

Four Years of SDGs in Bangladesh

AND THE WAY FORWARD

*Looking through the Prism of
Non-State Actors*



Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh

এসডিজি বাস্তবায়নে নাগরিক প্ল্যাটফর্ম, বাংলাদেশ



**Four Years of
SDGs in
Bangladesh
and the Way Forward**

Four Years of SDGs in Bangladesh

AND THE WAY FORWARD

*Looking through the Prism of
Non-State Actors*



Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh

এসডিজি বাস্তবায়নে নাগরিক প্ল্যাটফর্ম, বাংলাদেশ

Published in July 2019 by

Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh

Secretariat: Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)

House - 6/2 (7th & 8th floors), Block - F

Kazi Nazrul Islam Road, Lalmatia Housing Estate

Dhaka - 1207, Bangladesh

Telephone: (+88 02) 58152779, 9141734, 9141703, 9126402 & 9143326

Fax: (+88 02) 48110414

E-mail: coordinator@bdplatform4sdgs.net

Website: www.bdplatform4sdgs.net

© Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh and
Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)

All rights are reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without prior permission in writing from the publisher. Any person who does any unauthorised act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

The views expressed in the reports of this publication are those of the authors alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh, or CPD, or any other organisations with which they are affiliated.

Cover and design concept
Avra Bhattacharjee

Printed at

Lithograph

41/5 Purana Paltan, Dhaka 1000

Preface

One of the relatively understated issues concerning implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) happens to be the role of non-state actors, including the private sectors, non-government development organisations, community-based organisations and civil society organisations. In this connection, the present publication, prepared under the aegis of the *Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh*, can be distinguished by its two main features. First, it embodies a unique set of works undertaken by the non-state actors in Bangladesh in the context of the state of delivery of the SDGs. Second, this invaluable compendium is the outcome of an extraordinary participatory process initiated on the occasion of the fourth anniversary of the launch of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Platform

Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh is a partnership of more than a hundred organisations who are non-state actors, and intend to contribute in the national SDG process of Bangladesh. This unique Platform was convened in 2016, as a congregation of organisations already working in different areas of SDGs, in order to promote greater interaction and coordination among themselves along with the government and other related stakeholders. The aim is to put a concerted effort in realising the global goals, and ensuring transparency and accountability in the national process.

The Product

Regarding the first distinguishing feature of this publication, it may be noted that the need to follow-up and review the delivery of the SDGs has been emphatically underscored in the 2030 Agenda—the designated vehicle of which is the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). However, in most cases, these VNRs have remained more 'governmental' than 'national'. Experience suggests that the participation of the non-state actors in the preparation

of these documents had been perfunctory. Moreover, these VNRs hardly reported on the contributions of the private sector and NGOs in delivering the SDGs. In response, this compendium seeks to fill the lacuna concerning the documentation of the SDG-related activities of the non-state actors in Bangladesh.

However, reporting on these activities remains limited to the six goals pre-identified for discussion at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2019. These goals are: Quality Education (SDG 4); Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8); Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10); Climate Action (SDG 13); Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (SDG 16); and Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17). The review on each of these goals attempts to report on the nature of interventions by the non-state actors and their intended outcomes by situating them in the overall SDG context of the country.

The Process

Regarding the second distinguishing feature of this publication, it may be pointed out that the seven review reports—one overview and six on specific SDGs—have been prepared through an extensive, as well as focused, multi-stakeholder consultative process. This involved focus group discussions, technical workshops and presentations at a national conclave of stakeholders, among others.

One of the most remarkable traits of these review reports had been their mode of preparation. Six status reports were prepared by Platform’s designated partner organisations with demonstrated expertise regarding that concerned SDG. The review reports sought to assess the progress of the goals in Bangladesh, capture the lessons learnt—best practices and challenges, and indicate the way forward for more effective delivery. Indeed, this approach allowed the generation of ‘portraits’ of the contributions of the private sector and NGOs from the ground. Valuable inputs were received from the relevant ministries and government agencies, international development partners, representatives from print and electronic media, the entrepreneurs and business leaders and partner organisations of the Platform. The key findings of the status reports were then used to prepare an overview report on the progress of SDGs in Bangladesh. The event titled “Citizens Conclave: Four Years of SDGs in Bangladesh” was

the climax of a long participatory process for preparation of review reports on each SDG, and was attended by more than 1,000 delegates from across the country.

While the full reports are on their way, the present publication is a compendium of all the summary reports under one cover.

The Outlook

Curiously, the journey of preparing these reports has given rise to a set of issues regarding the recognition of the contribution of the non-state actors in actualisation of the 2030 Agenda. These include the following:

1. Tracking the changes in non-state actors' priorities following launch of the SDGs;
2. Identifying the non-state actors' approaches and interventions in the area of the SDG pledge to 'leave no one behind'; and,
3. Developing a framework for assessing contributions of the non-state actors in delivering the SDGs.

Although the materials presented in this publication are based on the experience of Bangladesh, one can readily see its broader approach in terms of both concepts and practice. Thus, we are pleased to be able to release it on the eve of the HILPF 2019.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As is the case in such intellectual endeavours, the tireless efforts of many have gone into the successful production of this book. First and foremost, we are grateful—to the Advisory Group of the Citizen's Platform for their continued guidance, and to the Core Group for their active engagement with this publication.

We are indebted to a number of organisations, including the 105 partner organisations of the Platform and beyond, for their support in organising the 'Citizen's Conclave 2019'. We are especially grateful to our Platform partners,

who spontaneously came forward to form the Goal Groups on the six SDGs and prepared the review reports.

We sincerely appreciate the inputs received from consultation meetings with government officials, private sector representatives, international development partners and media professionals. We are also grateful to the partner organisations, as well as private sector entities, who have extended generous support towards underwriting the process and different events. In this connection, we would like to make special mention of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Swedish Development Cooperation (SDC).

One final note of gratitude is due to the senior management of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) and colleagues from its Research, Dialogue and Communication, and Finance and Administration Divisions—for their extraordinary efforts as the Platform’s Secretariat.

Dhaka
July, 2019

Debapriya Bhattacharya, Ph.D.
Convenor, Citizen’s Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh
Chair, Southern Voice
a network of international think tanks
and
Distinguished Fellow, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)
<deb.bhattacharya@cpd.org.bd>

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>Acronyms</i>	<i>xi</i>
Four Years of SDGs in Bangladesh: Measuring Progress and Charting the Path Forward	1
Promoting Quality Education for All (SDG 4)	21
Pursuing Decent Jobs Agenda for Inclusive Economic Growth (SDG 8)	29
Reducing Inequality in a High-Growth Scenario (SDG 10)	37
Improving Capacity for Effective Climate Action (SDG 13)	45
Ensuring Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (SDG 16)	51
Strengthening Global Partnerships for Empowering People and Ensuring Inclusiveness (SDG 17)	57

Acronyms

AI	Artificial Intelligence
APA	Annual Performance Agreement
ATM	Automated Teller Machine
BNCU	Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO
BUILD	Business Initiative Leading Development
CAMPE	Campaign for Popular Education
CBO	Community-based Organisation
CPD	Centre for Policy Dialogue
CRI	Commitment to Reducing Inequality (index)
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DC	Deputy Commissioner
DFI	Development Finance International
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EFA	Education for All
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FTA	Free Trade Area
GATJ	Global Alliance for Tax Justice
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GED	General Economics Division
GNI	Gross National Income
GPI	Gender Parity Index
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
HDI	Human Development Index
HLPF	High-Level Political Forum
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IT	Information Technology
LDC	Least Developed Country
LEED	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MSM	Men Who Have Sex with Men
MoDMR	Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief

MoE	Ministry of Education
MoPME	Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
(I)NGO	(International) Non-Government Organisation
NIS	National Integrity System
NPL	Non-Performing Loan
NSA	National Student Assessment
NSDA	National Skills Development Authority
NSO	National Statistics Office
NSSS	National Social Security Strategy
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PSDPCC	Private Sector Development Policy Coordination Committee
RMG	Readymade Garments
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SFDRR	Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction
SID	Statistical and Informatics Division
SIR	SDGs Implementation Review
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
TIB	Transparency International Bangladesh
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNO	Upazila Nirbahi Officer
USD	United States Dollar
USGBC	U.S. Green Building Council
VAT	Value Added Tax
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WEF	World Economic Forum
7FY	Seventh Five Year Plan

Four Years of SDGs in Bangladesh

Measuring Progress and Charting the Path Forward

**This report has been prepared by the
following researchers at Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)**

*Fahmida Khatun
Debapriya Bhattacharya
Mustafizur Rahman
Khondaker Golam Moazzem
Towfiqul Islam Khan
Mostafa Amir Sabbih
Syed Yusuf Saadat*

1. Introduction

Bangladesh, as a signatory of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, is engaged in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the last three years, and has also been playing an active role in the global discourse on the SDGs. Government of Bangladesh (GoB) has involved various stakeholders in implementing the SDGs within a 'whole society approach' to this end. Non-state actors have also been playing important roles in carrying out activities towards implementation of the SDGs. Keeping in purview the agenda of the upcoming High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in July 2019, and the SDG Summit in September 2019, the motivation of the present report is to contribute towards more effective implementation of the SDGs in Bangladesh over the coming years.

The present report has been prepared in view of the Conclave titled "Four Years of SDGs in Bangladesh" convened by the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh on 27 April 2019 in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Since its inception in 2016, the Platform has been playing an important role in highlighting the contribution of non-state actors in implementing the SDGs in Bangladesh, helping raise voice of non-state actors in this connection, and mobilising them towards more effective SDG implementation in the country. More than a hundred civil society organisations (CSOs), non-government organisations (NGOs) and private sector organisations which are members of the Platform have been engaged in a variety of activities, through which they are playing a crucial role towards implementation of the SDGs in Bangladesh.

The report has the following objectives: (a) examine the implementation progress of the SDGs in Bangladesh in six goal areas identified for review at the upcoming HLPF; (b) assess the contribution of non-state actors in Bangladesh in attaining the SDGs; (c) identify key implementation-related challenges and draw lessons to raise the efficacy of SDG implementation; and (d) recommend measures to attain the SDGs in Bangladesh by 2030.

The theme of HLPF 2019 is '*Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality*', which resonates very closely with aspirations of Bangladesh in relation to SDGs. The HLPF will undertake a review of progress concerning six of the 17 goals and the associated targets. The goals identified for the 2019 review are particularly critical for Bangladesh, because of their overriding importance in the context of the current state of development of the country. The six SDGs selected for 2019 review are: Goal 4: Quality Education; Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth; Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities; Goal 13: Climate Action; Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions; and Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals. Not only do these

cross-cutting goals resonate very well with the priorities of Bangladesh, these are also crucial to attaining the other SDGs in the country, through leveraging and drawing synergies.

The present exercise is particularly important, as Bangladesh will not be taking part in the Voluntary National Review (VNR) in 2019. The report will fill a gap in this context by presenting an updated assessment of SDG implementation in Bangladesh. This review taking place in the fourth year of SDG implementation is also important on two counts: firstly, four-years is a substantial time to assess the direction in which SDG implementation work has been moving, and draw lessons as regards what has worked and what improvements are needed and where the challenges are; secondly, there is still more than a decade left in the run-up to 2030, and insights from the lessons learned from the experience of the past four years could throw important insights to help raise efficacy of SDG implementation over the coming years.

The present report has made extensive use of the six goal-specific reports prepared by dedicated groups of the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh. The reports and underlying ideas were shared with key stakeholders, and feedbacks were received through four consultations that were organised by the Platform. Key stakeholder communities, such as government officials, international development partners, media professionals and representatives from the private sector were present in these consultations. Various government documents, secondary materials, and national and global data sources were consulted to get the needed information. Analytical tools were deployed and trend analysis was undertaken to make necessary projections.

2. Integration of SDGs into National Policies

Bangladesh is one of the front-runners in institutionalising the SDG implementation mechanism. Its specific measures in this regard include – establishing high-level platforms, coordination of intergovernmental agencies, integration of policies, undertaking priority-setting exercise and devising of action plans. Initiative has also been taken to involve non-state stakeholders in the official institutional framework of SDG implementation process through adopting a 'whole society approach'. However, these initiatives suggest that more success has been achieved in the 'upstream', and that there is a lack of progress in the 'downstream'. A number of future challenges may be drawn from the experience of first four years of integrating SDGs into the national development process in Bangladesh.

First, the government has achieved major strides in aligning the SDG targets with the country's Seventh Five Year Plan (7FYP). Curiously, some

of the critical areas (such as targets under SDG 4) were not found to be aligned with the 7FYP. There is no clear direction and timeline as to how, through revisions, the 'not-aligned' targets will be integrated into the current or future SDG-oriented national development plans, policies and strategies. This calls for further scrutiny and fine-tuning of the national action plan for SDGs.

Second, the concept of 'localisation of SDGs' has received a great deal of attention among the government officials and policymakers. To this end, the General Economics Division (GED) of the national Planning Commission has put forward a proposal to localise the SDGs, which has been discussed in the SDGs Implementation and Review Committee. In the meeting, it was decided that the upazila nirbahi officers (UNOs) will take the responsibility of this schematic localisation model, involving the government agencies and local government bodies at upazila level; and Deputy Commissioners (DCs) will be doing the same at district level. Natore district administration has put into practice this localisation model at district level by chalking out local problems, potentials and action programmes for all government agencies to address the problems through utilising the potentials.¹

However, ensuring its proper implementation in an inclusive manner still remains a major challenge. Here, further actions are required to strengthen the local government through overcoming the structural bottlenecks. Local solutions have to be devised through identifying local priorities and problems and utilising local knowledge and resources.

