

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR SDGS LOCALIZATION IN BANGLADESH

Program Summary

Background

The Government of Bangladesh, after a successful run with the Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015) has committed to achieve the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Following the signing of the UN SDG, the government has gone the extra mile and set up a high-level coordinating secretariat withing the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), subsequently creating SDG focal points across all Ministries at various levels across the country.

In August 2015, the Curtin University Australia has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Governance Innovation Unit (GIU), Prime Minister's Office (PMO) of Bangladesh to provide training, research and policy supports to the public servants to achieve SDGs. In the backdrop of this ongoing relationship between the Government of Bangladesh and Curtin University, a series of structured capacity building programs have been organized for the officials from various Ministries. The **two pillars** of the programs are – firstly, SDG localization and secondly, putting the knowledge into practice through systematic actions. SDGs are a global agenda set by the UN for all the member countries with various stages of development under various local conditions which makes the concept of localization essential. Furthermore, it is critical that the theoretical concepts are being put into practice.

The academic program has been designed and led by Prof Dora Marinova, a leading international expert in sustainability policy with an action research component in Bangladesh which addresses both the localization and knowledge in practice around SDGs. The program is managed by Circular Economics Pte Ltd, an external partner of Curtin University, specializing in innovative research in social science in relation to circular economy & sustainable development with partners in academia, industry & governments in the Asia Pacific region. After accomplishing numerous projects between GIU and Curtin University, the MoU was renewed in March 2022 until March 2027 by initiating the following programs:

Title: Action Research for SDG Localization in Bangladesh: Program 3 & 4

Duration: May 2022 – May 2023

Sponsor: Government of Bangladesh



Program Overview

The program has been designed for the government officials who are at the forefront of identifying needs and implementing various development projects and policies, taking leadership role in their respective areas of responsibility. The academic program has therefore been specially structured and customized for the participants in order to better understand sustainability and sustainable development in the context of Bangladesh for incorporating sustainability aspects and parameters in all the development programmes undertaken within their departments, ministries and job function.

The agenda of the United Nations (UN) for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 is a global agenda to be implemented by the member countries with heterogeneous local conditions. Therefore, the localization of SDGs is being increasingly recognised as the most pragmatic way forward for the achievement of the Goals. With the localization aspect in mind, the program has been designed in consultation with experts in this area from different countries including Bangladesh.

The academic program has three core modules:

- i. Sustainability: Concept and Measures
- ii. Application of Action Research Methods for SDGs Localization
- iii. Sustainability Issues in Bangladesh: the Historic & Contemporary Evaluation

The concept of sustainability is both complex and ambiguous as it comes to implementation. Sustainability is being conceptualized through system approach and deals with the measuring and managing aspects through life cycle assessment approach. Subsequently, it allows us to comprehend the sustainable development goals & targets as well as the indicators & indices in a structured way.

In terms of the methodological approach for the SDGs localization we use '*action research*', a method from the management science which as the name suggest requires the researcher to be involved in the course of the actions so that the actor could come up with more grounded, pragmatic and informed decisions. We have chosen this methodological approach as the participants are professionals and potential leaders/ decision makers in the development programs.

The last core module is for analysing the traditional and current agricultural practices in Bangladesh in relation to their sustainability characteristics which would require participants to



understand where the agricultural system is positioned and how sustainability characteristics could be enhanced in the system from scientific and economic perspectives.

The core modules are followed by a series of

- i. Literature review and action research workshops by the program leader
- ii. Seminars in selected topics conducted by the invited speakers
- iii. Field visits accompanied by the industry practitioners

In Program 3&4 we have conducted the following seminars:

- i. Australian Government and sustainability responsibilities, *John Philimore*
- ii. Sustainability and sustainable agriculture in Margaret River Region, *Saul Cresswell, Shire of Augusta and Margaret River*
- iii. Land care management and the Lower Blackwood Landcare Group, *by Jo Wren and Tim Crimp, Lower Blackwood Landcare Group*
- iv. Permaculture, *by Jodie Lane, CEO FairHarvest*
- v. Richgro Bioenergy Plant, *by Geoff Richards, CEO Richgro Bioenergy Plant*
- vi. Planetary health and human values, *by Prof Dora Marinova*
- vii. Circular economy & sustainable waste management, *Atiq Zaman*
- viii. Sustainable supply chains management, *Mohamed Quaddus*
- ix. One planet living, *Jon Strachan*
- x. Disaster management, *Jorome Jayas*
- xi. Energy transition and sustainable transport, *Peter Newman*
- xii. Resource recovery, *Jared Crowe*
- xiii. Green growth and sustainable investment, *Asif Iqbal Siddiqui*
- xiv. Wetland restoration using water sensitive urban design, *Mohammad Swapan*

The program also organizes the following study visits,

- i. Fair Harvest, *David Galway*
- ii. *Richgro Bioenergy Plant, Atiq Zaman*
- iii. Eric Singleton Bird Sanctuary, *Jereme Maher*
- iv. Legacy Living Lab, *Roberto Minunno*
- v. Fair Harvest, *David Galway*
- vi. Fremantle City, *Jon Strachan*
- vii. Margaret River region



We finally encourage all participants to develop an *action research proposal* based on the learning throughout the program as the *key learning outcome* which they would pursue in their respective departments following the completion of the program.

