

## **A case study of executing social responsibility: Upgrading of a technical training centre**

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The paper is based on the experience gathered in executing a project to upgrade the Light Engineering Training Centre, located in Aluwihare, Matale to a higher level certificate awarding institute. It was providing light engineering craft training for a batch of 20 youth. However, only a handful of those who enroll completed the programme and a fraction of that will continue in related areas of employment. In order to upgrade the centre, the Engineering Design Centre (EDC) of the Faculty of Engineering, University of Peradeniya was employed to provide the necessary consultancy work. This included, drafting of the intended upgrading programme and its implementation.

Based on a needs survey on the type of training and the availability of employment, the selected course was targeted to provide a training suitable for the 'die and mould making' industry. Based on the basic training required, the equipment and tools suitable for the target training were identified and course syllabi and course contents were drafted. At the same time, the teaching staff had to be trained and upgraded. They too had to be exposed to the modern equipment and tools that were to be made available at the centre.

The most important step was the selection of trainees. Through some publicity, 54 candidates were selected for the first batch, although the target was 60. After conducting the courses including practicals and industrial training, an evaluation of the trainees was done. Out of the 54 trainees of the first batch, 48 completed the course successfully. As many as 70% of the trainees had secured employment at the place of training itself.

This project has paved a way for satisfying the dire need of technically skilled personnel in a small way. The trainees have expressed their satisfaction about the programme as they have acquired skills that have a good market value. The parents of the trainees are quite happy that their children have been put on the right track by this programme. They have observed the positive changes in their children as they are behaving with responsibility and self-esteem. The response received from the industry is extremely satisfactory. They have expressed the highest regard for the trainees. This is well proven by the subsequent employment rate. Many have requested for future trainees in their organisations. In implementing this project, resources of several national level organisations were mustered. It should be noted here that all those who supported the execution of this project were ready to do much more than the call of duty and did their contribution as a social responsibility.

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