Third, while financial resource requirement for implementing the SDGs has been estimated and their possible sources have been identified, mobilising funds from the potential sources at the projected rate would be a difficult task, particularly for a country like Bangladesh, which has one of the lowest revenue-GDP (gross domestic product) ratios in the world. Flow of funds through foreign aid, foreign direct investment (FDI), South-South cooperation and blended finance are still low, compared to their targets. Therefore, the major effort should be put on tax reforms, attracting private investments and identifying other innovative sources. Additionally, non-financial resources should be tapped. These include facilitating technology transfer, seeking favourable market access and urging for conducive international trade rules.

Fourth, efforts in identifying the data gaps for SDG indicators is well-appreciated. However, limited or no progress has been made so far in generating new data from various sources, such as through initiating new

¹This is known as the 'Natore Model'.

surveys, from administrative sources, and by recognising non-official data. Meanwhile, while financial support for the national statistics offices (NSOs) has almost doubled in absolute terms, it has declined as a share of total budget during the last five fiscal years. Budget allocation for the Statistical and Informatics Division (SID) of the government has increased from Tk. 381 crore in FY2014-15 to Tk. 599 crore in FY2018-19, but declined as a share of total budget, from 0.2 per cent to 0.1 per cent over the same period. There is also not much progress with regard to harnessing more disaggregated data for addressing the vulnerable and marginalised groups, which would be key in ensuring that ‘no one is left behind’.

Fifth, there is no formal platform as yet for institutionalising partnership with the private sector, though some attempts were observed in organising dialogues with them. In some cases, private sector representatives were called as special observers. As the resource requirement suggests, the private sector will have to play a pioneering role in financing the SDGs. Hence, involving them in each step of the SDG implementation process from early stage is critically important. Same is also applicable for the NGOs and CSOs. Furthermore, the role of the parliamentarians is still unclear. There is no framework till date for the parliamentarians to discuss and debate on progress, challenges and success stories of SDG implementation during the parliament sessions.

There are also a few more issues which are felt to require further attention. These include: trade-offs and synergies are not adequately conceptualised and put into policy priorities; opportunities of collaboration at the sub-regional level are not adequately explored; systemic concerns, such as trade war, deteriorating global and regional circumstances and national transitions should be taken into consideration while planning and reviewing Bangladesh’s progress on SDGs. Also, it is often noticed that, government’s efforts are confined within the traditional conceptualisation of inclusiveness. Hence, fulfilment of the aspiration of ‘leaving no one behind’ during the SDG implementation process may prove to be difficult.

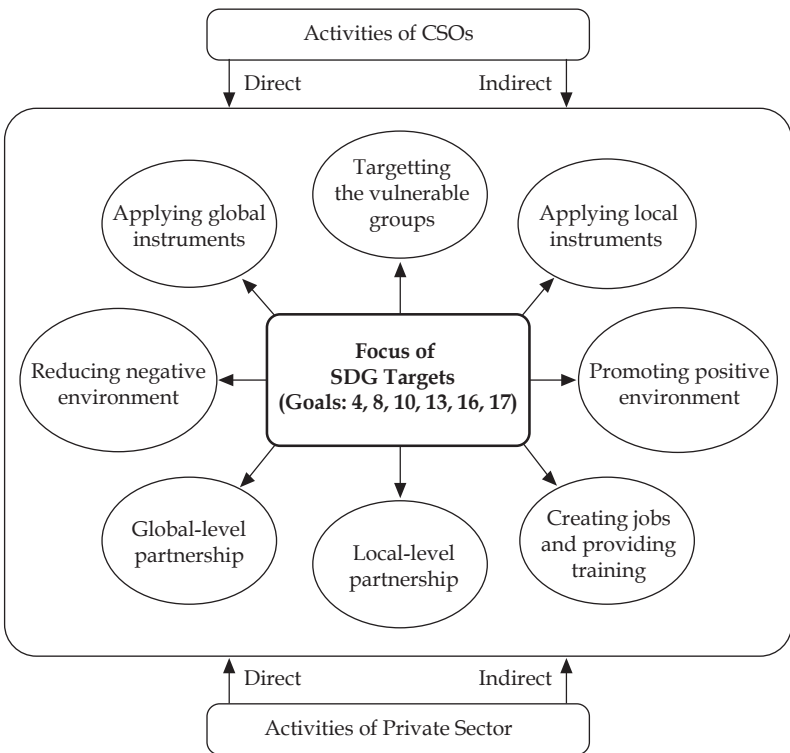
Overall, it may be said that, often at the implementation level, ‘business as usual’ actions have been put under ‘SDG bracket’, rather than transforming these types of practices for delivering SDG aspirations. It appears that, the SDGs Implementation Review (SIR) and the Annual Performance Agreement (APA) are considered as key annual follow-up and review processes at the national level. However, one may expect a more rigorous mechanism under these processes, which will need to be followed by concrete policy actions. It has been almost four years since the adoption of the SDGs on 25 September 2015. Therefore, it is high time to address the challenges related to institutions, planning, finance, monitoring and review.

3. Changes in Non-state Actors' Activities and Priorities

3.1 Engagement of CSOs

Historically, non-state actors in Bangladesh have played an important role in serving various development agenda at the community level, particularly in addressing the priorities of the people who are left behind. They have been doing this through activism, awareness raising, capacity building and direct support. Since six SDGs (i.e. 4, 8, 10, 13, 16 and 17) are the focus of this review report, the engagement of the CSOs and the private sector are examined in line with these SDGs and related targets. A review of scope, nature and level of engagements of non-state actors indicate that their engagements vary across different targets of the selected six goals. Figure 1 and the subsequent analyses present a summary of their engagements in various SDG-related activities.

Figure 1: Different focus of selected SDGs and scope of engagement of non-state actors



Source: Illustration by the authors.

In the post-2015 period, CSOs have largely been involved in activities in line with their traditional areas of experience and expertise. Some CSOs have set up internal SDG teams within the organisation, while some are continuing their regular or ongoing activities that are already in place, and which resonate with the objectives of the SDGs. The most prominent initiative in Bangladesh has been the launch of the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh, comprising like-minded CSOs and private sector organisations with a view to contribute to the national SDG process along with the government. The Platform partners have attempted to work towards fulfilling the core commitment of the SDGs, i.e. "leave no one behind."

Thus, CSOs have enhanced their focus on vulnerable groups, particularly the poor and marginalised communities, such as the dalits and harijans, adivasis and differently-able people, sex workers, transgender groups, climate-vulnerable population, among others.

Notable difference is observed in case of Goal 13 which focuses on climate change. This is also because, the issue has received increased attention following the 2015 Paris Climate Conference. CSOs are now more aware with regard to greater accountability of the use of climate funds for adaptation-related programmes. Besides, the notion of human rights activism at community level is developed – to uphold citizen's rights and environmental promotion through community forums.

Another change in focus is observed in case the SDG 17. During the pre-2015 period, CSOs' focus was mainly on trade and aid-related issues. CSOs have now expanded their attention towards other issues, such as technology transfer from the developed countries and capacity development. There is also a renewed realisation regarding the importance of partnership with various stakeholders for implementation of the SDGs.

Several activities are being undertaken by the CSOs which are geared towards reducing inequality (SDG 10). Some of these include: capacity development and leadership promotion; sensitisation of service-providers; alliance, network and linkage building; community awareness and capacity development on human rights and violence against women; legal aid support to victims of violence, including for the marginalised people and women; skills development training and linkage with trade and job markets; linkage with financial institutions for credit facilities; monitoring and strengthening of service-providing institutions by applying social accountability tools; advocacy and lobbying for law and policy implementation; beggar rehabilitation; and enhancing resources and increasing capacities of poor households.

CSOs have also been making use of new instruments and programmes through setting up of new networks and institutions. Rights-based CSOs are now undertaking policy activism to enact new policies, laws and rules to lessen the adversities of weak governance situation (SDG 16).

In case of funding, it can be observed that, the share of official development assistance (ODA) for least developed countries (LDCs) has increased only by a modest level since 2000. The flow of fund targetted to Bangladesh's CSOs has experienced a change in recent years, particularly following the influx of Rohingya population from Myanmar since 2017. A large part of the recent rise in the flow of foreign fund is particularly for supporting the Rohingya people. It is to be noted that, CSOs and NGOs do not have alternate sources of funds at the national level to carry out their intended activities in relation to the SDGs.

Awareness raising has been another area of SDG-related activities by CSOs. There are examples of CSO activities in developing inclusive education model in rural areas in collaboration with communities. There are also initiatives to increase awareness of trade union members, women peer leaders and workers, regarding their rights and entitlements (SDG 8). A few organisations are working with dalit, harijan and transgender communities for upholding their rights.

A number of CSOs are working towards implementation of programmes for developing effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels (SDG Target 16.6). They are involved in ensuring responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels under SDG Target 16.7.

In a number of cases, CSOs have to interface their SDG-related activities with the government. The Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh has been working with different government ministries and institutions at central and local levels on various aspects of SDGs. CSOs undertook activities in collaboration with different ministries and departments or other public authorities. A Strategic Framework and Action Plan on SDG 4 has been prepared under the leadership of the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME) and Ministry of Education (MoE), where a number of organisations provided inputs. Both in case of Goals 8 and 17, the private sector is working as the research and advocacy support partner, and secretariat for the Private Sector Development Policy Coordination Committee (PSDPCC) at the Prime Minister's Office, headed by the Principal Secretary. PSDPCC has representation from 13 trade and business supporting ministries and five leading private sector bodies. With regard to Goal 13, the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR), along with a number of CSOs, has prepared a scoping paper

to explore the potentiality of the National Mechanism on Climate Change-induced Disaster Losses and Damages in Bangladesh. With regard to Goal 16, CSOs are working with the government for promoting legal identity for all, including birth registration, by 2030 (SDG Target 16.9).

3.2 Engagement of Private Sector

The private sector in Bangladesh has enhanced its activities in the area of social compliance to a significant extent. More specifically, they are active in ensuring decent job conditions, and creating awareness regarding the need to reduce down pollutions from industries. Private sector has formed different entities such as foundations and funds, as part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities. They also support educational institutions and provide training to workers. In recent times, the private sector has been collaborating with CSOs in SDG implementation, leveraging the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh, which indeed is providing the suitable platform in this regard.

The private sector has been contributing towards achieving the SDGs in a number of ways. A web-based data analysis was carried out by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), on engagements of the private sector in SDG implementation at the global level, based on the information available in the website titled 'Sustainable Development Partnership Platform', a United Nations (UN)-led initiative. The website reported information of a total of 702 different initiatives, mostly led by private sector, CSOs and other organisations (as of 10 March 2019). Key areas of their engagement include activities for knowledge sharing on climate change, gender equality, community development, media services, livelihood development, e-schools, capacity development in the information and communication technologies (ICTs), training, improving organisational capacity, public-private partnership, promotional activities for marketing of products, green growth by reduced chemical use, and ideas for developing apps. In many cases, instead of attaching directly with their corporate entities, private sector has formed separate entities in the form of foundations to provide financial support to universities, research organisations, schools and banks to implement different activities. Such engagements are also found in different forms of collaboration between different organisations, such as foundation-university collaboration, foundation-CSO collaboration, university-foundation collaboration and UN agencies-foundations-private companies' collaboration.

By and large, a 'business as usual' approach is observed among the private sector in Bangladesh in addressing different concerns related to the SDG process. A thorough search on the websites of the business associations have

revealed, that among the SDGs under review of this report, engagement of the private sector is mostly confined to two : SDGs 8 and 17. A list of their activities on these two SDGs is presented below.

Goal 8 – Decent work and Economic Growth: Major activities include: (i) conducting training programmes for women entrepreneurship; (ii) preparing recommendations for the national budget, and work on tax, value added tax (VAT), development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and price monitoring; (iii) building awareness on workplace safety; (iv) running training courses on ICT.

Goal 17 – Partnerships for the Goals: It includes: (i) partnership with different stakeholders; (ii) partnership with national and foreign delegations; (iii) trade facilitation and promotion; (iv) protect and promote trade, commerce and manufacturers; (v) bridging the communication gap with different stakeholders; (vi) collect and disseminate statistics and other information relating to trade, commerce and industries; and (vii) facilitate exports in various destinations.

The above discussion indicates that, CSOs and the private sector are carrying out SDG-related activities in different manners, forms and structures. Since the inception of SDGs, there has been a shift in their understanding towards their organisational planning of programme interventions, which is guided by their increased awareness on SDGs – their importance, scope and prospects in the Bangladesh context. Based on the above discussion, it is clear that their involvement in the SDG process is reflected in five specific areas. These are: (a) strategic change in focus of the actors’ activities and interventions; (b) new initiatives focusing the SDGs; (c) changes in funding pattern for CSOs; (d) awareness raising done by the actors; and (e) interfacing of SDG-related activities with the government.

4. Outlook for Reaching the SDGs by 2030

Bangladesh has made remarkable accomplishments in terms of economic development since its independence. Nevertheless, the SDGs represent an ambitious and comprehensive set of targets that will be a challenge to achieve within 2030. Thus, it is imperative to track progress on the SDGs, so that policies can be prioritised on the basis of empirical evidence. This section of the report will focus on the current status of the six specific SDGs in Bangladesh, and discuss their probable outlook in 2030.

In this section, an attempt has been made to project the progress of a select group of indicators under the six SDGs that will be reviewed during the HLPF 2019. The objective is to show if the current trends of progress

continue, how much will be achieved by 2030. This exercise can be a guide for the policymakers and non-state actors as to how they should prioritise their actions depending on the distance they have to travel towards achieving the SDGs by 2030.

There are 68 targets and 95 indicators under the specified six SDGs. However, forecasting of all the indicators was not possible, mainly for two reasons. First, all SDG indicators are not quantifiable. Second, data for forecasting those indicators, particularly reliable long-term data, are not available for Bangladesh. Hence, this research could include 38 targets and 50 indicators of those six SDGs for the forecasting exercise.