SDG LOCALIZATION INITIATIVES (PROGRAM 3 & 4)

PROJECT 1: EMPLOYMENT GENERATION THROUGH ECO-TOURISM AND FORESTATION IN THE HAOR AREAS OF AJMIRIGANJ

Abstract:

This project has been concentrated on reducing poverty through employment generation as an indirect objective. The direct strategy of this project is to raise eco-tourism which will attract diverse tourists. Different economic perspectives can be attracted when this area will be a tourist spot. The main purpose of the project is employment generation in the haor area of Ajmiriganj. This project has chosen eco-tourism and forestation as the tools to raise employment sources. It directly relates to sustainable development goals 8 and 9 and indirectly relates to goals 1, 2, 11, and 13. The method of this project is the Plantation of Flame trees and Palm trees on the roadside of about 2 km along the Sharifuddin Road in Ajmiriganj Sadar Union and the riverbank of Kakailchaeo Union of Ajmiriganj Upazila. It will ensure Beautification through colorful fences with the 17 theme colors of SDG.

PROJECT 2: ENSURING SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD FOR LANDLESS FISHERS' FAMILIES: BILCHATRA PERSPECTIVE, ATHGHARIA, PABNA

Abstract:

This project targets the development of sustainable livelihood for landless fishermen families. Specific objectives of this project are - assessing the status of their livelihood and substantial changes and enhancement of those factors that are needed to improve their livelihood. This project believes if disadvantages and unsustainable issues are found, development activities will reach the desired level of their profession by focusing on SDG goals. The empirical method of this project has been applied to reduce the negative externalities of fishing. Practical strategies are - dredging up silt from Bilchatra for the natural reproduction of fishes; Housing the homeless fishers under the ashrayon-2 project; Leasing out the Bilchatra wetland to them under the law; Ensuring social safety-net programs for the fishers; Developing linkage to the 'Golden Basket' super shop of Pabna city. At the time, this project will improve the socioeconomic sustainability of landless fishers which will reach every fundamental need of their life.



PROJECT 3: REHABILITATION PROJECT FOR CHILDREN OF SOCIALLY DISABLED WOMEN (SEX WORKERS) IN BANISHANTA UNION UNDER DACOPE UPAZILA OF KHULNA, BANGLADESH

Abstract:

This project has tried to enable the equality of mainstream development by including the most disadvantaged and socially unrecognized communities. The objectives of this project are the integration of socially disabled women (sex workers) and their children into mainstream society. On the other hand, this objective will enable a sustainable environment where this community will be recognized to take part in sustainable growth. The empirical method of this project is mixed and data has been collected from the selected study area and defined population. Baseline data will be collected before the Implementation of the intervention. Data collected before implementation and data collected after the implementation will be compared and critically appraised. Action interventions are awareness building, alternative income generation, and training for different trade-based activities which are flexible to adapt or to utilize with their current capacity. These are fish cultivation, poultry farm, dairy farm, integrated farming, vocational training, and loan support from banks, different departments of the government number and NGOs for the sex workers. Besides, this project has provided logistics for the educational and basic needs of the children of the sex workers. Upazila Administration has played a vital role in funding and advocating the strength of project objectives.

PROJECT 4: VOCATIONAL AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT TRAINING FOR QAWMI MADRASA STUDENTS

Abstract:

The focus of this project is to transform an unemployable and disadvantaged community into a human resource. The target area has concentrated on Qwami Madrasa students with the top of feasibility analysis. The objective of the project is to provide vocational and skills development training to Qawmi madrasa students, graduates or dropouts so that they can also participate in the labor market as skilled/semi-skilled persons. The study area of this project is three selected madrasas in Kotbari area of Sadar South Upazila of Cumilla District. The feasibility of this project catches high sensitivity of unacceptability from Qwami Madrasa Stakeholders. This action research has followed various actionable contents which may break their culture of unchanging behavior. Applied steps or strategies to reach the objectives are Situation analysis (Baseline) to continue present activities, awareness and engagement building with madrasas through stakeholder visits, and discussion with Guardians and Students to have their valuable consent. Training Logistics were Basic Computer & ICT, Driving, Electrical & Electronics, AC & Fridge



Servicing, Computer Lab and Trainer (available with BARD/BPATC/TTCs), Trainer Driver with Vehicle (available with BRTC or could be outsourced to TTCs through MoU), Lab for Electrical & Electronics, AC & Fridge Servicing (could be outsourced to TTCs through MoU).

