

ICT & Innovative Partnership Project

The Advocacy Strategy

Background:

A large number of the secondary schools of Bangladesh have adequate WaSH facilities, but that facilities are not in condition for use, due to poor or absence of maintenance. In one hand schools authorities are reluctant on maintenance of these facilities in the other hand they have lack of awareness about maintenance of WaSH facilities. More over there is no specific monitoring mechanism exist to monitor WaSH in schools from both local authority and government side. With the WASH situation at schools in Bangladesh as “test case”, the ICT & Innovative Partnership project is testing the assumption that use of ICT and innovative partnerships with children, youth and their organizations can support improvement of WASH facilities and accountability structures in schools.

A baseline study on WaSH, governance and ICT situation of 30 secondary schools of Savar have been conducted at the end of 2014. The findings of the baseline represents the national situation also. Along with this study, different national policies on school WaSH and governance have been overviewed to identify policy gaps and opportunities of WaSH in schools, so that we could identify the issues for advocacy. Based on the study report and policy analysis, this advocacy strategy paper has been developed. The advocacy interventions will intervene at micro, meso, and macro level which intends to bridge the micro level findings (from Savar) with macro level policy changes resulting improve wash situation at secondary level schools.

Key findings of baseline study:

Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WaSH) was found as the most neglected part of the school infrastructures. Students of all schools expressed their highest level of dissatisfaction on WASH facilities. No separate budget allocation was made for WaSH in any of these schools rather it was always remains under development head with low priority. Most of the students mentioned that they carry water bottle from home for drinking. Toilet facilities were found worse than other WASH components. All 30 schools have brick made *pucca* sanitary toilets within or attached to the building. Average ratios of toilets in all 30 schools were found for boys 1:80; for girls it was 1:99; for teachers it was 1:8 and for other staff 1:9. Most of the student's toilets are not usable. About 77% schools have mentioned that they have appointed staff (Sweeper) for cleaning toilets. But in reality none of the schools had simply clean (not hygienic) toilets good for use. In 23% schools Aya (women support staff) were assigned to clean the toilets. No soaps were provided for hand washing in any of the schools. Scope for menstrual hygiene practice by the girls was found absent in all 30 schools including one girl's high school. No waste disposal system exists in the schools except some schools have occasionally used basket in the classrooms. Information collected from the students and teachers indicates that no separate hygiene class organized by the schools and no teachers appointed for this purpose, which is vital to make the students aware about proper hygiene practice in the school and at family level.

In terms of children empowerment, no such culture and practice developed yet in any of the 30 schools to include students in the decision making process even if it is about student's issue. A gap prevails between teachers and students. SMC is not reachable by the students. Student's had no linkages with SMC in any form.

Recent Government initiatives:

MoE is aware on these issues. But MoE control over SMC is loose than as much MoE needed. The accountability structure is not enough strong according the ordinance 2009 on managing secondary and higher secondary nongovernment educational institutions. According the ordinance there is on scope for students to being SMC member or part of decision making process of a school. In this regard MoE is going to reform the ordinance.

On April 2015 Ministry of Education initiated a circular on sanitation system improvement in secondary educational institutions. In this circular, Government has recognized the poor WaSH situation and the consequences of the poor situation in secondary schools. Circular has mentioned that, the main reason for the poor situation is lake of maintenance of the WaSH facilities. Many schools have enough WaSH facilities but that facilities are unusable because of unhygienic and dirty condition. To address this situation some instructions for the schools have been provided by this circular i.e. SMC and teachers should give attention on maintenance of the toilets of the schools, SMC and teacher should create a separate fund and appoint WaSH worker, government officials will inspect WaSH condition while their school inspection etc.

Policy Gaps:

Policy gaps have been identified while reviewing available documents which are presented below.

- Government policies did not mention about specific responsibilities of SMC to ensure governance at school level
- Accountability of SMC not defined and reflected in any government policies
- National Plan of Action II (2003-2015) mentioned about children's representation in the SMC and take part in decision making but it was totally dropped in the government circular related to SMC formation and management
- No pre-condition was set in the education policy 2010 to ensure WASH facilities with proper infrastructure while approving school infrastructure
- As most of schools have limited sources of income there is no fund allocation from Government for WaSH.
- As most of the schools have limited ability to allocate fund for the salary of WaSH worker, no declaration from the government of allocate budget for salary of WaSH worker or include WaSH worker post in MPO.
- No common monitoring format exists in the education department to monitor WASH facilities and give feedback to the school authority.
- Physical education subject did not give emphasis in hygiene education issue and no experienced teacher appointed in the school on hygiene education.

Advocacy Points:

Following the evidence (baseline study) from Savar and analysis of the policy gaps, the project have identified the advocacy points as - increase resource to secondary school for improved WaSh, scope to children's representation in decision making process, and priority to monitor the WaSH by government officials at school.

