

#CHILDREN AND CITIES

CHILD-SENSITIVE URBAN PLANNING



Save the Children

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

**VENUE: BANGLADESH INSTITUTE OF PLANNERS (BIP)
CONFERENCE ROOM, BIRUTTAM CR DATTA ROAD,
DHAKA, BANGLADESH.**

DATE: 28 DECEMBER 2016



Background

The urban population of Bangladesh is rising fast and currently in the early stages of its own urban transition. Urbanization is bearing its toll on its children as well, just as elsewhere in the world. It is essential to address the need and priorities of all segment of the community for developing an equitable and enabling urban environment. Children consist of almost 40% of the total population. Due to rapid urbanization, in the name of development lots of interventions taken and in most of the cases those developments remain indifferent to the specific needs of children's vulnerability and opportunities. Time has come to consider and emphasize the inclusion of the impact of unplanned urbanization on children and how to incorporate child specific needs in upcoming policy, procedures and implementation to bring positive development. Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP) and Save the Children Bangladesh has organized a round table discussion on "Child Sensitive Urban Planning". For this purpose, Prof. Dr. Shamsul Alam, (Senior Secretary Member, GED, Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh) chaired as chief guest, Mohammad Abu Sadeque, (Director, Housing & Building and Research Institute) and Ms. Mahmuda Sharmeen Benu (Additional Secretary, Ministry of Women & Children Affairs) chaired as special guests. Besides them, participants from ministries of GoB, LGED, City Corporation, Municipalities, NGO/INGO's and respective organizations joined to share knowledge and ideas. This discussion brings the issue of Child Sensitive Urban Planning in focus to discuss how governments, local stakeholders, planners, NGO/INGOs and private sectors can best contribute to the task of building sustainable and inclusive cities from the perspective of children.

SESSION 1

WELCOME ADDRESS

Planner Mohammad Fazle Reza Sumon
Vice President, Bangladesh Institute of Planners

Mr. Sumon welcomed all for participation in the program. He thanked the chief guest, Prof. Dr. Shamsul Alam (Senior Secretary Member, GED, Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh), special guests, professionals from different organizations and all the participants. He mentioned that on 8th November of this year, World Town Planning day was celebrated widely as well as in Bangladesh too. He acknowledged that Dr. Mahbuba Nasrin (Professor and Director of Institute of Disaster Management and Vulnerability Studies, DU) will present a paper on Child Sensitive Urban Planning to show the situation and possibilities on this topic. Besides this, many technical and non-technical experts will share their ideas and experiences. Finally, he thanked everybody again for joining the program and announced the starting of the program.

Mr. Syed Matiul Ahsan
Senior Manager DRR & CCA, Save the Children



He thanked BIP for arranging this dialogue session and knowledge sharing opportunity. Also thanked Prof. Dr. Shamsul Alam (Senior Secretary Member, GED, Planning Commission, Government of Bangladesh), special guests, professionals from different organizations and all the participants. As Save the Children work for children, they are interested to know whether the cities and master plans are child and women friendly or not. In conventional thinking, children are treated as passive agents but in reality, they act as active agents for urban development. To make a great Bangladesh, inclusion of children, women and the marginalised in master-planning is very necessary. He finished his speech hoping to receive useful knowledge and recommendations from the participants.

SESSION 2

PAPER PRESENTATION ON CHILD SENSITIVE URBAN PLANNING

Dr. Mahbuba Nasrin
Professor and Director,
Institute of Disaster Management and Vulnerability Studies, DU

Urbanization is a fast growing mechanism in the world as well as Bangladesh. The number of people living in cities is rapidly increasing as urbanization continues. This is creating extended cities. According to BBS's recent reports, the population of urban areas increased from 9% to 28% (1974-2011). Urban planning is a technical and political process of designing the urban area. It is concerned with using and developing of existing land, ensuring protection, maintaining the environment and ensuring public welfare. Child Rights Mainstreaming in Program & Project Cycle Management is a great concern (EC, Report) around the world/



Statistics says over half the world's people including more than a billion children now live in cities and towns. In Bangladesh, children consist of almost 40% of the total population. Therefore child sensitive urban planning, infrastructure development, service delivery is a demand of the day. People live in urban for many reasons, however, some are forced to move-cyclones, floods, river erosion and other slow onset disasters and impacts of climate change make people displaced with their children. Displaced children are more prone to insecurity. Studies reveal that needs, vulnerability and opportunities of children are different than of adults. The inclusion of impact of unplanned urbanization on children and incorporating child specific needs in policy, procedures and implementation is crucial for bringing positive development. The experiences of children in increasingly urbanized areas are different. Children and their mothers need to have access to improved health and nutrition, to be protected from abuse, exploitation, and violence, to have access to quality educational opportunities from early childhood and to have recreational space.

