?

### 3.6.1 What is the funding landscape like for UCEP going forward?

UCEP has used the DFAT grant strategically to consolidate an important range of key relationships, and is well positioned in terms of an emerging alignment that is placing greater priority on technical education as a component of maximising Bangladesh's demographic dividend. Technical education is also enjoying a resurgence in terms of its capacity for inclusion – in part because of organisations such as UCEP.

UCEP's status is best reflected in terms of the GoB's Skills for Employment and Investment Program (SEIP) which assessed (through independent third party monitoring) UCEP to be the strongest of 16 service providers they draw upon.

BTEB also appreciated UCEP for its ability to draw in much needed resources for technical education, based on its ability to showcase better standards and innovation, and also its ability to support training of government officials.

UCEP now involved providing services to five government funded programs, as well as several NGO and philanthropic funded programs.

Efforts are also being made to engage the 'social enterprise' space, including establishment of two privately funded Polytechnics (i/ the A. K. Khan UCEP Polytechnic Institute in Chattogram), ii/ the Shaheed Khalek UCEP Textile Institute in Dhaka). Beyond that, a third social enterprise related to supporting graduates into overseas work needed to be abandoned due to legal issues related to the compatibility of the current structure of the UCEP Board to the prevailing laws for such a business structure. Beyond these, UCEP continues to look at micro-enterprise options that can be leveraged off their core work.

### 3.6.2 What measures are being taken by UCEP to improve its sustainability as an organisation?

UCEP is at an important stage in its development in terms of it having (and needing to take) opportunities to help consolidate itself as an NGO of significance. Historically, UCEP has acted more as a quiet achieving education service provider than a civil society organisation capable of influencing change for the under-privileged cohort that it aims to represent.

Effort is now being undertaken to strengthen UCEP structures, advocacy capacity and brand awareness, including a revamped website and standardised social media platforms. There is also renewed emphasis on collaboration with government – both programmatically (for e.g., through the Social Development Fund and SEIP, as well as large NGOs through programs such as Prottoy).

The UCEP board has also been revamped and now includes representation of international NGOs, business, Government, the Population Council, BRAC and lawyers, with the aim of ensuring UCEP the required breadth of knowledge and experience to guide it forward.

Explicit efforts have also been made to further mature UCEP's GESI focus with a view to strengthening credibility in terms of programming related to women's inclusion.

## 4. Conclusion

Notwithstanding the complex challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the UCEP implemented QUEST program has been effective in developing, promoting and implementing strategies that address the complex challenges faced by underprivileged children and youth in securing the skills necessary to enter formal employment. Significantly,

this endorsement of UCEP performance comes from government, industry, employers and community leadership who all express satisfaction with the program approach and the results it is achieving.

With DFAT support, UCEP has placed significant focus on inclusion of disadvantaged women, PWD and other minorities in the program. This has allowed it far higher levels of social inclusion than comparable programs. These outcomes were significantly aided by two key factors.

Firstly, program implementation and social inclusion have both benefited greatly from UCEP's longstanding relationships with its focus communities which ensure respect, networks and a level of trust conducive to inclusion of girls and women, PWD and other minority groups. Secondly, UCEP has worked to develop a 'skills eco-system', mobilising key stakeholders amongst government, industry and employers conducive to ensuring secure pathways towards 'decent employment' for program participants. Key to this is the quality of the training provided by UCEP and also its responsiveness to industry and employer needs. While this 'skills eco-system' is a work in progress, indications are positive given high levels of satisfaction amongst employers of the graduates emerging from UCEP schools, which is incentivising their continued participation.

UCEP itself has strengthened over the course of QUEST implementation, working to build its profile, structures and consolidate its position as an important actor supporting disadvantaged youth towards secure employment. Moving forward, UCEP needs to strengthen its monitoring and evaluation capability, especially in relation to reporting on qualitative aspects of its programming.

Closer collaboration between UCEP and DFAT is also encouraged moving forward as a step towards greater understanding and clarity around program pressure points and reporting expectations.

# **Annex One Evaluation Terms of Reference**

## **Terms of Reference (ToR)**

### **End of Program Evaluation of DFAT’s ‘Skills for Economic Growth and Prosperity’ Investment in Bangladesh**

#### **BACKGROUND**

‘Skills for Economic Growth and Prosperity’ project was funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and implemented by UCEP Bangladesh. DFAT provided core funding (\$14.7 million, 2019 - 2022) for this investment, which leveraged UCEP's systems and mechanisms (e.g. the organisational Theory of Change and Results Framework, developed in collaboration with the UK). This project also supported core institutional strengthening components (e.g. M&E systems, inclusion strategies) to yield greater results. The aim of this project was to deliver ‘second-chance’<sup>3</sup> education and technical skills training to disadvantaged children and youth (with a special focus on girls, persons with disability and ethnic community members) to improve their socio-economic opportunities through employment.

Australia has been supporting the Underprivileged Children’s Education Programme (UCEP) Bangladesh to tackle the challenges of out of school children and dropouts, particularly amongst the urban poor, and to address the current skill shortage in Bangladesh. UCEP Bangladesh is a reputed national NGO that has been supporting disadvantaged children and youth for 50 years.

