



■ Local education officer, teacher, and parents are the prorating strategic issue in group work on SDG 4

Executive Summary

Civil Society Spotlight Report on the SDG 4 Implementation Status in Bangladesh

COUNTRY FACTS AND FIGURES



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| TOTAL POPULATION: | 164.67 million (UNESCO, 2017) |
| POPULATION AGED 14 YEARS AND YOUNGER: | 46.717 million (28%) (UNESCO, 2017) |
| GNI PER CAPITA: | US\$ 1,470 (World Bank, 2017) |
| INCOME GROUP: | Lower Middle Income Status (World Bank, 2018) |
| HDI VALUE AND RANK: | 0.608, 136 out of 189 (UNDP, 2017) |
| POVERTY HEADCOUNT RATIO AT NATIONAL POVERTY LINES (% OF POPULATION): | 24.3% (World Bank, 2016) |
| NET ENROLMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOL : | 97.97% (Bangladesh Education Statistics, 2017) |
| OUT OF SCHOOL RATE: | 17.39% (UNESCO, 2019) |
| OUT OF SCHOOL: | 6.12 million children (UNICEF estimate, 2016) ² |
| LITERACY RATE (15-24 YEARS): | 92.95% Female: 94.38%, Male: 91.54% (UNESCO, 2017) |
| LITERACY RATE (15 YEARS AND OLDER): | 72.89% Female: 70.09% Male: 75.7% (UNESCO, 2017) |
| EDUCATION EXPENDITURE: | 2.09% of the GDP and 11.42% of the total government expenditure (Ministry of Finance, 2018-19) |

Country and Education Context

Bangladesh has achieved macroeconomic stability through a consistent trend of economic progress and continues to make socioeconomic progress through prudent use of human resources. In addition to the National Education Policy 2010 and complementing supportive documents, the Seventh Five Year Plan (7th FYP 2016-2020) seeks to increase the growth rate to reach 8 per cent by the end of the 7thFYP in 2021 and reduce poverty to 13.6 per cent. The quality of the labour force in terms of general education, as well as scientific and technical skills, is the most crucial factor for increasing productivity, improving competitiveness, and securing sustainable gains in employment, income and poverty reduction.

Bangladesh is one of the highly populated E-9 countries¹ committed to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals to transform our world as adopted by the world leaders at the United Nations in September 2015. Prior to that, in May 2015, the World Education Forum (WEF) 2015 in Incheon, Korea, set the ambitious Education 2030 agenda, replacing EFA 2015, to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

The Education 2030 Agenda has been reflected as SDG 4 with 10 targets. It has been highlighted that the success of other SDGs, such as in health, growth and employment, sustainable consumption and production, climate change and humanitarian response, and peace, values, and good governance, is also driven by the education goal. Thus, to ensure that Bangladesh leaves no one behind, achieving SDG 4 and all its targets must be prioritised.

- ¹ E-9 countries are the highly populated countries in the world representing over half of the world's population and 70% of the world's illiterate adults.
- ² UNICEF estimated a total of 6.12 million children in 2016 of which approximately 1 million pre-primary level, 2.5 million primary level and 3 million lower secondary level. Among them about 2.56 million of age ranging 8-14 which is considered as out of school children of primary level in 2016 as recognised by the Annual Primary School Census.
- ³ Bangladesh Education Statistics 2018, published in 2018.



Government Rollout and Implementation of the SDGs and SDG

The Government of Bangladesh has taken the Sustainable Development Goals as a core agenda since its inception and has taken a number of initiatives around it, along with SDG 4. Immediately after the adoption of the SDGs, the Honourable Prime Minister of Bangladesh has appointed a Principal Coordinator for SDG Affairs to coordinate among the key actors with a Principal Secretary equivalent position, who leads the Inter-Ministerial Committee on the SDGs Implementation and Review. At the ministry level, there is one focal point and one alternative focal point for SDG-related issues. Three officials in the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, Secondary and Higher Education Division, and Technical and Madrasah Education Division were appointed as focal points, while three alternative focal points have been assigned in the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education and two divisions of the Ministry of Education.

The Election Manifesto 2018 of the ruling party of Bangladesh was transformative as it considers all SDGs and gives high priority on equity issues. For example, one of the six thematic areas is 'My Village, My Town' which aims to address the disparities. This will include improving the education infrastructure, improving the supply of professionally trained and qualified teachers, increasing internet and electricity connectivity, and reducing existing disparities in the urban areas.

