

REPORT ON BANGLADESH YOUTH PEER LEARNING VISIT TO INDIA

BACKGROUND

Rural youth groups in Bangladesh are very keen to bring positive change in their community. They are doing a lot of great work for the local community. However, they face with difficulties in bringing their voice and needs from local level to national level and influence the policy/decision making process. They are able to identify their issues at local level, work with local government but some issues need more attention at national level. Rural youth in Bangladesh are interested to know:

- **Youth advocacy.** How can youth carry forward their issues from local level to national level in a structured way? (how to influence the national decision makers and ensure youth have a say and can take part in decision making processes, such as budget planning, allocation, monitoring? How to keep local government elected body accountable?)
- **Motivation youth (groups).** How to ensure youth keep their motivation for quality participation and active citizenship?
- **Sustainability of youth (groups).** How to sustain youth efforts/initiatives? How to create impact and concrete results?

To look for the answers to these questions, Empower Youth for Work Bangladesh team, together with youth representatives from youth groups¹ formed within Empower Youth for Work (EYW) project, stepped on their E-motive journey to India from 7th- 13th October and visited three selected organizations (Restless Development, Pravah and YP Foundation) that work on the topics of youth advocacy and youth participation. The aim of this E-motive learning is to build up the capacity for youth to play active citizenship role to bring change in not only youth empowerment, but also in the community as a whole.



India: having similar context and best practices



3 learning topics: youth advocacy, youth motivation, youth (groups) sustainability

¹ These youth groups are formed at different tiers following the government administrative layers; from ward (community) to union and district level. Ward groups have representation in union and district levels youth groups. Such as, Ward groups select their representatives for union group (Union Advisory Body) and Union groups have representation in district level advisory board. There is also a National youth advisory board comprising of representatives from districts groups and few members from other youth networks who have national and district presence.

OBJECTIVES

- To learn and gather knowledge on fruitful model of youth engagement and participation, advocacy/influencing experiences from India and explore the possibilities to transfer/replicate/contextualize the learning in Bangladesh
- To strengthen the collaboration of EYW Bangladesh and the Indian peers in order to raise the voice and needs of rural youth in Bangladesh.

COMPOSITION OF THE GROUP

Sriti Teresa D Rozario: Member of District Youth Advisory Board (DYAB), , Member of Union Apex body (UAB) & Ward group under EYW project, Padrishibpur Union, Bakergonj, Barishal

Md. Apel Mahamud: Members of DYAB and UAB under EYW project, Secretary of Latibpur Union Youth forum (registered youth group under Department of Youth Development, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Government of Bangladesh), Latibpur Union, Mithapukur, Rangpur

Rezowana Sharmin Prapti: Members of DYAB and UAB under EYW project, Chairperson of Pairabond Union Youth forum (registered youth group under Department of Youth Development, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Government of Bangladesh), Pairabond Union, Mithapukur, Rangpur

Md. Nazrul Islam: Member of District Youth Advisory Board (DYAB) and UAB under EYW project, Baliadanga union, Batiaghata, Khulna

Tosiba Kashem: Project Coordinator of Empower Youth for Work project, Oxfam in Bangladesh

Musrat Hasan Emon: Project officer of EYW, Oxfam in Bangladesh

Gwendolyn Parami: Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Advisor Empower Youth for Work project, Oxfam Novib

Zhiren Ye: Jr. program officer Empower Youth for Work project, Oxfam Novib



KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

ADVOCACY

- In both Bangladesh and India rural youth are facing same kind of problems, such as unemployment, rigid social norms affected young women's access to and participation in skills, information, training and economic opportunities. But commitment to work on issues that affect the life of people and make young people vulnerable, is the key that triggers for change among the youth in India, which is also applicable for Bangladeshi youth.
- Youth-led accountability is an effective way to ensure not only accountability from the key actors but also make youth accountable to raise their voices and work on the issues that effect their life. You change makers who work in the community/grass root level are being connected with youth advocates can influence to bring change in social behavior at practice level. And can link it to national level policy issues through youth advocates.
- Data collection on present status of the situation and policy gaps is important to do advocacy on any specific issue. Planning and stakeholders mapping is important as well focusing on such issues. Preparation of youth and enriching themselves with all sorts of information help to provide counter argument while influencing relevant stakeholders at different levels. Continuity in campaigning and reaching out to right momentum and audience for changing the narratives are keys to success.
- Engagement of and networking with other like-minded organizations, youth collectives and relevant government departments, academics, researchers in a common platform that can make the youth voice strengthen and provide the platform to raise voice of rural youth through active participation. Civil society organization stays in the middle to create the link between urban and rural youth. Utilization of expertise or expert/professionals if youth get stuck in influencing, can be an effective way of engagement.

