

In-depth Monitoring of
Basic Education for Hard to Reach Urban
Working Children (BEHTRUWC) Project
(2nd phase)

Final Report



Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division
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Executive Summary

- 1.0 Basic Education for Hard to Reach Urban Working Children (BEHTRUWC) Project (2nd phase) was built on the experience of NFE-3 completed in 2004. The novelty of NFE-3 lies in the fact that its target population was mainly the working children. They had no access to education & were mostly engaged in odd jobs to support their families. The project was successful in building all-round awareness for education of working children in the family, the society & the nation at large.

BEHTRUWC Project:

- 2.0 Basic Education for Hard to Reach Urban Working Children (BEHTRUWC) Project (2nd phase) was undertaken to intensify & broaden GOB intervention in this area covering all six divisional cities as in NFE-3. The estimated cost was Tk.2060.00 million to be implemented during 2004-2009. UNICEF, SIDA & CIDA was to co-finance the project to the tune of TK.1985.50 million. Subsequently the project has been revised at a cost of TK.2679.29 million with a PA of TK.2588.17 million to be executed in an extended period of 2004-2012.
- 3.0 Basic Education for Hard to Reach Urban Working Children (BEHTRUWC) Project (2nd phase) aimed to provide life skills based basic education to urban working children of 10-14 years age. The project has particular focus on girls comprising 60% of the target. Broader goal of the project is "to enhance the life options of urban working children and adolescents to access their rights to education, protection and development and participation".
- 4.0 Specifically, the project targeted :(a) To provide quality non-formal, life-skills-based basic education to 166,150 urban working children and adolescents ages 10 to 14 years, of which at least 60% will be girls;
- b) To provide 10,000 (out of 166,150) urban working children and adolescents (13+age group) with livelihood skills training, and access to support systems to ensure optimal use of life-skills-based basic education to improve their life;
- c) To advocate at City and National levels for education, social and economic policies in favor of working children and their families and for protecting children from hazardous working environment; and
- d) To increase awareness of all relevant stakeholders to act in favor of progressive elimination of child labor.

- 5.0 The project is being implemented by PIU under BNFE in partnership with limited number of NGOs. UNICEF is an important partner in the implementation of the project assisting its implementation in many ways. Project activities include: (a) Life-skills-based basic education;(b)Livelihood skills education; (c) Capacity building; and (d) Advocacy, social mobilization and communication for raising awareness.

Progress and Achievements:

- 6.0 **Life skills based quality basic education:** LSBE is a new concept in non-formal education in the country. The project was successful in opening 6646 learning centers and enrolled 166150 learners in the LCs till to date. There was significant relocation of centers: 4387 in Dhaka (target 3700), 1213 in Chittagong (target 2000), 245 in Sylhet (target 300), 65 in Barisal (target 400), 227 in Rajshahi (target 600) and 509 in Khulna (target 1000).
- 7.0 Instead of two stages of 6000 and 2000 centers, centers were opened in four stages until July 2008. Significant delays have occurred in opening centers since completion of base line survey in September 2005. This delay between survey and center opening led to changes in location of learners, changes in age bracket of working children and possibly in their expectations. This had spillover effects on establishing centers and required supplemental survey with additional cost and time.
- 8.0 **Develop curriculum and materials:** UNICEF recruited the agency to develop curriculum and materials. The team consisted of 5 full time experts and 15 other part time professionals. The team was successful in developing cycle-I materials before August 2006 for distribution to learners of Stage-1 & Stage-II. Material development for cycle-2 and cycle-3 of Stage-1 was delayed by 8 weeks. BEHTRWC trained 6,646 teachers and 664 supervisors for running the centers. Lately, CMC orientations were made for efficient operation of centers by improving attendance and reducing dropouts. Birth registration of learners is under process.
- 9.0 **Livelihood skills training:** BEHTRUC had an objective to provide livelihood skills training in two ways: (a) directly to 5000 learners through selected expert NGOs/organizations and (b) through linkages to 15000 selected 13+ learners .This component was to start from the 4th cycle. First batch of children was in the 4th cycle in September 2007. Because of many delays, the component has not yet started and the target has been revised to: (a) direct skill training for 5000 selected learners and (b) linkage training to another 5000 learners.