DFAT is one of the largest donors of UCEP Bangladesh. UCEP Bangladesh has a diverse fund base with contributions from several donors, development organisations and private sector companies.

#### **OBJECTIVE**

The purpose of this end of program evaluation is to provide a systematic and objective assessment of the impact that ‘Skills for Economic Growth and Prosperity’ project has made in delivering its program objectives.

The evaluation also seeks to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of ‘Skills for Economic Growth and Prosperity’ project’s implementation approach and compile lessons learned. It also provides the opportunity to assess regarding the adjustments which were taken by UCEP Bangladesh regards to:

- changes in the light of the global COVID-19 pandemic
- changes in the development landscape

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<sup>3</sup> Schooling for children who have dropped out from primary school or were never previously enrolled

- changing organisational context
- experiences gained during the implementation process and / or
- changes in project risks and assumptions

The end of program evaluation should provide comments and recommendations on the strength of the program design and relevance to Australia’s development objectives. It should also strive to provide a projection of future prospects for UCEP Bangladesh to better respond to challenges and opportunities in the changing contexts, with an overall objective to develop ‘adaptive and progressive human resources with comprehensive and relevant skill-sets’.

## SCOPE OF WORK

- Assess the performance of the project in achieving its aim and outcomes and results as outlined in the Results Framework.
- Assess to what extent the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the ability of UCEP to achieve the results. Were the revisions proposed by UCEP in the results framework justified? Were the impact of the revisions on the outcomes of this project positive or negative?
- How were learning outcomes, students’ participation and quality of services maintained and measured during the pandemic?
- What interventions has UCEP used to achieve the results (e.g. remote learning) during the pandemic and have these interventions been effective in engaging students?
- Assess if UCEP has effectively implemented safeguarding policies.
- How has UCEP contributed to gender equality and disability inclusion? What could be done to make its contribution more effective?
- What impacts (intended, unintended, positive and negative) has this program had and how sustainable are these?
- What is the funding landscape like for UCEP going forward? What measures is UCEP taking to improve its sustainability as an organisation?
- What else could have been done differently to achieve better outcomes from this investment?

## METHODOLOGY

The review methodology may be a mix of desk review, virtual or face-to-face interviews and field visits. To inform the end of program evaluation, the following documents will be provided:

- DFAT’s Investment Design Summary
- Program Document and Results Framework
- Annual report for 2019 (prepared by UCEP Bangladesh for DFAT’s investment)
- Annual report for 2020 (prepared by UCEP Bangladesh for DFAT’s investment)
- Annual report for 2021 (prepared by UCEP Bangladesh for DFAT’s investment)
- Annual report for 2022 (prepared by UCEP Bangladesh for DFAT’s investment)
- Annual Review Report conducted in 2020 (commissioned by FCDO)

- Assessment of UCEP's Organizational Capability and Financial Sustainability (conducted by PwC in 2019)

## DELIVERABLES

The Consultant/Team will prepare and provide an end of program evaluation report to DFAT and UCEP Bangladesh for review. A short virtual PowerPoint presentation will be delivered highlighting key findings and recommendations with DFAT and UCEP Bangladesh. The end of program evaluation report will be finalised after addressing any relevant comments arising from the presentation discussion.

## DURATION

The end of program evaluation will be based on desk review as well as virtual meetings with the Senior Management Team of UCEP Bangladesh. Physical visit to organisation's Head Office in Dhaka may be undertaken if required and deemed feasible. A total of up to twenty days are foreseen for this consultancy between 15 February 2023 to 15 May 2023. This includes all aspects of this assignment including the preparing and submitting the report, and participation in a virtual dissemination discussion meeting.

## MANAGEMENT

The Consultant will report directly to the First Secretary, DFAT, Australian High Commission in Dhaka and also work with Senior Program Manager involved with Investment management.



## Annex Two Field work schedule

### In-Country Visit Schedule of Mr. Scott Rankin

Purpose: Endline Evaluation of ‘Skills for Economic Growth and Prosperity’ Investment in Bangladesh of DFAT [Also known as QuEST-I]

Sl.	Date	Time	Events	Place	Purpose	Participants
1.	2 July Sun	11:00 - 01:00 pm	Introductory meeting	Board Room (UCEP HO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Brief on UCEP by the Executive Director</li> <li>- Brief on the process and methodology of the endline evaluation by Mr. Scott.</li> </ul>	Executive Director, Directors (Program & Innovations; People & Admin; Finance & Compliance), Deputy Directors
2.	2 July Sun	01:45 - 04:30 pm	Meeting with relevant staff at national level	Board Room (UCEP HO)	Discussion about <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- JSC/SSC Vocational and Life Skills</li> <li>- Tech Short courses and the skill eco-system model, and</li> <li>- Social Inclusion programming</li> <li>- Decent Employment Programme</li> <li>- Monitoring and Evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mr. Kanak Kumar Poddar</li> <li>- Mr. Sk. Rawshon Amin</li> <li>- Mr. Shafiqur Rahman</li> <li>- Mr. Rashedul Hassan</li> <li>- Mr Mahmud Hassan Talkudar</li> </ul>
3.	3 July Mon	08:30 - 10:00 am	Meeting with relevant program staff	Board Room (UCEP HO)	Discussion about <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Financial management</li> <li>- Overall management of Quest project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mr Anisuzzman</li> <li>- Mr Abdullah Al Mamun</li> </ul>

