

Local Government and Community Engagement to Promote Inclusive Education in Bangladesh: Success of HOPE Project

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Holistic approach towards Promotion of Inclusive Education (HOPE) Project, Bangladesh (April 2016-March-2019) has worked to promote inclusive education through engagement of local government and community with the approach of Child Friendly Local Governance (CFLG).

Child Friendly Local Governance (CFLG) comprises a rights-based child programming approach and a set of social accountability initiatives that works to facilitate, promote, and institutionalize the empowerment and participation of children in the governance arrangements at the local level.



CFLG places children at the centre of the development agenda of local government. It facilitates their inclusion in institutional mandates such as ward shovas and open budget sessions as well as building their understanding and capacity to effectively influence decision-making process and to monitor services and resources.

Through the approach the project worked closely with Local Government and community as well as children and school to make local government accountable to promote inclusive education and engage community to take responsibility to ensure the educational rights of children with disabilities. HOPE Project mobilized community to increase engagement around inclusive education through sensitizing community and local government to act as responsive duty bearers.

A. Identify out of school children:

Through community mapping and home visit local government officials, school management committee, parents, teachers, Children Forum members have identified 1264 CWDs who were deprived proper care to be ready to go to school. There was huge social stigma and barriers towards the children with disabilities. Among the 1264 children with disabilities 301 children were school going. But the parents, school, local government as well as community were not aware about their schooling. HOPE project has sensitized the community and local government to take responsibility to identify the children for providing appropriate care and schooling. Then 1264 children with disabilities are getting services with the support of community as well as local government and 301 children with disabilities have been enrolled in school who were out of school.

B. CBR Centre establish and management:

With the technical support of HOPE Project 06 Union Parishad (Local Government) have set up 06 CBR centre at their complex. Union Parishad composed a management committee to overall management of the CBR centre. With the support of Union Parishad HOPE project recruited 12 Community Based Rehabilitation Person (CBR-P), where 06

are female and 06 are male. The project provided 20 days basic training to the 12 CBR-P from CDD (a specialized organization working for person with disabilities in Bangladesh) on primary therapy and rehabilitation services. The Union Parishad have provided rooms for CBR centre 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 1264 children with disabilities are getting service from CBR centre with the support of parents, local government, child forum members and local elites.

C. Enrolment Campaign:

100% enrolment at primary school is a key target of government of Bangladesh. But still 4% of school going children are remaining out of school where the number of children with disabilities is 80,046. This is a great challenge to ensure inclusive education. Though government have taken different initiatives for 100% enrolment there are huge number of children with disabilities are out of school. Government is not able to meet the challenges unless the community awareness and active role of local government. In these regard with the support of HOPE Project Union



Parishad and community organized several enrolment campaigns at its working areas. They have taken impressive initiatives as part of the campaign. The initiatives were-

- Several groups have been formed led by Union Parishad officials and participation with ChildForum Members, community leaders organized meeting with parents and community for enrolment of Children with Disabilities and out of school children.
- Organized Parents meeting at the community level to motivate parents to enroll their children at school.
- Organized enrolment discussion at Mosque and letter has been issued to religious leaders to act for enrolment by Union Parishad.
- Organized joint meetings with School Management Committee (SMC) & and parents.
- Organized rally and making for child enrolment at growth centres.
- Assisted to Children with disabilities to enroll at school through providing assistive device by Union Parishad.
- Door to door visit to enrolled 100% children and initiate in spot enrolment.
- Covered destitute parents by social safety net program of Union Parishad.
- Observed enrolment week initiated by Union Parishad
- Monitored casement area after enrolment whether any children have left from enrolment.

D. School accessibility:

With the facilitation of HOPE Project School Management Committee formed School Accessibility Plan with the participation of Local Government representatives, Parents, Teachers, Children, and local elite. The Committee has identified the barriers to make school accessible to the children with disabilities as well as all 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, colourful and enjoyable.

E. Sensitized Local Government:

HOPE project has worked 06 Union Parishad as key stake of Local Government with the framework of right based approach. The project is working to make the Union Parishad more accountable to ensure the rights of children especially the educational rights of children. Each of the Union Parishad 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, provided necessary support to make school accessible through repair school going roads and other facilities which are needed for school, repaired the road as it will be useable for children with disabilities, included more children with disabilities and their families at social safety net programs and organized community campaign/ awareness activities for inclusive education and rights of children with disabilities.

Dukuriabera Union Parishad (Local Government) has taken project to work for school improvement from LGSP (Local Government Support Program) fund of government and UNDP. They have taken project to construct boundary wall at school to address protection issues of children, repairer & provide furniture for school to ensure enough sitting arrangement of children and teachers, repairer playground and distribute play materials for children. Total fund is BDT. 33, 93,876 and allocated fund for school is BDT10, 60,000 which is 31% of total fund.

F. Child Forum as active citizen:

HOPE Project has formation of 18 Child Forum with 540 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 with Local government, SMC, School, Parents as well as community for supporting the rights of children through schooling and make accountable the duty bearers to the rights holders.



Child Forum members are working as advocate for ensuring child rights especially educational rights of children at their community. They are working for provide support on inclusive education through identify out of school children especially children with disabilities, enroll them at school, mobilize parents and their peer to remove social stigma towards children with disabilities. They have provided support to enroll 1679 children at school.

G. Parents awareness:

HOPE Project is supporting community to develop their awareness on child rights specially rights on education. Doing so the project has provided training on "The role of parents to promote child rights" at the communities. Total number of 187 parents who have children with disabilities and out of school children have been received the training. There are also 180 parents' groups. The groups are providing motivational support on child rights especially the rights of education from the project. 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.