10.0 **Capacity development:** BEHTRUC project included actions for capacity development of the government, the NGOs and partners for attaining efficiency and effectiveness in implementation and long term sustainability of the project. A Project Implementation Guideline has been prepared in three volumes for use by PIU and the NGOs. MoPME, BNFE, PIU and NGO staff has been provided training in planning, implementation and monitoring. A customized system and manual for accounts and audit was developed and PIU staff trained on the use of the system. NGOs were also trained on financial management to harmonize project accounts within partners. Development of systems and procedures, trainings and orientation did not always precede project activities which were expected to benefit from capacity development. In fact many initiatives like Project Implementation Guideline, CMC orientation; MER & Financial Management & NGO training on it was much delayed to be fully useful. Inadequate PIU manpower & frequent manpower changes in the PIU not only impeded capacity development but also the program itself.

11.0 **Mobilization, advocacy and communication:** Activities on social mobilization, advocacy and communication were minimal. The component needs capacity strengthening to lobby and advocacy for child rights at PIU and NGO level. In fact NGOs and civil society has a greater responsibility to bring about a favorable environment for the urban working children through their activism, movement based orientation and their inherent strength on working with the downtrodden.

Effectiveness and Efficiency:

12.0 **Points raised in FGD:**FGD meeting highlighted a few points: (a) students do not get year end result like mainstream education; (b) unlike schools learners sit on mats; and (c) they don't carry books like school students. Parents do not feel that their wards are studying. They also mentioned about lack of orientation of CMCs and absence of spiritual content in curriculum. NGOs mentioned about the undefined nature of the advocacy component and its resource backing. Teachers were not provided with certificate for participation in training and also there is uncertainties on the issue of experience certificate by PIU. There's no provision of sports in LCs.

13.0 **Learning outcome:** The study collected information from 90 learning centers. The team conducted tests on 450 learners (60% girls). Learning outcome is quite acceptable considering the score of

learners in literacy, numeracy and life skills. The program is achieving its learning objectives in listening, reading, writing and speaking. Learning progression is satisfactory. It was observed that hand writing of learners was not up to the mark. Also task given in the class was not examined properly by the teachers and instructions for improvement were not given.

- 14.0 **Incentive for learners:** Initially learners were not provided any incentive package for attending the course like Tiffin, school bag etc. which were provided in similar programs run by others. MTE recommended inclusion of such package and has been included in the RDPP. Only lately, this has been materialized but in the mean time Stage-I 50000 learners of 2000 centers have already completed the LSBE of 5 cycles. Full benefit of the effort in promoting attendance and arresting drop out could not be reaped for delay in its materialization
- 15.0 **Curriculum, teaching and learning materials:** BEHTRUC made commendable success in developing a functional BE curriculum, teaching and learning materials. The TLM materials are child friendly, promote interactive learning and are enjoyable to learners. These materials can be retained for use by different stakeholders and for future. This can be replicated and shared with stakeholders for sustainability of the BE program.
- 16.0 **Project impact:** Te project has brought about far reaching effect in the attitudes of learners, significantly addressed the gender issue, and increased the life options for the working children. It has promoted quality teaching and its institutional development in the country. Beside, it created direct employment to 6646 teachers, 665 supervisors many others in running the centers.