Sl.	Date	Time	Events	Place	Purpose	Participants
4.	3 July Mon	10:15 - 12:00 pm	Visit Shah Alibagh Tech School and conduct <b>FGD</b>	Shah Alibagh, Mirpur, Dhaka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Observe school activities.</li> <li>- <b>FGD-1</b> with 9-10 students of SSC Voc</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Head of Technical School, teachers and students.</li> </ul>
5.	3 July Mon	01:45 - 03:30 pm	Visit Hesamuddin Tech School and conduct <b>FGD</b>	Mohammed pur, Dhaka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Observe school activities.</li> <li>- <b>FGD-2</b> with 9-10 students of SSC Voc</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Head of Technical School Teacher and students.</li> </ul>
6.	3 July Mon	04:00 - 04:30 pm	Visit Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB)	Agargon, Dhaka	To get a reflection of the regulatory authority's perspective on UCEP's performance and contribution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Key personnel of BTEB and TVET sector to get their reflection</li> </ul>
7.	4 July Tues	10:00 - 10:30 am	Meeting Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE)	Secretariat Building, Dhaka	To get a reflection about the ongoing partnership activities with the GoB and the positioning of UCEP from a policy perspective.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Mr. Md. Ehsan-E-Elahi</b>, Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment</li> </ul>
8.	4 July Tues	11:00 - 11:30 am	Meeting with UCEP private sector partners	Niketon, Dhaka	To know about their role, feedback and suggestion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mr.A B M Ashraful Haque, Chief Coordinator, Industry Skills Council of Tourism and Hospitality (ISC-T&amp;H) sector.</li> </ul>

Sl.	Date	Time	Events	Place	Purpose	Participants
9.	4 July Tues	12:00 - 12:30 pm	Meeting with UCEP private sector partners	Gulshan-2, Dhaka	Observe activities and get impression of key persons about UCEP activity and performance of the graduates.  - Dr. Mohammad Hasan, MD, Cotton Group	- Mr. Raihan Syed, Head of HR, Transcom
10	4 July Tues	02:00 - 02:30 pm	Meeting with UCEP private sector partners	Police Plaza Tower, Gulshan-1	NA	NA
11	4 July Tues	03:00 - 03:45 pm	Meeting with other donors (OXFAM)	Gulshan,	To get a reflection from other donors working in youth, vocational training spaces	- Project lead of "Suniti" project at OXFAM
12	4 July Tues	04:15 - 04:45 pm	Visit QuEST project graduate workplace	Airport Road, Dhaka	Observe activities and get impression of the graduates.	- Mr. Shahrukh Rahman, HR Manager, Radisson Blu Dhaka Water Garden
13	5 July Wed	07:30 - 09:30 am	Travel to Chattogram by Air	NA	NA	NA
14	5 July Wed	10:00 - 10:30 am	Introductory meeting	Ambagan, Chattogram	- Brief on Regional activities	- Regional Manager, Chattogram

Sl.	Date	Time	Events	Place	Purpose	Participants
1 5	5 July Wed	10:30 - 12:00 pm	Visit Ambagan TVET Institute and conduct <b>FGD</b>	Ambagan, Chattogram	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Observe skills training activities.</li> <li>- <b>FGD-3</b> with 6-10 graduates (who already completed training)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Trainees, Instructors and Head of TVET Institute.</li> </ul>
1 6	5 July Wed	12:00 - 1:00 pm	Visit Pahartoli Tech School and conduct <b>FGD</b>	Pahartoli, Chattogram	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Observe school activities.</li> <li>- <b>FGD-4</b> with 9-10 students of SSC Voc</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Head of Technical School, Teachers, and students.</li> </ul>
1 7	5 July Wed	1:30 – 2:30 pm	Lunch with the Chair and Vice-chair of Employers' Committee	Ambagan, Chattogram	Informal discussion with the employers' and getting their views.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chairperson and vice-chairperson of employers' committee.</li> <li>- Mr. H M Ferdous, GM, Alita BD Ltd.</li> <li>- Mr. Md. Salamat Ullah, Project Director, Bengal Synthetic Ltd.</li> <li>- Ms. Shamima Rahman, Proprietor of Shamima Beauty Care.</li> </ul>
1 8	5 July Wed	3:45 – 4:45 pm	Observe community meeting	Matijharna, Chattogram	Observe social inclusion activities at community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parents and community people</li> </ul>
1 9	5 July Wed	7:00 – 9:00 pm	Travel to Dhaka by Air	NA	NA	NA

