

# Process Document: Initiative on Child-led Budget Analysis and Advocacy



## **About the report**

During July to December 2016, a child-led budget advocacy initiative, backed by a local research carried out by themselves had been facilitated by Save the Children in Bangladesh (SCiB) in partnership with Centre for Services and Information on Disability (CSiD). The key aim of this process document is to provide a **summary account of the process and the learnings** from the aforementioned initiative. Based on this report, it is expected to generate a replicable budget advocacy approach for the children.

The process document presents a snapshot of three major momentum of the said initiative:

- How target children groups got involved in the budget analysis process
- How they led (through facilitation) the budget analysis and what was the outcome
- How they translated the outcome into an advocacy effort and how they performed their role as child advocates

## **Backdrop of the initiative**

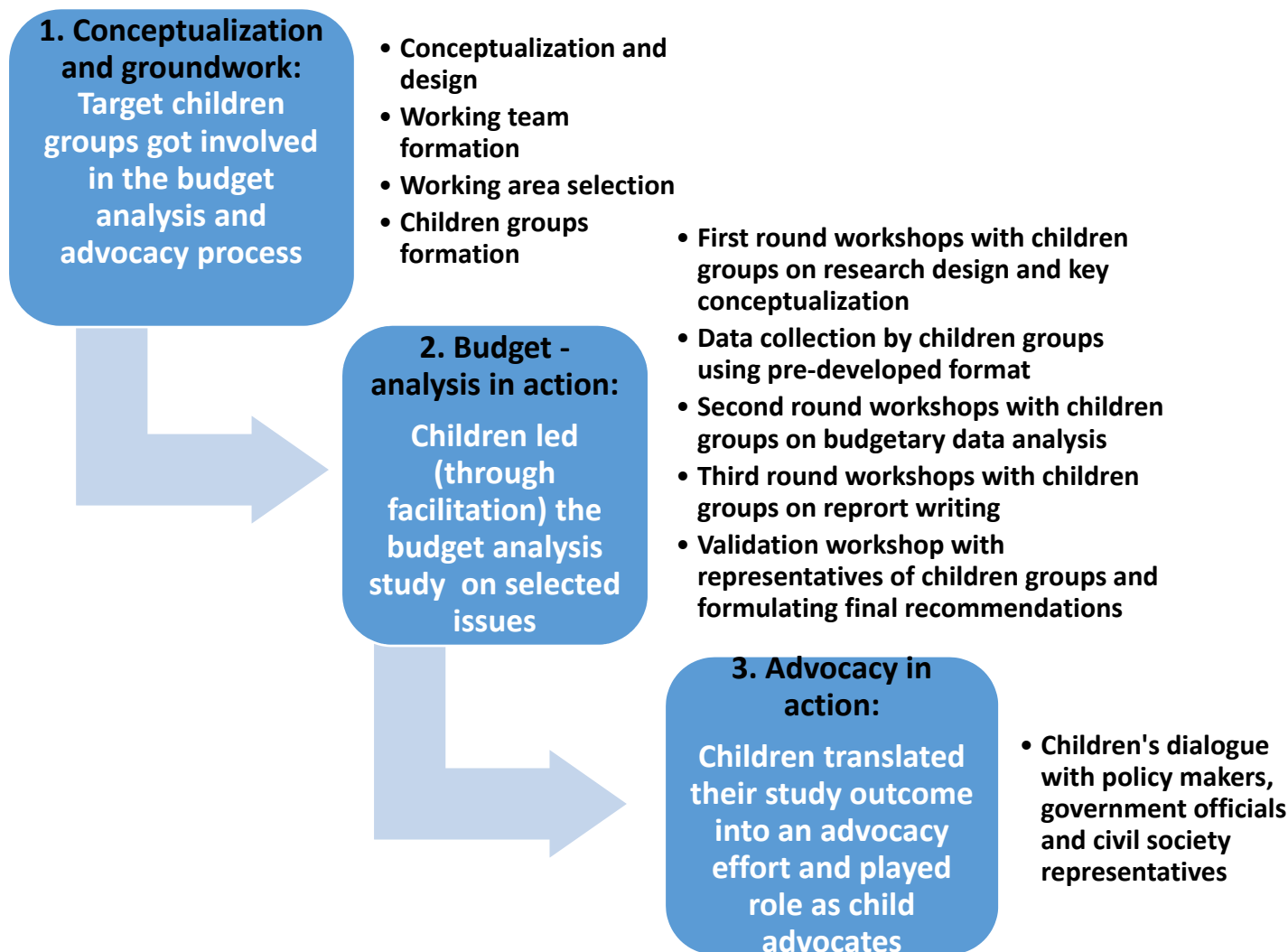
Voices of children are seldom reflected in development and fiscal planning by decision makers in Bangladesh. In fact, room for meaningful participation by children to influence policy decisions (especially, fiscal decisions) are very limited. The case is specifically valid for the poor and the marginalized children, as living conditions of children define their access to facilities and opportunities in many ways.

On the other hand, the Government of Bangladesh introduced child focused reporting on the national budget for FY2015-16. This reporting format is commonly known as the 'Child Budget', which aims to track investments in children. As a follow up, government has introduced the same for FY 2016-17 once more, which reports on children's share in the allocations of seven ministries.

At this crossroad, the budget analysis and advocacy initiative led by children had been designed and launched by SCiB and CSiD. The initiative aimed for facilitating poor and the marginalized children to carry out a local research by themselves and translate the outcome into an advocacy effort.

## Key steps: Design and process of 'Child-led budget analysis and advocacy'

Following flow-chart evinces the key steps and activities of the initiative at a glance. Each step and activities are described in latter part of this section.



## Step 1: Conceptualization and groundwork

### **Conceptualization and design**

The 'Child-led budget analysis and advocacy' initiative had been conceptualized and designed to be implemented under a regular project of SCiB and CSID titled 'Investing in children (IIC)'. The initiative was envisioned to launch a demand side-driven mechanism with regard to 'Child Budget', involving the key stakeholder i.e. children. The said initiative had been designed to devise effective and appropriate advocacy approaches to facilitate children's engagement in budget analysis process, accompanied with efforts to build their research and advocacy capacities.

Objectives of this initiative were:

- a) To prioritize rights based services for marginalized/excluded children through children's participation adopting Right Based Approaches (RBAs);
- b) To facilitate and capacitate the marginalized/excluded children in identifying and assessing gaps/limitations in public allocations and in developing budget recommendations for the prioritized services; and
- c) To facilitate campaign and advocacy with policymakers by the marginalized/excluded children.
- d) To generate a replicable child-led budget advocacy model.