Advocacy Goal:

Improved WASH facilities for students in the secondary high schools of Bangladesh.

Advocacy Objective:

To increase accountability structure of school authority and better WASH facilities in secondary schools of Bangladesh.

Specific objectives:

Specific Objective	Output Result
To advocate with MoE to incorporate children's representation in SMC guideline.	Ministry of Education taken appropriate action (i.e. Circular, review of guideline) to incorporate children's representation in SMC
Advocate with MoE to introduce monitoring mechanism to monitor WASH situation at school	Official Order has been provided by MoE (DSHE) to monitor WASH situation at secondary school level
To advocate with government for separate budget allocation for WASH in secondary schools.	MoE and Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education have the commitment (and taken visual initiative) on introducing/increasing WASH budget in secondary schools

Targets

The targets of this advocacy are Ministry of Education, policy makers, government officials, school teachers and SMC.

Ministry of Education: MoE have the authority to make or reform the rules and regulations and laws for school managing. So Secretary and the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education of MoE is the main target of the advocacy initiatives to achieve children's representation in SMC guideline and monitoring mechanism to monitor WASH situation at school.

Policy Makers: The Parliamentary Standing Committee for Education Ministry and The Parliamentary Caucus on Child Rights (PCCR) are the another main target groups of this advocacy initiative.

PCCR is a forum of law makers, which is committed to take initiatives in policy level to establish child rights. As the advocacy issues are child rights related PCCR will take an influential role. PCCR can influence the 'education standing committee in the parliament' to take initiative to allocate separate budget for WASH in secondary schools. Already in a lobby meeting PCCR members have agreed to raise the issues in policy making forums and their speech in parliament. Several sharing meetings will be organized with the PCCR.

Government officials: Central, District and Upazilla education officers, Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education and EED are another target group. Government officials

are the implementation and monitoring authority of any laws and policies. We have some opportunities in existing system and policies to ensure better environment in secondary schools regarding WaSH. To influence and motivate them in this regard several field level evidence sharing meeting, roundtables, dialogue, memorandum submission will organize with them.

School teachers and SMC: School teachers and SMC of 30 schools of Savar upazilla are the local level target group. As they are the locally responsible authority for ensuring WaSH facility for the students, field level meetings will be organized with them. Along with to build awareness and capacity of SMC and school teachers, several training will be organized as they can response the student's demands on WaSH.

Allay

Several national and international NGOs like Unicef, NGO Forum, Oxfam, BRAC, DAM, WaterAid, WASH Alliance Bangladesh etc. are working in WaSH sector in Bangladesh for long time. In this sector they have remarkable success and experiences. We need to share their experiences and support to sharpen our initiatives in achieving the objectives. They have keen interest in allocating separate budget for WaSH and introduce monitoring mechanism to monitor WaSH situation at school. We will want their presence in several sharing meeting and roundtables to share their experiences.