In order to understand the possibility of achieving the SDGs by 2030, forecasting has been done using long-term official data from various sources. One important caveat of this exercise is that, the results of the projection relate only to the specific SDGs indicators, and cannot be interpreted as the future performance of the whole SDG itself. The present study has ranked the six SDGs based on the performance of the targets and indicators related to those SDGs.

In doing so, colours have been put to indicate the state of progress, and then values were assigned to the colours. Hence, first, in order to get a bird's eye view of the state of the six selected SDGs in Bangladesh, Red-Amber-Green statuses have been assigned for each of the indicators considered in this report. 'Red' status represents that the indicator is going in the wrong direction; it requires radical policy changes and significant efforts from all involved stakeholders in order to reverse the trajectory. 'Amber' status represents that the indicator is going in the right direction, but requires some policy interventions to steer it towards SDG target achievement by 2030. 'Green' status represents that the indicator is going in the right direction, and the target will be achieved within 2030. Second, scores have been assigned based on the performance. Indicators that fall within the Red category are assigned a score of 1, Amber category indicators get 2, and Green category indicators receive 3. Depending on the colour-based classification system, Table 1 presents the status of the performance of the selected indicators.

SDG 4 has 11 indicators in total. However, data could be obtained on seven indicators. All the indicators for SDG 4 are in Amber status, except for Indicator 4.5.1, which is Green; and Indicator 4.b.1, which is Red. Schooling completion rates, pre-school enrolment rates and literacy rates are increasing, and educational facilities are improving. Nonetheless, progress of these indicators is, in most cases, both slow and qualitatively inadequate. Gender parity in literacy has already been achieved, and

Table 1: Heat map of selected SDG indicators in Bangladesh

SDG 4 Education	SDG 8 Decent Work	SDG 10 Inequality	SDG 13 Climate Action	SDG 16 Peace and Justice	SDG 17 Partnership
4.1.1: Schooling completion rate	8.1.1: Annual growth rate of real GDP per capita	10.1.1: Growth rate of income of poorest 40 per cent	13.1.1a: Households affected by disasters	16.1.1: Intentional homicide per 100,000 people	17.1.1: Tax-GDP ratio
4.2.2: Pre-primary participation rate	8.2.1: Annual growth rate of real GDP per employed person	10.5.1: Financial soundness indicators	13.1.1b: Aggregate economic loss due to disasters	16.1.2: Conflict-related deaths per 100,000 population	17.2.1: Net ODA received as % of GNI
4.5.1: Gender parity index of literacy rate	8.3.1: Informal employment rate in non-agriculture	10.B.1: Net ODA received	13.1.1c: Sickness and injury due to disasters, by area	16.1.3: Prevalence of violence against women	17.3.1: Net FDI inflow
4.6.1: Literacy rate	8.4.2: Domestic material consumption per capita	10.C.1: Remittance costs	13.1.1d: Sickness and injury due to disasters, by disaster	16.2.1: Proportion of children with aggression experience	17.3.2: Volume of remittances as a proportion of total GDP
4.A.1: Schools' access to electricity, technology and sanitation	8.5.2: Unemployment rate		13.1.1e: Average economic loss per household due to disasters	16.3.1: Reporting of violence	17.4.1: Debt service as proportion of exports
4.B.1: Volume of ODA for scholarships	8.6.1: Proportion of youth NEET		13.1.1f: Non-schooling days due to disasters	16.4.1: Illicit financial outflows	17.6.2: Fixed internet broadband subscriptions
4.C.1: Proportion of trained teachers	8.7.1: Proportion of children in child labour		13.2.1a: Growth rate of greenhouse gas emissions	16.4.2: Number of arms act cases	17.8.1: Proportion of individuals using the internet

(Table 1 contd.)

(Table 1 contd.)

SDG 4 Education	SDG 8 Decent Work	SDG 10 Inequality	SDG 13 Climate Action	SDG 16 Peace and Justice	SDG 17 Partnership
	8.10.1a: Commercial bank branches per 100,000 adults		13.2.1b: Annual average temperature change	16.5.1: Public official bribery rate	17.11.1: Share of global exports
	8.10.1b: ATMs per 100,000 adults			16.7.1: Proportions of parliament seats held by women	17.17.1: Investment in energy with private participation
	8.10.2: Proportion of adults with a bank account			16.10.1: Kidnappings per 100,000 people	17.19.1: Resources for strengthening statistical capacity
	8.A.1: Aid for trade commitments and disbursements				

Source: Authors' compilation.

Note: GNI: Gross national income.

is expected to be maintained up to 2030. However, the volume of ODA inflows for scholarships is declining, and is unlikely to rise in the coming years.

For the SDG 8, 11 out of a total of 17 indicators have been evaluated. Four indicators are found to be in Red status, four in Amber status, and three in Green status. GDP per capita, GDP per employed person and number of commercial bank branches are all expected to continue increasing till 2030. The share of youth not in education, employment or training (NEET) and the share of children in employment are both decreasing, but need greater policy attention. The number of automated teller machines (ATMs) and the proportion of adults with bank accounts are increasing, but the volume of cashless transfers and the level of inclusion in the formal financial system remain rather low. Both youth unemployment and informal employment in the non-agricultural sector are high, and expected to rise.

As for the SDG 10, the prospect of achieving it appears bleak. Among the 11 indicators, four were considered in this report. Three out of these four indicators are in the Red status, with only one indicator being in the Amber status. The income share held by the poorest 40 per cent is expected to keep falling from the already low level that was present in 2015. This will lead to an increase in income inequality in the country. In the meanwhile, the state of the banking sector, which accounts for the largest part of the financial sector, is in a difficult situation. Non-performing loans (NPLs) are at high levels, and they are creating a drain in public resources since the government is bailing out banks with taxpayers' money year after year. While total resource flows for development have increased in recent years, it was mainly in the form of project aid, and was inflated after the influx of the Rohingyas from Myanmar since August 2017. The transaction cost of sending remittances is on the rise, and this is particularly disconcerting, since it creates incentive for diverting the flow of remittances from the legal to the illegal channels.

The situation of SDG 13 looks most grim. Country-specific quantifiable indicators on climate change are almost non-existent. So the present study had to rely on proxy indicators which are closely related to climate change for two targets under SDG 13. And, though there are eight indicators under five targets of SDG 13, eight proxy indicators have been included within two targets of SDG 13. All of the considered eight indicators fall in the Red category. The number of households affected by natural disasters is rising, and by 2030, around 30 million households are expected to be affected by natural disasters. The effects of natural disasters in the forms of economic losses to households and the economy, incidence of sickness and injury, as well as loss of schooling days—are all at high levels, and expected to get worse in the coming years. Greenhouse gas emissions are forecasted

to increase at faster rates in 2030, which will also be accompanied with warmer average temperatures. Overall, the analysis of SDG 13 indicates that, Bangladesh is in a precarious situation with respect to climate change, and has to take preparations to deal with the impact of climate change.

Except for three, all 10 indicators considered for SDG 16, out of a total of 23 indicators, are in the Red status. Three indicators are in Amber status. However, even the Amber status of these indicators is largely due to poor reporting and information gaps, rather than an actual positive scenario. Murder, violence against women and children, bribery and illicit financial flows—are all disturbingly high, and most of these crimes will increase in 2030, if they follow their historic trends. On the other hand, reporting of violence is quite low, and reporting of detention or kidnapping is virtually non-existent, except for high profile cases. Therefore, it is unlikely that the official data on these indicators provide an appropriate representation of the ground reality.

Finally, in case of SDG 17, out of 25 indicators, 10 could be examined. It is found that, three indicators are in Red status, five are in Amber status, and two are in Green status. Apart from debt service, the other indicators of finance which are critical for SDG implementation, such as tax-GDP ratio, net ODA and volume of remittances, all are in unfavorable positions. Indicators of technology, such as number of fixed broadband subscriptions, show that Bangladesh is significantly lagging behind the rest of the world. Bangladesh’s trade regime is anticipated to carry forward its traditionally strong performance, as the share of Bangladesh’s exports in global exports is forecasted to keep rising till 2030. Resources for strengthening statistical capacity will dry up, if the current declining trends continue.

In the second phase of the present exercise, the SDGs are ranked based on the trend of current and projected performance by assigning scores on the colours. The rankings presented in Table 2 show that SDG 4 tops the list, while SDG 13 is at the bottom of the six SDGs considered. However, it may

Table 2: Ranking of SDGs based on projected performance by 2030

Rank	SDG
1	Goal 4: Quality Education
2	Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals
3	Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth
4	Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
5	Goal 10: Reduced Inequality
6	Goal 13: Climate Action

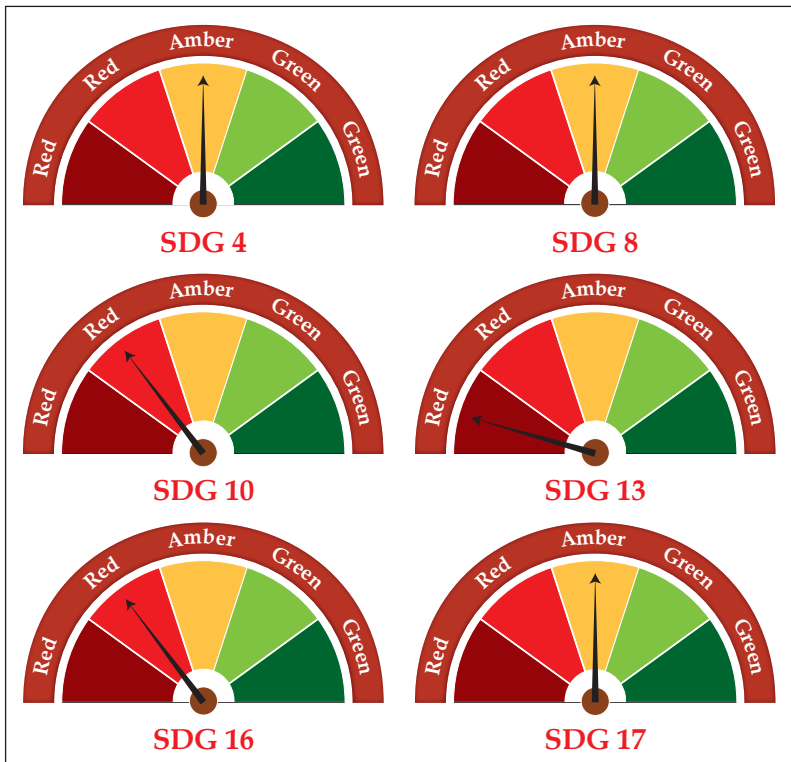
Source: Based on authors’ analysis.

be mentioned that, SDGs 4, 8 and 17 are close in terms of their achievements on the targets and indicators considered. Similarly, in case of SDGs 10 and 16, indicators considered for analysis followed almost similar trend of performance. It is important to keep in mind that, the ranks assigned to each goal are on the basis of analysis of quantitative data. Therefore, qualitative aspects of education and information gaps in the governance-related data are not accounted for.

Based on the target- and indicator-level performance of the six SDGs, overall Red, Amber or Green statuses are assigned to each of the six selected SDGs in Figure 2. Here, Deep Red represents the worst status and Deep Green represents the best status. SDG 13 is in Deep Red status, SDGs 10 and 16 are in Red status, and SDGs 4, 8 and 17 are in Amber status.

On the whole, from the exercise on the basis of averaging the status of the indicators under each goal, it can be deduced that, SDGs 4, 8 and 17 are

Figure 2: Red-Amber-Green status of selected SDGs in Bangladesh



Source: Authors' illustration.

going in the right direction, but require some policy interventions to steer them towards their achievements by 2030. On the other hand, SDGs 10, 13 and 16 are NOT going in the right direction, and require radical policy changes and significant efforts from all involved stakeholders in order to reverse their trajectories. Of course, climate change (SDG 13) is an issue which is not created by Bangladesh, and global initiatives are needed to reverse the trend in climate action.

5. Conclusions

The present report has reviewed the achievements of non-state actors in Bangladesh, examined what has worked and why, captured lessons learned and the attendant challenges, and presented how best to move forward to raise the efficacy of SDG-related initiatives in Bangladesh over the coming years. The report has intended to achieve four key objectives. Firstly, the report has documented the policies and institutional framework that have been put in place to implement the SDGs. It has made extensive use of the reports prepared by the CSOs on the activities being implemented in the various goal areas, lessons learned and challenges confronted within implementing the SDGs.

Secondly, the report has presented an analysis of whether there has been discernible changes in actions, approaches and strategies pursued by the CSOs and other non-state actors in view of the SDGs. Here, the focus has been on new initiatives, new ways of doing, new funding sources, and new and innovative collaborations with both state and non-state actors, as also with global partners.

Thirdly, it has endeavoured to assess the progress attained till now in Bangladesh, in the context of the six identified SDGs. This has been done by reviewing various documents and datasets, both national and global, through data gap analysis, and by drawing on goal-specific reports prepared by the six goal groups of platform partners. The report has also examined whether there has been any departure in the pace of attaining the various targets in view of the SDGs. The report has made projections as regards the likelihood of meeting the targets by 2030 under the current scenario, and identified the emerging gaps.

Fourthly, by drawing on insights gleaned from the review of goal-specific reports prepared by partners of the Citizen's Platform for SDGs in Bangladesh and relevant documents, the report has presented key lessons learned in the course of the past four years. The purpose here has been to put forward recommendations, both for policymakers and non-state actors, based on identified challenges, gaps and deficits which have emerged in the course of the SDG praxis. The objective was to come up

with concrete suggestions in the areas of coordination, resource generation, prioritisation, leveraging and drawing synergies towards achieving the SDG goals and targets by 2030.

Based on the review of integration of the SDGs in the national development process, change in non-state actors' activities and priorities, and progress of the six SDGs and their future outlook presented in the previous sections of this report, a number of important lessons have been learnt and a few challenges are identified. These lessons and challenges, along with recommendations to move forward, are presented below.