Targeted participants for the workshops were thought of as members/ representatives of marginalized / excluded children including street children, children living in slums, children with disabilities and children of Hawor areas. And, activities with regard to budget analysis and advocacy were designed to be implemented in five stages, mostly in workshop mode during the time period of July to December 2016. Dhaka and Sylhet were primarily chosen as the working locations.

### **Learnings:**

- Throughout implementation stage, some components of initial design required customization to fulfill overall objectives and address participant's need. Indeed, the flexibility in design resulted into successful output.
- It was a bit challenging to fix dates for workshops, as the activities were implemented during second half of the year. Children were mostly busy with their exams.
- Could not include Howor children and street children due to shorter span of implementation period. Instead, rural poor children were included.

### **Recommendations:**

- Need to be flexible about the design while replicating the initiative.
- Need to fix the timeline when the children are free for the majority of the day (i.e. during long vacations/ first half of a year)

### **Working team formation**

CSID mobilized a new team for carrying out the initiative. Under the leadership of Executive Director of CSID, a Budget analyst and Public Finance expert was recruited as 'Issue Expert' on part time basis to facilitate and guide the child participants in carrying out their research. Besides, a part time 'Advisor' was recruited to guide the implementation modalities and accomplish the process documentation. CSID's internal staff members were deployed to work as district coordinators (2 persons) and field facilitators (2 persons) to implement the activities in Sylhet and Dhaka district. Both internal and external staff (hired on per-day basis) worked as note takers and co-facilitators during the workshops.

### **Working area selection**

Working areas were selected through assessing socio-economic conditions and poverty indicators of the localities. In Dhaka, Basila and its adjacent localities (slum area to reach urban poor children) was chosen as the working area. It can be mentioned here that, Basila has been included in Dhaka City Corporation territory just a year ago, hence it has a peri-urban flavor as well. A baseline was conducted in lower income households within this slum area to identify the target children. In Sylhet, Raniganj ward of Nandirgaon union under Gowainghat upazila was selected as another working area. It is worthy of mentioning that Gowainghat is the poorest upazila (upper poverty line is 52.6% and lower poverty line is 46.5%, as of National Census 2011) of Sylhet district. Raniganj is one among the poverty stricken areas of that upazila. A baseline was conducted to identify the target children in Raniganj.

#### **Learnings:**

- All the related staff / working team members needed to have a basic idea on research and budget analysis process.

#### **Recommendations:**

- An orientation workshop is required to take place for the staff members on research and budget analysis process before launching the key activities.

#### **Learnings:**

- Selection of geographical areas and formation of groups could successfully comprise the target children flagging SCiB's motto to reach 'every last child'.
- Living conditions of children defined their access to facilities and opportunities in many ways.

### **Children groups' formation**

Three groups of children (children with disabilities, slum children and rural poor children) were included in the initiative. Two groups (children with disabilities and slum children) were formed in Basila and adjacent localities (slum area) of Dhaka. Another group (rural poor children) was formed in Raniganj (poverty stricken rural area) of Sylhet. CSID team collected baseline information of 43 rural poor children to shortlist 20 rural poor children in Sylhet. In Dhaka, CSID team collected baseline information of 27 children with disabilities and 39 slum children. 15 children with disabilities and 20 slum children were shortlisted respectively on the basis of baseline information. A justifiable selection criteria was followed to shortlist the children of all groups to ensure spontaneous participation and maintain uninterrupted focus of children during budget analysis. Age limit of children of all the three groups ranged between 12 years and 18 years. 50% of the total children per group were female. In all groups, there were combinations of school/college-going, drop outs and working (part time and full time) children. In children with disabilities group, heterogeneity in types of disabilities was ensured. It included children with visual disabilities, physical disabilities, hearing and speech disabilities (sign language users). Children with intellectual disabilities, autism and profound degrees of disabilities were excluded considering the level of meaningful participation by the children. Child profiles of all the selected children were developed and SCiB's consent forms were signed by the respective guardians during formation of groups.

### **Learnings:**

- Group formation was very effective as it focused on retaining quality rather than quantity regarding child participation.
- Children who had been involved in CSID's other initiatives/ project activities, participated more meaningfully compared to others.
- Compensation package for the working children was required to taken into account.

### **Recommendations:**

- Focusing on retaining quality rather than quantity regarding child participation will ensure a vibrant group formation.

## Step 2: Budget -analysis in action:

The budget-analysis activities took place in four stages through participatory workshops, facilitated by the Issue Expert. Following part illustrates the objectives, process and learnings of each round of workshops.

### **First round of workshops with children groups on research design and key conceptualization**

First round of workshops were designed to be held separately for each group of children. Hence, three workshops took place with three groups following common objectives and almost similar session plan. However, sessions and methods / tools used against each session varied to some extent from one group to another. From time to time, tools/ methods were customized to fit into with each group's team-dynamics, heterogeneity, level of understanding and participation. In case of both slum children's group and children with disabilities group a half days additional session were required to fulfill the overall objective of the round.

Major objectives of two day long first-round workshops were as follows:

- Identification and prioritization of the most important issues the child group care most.
- Developing a suitable and child-friendly research design the groups can handle with.
- Developing consensus on suitable methods/techniques of data collection.
- Identification of sources of relevant data and information and developing data collection checklists.
- Distribution of tasks among the group members; role of the group leader and guide/facilitator