Problems and Lacunae:

- 17.0 Teachers, supervisors and CMCs are the key factors in the quality operation of learning centers along with NGO coordinators. Orientation of CMC Chairman and members either was not done or done at a later stage which impaired proper functioning of the LCs. Supervisors were not found reasonably effective in LC activities.
- 18.0 There is a concern for the drop out rate and regularity of attendance in LCs. Teachers, supervisors and CMCs are not adequately addressing this issue. We have noticed misreporting of drop out.
- 19.0 There is a problem in the equivalency in the certification offered by the PIU. Parents are concerned whether the certificate will permit

BE completers to transfer to other educational opportunities. A difference in equivalencies in subjects has prompted this concern.

- 20.0 NGO coordinators, teachers and POs did not get sufficient time to organize the LCs and CMCs. There should be an appropriate lead time to organize these activities prior to the opening of the LCs. They should be fielded few months' ahead of opening the LCs.
- 21.0 Advocacy, social mobilization and communication were weak and were delayed. The objectives and elements have been specifically identified in RDPP. Activities in this area should be accelerated with particular emphasis at the grassroots level which will help address dropouts, promote attendance and improve environment around working children.
- 22.0 Capacity development depends on adequacy of manpower, its continuity and training. This suffered for frequent turnover of PIU manpower at PD/DD level, inadequate staffing and inability to release staff for training.
- 23.0 There are manpower inadequacies in PIU and BNFE in the areas of curriculum development, MER and accounts and finance. Address these areas to develop viable organization in non formal education. Ensure continuity with professionals in the organization.
- 24.0 For sustainability of BEHTRUC program, steps need to be initiated to retain the expertise of POs and MOs of the project. They should be given priority in appointments in similar program of BNFE.
- 25.0 There was significant turnover of teachers and supervisors. This has affected delivery of LSBE and dissipated the effectiveness of training. Poor compensation package to them is largely responsible for this. Recently the compensation package has been revised upward which is likely to arrest the trend. Teacher's salary needs further upward revision to bring it at par with cost of living.
- 26.0 There is an imbalance in zonal staffing. Four zones (POs) have to over see 4387 centers in Dhaka. Each PO has to visit 40 centers in a month and together they can visit 160 centers monthly. They require 27 months to pay a single visit to each of the centers. On the other hand, Chittagong has 1313 centers, Sylhet 245, Khulna 509, Rajshahi 227 and Barisal has just 65 centers. Replace supervisors by APOs to assist the POs.
- 27.0 Development of MER and financial management system with software has been delayed. These components should have been

- ready initially to obtain full benefit of the improved system.
- 28.0 Materials for learners and learning centers were supplied in time. But the quality of pencil, eraser for use of learners and black board for learning centers were of low quality as reported by learners and in FGD.
 - 29.0 Participation of local stakeholders is a must for implementation of community based activity like LSBE. There is provision of Ward Committee (WC) and a City Implementation Monitoring Unit (CIMU) for assisting LSBE. Though these committees were constituted by the PIU, their participation in program implementation were not satisfactory. Meetings were rare and their contribution is rather marginal.
 - 30.0 Undoubtedly non-formal education has advanced in Bangladesh, in terms of program formulation, teaching, learning, materials development etc. But there is enough scope to improve the present curriculum of LSBE program. The spiritual content is absent in the curriculum.
 - 31.0 The in-depth monitoring and study found that the book of curriculum has been published after 3 years of start of the project. It has been delayed.
 - 32.0 Health and medical side of learners has been ignored in the program. Learners should have opportunity for medical check-up free of cost by the local government medical officers. PIU should take initiative for this.
 - 33.0 Center rent has remained static over years causing difficulty in finding center accommodation. House rent for Learning Centers should be revised time to time to adjust with the market rate.

Suggestions and Recommendations:

34. BEHTRUWC made commendable success in developing a functional BE curriculum, teaching and learning materials. The TLM materials are child friendly, promote interactive learning and are enjoyable to learners. Efforts should be made to make LSBE a sustainable program in the country.
- 35.0 There are manpower inadequacies in PIU and BNFE in the areas of curriculum development, MER and accounts and finance. Address these areas to develop viable organization in non formal education. Ensure continuity with professionals in the organization.