5.1 Lessons Learnt

- Non-state actors are a key player in SDG delivery. While the private sector is making an overall discernible contribution towards achieving the SDGs, they are yet to fully align their activities with goals and targets of the global agenda. CSOs, on the other hand, are working more at disaggregated level. Some CSOs activities are also interfacing with the GoB activities.
- Both the private and non-profit sectors are demonstrating sensitivity to the new global demands in areas, such as decent work, institutional accountability, qualitative improvement in intervention impacts, which are critical to fulfilling the pledges of the SDGs.
- A stable working relationship between the government and non-state actors based on mutual respect is key for the effectiveness of collaborative activities.

5.2 Challenges

- Data limitations have been a major challenge in undertaking this study. For many indicators, up to date and real-time data was not available; for others, there was no data at all. This made the task of assessing implementation progress difficult. Availability of data at the disaggregated level is crucial to measuring the progress of SDG implementation, particularly if the ambition of 'leave no one behind' is to be fulfilled. Detailed analysis of progress was constrained in the absence of disaggregated data concerning many indicators.
- There are several SDG targets, which are not quantifiable. As a result, projections on some of those have been done using proxy indicators, while for others the exercise could not be performed.
- National framework does not specify the role of CSOs and the private sector. The institutional framework for SDG implementation in Bangladesh does not recognise CSOs as partners. Thus, the role of non-state actors is underplayed at the official level.

- Establishment of a direct link of the work of CSOs and the private sector with SDG 17 (partnership) is difficult. This is because their activities are largely at the grassroots and in the field levels.
- CSOs have not received new and additional funds for carrying out SDG-related activities. Hence, their engagement is constrained by limited resources.

5.3 Recommendations

- All out efforts need to be taken at national and global levels for meeting up the data gap. More resources should be allocated for generating real-time data through primary surveys on a regular basis. Non-state actors and all citizens should have access to those data.
- A voluntary initiative at national and global levels needs to be undertaken with a view to ensure proper recognition of the contribution made by CSOs and the private sector in attaining the SDGs. Such initiative should identify a set of proxy indicators to be called 'associated indicators', customised with the activities and initiatives of CSOs and the private sector in implementing different targets and indicators of different goals.
- CSOs need support for scaling up their activities on SDG implementation. Support for the Rohingyas by development partners should be allocated and reported separately. At the national level, the government should form a special fund for supporting CSOs in their various activities related to SDG implementation.
- The projections on targets and indicators of six SDGs indicating where the country is heading should be taken into consideration by the policymakers seriously. Clearly, the SDGs that are lagging behind, will require much more effort than what is exerted at present.
- The role of non-state actors should be recognised adequately at the official level. Non-state actors have to be considered as partners in the institutional framework for SDG implementation in Bangladesh.



Promoting Quality Education for All (SDG 4)

Anchor organisation

Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE)

Co-anchor organisation

Plan International Bangladesh

Associate organisations

British Council in Bangladesh

Dhaka Ahsania Mission

Gonoshasthaya Kendra (GK)

JAAGO Foundation

Kapaeeng Foundation

Save the Children in Bangladesh

SERAC-Bangladesh

Turning Point Foundation

Lead author

Md. Mostafizur Rahaman, Ph.D., Program Manager, CAMPE

AUTHOR'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In preparing this report the author has taken assistance of many writers, academicians, researchers and practitioners. They have contributed to the enrichment of the review report on SDG 4, which includes the progress of this Goal in last four years, with particular focus on the contribution of non-state actors and a set of recommendations for moving forward. The author has made a conscious attempt to acknowledge his debt to all of them by citing their works.

The author expresses indebtedness to Manzoor Ahmed, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus of the Institute of Educational Development of BRAC University in finalisation of this report. In each and every stage of this work he meticulously contributed from design to finalisation. The author is deeply grateful to Rasheda K. Choudhury, Executive Director of CAMPE, who reviewed the report and provided valuable suggestions. He is also thankful to Afrin Sultana Chowdhury, Advisor, Programme Development and Resource Mobilisation, JAAGO Foundation, for providing editorial support and Murshid Aktar, Head of Education Program, Plan International Bangladesh, for sharing their success stories.

The author acknowledges Ghulam Mustafa Dulal, Executive Director (Programs), GK, G. F. Hamim, Acting Director (Programmes), Dhaka Ahsania Mission, Khokon Suiten Murmu, National Consultant, Kapaeeng Foundation, K. M. Enamul Haque, Deputy Director and Rajasree Gain, Deputy Program Manager of CAMPE, and other associated organisations (of Goal Group 4) for their valuable contribution in making the report informative and inclusive. All the members of CAMPE shared their programmes related to SDG 4 and the CSO contribution in education sub-sectors. The author is extremely thankful to all of them.

Appreciation is also due to Khondaker Golam Moazzem, Ph.D., Research Director, CPD, for his kind and critical feedback in preparing this report. Anis Pervez, Ph.D., former Additional Director, Md. Sazzad Mahmud Shuvo, Senior Dialogue Associate and other colleagues from CPD, the Secretariat of the Platform provided continued support, guidance and cooperation throughout the report preparation process. The author is grateful to them.

Introduction

In September 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by the world leaders at the United Nations (UN), with a pledge to ‘*transform our world*’. Earlier in May 2015, the World Education Forum (WEF) 2015 in Incheon, Korea, had set the ambitious Education Forum 2030 agenda, replacing the Education For All (EFA) 2015, to ensure “inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” (UN, 2015).¹ The Education 2030 agenda is reflected in the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) stipulated for education (SDG 4), one of the 17 SDGs. The SDG 4 reflects the important role of education by encapsulating targets in a stand, highlighting that the success of other SDGs (such as health, growth and employment, sustainable consumption and production, and climate change) is also driven by the education goal. For making SDG 4 a reality, a key concern for Bangladesh will be to address a number of challenges that are pertinent to different dimensions of education sector in the country, which relate to policy development, policy ownership, building consensus on key objectives and strategies, and their effective implementation.

The present report has been prepared based on both primary and secondary data. Field-level data was collected through a structured questionnaire from non-government organisations (NGOs) working in the area of education. Various government reports, frameworks, guidelines, and non-state data (i.e. research reports, annual reports, project progress reports, fact sheets, policy briefs, spotlight reports, etc.) were also collected and reviewed in preparing the report.

Progress So Far

The Government of Bangladesh (GoB) began the task of implementing the SDGs from early on. In this regard, the government has partially aligned the SDG targets with the 7th Five Year Plan (7FYP), where all 17 goals are integrated. Fourteen (82 per cent) out of these 17 goals are fully aligned thematically, while three (SDGs 14, 16 and 17) (18 per cent) are aligned partially. Recognising the challenge of coordination among various ministries, the Honourable Prime Minister has established an Inter-Ministerial Committee on SDGs Implementation and Review, demonstrating the commitment of the government. The Principal Coordinator (SDGs Affairs), a newly created high-level position in the Prime Minister’s Office, heads the Committee. The government has also assigned

¹UN. (2015). *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. New York: United Nations (UN).

ministry-wise SDG focal persons, including for the Ministry of Education (MoE) and Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME). The General Economics Division (GED) of the Planning Commission has conducted and published a mapping of ministries by targets, in implementation of SDGs, aligning with the 7FYP, SDGs Financing Strategy, Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, etc. Besides, a Strategic Framework and Action Plan on SDG 4 is almost ready under the leadership of MoPME and MoE, where United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO (BNCU) and Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) are jointly involved as associate partners.

As a result of all these initiatives, a significant progress has been made in SDG 4 and other goals over the years (2016-2018). According to the *Sustainable Development Goals: Bangladesh Progress Report*, published by the GED in December 2018, the Gender Parity Index (GPI) exceeded 1 at primary and secondary levels of education, and has remained above 1 for more than a decade. GPI at tertiary education reached its peak at 0.737 in 2014, and then declined to 0.701 in 2016, and 0.71 in 2017, respectively.

The non-state actors, particularly NGOs, are playing a significant role in implementing SDGs at the grassroots level by operating in the remote areas, and helping people to combat the adverse effects of climate change and achieving targets related to Human Development Index (HDI). In addition to microfinance services, NGOs are largely concentrating on human development issues, i.e. health, nutrition and population; education; water, sanitation and hygiene; skills development; disaster, environment and climate change; rural development; urban development; agriculture and food security; migration; gender justice; and poverty eradication – to name a few. The spirit of SDGs is to “leave no one behind.” The NGOs are working mostly to address the left-behind groups like those living in geographically hard-to-reach areas, deprived and underprivileged communities and physically-challenged people. Approximately a thousand NGOs in Bangladesh have different types of education and skill training programmes, and they are actively involved in attaining the targets of SDG 4. NGO programmes are focused on both service delivery and advocacy. With a service delivery approach, NGOs are carrying out programmes/projects to address the issues of dropout and left-out children; inclusive education; early childhood development (ECD) and care; girls’ education; education services for geographically hard-to-reach areas; technical and vocational education; lifelong learning; adult education; multi-lingual education; tertiary and vocational education; etc. According to the field data compiled by BRAC, since the launching of the EFA in 2001, NGOs have been providing the following supports:

- Deliver education services to 2.9 million learners (61.71 per cent girls/female) through 79,573 learning centres/schools, and still continuing;
- Operating 37,000 formal and non-formal centres/schools with 1.7 million learners (56.56 per cent girls);
- Providing pre-primary education support, including ECD, through 25,000 centres covering 700,000 learners;
- Providing lifelong learning facilities through 20,000 community learning centres for 700,000 learners.

Gaps and Challenges

Despite various efforts and progress achieved in different areas of SDG 4, significant challenges remain, which include inclusive and equitable education, quality of education at all levels, quality of teaching, adult literacy and lifelong learning. Number of vulnerable and disadvantaged children still out of the education system is quite high. Some of them had opportunities, but could not continue. Even though the net enrolment rate is 97.97 per cent, the dropout rate is also very high (18.8 per cent); the repetition rate is 5.6 per cent; and survival rate to grade five is 83.3 per cent. The average pupil-teacher ratio remains very high (46:1), and about 80 per cent of the schools are run on double shifts, with learning time in a school-year less than half of the international average of a thousand hours. The large student size in a class and small learning time combine to limit effective contact hours. The percentage of teachers with professional qualification has fallen. Very few teachers have received leadership training (only 26 per cent), and the percentage of teachers who undergo regular professional trainings has fallen substantially. The student performance has also fallen. According to the National Student Assessment (NSA), students' performance has declined since 2011. In 2015, only 65 per cent and 41 per cent of grade three students performed at their levels or above in Bangla and mathematics, down from 68 per cent and 50 per cent in 2011, and 75 per cent and 57 per cent in 2013. The performance is even lower for grade five. Only 23 per cent and 10 per cent of grade five students performed at their levels in Bangla and mathematics, respectively, in 2015, down from 25 per cent and 32 per cent in 2011, and 25 per cent and 34 per cent in 2013.

The high dropout rate is a major challenge in secondary education. Less than half of students complete the 5-year cycle of secondary education, reflecting a huge waste of financial resources and an inefficient education system. A gender gap shows 51 per cent of boys completing the 5-year cycle, but only 43 per cent of girls. The participation in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and tertiary education is also unsatisfactory. Science and technology is aligning the development plan

of Bangladesh along with the objective to meet SDGs; this is a challenge as well as opportunity for Bangladesh. UNESCO in its 2015 report², stresses the role of science and technology in leading to innovation.

There are four ministries involved with the delivery of education, training and technology services. These are: MoPME, MoE, Ministry of Science and Technology, and the ICT (Information and Communication Technology) Division of the Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology. The Ministries of Women and Children Affairs, Expatriate Welfare and Employment, Youth, Social Welfare, Health and Family Planning, and others also, have specific and significant involvements. From the output and results perspective, it is obvious that, there are issues of inter-ministerial linkages, which is a challenge for coordinated policy-making. The service delivery is heavily centralised, with most policy decisions and implementation managed from Dhaka, the capital. It is near impossible to manage adequate teacher attendance, quality of school infrastructure and quality of learning—without a decentralised service delivery. Recruitment of teachers and procurement of infrastructure and supplies are also heavily centralised, which often tend to suffer from lags and delays.

The public expenditure on education increased from USD 2.25 billion in FY2010-11 to USD 5.65 billion in FY2016-17, but has been kept at about 2 per cent of Bangladesh's gross domestic product (GDP)—one of the lowest percentages in South Asia and among the developing countries. Expenditure on primary education is around 45 per cent of the total education expenditure. Teacher salaries and school infrastructure development account for more than 90 per cent of the expenses. The government is the signatory of Muscat Agreement, which recommended allocation of 4–6 per cent of the GDP, and 15–20 per cent of the total government spending for education; thus, the current investment in education in Bangladesh is significantly lower than the global standards.

Private sector is also an important player in the education sector of Bangladesh at all levels—from pre-primary to tertiary. Some of the private institutions are engaged in imparting vocational and technical trainings. While the role of the private sector in attaining the goals and targets of SDG 4 is undeniable, and despite the impressive number of enrollment in private academic institutions, the challenges remain in the delivery of quality education. Many CSOs are pursuing innovative approaches to improve the quality of education in the country. There are, however,

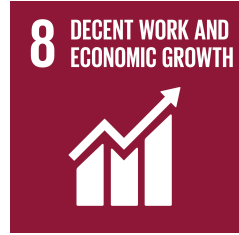
²UNESCO. (2015). *UNESCO Science Report: Towards 2030*. Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

gaps and lack of coherence and coordination among these and the public education system. Greater coordination and systematic approaches are needed to achieve the SDG 4 by 2030.