The Seventh Five-Year Plan was almost ready when the SDGs were adopted, but the government has taken more efforts to align the plan with the SDGs. The General Economic Division of the Ministry of Planning has played a critical role in internalising the SDGs within the planning process of the government. The GED has carried out a number of initiatives, including the mapping of ministries by targets, for the implementation of the SDGs and their alignment with the 7th Five Year Plan, SDGs Financing Strategy, and Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, among others. This contributed to the state-level readiness and the development of an annual performance agreement by the Ministries and concerned government agencies. Moreover, under the leadership of Ministry of Education (MoE) and Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME), the government has developed an SDG 4 Strategic Framework for Bangladesh (Draft) where UNESCO Dhaka office, Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO (BNCU) and CAMPE also played key roles. In addition, the Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS) has developed the National Indicator Framework (NIF) for education and also identified additional indicators for localisation of SDG 4 and the facilitation of data-driven policy decision in education.

There are two sector-wide programmes, namely the Fourth Primary Education Development Program (PEDP4) and

the Secondary Education Development Programme (SEDP). In addition, two other education sector planning processes are in the pipeline, which includes non-formal education (NFE) and technical and vocational education and training (TVET).

CSO's Role in the SDG Implementation and Review Process

The non-state actors, particularly civil society and the NGOs in Bangladesh, are vibrant and have played a significant role in fostering the progress in implementing SDGs in Bangladesh. The Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) is a civil society platform formed by the education activists in 1990. It acts as the national coalition for education in the country and engages with the government, development partners, and civil society actors, including the teacher's associations to advocate for the right to education and pro-poor policy decisions focused on quality, equity, and financing education.

CAMPE has a high level of participation in the Local Education Group (LEG) process. The official process to coordinate with the government, development partners, and civil society, is known as the Local Consultative Group for Education (ELCG) in Bangladesh. In addition, CAMPE represents civil society in different working groups and technical committees formed by the government. Currently, CAMPE is representing civil society in more than 30 committees, taskforce, technical team, and an advisory committee formed by the government.

CAMPE has contributed to developing the SDG 4 Strategic Framework for Bangladesh under the leadership of the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Primary and Mass Education. The core process has been conducted jointly by BNCU, CAMPE, and UNESCO Dhaka office. CAMPE has organised a series of consultations at the national and sub-national levels, contributed to identifying issues and strategies, and also coordinated with the different actors.

The government values citizen-led initiatives and participated in the consultations organised by civil society. The national coalition, Citizen's Platform for SDGs, and youth-led organisations are organising a number of consultations on SDG 4 where government representatives are well-represented and have extended their support. However, the linkages are still ad-hoc in nature and have yet to be institutionalised at the desired level. CSOs had limited access to the PEDP4 process compared to the level of engagement prior to 2017.

In 2016, civil society has formed the Citizen's Platform for SDGs in Bangladesh in 2016. CAMPE, as a national coalition for education, coordinates the SDG 4 in the Citizen's Platform besides its regular mechanism to influence and advocate for SDG 4. There is diversity in the membership of the platform that covers all 17 goals and engaged in service delivery, identifying innovative solutions, reaching the out-of-reach, and performing watchdog role, among others.

Progress on SDG 4

The strategic coordination of the SDGs is led by the Prime Minister's Office, demonstrating high-level political commitment which is supported by the Ministry of Planning, particularly the General Economic Division. The implementation of the National Education Policy 2010 and 7th Five Year Plan, Primary Education Development Programme (Phase 3 & 4), and Secondary Education Development Programme are instrumental for achieving SDG 4. To ensure effective implementation, the Government of Bangladesh has given special emphasis on technical and vocational education. It has bifurcated the Ministry of Education by establishing two divisions, namely the Secondary and Higher Education Division (SHED) and Technical and the Madrasah Education Division (TMED).

Bangladesh has developed a Strategic Framework for SDG 4 that focuses on some foundational principles which consist of (i) universality, (ii) rights-based and a public good, (iii) comprehensive policies, plans and systems, (iv) effective governance, accountability and partnerships, (v) effective coordination, (vi) sufficient financing, (vii) efficient monitoring, follow-up, and review for evidence-based policies and sector plans, (viii) emphasis on equity, inclusion, and gender equality, (ix) focus on quality, learning outcomes, and relevance, (x) preparedness for and provision of education in emergency. In this regard, a set of strategies has been identified.

