

#HUMANITARIAN SECTOR BANGLADESH



**CLEAN
GREEN & SAFE
APPROACH**



Save the Children

bangladesh.savethechildren.net

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Background

Bangladesh faces numerous challenges in trying to provide a clean, green and safe environment for its population. The country experiences severe climate change induced impacts, especially in the southwest and coastal areas, and is prone to frequent flooding during the monsoon season, with considerable destruction after instances of cyclones. Urban areas are faced with an additional spectrum of risks including waterlogging and heat island effects. The hazards of sexual and gender based violence, fire, earthquakes and building collapse are also more prevalent in urban areas of the country due to a higher population density and poor compliance. Consequently, these risks massively hamper quality of life – for the poorest and most marginalised in particular – creating an environment that suffers from unsatisfactory clean, green and safe standards. Children will bear a disproportionate share of the impacts in this substandard environment – both immediate and long-term – as they are the most susceptible to risk and disaster. Negative effects on the environment are exacerbated by lack of good governance, strained resources, poor education and poor awareness.



What do we mean by Clean, Green and Safe?

The concept of a clean, green and safe environment involves the following, bearing in mind that all three concepts interlink with one another:

CLEAN



Cleaning the environment reduces pollution, protects unique ecosystems, prevents the extinction of endangered species and conserves resources, such as water, land and air. The concept of clean in the context of humanitarian projects, involves a space that is cleaner, and in turn healthier, in terms of the following:

Cleaner land:

Better maintenance of hazardous waste and increased awareness of proper disposal is a fundamental part of creating cleaner land under project initiatives. Doing so would ensure a healthier environment for people and nature to thrive and sustain.

Cleaner water:

Temperature and precipitation, both of whose extremes will increase with climate change, affect the spread of water and food-borne diseases. Higher temperatures seem to produce a greater number of water and food-borne parasitic infections, as well. Increasing the quality of water is crucial to a healthy environment and promoting water restoration, maintenance and conservation. A major component of this is ensuring proper waste disposal. Doing so would ensure protection of fish and endangered wildlife, and cleaner and safer water to use.

Cleaner air:

Climate change is expected to contribute to air quality problems. Respiratory disorders may be exacerbated by warming-induced increases in the frequency of smog (ground-level ozone) events and particulate air pollution. By promoting the use of renewable energy, such as solar panels, conservation of energy and encouraging tree plantations, the quality of air in the environment will improve.

The concept of clean also involves a change in attitude, mindset and lifestyle of people in order to have effective results, such as the above mentioned. To have this change take place, there would need to be specific activities to educate, advocate and campaign for such change among communities, schools, CSOs and government authorities, as well as actively integrating ways of producing a culture of clean.

GREEN



The concept of green involves a space that is greener in terms of the following:

Being green and creating a greener environment means to have a space and culture that promotes a more eco-friendly way of living, that is natural and healthy and conserves nature. It includes an environment being greener in the literal sense, by way of encouraging vegetation growth and also being aware of the importance of flora and fauna. The concept of green ties into the concept of clean, as a greener environment is also a cleaner one, and vice versa. As with clean above, in order to have this change in the way of thinking, there would need to be specific activities to educate, advocate and campaign for such change among communities, schools, CSOs and government authorities, as well as actively integrating ways of producing a culture of green.

SAFE



The concept of safe involves a space that is safer in terms of the following:

A safe environment involves having a culture of resilience where people are better prepared and less vulnerable to disaster and risk, including those induced or exacerbated by climate change and risks relating to sexual and gender based violence. Increased resilience means increased safety. A cleaner and greener environment also contributes towards a safer space. In order to achieve a safer environment, projects would intend to integrate activities that educate, advocate and campaign for safety among communities, schools, CSOs and government authorities, as well as actively integrating ways of producing a culture of safety.

Children's Perspective



Save the Children centres the child's perspective in all its interventions, encourages them to be the drivers in achieving what they want and helping them to raise their voice in the right place for action to be taken.