PROJECT 5: PROJECT BHURUNGAMARI: ADDRESSING THE ROOT CAUSES OF CHILD MARRIAGE

Abstract:

This research believes that quality education and hygiene (sanitation) facilities can have a significant role in girls' regular attendance at school. To reduce the level of social stigmas on women's education, counseling may be a good concern to engage teachers, school management committees, parents, and students in modeling, reflecting, and acting. The objective of this project is to eliminate gender disparities in education focusing on SDG no. 5. The research area is at Bhurungamari Upazila of Kurigram district under the Rangpur division. The methodological activities to ensure this objective are awareness-based activities to enforce the monitoring of marriage registers, security enforcement for girls' safety, stakeholder engagement (family, preachers, community, local leaders, etc), posters, and leaflets in public places. There are also several output measurement variables which are monthly enumeration, law enforcement meetings for monitoring incidences, the quarterly meeting of stakeholders, and enumeration of poster distribution. Material supports have been engaged in income support (i.e., VGD, VGF, etc.) and feminine hygiene (i.e. distribution of sanitary napkins and disposal facility) to ensure their educational finance and safe environment.

PROJECT 6: RE-ENROLMENT OF THE COVID INDUCED DROPOUTS TO INCREASE THE COMPLETION RATE IN SCHOOL EDUCATION

Abstract:

This project has been focused on the severe impact on secondary-level students through the Covid -19 pandemic. This problem has taken place due to the increasing rate of student dropouts. The COVID pandemic brought the students into a new reality that directed their learning flow into a long-term gap. The ultimate effect is primarily attributed to large dropout rates. The connected objective is the re-enrolment of COVID-induced dropouts in secondary education. The study area has been stated among selected schools of Sarail Upazilla, Brahmanbaria, Bangladesh. Key support activities are 'Awareness and Motivation', 'Education Support', and 'Income Support' namely. This project has engaged a significant number of stakeholders. After that, they make a consultation with them to identify existing problems and find the way of necessary interventions. This project will connect various SDGs (SDG 4.1) (SDG 8.7) (and SDG 16.2) respectively as more



numbers of students to be completed school education, reducing the number of child laborers, reducing the number of child marriages, and better lives for the children.

PROJECT 7: ENSURE LOGISTIC SUPPORT TO REDUCE INFANT AND MATERNAL MORTALITY IN HAOR AREAS

Abstract:

This project has tried to secure the health perspective of SDG. The project area was at Khaliajuri Upazila Under Netrokona District. The specific objective of the study is to set and analyse the logistic support to reduce Infant and Maternal Mortality in Haor Areas. Significant project issues are available transport system, number and quality support from village committees, maintenance of the birth calendar and focal point, quality medical support, and fund creation for more support programs. All these issues make health services more difficult for the Haor area people. As a result, to overcome all the problems regarding health and well-being, this project has set an action plan to monitor and identify pregnant mothers and houses; set a Hotline number and select contact person; vehicle support- one engine boat/ one Auto; forming village committee and community clinic or health centre; reducing maternal mortality rate per lac and infant mortality per thousand. This project has been accommodated under the social safety net program of Upazila Parishad.

PROJECT 8: “ATTAINING OPTIMAL INSTITUTIONAL DELIVERY OF THE PREGNANT WOMEN OF MOHICHAIL UNION UNDER CHANDINA UPAZILLA BY ISSUING MATERNAL HEALTH CARD [MATRI-SEBA CARD]”

Abstract:

Women’s reproductive health has been focused on for this project. They are usually not willing to share pregnancy complications with health personnel at Mohichail Union, Chandina Upazilla, Cumilla District. Socio-cultural upbringing is covered through superstitions. The women usually hide their pregnancy-related information. The specific objective of the project is to attain optimal institutional delivery of the pregnant women of Mohichail Union. The current methods to attain this objective are - issuing maternal health cards [Matri-seba card] with all related information of the expecting mother; providing training to the health staff for ensuring ANC, PNC, and neo-natal care as well as safe institutional delivery; raising awareness among the stakeholders to ensure reproductive health and minimum 4 times visit to the health personnel during pregnancy period; Ensuring easy access for pathological test in Upazila Health Complex.



PROJECT 9: “BOAT SCHOOL” FOR CHILDREN IN HAOR (WATER LOCKED) AREA FOR INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION

Abstract:

The main objective is to ensure the enrolment of children who are in vulnerable situations (living in the Haor area) and to increase learning opportunities. This project has kept an effort to provide equal access to educational facilities. The core intervention is the establishment of a Boat School. The study background is located under Arora Majlishpur Ashrayan Project, Itna Sadar Union, Itna Upazila, Kishorgonj. The indirect outcome of the project is concentrated mainly on social transformation. It is expected to reduce the rate of child abuse, early marriage, harmful practices and exploitation, and all forms of violence against women and other social discrimination. Empirical methods of intervention are Campaigning through focused group discussions, and audio-visual presentations at regular intervals to encourage parents to send their children to the boat school. Social safety net programs of the Ashrayan Project have been engaged to make boat schools sustainable. SDG 5 and 16 has been specified to achieve successful implementation through quality education and inclusive access to services.