Bangladesh made significant progress in access to education at the primary and secondary levels. The net enrolment in primary education is 97.97 per cent and 68.78 per cent. The share of primary education is 35.88 per cent, secondary education 28.81 per cent, and 2.49 per cent for technical and vocational education. However, within the secondary level, the share is only about 16 per cent. The survival rate in primary education was 70.54 per cent in 2017. The dropout in primary and secondary education in 2017 was 18.85 per cent and 19.89 per cent respectively. Trends show that the dropout has been reduced significantly in both primary and secondary levels. At the primary level, the dropout has been reduced to 18.85 per cent in 2017 which was 47 per cent in 2005. Under the 'My Village My Town' initiative, the government has targeted to reduce the dropouts to 5 per cent at the lower secondary level by 2023.

The MoPME and MoE have identified quality as one of the central focus of education development in Bangladesh and have promptly taken a number of initiatives. Primary and secondary curricula are under the process of review by the National Curriculum and textbook board under the Fourth Primary Education Development Program (PEDP4) and Secondary Education Development Programme (SEDP) respectively. Rigorous teacher development initiatives have been taken under the SEDP which focused on teachers' quality (capacity and competency) through different training programmes at home and abroad, linking with continuous professional development and incentive structure for the teachers.

The government has also taken initiative to promote Information and Communications Technology (ICT) for Education by equipping all classrooms with audio-visual aids, including multimedia classrooms and a digital smart board in a phased approach. Teachers are being trained in different stages to ensure interactive classes and using e-books and e-learning materials. Under the Secondary Education Sector Investment Programme (SESIP), the Ministry of Education is establishing 640 ICT Learning in 64 Districts, while ICT for Pedagogy is another effort for the enhancement of ICT.

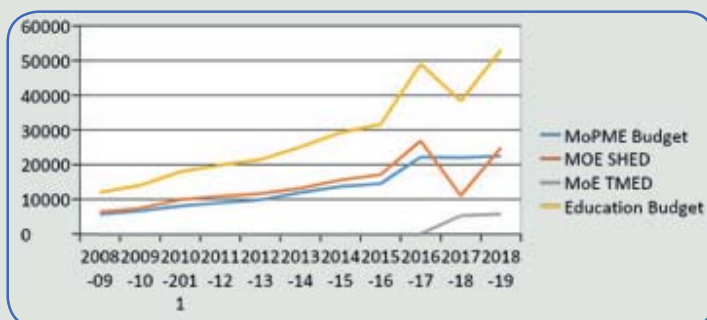
As part of the process, the Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statics (BANBEIS), the statistical office for

education, has developed a National Indicator Framework (NIF), carried out data mapping and data quality assessment framework and a National Strategy for Development of Education Statistics (NSDES) and Action Plan for Bangladesh. Although there are 43 indicators for SDG 4, the BNABEIS has identified 130 national-level indicators of which 97 will feed into the SDG 4 and the rest of the 33 indicators will contribute to other SDGs relevant to education. Examples of additional indicators include (i) the percentage of enrolment in Grade 1 with ECD/Pre-primary experience; (ii) the non-formal education participation rate by sex and age; (iii) the GIR, NIR and dropout rate in Pre-primary education; and (iv) the Gender parity index in TVET and Tertiary education.

The share of domestic financing has been significantly increased in the education sector while aid to education has sharply decreased during the last decade. Bangladesh has increased the education budget significantly every year in terms of size (absolute amount). However, as the economy is progressing much faster (e.g. this year economic growth is expected to be 8.1%), Bangladesh still lags behind in terms of share for education in the national budget and has yet to achieve the international benchmark of 15-20 per cent of the national budget for education and 4-6 per cent of the GDP for education.

Issues and Concerns

Bangladesh has made significant progress in terms of SDG 4 planning and strategy formulation. Ensuring quality education has been identified as one of the keys to sustainable



development. However, this can only be achieved through a comprehensive review of the curriculum, deployment of trained teachers, the increased use of ICT for education. Among the critical concerns for Bangladesh are the capacity gaps in education; centralised decision-making process and inadequate decentralisation; corruption and governance issues; increased trend of the commercialisation of basic education; and lack of a legislative framework for the right to education.

Currently, five years of publicly funded basic education is free only in Government Primary Schools but secondary education is fee paying. About 95.88 per cent of secondary level learners are dependent on private education institutions. However, a large portion of these private schools receive salary subsidy from the government.

Although Bangladesh has made progress in the primary level enrolment and in achieving gender parity in secondary level, the transition to post-primary is still low. Thirty per cent of the children have not transitioned to secondary level at the right age. Participation in technical and vocational education also remains a big challenge. Understanding and motivation for participation in TVET, as well as in skills development programmes, are lacking. Girls' participation in tertiary level

is also relatively low. Quality remains the biggest challenge across all levels. Attracting qualified, motivated, and trained teachers proves to be challenging, and providing them with a congenial working environment, decent pay, and adequate time for preparation by a teacher policy are yet to be achieved.