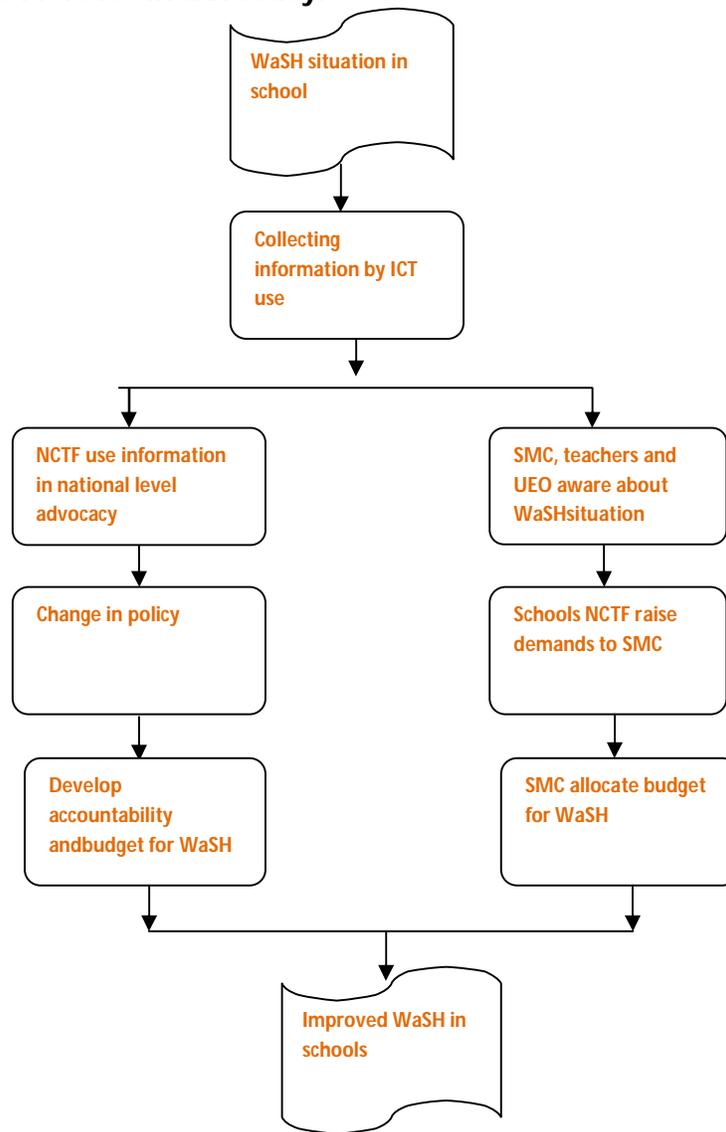
Partners

NCTF: The National Children Task Force (NCTF) acting as central actor of these advocacy initiatives. As a children organization NCTF will lead advocacy activities. School level committees of NCTF to national level committee have their specific roles. School committees will collect data on WaSH situation of the schools by the use of ICT and upload collected data in specific web portal. Those data will be used as evidence in national level advocacy. School NCTF committees will take initiatives to dialogue with the teachers and SMC to being them proactive in solving their WaSH related problems at school level.

Upazilla level committee will coordinate activities of school level committees. This committee will take initiatives to sensitize upazilla level government official. This committee also represents NCTF in different level coordination meetings.

District and national level committee will take the responsibilities of face to face dialogue to sensitize the policy makers and duty bearers. They will represent the children of Bangladesh and raise their voice in several roundtables, lobby meetings, sharing meetings and submission of memorandum.

Flow chart on NCTF roles in advocacy:



Media: Media can play an influential role and can create pressure on policy makers. So we want to take the chance to use their ability in our advocacy initiatives. A systematic media campaign will be organized by MMC. By influencing local and national level journalist and capacitating child journalist group of NCTF news on WaSH situation will be published in local and national level both electronic and print media. Features on school WaSH will be published in NCTF magazines and special edition on WaSH situation will be published. These all will create pressure on policy makers and will be used as evidence in advocacy.

Project partners: Partner organizations of the project have expertise in their working area. They will provide all support to NCTF in their own expertise area.

CSID will organize all national level advocacy initiatives, they have the facilitating role. They will

provide organizational, financial, technical and documental support to NCTF, in this regard they have capacitating role. They will document all the national level initiatives.

VERC will organize field level initiatives. They also organize training for NCTF, SMC and school teachers to capacitate them. MMC will organize a systematic media campaign and organize training for NCTF media group. mPower will provide all ICT related support.

Save the Children will be the center of coordination among all partners including NCTF. They will provide all technical support to the partners.

Activities

To achieve the objectives of the advocacy a set of activities will be implemented in both national and field level. Major activities are described in below.

Baseline Study: To prepare evidence for advocacy a baseline study on WaSH, governance and ICT situation of secondary schools of project area Savar have been conducted. Primary data from 30 schools on WaSH, governance and ICT have been collected and to realize the perception of teachers and students on these issues some FGD, GD and interviews have been conducted.

Policy Study: Along with this study, national policies on school WaSH and governance and national and global mandate on WaSH have been overviewed.

Sharing meeting: Sharing meeting will be organized both at national and local level. Sharing the baseline study findings and recommendations focused policy advocacy in secondary school level and insights of participant's opinion on the policy findings and recommendations are the objective of the sharing meetings.

In national level sharing meeting target groups of the advocacy initiatives, development partners in WaSH sector, media representatives and NCTF representatives will be the key participant.. Participants of the meeting will take part in an open discussion session.

In local level sharing meeting local level government officials, school teachers, SMC and local level NCTF will be the key participants. Participants of the meeting will take part in a open discussion session.

Roundtable: 3 roundtables on 3 specific objectives will be organized.

1. To mainstreaming the demands explored by baseline study and policy analysis and field level demands regarding WaSH issues a national level roundtable dialogue will be organized. Where, policy makers, MoE, media personnel, development partners of WaSH sector and NCTF representatives will be the key participant..
2. To sensitize MoE to mainstream the open budget practice mandatory in schools for SMC, a national level roundtable will be organized. In the roundtable MoE, Directorate of Secondary Education, PCCR, representatives of parliamentary standing committee for education ministry, representatives of school teachers and SMC and NCTF representatives are key participant. A presentation on open budget practice will be presented there.

3. To mainstreaming the WaSH rights as part of child rights a round table will be organized. In the round table PCCR along with NCTF will take the key role. In the roundtable policy makers, development partners of both WaSH and child rights and media will be the key participant. A presentation on WaSH as a child right will be presented there.

