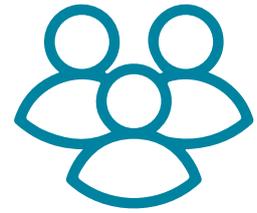




Save the Children



Mainstreaming Child Rights in the **Academia** in Bangladesh

Background:

Academia serves as a bridge between theory and practice, by playing a central role with a clear understanding of both the conceptualization and application of child rights. This bridge is vital, because child rights, childhood and children do not feature comprehensively in most academic curriculums in Bangladesh. There is, hence, a greater need to engage with academics to address this pedagogical gap. Issues of child rights need to be brought to the fore in academic settings.

The 'Policy Rights and Governance' sector of Save the Children has been working with Academia since 2006 to introduce child rights curriculum in higher education as well as transforming the academia to child rights activist. Save the Children (along with a partner organization INCIDIN) has been facilitating different initiatives – notably, capacity development of the teachers and student, formation of youth groups, research and study on child right, awareness and sensitization of local communities and youth, local level advocacy, internship programme for the students, etc.

Overall Objective:

Improve the child rights situation in Bangladesh by active engagement of Academia in Bangladesh

Specific Objectives:

- Create a vibrant academics and learners in defending child rights at locally and nationally
- Establish linkages between child rights academics and child rights protagonists/organizations to generate evidence for policy advocacy
- Develop and strengthen a network of Academia for a strong national presence that generate evidence for policy advocacy on child right

Geographical Coverage:

All over the country focusing on public universities

Project Duration:

January 2015 to December 2016

Funded by:

Save the Children Sweden and Save the Children Denmark with the support of SIDA and DANDIA

Target Group



Public Universities of Bangladesh



Teachers



Students

Major Achievement:

- Total 11 universities opened the 'Child Rights' course with the discipline of Sociology, Social Work, Anthropology, Development Studies and Economics.
- Rajshahi University accumulated the information of 5600 children in a database to draw a broader attention on 'Child Rights'.
- Bangladesh Child Rights Academia (BCRA) network has been established and Academia have shared their views through the network
- A Community based 'Child Research Centre' engaged multiple stakeholders in Rajshahi for promoting child rights and development.
- Academia has conducted studies on a range of issues i.e. child marriage, school dropout, child abuse etc. The findings of the study have been shared with the community, for their awareness, and with the government, for sensitization.

Major Challenges:

- Academia has their own understanding, explanation and perspective about child rights which is different from the development organization's experiences. Bridging this gap is always challenging.
- Making the curriculum relevant and in tune with the demand from a 'right based organization' is very crucial.
- The administrative (bureaucratic) procedure of the universities in introducing new courses is lengthy. Number of regulatory body exist - University Grant Commission (UGC), academic council etc.
- Creation of a network of Academia is challenging as the project working with universities located in different geographic location of the country.

Future Direction:

- Involve Academia in action research on child rights issues and share their research findings with Local Government, Community and Family to increase awareness and make the local authority accountable.
- Develop linkages and cooperation between public universities within Bangladesh and universities abroad, on Child Rights issues.
- Establish linkages among academics, development organizations, local government and communities, with the objective of stopping child migration, early marriage, dowry, child health, nutrition, and birth registration issues.
- Explore ways to create more knowledge about Academia through capacity building on child rights and their practice.
- Encourage and engage young people / university students by facilitating learning and internships in organizations on child rights, for utilizing the fresh theoretical perspective on child rights that they would have acquired.