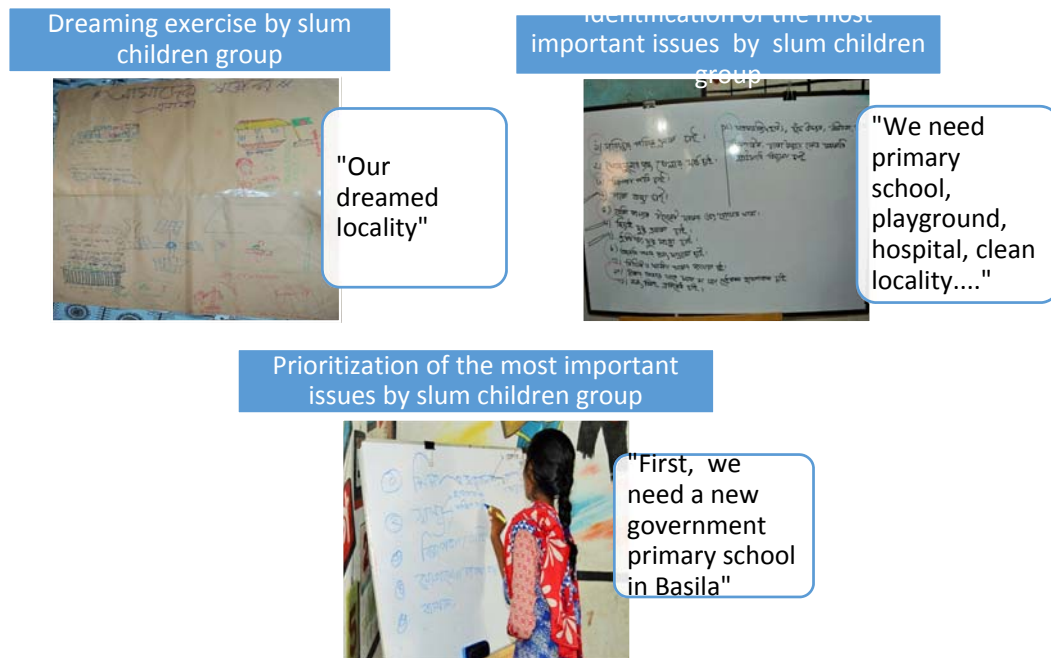


Photo series 1: First round workshop with slum children group



Dreaming exercise by children with disabilities group



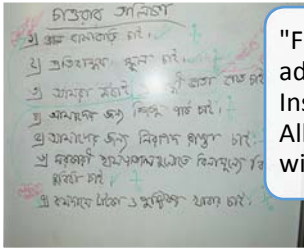
"Our dreamed life"

Identification of the most important issues by children with disabilities group



"We want disability-friendly school, disability allowance, safe road..."

Prioritization of the most important issues by children with disabilities group



"First, we want adequate coverage of Insovent Disability Allowance for children with disabilities"

Photo series 2: First round workshop with children with disabilities group

Dreaming Exercise by rural poor children group



"Our dreamed village"

Identification of the most important issues by rural poor children group



"Good communication facilities, safe drinking water, Quality education..."

Prioritization of the most important issues by rural poor children group



"First, we need a government high school in our village"

Photo series 3: First round workshop with rural poor children group

**Process followed and tools used during first round workshops**

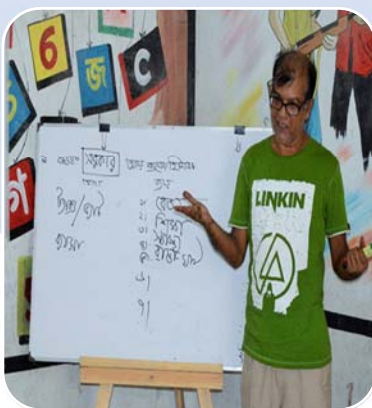
Sessions	Methods/ tools	Key observations
<p>Session 1 (30 minutes): <b>Introducing CSID team</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During this session with all groups of children <b>lecture and question /answer method</b> was followed.</li> <li>• CSID team members introduced themselves, stated their purpose of joining the workshop, and shared the goals and objectives of the 'research journey' for 4 months including children's specific roles and responsibilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This session did not work well during the workshop with slum children. Due to the congested venue, children could not concentrate properly. For the remaining workshops, the venue was shifted to a spacious and comfortable one to ensure effective participation.</li> </ul>
<p>Session 2 (60 minutes): <b>Knowing each other</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To facilitate this session, <b>individual interview method</b> was used in the workshop with slum children. After identifying limitation of this tool, <b>Interactive conversation in pair</b> method was used for the remaining groups.</li> <li>• Participants' names and family details, locality, schooling, work, likings, dis-likings were known to each other through this session. Facilitator interviewed each participants while following <b>individual interview method</b>. In <b>Interactive conversation in pair method</b> participants were paired to discuss in private for 5 minutes with each other. Later, one introduced another in plenary based on their interactive conversations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual interview method in the workshop with slum children did not work well as children could not concentrate or were not attentive. Hence, another tool (Interactive conversation in pair) was used for the remaining groups.</li> <li>• Rural poor children found to be more vibrant during this session, as they were well-known to each other.</li> </ul>
<p>Session 3 (120 minutes): <b>Mapping out everyday activity and measuring the level of satisfaction and dissatisfaction</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To facilitate this session (activity mapping) with slum children and children with disabilities, <b>group work and pictorial / written presentations, scaling (1 -5), debate and discussion</b> took place. Key discussion points covered during this session were: how do the participants spend their time, their activities during different segments of time, what every day activity makes them happy/unhappy and reasons behind that. Later they clustered major activities and related those with their personal experiences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This session was customized during the workshop with rural poor children, as their context were different. Instead a social mapping exercise took place.</li> <li>• It was observed that most of the participants were not interested in drawing pictures. They were</li> </ul>



<p>(for slum and CWD groups) / <b>Social mapping exercise</b> (for rural poor group)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To facilitate this session (social mapping) with rural poor children, group <b>work and pictorial / pictorial presentations and a panel review</b> took place. The children drawn a community map indicating each and everything (school, college, roads, houses, hills, markets, hospitals etc.) and a 3-members `expert panel` (seniors) formed to revisit the map and make changes as necessary. Following that presentation, discussion and debate were held. This session identified the locations where children frequently visit for their various purposes. A general discussion went on how do feel when they visit those places (such as school, playground, hospitals, markets etc.)</li> </ul>	<p>more comfortable in written and verbal presentations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Panel review added value to the whole method.</li> </ul>
<p>Session 4 (120 minutes): <b>Identifying the barriers</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For the workshop with slum group, a <b>mobility mapping exercise</b> was conducted to identify the sorts of barriers they usually phase in their community. <b>Group work</b> and <b>discussion in a plenary</b> were used as the tool.</li> <li>With children with disabilities, an <b>experience mapping exercise</b> was conducted to identify their barriers as a marginalized group. <b>Group work</b> and <b>debate - discussion in a plenary</b> were used as the tool.</li> <li>Rural poor children were engaged in a <b>locality based experience mapping exercise</b>, as the group members were from same village. <b>VIP card, Expert panel, debate-discussion in plenary</b> were used as the tools.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This session were customized for each group according to their contexts.</li> <li>With CWDs, facilitation or <b>group work</b> was done in a manner that a homogeneous voice can be echoed beyond their heterogeneities.</li> </ul>
<p>Session 5 (120 minutes): <b>Dreaming exercise: Visualizing the characteristics of a `dream-community or village</b> (for rural poor and slum group)/ <b>Visualizing a</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children with disabilities were facilitated towards a <b>dream exercise on how they visualize a comfortable life/barrier-free community</b> and developing a wish list. <b>Group works, pictorial presentation and discussion in a plenary that led to a wish list</b> were used as tools for this session.</li> <li>Rural poor children were facilitated towards a <b>dream exercise on visualizing the characteristics of a `dream-community`</b>. Each participant wrote two characteristics in a big piece of paper and an `expert panel (selected from participants)` observed everything and revisited the whole paper work and made necessary changes. Thus, <b>individual thinking, expert panel review, written presentation and discussion</b> were used as the tools.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This session were customized for each group according to their contexts.</li> <li>An innovative method named `dreaming exercise` had been used to enable them to visualize a comfortable life together, instead of `problem tree` while identifying the issues with budgetary implications. The insight of this session and tool was, children</li> </ul>

