

# অন্তর্ভুক্তিমূলক উন্নয়ন ও ন্যায্যতার লক্ষ্যে নাগরিক এজেন্ডা

## *Triggers to Ensuring Quality Primary Education*

*Presentation by*

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Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh

এসডিজি বাস্তবায়নে নাগরিক প্ল্যাটফর্ম, বাংলাদেশ



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## Policy Briefs: Origin of the Initiative & Process of Preparation

The initiative of the *Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh* to prepare a set of Policy Briefs has its origin in the diverse range of activities undertaken by the Citizen's Platform over the past two years. These were geared to capture the perspectives of the country's left behind communities as regards Bangladesh's dominant development narrative. Citizen's Platform activities in this connection included stakeholder dialogues, townhall meetings, focus group discussions, perception surveys and consultations with media. These also included organisation of public hearing at national level aimed at creating opportunities for people to voice their concerns and aspirations in the presence of high-level policymakers. What emerged from this exercise is that a significantly large number of the country's citizens have continued to remain vulnerable to various risks which are manifested in their being left behind in the process of economic development. On the other hand, to recall, the leave no one behind spirit of the SDGs requires that all citizens have the right to equitable share in the development of the country and appropriate actions are needed to address the concerns and advance the interests of the country's vulnerable groups and communities.

In view of the above, Citizen's Platform has identified 11 issues (see later), from the perspective of the left behind groups, which require urgent attention and call for immediate actions. The objective of the Policy Brief exercise is to come up with a set of recommendations in each of the identified areas, by articulating the context, highlighting the issues of interest to vulnerable groups and by proposing a set of concrete actions to address their concerns.



## Policy Briefs: Origin of the Initiative & Process of Preparation

Each of the Policy Briefs was prepared by a dedicated team of experts. The scholars, numbering 12-15 members, included leading experts and academics, development practitioners and activists in the concerned area . Each Policy Brief Team had an eminent personality as Chair, and a Penholder who was entrusted with the responsibility of preparing the drafts of respective Briefs. The Team sat for several meetings, consulted background notes based on Citizen's Platform's country-wide discussions and consulted relevant resource materials. The expert groups identified a set of prioritised actions for policy uptake and consequent implementation.

A 19-member Advisory Committee which included eminent citizens, academics and leading civil society personalities provided guidance to the Policy Brief initiative.

The CPD, as the Secretariate of the Citizen's Platform provided all necessary support to the work of the Policy Brief Initiative.



## Policy Briefs: Origin of the Initiative & Process of Preparation

Citizen's Platform plans to take up a number of follow-up activities to take the Policy Brief initiative forward with a view to raising awareness as regards the recommended actions and mobilising support around those actions. These include:

(a) Holding of media briefings to present the recommendations to the wider audience with the Policy Briefs to be clustered into three groups- Economic, Social and Governance Issues;

(b) Presentation of the recommendations at meetings with major political parties, to inform electoral discourse and as inputs to election manifestos;

(c) Organisation of public hearing in Dhaka on recommended actions, with participation of the disadvantaged groups, civil society activists, opinion builders and media, in the presence of high-level policymakers;

(d) Organisation of discussion meetings in various parts of the country to mobilise civic activism in support of the action agendas put forward in the Policy Briefs.



# Policy Briefs: Origin of the Initiative & Process of Preparation

## Issues for 11 Policy Briefs

### Economic

- Transforming agriculture for an inclusive and diversified economy
- Providing decent employment for youth in view of domestic and overseas market
- Providing public utilities and services in the backdrop of unplanned urbanisation
- Affordable and clean energy for all

### Social

- Reducing out-of-pocket expenditure to improve universal access to quality health care
- Triggers to ensuring quality primary education
- Dealing with the manifestation of localised vulnerabilities of climate change
- Promoting universal social protection system and the need for targeting disadvantaged groups

### Governance

- Effective implementation of laws and judicial process for eradicating gender-based violence and discrimination
- Access and justice for ethnic and religious minorities
- Giving voice to the 'silent' and establishing democratic accountability



# Background

- Remarkable socio-economic advancement including realization of various national and international goals
- Education is a key contributor to this success, with notable achievements in enrolment and gender parity.
- Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) stands at 110.5%, and Net Enrolment Rate (NER) at 97.6% in primary education.
- Recent introduction of two-year pre-primary education in over three thousand primary schools earlier it was one-year.
- But high dropout rate and quality of education is still a concern.
- Without quality education at primary level, children cannot be expected to grow as adult with potentials and prospects.
- This is more relevant in case of the children from the left behind and disadvantaged groups.