Sl.	Date	Time	Events	Place	Purpose	Participants
20	6 July Thurs	09:30 - 10:00 am	Meeting with Civil society partners relevant to gender and disability	Access Bangladesh/ CDD	Observe activities and get impression of key persons about UCEP activity related to the social inclusion.	- Key personnel of Civil society partners
21	6 July Thurs	11:00 - 11:30 am	Meeting with ILO	Agargon, Dhaka	- To get a reflection about the partnership activities between the ILO and UCEP Bangladesh	- Meet with the ILO officials
22	6 July Thurs	12:00 - 01:00 pm	Visit Mirpur TVET Institute and conduct <b>FGD</b>	Mirpur, Dhaka	- Observe skills training activities. - <b>FGD-5</b> with 6-10 graduates (who already completed training)	- Training participants, Instructors and Head of TVET Institute.
23	6 July Thurs	2:30 – 4:30 pm	De-briefing by Mr. Scott Rankin	Board Room, UCEP HO	Share findings and feedback	Executive Director and all Directors and Deputy Directors
24	7 July Friday	NA	Departure	NA	NA	NA

**Annex Three**

**Evaluation Plan**

End of Program Evaluation

**DFAT's 'Skills for Economic  
Growth and Prosperity'  
Investment in Bangladesh**

**Evaluation Plan**

June 2023

# 1. Background

## 1.1 Investment context

In 2019, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) decided to fund the Bangladeshi NGO UCEP Bangladesh<sup>4</sup> to implement the ‘Skills for Economic Growth and Prosperity’ project. The purpose of the investment was to support DFAT efforts towards achievement of the first objective of its Bangladesh Aid Investment plan (2015-19) – to improve educational access, equity, efficiency and learning outcomes.

The aim of the ‘Skills for Economic Growth and Prosperity’ project was to deliver ‘second chance’ education and technical skills training to disadvantaged children and youth (with a special focus on girls, persons with disability and ethnic community members) to improve their socio-economic opportunities through employment

Core funding of AUD 14.7 million was allocated to UCEP across the project implementation period, 2019 – 2022. In addition to education and technical skills training, the funding also leveraged UCEP's systems and mechanisms and supported institutional strengthening components to yield greater results.

DFAT currently frames its development program support to Bangladesh around the pillars of health security, stability, and economic recovery, placing a strong emphasis on protecting the most vulnerable, especially women and girls and people with disabilities.

While support to UCEP is positioned under the ‘stability’ pillar, outcomes of the ‘Skills for Economic Growth and Prosperity’ project have the potential to contribute to economic recovery. The project is also strongly focused on inclusion of women, girls and people with disabilities.

Through supporting UCEP, Australian assistance aimed to tackle challenges faced by out of school children and dropouts, particularly amongst the urban poor. Success in this ambition would also help address skill shortages in Bangladesh, and contribute to a strengthened Bangladeshi economy.

## 1.2 Project objectives

The project aims to:

- a. Provide equitable access to quality education to children and youth, including those from underprivileged families, especially girls, Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), minorities etc.

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<sup>4</sup> The name UCEP originally stood for Underprivileged Children’s Education Program. However, the organisation is now referred to simply as UCEP due to its program focus having evolved from children, to include youth as well.

- b. Enhance employability of disadvantaged youth (including females, PWDs, minorities etc.) through Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Skills Development.
- c. Facilitate socio-economic empowerment of youth by ensuring self or wage employment.
- d. Contribute to the institutional strengthening and capacity building of UCEP Bangladesh.

The project has been implemented in 8 urban areas across the country through 10 TVET Institutes and 35 technical schools to meet the needs of out of school children and dropouts, particularly amongst the urban poor, and to address the current skills shortages in Bangladesh.

### 1.3 Evaluation context

A mid-term review of the project occurred in March 2021. Occurring at the height of the pandemic, the review was generally positive and endorsed UCEP's management of the dramatic impact on project implementation caused by the pandemic.

The end of program evaluation occurs in the context of DFAT having already decided to fund a second phase of the 'Skills for Economic Growth and Prosperity' project, with AUD 12 million allocated for implementation across Jan 2023 to June 2026.

However, the evaluation will also cast an eye to the future and consider needs and options related to optimising phase two programming, including consideration of any ongoing institutional strengthening opportunities. Specific focus will be placed on UCEP 'safeguarding' capacity, given the commitment of Australia to ensure the welfare and inclusion of women, girls and people with disabilities throughout all Australian supported programming.

The project aims to:

- a. Provide equitable access to quality education to children and youth, including those from underprivileged families, especially girls, Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), minorities etc.
- b. Enhance employability of disadvantaged youth (including females, PWDs, minorities etc.) through Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Skills Development.
- c. Facilitate socio-economic empowerment of youth by ensuring self or wage employment.
- d. Contribute to the institutional strengthening and capacity building of UCEP Bangladesh.

The project has been implemented in 8 urban areas across the country through 10 TVET Institutes and 35 technical schools to meet the needs of out of school children and dropouts,



particularly amongst the urban poor, and to address the current skills shortages in Bangladesh.