Schoolchildren in the urban implementation areas (Mirpur, Savar and Naryanganj) of current humanitarian project, Proyash, expressed their views and needs in terms of a cleaner, greener and safer school environment, through focus group discussions. All children had the viewpoint that their schools were lacking in these three areas and they understood the importance of their role in being an agent for change. They also emphasised that, in order to successfully create such an ideal environment, we all need to work together and also take initiatives independently.

When asked what it means to have a cleaner, greener and safer school and how to achieve it, they answered the following as their priorities:

- Keep school surroundings neat and clean with the help of school staff
- Dispose of waste appropriately, use the dustbin and do not litter
- Clean our class room regularly
- Keep our bench, bags, waste bins in specific areas
- Have to maintain broken blackboards at classroom with help from class teachers
- Do not write any graffiti on benches, walls, tables or doors
- Keep school washrooms clean and teach everyone proper use of it, including the promotion of good hygiene
- Cleaning classroom ceilings
- Need for tree plantations in the playground and around the school
- Need to address the issue of water logging in school playgrounds
- Ensure clean water system and good ventilation of classrooms

- To stop harassment and eve teasing towards girls on their way to and from school
- To stop gender-based violence
- To stop physical or mental abuse or punishment by teachers)
- Ensuring safe electric lines and devices around school
- To stop the occurrence of child marriage
- Address bullying and promote a friendlier learning environment between students and teachers
- Need to address the poor drinking water facilities at school



The Clean, Green & Safe Approach

Under the Humanitarian Sector at Save the Children in Bangladesh, a unique approach with constant opportunities for innovative ideas has been developed as a way to contribute to achieving a cleaner, greener and safer environment for children and their families. The approach applies to both rural and urban project locations, and its aim is to incorporate into every intervention, where possible, an opportunity to improve the environment and lifestyle of the communities and schools Save the Children work with. These opportunities would be created within three channels - clean, green and safe – all of which interlink with one another – in order to produce project results reflecting a better environment.

The approach is to be piloted in schools, where a large proportion of Humanitarian project activities are undertaken, and then eventually - after considerable evaluation of its viability and effectiveness at the school level - implemented in other areas (community-centred, private sector, health institutions etc.). SCI believes the best route towards a **Clean, Green and Safe School** is through awareness. With local implementing partners, SCI holds awareness raising activities with students, student councils (representatives from different classes), school management committees (SMCs) to sensitise them on clean, green and safe related issues. The aim is to have students and school management committees realise the urgent need of a quality environment. To complement ongoing awareness raising measures, SCI performs an assessment in schools called a 'School Safety Plan' (SSP) with the objective to measure the physical and non-physical elements of school safety. This is mainly a visual rapid screening - a fast evaluation of the school building and its premises. This participatory process of assessment enables students to raise their voice for a quality learning environment.

Under Proyash – an Urban Risk Reduction humanitarian project, SCI and its implementing partner SEEP have been working with 14 schools in Dhaka, Savar and Narayanganj, conducting awareness raising activities and developing and implementing school safety plans. All the activities identified by the SSP are identified as clean, green and safe initiatives.

Clean, Green & Safe School Initiatives



Ideally, it is the responsibility of the School Management Committee to fulfil the needs of its students. However, the schools require support from the community, local government authority and the private sector, given their limited human and financial resources. Under these circumstances, SCI and its partner SEEP, teamed up with the schools to implement the identified activities. These activities contribute to Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA), which then increase quality of the school environment. Many activities have already been completed through joint initiatives with schools and through the Proyash project itself. For example, children are now drinking safe water in school, they know what they have to do during an earthquake or fire and the female students now have more privacy while using improved school toilets. The following are current and proposed activities under the approach:

CLEAN

- Clean school surroundings
- Establish/reestablish and improve drainage systems
- Install clean drinking water systems
- Ensure healthy food availability in cafeterias
- Ensure regular waste collection
- Educate students, staff and authorities on proper waste management
- Liaison with city and municipal cooperations for proper waste collection
- Make arrangements for provision of hygiene kits
- Ensure cleanliness of water tanks
- Ensure sanitary and private conditions in toilets
- Raise awareness and educate on clean issues through class sessions, observation days, rallies and workshops with students, staff and authorities