# Perspective of Leave No One Behind (LNOB) in Bangladesh

## *Distinctive features of left behind children in Bangladesh:*

- Rural and remote communities, ethnic and religious minorities, street children and child workers
- Children with disabilities
- Young and adolescent girls
- Climate-affected children
- Children from low-income families
- Children in institutional care (orphanages and similar institutions)
- Nutritional deprivation and education outcomes (mid-day meal)
- Financial assistance for education (Conditional stipend, amount)
- Covid's negative footprints (disruption in education, learning loss, dropout)
- Education in mother tongue





# Perspective of Leave No One Behind (LNOB) in Bangladesh

- Experience shows that **inequality, vulnerability and educational exclusion are often closely linked.**
- **Emergence of growing income and asset inequalities as major barriers to achieving universally acknowledged primary education.**
- The fact is that **children from these groups are likely to face more difficulties with low educational attainment** compared to those belonging to more affluent and advantaged groups.
- The **leave no one behind spirit of the SDGs implies that no children ought to be left behind and left outside as far as delivery of quality primary education was concerned.**



# Key challenges facing Bangladesh's education system

- Quality of education
- Access to education
- Overcrowded classrooms
- Lack of proper curricula implementation
- Poor teacher quality and training
- Weak technical and vocational education
- Infrastructure and inadequate resources
- Lack of conducive environment
- Rote learning vs. Critical thinking
- Mismatch with the job market



# Major Recommendations

## *Continue remedial efforts to reduce learning gaps*

- **School-based assessment** for identification of students with learning loss, and measuring the extent of loss;
- **School-based remedial plan and coaching support** for identified students who are not adequately prepared, or are generally weak;
- **Psycho-social support** for students' mental well-being.

## *Ensure quality of curricula, appropriate teaching methods and proper assessment tools*

- **Mother tongue-based education** for ethnic minority groups, and **extra-curricular activities** for all children in inclusive manner;
- **Promotion of active learning approaches and appropriate technology** in teaching methods following a variety of assessment techniques.



# Major Recommendations

## *Undertake actions to reduce inequalities arising from lack of access to education*

- **Disaggregated data of all marginalised communities** towards proper monitoring of learning outcomes;
- **Increased amount of stipend** (at least 500 taka per month per student) for all students including **special incentive programme for dropout students** (victims of child marriage and child labour) to bring them back to school and **establishment of schools with residential facilities** in hard-to-reach areas, including char, haor, and hilly areas;
- **A plan for universal and inclusive education** including implementation of *Multi-Lingual Education (MLE)* in languages of ethnic minorities and *expansion of mid-day meals programme*.



# Major Recommendations

## *Ensure recruitment of qualified teachers and take steps for their professional development*

- **Establishment of Teacher Recruitment Commission, appropriate monetary compensation** for teachers and **recruitment of qualified graduates** as teachers on the basis of merit with proper incentives;
- **Strengthened teacher training programmes** with revision of curricula and psycho-social first-aid issue to **ensure that all students are taught by properly trained teachers in safe learning environment.**

## *Integrate technology and blended approach in education*

- **Acceleration of the process of embedding Blended Education** in education planning;
- **Ensuring access to digital facilities** (online learning platforms, virtual classrooms and webinars, e-books and digital libraries, mobile learning etc.) for all students including from disadvantaged and marginalised groups to equip them for blended education;
- **Innovative training programmes for teachers** to equip them properly to use digital technology for teaching purposes.



# Major Recommendations

## *Facilitate parental, community and civil society engagement*

- **Periodic training programmes** for members of the School Management Committees.
- **Strengthen PTAs (Parent Teacher Associations)** in all schools ensuring at least one member (mother) from each of the marginalised/ethnic groups (where feasible) including **regular engagement events** with participation of parents and representatives of local community members.
- **Collaborative space and partnerships between government and relevant national level civil society organisations/platforms** in order to promote the cause of education from a whole of society approach.



# Major Recommendations

## *Ensure adequate allocation in education, and develop education law*

- Budgetary allocation for education to **at least 15 per cent, and gradually to 20 per cent of the national budget by 2026;**
- Allocation of **adequate budget for teachers' training, increased salaries and other benefits** so that bright and talented graduates are attracted to the teaching profession;
- **Extension of primary education from class V to class VIII** and establish linkages with pre-vocational education system;
- **Decentralised education system and strengthened accountability and monitoring mechanism** for efficient utilisation of education budget and delivery of expected outcomes;
- A **comprehensive education law** and **adequate financing** for its implementation.

# Thank You



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