Way Forward

Based on the discussion above, the following measures may be given priority to achieve the SDG 4 targets and other national and global agendas:

- Within a medium-term timetable, the proportion of GDP for public education budget should be raised to at least 4 per cent, and eventually to 6 per cent of GDP, and/or 20 per cent of national budget. As interim steps, two pragmatic measures can be taken – an education cess (taking the positive and negative lessons from India and other countries into account), and tax incentives for individual and corporate contribution to education.
- The existing national objectives and targets in education as well as the targets of SDG 4 should be articulated in 8th Five Year Plan and the longer-term Perspective Plan.
- The highly centralised structure of education governance and management needs to be transformed in order to devolve authority and responsibility with accountability and transparency to the local level and to individual institutions.
- Finance and budget measures have to provide for sufficient number of teachers and ensure effective teaching-learning. Apart from improving current in-service training of teachers, measures have to be taken to make teaching one of the first career choices for talented young people, rather than the last one.
- A second-chance programme must be incorporated as a part of the main strategy for universal primary education, in order to serve the out-of-school children.
- To make lifelong learning a reality and expand functional literacy for youth and adults, a network of community learning centres, supported by essential resources, must be built up – to offer relevant learning activities and complement formal education.



Pursuing Decent Jobs Agenda for Inclusive Economic Growth (SDG 8)

Anchor organisation

BRAC

Co-anchor organisation

Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD)

Associate organisations

Access Bangladesh Foundation

ActionAid Bangladesh

Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS)

British Council in Bangladesh

CARE Bangladesh

Dhaka Ahsania Mission

Gonoshasthaya Kendra (GK)

JAAGO Foundation

Plan International Bangladesh

Practical Action in Bangladesh

Save the Children in Bangladesh

SERAC-Bangladesh

VSO Bangladesh

Lead authors

Mohammad Azad Rahman, Programme Head, Advocacy for Social Change
and

Samira Manzur, Consultant, BRAC

AUTHORS' ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This review report is an output of the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh. The Goal Group 8 of the Platform prepared this report to provide a critical view on the progress made with SDG 8 - Decent and Economic Growth from the perspective of non-state actors as well as to identify key implementation challenges and to provide recommendations for going forward.

The authors would like to thank Tasmiah Tabassum Rahman, Head of Skills Development Programme, BRAC, for editing the report. Important contributions were also made by Ferdaus Ara Begum, Chief Executive Officer, BUILD, Nusrat Jahan Tania, Economist, BUILD, Md. Khairul Islam, Manager - EYE (TVET), Save the Children in Bangladesh, Mehrab Ul Goni, Manager - Advocacy & Partnership, Practical Action in Bangladesh, and Md. Shakhawatul Islam, Partnership Manager, Advocacy for Social Change Programme, Mahenaw Ummul Wara, Programme Manager, Farha Lutfa Rahman, Knowledge Management and Communication Specialist, and Medha Zayan, Intern of Skills Development Programme, BRAC. The author is grateful to all of them.

Appreciation is also due to Khondaker Golam Moazzem, Ph.D., Research Director, CPD, for his kind and critical feedback in preparing this report. Thanks to Anisatul Fatema Yousuf, Coordinator of the Platform, Anis Pervez, Ph.D., former Additional Director, Md. Sazzad Mahmud Shuvo, Senior Dialogue Associate and other colleagues from CPD, the Secretariat of the Platform who provided continued support, guidance and cooperation throughout the report preparation process.

Lastly, immense gratitude is extended to the many organisations and committed citizens across Bangladesh who are actively working to advance SDG 8 for all.

Introduction

The eighth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 8) is about *Decent Work and Economic Growth*; this review report is an effort to understand the progress made, the challenges and the opportunities in realising the stipulated targets of this goal in Bangladesh. BRAC was the anchor organisation, and Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD) was the co-anchor organisation for the SDG 8 Goal Group that organised the consultation process and prepared the review report. The review emphasises the achievements so far, captures the lessons learned and emerging best practices, and provides considerations for the way forward. The report puts an emphasis on the contribution and intervention of the non-state actors and the central agenda of “leaving no one behind.”

Progress and Challenges with the SDG 8

Although Bangladesh continues to maintain impressive economic growth, there are many challenges in effective realisation of the SDG 8. Increasing economic disparity, gender inequity, youth unemployment and lack of decent work opportunities are some of the challenges that require concerted efforts from different actors. In addition, the economy is still struggling to make an inclusive work environment for many disadvantaged and marginalised groups, which ultimately affects both bringing people into the workforce, as well as retaining them. While many progress numbers remain impressive, efforts to understand equity and inclusion should be increased. Some key highlights from the SDG 8 progress assessment include:

Ensuring inclusive economic growth. SDG Targets 8.1 and 8.2 are concerned with the annual economic growth. The economy of Bangladesh has been experiencing sustained growth in the past years, with the annual growth rate of real gross domestic product (GDP) per capita reaching 6.6 per cent in 2018. While the overall economic growth is commendable, there remains scope to ensure that these improvements reach every segment of the country.

Formalising and promoting decent work. Bangladesh continues to face the daunting challenge of ensuring formal jobs for all across the country. In 2016, about 85 per cent of the workforce was employed in the informal economy, almost 78 per cent of whom were in non-agriculture employment. The already existing challenge of securing labour rights and good governance are amplified in the informal sector. Further, the SDG Target 8.8 seeks to protect labour rights and safe work for all, including for economic migrants.

Difficulties in ensuring good governance. Adequate and effective governance remains a concern for Bangladesh. It is not enough to create jobs and promote employment; it must also be ensured that these are decent jobs, and that rights and dignity of the workers are secured. While there have been some positive improvements, especially in the garments sector, a lot remains to be done. Further, there is a need for increased dialogue on decent work in the non-garment sectors.

Addressing unemployment rates and bringing youth into NEET. SDG Targets 8.5 and 8.6 call for full and productive employment and reducing down youth not in education, employment or training (NEET), respectively. Youth unemployment rate is about twice as high as the national unemployment rate, reaching to around 10.6 per cent in 2017.

Challenges in monitoring child labour. The latest Child Labour Survey in Bangladesh was conducted in 2013, which makes it difficult to assess the progress made since the commencement of the 2030 Agenda. Anecdotal evidence suggests that child labour has been extensively curbed in the formal sector, but remains rampant in the informal sector. The government and the civil society organisations (CSOs) have an important role in helping bring these children into education and training, while ensuring that their livelihood is not threatened.

Advancing financial institutions and facilities for all. Although there is an increase in the number of bank branches and automated teller machines (ATMs) between 2016 and 2017, there is a need to develop a more in-depth understanding of clients and disadvantaged groups who may not access such services. It is important to note that, the more non-traditional financial services, such as microfinance and mobile banking services (e.g. bKash), have been able to reach a larger base of people and the marginalised communities across Bangladesh. Increased mobile phone and internet penetration, accompanied by technological innovation, have played an important role in advancing this outreach and inclusion. This should be considered important progress, although it may fall outside the scope of the SDG 8 indicators.

Increasing sustainable production and consumption. Bangladesh still needs to increase its efforts in greening its industries and adopting environment-friendly processes and technologies, especially in the manufacturing sector. More linkages with other SDGs, such as the SDG 12 (*Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns*), should be established to help advance SDG Target 8.4.

CSOs in Advancing and Monitoring the SDG 8

Understanding SDG 8 priorities in the local context. When asked to rank the importance of SDG 8 targets, the largest share of CSOs considered Targets 8.3, 8.7, 8.1 and 8.6 as the top priority areas in Bangladesh's context. These targets include the promotion of development-oriented policies that support productive and decent job creation, actions to eradicate child labour and forced labour, sustaining economic growth, and combating youth unemployment.

Targeting disadvantaged groups for skills development. As the SDGs seek to 'leave no one behind,' many CSOs are implementing targeted interventions that are particularly designed to reach people from different backgrounds and those from marginalised communities. A number of CSOs are specifically targeting disadvantaged groups, and are trying to equip them with the necessary skills for acquiring feasible decent jobs.

Building a skilled and well-informed workforce. CSOs, along with the public and private actors, are working towards developing a skilled workforce in the country. Skill development interventions have focused on building specific technical skills, as well as soft skills. A combination of the two is essential to help job-seekers, especially the youth, particularly in view of the modern changing labour market. In addition to skill trainings, CSOs are also contributing by way of raising awareness about workers' rights and important life skills (such as, personal health and financial literacy); this also helps in advancing the decent work agenda.

Advancing the issue of workplace safety and proper work environment. A number of CSO interventions are focused on the readymade garment (RMG) sector to help improve the overall working environment in the factories. Some organisations are also working with small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to support them in promoting good work practices, as well as to improve their businesses.

Considerations in Going Forward

In concluding the present review report, a few key challenges and recommendations are presented from the perspective of the civil society's scope of work and engagement. Selected key recommendations include:

Advancing SDG 8 with a collective voice. There remains a scope to enhance coordination and collaboration between the different actors working to advance the SDG 8 in Bangladesh. The various actors—government representatives, civil society and the private sector—can further enhance

their communication to keep each other informed about their activities, and coordinate their programmes, wherever possible. Another area that is highlighted in this regard, is the need for more concerted efforts related to corporate social responsibility (CSR) from the private sector.

Ensuring inclusion at the core of all interventions. CSOs should invest in mapping the ultra poor and identifying the marginalised groups, and emphasise on disseminating information among them on how best to access the training and placement services that are available from various sectors. The low participation of female labour force remains a concern in Bangladesh, and should be addressed from the perspective of the related cross-cutting themes and advocacy efforts that would help address issues such as violence against women, promote caregiving facilities and ensure safe mobility. Where feasible, state and non-state actors should explore how technology can help in reaching different target groups. Further, as implementing actors, CSOs are well-placed to bring grassroots experiences and evidence to advocate for greater inclusion at the national level.

Targetting and collaborating to streamline skills development efforts. CSOs should increase the consultation process with the private sector prior to designing skill development initiatives and making resource allocation. This will essentially help bridge any demand and supply gaps, and the process of creating an employable workforce with specific skill sets that match the market demands. A robust national monitoring system can be useful in maintaining a database of participants and their training records, which can help facilitate targeted job placements.

Matching technological advancement and skills development. With the global advancement of technology, including artificial intelligence (AI)-equipped automated systems, the labour market is fast changing, and many traditional jobs are becoming redundant. This ‘fourth industrial revolution’ is making it imperative that countries invest in creating an agile workforce. Here, CSOs in Bangladesh need to work with the government’s National Skills Development Authority (NSDA) to identify strategies on how to bring about the process of innovations and retool a skilled labour force.

Including returnee economic migrants and internal climate-induced migrants. As we seek to ‘leave no one behind’, both cross-border and internal migrants should be effectively included as programme beneficiaries. Some organisations have started working on the reintegration of the returnee migrants, many of whom are affected survivors of violence. CSOs and the government can increase their collaborative efforts in identifying alternative work opportunities for those at risk of environmental hazards and disasters.

Increasing dialogue with the government and the private sector. The consultation process and review report has helped highlight the scope for CSOs to improve its engagement with the private sector. As the private sector has a key role in advancing job creation, civil society can increase their support in developing a skilled workforce and actively promote inclusion. Further, a relatively untapped area of collaboration is the SDG Target 8.9, which calls for the promotion of sustainable tourism. Increased collective efforts of the government, civil society and the private sector is required to collectively promote sustainable tourism that can increase job opportunities at the local level, and thereby benefit the local communities.

Advancing a favourable business climate that attracts more investment and promotes job creation. The business climate is an integral component when discussing economic growth and job creation. When given well-informed incentives, businesses can effectively help advance the agenda for inclusive job creation.

Customising and mainstreaming financial instruments to increase financial inclusion. Although the indicators related to SDG Target 8.10 show advances in terms of the number of bank branches and ATMs, there needs to be a more comprehensive understanding of how these services are reaching the different socio-economic segments of the country. While this makes traditional banking a challenge, it also encourages all actors to explore some innovative financial services, such as intelligent microfinance products and service-providers (e.g. bKash). There needs to be a greater focus on how to further mainstream such financial instruments through innovative policies.



Reducing Inequality in a High-Growth Scenario (SDG 10)

Anchor organisation

Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF)

Co-anchor organisation

Oxfam in Bangladesh

Associate organisations

Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF)

Avijan

Bandhu Social Welfare Society

Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples Forum (BIPF)

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (BMP)

CARE Bangladesh

Dhaka Ahsania Mission

Dhrubotara Youth Development Foundation (DYDF)

JAAGO Foundation

Nagorik Uddyog

Naripokkho

Steps Towards Development (Steps)

Lead authors

Shoeib Shazzad Khan, Senior Coordinator, Programme, and
Rezwana-Ul-Alam, Ph.D., Director, Knowledge Management, MJF

AUTHORS' ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This review report is an output of the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh. The Goal Group 10 of the Platform prepared this report to provide a critical view on the progress made under SDG 10 – Reducing Inequality – from the perspective of non-state actors, including key implementation challenges and relevant recommendations for heading forward.

The authors are especially grateful to Mahfuza Akter Mala, Senior Programme Officer, Oxfam in Bangladesh, Afrina Binth-A Ashraf, Manager-Program, ASF, Banani Biswas, General Secretary, Avijan, Jana Goswami, Director, Advocacy, BMP, Umme Farhana Zarif Kanta, Director - Policy Advocacy & Human Rights, Bandhu Social Welfare Society, Ahmad Sadequl Amin, former Coordinator - Agriculture & Value Chain, CARE Bangladesh, Md Asaduzzaman, Head, Economic Development Sector, Dhaka Ahsania Mission, Afrin Sultana Chowdhury, Advisor, Programme Development and Resource Mobilisation, JAAGO Foundation, Monjurul Islam, Policy & Advocacy Coordinator, Nagorik Uddyog, Samia Afrin, Project Director, Naripokkho, Chandan Kumer Laheri, Programme Coordinator, Steps, Nazmul Haque Ome, National Affairs Secretary, DYDF, and Sanjeeb Drong, General Secretary, BIPF, for providing valuable inputs for this report.