Bangladesh has fallen in the 2 per cent of GDP trap for a long period. The country has maintained steady progress in its education budget, but there is no significant improvement in terms of the share of education in the GDP or the national budget. Although the rates of enrolment have increased and the dropout rates have reduced, the increase in the budget allocation does not necessarily meet the demands of the sector. The government aspires to allocate 20 per cent of the national budget to children's needs. Unless the government invests more in the sectors of education, health, and nutrition, as well as sports and cultural activities, that aspiration will not be met. With no career development path for them, teachers remain a neglected area in the education system in Bangladesh. Generally, a person recruited as an assistant teacher retires as an assistant teacher which results in the lack of motivation. Out of 19,480 non-government secondary schools, 16,054 schools receive the government support of Monthly Payment Order (MPO). However, among the 235,004 teachers of these institutions, only 193,801 receive MPO and the rest do not have access to the MPO. In addition, the MPO represents mostly the basic salary and token money in the name of house rent and medical allowance. There is a lack of a comprehensive policy on teachers' issues that is aligned with the UNESCO-ILO recommendations.

Recommendations

Bangladesh needs to focus on the most critical issues in education equity, inclusion, quality, and financing. In doing so, it is necessary to (i) revisit the boundary, particularly legal, technological, physical, and moral boundaries that set the norms of operation; (ii) enact the Right to Education Act (or

a comprehensive Education act using a rights-based approach); (iii) ensure free and compulsory basic education up to grade 12; and (iv) reduce commercialisation of education.

Systematic effort is required under the sector-wide programme. The government and relevant education departments are called upon to improve the quality of education by (i) revisiting the curriculum at the primary and secondary level; (ii) increasing the use of ICT to foster the progress of educational attainment (planning, teacher's preparedness, learning enhancement, monitoring and reporting); (iii) improving physical infrastructure; and (iv) increasing the supply of teaching-learning materials along with ensuring the supply of competent, professionally developed, and motivated teachers and academic supervisors.

Another area of intervention is the promotion of technical and vocational education and skills development training programme linking with a quick transition to the world of work. This will entail a huge awareness raising programme and strengthening linkages with the corporate sector.

Promoting human rights and global citizenship among the youth is critical. A special programme is required, the curriculum needs to be re-visited, and efforts strengthened to promote peace, tolerance, and pluralism, so as to support social coherence and societal harmony.

The increased reliance on domestic resources and increased budget for education are critical which has linkage with tax management and internal resource mobilisation. Ensuring the allocation of 15-20 per cent of the national budget and 4-6 per cent of the GDP is critical. Bangladesh needs to find innovative ways to come out from the 2 per cent GDP trap for education.

Improving the internal capacity, strengthening governance, and ensuring genuine citizen's participation, particularly the civil society engagement in educational planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation are essential to achieving SDG 4 in Bangladesh. Both the government and the civil society must work in close collaboration to achieve the SDG 4 targets, most especially to ensure that no one is left behind. •



গণসাক্ষরতা অভিযান

Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE)
www.campebd.org

CAMPAIGN FOR POPULAR EDUCATION (CAMPE)

Address: 5/141 Humayun Road I Mohammadpur Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh.

Phone: +8802 58155031-32, +8802 58153417

+8802 9130427, +8802 8142024-5

Fax: +88-02-9123842; | Email: info@campebd.org

Website: <http://www.campebd.org>

Campaign For Popular Education (CAMPE) is an advocacy and campaign network operating in Bangladesh since 1990. CAMPE which started its journey with only 15 member organisations and individuals have in the last twenty-eight years grown to a credible membership of almost 1000 NGOs, researchers, educators, youths, and other civil society organisations and individuals sharing a similar vision. CAMPE's programme interventions primarily focus on Policy Advocacy, Networking, Campaign, Research and Capacity Building of its members and partner organizations. CAMPE is committed to facilitating the process for sustainable and pro-poor policy frameworks which will, in turn, enable the achievement of inclusive and equitable quality education for all and promote lifelong learning opportunities. It works closely with policymakers, development partners and different national, regional and global forums. CAMPE is a member organisation of ASPBAE.



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Unit 106 Sterten Place Condominium
116 Maginhawa Street, Teachers Village East, Diliman
Quezon City 1101, Philippines

Tel/Fax: 63 2 441 4594

Email: aspbae@gmail.com | Website: www.aspbae.org

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