## 1.4 Evaluation purpose

The primary purpose of this end of program evaluation is to provide a systematic and objective assessment of the impact that the first phase of the 'Skills for Economic Growth and Prosperity' project had in delivering its program objectives. The evaluation will also consider institutional strengthening efforts undertaken through the DFAT investment.

The primary objective of the evaluation will be to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the 'Skills for Economic Growth and Prosperity' implementation approach and compile lessons learned. The evaluation also provides the opportunity to assess the appropriateness and efficacy of adjustments undertaken by UCEP Bangladesh with regards to:

- changes in the light of the global COVID-19 pandemic
- subsequent changes in the development landscape
- changing organisational context
- experiences gained during the implementation process, and
- changes in project risks and assumptions

The final report will provide analysis and recommendations on the strength of the program design and relevance to Australia's development objectives. It will also assess UCEP Bangladesh capacity to best respond to challenges and opportunities in changing contexts, with an overall objective for Australian assistance to help develop 'adaptive and progressive human resources with comprehensive and relevant skill-sets'.

## 1.5 UCEP context

Established in 1971, UCEP is a well regarded Bangladeshi NGO that aims to provide pathways through primary education into vocational skills training and job placement for poor children and youth in urban areas who have dropped out of or never enrolled in schools.

UCEP operates its program through two headline programmes:

- Social Development Programme
- Social Enterprise Development

The DFAT investment primarily relates to the Social Development Programme, which runs the following sub-programmes:

- General Education programme
  - Offering flexible shift schooling to help ensure students have flexibility to courses at times convenient to their often complex schedule. UCEP schools are equipped with necessary physical facilities along with qualified and competent teachers to deliver quality education
- Technical Vocational Education & Training and Skills Development programme

- involving an integrated approach to supporting students to develop required technical skills, with the objective of moving them into formal, decent employment. This occurs through multiple interventions, including formal skills training, industry based skills training, recognition of prior learning or competencies, and entrepreneurial skills training
- Decent Employment & Enterprise Development programme
  - linking TVET and Skills Development programme students with both wage-employment and self-employment opportunities, leveraging off UCEP’s strong linkages with industries and enterprises
- Social Inclusion and Women’s Empowerment programme
  - implemented through UCEP’s ‘Child & Woman Rights Advocacy and Social Inclusion component, this programme aims to ensure gender parity and inclusiveness for girls, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities and other disadvantaged groups, in order to help establish a safe and secure environment for all UCEP programme participants.

## 1.6 Project Monitoring and Evaluation

UCEP monitoring and evaluation occurs through its Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning (MERL) component<sup>5</sup>. This system is still a work in progress, with the aim of supporting the organisation to measure performance and achieve its goals.

UCEP maintains program data on a monthly basis through spreadsheets aligned to the results frameworks of different donor funded projects, allowing close to realtime comparative analysis of the progress of different project components on a periodic basis. Program monitoring is augmented by field visits. The system is also the basis of all UCEP reporting to donors, government, program partners and UCEP management.

UCEP is in the process of introducing an automated data management system which will be reliant on data inputting by at school and TVET levels, which they acknowledge carries some risks, and will require significant training.

In terms of the DFAT first phase investment, the following presents a summary of the Results Framework which guided investment performance measurement:

### Project impact

Improved socio-economic opportunities for youth, especially females through market oriented skills for disadvantaged youth contributing to building Bangladesh’s skilled workforce, resulting in reduced poverty.

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<sup>5</sup> Until mid 2023, UCEP’s monitoring and evaluation approach was referred to as monitoring, evaluation and knowledge management (MEKM)

- Impact indicator - At least 42,328 persons have come out from poverty through employment of one person of each family through skills training.

## **Project outcome**

Underprivileged youth, especially females, have improved opportunities for higher education and formal employment

- Outcome indicators
  - UCEP Students pass rate in Public Examinations
  - Rate of competency achieved in Bangla language (reading and writing) of Remedial of Literacy and Life Skills (ROLLS) students
  - Employment/ apprenticeship/ continuing education rate of UCEP training graduates
  - Rate of Female participation in education, training and employment
  - Enhanced organizational management system for institutional strengthening and sustainability of UCEP Bangladesh

## **Project outputs**

1. Second chance education provided to hard-to reach underprivileged children maintaining gender parity
2. Technical and Vocational Skills training provided to youth
3. Job-placement and apprenticeship services provided to vocational skill training graduates
4. Community members engaged in activities to promote rights to education, training and employment especially of girls/women and disadvantage groups
5. UCEP Bangladesh has developed and implemented necessary policies

## **2. About the Evaluation**

### **2.1 Tasks and Expected Outputs**

The specific tasks to be performed:

- Assess the performance of the project in achieving its aim and outcomes and results as outlined in the Results Framework.
- Assess to what extent the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the ability of UCEP to achieve the results. Were the revisions proposed by UCEP in the results framework justified? Were the impact of the revisions on the outcomes of this project positive or negative?
- How were learning outcomes, student's participation and quality of services maintained and measured during the pandemic?