<p><b>comfortable life</b> (for CWD group)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slum children were facilitated towards a <b>dream exercise on how they visualize their dream-locality and developing a wish list. Group works, pictorial presentation and discussion in a plenary that led to a wish list</b> were used as tools for this session.</li> </ul>	<p>should envision for a better life without being negative.</p>
<p>Session 6 (45 minutes): <b>Personal budget: income and expenditure</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This session was facilitated through <b>lecture, discussion-debate and consensus building</b>. The session incorporated discussion points on: income and expenditure of a child, how do they make their income and how do they spend their money and for what purposes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children could easily relate with key concepts of budget.</li> </ul>
<p>Session 7 (60 minutes): <b>From personal budget to Government budget: Income and expenditure</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This session was facilitated through <b>lecture, discussion and debate method</b>. The session incorporated discussion points on: government budget, sources of government revenue/income, government expenditure, distribution of resources from central government to local government.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children could easily relate with key concepts of budget.</li> </ul>
<p>Session 8 (120 minutes): <b>Overview on data collection, group formation and checklist</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Lecture, discussion and question- answer</b> were used as the tools.</li> <li>Key discussion points covered: what is budgetary information, why do we need information, where to go for information, how to approach the government or elected officials and what kind of information the children will need?</li> <li>Potential data collectors (8-10 children) were identified and they were provided with a list of questions (data collection checklist/ tool) for their own understanding. Later, two team leaders from each group (total 4 children) explained the data collection tools to the whole group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The children found to be very rich in terms of having information and articulation capacity.</li> <li>Both slum children's group and children with disabilities group required additional time to cover this session.</li> </ul>

## What is budget? - From personal budget to Government budget



Session during workshop with slum children group



Session during workshop with children with disabilities group



Session during workshop with rural poor children group

Photo series 4: Sessions on budget in first round workshops with children

## Group-wise topics selected by children for carrying out local research

<u>Slum children group</u>	<u>Children with disabilities group</u>	<u>Rural poor children group</u>
Enhanced primary education services and other facilities from government in slum areas	Increased coverage and allocation of 'insolvent disability allowance' for children with disabilities	Enhanced coverage and facilities of secondary education services from government in rural areas

### **Key learnings from first round workshops:**

- Intellectual and analytical abilities of children were found to be far better than what we expected earlier. General observation suggests that, 40% of the total participants per group are intellectually sound.
- The children found to be very rich in terms of having information and articulation capacity.
- A good number of girl child were found to be enthusiastic and well-articulated.
- Most of the children felt comfortable in writing rather than drawing pictures during workshop sessions.
- Team dynamics of rural poor children found to be more vibrant compared to other groups, as they upheld a similar communal feeling of a closely knitted rural set-up.
- Engaging sign language user children found to be a bit challenging.
- Sessions and tools often got customized on spot to address the different contexts /needs of the groups and as per flow of discussion points. However, the customization process moved on very smoothly due to excellent facilitation flow.
- Comfortable venue and logistics ensured more attentive participation.
- As the workshops with different groups progressed under this round, the facilitation got more matured and fluent. Gradually the similar sessions took lesser time and it became easier to achieve the expected outcome of the round.

### **Recommendations:**

- Comfortable venue and child logistics is required to ensure effective participation of the children. In rural set up, reasonable adjustments may need to be arranged.
- While replicating the process, the facilitator require to be well conversant of different context of children from different background/ realities.

## Data collection by children groups using pre-developed format

Selected representatives (7 to 10 children per group) collected primary data form local government offices.

List of offices visited by children groups for data collection		
<u>Slum children group</u>	<u>Children with disabilities group</u>	<u>Rural poor children group</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ward Commissioner's Office, Balisa</li><li>• Dhaka North Regional City Corporation Office, Karwanbazaar</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ward Commissioner's Office, Balisa</li><li>• City Social Services Office, Adabor - Mohammadpur Thana</li><li>• Directorate of Social Services, Agargaon</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Union Council Office, Nandirgaon Union</li><li>• Upazila Nirbahi Officer's and Upazila Education Officer's Offices, Gowainghat Upazila</li></ul>

### *Process followed during data collection*

They were facilitated to develop issue-specific checklists for data collection and underwent mock sessions. Children groups visited relevant government offices, interviewed concerned officials and collected written budget documents. The CSID team communicated with the relevant offices time before hand to make appointments and to brief the concerned officials on the purpose and children's roles.



Mock session with slum children group



Mock session with children with disabilities group



Mock session with rural poor children group

Photo series 5: Mock sessions on data collection by the children groups

Data collection by children with disability group



Children taking notes while conversing with City Social Services Officer

Data collection by children with disability group



Children were briefed by DG of Directorate of Social Services

Data collection by slum children group



Children collecting data at Dhaka North Regional City Corporation Office

Data collection by rural poor children group



Children interviewing Nandirgaon Union Council Chairman

Data collection by rural poor children group



Children collecting data at UNO office of Gowainghat Upazilaa

Photo series 6: Data collection by the children groups

### Key learnings from data collection process by the children groups:

- Prior grip with the government offices made the data collection process easier.
- The project implementation team needed to be more conversant on the purpose of data collection, in order to brief clearly on what data the children will require.
- Government officers needed to be sensitized towards children, in order to providing adequate time during data collection meetings.
- Children exposure to government offices boosted up their confidence level.
- In some cases, children could not get appointments from the most related official due to time constraint.

### Recommendations:

- The project implementation team need to be well conversant on the purpose of data collection, so that they can brief in detail to respective offices to deliver the children with relevant data.
- The data collection phase will require allocating adequate time in future, so that appointments from most relevant government official can be sought.

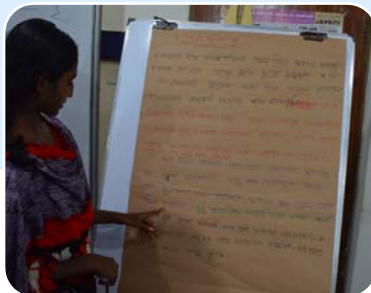


## Second round workshops with children groups on budgetary data analysis

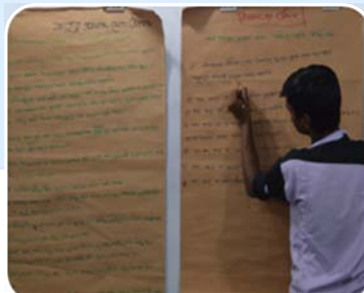
Second round of workshops were designed to be held separately for each group of children. Hence, three workshops took place with three groups following common objectives and almost similar session plan. However, sessions and methods / tools used against each session varied to some extent from one group to another. From time to time, tools/ methods were customized to fit into with each group's team-dynamics, heterogeneity, level of understanding and participation.