The Principles of United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) includes non-discrimination/equality, the best interest of the child, survival and development and participation/inclusion. Safe Urban planning for a child means to make a child-friendly urban planning where urban development issues will consider child development and where urban protection will ensure child protection as well. This also means to build urban environment which will be intended as safer and sound environment for children in case of the whole process equality for all child and child participation will come as cross-cutting issue. Child protection means Safety security of children against neglect, abuse, exploitation, violence by ensuring child rights. Safe urban planning means the development of prevention of and response mechanism to abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence against children. To examine the current scenario and the trends of urbanization in Bangladesh a plan must be taken to prevent air, water, noise pollution which is harmful to and unexpected for children's health and mental development. For example urban schools should serve high-poverty families and communities to pursue research and planning interests in children's social development, with special attention to children and adolescents who are not well served by public education, ethnic minority children, children with disability, low-income children and children at-risk for school failure is needed. Methodologically in the urban planning process, the voice of children must be considered through interviewing or group discussion. Every segment of the plan must ensure equality and non-discriminate view to understanding children's behaviors across samples of students that vary by social class, gender, ethnicity, disability, age and region of residence to determine the generalizability of services and facilities. Guiding legal documents on this topic include Children Act 2013, Labor Law, 2006, National Children Policy 2011 and the Prevention of Oppression against Women and Children Act 2003. One important thing pointed out was that the policies are very child-friendly but the implementation is not. She finished her speech thanking everyone.

SESSION 3

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Md. Maruf Hossain
Program Officer, WBB Trust

He considered this event as a wonderful opportunity for sharing ideas on child sensitive planning and inclusion of children in decision making. He focused on human-sensitive city planning, not only child-sensitive. Though changes in policy are often found but in reality, the implementation of planning failed in recreation sectors as well as in other sectors too. Recreation for children become very limited in Dhaka city. He thinks children are now in a vulnerable position. Park and playground should build in every community in Dhaka city. Health service should be made available to children of all ages and social class. Studies show people tend to go the nearest playground rather than the far ones. In transportation sector children tends to go good schools though they are far. Sound pollution in cities is another major problem. Changes should be made step by step. Participation of children of all ages and classes, municipalities, NGOs should be confirmed. He stated and hoped that the process is already started and every goal will be achieved ahead soon.

Mr. Salma A. Shafi
Vice President 1, BIP Program Officer, WBB Trust

She suggested ten important points for inclusion in the planning process. 1) All statistics must highlight the percentage or proportion of children aged 0 to 19 years. 2) Identify the services which facilitate children considering their travel hours, their education. 3) Rights and laws, which support and protect children for their education, health and environment. 4) Whether children planning measures are taken in the master plan, structure plan, urban plan, detailed area plan process. 5) Were children concerns were taken side by side with gender concerns? 6) Infrastructure and utility services must take children's need. 7) We must always consider the children with special needs such as the disabled and mentally slow. 8) Developing policies for City Corporation, municipalities and inclusion of these laws in local government planning process. 9) Ensure rights of children of home and protect children in work and open areas. 10) Lastly, she added that implementation has to be done in our own field.

Mr. Moniul Islam
Town Planner, Narayanganj City Corporation

In developed countries, child-friendly planning is practiced and implemented. In Bangladesh, children are facing some serious problems. If child sensitive urban plan is developed, many of this problems can be resolved. As there is a lack of parks and playground in urban areas, the health of children is declining. Planners can come forward to solve this problem. Examples of developed countries can be reviewed and implemented. Planning standards and guiding principles should be improved and developed. Also, civic sense should be developed. Children's voice and opinion should be inscribed. Narayanganj City Corporation has awarded by United Nation Habitat for Baburail Canal Restoration Project. This project will allow accommodating and created recreational space for all age groups and genders such as children to elders and women.

