

Out-of-school youth: Govt to expand skills training in all 64 districts

Sun Jun 29, 2025 04:00 AM

Last update on: Sun Jun 29, 2025 05:03 AM



The government yesterday announced plans to expand the Skill-Focused Literacy for Out-of-School Adolescents (SKILFO) project nationwide, following the successful completion of its pilot phase in Cox's Bazar.

"The pilot has shown that a skills-based, non-formal education can change lives. We want to take this model to all 64 districts in future," said Prof Bidhan Ranjan Roy Podder, adviser to the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, at an event jointly organised by his ministry and Unicef at a hotel in the capital.

Bureau of Non-Formal Education (BNFE) Assistant Director SM Shamim Ahasan presented the project's key findings, saying that it has already reached 7,000 adolescents in Cox's Bazar. The next phase will see SKILFO rolled out in 16 districts, with a target of bringing over one lakh out-of-school and NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) adolescents under its coverage.

According to official data, around 2.2 million people enter the labour market annually, but only 1.9 percent receive formal skills training.

Unicef Representative in Bangladesh Rana Flowers said, "The SKILFO pilot proves that when out-of-school youth get the right training and support, they can thrive and contribute to society."

Rubaiya Murshed, assistant professor of Dhaka University's Economics department, said SKILFO's flexible delivery, market alignment, and strong engagement with employers and communities were key to its success.

According to BNFE, 83.1 percent of participating girls and 81.3 percent of boys have already secured placements or income opportunities.

KM Kabirul Islam, secretary of Technical and Madrasah Education Division, recommended including homeless children and exploring integration of Qawmi Madrasa students, alongside supporting graduates financially and enriching their entrepreneurship capabilities.

Md Shakhawat Hossain, secretary of the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education presided over the programme.