The authors also deeply acknowledge the continued guidance of Shaheen Anam, Executive Director, MJF, in designing the structure and finally editing the report.

Professor Mustafizur Rahman, Core Group Member of the Platform, provided detailed review and feedback on the draft report. The authors are immensely grateful to him. Thanks are also due to Anisatul Fatema Yousuf, Coordinator of the Platform, Md. Sazzad Mahmud Shuvo, Senior Dialogue Associate and other colleagues from CPD, the Secretariat of the Platform for their support and cooperation throughout the report preparation process.

The authors expect that this report will be useful to those who are committed towards implementing the agendas of SDG 10 in Bangladesh.

Introduction

The following summary captures the contributions of the non-state actors in Bangladesh towards achieving the Goal 10 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDG 10 calls for reducing inequality within and among countries by reducing income inequality (10.1), promoting social, political and economic inclusion (10.2), addressing discrimination and inequalities of opportunity and outcomes, and ensuring equal opportunities and ending discrimination (10.3). SDG 10 requires adopting fiscal and social policies that promote equality (10.4), calls for improved regulation of global financial markets and institutions (10.5), enhanced representation for developing countries in financial institutions (10.6), and pursuance of responsible and well-managed migration policies (10.7). As means of implementation, SDG 10 urges upon developed countries to offer special and differential treatment for developing countries (10.A), and to encourage development assistance and investment in the least developed countries (LDCs) (10.B), and asks that steps be taken to reduce transaction costs for migrant remittances (10.C). The underlying aspiration is to attain SDG 10 by “leaving no one behind.”

This report has been prepared by the Goal Group for SDG 10, composed of Platform members working in various areas associated with the Goal 10. This summary report sets out the background of the report, captures the contribution of Bangladesh’s non-government organisations (NGOs) and private sector in attaining Goal 10, highlights the lessons learnt in this connection, and offers recommendations to address the attendant challenges in attaining the targets of Goal 10 by 2030.

Background

Removing social and economic inequality through equitable wealth distribution among citizens, and ensuring equal opportunity and participation of all, including women, in all spheres of national life, is a constitutional obligation of the Government of Bangladesh (GoB).¹ SDG 10 is of heightened relevance and importance to Bangladesh in the current context, particularly in view of the rising income and wealth inequality within Bangladesh, and the slow progress in reducing divergence among areas, countries, globally. Along with poverty alleviation, addressing issues of rising inequalities has emerged as a key policy concern in Bangladesh. The government had articulated its objective to reduce income inequality, as estimated by Gini coefficient, at 0.45 or below during the Seventh Five

¹http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/print_sections.php?id=367&vol=§ions_id=24567 [Accessed: 17 March 2019].

Year Plan (7FYP) period (2016-2020).² Between 2010-2016 period, in spite of the rise in average income and significant fall in number of people below the poverty and hardcore poverty line, one observes growing disparity between rich and poor in Bangladesh, both in urban and rural areas.³ Indeed, income inequality in Bangladesh has posted a rise from 0.45 to 0.48 between 2010 and 2016.⁴ The growing disparity in income levels between the top 5 per cent and bottom 5 per cent is a disquieting trend, which is manifested in the rise of the multiple of relative income share from 32 to 121 times between 2010 and 2016.⁵ This scenario also got reflected in a report of the Development Finance International (DFI) and Oxfam⁶, which placed Bangladesh in the rank of 148th among 157 countries in the Global Index 2018 on Commitment to Reducing Inequality (CRI). Yet another emerging concern is the wealth inequality situation in Bangladesh with the Gini coefficient standing at about 0.74.⁷ No doubt, given the emergent scenario, Goal 10 demands special attention in the Bangladesh context.

Interventions and Contributions of the Non-State Actors

NGOs and CSOs

Bangladesh's NGOs are engaged in wide-ranging activities in the areas of reducing inequality, increasing access to various resources and services, mitigating vulnerabilities and enhancing capacities of the most marginalised sections of the society. These activities involve direct interventions, advocacy, research and policy influencing, through which civil society organisations (CSOs) and NGOs are addressing many of the issues that are relevant to attaining the SDG 10. Since NGOs in Bangladesh have a comparative advantage in reaching the marginalised groups, their

²http://plancomm.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/plancomm.portal.gov.bd/files/aee61c03_3c11_4e89_9f30_d79639595c67/7th_FYP_18_02_2016.pdf [Accessed: 17 March 2019].

³<https://cpd.org.bd/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/IRBD-FY2018-First-Reading-Presentation-final-13012017.pdf> [Accessed: 17 March 2019].

⁴[http://www.bd.undp.org/content/dam/bangladesh/docs/Publications/Pub-2019/SDGs-Bangladesh_Progress_Report%202018%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.bd.undp.org/content/dam/bangladesh/docs/Publications/Pub-2019/SDGs-Bangladesh_Progress_Report%202018%20(1).pdf) [Accessed: 17 March 2019].

⁵<https://cpd.org.bd/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/IRBD-Paper-State-of-Bangladesh-Economy-and-Upcoming-National-Elections.pdf> [Accessed: 18 April 2019].

⁶<https://oxfamlibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/620553/rr-commitment-reducing-inequality-index-2018-091018-en.pdf> [Accessed: 4 April 2019].

⁷<https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/economics/why-bangladeshs-inequality-likely-rise-1575079> [Accessed: 8 April 2019].

contribution to attaining the SDG aspiration of 'leave no one behind' demands special mention.

As regards Target 10.1, NGOs and CSOs are making important contributions by implementing various programmes that aim at raising the quality of Human Development Indices (HDIs) and reducing the access gap for the poor. Platform's partner organisations have, in their portfolio, several capacity development programmes including imparting vocational training towards better income opportunities and interventions towards improved livelihood. The target groups here are mostly the marginalised communities. The NGOs and CSOs are also engaged in promoting the cause of social inclusion geared towards reducing income inequality and the creation of asset base.

Among the different targets of SDG 10, NGOs and CSOs in Bangladesh are proactively engaged in the context of Target 10.2. A large number of NGOs and CSOs are involved in a host of activities that aim at empowering people and promoting social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity and origin, religious, economic or other status. Many NGOs have specific programmes for the disadvantaged groups, such as adivasis, dalits, fisher-folks, transgender people, MSMs (men who have sex with men) and HIV patients. They go into hard-to-reach areas to work with hard-to-reach communities. NGOs also have specific programmes for persons with disabilities; some carry out advocacy programmes to promote disability-friendly education, production practices and transportation, communication. Majority of NGOs have women empowerment programmes to help vulnerable and excluded women, imparting knowledge and skills with a view to enhancing income and employment opportunities.

As regards Target 10.3, NGOs and CSOs in Bangladesh have been actively advocating for equal opportunities for all, and the elimination of all discriminatory laws. For example, they have been pressing for enactment of Anti-Discrimination Act, which at present is with the Ministry of Law, waiting to be tabled as a Bill.

In connection with Target 10.4, a number of advocacy NGOs and CSOs in Bangladesh have been promoting the cause of fiscal justice and progressive fiscal policies, and for better and universal social protection. CSOs such as civil society think tanks have been forcefully arguing in favour of distributive justice and social protection through evidence-based research.

As regards Targets 10.5 and 10.6, a number of NGOs and CSOs have been actively engaged in various global fora, demanding greater voice and representation of the countries from the South in various global rules-

setting institutions that deal with trade, finance, technology transfer, etc. Some think tanks are strongly arguing for more effective contribution by developed countries in making the three means of implementation work for attainment of the SDG 10. A few NGOs and CSOs are working in areas that concern Target 10.7 that fosters facilitation of safe migration. They are advocating for responsible migration and reduction of migration costs.

Private Sector

The private sector of Bangladesh has undertaken a number of initiatives to reduce inequality by creating opportunities for the disadvantaged people. To cite a specific example, Bangladesh Employers' Federation, in collaboration with disability organisations and development partners, is providing specialised skill training for persons with disability. It is also organising events to connect potential job-seekers with prospective employers. Through this initiative, as many as 360 persons with disability were provided jobs in various industries during 2017 and 2018. However, Bangladesh's private sector will need to do much more to create decent, well-paying employment opportunities, which is key to reducing income inequality in the country.

Learnings

When non-state actors work in tandem and collaboration, the likelihood of success in Goal 10 areas is found to increase manifold. Concerted campaigns by NGOs and CSOs (civil society, media and social support groups) can play a catalytic role in protecting the rights of various marginalised communities. The organs of government are then compelled to take note and act. Many examples can be cited in this connection.

Education, health and livelihood supports, such as skills training, asset transfers and creation of income opportunities are critical to raising the level of income of the vulnerable communities and enhancing their risk-mitigating capacities. This contributes to reducing the income gap. Social safety net programmes can reduce vulnerabilities; however, for sustainable improvement of income levels and reduction of income inequality, more investment is needed in these areas. Effective collaboration among government and non-state actors can generate important synergies in this context. It is also seen that, such interventions are more successful, when those are well-coordinated and well-sequenced.

Challenges

There is a dearth of community-specific and disaggregated data on dalit, harijan, transgender, bede and other marginalised groups. This undermines

the cause of designing concrete programmes to address exclusion and reduce inequalities. Effective collaboration among government and non-state actors could help attain SDG 10 in many areas, and can produce faster results. However, it needs to be noted that, the efficient service delivery capacity of the NGOs are not fully made use of by the government. A change in mindset is needed in this respect. Inclusion of indigenous people in the decision-making process is a formidable challenge, but remains important in addressing inequality. The state of overall representation and governance is important in this context. Job creation and enhancing labour productivity are domains where the government will need to play a more proactive role. Expansion of microcredit and loans for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), effective women empowerment initiatives, and programmes for environment-affected and displaced people are important areas of emerging challenges, where NGOs will need to be involved more in the future.

Recommendations

More effective coordination and better sequencing of activities will be needed as regards various NGO activities and interventions towards attaining SDG 10 targets. In this context, strengthened local government institutions could play an important role in coordinating various activities at local levels—aimed at addressing the issues of inequality. Education, skills, credit support and job creation activities have strong interlinkages, and can produce better results, if these are better coordinated.

NGOs should make more effective use of social media to build a strong case in support of attaining the Goal 10. Issues of rising inequality must be at the centre of this advocacy to mobilise social opinions, create social pressure and compel policymakers to act fast.

Non-state actors should join hands to pursue the cause of democratisation of global institutions. The government must finalise the draft Anti-Discrimination Act to ensure that legal measures are in place for addressing inequality. Also, full implementation of the government's action plan, based on the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS), needs to be fast-tracked to make growth more inclusive for the poor and the vulnerable.

The government must pursue fiscal policies that help reduce inequality and lead to better distributive justice. The government should take advantage of the role of non-state actors to strengthen its efforts towards attaining Goal 10. Government can facilitate participation of the CSOs/NGOs and private sector, by creating a platform for consultation prior to preparing budget and getting feedback after the finalisation of the budget, to better reflect the demands of the citizen as regards disparity and inequality.

Non-state actors should be engaged in monitoring, reporting and holding relevant government agencies accountable for SDG implementation, so that the issues of disparity and inequality are properly addressed by concerned authorities.

The government should take urgent steps to establish a database that capture essential information as regards all marginalised communities. A separate table showing annual allocation in the national budget under the 'leave no one behind' theme of the SDGs, should also be included. The government should also accelerate the implementation of programmes that promote job creation, enhance labour productivity and raise income. The government should put in place greater support for microcredit programmes and loans to SMEs, particularly for women entrepreneurs.

Conclusion

The growing inequality in terms of income, wealth, access to resources and justice afflicting the disadvantaged and marginalised population pose a serious threat to the attainment of SDG targets, not only with respect to SDG 10, but for the Agenda 2030 itself. The SDG 10 is a cross-cutting area – failure here will undermine the cause of achievement in other SDG areas. While the political commitment of the government to reduce inequality is laudable, implementation of various government programmes through transparent and accountable governance is also of equal importance. Creating an enabling environment to exercise constitutional rights to have all voices heard could play a conducive role in reducing inequality and emerging as a more inclusive society. On its part, non-state actors will also need to raise the efficacy of their interventions in support of the marginalised groups through better coordination and sequencing of their activities. Women's empowerment and enactment and enforcement of laws to safeguard women's interests must be seen as a precondition to attain the SDG 10 in Bangladesh.



Improving Capacity for Effective Climate Action (SDG 13)

Anchor Organisation

ActionAid Bangladesh

Co-anchor Organisations

International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD)

WaterAid Bangladesh

Associate organisations

Brotee

Dhaka Ahsania Mission

Enfants du Monde (EdM)

Practical Action Bangladesh

Save the Children in Bangladesh

Lead authors

Tanjir Hossain, Lead- Resilience and Climate Justice, and
Syeda Lamia Hossain, Programme Officer, ActionAid Bangladesh

Co-author

Shaila Shahid, Senior Advisor- Climate Change, DRR and Gender,
ICCCAD

AUTHORS' ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This review report is an output of the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh. The Goal Group 13 of the Platform prepared this report to provide an overview of the progress made with SDG 13 – Climate Action, especially in ways the non-state actors are contributing in the process. The report also identified key implementation challenges and provided recommendations for moving forward.

