

BEHTRUWC Project Second Phase

The second phase of the Basic Education for Hard to Reach Urban Working Children (BEHTRUWC) Project is planned to be implemented in six Divisional Cities with the objective to reach 200,000 urban working children with a forty month non-formal education package. The target is children of 10-14 years of age of which 60% are girls. Under the framework of the Government of Bangladesh's Bureau of Non Formal Education (BNFE), NGOs have been engaged to provide basic non-formal education to urban working children in this project.

Over the last six years the BEHTRUC project covered more than 346,500 working children of whom more than 50% were girls. Many children were also successful in entering into mainstream education. As a follow up and a pilot activity, a livelihood skill project for 500 HTR graduates in Dhaka, 250 in Barisal and 250 in Sylhet has been completed.

Project Background

Bangladesh has a population of nearly 140 million, of whom 19.6 million are primary school-age children. As indicated in the preliminary report of the Bangladesh Census 2001, the total urban population is 28.8 million. About 52 per cent urban population live in the 4 city corporations (Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi) and almost 50 per cent of these are urban poor who live in slums. As the urban migration continues, the population in slums also continues to grow rapidly. Dhaka city alone has an estimated population of more than 9 million. Children are said to account for approximately 56% of slum inhabitants.

The Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey 2003 revealed that about 40 per cent slum children are not enrolled in any schools in contrast to 17 per cent nationally. In Dhaka city slums, the net primary school enrolment rate is 64% for girls and 62% for boys, compared to the national figures of 84% for girls and 81% for boys.

As the statistics indicate, rural areas are better served by the primary education sector than urban slum areas. Urban slums, which are home to most working children, are very poorly served. Though the government has taken some steps to provide education to working children, the scale of the problem demands concrete policies for the urban poor to provide education and other primary services to ensure that urban working children have better life options.

According to the National Child Labour Survey 2003, the number of working children aged 5-14 is 4.9 million. An additional 3.5 million children of this age group were reported to be neither in work nor in school. Most of the urban working children live in slums under very unhygienic conditions with hardly any access to basic services like clean water, healthcare, housing, and education. They are engaged in more than 300 kinds of work, including 48 types of work that have been identified by ILO as hazardous. On average, urban working children put in nearly 40 hours of labour per week and earn less than \$10 per month. These children are seen everywhere but never noticed. Engaged in full time work, they cannot afford to go to school. Moreover, there are very few schools in slums. Most of the working children are from families who migrated to the cities for a better life. Living in slums, they are exposed to various anti-social activities and often become victims of violent political strife. They are not only exploited by their employers, but also by the *mastaans* (musclemen/hoodlums) living in slums.

These children are unable to access learning opportunities whether it is education or skill development. According to the Child Labour Survey, 89% of working children were not receiving any education, with only 9% being educated up to class 5 (BBS, 2003). The major social cost of child labor is the loss of opportunity to spend time in school. A vast majority of the children assert that, given the opportunity, they would like to attend school. However, they are unable to pay for school related expenses such as tuition, schoolbooks and supplies, and also the school timings are not convenient for these children.

Project Objectives and Strategies

Overall Objective:

To enhance the life options of urban working children, to access their rights to education, protection and development.

Key Results:

- In six divisional cities, 200,000 urban working children ages 10 to 14 of which at least 60 percent will be girls receive quality non-formal, life skills based basic education.
- 20,000 working children (out of 200,000) of 13+ age group gain livelihood skills and access to support systems to ensure optimal use of Life skills based basic education to improve their life chances.
- National and city policies for education, social issues and the economy become more favourable to working children and their families for protecting children from hazardous working environment.
- All stakeholders act in favour of supporting the progressive elimination of child labour

Target Population:

The project will target 200,000 urban working children in six divisional cities, aged between 10 and 14, engaged in occupations that prevent them from attending school. Based on requirement and needs the project area will be expanded up to 10 Km beyond the City Corporation jurisdiction. 20,000 learners aged 13 and above of the proposed project will receive vocational skills training. At least 60% of the children participating in the training will be girls.

