

Project Information

- **Country:** Pakistan
- **Project Name:** The Project for Development of Center of Excellence (CoE) for Technical Education (Technical Cooperation)
- **Cooperation Period:** 2008 – 2013
- **Implementing Organization:** Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA), Government College of Technology Railway Road Lahore (GCT R.R.)

1. Background and Project Summary

Pakistan has promoted the growth of the manufacturing sector toward 2030 and the demand for middle-level technicians who can link the construction/manufacturing sites and management has increased. However, the Government Colleges of Technology (GCT), which are responsible for training those technicians, have faced various challenges such as an outdated curriculum, insufficient number and quality of trainers, unavailable placement services, weak linkage with the industrial sector, etc. This project started in December 2008 in Lahore, Punjab Province, the second largest industrial city in the country after Karachi. Its goal is to address these challenges, and eventually to enhance the capacity of The Government College of Technology Railway Road (GCT R.R.) to provide quality education in Mechanical and Architecture courses based on industrial needs as a Center of Excellence (CoE).

2. Technical and Vocational Education & Training from the Gender Perspective

In Pakistan, the female labor force participation rate remains low (24.4% in 2012). There are a number of barriers that inhibit women's participation in employment; social and cultural norms about women's roles and suitable occupations for them, employers' attitudes, limited mobility of women and girls, their reproductive roles, and lack of access to information, career guidance and skills development opportunities.

Other than a few exceptions, training offered in vocational training institutes also reflects the traditional gender division of labor in the society. Training is available to women and girls in only a narrow, more conventional range of courses such as hand embroidery, sewing and cosmetology. Such courses either have poor linkages with the formal labor market or are associated with lower incomes. Girls from the poorer families have limited options in being trained for income generation or employment unless they proceed to the

higher education institutes.

To facilitate women's labor participation, it is necessary to explore new and emerging occupations with the potential for women's employment and diversify skills development opportunities accordingly. Social mobilization and raising awareness among women and girls, their families and communities, and potential employers, would also be important.

3. Gender-responsive Activities

In Punjab, female students had limited opportunities for professional education in spite of their willingness to learn and demand for skilled labor force. One exception was architecture. Architecture is socially accepted as a field where women can be employed because a large part of the work can be done indoors. This project, therefore, started to accept female students to the Architecture course at GCT R.R. in 2010.

Although coeducation was not unusual at private schools and higher education institutes in Pakistan, the GCT had never accepted female students. GCT R.R. became the first GCT to adopt a coeducational system. It enabled female students to learn in a better educational environment with low school fees. Before accepting female students to the course, a prayer room, a first-aid room, rest rooms and a common room were arranged for them. In addition, recruitment drives were made at secondary schools to facilitate admission of female students to the course. 28 female students entered the course in the first year. A total of 104 female students entered the course for four years from 2010. 21 female students of the first group graduated from the course in 2013. The majority of the students proceeded to public universities. Some were successfully employed by architect offices, etc. Female students were highly motivated and earned commendable scores. In the Architecture course, half of the instructors were women. They encouraged female students to continue their studies even during a volatile security situation.



The job opportunities for women in Pakistan used to be confined to public servants, bankers, nurses, etc. Now with the project's assistance, female students have found jobs in the architectural field. It is expected that a system to promote women's skills development relevant to the labor market is to be established to lead to women's improved employability.