Major objectives of two day long second-round workshops were as follows:

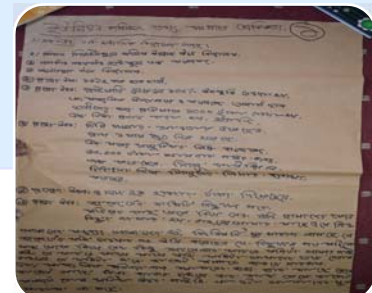
- Sharing experience of data collecting process: good experience and bad experience
- Evaluating the group by themselves (self-reflection): what went right and wrong during the data collection process
- Providing techniques of compiling the data
- How to link local level data with the national one
- Providing techniques to analyze and interpret data
- Selecting representatives to write reports



Session with slum children group



Session with children with disabilities group



Session with rural poor children group

Photo series 7: Session on sharing experiences of data collection in second round workshops



Session with slum children group



Session with children with disabilities group



Session with rural poor children group

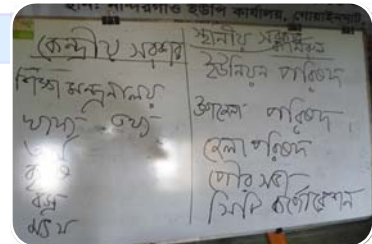
Photo series 8: Session on why budget is important in second round workshops



Session with slum children group



Session with children with disabilities group



Session with rural poor children group

Photo series 9: Session on central and local budget in second round workshops



Session with slum children group



Session with children with disabilities group



Session with rural poor children group

Photo series 10: Session on analyzing budgetary data in second round workshops

**Process followed and tools used during second round workshops**

Sessions	Methods/ tools	Key observations
<p>Session 1 (30 minutes): <b>Introduction</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For all groups, this session was facilitated through following <b>lecture / discussion and question answer</b> method. At the outset of this session, participants greeted each other once again as they met after a certain period of time. Then the Lead facilitator briefed the children about the purpose of second round workshop i.e. to make them understand, compile, organize and interpret budgetary data.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children found to be more comfortable with each other and with project team members, compared to the first round of workshops.</li> </ul>
<p>Session 2 (180 minutes): <b>Sharing experiences of data collection</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For all groups, this session was facilitated through <b>group work</b> and <b>presentation</b> which led to <b>preparation of summary write up by interested individuals</b>. Key points covered in the group works were: what did they ask for during data collection, how did the officials responded, what data did the children get from them, what went right and what went wrong with regard to data collection process. Then, some interested children were assigned to summarize experiences of data collection and develop small write ups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experiences shared by the children were mostly positive.</li> <li>A very few children found to be capable of developing quality write ups. The purpose of this task at individual level was to identify potential report writers from each group.</li> </ul>
<p>Session 3 (120 minutes): <b>Why budget analysis is important</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This session were designed to be facilitated in <b>combination of multiple tools</b>. At the beginning if this session the facilitation team engaged children in an <b>entertaining game</b>. During the workshops with all groups of children, participants were split into three teams. Each team were provided with 17 VIP cards containing same texts. On 5 VIP cards, the basic rights of human beings were written using child friendly wording. Remaining 12 cards contained some other needs of children. The children in three teams gradually discarded the less important needs, without which they can survive. Finally, they came up with 5 rights in hand, without which they cannot survive. At the end of the game, all the teams found that they kept the similar 5 cards. This game worked as an entry point to initiate <b>discussion</b> on rights, value for money and states role to take care of basic rights and UN conventions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children enjoyed the game based group works during the discussion on basic rights.</li> <li>Rural poor children group found to be richer in terms of having information and articulation capacity during this session.</li> </ul>

	<p>including UDHR, CRC, CRPD etc. At the end of this discussion the facilitator related the basic rights with budget and <b>lectured</b> on why budget analysis is important.</p>	
<p>Session 4 (90 minutes): <b>Central and local budget</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For all groups, brief <b>discussion</b> about central and local government budget, link between central and local government budget took place during this session using <b>lecture and question answer</b> method. A group work also took place to analyze collected data in light of central and local level budget.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In this session, most of the children faced difficulty with regard to data analysis. Some of the children, who participated well and contributed meaningfully during first round of workshops could not contribute well during this technical session.</li> </ul>
<p>Session 5 (60 minutes): <b>Data compilation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Discussion and question answer</b> methods were used to discuss on what the children intended to do with budgetary data and how to organize and compile data.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The level of participation dropped quantitatively in case of all groups. Facilitator had to translate and present technical jargons in a child friendly way instantly.</li> </ul>
<p>Session 6 (150 minutes): <b>Analyzing the budgetary data</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion, question answer, group work took place in a row to cover this session's agenda for all groups. Key discussion points emphasized on: was data available at local level, was the amount of money sufficient to address the barrier identified by the children groups, how does the government prepare the budget, do the children have any participation that process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alike previous session, the level of participation dropped quantitatively in case of all groups. Facilitator had to translate and present technical jargons in a child friendly way instantly.</li> <li>This session was customized for each group to fit into their different contexts.</li> </ul>
<p>Session 7 (30 minutes): <b>Group formation for report writing</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential participants were identified to form report writing teams for each group during this session. The selected participants (three to four children per group) were assigned for developing notes of analyzed data (i.e. small write ups) at home and requested to bring that write up in third round workshops.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It was found to be a bit difficult to select representatives from slum and CWD groups.</li> </ul>

### **Key learnings from second round workshops:**

- As the child-led research initiative entered into a technical phase during this round, level of participation of children dropped quantitatively. It was observed that, children from the age range of 14 to 18 years could engage more meaningfully. Exposure to education also played a crucial role in shaping children's level of participation.
- A very few children found to be capable of developing quality write ups.
- Rural poor children group found to be richer in terms of having information and articulation capacity during this round, compared to other two groups.
- Facilitator had to translate and present technical jargons in a child friendly way instantly in order to ensure meaningful participation of children.
- Children with visual and hearing disabilities were found to face difficulties to engage during this round.

### **Recommendations:**

- The lead facilitator will be required adequate knowledge on fiscal policy issues. The facilitator must have the capacity to translate and present technical jargons in a child friendly way. Such skillful innovation and presentation must be spontaneous and instant.

### Third round workshops with children groups on report writing

One day long third round of workshops were designed to be held separately for each group of children. Hence, three workshops took place with three groups following common objectives. However, the session plans for different groups widely varied from each other. The variation in designs were not pre-determined, rather those were highly contextual. The dissimilarities emerged from the learning and experiences of every single workshop as those graduated from one group to another. Hence, from time to time, session plan, tools/ methods were customized to fit into with each group's team-dynamics, heterogeneity, level of understanding and participation. In case of rural poor children's group, the third round workshop took place in a row immediately after the second round workshop of that group. It was done in order to save resources and ensure children's availability during their exam season.