The authors would like to express their heartiest gratitude to Marjana Chowdhury, Program Manager- Climate Resilience, and Mohammad Abdul Basit, Programme Officer-Engineer from WaterAid Bangladesh, Md. Badrul Alam Talukder, Manager - Climate Change, Save the Children in Bangladesh, Afsari Begum, Senior Specialist – DRR, Practical Action in Bangladesh, Tapas Ranjan Chakraborty, ICT & Development Coordinator, Oxfam in Bangladesh, Md. Rafiqul Islam, Deputy Director, Brotee Samaj Kallyan Sangstha, Mizanur Rahman Bijoy, Executive Director, Network on Climate Change, Bangladesh, and Shamim Arfeen, Executive Director, An Organization for Socio-Economic Development, for sharing case studies and technical inputs that enriched the report significantly. Authors are particularly thankful to Shababa Haque, Coordinator for SDG and Climate Action, ICCCAD, for providing editorial support. They are also grateful to all the organisations who have taken time to provide relevant information for the report.

The authors sincerely appreciate the continued support and cooperation provided by Anisatul Fatema Yousuf, Coordinator of the Platform, Md. Sazzad Mahmud Shuvo, Senior Dialogue Associate and other colleagues from CPD, the Secretariat of the Platform throughout the report preparation process. They would also like to thank all the stakeholders, including government officials, media and private sector, for their inputs and comments during the consultation workshops. The contribution of Farah Kabir, Country Director, ActionAid Bangladesh, in overall supervision and guidance in preparing this report is gratefully acknowledged.

Lastly, the authors would like to extend their immense gratitude to the many organisations and committed citizens, who are working to advance SDG 13 and contributing towards making Bangladesh a resilient nation.

Introduction and Approach

Bangladesh, one of the most at-risk countries to adverse impacts of climate change, has suffered economic and non-economic losses and damages over the last two decades, posing significant threat to the country's ambition of becoming a middle-income country by 2021.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted at the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in 2015, gave the world an ambitious aspiration that leads towards a transformational growth, with the commitment of "leaving no one behind." Climate Action—the SDG 13, with five targets and seven indicators, is a unique goal that addresses the adverse impacts of climate change, and has a cross-cutting link with other SDGs. The goal is inseparably linked with the Paris Agreement for Climate Action and Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR), creating opportunities for affirmative synergies at national level for implementation.

Civil society organisations (CSOs) in Bangladesh have been working in the areas of adaptation and mitigation from local to global levels. Several of these organisations are working in partnerships and consortiums. The objective of the present study is to stock-take the contribution made by the CSOs in addressing climate change in particular programmes, researches and policy spaces. This report also captures challenges and measures that need to be taken into account for achieving the targets of SDG 13.

CSOs in Programme Delivery and Advocacy

The study shows that, the CSOs in Bangladesh have been working on issues related to climate change, disaster management and resilience building for decades. These activities can broadly be categorised in the following three major types of actions, which again interlink.

Programme Interventions

Based on the literature review and collected data, the study has identified five areas of dominance in terms of programme intervention. The first of these areas is building leadership capacity of women and young people in taking climate action at community level. Many CSOs are focusing particularly on transformative women leadership, and income-generation scope and emergency response training for women and young people. Others have reported actions for enhancing women and young people's role in policy advocacy and influencing towards women's empowerment at house and community level. The second core area is—climate-resilient and sustainable agriculture. Empowering women farmers, building

capacity to use sack gardening, agro-met services, vermin compost and digital weather boards are few initiatives to note in this regard. The third area is diversified livelihood, under which building and repairing electronic devices, welding, tailoring, carpentry, etc. skills are developed. Strengthening capacity of the community to understand climate change, disaster risk reduction and build resilience engaging women, young people and children is the fourth area. Major activities focus on the dissemination of early warning systems, increasing the adaptive capacity of community, mock drills, training on disaster risk reduction. The last area is promoting context-specific alternative solutions through adaptation and mitigation. Examples of work under this area include, but are not limited to, solar lamps, eco-friendly stoves and solar water disinfection technology.

Policy Advocacy

CSOs have been involved in the process of formulation and reviewing of government policies, plans and instruments. For instance, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change conducted several consultation workshops with the CSOs during the formation of Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), Bangladesh Climate Change and Gender Action Plan, and reviewing of the Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR), in collaboration with selected international non-government organisations (INGOs), are working on finalising a National Mechanism for Climate-induced Disaster Losses and Damages. In 2018, CSOs have published a report with analysis of, and recommendation for, government's climate budget, demanding for a more accountable and effective process. It is worth mentioning that, Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) has contributed to increases in financing, institutional analysis, setting up institutional processes for approval and management of funds, international recognition of the importance of governance in climate change financing, creating demand for performance audits and evaluations, while simultaneously collecting evidence of problems and challenges experienced in the implementation of climate finance projects.

Research and Awareness

Awareness raising, as part of capacity building of the communities that are vulnerable to climate change and disaster impacts—is the most common area of intervention by the CSOs. The NGOs are investing a major portion of their project funds for finding local/contextual solutions that are socially acceptable and economically viable. The action research projects focus mostly on women, young people and children, who are the most vulnerable groups of the society. Furthermore, NGOs, in collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh (GoB), have been

supporting the conduction of the Joint Needs Assessment in post-disaster situation, to develop a comprehensive response plan and ensure effective financial allocation.

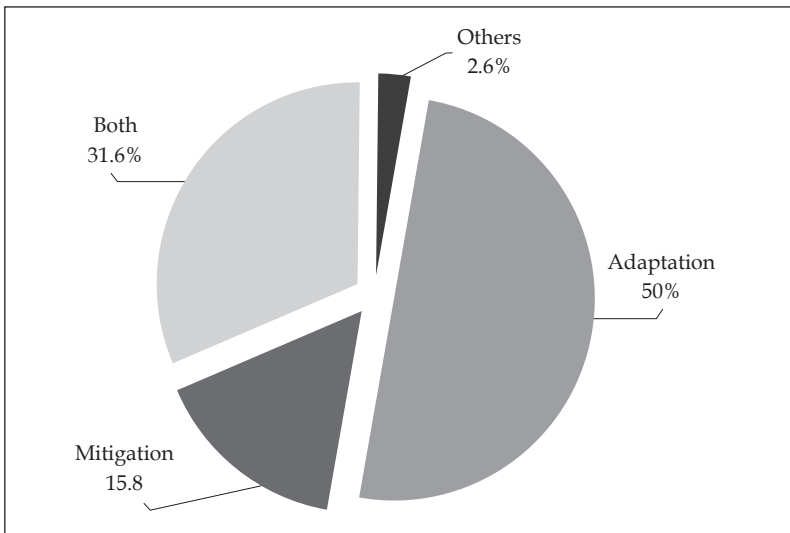
Initiatives by the Private Sector

Bangladesh's private sector has also been contributing in the country's journey to meet the SDG 13. Bangladesh is the second largest exporter of readymade garments (RMG) in the world, and a number of enterprises in the sector has been actively pursuing the cause of green growth and in sustainable green industrialisation. According to the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), Bangladesh now has 67 LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) green factories certified by the USGBC, and all of these belong to the RMG sector. Among these, 13 are rated as LEED Platinum. In addition, seven Bangladeshi factories are ranked among top 10 global green factories. The country also has the highest number of green RMG factories (67) in Asia.

Key Lessons Learnt

The study reveals that 50 per cent of the respondents are working on 'adaptation', whereas about 16 per cent are focusing on 'mitigation' actions (Figure 1). Around 31.6 per cent of projects address both 'adaptation' and

Figure 1: Percentage of INGOs and CSOs focusing on various climate-related initiatives



Source: Based on the survey data collected by the authors.

‘mitigation’. The adaptation and mitigation actions can also be further segregated by different priorities, such as awareness, advocacy work, research and technology development, and so on. However, there is a lack of research and projects that address ‘loss and damage’ area. While few of the organisations are doing an incredible job by bringing technological changes, such as climate technology parks and solar-based solutions, this area needs further innovation and support from developed countries.

Challenges

Climate change is unpredictable. We do not know what course it will take in the next few years, when the global temperature will have risen by 1.5°C. Although there are global-level data and information, not much is known on local-level temperature-rise trajectory. Therefore, projects are mostly focusing on building social and economic capacity in short- to medium-term. The contribution of these projects is not always reflected in the central database of the government; and hence, there is no single monitoring and reporting mechanism to share progress made under SDG 13 and the actual contribution of the CSOs.

Way Forward

Based on the findings, challenges and opportunities, it is recognised that the CSOs require a common space to promote credible solutions to address issues under SDG 13, Paris Agreement and the SFDRR in a comprehensive way. This also needs to be linked with different government initiatives for greater sustainability. It is imperative to have a joint monitoring and implementation plan (of the GoB and the CSOs) for the progress of SDG 13 and other global agreements on climate action. Specific steps should include collating and disseminating good practices, undertaking public information programmes on local initiatives, and focusing on action research on climate-induced disaster losses and damages.



Ensuring Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (SDG 16)

Anchor organisation

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB)

Co-anchor organisations

Brotee Samaj Kallyan Sangstha
Nagorik Uddyog

Associate organisations

Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF)
ActionAid Bangladesh
Bandhu Social Welfare Society
Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST)
British Council in Bangladesh
HEKS/EPER
JAAGO Foundation
Naripokkho
World Vision Bangladesh

Lead authors

Shahzada M. Akram, Senior Programme Manager, and
Juliet Rossette, Programme Manager, TIB
Marufia Noor, Project Manager, Nagorik Uddyog

AUTHORS' ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This review report is an output of the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh. The Goal Group 16 of the Platform prepared this report to provide a critical view on the progress made with SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions from the perspective of non-state actors, as well as to identify key implementation challenges and provide recommendations for going forward.

In preparing the report, important contributions were made by Nahid Sharmin, Deputy Programme Manager, Md. Mostofa Kamal, Deputy Programme Manager and Md. Sahidul Islam, Deputy Programme Manager of TIB, Md. Rafiqul Islam, Deputy Director, Brottee Samaj Kallyan Sangstha, Selina Ahmed Ena, Executive Director, ASF, Maheen Sultan, Member, Naripokkho, Afrin Sultana Chowdhury, Advisor, Programme Development and Resource Mobilisation, JAAGO Foundation, Md. Mozahidul Islam, Programme Coordinator and Selina Akhter Keya, Programme Manager, PIDIM, and Israt Jahan Biju, former Programme Manager, PIDIM of HEKS/EPER, Md. Korban Ali, Deputy Manager – Youth Representation, ActionAid Bangladesh, Shara Arzoooman Chowdhury, Senior Officer (legal talk), Bandhu Social Welfare Society, Taqbir Huda, Research Specialist, BLAST, Md. Zahidul Kabir, National Coordinator, Social Inclusion and Policy Analysis, and Shabira Nupur, Deputy Director-Advocacy and Justice for Children of World Vision Bangladesh, and Md. Abdur Rahaman Khan, Project Manager – Society, British Council in Bangladesh. The authors would sincerely like to thank all of them.

They are specially thankful to Professor Mustafizur Rahman, Core Group Member of the Platform, for his kind and critical feedback during the preparation of this report. Colleagues from CPD, the Secretariat of the Platform, Anisatul Fatema Yousuf, Coordinator of the Platform, Anis Pervez, Ph.D., former Additional Director, Md. Sazzad Mahmud Shuvo, Senior Dialogue Associate, also deserve much appreciation for their continued support, guidance and cooperation throughout the report preparation process.

Lastly, the authors would like to express their gratitude to the organisations and citizens across Bangladesh who are committed to advance SDG 16.

Introduction

The Government of Bangladesh (GoB) has adopted a multi-pronged approach for achieving the globally-adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and necessary exercises have been carried out, which include mapping of relevant bodies and gaps in data, preparing monitoring mechanisms and tracking tools, and needs assessment of funds and possible sources. For achieving the Goal 16, the government has adopted an approach of promoting integrity and good governance among the public administration. However, the government is yet to develop a specific strategy and plan of action for achieving Goal 16.

This paper makes an attempt to assess the progress of Goal 16 in Bangladesh, capture the lessons learnt, and assess the way forward for more effective delivery of the SDG – identifying the concrete steps the government should take, and the partners need to pursue. This paper is based on secondary data collected from reliable sources, existing publications of civil society organisations (CSOs), and documentation of different sectoral reports of Bangladesh Government.

From the review of the progress, it is observed that despite different initiatives, the government planning lacks adequate emphasis on SDG 16, as there are significant gaps in the baseline data. Official information in light of target indicators are not available, particularly for, corruption and bribery (Target 16.5), public satisfaction on public services and institutions (Target 16.7), and extrajudicial killings (Target 16.10); while partial information are available on some issues, such as violence and related death rates (Target 16.1), and abuse, exploitation, trafficking and violence against and torture of children (Target 16.2). Among the 23 indicators of the 12 targets under this goal, government data is available for only eight indicators of six targets.

Despite adequate preparedness in terms of having laws, policies and institutional arrangements required for implementing the targets under Goal 16, there are some gaps in implementation of the laws. In spite of various initiatives taken by the government, corruption and bribery, money laundering, violation of fundamental freedoms and human rights are continuing in Bangladesh. The National Integrity System (NIS) institutions are not effective up to the expected level. There is no framework to hold them accountable to the people in most of the institutions, and internal accountability system of these institutions are also weak. There have been an increasing trend of politicisation, thus leading towards the erosion of effectiveness of key institutions of accountability. Proactive disclosure of information of some institutions are not sufficient. According to the SDG

Index and Dashboards Report 2017, Bangladesh fall under the Red category in achieving the Goal 16, scoring 54 out of 100.

CSO Contributions

CSOs have been engaged, along with the government functionaries, in implementing different programmes for achieving different targets of the Goal 16. These CSOs are providing support to the government through advocating for institutional, policy and legal reforms, intended for NIS institutions, such as different constitutional and statutory bodies and different public institutions. Different policy reforms have been carried out for sectors, such as gold import, education, health, NIS institutions, anti-corruption and climate finance. Legal reforms on issues such as anti-corruption, rights to information, anti-discrimination, and acid-related laws have been advocated. Reforms in private sector, such as in the readymade garments (RMG), has also been promoted through CSO activities.

