



Child Friendly Local Governance (CFLG) Approach for Education Sector in Bangladesh: Evidence and Opinions

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A. Child Friendly Local Governance (CFLG) Approach and Practice of Save the Children

What is CFLG approach? Ensure better services and improved accountability of the Local Government towards the social development and rights of children.

The conceptual framework of CFLG: CFLG framework has been defined as:

1. **Children's empowerment and citizenship:** CFLG works to empower children as citizens, to help them understand and participate in local governance mechanisms, to enter into dialogue with decision makers, and to use simple social accountability tools.
2. **Child focused plans and budgets of Union Parishad and Municipalities, and institutionalized dialogue with children and adolescents:** UPs and Municipalities - in response to community, civil society and children's engagement- commit to an increase focus on planning and expenditure on children's social development and rights. CFLG authorities use dialogue with children and adolescents to improve service delivery and investment in infrastructure around health and education, as well as prioritizing extreme poor children and their families in social safety net targeting.
3. **Civil Society Engagement for Child Rights:** CFLG works to strengthen the capacity of the community and local civil society to support the processes described above. Children cannot be empowered or mobilized in a vacuum, and need strong support from community and from non-government actors. Officials from local government in CFLG areas have therefore worked hand in hand with community organizations to support the participation of children.

Result of CFLG intervention:

1. **Participation of children and civil society:** With increased awareness and knowledge, children and young people are now engaging more than ever in local decision-making processes through participating in the ward Shova, public dialogues and open budget sessions. Together with civil society, children are systematically monitoring the provision of services for children to hold the local elected representatives more accountable for fulfilling their commitments.
2. **Child focused plans and budget allocations:** For the first time, local government institutions are explicitly considering and budgeting for children who live in their communities. As a result,



UPs, UZPs and Municipalities have allocated separate budget specifically for services and program for children and have developed child focused plans providing services to children and their families at the local level.

- 3. Child friendly complaint and response mechanisms:** The child-friendly complaint and response mechanism is another way in which CFLG is enhancing the accountability and transparency with which local government institutions fulfill their mandates. Child-friendly complaints boxes have

been set up in the working areas at the UP, Municipality and UZP level, with an accompanying monitoring committee (often formed as a 'child sub-committee' under the Standing Committee on Family Violence Eradication and Women and Children Welfare). This means that children and adolescents can now submit complaints- and these complaints are regularly assessed.

- 4. Improved access to safety nets:** UP and Municipalities have identified and selected over 44423 vulnerable children and their families to benefit from a various government safety nets, including: Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF), Vulnerable Group Development (VGD), Disability allowance, Lactating mother's allowance and school stipends.
- 5. Improved access to services:** As a result of the CFLG, local government institutions have also provided services to children and their families including monetary support, free admission to school and uniforms, sanitary latrines built, benches supplied for schools, water pipelines and tube wells set up for safe drinking water, children's parks refurbished, roads constructed and repaired for school-going children, children received playing materials, built wooden bridges built for school going children, schools repaired, fans supplied to schools, solar panels and photocopier provided to communities.
- 6. Government take initiative to scale up CFLG:** Child Friendly Local Governance (CFLG) approach has been approved by the Ministry of Local Government Rural Development and Cooperatives (MoLGRD&C) to scale CFLG approach in all UPs of Bangladesh. During this period, a draft guideline on CFLG approach along with indicators have been developed by the Local Government Support Project-3 team along with Breaking The Silence (BTS) and Save the Children (SC) and was submitted to the MoLGRD&C and World Bank for approval to include in the UP operational manual and LGSP-III performance indicators.

Major Challenges

1. As LGIs comprises elected officials, a major challenge stems from new UP elections requiring renewed sensitization efforts for the LGIs.
2. Dropout of youth volunteer is high which sometimes impact on regular project activities. The reason for dropout is that they are getting jobs with the experience gathered through their voluntary role.



Future Direction

1. Institutionalize CFLG in all LGIs across the country.
2. Amended UP operational manual
3. Inclusion of CFLG approach in the Local Government Act.

B. CFLG and Education (Experience and Learning of HOPE Project)

Intervention of the Project:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity building of Union Parishad on participatory planning and budgeting Facilitate dialogue session between Child Forum and Union Parishad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobilize Child Forum for promoting their rights Capacity building of Child Forum 	<p>Awareness raising activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Day observation ✓ Theater for Development ✓ Child Fair ✓ Parents meeting
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Working with Union Parishad: HOPE project is working with 6 Union Parishad as key stake of Local Government. With the frame work of Right based Approach ¹HOPE project is working to make the Union Parishad more accountable to ensure the rights of children especially the educational rights of children. To sensitize Local Government ²in promoting inclusive education the project has signed MOU with Union Parishad and made joint action plan for Inclusive education. The project is working to build capacity of Union Parishad as a responsive duty bearer for Inclusive Education through training, orientation, workshop and day to day support.