- What interventions has UCEP used to achieve the results (e.g. remote learning) during the pandemic and have these interventions been effective in engaging students?
- Assess if UCEP has effectively implemented safeguarding policies.
- How has UCEP contributed to gender equality and disability inclusion? What could be done to make its contribution more effective?
- What impacts (intended, unintended, positive and negative) has this program had and how sustainable are these?
- What is the funding landscape like for UCEP going forward? What measures is UCEP taking to improve its sustainability as an organisation?
- What else could have been done differently to achieve better outcomes from this investment?

## 2.2 Evaluation outputs

An initial summary of findings will be provided to DFAT and UCEP Bangladesh following the field work in the form of a short virtual PowerPoint presentation. This will highlight key findings and recommendations with DFAT and UCEP Bangladesh.

A draft end of program evaluation report will be provided to DFAT and UCEP Bangladesh for review by 10 July.

A final end of program evaluation report will be finalised after addressing any relevant comments arising from the presentation discussion. This will be submitted by 20 July, 2023.

## 2.3 Key Audiences and Use

It is anticipated that the Evaluation will be of interest to a range of audiences. Primary audiences will be the DFAT Bangladesh Post and Desk and UCEP. Findings will be used to define Phase One investment performance, but will also help inform future programming and Phase Two.

### 3. Key Evaluation Questions and Sub questions

Table 1: Key Evaluation Questions

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Effectiveness	<p><b>1. To what extent did the investment contribute to improved socio-economic opportunities for youth? (30%)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Did the project have robust systems in place for identification and inclusion of hard-to-reach, disadvantaged youth?</li><li>b. What factors enabled and constrained student performance in terms of UCEP student participation in public examinations?</li><li>c. What factors enabled and constrained student performance in terms of literacy programming?</li><li>d. What factors enabled and constrained vocational training and job placement?</li><li>e. Are there differences in results experienced across different regions of implementation?</li><li>f. What interventions did UCEP apply to ensure ongoing achievement of results (e.g. remote learning) during the pandemic? Were these interventions effective?</li><li>g. What other factors supported or hindered results?</li></ul> <p><b>2. To what extent has the investment succeeded in helping promote inclusion? (20%)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. How effective was the project in facilitating inclusion of disadvantaged women, people with disabilities and other minority groups?</li><li>b. What more could be done to strengthen gender and disability inclusion in UCEP work?</li><li>c. What steps has UCEP taken to ensure safeguarding of program participants? Is more needing to be done?</li></ul>
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Efficiency

**3. How well did UCEP manage and use project resources? (25%)**

- a. To what extent did the COVID-19 pandemic impact the ability of UCEP to achieve intended results?
- b. Were the revisions proposed by UCEP in the results framework justified?
- c. Were the impact of the revisions on the outcomes of this project positive or negative?
- d. Are systems in place for precise and thorough management of DFAT allocated resources?

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Impact

**4. What impacts (intended, unintended, positive and negative) has this program had? (10%)**

- a. What were the major impacts of the intervention?
- b. What could have been done differently to achieve better outcomes from this investment?
- c. Are monitoring and evaluation systems sufficient to ensure full and transparent assessment of program performance?

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Sustainability

**5. How is UCEP Bangladesh working to ensure sustainability of the DFAT investment sustainable are these? (15%)**

- a. What is the funding landscape like for UCEP going forward?
  - b. What measures are being taken by UCEP to improve its sustainability as an organisation?
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## 4. Evaluation Methodology

### 4.1 Methodological context

The endline evaluation occurs in a context of a second phase having already commenced. While the focus of the evaluation will be phase one performance, the evaluation will consider the current context of UCEP Bangladesh in terms of management systems, MEL systems, administrative capacity and progress in relation to safeguarding and other inclusion issues.

While this analysis will focus on phase one performance in strengthening each of these aspects of UCE Bangladesh programming and administration, findings and recommendations will be framed in a way that considers how to strengthen phase two implementation.

### 4.2 Methodology

The methodology proposed for the evaluation is based upon ensuring a blend of qualitative and quantitative evidence from which conclusions can be reached with regards to the overall performance of UCEP Bangladesh in phase one of the 'Skills for Economic Growth and Prosperity' project.

This will require consideration of the overall effectiveness of the various approaches initiated by UCEP its intended impact of "improved socio-economic opportunities for youth, especially females through market oriented skills for disadvantaged youth contributing to building Bangladesh's skilled workforce, resulting in reduced poverty", and outcome of "underprivileged youth, especially females, having improved opportunities for higher education and formal employment".

This will occur through consideration of the overall implementation approach, with specific focus placed on UCEP management and adaptation in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic which arose early in the implementation period. Initial consultations with DFAT have also helped further focus the evaluation in terms of a desire to better understand progress on safeguarding and broader inclusion issues.

UCEP's results framework will be a key reference to help guide the evaluation's lines of enquiry. It will also be important that evidence be triangulated through consultations with "UCEP users' – disadvantaged Bangladeshi youth. Efforts will also be made to assess the adequacy of UCEP monitoring systems to objectively trace outcome pathways – while clearly noting that impact is generally very difficult to assess in the short or medium term.