Advocacy meeting: To sensitize the concern authority advocacy meetings with MoE for allocating budget according to annual plan and budget at school level will be organized. The meeting will be between NCTF representatives and MoE. Two meetings on same issues will be organized, the second meeting will be the follow up of first meeting.

Lobby meeting: To sensitize the Parliamentary Standing committee on Education on school WaSH issues lobby meeting will be organized between NCTF representatives and Parliamentary Standing committee on Education. Two meetings on same issues will be organized, the second meeting will be the follow up of first meeting. To sensitize PCCR to recognize school WaSH as child rights issue a lobby meeting between NCTF representatives and PCCR will be organized.

Submission of Memorandum: Two memorandums to Education Minister and Directorate of Secondary education on budget allocation for WaSH at school level will be submitted by NCTF.

Press briefing: Press briefing on advocacy initiatives, challenges and success will be held at the end of the project. In the press briefing a written speech will be presented by NCTF.

MEAL

Quality Benchmark for Advocacy Campaign:

- Advocacy strategy shared with Savar NCTF & NCTF Dhaka/Central Committee?
- Advocacy strategy focused the children's demand came out from baseline data?
- Advocacy initiative taken jointly by NCTF Children and CSID?
- Savar NCTF's Child Parliamentarian can advocate the project's advocacy issues in local and national level?
- Advocacy issue from Savar NCTF is consider in the NCTF Central Child Parliament?
- Does advocacy strategy share with relevant stakeholder working in the issues?
- Does advocacy strategy share with government relevant department?

Challenges

We have anticipated few challenges in implementing advocacy activities.

- Time schedule of the key stakeholders.
- Engage NCTF in such tight scheduled activities as they are all school children.
- Frequent participation of PCCR as they are engage with SC and CSID in other programs.
- Political situation of the country.
- One or two years time span for advocacy is not enough to achieve a policy change.

Conclusion

This innovative partnership project was developed based on a challenging idea of involving children's committee with CSOs. Implementation approach of this project will be completely different than other development projects. Under the project the strategy of advocacy initiatives is innovative. Time span of this advocacy initiative is too short to undertake all challenging activities involving all parties and partners. Common understanding, Quick response, regular close monitoring, proper coordination and cooperation from all partners are essential to make the initiative successful. NCTF Upazila committee should work in close cooperation with NCTF district and national committee to establish a strong platform at the grassroots level and make upazila committee sustainable after withdrawal of project's support. It would be highly ambitious if the project tries to achieve all its expected results within this short period.

Action Plan:

Activity	Objective	Time	Budget	Participants
Policy analysis to identify key advocacy issues on improving WASH at secondary school	To identify policy gaps and key advocacy issues	March,15	600000	-
Publish/sharing policy brief highlighting policy gaps and recommendation	Sharpen the advocacy objectives and strategy	September ,15	80000	NCTF, DSHE, PCCR, Parliamentary standing committee, Development Partners
Organize dialogue by NCTF at Upazilla level	Share the key findings of baseline study with Upazilla level stakeholders	May, 15	40000	SMC, School teachers, NCTF, Upazila level Govt officials
Organize dialogue by NCTF at National level	Sensitize targets groups on key objectives of advocacy	November,15	100000	NCTF, DSHE, PCCR, Development Partners, District and Upazilla education officer
Organize policy dialogue to mainstream the open budget practice mandatory for SMC	To mainstream the open budget practice mandatory for SMC	February, 16	100000	NCTF, DSHE, SMC, Development Partners, District and Upazilla education officer
Submission of memorandum to Education Minister, Directorate of Secondary education, facility department	Sensitize MoE on school WaSH demands	October,15 and March,16	20000	Secretary of MoE and DG of DSHE, NCTF
Advocacy with MoE and other concern department for allocating budget according to annual plan and budget	Sensitize MoE on separate budget allocation for WaSH	October,15 and March,16	20000	Secretary of MoE and DG of DSHE, NCTF
Lobby meeting with Parliamentary standing committee on education	Sensitize Parliamentary standing committee to take initiative to overcome policy barrier.	November,15 April,16	30000	Parliamentary standing committee on education, NCTF
Lobby meeting with PCCR for policy and practice changes to improve WASH situation in secondary schools	Sensitize PCCR to take influential role to overcome policy barrier.	June, 15 January,16	30000	PCCR, NCTF
Round table organized by parliamentary Caucus on child rights involving key targets groups and stakeholders	Sensitize MoE to allocate separate budget for WaSH.	May, 16	100000	NCTF,PCCR, DSHE, SMC, Development Partners, District and Upazilla education officer
Press brief by CSID, CRGA for institutionalizing child participation in SMC on planning and budget process	Share the updates of advocacy initiatives with media.	June, 16	30000	Print and Electronic Media Personals, NCTF, CRGA, CSID