MOTIVATION

- Youth spend most of their time in 4 spaces (family, friends, career/education, leisure) in the ecosystem where they face lots of difficulties, challenges and gaps to explore their potentials. Co-creation of 5th spaces (the way how youth experiencing with love, ownership, learning, social hope, freedom and cocreate own environment for learning and action) enable youth to engage in social action, active citizenship and volunteerism.
- Chain in leadership; from youth change makers who work at the community/grassroot level and belong to same socio- economic context and able to act as role model for peer influencing to Youth advocates at national/urban level with comparatively higher education, accessibility to information, services and institutions and having networking opportunities can motivate the change makers to work with and become youth advocates.
- Recognition of social action increase the motivation of youth change makers. Representation of youth voice at high level platform; national/global level through attending conference symposium can be an effective way for being motivated as youth active citizen.

- Mentorship is an important aspect to motivate youth for social action. Attachment with mentors can motivate youth to understand own potentials and have self-awareness, self-transformation. Fellowship at small scale, internship with other development organizations/social business can be another form of ensuring mentorship for youth.

SUSTAINABILITY

- Creation of youth collectives through inking among existing youth groups who work formally (with organizational mandate or government registration) or informally. Building the organizational capacity of youth groups through their capacity building on writing proposals for fund to implement social action projects to government or other organizations who have development and youth agendas.
- Internship or placement in different organizations who have scopes within policy and programs and youth agendas can sustain the action of youth groups or individual.

THE VISITED ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR BEST PRACTICES

RESTLESS DEVELOPMENT INDIA



Restless Development has been supporting young boys and girls for over 3 decades in India. They have gained unique access to the realities of life for young women and girls, a strong trust from them and their families and most importantly the demand for girl centered programming.

Youth-Led Accountability for Gender Equality and Social Change is a program of Restless Development aiming to pilot a

replicable youth accountability model in India and Tanzania. The project is training, connecting and building coalitions and initiatives to advocate for commitments made in connection with Family Planning 2020 targets and Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Gender Equality) targets. The initiative is amplifying the voices of youth accountability advocates through our 'Youth Collective' - a movement Restless Development is building in support of youth-led change, engaging young changemakers and coalitions of youth-led organisations and partners.

TAKE AWAY FROM RESTLESS DEVELOPMENT

- For influencing at local and national level either practice or policy level youth should collect data and information on which issue they can work to influence other stakeholders/key actors and desire to bring positive change through their action. It would help youth to be prepared enough to present evidence and produce counter argument to influence.
- Advocacy/influencing can be strengthened when it is guided by the policy and adequate information and data should be collected for creation of evidence for an effective policy level influencing.
- Youth led accountability can make stakeholders accountable for providing services
- Engagement of public departments, academic, networks and like-minded organizations in the policy agendas.
- Youth engagement and participation at different level, rural youth can generate data/information and needs from the ground and youth having higher education and from different professions can analyze data, prepare report and present the recommendations at national level and ensure the representation of voices of rural youth.
- Reward to the young change makers at local level with the presence of community mass and elite for their action.
- Capacity building of youth to perform their role for social action such as introduction to data collection and accountability tools.
- Motivation for youth advocates can be increased /created through providing the platform/forum at national and global level and link with different organizations at higher level for young advocates.



PRAVAH



Pravah has been working since 1993 in India, on developing leadership capacities of young people to unleash their ability to bring about transformational social change. Their mission is to work on 'prevention' of social conflicts by developing social responsibility and personal leadership among young people. They endeavour to build future looking, wholesome adolescents and youth leaders through psychosocial interventions leading to economic, political and social inclusion.