Mr. Ali Akhter Hossain
Project Director, SRIIP, LGED

He said that the concept and practice of child sensitive urban planning have started already. He think, in planning economy plays a vital role. As a result, in Bangladesh there have scarcity of parks and playgrounds in urban areas. Moreover, nowadays the mentality of parents have changed towards competition rather than children's health. This tendency has to be changed. LGED is making urban growth centers which act as rural growth centers. Recreational infrastructures with facilities are required in these places too. The Economic benefit of recreational infrastructures has to be estimated and applied.

Mr. Mostofa Quaium Khan
Advisor, Bangladesh Urban Fom

Thanked BIP and Save the Children for organizing an event on such an important topic. This topic should be given the highest importance in Bangladesh if we want to uphold humanity. United Nations SDG's goal 11 has a reputation on this topic stating to make cities and human settlement inclusive, resilience and sustainable. Bangladesh has done very well achieving MDG so it is hoped that similar will happen in the case for SDG. The rapid rate of urbanization will allow more than 50% of the total population will live in an urban place before the year 2030. This rapid rate of urbanization is a sign of development. But this urbanization has to be planned and it should include children, elders, male, female and every human beings. Today's errors and the fault will be the problem for tomorrow's children. More than 65% of GDP comes from urban places. So urban planning should be given the most priority. Planned growth has to be ensured for vision 2021. To take care of the children, the future of Bangladesh, the planning has to be human friendly by proper management and proper urban planning. If the government of Bangladesh come forward with advocacy for child sensitive urban planning a new future can be achieved.

Mr. Mohammad Iqbal Hossain
Research Associate, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies

Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies conducts researches on socio-economic topics. Population and housing census data of 2013 shows the number of non-school going children aged 10-15 years working in any paid unpaid workplace are almost 8% to 43% per ward of DCC. This huge number of child worker has to be incorporated in urban planning. Urban transportation is not child-friendly at all. So this has to be incorporated in planning.

Urban places have to be planned according to the children's need. Their perception, requirements and their view of urbanization have to be captured. Children's participation has to be ensured. He then gave an example of a case study in Nepal where children solved dropout problem by their own. So solution can be achieved by incorporating children. The needs and the problem of children differ from age to age, place to place and by socio-economic class. So solution differs too. Age groups should be considered. The recommendation should be developed. Master plan and all other plans have to be child inclusive. Health hazard, as well as mental problems, can be avoided by child-friendly building and community design.

Ishita Alam Abonee
Project Analyst, Social, Urban, Rural & Resilience (GSURR), World BankP

From urban planning and development perspective, our plans, policies and acts outlined inclusiveness, children and women's participation, disabilities etc. in clear format. But there is a big gap in implementation. Lack of organization is found in reality. The situation on municipalities differs very much from big cities. Migration to Dhaka and big cities is common. Roads and bridges are focused on infrastructure development. Inclusive planning requires parks and green spaces, whole service network design, transportation etc. The institutional reality is that these are largely missing. Planning community has to focus on how to engage more. Land use planning has to be in the way to reclaim the missing elements. Planning should be people centric not infrastructure-centric. Urban spaces have to be utilized and people should be engaged in the process.

Sarah Jabeen Haque
Consultant, Dhaka North City Corporation

The children in Dhaka city are the most vulnerable in terms of help-seeking and opinion sharing. Green space, as well as parks and playground, are decreasing day by day. She is now designing a park in Uttara by maximising child sensitivity issues. Natural techniques are introduced here. She mentioned children's participation and the requirement is highly required for any kind of planning. NGO's should come forward for implementing designs and plans. Building codes should be improved for including child sensitivity. She finished her speech stating the non-child friendly condition of the transportation system of Bangladesh which needs to be improved.



He gave an example of developed countries to compare the problems of Bangladesh. The health, education and transportation sector can be improved. Children's participation on every step of planning has to be ensured. Almost 30-60% people do not own secured housing. One-third of these people are children who do not even get the opportunity of birth registration. There are about 215 million children aged from 5 to 17 involved in child labor activity. Though the plan and policy are well enough but the implementation is not. SDG is fixed in November of 2015. The goal no 11 includes inclusiveness of all people. Our standing orders on disaster have been redesigned according to achieve these goals. There are opportunities for NGO's, municipalities, civil society to engage in development and planning. The government has focused on child sensitive planning. Disaster management has been included in the curriculum. Besides this scholarship, training and research opportunities are introducing by the ministry and government to ensure participation and knowledge gathering. Our environment has to be considered as well. He finally declared that in future, children's participation will be assured on seminars and events.