Formation of Child Forum: HOPE Project has formed 18 Child Forum composed with 541 Children including girls, boys, children with disabilities and out of school children to participate in the local government planning, budgeting and monitoring the budget expenditure and service delivery. The child forum members are holding regular monthly meeting having with a long term planning to make themselves an active citizen for promoting child rights especially the quality education for every child. They are advocating to Local government, School Management Committee, Parents as well as community for

¹ Right Based Approach (RBA) is a conceptual framework which based on fundamental human rights principle.

² In this article Union Parishad is called as Local government.



supporting to ensure rights of children especially rights of education through making accountable duty bearers and active community participation.

Working with parents group: HOPE project has formed parents group by 180 individuals at 6 Union Parishad of 3 sub districts. Each parents group is composed with average number of 15 parents and total number of parents are 2700. Each parents group are participating by monthly meeting at their communities with the facilitation of community volunteer. In the meeting they discussed about the issues of social stigma towards inclusion education especially the barriers for children with disabilities to schooling. They also discussing about the role of parents to promote inclusive education and the supporting way to continue the education of children especially for the children with disabilities.

Initiatives taken by Union Parishad, Child Forum and Community: With the support of HOPE Project, the Union Parishad, Child Forum and community are working for ensuring inclusive education at the school as well as communities through providing support to the schools in various activities.

1. **Identify out of school children:** Through community mapping and home visit local government officials, school management committee, parents, teachers, Children Forum members are identifying children with disabilities who are out of school.
2. **CBR Centre establish and management:** With the technical support of HOPE Project 06 Union Parishad have set up 06 CBR centers at their complex to provide primary therapy and rehabilitation services to the children with disabilities for their school readiness. Union Parishad composed a management committee to overall management of the CBR center
3. **Facilitate participatory Annual Development Plan of Union Parishad:** HOPE Project is facilitating 6 Union Parishad for develop participatory annual development planning. The project is working with Union Parishad to make them sensible to increase governance process at their budgeting process through ward Shova,³ and open budget session with the participation of children, parents, teachers, local elites and relevant stakes.
4. **Enrolment Campaign:** Union Parishad, Child Forum and community organized several enrolment campaign at its working areas. They have formed several groups leaded by Union Parishad officials and participation with Child Forum Members, community leaders to organize meeting with parents and community for enrolment of Children with Disabilities and out of school children at school. The Union Parishad also organized rally and making for school enrolment.
5. **Initiate School Accessibility Planning:** Union Parishad and School Management Committee developed School Accessibility Plan at 45 government primary schools with the participation of Upazilla Education Department, Child Forum, Parents, teachers and local elite.

³ Every Union Parishad is divided into 9 ward and the voter of the ward is the member of the ward. The yearly and half yearly meeting of the ward is called ward shova.



6. **Organize Child Fair:** Union Parishad and School Management Committee have organized 6 Child Fair at 6 unions. Numbers of government primary schools, Child Forum and different cultural organization have participated at the fair with offering different learning materials and messages to attract people on education.
7. **Day Observation:** Union Parishad and School Management Committee is observing various day related to children rights of education. HOPE project is providing technical support to the Union Parishad and School Management Committee to celebrate the day. They have celebrated various days including Child Rights Week, International Day of Person with Disabilities and International Literacy Day through rally, discussion session, essay and art competition among the children and inclusive game.

Key success of the project: HOPE project has engaged the local government and community through its project intervention and activities so the so there will be created an enabling environment for inclusive education at the community. There are various significant results have been happened to promote inclusive education through engagement of local government and community.

1. **Increased enrollment of out of school children including children with disabilities:** Through the engagement of Union Parishad and community there has been significant changed to enrollment tatus especially out of school children and children with disabilities. Union Parishad, School Management Committee and Child Forum identified 1264 children with disabilities at 6 Union who were deprived proper care to be ready to go to school. There was huge social stigma and barriers towards the children with disabilities. Parents, school, local government as well as community were not aware about their schooling. Now 1331 children with disabilities are getting services with the support of community as well as local government and 302 children with disabilities have been enrolled in school who were out of school.
2. **Increase access to community based rehabilitation services:** The Union Parishad have provided rooms for CBR center and exposing the utilities cost to run the CBR centers. They are organizing different campaign and communication with community to disseminating the information of the service providing to children with disabilities to make readiness the children for schooling. Now total number 1331 children with disabilities are getting service from CBR center with the support of parents, local government, child forum members and local elites.
3. **Increase people participation at Local Government decision making process:** The Union Parishad have developed their annual development planning with participatory process where community especially parents, teachers, local elites and children have participated and raised their demand to allocate more fund for inclusive education.