GREEN

- Proactively planting trees, including fruit bearing and medicinal trees
- Developing a proper mechanism to nurture existing trees
- Installing solar panels and promoting conservation of water and energy
- Raise awareness and educate on green issues through class sessions, observation days, rallies and workshops with students, staff and authorities





SAFE

- Raise awareness and educate on hazards and disasters (including sexual and gender based violence) through class sessions, observation days, rallies and workshops with students, staff and authorities
- Arrange earthquake and fire mock drills
- Ensure proper electric wiring
- Ensure fencing around school premises
- Plinth raising of the school playgrounds
- Advocate for building code compliance and construction of safer schools
- Ensure safer vehicle parking around schools
- Install signboards communicating safety measures
- Construct speed breakers in front of school
- Repair roads around schools
- Liaison with law enforcing agencies to ensure law and order in disasters
- Retrofitting at schools



SAFE SCHOOLS

Children are the most vulnerable victims of disasters and are most at risk. As children spend a significant amount of time in school, an incident of disaster may have a considerable impact on children; boys and girls can be injured and even killed. Moreover, it often becomes the case that children are unable to attend school during and after such disasters. They can also be separated from their families and forcibly displaced. As a result, this causes substantial and prolonged disruption to children's education, which could have been otherwise avoided. In the several years Save the Children has been working in Bangladesh, it has seen that schools, teachers and students are vulnerable and are unprepared for disaster. Unless we take action and commit to making education safe from disaster, advancement in education will be curtailed.

What do we mean by a 'safe school'?

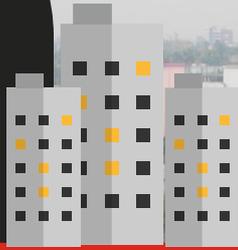
A safe school is where every child is protected from any kind of risk that exists in a school whether natural, man-made or social. A school which is well prepared for disaster, follows existing government laws and policies, has identified hazards and developed a risk reduction action plan with a continuous monitoring mechanism to keep children and staff safe from hazards and risks.

Why is a safe school important?

- More than 4,666 schools in Bangladesh are affected by disasters per year
- During the past three years, natural disasters – particularly cyclones – have disrupted the education of more than 1.5 million children
- 46% girls are dropping out from high school where child marriage is the major reason
- 49% of schoolchildren in Bangladesh are victims of cyber harassment
- 31% of schoolchildren in Bangladesh are physically punished on regular basis
- A large number of school going children are subjected to sexual harassment on their way to school, around school and in school premises by classmates, teachers and school staff



Bangladesh and Disaster



In April 2015, eight million people - 3.2 million being children - were affected by two earthquakes in Nepal. Around 5000 schools were destroyed and thousands more damaged. Within a few months, frequent earthquakes were felt throughout Bangladesh. Dhaka city, the heart of Bangladesh, is highly vulnerable to earthquake disasters due to the high population density, unplanned infrastructure, close proximity with India and Myanmar's active seismic area, poor economic conditions, poor emergency preparation and recovery capability. It is predicted that a major earthquake would cause around 88,000 deaths, destroy 72,000 buildings, damage 86,000 others, resulting in a huge economic loss since damage is estimated to cost US \$ 650 million to US \$ 1,075 million in the capital.



The Policy Guide for a Safe School

The 2015 **Disaster Management Policy** of the Bangladesh government provides guidance in providing disaster management education in school curriculums and forming a School Disaster Management Committee along with a School Management Committee to educate on disaster risk reduction in schools and build their capacity.

The **Sendai Framework for Action** promotes the incorporation of disaster risk knowledge, including disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness, emergency response, recovery and rehabilitation, informal and formal education at all levels.

Bangladesh's High Court in 2011 declared all types of corporal punishment in schools illegal and unconstitutional. The **Ministry of Education** deemed corporal punishment to be damaging to children's development, and in 2011, issued a circular prohibiting all kinds of corporal punishment on students.