Major objectives of one day long third-round workshops were as follows:

- Discussion on how to write a report
- Developing a consensus on reporting format
- Selecting representatives to write reports and assist them to prepare a draft report

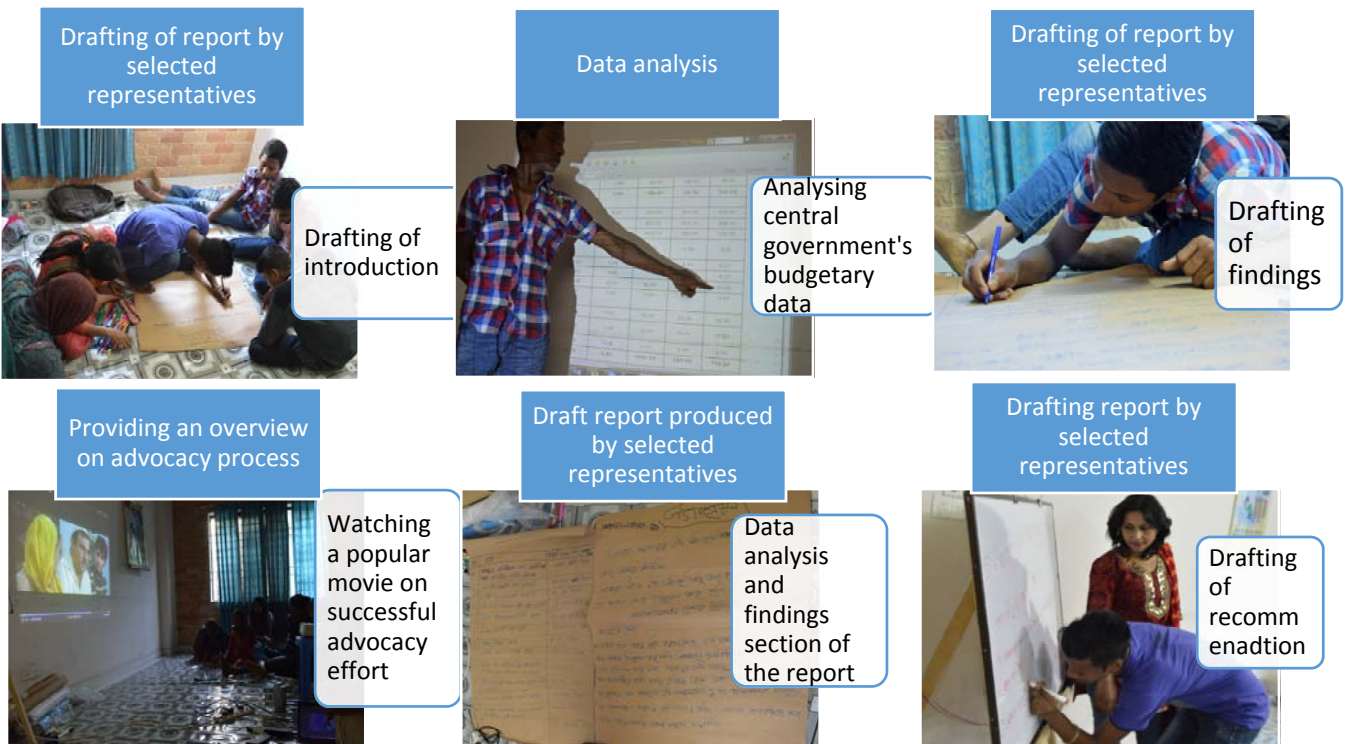


Photo series 11: Third round workshop with children with disabilities



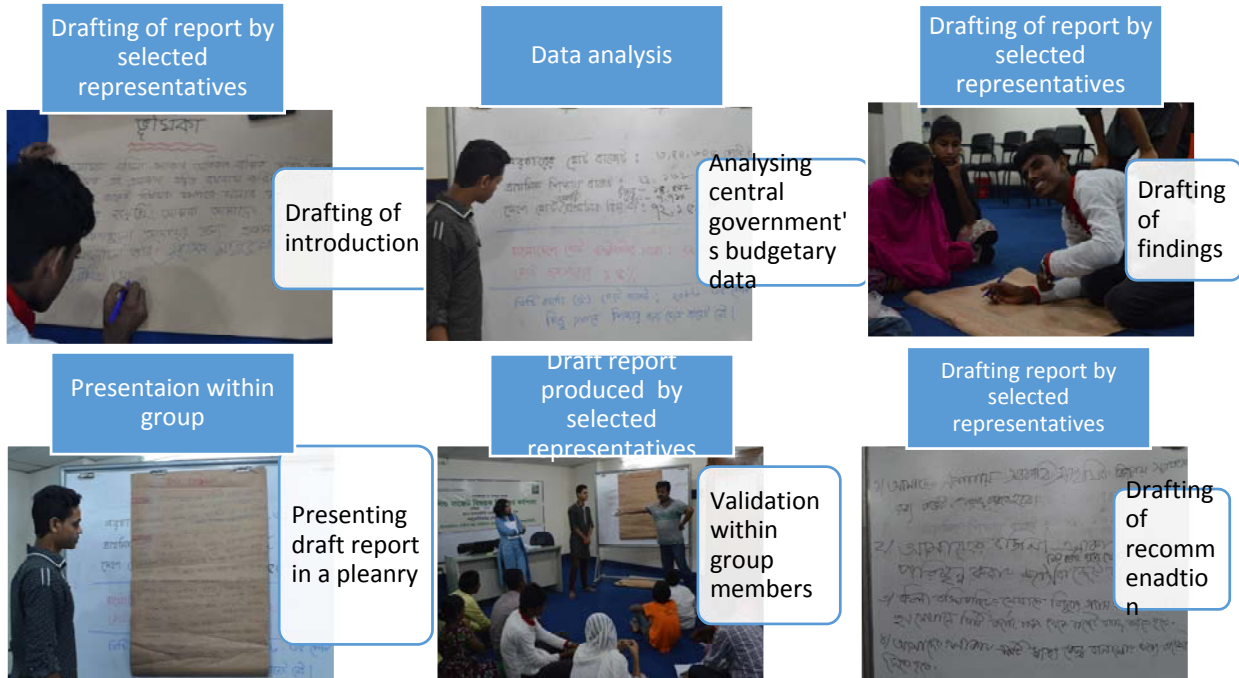


Photo series 12: Third round workshop with slum children



Photo series13: Third round workshop with rural poor children

### Process followed and tools used during third round workshops

Sessions	Methods/ tools	Key observations
<p>Session 1 (30 minutes): <b>Overview on simple research report's format and parallel activity</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In the workshop with slum children, this session was conducted through <b>discussion and debate in a plenary</b> session. Major points of discussion emphasized on contextualization of the research topic of this group. Later, four selected participants (representatives) were given the responsibility of drafting the report and they were briefed on the format of a simple research report. The remaining children were assigned to watch the writing process.</li><li>• In the workshop with children with disabilities, only data collection team members (6 in total) participated and the session was conducted through <b>debate and discussion in a plenary</b>. Points of discussion covered the similar points as of the session with slum group. Afterwards, among them three participants were assigned to lead the writing process. However, all of the six participants were requested to contribute in the report drafting session.</li><li>• In the workshop with rural poor children, only data collection team members (6 children in total) were involved in report writing process. Remaining 14 participants were assigned in a <b>parallel activity</b>. They were introduced to <b>systematic photo-shoot of barriers</b> (which they identified during first round of workshop) in their community. Hence, during this session report writing team were briefed on the format of a simple research report through <b>debate and discussion in a plenary</b>. The remaining children were oriented on camera operation, choosing subjects for photo shoot and representation of photo story.</li><li>• Selected participants from all groups of children were assigned to develop small write ups (i.e. notes on analyzed data) as home work at the end of the second round of</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In the workshop with slum group, most of the participants did not concentrate well apart from data collection and report writing team members.</li><li>• Assigning most of the children of slum group to watch the writing process, did not work at all. It created isolation as they could not engage with the writing team well, which resulted into a chaotic situation and facilitators faced difficulties to meet up overall objective of this round.</li><li>• Based on the experience earned from the workshop with slum group, the next workshop of this round (held with children with disabilities) were redesigned. Consequently, only data collection team members of this group attended this round of workshop. Yet, it had been acknowledged that excluding most of the</li></ul>

	<p>workshops. However, only rural poor children brought those write ups. Hence, lead facilitator commented on those notes during this session.</p>	<p>children was not a good practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure inclusion of all children without hampering the overall objective and flow of facilitation, this round of workshop with rural poor children was designed in a thoughtful manner. Accordingly, parallel sessions took place where all children could engage and contribute meaningfully.</li> <li>• Compared to other groups, rural poor children found to be more sincere about the drafting and submitting their homework.</li> </ul>
<p>Session 2 (180 minutes): <b>Drafting report (introduction and background, methodology, data analysis and findings, recommendations) and parallel activity</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During this session with slum children, selected four children drafted their report through <b>group work</b> and prepared <b>written presentations</b>. They drafted the introductory part of the report highlighting their context /background and the ultimate goal/objectives of their research work. Besides, they tried to clearly articulate their selected issue for researching and process of selecting that issue. Methodology part of their report highlighted the whole process of their involvement and role in the said initiative. For data analysis they reviewed central government’s budgetary allocation related to their issue and developed key findings. They incorporated different parts of the research report in a written presentation and presented that. Based on that presentation, remaining children and project team members provided their inputs and thus the report was <b>validated</b> within the group.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As the report writing team members from all groups were chosen based their writing and articulation capacity, contributed amazingly well in drafting their reports.