- 4. Inclusive Union planning:** The project is facilitating Union Parishad and community to make the Union as inclusive union where all children, irrespective of gender, language, ability, religion, nationality or other characteristics will enjoy their rights especially the rights of education. The community and Union Parishad have been synthesized to remove the barriers to promote inclusive education through change the community attitude and social system with various awareness raising activities. The Union Parishad have made a plan to make the Union Parishad as Inclusive Union with the support of parents, teachers, local elites and different development organization.
- 5. Developed School Accessibility Plan:** Union Parishad, School and community have identified the barriers to make school accessible to the children with disabilities as well as all of the school going children. They have first identified the barriers of accessibility and to remove the barriers they have developed accessibility planning for each school. After the planning they have made refurbishment works with the support of local government, community and government department. Through the process they have made 45 schools accessible, colorful and enjoyable.
- 6. Increased support from Union Parishad:** 6 Union Parishad of HOPE Project working areas have made annual action plan to promote child rights especially educational rights of children. They have allocated more budget for inclusive education at their annual budget, providing necessary support to make school accessible through repair school going roads and other facilities which are needed for schools, repairer the road as it will be useable for children with disabilities, include more children with disabilities and their families at social safety net programs and organize community campaign/ awareness activities for inclusive education and rights of children with disabilities.
- 7. Parents become aware about Inclusive Education:** Now the parents are providing support to their children for attending school with others school going children. The parents are disseminating the message of educational rights issues at different forum at the community as well as at the local government planning and decision making process. They are placing the educational rights issues at school, mosque, home as well as public places.

Engagement of local government and community to promote Inclusive Education and lesson learning of HOPE Project: There was enormous social stigma towards the rights of children with disabilities at the community. Parents of children with disabilities were feeling nervousness to provide the information of their children to get any services as well as education as the community seen it as a sign of parents especially mother. The service centers were not ready to provide services to the children with disabilities. The school was not ready to enroll the children with disabilities in school. The local government were avoiding the rights of the children and not ready to provide services to the children. So children with disabilities and their families were marginalized. So there are lots of barriers to promote inclusive education at the community. In this situation HOPE Project is implementing its activities to promote inclusive education and identified some lesson learning.



- Without holistic approach promoting inclusive education at the community is not successful. Any project related to inclusive education should address the personal and social barriers as well as have to work with school, community, local government and parents with a holistic point of view.
- Engagement of local government and community are key factors to change has attitude towards the rights of children especially the educational rights of children with disabilities. Responsive Union Parishad is key duty bearer at the community to take responsibilities towards promote inclusive education. Beside these active participation of community at the decision making process of Union Parishad can ensure the services of children especially the services to the children with disabilities and promote their educational rights.
- Child to Child approach is very much effective approach to aware community and provide support to the peer to ensure education rights of children. Children Forum can play a significant role to promote inclusive education at the community through raising awareness among their peer, parents and provide support to the children.

Sustainability of the activities for promote inclusive education: Union Parishad is promoting participatory annual development planning where parents, teachers, children, local elites as well as marginalized community can participate at the decision making process at local development agenda. They have allocated more fund at their annual budget to support to ensure educational rights of children. They have allocated additional budget for children with disabilities and their family through different project and social safety net programs. HOPE project located 6 Union Parishad have allocated 35% of their annual budget for promoting inclusive education previously which was less than 15%. The Union Parishad have developed their yearly action plan to implement inclusive education related activities. They have also developed a sustainable planning to continue the inclusive education activities after complete the HOPE project tenure. They also advocating with government to get more support though the inclusive education model can be replicated at rest of the Union of the Upazilla (sub district).

C. Opportunities to incorporate CFLG in Education Sector (Recommendation)

1. As an intergradation technique CFLG should be considered for future program. A CFLG focal person/representative should be going and participating in program design session and field level support.
2. CFLG Can integrated to the Second Change program and incorporating CFLG not need more budget but we can integrate it through concrete implementation plan.
3. Ensure the child rights by including child governance in all education project. It can be developing when project design level. It can include with all education project through engaging Local Government in the project implementation.
4. We can consider CFLG in future project design.
5. CFLG approach should positive for every primary school and should be established this approach as soon as possible.
6. Introduce Child Forum as intervention in Education Project.
7. Local Government should be involved in project activities.



8. We can incorporate CFLG in our future education based project as it is an effective approach.
9. CFLG can be introduced in education programing for formal and non-formal education project (6-10 years for primary school and 11-16 years for secondary school)
10. CFLG can be implemented with ICT in Education in community with learning component.