A key risk for the evaluation relates to engagement of UCEP users, which presents a complex challenge on multiple levels. Disadvantaged cohorts are commonly mobile and time poor. Female program participants add an additional layer of complexity, due to cultural and mobility considerations. Language and communications issues also present challenges, Despite this, it is essential that the evaluation includes opportunities for unbiased input from program participants, most likely through focus group discussions but also through direct

interactions when/if appropriate.

In terms of evaluation implementation, the following approaches will be drawn upon:

### **Document analysis**

Through review will occur of available project documentation, including:

- Design and Implementation documents
- UCEP reporting
- Internal DFAT documentation
- M&E documentation

### **Stakeholder Interviews**

As much as possible, key informant interviewing will be undertaken remotely. While this will be possible with DFAT and UCEP representatives, it is unlikely to be appropriate when engaging government representatives or UCEP program participants – who will most likely need to be interviewed face to face in Bangladesh

An indicative list of interviewees is attached at Annex Two.

It is expected that many interviews will be able to be undertaken in English. However, there will need to be independent (non-UCEP) translation available for in-country meetings. This need has already been raised with UCEP management, who fully understand the need for independent translation.

### **Case Studies**

As possible, qualitatively focused case studies will be developed to explore the experience of different UCEP user cohorts to help illustrate strengths and weaknesses in program implementation.

### **Participatory sense making**

It is proposed during the evaluation that the evaluator work closely with both DFAT Bangladesh and UCEP staff to present emerging findings, in order to benefit from local input and to help shape actionable recommendations. This approach will support validation of findings and support utility of the evaluation and uptake of the recommendations.

An Evaluation Analytical Framework is attached at Annex One, detailing methods to be used to answer the different evaluation questions detailed above, likely data sources, performance measure measures and the type of analysis required.



### 4.3 Assessment Tools

Given that key informant interviewing will be the primary technique utilized, interview guides will be developed to guide each interview type, to help ensure alignment with the agreed Assessment questions. These guides will also be able to be adapted to FGDs should the need arise.

Tailored key informant interviewing guides will be developed for:

- Donors (DFAT, and potentially DfID) at post – and potentially desk
- Government representatives – notably the Bangladesh Technical Education Board
- Other youth interested donors and development agencies
- Private sector, industry and employer groups
- Women, Young People and Disability networks relevant to improving socio-economic and employment opportunities for youth
- Specific questions related to the gender and inclusion dimensions of UCEP programming will be integrated within each guide. While guides will be developed, the approach to key informant interviewing will be undertaken in an open-ended manner that is responsive to the context of the informant, and encouraging of additional information of importance to be presented and captured as appropriate.

### 4.4 Data Analysis

Analysis of data gathered through this evaluation will be an iterative process built around the evaluation questions and sub-questions. The process for analysis will involve drawing on evidence from the various data sources to articulate and corroborate findings relevant to the evaluation questions, with cross-checking across sources as appropriate. Qualitative data will be mapped by themes to identify (and document) patterns across sectors and types of assistance.

Because evaluation is inevitably an iterative process, analysis will be continuous and rolling throughout the data collection period as new pieces of evidence are brought to bear. Findings relevant to each evaluation question or sub-question will be used to establish conclusions, which in turn will serve as the ‘evidence’ for extraction of lessons learned and recommendations. An overarching Evidence Matrix will be developed to manage information, support data analysis and provide an important ‘database’ through which analysis can occur and be validated.

### 4.5 Sampling Strategy

It is proposed as much as feasible that the evaluation use a purposive sampling approach. Such an approach would help ensure that sampling logically represented the different participant cohort groups, as well as other factors such as Dhaka v regional Division.

Due the scale of the project in terms of numbers of participants, it is proposed to conduct as broad a geographical spread of users as is feasible in the relatively short time available for field work. It is therefore proposed that data gathering occur in Dhaka, as well as one or two Divisions (which would ideally be randomly selected).

An initial list of indicative stakeholders is attached at Annex Two. This list aims to detail different stakeholder types, and will be further refined and provided greater detail over the early stages of the evaluation. Efforts will be made to include additional stakeholders external to UCEP and DFAT, such as other NGOs and groups interested in addressing youth disadvantage.

Introductions from the UCEP team or DFAT will likely be required with most stakeholders, particularly government staff. Permissions may be needed by some government stakeholders to speak to staff. The evaluator will seek guidance from UCEP and DFAT on how to best approach government stakeholders.

#### 4.6 Data use and storage

Interview data collected from stakeholders will only be used for this evaluation. Interviews will be initially recorded through note taking and possible recording. All data (notes and recording) will be stored on a secure, password protected computer. Hard and electronic copies of any data collected for the evaluation will be stored securely and deleted one month after the approval of the final evaluation report. Interviewees will be informed of how their data will be used, is stored and how they may access it.

#### 4.7 Ethical Issues and informed consent

All consultations will be undertaken with required introductions and permissions. An email outlining the purpose of the evaluation, use of data and consent information from the interview will be provided via email during prior to the interview. At the start of the interview the interviewer will gain verbal consent for the interview to proceed and what level of confidentiality they would like.