</li> <li>• Children found to be enthusiastic about the photo shoot activity and did well.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During this session with children with disabilities group, all participants drafted their report through <b>group work</b>. They drafted the introductory part of the report highlighting their context /background and the ultimate goal/objectives of their research work. Besides, they tried to clearly articulate their selected issue for researching and process of selecting that issue. Methodology part of their report highlighted the whole process of their involvement and role in the said initiative. For data analysis they reviewed central government’s budgetary allocation related to their issue and developed key findings. Children analyzed central government’s social safety net program’s budgetary data, using <b>multimedia</b>. An extra component was added during this session. Children watched a popular movie (Well Done Abba) to learn about successful advocacy effort.</li> <li>• During this session with rural poor group, 6 children involved in report writing were split into two groups. Through <b>group work</b>, they simultaneously drafted the introduction, methodology, data analysis and findings part of the report and developed <b>written presentations</b>. Two groups <b>presented</b> their parts <b>in a plenary</b> and formulated final recommendations together. The remaining 14 children, who took part in the photo shoot (parallel activity) shared their findings within the group.</li> </ul>	
<p>Session 3 (45 minutes): <b>What the children have learnt throughout the research initiative</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In this session with slum and groups of children, they wrote what they have learnt throughout the research initiative through group work.</li> <li>• Rural poor children articulated their thoughts in a plenary discussion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural poor children got very emotional during this session while expressing their thoughts. One of the participant wrote a poem to express how blessed he was to be a part of this initiative.</li> </ul>

**Key learnings from third round workshops:**

- As the report writing team members from all groups were chosen based their writing and articulation capacity, contributed amazingly well in drafting their reports.

**Recommendations:**

- All children in a group may not have equal writing capacity and thus cannot contribute well in drafting. However, alternatives to engage them and ensure their participation can be way out while replication.

## Validation workshop with representative of children groups and formulating final demands

Validation workshop was designed to consolidate and validate three reports developed separately by each group of children. Hence, one half day long workshop took place with selected representatives from three groups. Nine children, who led the report writing phase participated in the workshop. Apart from validating their prior findings, the children had analyzed some additional national level budgetary data in order to add value in their reports. Later, they also formulated final recommendations / demands.

### Major objectives of a half day long validation workshop were as follows:

- Interaction among three groups on their experiences on research process and findings
- Identifying missing information in previously drafted reports by the children through analyzing central government's budgetary data (relevant project's ongoing fiscal year's allocation)
- Developing consensus on findings, minimizing gaps and missing links in the reports
- Formulating final recommendations/ demands for further advocacy effort
- Ascertaining new learnings of the children through the whole research process

### **Process followed during validation workshop**

The workshop took place in SCiB office in presence of the key team members of both CSID and SCiB. Three children per group (i.e. in total nine children from three groups) attended the workshop. These children were involved in the report writing phase and led the writing process and represented their groups in the validation workshop. At the outset of the validation workshop, the children from three groups got known to each other through **interactive conversation in pair** method. All the children were paired from two different groups. Each pair interacted between themselves and introduced each other in a plenary. Then they were provided with printouts of their reports (fine-tuned version of the reports, which they drafted earlier) to find out missing information. Each group **separately presented** their missing information and remaining groups fed into with their thoughts to improvise the reports. In connection to this, the children identified relevant central government projects under ADP and analyzed allocations for current fiscal year. In this manner, they analyzed the actual budgetary allocation on ongoing fiscal year of the government which are related to their primary demands and added those information to enrich their reports. Later, they formulated final recommendations / demands based on their findings through group work.