- 36.0 There is a concern for the drop out rate and regularity of attendance in LCs. Advocacy, social mobilization and communication activities needs up scaling to arrest drop out and improve attendance.
- 37.0 NGO coordinators, teachers and POs did not get sufficient time to organize the LCs and CMCs. There should be an appropriate lead time to organize these activities prior to the opening of the LCs. They should be fielded few months' ahead of opening the LCs.
- 38.0 Instead of supervisors, create half of the number of Assistant Program Organizers (APOs) in PIU to have better service in center management and support to teaching improvement. It is doubtful whether supervisors provide full time service.
- 39.0 For sustainability of BEHTRUWC program, steps need to be initiated to retain the expertise of POs and MOs of the project. Treat BEHTRUWC as a program and ensure its sustainability including retaining the developed expertise.
- 40.0 Livelihood skill training to learners on completion of cycle-3 could not be started yet. In the meantime stage-I learners have already graduated from the LSBE course and learners selection have been made for the LST. The program appears very ambitious and facing extreme uncertainty. Address this in the right earnest.
- 41.0 Differences in equivalencies in subjects (Grade-V for Bangla & S.Sc, Grade-IV for Math and Grade-II in English) have created an anomaly. Establish a uniform equivalency, say Grade-V, for all subjects. Study result shows that UWCs are quite receptive.
- 42.0 There is a concern for the drop out rate and regularity of attendance in LCs. Adequate orientation of CMCs is needed to address this issue. Advocacy, social mobilization and communication activities needs up scaling.
- 43.0 There is an imbalance in zonal staffing. Address the issue of zonal staffing by recruiting Assistant Program Organizers (APOs) in place of Supervisors. Reducing the number to half of the supervisors will accommodate cost to budget.
- 44.0 Develop and institutionalize Monitoring, Evaluation & Reporting (MER) and Financial Management System (FMS). Efforts should be made to make these sustainable by building in house capacity. Apply this across all projects in BNFE.

- 45.0 Address issues raised in FGD meeting such as: (i) issuance of certificates at the end of each cycle; (ii) explore possibility of improving the sitting arrangement (in place of floor mats); (iii) allow students to take books to home; and (iv) introduce some spiritual content in curriculum. Define the advocacy component and provide resource backing.
- 46.0 Provide certificate to teachers for participation in training and remove uncertainties on the issue of experience certificate to them. This will encourage and motivate teachers to serve BEHTRUWC.
- 47.0 It has been alleged that there's no provision of sports in LCs. Introduce sports in the LCs and arrange quarterly sports competition among neighboring LCs to infuse increased motivation to children.
- 48.0 Address the quality issue of materials for learners and learning centers.
- 49.0 Various committees were constituted by the PIU. But meetings were rare and their contribution is rather marginal. Ways should be found out to activate these committees.
- 50.0 Learners should have opportunity for medical check-up free of cost by the local government medical officers. PIU may take initiative for this.
- 51.0 House rent for Learning Centers should be revised time to time to adjust with the market rate.

Conclusions:

- 52.0 BEHTRUWC has developed a model for providing opportunities of learning to UWC. This will improve their life options. It can be upgraded into program for replication of this model with changes mentioned. This is essential in view of the swelling number of UWC.
- 53.0 Non-Formal education will continue to be a strategy for eradicating illiteracy from the country and to achieve EFA. It is a big challenge. Build BNFE as an organization worthy of the challenge.
- 54.0 There are several functional organizations for mainstream education: (a) Curriculum development (NCTB), (b) Private sector for material development, (c) Reasonably equipped schools, (d) Conscious parents and (e) Primary education department to oversee management. In case of non-formal education, all these functions

are combined in BNFE. BNFE should have manpower and expertise in all these areas together in mini form. It should be developed into a professional organization. A truncated organization cannot achieve a big mission.