It is not intended that interviews will be recorded as there will be limited time for transcription. If interviews are to be recorded, permission will be sought from interviewees, recordings de-identified, and deleted upon evaluation completion and approval of report.

Interview data used in the analysis will be de-identified (unless permission given otherwise – both in the analysis and reporting phase. Quotes will not be used where it identifies individuals unless clear permission has been granted.

#### 4.8 Risk and Limitations

The primary risk and limitations associated with this evaluation are identified as follows:

**Table 2: Risk and Limitations**

Risk or Limitation	Potential impact on the Evaluation	How it will be managed
The evaluation is relatively time limited for an investment of this scale, meaning that decisions will need to be taken in terms of what can and cannot be included in terms of evaluation methodology.	It is likely that only one city in addition to Dhaka will be able to be visited during the evaluation, which could result in a ‘Dhaka-centric’ perspective of program performance.	Strongest possible effort will be made to disaggregate understanding by Divisions, as a means of identifying specific areas of interest to the valuation and development of key lessons learned.
UCEP programming is vast in terms of program breadth and participation.	Given the breadth and scope of the program, there is a risk that there could be an exception to every finding – raising questions over the credibility of the evaluation.	Frequent contact with team members and ‘sense-making’ efforts will assist in identifying exceptions to proposed findings, and allow for their consideration and inclusion within findings summary.
Assessing program contribution to women’s empowerment is complex, and made more difficult in the context of an evaluation in a country with conservative gender norms.	While efforts will be taken to consult with women beneficiaries directly, the evaluation will also inevitably need to draw on secondary sources to fully understand overall program performance in this area	The evaluator will work with UCEP to determine an approach that helps ensure the evaluation includes clear representation of the voice of a sample of women participants. It is also proposed that a woman interpreter be appointed for FGDs.
Government duty bearers will unlikely have detailed understanding of the detail of the DFAT support to UCEP.	Ascertaining a clear government assessment of UCEP investment performance could be difficult	Preliminary research will be undertaken to help ensure the evaluator meets with Government representatives that are genuinely well informed of UCEP work. Government interviewees will

		be provided information of the purpose and intent of the evaluation well in advance of the meeting.
Key stakeholders may not be available for consultations during the in research period	Limited data from the right people to draw on	Efforts will be made to ensure the widest possible period for interview scheduling to help ensure options for interviewees

## 5. Making Evaluative Judgements

Judgements made by the evaluator will be directly supported by an Evidence Matrix, that will help ensure that evaluative judgments that are defensible.

## 6. Timeline

Responsibilities for the MTE are detailed in the MTE ToR and summarised below. The Evaluation Schedule is still under development, and will be included at Annex Four once finalised.

Table 3: Timeline

Role	Actions (and delivery date where applicable)
Inception Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preliminary review of documentation</li> <li>• Consideration of evaluation ToR and UCEP monitoring and evaluation systems</li> <li>• Initial consultations with DFAT and UCEP</li> <li>• Preparation of an Inception Plan, including evaluation questions</li> <li>• <b>Deliver by July 4<sup>th</sup> 2023</b></li> </ul>
Desk based work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further development of data gathering instruments</li> <li>• Agree on and finalise sampling</li> <li>• Extended review of program documentation and UCEP Results Framework</li> <li>• Remote interviewing of key informants as possible</li> <li>• Field visit planning and preparation</li> </ul>

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Field visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake field visit to Bangladesh, involving data gathering in Dhaka and one or two other locations (pending agreement with UCEP)</li> <li>• Interviewing of key informants</li> <li>• Focus Groups discussions with project participants</li> <li>• Tentatively proposed for 1-12 July</li> </ul>
Evaluation completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake data analysis</li> <li>• Initial findings presentation</li> <li>• Prepare draft report</li> <li>• Receive feedback on draft</li> <li>• Prepare final report</li> </ul>

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## 7. Write-up

### 7.1 Design, Analysis and Interpretation (D-A-I) Estimation

Given the purpose of the evaluation it is anticipated that design-analysis-interpretation ratios of the final document will be as follows (and with the following rationale):

- Description (~ 20%) – based on the need for the Evaluation to describe:
  - the different areas of focus and priority of the DFAT investment
  - the degree that project implementation occurred cohesively, including adaptation related to the COVID-19 pandemic
  - broader perspectives on needs related to youth disadvantage
- Analysis (~ 50%) – based on the importance of the Evaluation presenting project level analysis that looks at:
  - the contribution of the investment in addressing the needs of different cohorts through different implementation modalities
  - the effectiveness of the program whole in addressing youth disadvantage and socio-economic empowerment
  - appropriateness of safeguarding and broader inclusion approaches
  - efficacy of program management, including pandemic navigation
- Interpretation (~ 30%) – ensuring evidence based conclusions and recommendations are provided from which DFAT can consider the contribution of different approaches in meeting the needs of different cohorts

## 7.2 Outline

The Final Report will answer all Key Evaluation Questions and Sub Questions with supporting evidence referenced. The final report will be no more than thirty pages (not including annexes or executive summary).