



Concept Note
Online Consultation on “Recent Crisis and the Urgency of New Strategy for the NGOs in Bangladesh”

Date: July 27, 2020

Background

The journey of NGOs in Bangladesh primarily started in the wake of liberation war, with only a few of them being active before 1971. After the liberation period, the NGOs started functioning mainly on the fields of relief and rehabilitation and then gradually entered other development areas. However, over the years, NGOs of Bangladesh have made an important contribution to humanity through their works on livelihood development, gender equality and women empowerment, human right education and promotion, good governance, health and nutrition, social protection, social safety net, child rights, labour rights, disaster risk reduction, climate change, humanitarian crisis response, migrants’ rights and many other development issues. Bangladesh is one of the countries with the highest number of NGOs (2510 as of June 2020 according to government records). Several networks have been formed with similar thematic or service areas over the years, with partial success in joint advocacy and coordinated programmes. The NGO Affairs Bureau was set up by the government in 1990 with an administrative order, first placed under the President’s Secretariat and later under the Prime Minister’s Office. It functions as a regulatory and monitoring government department.

In fact, NGOs can adapt responses to the community context and their programmes are paramount to the society’s most vulnerable population. NGOs of Bangladesh also have an enormous role in policy advocacy on various rights-based issues and they raise voices for the community at the national, regional and global level. NGOs are imperative to help government in achieving Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (SDGs), as well as other commitments made by Bangladesh at international forums. In the current context of Bangladesh where Government cannot reach all development targets alone, the role of Bangladeshi NGOs is highly significant along-with the International NGOs and UN agencies.

The development sector is changing rapidly. During the past decades, the development agendas have shifted extensively, followed by the changing roles of donor agencies, which is not only trending in Bangladesh, but also transforming globally. The SDGs have made new targets for all the signatory countries, which needs to be achieved together by the Government of Bangladesh with the support of NGOs. With the growing crisis of displaced population from Myanmar, the humanitarian response by NGOs opened up a new era of interventions. On the other hand, funding opportunities are shrinking rapidly, especially when Bangladesh has been declared as a lower-middle income country. The donor agencies are continuously pushing NGOs for planning on sustainability throughout implementing programs and encouraging them to reduce donor dependency. Nevertheless, NGOs are still highly donor dependent, although some good examples of self-reliant programs are empirically evident, generally based on microfinancing and business modeling.

The recent pandemic (COVID-19) situation has created further crisis for the NGOs, who serve the marginalized and disadvantaged communities. Donor funding priority countries are changing and the smaller, grassroot NGOs are having to downsize their staff and programmes. This crisis may worsen the scenario of funding in future and it might become more difficult to access donor resources, especially for



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the long term activities, as donors are working towards reducing their capacity in tandem with changing their mandate and strategies.

NGOs need to be aware of and adapt with the new strategies correspondingly. Crisis creates new opportunities, which need to be comprehended by the NGO community leaders. There could be a new era for the Bangladeshi NGO communities where they will need to rethink their mandates, with a focus on developing new strategies aligned with the current trend of development, funding opportunities, local resource mobilization and business modeling through new value chain development. All these require innovation through planning and implementation of new strategies.

This consultation will start a dialogue exchange process on the aforementioned issues among the NGO communities and development partners in Bangladesh.

Objective of the Consultation

- Understand the current trend of development and crisis created among the NGO communities, both globally and locally
- Explore the new opportunities available for the NGO Communities in the upcoming future
- Identify the way forward for the NGO Communities for setting new strategies and directions.

Participants

Government representatives, UN Agencies, International NGOs, NGOs from District and Divisional level, Development Practitioners and Media Personnel will join in the Consultation.

Date: July 27, 2020

Time: 11.00am to 1.00pm

Media: Zoom Virtual Platform (link and passcode is available in the email body).

Expected Outcomes

By the end of the Consultation, the NGOs may develop concise understanding on future planning and strategic directions, in relation to overcoming the current crisis. Rest of the participants, however will realize their role to collaborate with each other to sustain the development activities in Bangladesh.



Program Schedule:

“Recent Crisis and the Urgency of New Strategy for the NGOs in Bangladesh” Date: July 27, 2020		
10:45 AM – 11:00 AM	Login and troubleshooting	All participants
11:00 AM – 11:20 AM	Welcome note & Presentation on ‘Recent Crisis and the Urgency of New Strategy for the NGOs in Bangladesh’	Mr. Hassan Imam, Managing Director, DEVCOM
11:20 AM – 12:20 PM	Opinions of Experts from the Development Sector	<p>Ms. Rina Roy, Director Program Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF)</p> <p>Ms. Sheepa Hafiza, Human Rights Activist</p> <p>Ms. Nazia Haider, Programme Manager-Safer Migration, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC</p> <p>Ms. Lima Rahman, Chief of Party, Save the Children Bangladesh</p> <p>Ms. Nobonita Chowdhury, Director, Gender Justice and Diversity, BRAC</p> <p>Mr. Syed Saiful Haque, Chairman, WARBE Development Foundation</p> <p>Ms. Afroz Mahal, Dhaka and Country Portfolio Manager, Plan International</p> <p>Mr. Tony Michael Gomes, Director, World Vision Bangladesh</p> <p>Ms Rahnuma Salam Khan, Deputy Chief, MoEWOE</p> <p>Mr Shakirul Islam, Chairman, OKUP</p> <p>Mr. Towfique Ahmed, Divisional Head, Barisal, UNICEF</p>
12:20 PM – 12:50 PM	Open discussion	All participants and Speakers
12:50 PM – 1:00 PM	Summary and way forward	Mr. Asif Munier , Migration Analyst
1.00 PM – 1.05 PM	Vote of Thanks	Ms. Shamima Parvin , Coordinator, DEVCOM