Education Safe from Disaster

Save the Children has been working to keep children safe from disaster in schools. A safe school includes an active school disaster management process, which initiates a School Safety Plan and contingency plan engaging children and school staff. This process will help to enable children to continue attending school during and after cases of disaster. Coordination between the education department, service providers and relevant stakeholders is essential to make the process effective.

Students from Narayanganj High School, Narayanganj, Bangladesh

"We don't know how fires can start and what to do before, during and after an incident."

"We don't know whether the school has plan to reduce our risks or not."

"We are physically punished in school and we believe this form of discipline is harmful and wrong."

"I don't know where I have to go if there's an earthquake. We don't even know the evacuation routes in our school"



Our Strategy

Save the Children is following a Comprehensive School Safety framework to protect learners and education workers from deaths, injury and harm in school. The Comprehensive School Safety framework is aligned with education policies and practices concerning disaster management at national, regional, district and local school levels. It rests on three pillars: 1. Safe Learning Facilities 2. School Disaster Management 3. Risk Reduction and Resilience Education



Our Vision

- For every child to be safe from injury and death, and to not let an event of disaster jeopardise their education
- For no child to drop out of school due to child marriage and sexual harassment
- To put an end to physical punishment and abuse against children

Students
from Adharchandra High
School, Savar, Dhaka,
Bangladesh

"Our schoolyard
gets flooded when it
rains heavily and
we are unable then
to move around"

"We feel scared when we are
in our classrooms since our
school buildings are very old.
The stairways are risky to use
but we have no choice but to,
everyday."

Our O/O Goal

Our aim is to have 0 deaths and
injuries and 0 days of school
missed

Our Mission

- To develop and implement school safety and contingency plans in schools
- To increase children's capacity and skill in protecting themselves from disaster
- To identify the existing risks and hazards in schools and execute the necessary reduction measures so as to not hamper education
- To consider and incorporate children's ideas and opinions when planning for risk reduction
- To ban physical punishment in schools and monitor such issues
- To develop proper mechanisms to keep girls in school so as to prevent dropouts due to child marriage
- To form an effective committee to stop child abuse and sexual harassment in schools



Challenges

Mobilisation of SMCs

The school management committees (SMCs) are more motivated to make their schools cleaner, greener and safer. However, there is still much more work to be done. There are instances where SMCs are not always thinking of the best interest of students. For example, one of the findings from the assessment was the sale of cigarettes within school compounds even though the government has passed a law of banning smoking in public places, and the concern of selling junk food in the school cafeteria was identified as an alarming issue in the school safety plan. All these malpractices identified through the assessment show the need for SMCs to be further oriented on children's right to survival and nutrition. SCI and its partner SEEP have been advocating with SMCs in order for schoolchildren to learn in a safe and healthy environment.

Coordination gaps between government authorities

Making schools safe from disasters is complicated and challenging. Coordination between school and disaster management authorities is key. Only recently, education authorities have started addressing pillar 1 (Safe Learning Facilities) of the Comprehensive School Safety (CSS) Framework. The government still has not taken any initiative to retrofit previously constructed school buildings to make them earthquake resilient. The lack of coordination between authorities is reflected on the lack of safe school construction. The assessment conducted by SCI and SEEP shows that many schools have their playgrounds and classrooms waterlogged during the monsoon season and they often have no evacuation route or safe assembly area outside. The project also faced challenges to organise fire and earthquake mock drills as the fire trucks were unable to get into the school compound.

Environment friendly schools are a low priority

There are many clean, green and safe activities that can be undertaken. However, the assessment only identified 'planting trees' as the only option in making schools greener. This proves there is a shortcoming on the understanding, design and implementation of green initiatives in project initiatives. To take the first step forward, we, as the facilitators, need to be more knowledgeable on recycling, conserving energy and water and sustainable practices that are considered the basics of creating a greener environment. The active participation of every stakeholder - schools, government and non-government authorities and partner organisations is required in order to make eco-friendly environments a priority.

