



## Workforce Development in India An Overview of Our Ongoing Work

### Background

Over the last two decades, India leveraged the forces of globalization to generate high levels of economic growth, but translating that growth into broad-based, sustainable development outcomes is an ongoing challenge. Today, as the country faces slowing growth rates following the Great Recession, a growing budget deficit, and more intense global competition from other emerging economies, India's central economic challenge lies in upgrading the skills of its workforce. With a majority of Indian workers still relegated to low-paying, low-value added activities, the transition to high-quality, productive jobs is critical to both the country's economic agenda – maintaining competitiveness and boosting growth – and its social agenda – improving quality of life for the poor and other marginalized groups.

The Government of India introduced the National Skill Development Policy in 2009 to accelerate the pace of skill development toward a goal of skilling 500 million people by 2022. This policy aims to work with the private sector to build an inclusive system of training for the labor force. In addition to the government initiative there are a vast array of for-profit companies, grassroots organizations and educational institutes attempting to respond to the skills training imperative.

### Our Approach

The JustJobs Network aims to provide relevant, practical policy recommendations toward harnessing skill development as a channel for more and better jobs in India. With an estimated [300 million youth](#) entering the labor force between 2007 and 2025 and a current training capacity of only [3.1 million](#) per year – to say nothing of training quality – increasing the India's ability to provide effective vocational education remains a great challenge. Understanding the most effective ways to meet this challenge requires new and innovative research.

Our approach is to investigate the areas of skill development and skill policy that have so far been neglected by researchers and practitioners:

- **The lens of the trainee:** By what means are workers in the Indian labor force achieving economic mobility through skill development? How do the aspirations of trainees – especially youth – line up with the realities they face upon entering the labor market?

- **Workforce development needs of new sectors:** Sector Skills Councils, set up by existing industries, have attempted to map the current skill gaps in the Indian labor market. Less attention, meanwhile, has been given to the workforce development needs of new and emerging sectors, such as renewable energy. The ability for these industries of the future to grow will be determined by the availability of appropriately trained workers, making this a critical area of inquiry.
- **The impact of training on marginalized groups:** Women, youth, migrants, and religious and caste minorities are currently underrepresented in high-quality, formal economy jobs. Unless skill development policies improve the employment outcomes of these groups in particular, India will be unable to harness the productive forces of its large labor pool to realize its demographic dividend.

## Ongoing Projects

### 1. *NGOs and the Training Provider Landscape*

The JustJobs Network is partnering with [Hearth Education Advisors](#) to study the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in meeting India's skills challenge through vocational training. Despite the vast and decentralized landscape of NGOs currently conducting skill development programs, little attention has been dedicated to understanding the impact of these efforts and how they complement and/or replicate training offered by government and the private sector. JustJobs Network is conducting fieldwork with both trainees and providers to understand the NGO role in a larger ecosystem of workforce development.

### 2. *Analysis of Jobs in the Renewable Energy Sector*

The growing Indian renewable energy sector will require a significant increase in manpower over the next decade. The JustJobs Network is working with [MP Ensystems](#) to assess the current supply of skilled workers in renewable energy and advise the government on a plan for building capacity to meet the future labor requirements of the sector.

### 3. *Study on Daily Wage Construction Workers*

Construction is one of India's fastest growing and most critical sectors – especially as the government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeks to dramatically expand infrastructure development. Construction also employs some of the country's most marginalized workers. JustJobs Network is collecting data on the motivations, aspirations and working conditions of daily wage workers at construction sites throughout the National Capital Region. We will leverage our analysis to provide the government with actionable recommendations to improve quality of work and opportunities for economic mobility in construction.