Information dissemination through research and advocacy campaign on different issues covered under Goal 16 is another contribution from CSOs. They are also engaged in raising awareness through social mobilisation, engagement and advocacy at community level on governance and anti-corruption. Legal support has been provided for ensuring access to justice, especially for the poor, women victims of acid/domestic violence, marginalised, ethnic/adivasi, dalit communities. Capacity building activities are being operated for community people, especially the youth, on different issues, including rights to information, legal and human rights, labour rights, social accountability tools, among others. Some of the CSOs are promoting community participation in monitoring and decision-making of public representatives, public service delivery organisations (health, education, land, etc.) through formation of committees/groups at the grassroots.

Challenges

Some of the challenges of the CSOs include reluctance from the government to work with CSOs on some particular sensitive issues under Goal 16, such as corruption and governance. There is a dearth of official data on these. Government's reluctance in accepting corruption data generated by CSOs is also another challenge. Sometimes partisan political influence jeopardises partnership activities between the government and CSOs.

Way Forward

Legal reforms recommended by CSOs with regard to limitations existing in different laws pertaining to ensuring human rights, protection of

freedom of speech and expression, rights to information, right to life and livelihood, and strengthening NIS institutions should be sincerely considered by the government. The institutional and financial capacity of NIS institutions should be increased for better performance. The government should conduct a nationwide survey to determine the baseline situation on the state of corruption and bribery, people's satisfaction and trust on NIS institutions.

The participation of youth volunteers and social workers should be increased from both the government and CSOs. Their capacity should be strengthened to promote good governance, transparency and accountability of different institutions, to act as a driving force against corruption, human rights violation, violence against women and children, and to promote peace and justice in the social sphere.

Coordination among different public institutions and CSOs should be increased to give special attention to gender-based violence. Legal aid and service-providers, including state and non-state actors who are working across the country, should work together to create a central database which identifies and measures the reach and operations of legal aid and services.

To ensure sustainable development of dalits and adivasis, who are lagging behind for various reasons, institutional mechanisms, such as a separate ministry (like for the Chittagong Hill Tracts) and/or a commission is needed.

17 PARTNERSHIPS
FOR THE GOALS



Strengthening Global Partnerships for Empowering People and Ensuring Inclusiveness (SDG 17)

Anchor organisation

Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)

Co-anchor organisation

ActionAid Bangladesh

Associate organisations

BRAC

Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS)

Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD)

Gram Bikash Sahayak Sangstha (GBSS)

Oxfam in Bangladesh

Lead authors

Khondaker Golam Moazzem, Ph.D., Research Director, CPD

Asgar Ali Sabri, Director- Programme in Policy and Campaign, ActionAid

Bangladesh, and

Mohammad Ali, former Programme Associate, CPD

AUTHORS' ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report provides a critical view on the role of CSOs and private sector at national, regional and global levels in implementing the SDG 17. The report identifies various issues and concerns related to effective engagement of the non-state actors in implementation of Goal 17, and puts forward a set of recommendations for immediate action.

The authors would like to register their gratefulness to Debapriya Bhattacharya, Ph.D., Convenor of the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh, for providing overall guidance in preparing this review report. They sincerely appreciate Professor Mustafizur Rahman, Core Group Member of the Platform, Farah Kabir, Country Director, ActionAid Bangladesh, and Anisatul Fatema Yusuf, Coordinator of the Platform, for their kind support in undertaking this exercise.

They would like to especially thank Abul Kalam Azad, Deputy Secretary, Economic Relations Division (ERD) of the Ministry of Finance, Jeroen Steeghs, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of the Netherlands in Bangladesh and Ferdaus Ara Begum, Chief Executive Officer, BUILD, for taking part in the interviews and sharing their views. Appreciation is also due to participants of two preparatory meetings and those who took part in online survey.

Finally, the authors express their special thanks to the Platform Secretariat, particularly to Md. Sazzad Mahmud Shuvo, Senior Dialogue Associate, CPD, for providing necessary support for conducting the study and preparing the report.

Introduction

The Goal 17 of Agenda 2030 that promises to ‘*strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development*’ is one of the key goals which have been included for every single voluntary national reviews (VNRs) for the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) till date. As a cross-cutting goal, it directs about resources and partnerships in three core areas (i.e. economy, society and biosphere), and has diverse set of targets and indicators under five different areas, including finance, technology, trade, capacity building and systemic issues. The present study highlights the activities of the non-state actors of Bangladesh, i.e. civil society organisations (CSOs) and the private sector, in implementing the SDG (Sustainable Development Goal) 17, with a view to identify their specific engagements towards achieving different targets of the goal.

Bangladesh’s Priority Targets under SDG 17 and their Performance in the Post-2015 Period

As part of the present study, a sample survey was carried out to identify the priority targets under Goal 17 for Bangladesh. Out of 19 different targets, five most prioritised targets for Bangladesh are related to finance (17.1 and 17.3), technology (17.6) and systemic issues (17.17 and 17.18). In fact, domestic resource mobilisation and alternate source of financing, including foreign direct investment (FDI) inflow, remittance and debt management – have been identified as the top priority targets in achieving the Goal 17. Similarly, support for technological development has turned out as another priority issue for Bangladesh. Interestingly, no target from the areas of trade and capacity building have been identified as most-priority targets. This was perhaps because of changes in Bangladesh’s needs over the years, owing to achieving double graduation in economic and social development in recent years. Among the priority indicators, Bangladesh’s performance during the post-2015 period (data available for 2016 and 2017 only) is not very impressive; this includes weak state of domestic resource mobilisation under Target 17.1 (e.g. tax-GDP (gross domestic product) ratio), slow rise in alternate resource flows under Target 17.3 (e.g. FDI-GDP ratio), and decelerating trend in the flow of fund for CSOs under Target 17.17. On the other hand, the performance in some indicators are on track, such as fixed broadband subscription under Target 17.6, and remittance-export ratio under Target 17.3.

Role of CSOs in Implementing the SDG 17

The engagement of the CSOs in case of implementing different targets is largely in the form of policy activism, policy awareness and capacity building. Since the CSOs were involved in related issues even in earlier decades, it is important to review their role from intertemporal point of view—pre-2015 and post-2015, to appreciate the incremental changes in their participation in the SDG process. CSOs at the national level had been involved in areas of trade, tax and aid-related issues, following the global trend. In recent times, their engagements have been widened and deepened. On the other hand, a new set of CSOs have emerged, who work on various non-traditional areas, such as technology and communication, partly in partnership with different private sector organisations. Newer forms of engagement of the CSOs have been found in addressing tax-related irregularities, such as restrictive tax treaties and its consequences on revenue losses. National CSOs have been building partnership with global organisations, such as the Global Alliance for Tax Justice (GATJ), on various issues.

CSOs have been involved in capacity building activities through organising training workshops with a view to build a broader constituency, while enhancing capacity and strengthening networks and advocacy through raising voices on development effectiveness issues. Some of the CSOs have been working on issues related to tax, trade governance, climate finance, knowledge generation and research, capacity building of CSOs and community-based organisations (CBOs) on the issues and challenges pertaining to the SDGs and national Five Year Plans. Under different platforms, large number of CSOs and CBOs have been involved in dissemination, capacity building and GO-NGO (government-non-government organisational) collaborative activities.

The engagement of the CSOs has been widened in case of promoting technological advancements and other non-traditional issues related to trade, such as promoting living wage for workers in the global value chains; fair price for the manufacturers of the exporting countries; engagement in global policy debates on Southern issues; negotiation and communications; working as community watchdog for climate finance of the government; enhancing participation of CBOs and CSOs in democratic governance in Bangladesh; strengthening their knowledge and leadership capacities at the grassroots level, in order to secure the social and economic rights of the vulnerable individuals and communities in designing and implementation of government policies and budgets related to SDGs; getting involved in multi-stakeholder partnerships to mobilise and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources; and developing

programme-related database. In recent years, CSOs have been extensively working with youth population to address their concerns.

Role of Private Sector in Implementing the SDG 17

Private sector has been recognised as a major player for implementing SDGs, which was absent earlier in case of Millennium Development Goal (MDG)-led initiatives. Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) has carried out a web-based data analysis of the engagement of the private sector at the global level, based on the information available at the website titled Sustainable Development Partnership Platform, which is a United Nations (UN)-led initiative. Key areas of their engagement at the global level include— activities for knowledge sharing on climate change, gender equality, community development, media services, livelihood development, e-schools, capacity development on information and communication technology (ICT), training, improving organisational capacity, public-private partnerships, promotional activities for marketing of products, green growth by reduced chemical use, and ideas for app development. It is also observed that, instead of engaging directly as the corporate entity, private sector is preferring to form different entities, such as foundations; their corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds are facilitated through such foundations in providing financial support to universities, research organisations, schools and banks to implement different activities. Such engagements are found in different forms between different organisations, such as foundation-university collaboration, foundation-CSO collaboration, university-foundation collaboration, and UN agencies-foundations-private companies' collaboration, etc.

In Bangladesh, the engagement of the private sector in addressing different concerns related to SDG 17 has been following by and large a 'business as usual' approach. According to the information available on the websites of the business associations, they have been working on various issues which are related to Goals 3, 5, 8, 9, 12, 14 and 17. However, very few of these could be identified as focused and targetted initiatives; and how much of those initiatives are purposefully built to address the targets of Goal 17, is not out of question either.

Challenges and Way Forward

The study identified a number of issues and concerns, which are largely of four categories, including: a) framework-related; b) data-related; c) performance-related; and d) CSO and private sector engagements-related. Following areas need to be taken into due attention.

National framework does not specify the role of CSOs and private sector.

The institutional framework for SDG implementation refers CSOs and private sector ‘ornamentally’, and in some instances as ‘beneficiary’, in the SDG implementation process. It is expected, that role of CSOs and private sector will be duly recognised in the framework, by adding responsibility as ‘associate partners’.

Gap between activities related to indicators and those of CSOs. Given the nature of work of the private sector and CSOs, which are largely in the field and at the grassroots levels, creating direct link of their works with the Goal 17 indicators is rather difficult. A voluntary initiative at national and global levels needs to be undertaken with a view ensure proper recognition of their contribution. Such initiative should identify a set of proxy indicators to be called ‘associated indicators’, customised with the activities and initiatives of the CSOs and the private sector.

Bangladesh could not come out from the ‘business as usual’ trend in implementing Goal 17. There is no significant difference observed in the performance of top-priority targets in comparison to other targets of Goal 17 between pre-2015 and post-2015 periods. In other words, Bangladesh is still following a ‘business as usual’ approach in implementing the related targets under five areas of Goal 17 – finance, technology, trade, capacity building and systemic issues. Private sector, as well as CSOs, have a strong role to play in key issues related to domestic resource mobilisation, FDI and technology.

Engagement of CSOs has widened and partly shifted in the post-2015 period. The engagement of CSOs which were concentrated on trade and aid-related activities during the pre-2015, has now been widened to various other areas, such as technology, capacity building, partnership building, etc. In this process, the nature of partnership has changed with more collaboration with the private sector, as well as at the cross-border levels. Given the huge fund requirement in implementing the SDGs, development partners should further enhance the flow of fund in Bangladesh. In view of the recent dynamics, an emerged aspect in this regard should be the consideration that – Bangladesh’s CSOs need support for working exclusively for Bangladeshis; development partners’ support for the Rohingyas should be allocated and reported separately. At the national level, Bangladesh Government should form a ‘SDG Trust Fund’ in implementing SDGs by the CSOs.

Bangladesh’s private sector is way behind compared to that of the engagements of the global private sector. Bangladesh’s private sector is yet to get prepared to set their strategies and activities in achieving SDGs,

particularly for Goal 17. Globally, private sector is involved in diverse areas related to this goal through different entities and collaborative arrangements, whereas in Bangladesh, there are only few local initiatives found which actually target different SDG goals. This is particularly due to less awareness among the private sector about the SDGs, as well as limited presence of organised, formal businesses and corporate sector. Private sector could put emphasis on broader tax base, less tax burden on small and medium enterprises (SMEs); raising concern over rationale behind overconcentration of fiscal incentives to the readymade garments (RMG) sector, and demand for more balanced distribution of fiscal incentives between RMG and non-RMG sectors; strategic trade policy for sectoral development; enabling business environment for private investment including FDI; promoting bilateral free trade areas (FTAs) and other trade agreements with potential countries. Ensuring information technology (IT)-enable business environment, as well as promoting IT in businesses, needs to be catered by the private sector, as well as by the CSOs.



Citizens Conclave Four Years of SDGs in Bangladesh

Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh
এসডিজি বাস্তবায়নে নাগরিক প্রাচীক্ষণ, বাংলাদেশ

27 April 2019
Dhaka

The first ever intellectual contribution on sustainable development in Bangladesh through a non-government lens, this book is a unique analytical output that has been generated through a remarkable participatory process. The idea for this special compendium was conceived by the *Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh*, and later validated by concerned government officials, representatives from the private sector, international development partners, media professionals and Platform's partners, through focused consultations and presentations at a national conclave.

The book offers a set of summary reports that evaluate the development progress of Bangladesh, with special reference to the role of non-state actors, in the six Goal areas identified to be reviewed by the UN's High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2019: Quality Education; Decent Work and Economic Growth; Reduced Inequalities; Climate Action; Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions; and Partnerships for the Goals. In the process, the reports identify key partnership challenges and possible approaches in moving forward.

As Bangladesh is not the only developing country on the pathway towards achieving the SDGs by 2030, the appeal of this unique contribution extends well beyond the borders of Bangladesh.

 bdplatform4sdgs.net  [@BPlatform4SDGs](https://www.facebook.com/BPlatform4SDGs)  [@BPlatform4SDGs](https://twitter.com/BPlatform4SDGs)