SESSION 4

OPEN DISCUSSION

Mr. Sarder Shofikul Alam
Senior Research Coordinator, International
Center for Climate Change and Development

Raising opinion of children should be practiced. Changes in the mentality of family and raising awareness should be focused. Security of children has to be ensured in planning. Child labor is a very common scene in Dhaka city. These children have to be incorporated in the planning process.

Ms. Rifata
Program Officer, ActionAid Bangladesh

Awareness development is highly compulsory for children friendly urban development. Advocacy on the behavior of teacher and parents are needed. Focus on good governance can reduce the gap between policy and implementation. Eco-friendly urban planning should be practiced. Children should be self-developed by teaching their rights. Civic sense should be developed.



SESSION 5

SPECIAL GUEST SPEECH

Mr. Mohammad Abu Sadeque
Director, Housing & Building and Research
Institute (HBRI)



Child-friendly planning has to be in each and every step of urban planning. These have to be done in a holistic way. A good urban plan has to include everything. The approach should be done accordingly. The plan should be developed in a participatory and inclusive way. The dedicated planning department is UDD which has to come forward. Population map and migration trend can predict and help in develop a good plan. Awareness building is also required to increase security towards children. He stated that each year 1% agricultural land is declined. The major reason behind that is unplanned rural housing. If this decline is not stopped the vision 2021 cannot be achieved. HBRI has planned and implement disable and women friendly pavement, public toilet and sitting arrangement in Kallayanpur with the help of WaterAid. A good plan is required for developing Dhaka similar to this project. This is a very big issue so persons and organizations should come forward with knowledge and helping hand. He recommended BIP to tailor technology for general use. He finished his speech inviting everyone to visit HBRI for knowledge and idea sharing.



Urbanization and child sensitive urbanization is a very delicate issue. She thinks that the UDD, planning commission and all other planning bodies should come forward to make one planning body for developing a human sensitive master plan for improving cities and urban spaces. She focused out the lack of safe drinking water and toilet in roads. Ministry of Women & Children Affairs has addressed children and women of all location, age, gender and socio-economic classes. She then stated some of the projects and initiatives were taken by Ministry of Women & Children Affairs in the issue of child and women development. There are a huge number of works on this issue and only the Ministry of Women & Children Affairs cannot fulfil all the works so NGO's, organizations and individual persons can come forward to assist. She agreed on the issues and concerns raised at this event. Civic sense should be raised. The recommendation of this event will be given serious concern and followed accordingly. She hoped the media will show more child-oriented program and highlight this issue.

SESSION 6

CHIEF GUEST SPEECH

Prof. Dr. Shamsul Alam
Senior Secretary Member, GED, Planning
Commission, Government of Bangladesh



Thanked BIP and Save the Children, Dr. A K M Abul Kalam, President, BIP, Dr. Mahbuba Nasrin, special guests, professionals from different organizations and all the participants. He stated from his vast experience in the planning field that importance on children should be given properly. Demographic dividend shows the majority of our population is young people. These young people are our future human resource if they are nurtured appropriately. Urban place is a must for economic development. Children are exposed to violence more than ever in both home and outside. This violence led to both mental and physical disabilities. Decreasing number and space for the playground is a growing urban problem. The government of Bangladesh is working hard and fast to eradicate these problems. Helpful recommendation from all organization and individuals are asked. Children were given most importance in vision 2040. He mentioned an approach named “Life Cycle Approach” where a child will be given security and financial support from the start of life. All families with the poor financial condition will be given support starting from 2019-2020. He stated that we suffer from a crisis of civic sense so civic responsibility has to be fulfilled. If everyone fulfils their own responsibility no problem will stay unsolved.

SESSION 7

CLOSING REMARKS

Dr. A K M Abul Kalam
President, BIP

He stated that the issues raised in this event can help a lot to develop a child sensitive planning. There is a scope to assist in development by developing policies and implementation. Building code, disaster management, social aspect, education, land use planning should be reviewed earnestly. Elderly and children sensitive master plan have to be developed as it is yet to develop. Inclusive planning of municipalities requires funding by the government. Municipalities require more planner, engineer, architect, environmental scientist to achieve inclusive planning. He hoped that achievement in this issue will surely be achieved. He finished his speech thanking everyone for attending this program and sharing their valuable ideas and knowledge.