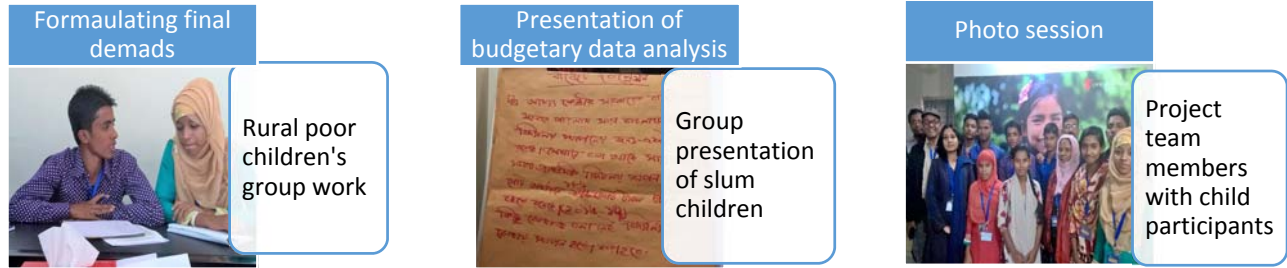
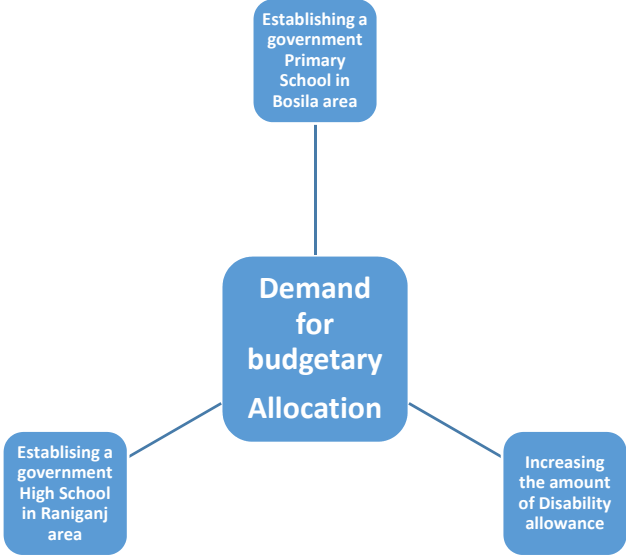


Photo series 14: Sessions during validation workshop

Final demands chalked out by children are as follows:



**Key learnings from validation workshop:**

- Use of information technology (which are usually inaccessible for the marginalized and poor children) like laptop, internet and multimedia enhanced enthusiasm of children during the sessions.
- Interaction among the marginalized children from different living conditions, enabled them to have a glimpse on heterogeneities within disadvantaged segment of the society.
- Children found to be very prompt in analyzing budgetary data of central government, compared to what was expected while designing the workshop.

## Advocacy effort by the children in light of their research work

### **A brief note on the Children's dialogue with policy makers, government officials and civil society representatives**

To place the research findings and demands before policy makers, a national level dialogue was organized. The motto of this workshop was to enable children to influence fiscal policy decisions on the basis of their research findings.

At the dialogue, 3 representatives of 55 children involved in the child-led research presented their findings and placed their demands before policy makers including member of parliaments. Jebunnesa Afroz, MP graced the event as chief guest, while Kazi Rozi, MP presided that. Prof M Abu Eusuf of Dhaka University was present as the special guest. The dialogue was moderated by Ashiq Iqbal, Public Finance Advisor of SCIB. Several Government officials including Anisul Awwal, DG of Labour Welfare Foundation at the Ministry of Labour and Employment were also present in the meeting. 15 selected children participated as well.

Key observations:

At the event, Guests posed some critical comments on the initiative which are as follows:

- In order to make the advocacy comprehensive, more children were needed to be incorporated in the initiative from different geographical areas, contexts and background.
- Children needed to have a clear concept on methodology followed to analyze budgetary data.
- Children needed to have a holistic approach on their findings in order to make their demands credible.



Issue Expert's final briefing to report presenters



Chief Guest and Special Guests along with the Moderator and Chair at the Dialogue



Representatives from each children group presented their key findings and demands



Participants at the Dialogue



Anisul Awwal, Director General of Labour Welfare Foundation commented on the methodology



Palash, a child with disability, while speaking during the open discussion



Jebunnesa Afroz, MP provided her speech as Chief Guest



Concluding speech by Kazi Rozi, MP as Chair

Photo series 15: Children's Dialogue with policy makers

**Key learnings from the advocacy effort:**

- Children have shown their skills and spent to present their research findings before the policy makers including the member of parliaments.
- The children required to be oriented enough on research methodology and importance of presenting accurate data / information (in order to make the findings credible) before commencing the advocacy activity.
- The children required more preparation on advocacy techniques and presentation skills. A little more effort (as an instance, inclusion of an extra session on advocacy techniques and presentation skills during third round of workshops) was needed to prepare the children for this national level advocacy event.

## Conclusion

### ***Key thoughts of lead-facilitator (Issue Expert) on the overall process***

#### On his overall experience:

“Dominant assumption about children’s understanding on policy process had been challenged. As a matter of fact, it was quite impressive and amazing to see how these children developed the stock of information; organized and processed those in making their arguments no matter how strong or weak those arguments were. This is perhaps these kids are growing up in age of ‘information revolution’, which is beyond our imagination.”

#### On his learnings:

“First, as pre-set tools, conventional methods or techniques (which can be pegged as entertaining for children) did not work that much. Rather discussion and debate in this case worked well. It went on like free flow of river’s stream.

Second, physical environment played an important role with regard to meaningful participation and engagement of children.

Third, preparing and putting them on driving seat was the ultimate objective of the facilitation process. In that way, the overall process reconstructed the conventional definition of facilitation characterized by its dominant role of ‘steering’ all the time. Once the children realized that the journey is ‘empowering’ for them, enthusiasm went up to the sky. They did not get distracted from what they were asked to perform.”

#### His recommendation:

“Critical engagement of children in such policy discourse will require vigorous facilitation skills, which may be considered as key to success. Hence, the lead facilitator must possess adequate knowledge and understanding on related policy issues (fiscal policy/budget, in this case). However, the most important skill the facilitator needs is his/her capacity to translate and present budget-related technical jargons and concepts in a very child-friendly way. Such skillful innovation and presentation must be spontaneous and instant ”



***Overall learnings***

Passion and willingness to learn from children and explorative approach towards the tools and methods of facilitation made the process a successful one.

***Overall recommendation***

While replicating the entire project team must possess adequate knowledge and experiences with regard to fiscal policy and public financing, child rights, research methodology, advocacy and child participation. If required, capacity building efforts may take place before implementing such initiative.