

National Children's Task Force (NCTF)



Background:

The traditional views on children that they are sufficiently mature nor capable of being involved in decision making processes at the family and political levels tend to persist, even where those decisions impact directly on children's lives. This suggests a popular belief that "children do not know much even for their own betterment". However, in reality, children often know their own situation better than adults and this understanding drives many of CRG's initiatives, especially when it comes to acting with children to achieve Article 12 of the UNCRC which relates to child participation.

NCTF established in 2006 to monitor child rights issues, raise concerns to hold duty bearers accountable and create space for children participation in decision making processes by Save the Children. NCTF is the only government endorsed children organization that has nation-wide presence and hosted at Bangladesh Shishu Academy (BSA) office in all 64 districts of Bangladesh which also currently supported by Plan International Bangladesh. Children aged 12 years to 18 years are eligible to be the members of NCTF. Currently NCTF is consisting of about 40,000 members where ensured equal number of boys and girls and representation from all groups of children irrespective of their backgrounds and socio-economic context.

Overall Objective:

Promote and protect child rights through active children and youth participation in monitoring, reporting and advocacy at local and national levels

Specific Objectives:

1. Strengthen the NCTF to monitor child rights situation at local and national levels in line with UNCRC, and based on Concluding Observation, CRC Alternative Report and UPR report.
2. Enhance capacity of children and youth (NCTF members) and adults to mainstream child participation in public life.
3. Influence policies/practices at local and national levels that affect children's lives and hold duty bearers and policy makers accountable.

Geographical Coverage:

All over the country with the support of Bangladesh Shishu Academy district office.

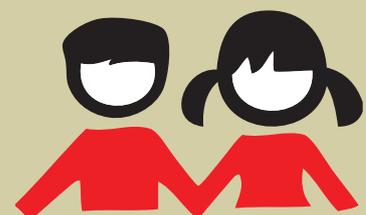
Project Duration:

January 2016 to December 2021

Funded by:

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

Target Group:



Children and Youth
aged 12-18 years

Major Achievements:

- Government issued memorandum to all educational institutions for stopping physical punishment in 2010 and use of cell phone by the teachers during class hours as a strong outcome of the advocacy of NCTF at 2011.
- Major political parties committed to stop exploitation of children in political activities and reflected this in their election manifesto at 2008 following NCTF advocacy.
- Government committed and providing free text books to the students of up to secondary grades.
- NCTF media group has been managing a child-led website (www.nctfbd.org)
- Five half-annual child rights situation report named Our Story Book has been published and based on it NCTF prepared a Child-led CRC Alternative Report which has been submitted to UNCRC Committee.
- NCTF members been consulted and provided their suggestions and support which enriched child policy, health policy, education and adolescent policy of Bangladesh.
- Active participation of children was obtained from NCTF when developing the national Children Policy 2011, as well as when revising the Children Act 2013.

Major Challenges:

- To ensure that the children are not putting themselves in vulnerable or risky situation, some severe child rights violations cases may not be covered.
- The task of instilling importance of research and without compromising its core principles is challenging.
- Continuous follow up is required to gather reliable information regularly including maintaining strong linkages with partners and stakeholders.
- Follow up of identified issues identified by CP members limited or no access to political dialogues.
- Majority of Child Parliament members are from urban areas and less representation from socially isolated children.
- It was not possible to reach a wide range of policy makers like Members of Parliament to create space for children to begin influencing the laws.
- Active engagement of general NCTF members at district with executive committee of NCTF and capacity building of the general NCTF members

Future Direction:

Save the Children will continue to invest in the organisational development of NCTF with the objective of empowering it to become a self-reliant and sustainable organisation that brings together children, adolescents and youth to advocate for child rights and social development. Recently, NCTF activities expanded from district to sub district level with the addition of 26 union (lowest level of administrative unit) of Bangladesh. As NCTF has started their ICT platform very recently, we will focus more in capacity building to capture their voice by utilizing ICT equipment and technical skill. The child led advocacy and campaign to combat violence against children and contribute to national dialogue and consensus by political parties and student/youth wings in Bangladesh over the use of children in political activism.



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As a NCTF member, I led different initiatives and mobilized other children to express their opinions. Besides, as a child parliamentarian, “I have got the opportunity to raise the concern for our rights and made the Deputy Speaker of National Parliament to listen the children’s issue.

Sidratul Montaha , age 15

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