

# SIDA Global Moments

## Background:

The health, population and nutrition situation of Bangladesh is looking optimistic as health outcomes continue to improve as demonstrated by the progress on MDGs 1, 4, 5 and 6 with a marked decline in maternal and child mortality. However Bangladesh remains in the midst of rapid demographic changes, epidemiological transition and confronted with double burden in nutrition. Physical location of Bangladesh makes the country vulnerable to different natural disasters, annual events and climate change as well. Pneumonia is the leading killer of children (22% of U5 deaths) while newborn is the most dangerous period of life in Bangladesh. Child marriage rates in Bangladesh is one of the highest in the world as 65% of the girls are married before they turn 18 and 29% before the age of 15.

Over the last 3 years, the project has contributed positively towards the inclusion of pneumococcal vaccine in routine EPI and raised mass awareness on the issue of child marriage not only at community and national level but also at the international level. The project has trained youth advocates on health and rights in various communities across country who are working towards improved health services through advocacy at the community level.

## Project Objective:

The Government has demonstrated differential programs and investments to address hard to reach areas of Bangladesh in key health indicators in their health sector plans

- Abridge the stark inequity and exclusion in the health indicators, esp. in Sylhet since it signifies that not everyone has benefitted from the progress to the same extent.
- Raise awareness on the importance of reducing the child mortality rate
- Promote the importance of preventing child deaths by focusing on preventing pneumonia
- Call upon the government for a breakthrough in relevant policies and practices in reducing child deaths that dramatically accelerates the Sustainable Development Goals

## Geographical Coverage:

Kulaura, Jaintiapur, Gowainghat sub-districts in the Sylhet division of Bangladesh

## Implementing Partners:

Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM), Bangladesh Pediatric Association (BPA), Save the Children

## Non-funding partners:

International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (Icddr), WHO, Unicef, Child Health Research Foundation

**Donor:**  
SIDA

**Duration:**  
January 2014 to December 2016

## Target Groups



Adolescents



School Management Committee (SMC)



Caregivers



Teachers



Government Officials



Community Stakeholders, Service Providers



Newborn



Community Facilitators



Pregnant Mothers

## Major Interventions:

- Community mobilization and participation towards a more accountable health service delivery system through Citizen Hearings, organizing meeting with School Management Committee/ Teachers for disseminating information on pneumonia, diarrhea, Drowning & Child marriage for creating awareness.
- Convening the Pneumonia Coalition and implementing Community case management- through advocacy efforts from the pneumonia coalition, the pneumococcal vaccine has been integrated into routine EPI and been scaled up across the country.
- Profiling and creating awareness on the issues of preventable diseases and child marriage at the national and sub-national level by creating youth advocates as the 'knowledge hubs' in the project areas.
- Collaborative partner efforts to feed into a global strategy through advocacy engagements transitioning from local, national and global level
- Creating youth champions in remote rural areas of Bangladesh.

## Major Achievements:

- Youth leader, Moni Begum attends Global Level Advocacy at the UNGA with a popular mobilization campaign #LetHerGrow referring to the need for equitable access to basic services for girls to grow, educate themselves, utilize their potential and contribute to the society.
- Youths collaborate to engage in community mobilization with government at local, national and international level. Engagement at national level with Honorable Deputy Speaker of Bangladesh Parliament, Md. Fazle Rabbi Miah, MP. Youth engagement with National Stakeholders for UH&FWC scale up and differential budgeting
- Through technical and organizational support from partners, medical camps are held in project areas with joint collaboration with local government, community support groups and civil society actors.
- The project successfully set up a coalition with civil society actors in Bangladesh which contributed towards the inclusion of pneumococcal vaccine incorporated, working in unison to coordinate pneumonia advocacy work with the government and MoHFW.
- The project facilitated health budget analysis report facilitated by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of Bangladesh, assessment on Child Health and Nutrition Services undertaken.
- Stakeholder's consultation on Global Strategy 2.0 held in Dhaka. This discussion was organized in collaboration with Bangladesh Paediatric Association, icddr,b, PMNCH, BRAC and Save the Children.
- Arranged a consultation on 'Addressing Health Inequities in Bangladesh' prior to the WHA 69. Report disseminated to State Minister for Health and Family Welfare at the global level advocacy platform World Health Assembly.
- Created a consensus among - stakeholders on equitable distribution of health services in Bangladesh and agreed on an action plan.

## Major Challenges:

- The financial system of the grant is such that 66% has to be spent on partners and that allows very little flexibility for Save the Children.
- Very last minute extensions of the project, and delayed fund disbursement from donors made project staff retention difficult.

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Instead of getting married in their teens, girls should be encouraged to grow and educate themselves because they have immense potential in the future Bangladesh. They need the support of the society and their families to grow with equal opportunity. Through these youth led initiatives, we get a chance to voice our opinions. Our parents feel more comfortable to discuss sensitive matters with us and so do we. I think it ensures a great transparency within the community as well

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-Youth Advocate Moni Begum who attended the UNGA in September 2015 from Kulaura, Moulvibazar, Sylhet