Way forward

Save the Children International along with UNICEF, ADPC, Plan, World Vision and UNESCO have been advocating for the 'Comprehensive School Safety' (CSS) Framework, with the purpose of having climate smart disaster risk reduction and bridging development and humanitarian actions in the education sector. The government has already taken initiatives to provide training for teachers on risk reduction curriculum materials, which falls under Pillar 3 (Risk Reduction Education). It also involves incorporating the needs of children with disabilities in its various school based interventions. Provision of ramps in newly-built government-owned primary schools is mandatory to ensure accessibility for children with disabilities. This intervention comes under Pillar 1 and 2 (Safe School Facilities and School Disaster Management). However, not all types of schools in Bangladesh are benefitting from these

initiatives. For example, it is not mandatory for private schools to ensure accessibility for children with disabilities. In urban areas, schools are built and run without considering physical risks (e.g. pedestrian paths, roads, river crossings) for children, which hamper children's access to school. One of the schools that SCI works with, for instance, needs a footbridge to connect its two school buildings, as crossing the road is too unsafe for students. It is a complicated issue for the community as well. It is illegal to construct on public land, and on top of that, if a footbridge is constructed, it will hinder the regular transportation system. The Clean, Green and Safe Approach is a step towards achieving the goals of the CSS. Many of the identified initiatives have been implemented so far, however, SCI and its partner SEEP continue to work with the respective SMCs to protect children from harm and give them a quality environment. At the national level, SCI is trying to initiate discussions between education and disaster management authorities. Bangladesh hosted a national level workshop on 'Education Safe from Disasters' in 2016, where officials from both authorities were present. To overcome the above mentioned challenges, SCI is committed to work with the government and other non-government organisations, along with SMCs and communities, where children are at the centre of the initiatives.

Sustainability

This approach is seen in some form within an already established and sustaining set of climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction interventions in current and previous projects. However, it is not in a structured fashion, or at a level where the concepts of clean, green and safe are fully understood in order for activities to have the desired effect. These interventions have proven thus far to include some sustainable activities, that have provided communities, schools and government agencies with prolonged effective knowledge and skills in order to better adapt themselves, and others, to climate change and hazards. This is evident through more attention being given for a child centric approaches and acknowledgement by the local and national level stakeholders for unique child-centred vulnerability assessments and child-led advocacy for resource mobilisation. Project activities have proven that working with children, youth, communities, government and international organisations – to reduce and mitigate the risks that directly impact children's lives – has produced long-term positive change and reduced potential vulnerability towards disaster.

The Clean, Green and Safe Approach hopes to enhance these already established project initiatives, and create innovative new ideas to be implemented with this fresh perspective. Save the Children is not only empowering children and communities, but also building the capacity of service providers and establishing linkages between target communities and key service providers, aiming that this relationship will be continued in the long run. This capacity and relationship building incentive intends to be enhanced with application of this approach. The approach also aims to encourage further support from different government agencies and different government departments in mainstreaming child sensitive initiatives into development programmes, and in developing feasible and replicable interventions that ensure institutional and financial sustainability.

Having a long-term vision is crucial in every Save the Children project, and the organisation finds it imperative that initiatives can prove to be long standing in many years of implementation and also after funding ceases. Importance is placed on communication and outreach in order to achieve

sustainability by ensuring a strong communications strategy whereby project results are shared with a larger audience and are effectively documented. By doing so, lessons to be learned will be more efficiently produced and shared, leading to a more sustainable project. Project results that have been produced with this Clean, Green and Safe Approach in mind, intend to be carefully evaluated after its piloting to determine the viability of such an approach, whether it has long-term potential and whether it can be applied to other areas of intervention, for example, in community-based work or in partnership with the private sector. The evidence created from this approach may also encourage other agencies to formulate and generate new ideas, which will bring forward more innovative solutions for a cleaner, greener and safer environment. Furthermore, the project would establish partnerships with NGOs and academic institutions to provide the approach with a wider outreach in the long term and also enhance institutional/organisational sustainability.