Strategic Changes:

In consistency with the broader education objectives and goals of the country, the proposed "Basic Education for Hard-To-Reach Urban Working Children (BEHTRUWC) Project Second Phase," has been designed incorporating the recommendations that have come out from the different studies and evaluations. The proposed project is an integral part of the second National Plan of Action (NPA II) for EFA and the national NFE policy framework when these are finalized. Based on the lessons learned from the BEHTRUC Project, a number of strategic changes have been made in the second phase of the project. These are:

1. Baseline survey, database and mapping has been done at the beginning of the project and updated periodically.
2. Age group of the target population will be 10-14 years instead of 8-14 years as in BEHTRUC Project, First Phase/NFE-3.
3. At least 60% girls will be enrolled in the learning centres. If 60% girls are not available within the catchments areas of the learning centres, maximum of 50% boys could be enrolled maintaining proper documents and with approval from the appropriate authority.

4. An improved gender strategy will be developed and implemented throughout the project period.
5. An enhanced environmental strategy will be developed that will include targeting employers, parents and communities to understand these hazards, identify ways of reducing them, create improved working conditions for the children and work towards progressively eliminating hazardous child labour.
6. New NGO selection criteria and transparent procedures has been developed to ensure selection of efficient and qualified NGOs for effective and efficient programme implementation. No more than 20 NGOs will be selected based on proven commitment and competence in non-formal education.
7. Life-skills-based basic education course enhanced from 24 months to 40 months divided into 5 cycles i.e. 8 months for each cycle with well-defined learning outcomes.
8. The revision of the existing curriculum and materials is underway incorporating qualitative changes that will also address life skills based basic education needs. The revised curriculum and newly developed materials will be used in the proposed programme. As requested by the former learners, some English lessons will be introduced from the second cycle of the learning course.
9. Livelihood skills education programmes will be implemented on pilot basis for selected number of learners who are 13+ years old and can complete the third learning cycle successfully.
10. Sufficient and better learning materials will be provided to the learning centres to impart life skills based quality basic education.
11. Honorarium for teachers and supervisors and centre rent will be increased in order to ensure recruitment of efficient and qualified teachers and supervisors.
12. Enhanced and more intensive training will be provided to teachers and supervisors before and during the project implementation.
13. Needs based training for project personnel as well as for other relevant stakeholders based on lessons learnt.
14. Overhead cost will be provided to the implementing NGOs to ensure contracting efficient and qualified NGOs and effective programme implementation.
15. Advocacy, social mobilisation and programme communication strategy will be developed in line with the national education communication framework and implemented throughout the project life in order to ensure active participation of all stakeholder including learners, guardians and employers.
16. Retention of the existing project personnel and enhanced project personnel at PIU and field levels with necessary provision for their capacity building in order to ensure timely project implementation with good quality.
17. Improved MER system for both programme and financial aspects will be developed and maintained throughout the project with provision for local technical assistance to work with both PIU and UNICEF.
18. Based on lessons learnt need based manuals/guidelines for more effective implementation will be developed in order to ensure more effective implementation of the project.

Project Period

The project period will be 5 years starting from October 2004 and ending in June 2009. The first twelve months is an inception period. The last six months of the project will constitute the completion phase and will include collection of vouchers from all levels, conducting final audit and evaluation and preparation of project completion reports. The teaching learning period will be for 40 months.

A total of 8000 centres in two phases will be set-up with 200,000 urban working children in six divisional cities. Based on baseline survey and mapping exercises, learners will be selected based on hazardous and exploitative occupations and lack of access to education, following a clear definition and strategy for reaching urban working children. Of these 200,000 children, 20,000 will be selected for livelihood skills training. Of these 5000 will be directly provided with livelihood skills training by this project. The remaining 15,000 will be linked to similar services with other relevant organizations.

Plans for the Future

The Project Director of Project Implementation Unit (PIU) and UNICEF are working towards opening the learning centers in the July of 2006. Soon after signing the agreement with NGOs, 2000 teachers and 200 supervisors is being trained now. Around 120,000 urban working children between the age of 10 – 14 years old not going to school will be identified by the NGOs (with the help from the findings of the baseline survey and mapping) in their catchment areas and enrolled in 4800 learning centers which will be in operation. Out of the 4800 learning centers, 400 will be exclusively for Child Domestic Workers (300 in Dhaka, 70 in Chittagong and 30 in Khulna). In case of Dhaka, the wards identified with Child Domestic Worker concentration will be surveyed by assigned NGOs to identify CDWs based on the findings of situation analysis done by UNICEF in 2005. For the other two cities, Project Officers of PIU, City Corporation and UNICEF will select the areas with CDW concentration from supplementary survey to be conducted by assigned NGOs to identify CDWs.