Pravah has developed a unique approach to youth development embodied in the concept of the 5th Space. Beyond the 'legitimized' four spaces family, friends, career/education and leisure margins for young people, there is a 5th Space where young people discover themselves by engaging in social action, a space where they engage in active citizenship, volunteering and much more. Pravah's experience has shown that a thriving 5th Space is a critical element for all round development of adolescents and youth.

TAKE AWAY FROM PRAVAH

- Co-creation of 5th space for youth; such a space focuses on self- transformation that turns into social transformation through social action.
- Work with ecosystem (family, teacher, educator, friends, community, organizations) for creating enabling environment for youth.
- Design of a program that encourages youth engagement and participation with full of motivation, such as; youth fellowship, internship.
- Provide capacity building for developing youth organizations and support them to go for social action project and later be part of youth collectives.
- It is almost impossible for rural youth to reach national level policy makers as they lack resource and platform. INGO/NGO should play a role in connecting youth with policy makers.
- Focus on existing policies for influencing and the gap within (rather than influencing the set up of new policies). Capacitate youth to identify these gaps.
- Focus on peer learning in districts/regions for advocacy skills among youth.



YP FOUNDATION



The YP Foundation is a youth run and led organisation that supports and develops youth leadership to advance rights of young women, girls and other marginalised youth. Their aim is to develop young people's feminist and rights-based leadership, ensure their meaningful participation in creating programmes and policies and legitimise youth leadership of social change.

YP Foundation trained youth leaders to do research and mapping on existing policies, and to engage with relevant experts/stakeholders to influence policy making and implementation.

TAKE AWAY FROM YP FOUNDATION

- Capacity building of youth on the issue they would work on, collection of data and situation analysis and support them to do stakeholder mapping and finding out policy gaps for policy influencing; are the effective way for youth led influencing.
- Working with existing local implementing organizations and their youth groups for sustainability of the effort.
- Ensure youth participation (following participation ladder) at every level of intervention planning and designing.
- Strong youth collectives from every corner of the country can influence state government to be responsive based on the regional demands and needs.



ACTION PLAN

Activity	Who is responsible	Whom to be engaged with	When	where
Advocacy- Youth budgeting (separate allocation for youth under local government budget)				
Sharing of with other group members from peer learning visit	Youth who have paid the visit In India (Sriti, Nazrul, Prapti and Apel)	DYAB and UAB members of their respective locations	Last two weeks of November 2019	Barishal, Khulna and Rangpur
Sharing learning with youth who missed the visit	PC- EYW Oxfam in Bangladesh Sriti in Barishal	Murad from Rajshahi and Rizvi from Barishal who missed the learning visit due to not getting visa (Murad will come to Barishal)	Last week of November 2019	Barishal
Exchange learning visit within country	PC-EYW Oxfam	PCs of implementing partners 2 DYAB members from each location	June 2020	At least in 1 project location
Designing tools for data collection	Oxfam in Bangladesh PC-EYW	MEAL person Other projects Implementing partners	End of November 2019	
Capacity building of youth on data/information collection	Oxfam in Bangladesh PC-EYW	MEAL person UAB members	By December 2019	In all unions of 4 districts

<p>Collection of data/information</p> <p>(on youth budgeting, from local to district level through primary data collection)</p>	<p>UAB members (Khulna- Nazrul, Rupa, Joy, Mahfuz, Kader, Rafeza Barishal- Sriti, Rizvi, Mahfuza, Rangpur- Apel, Mounata, Parpti, Morshedul, Shahazada, Asadul Rajshahi- Murad, Faisal, Sumaia, Rashed, Shima)</p> <p>Implementing partner staff -PC and PF of respective unions-for monitoring and follow up)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward group members • Community youth • Ward councilors • Youth Development officers • Social service officers • Secretary to UP chairman • Union Parishad (UP) Chairman • Upazila Executive Officer (UNO) 	<p>January-February 2019</p>	<p>In all unions of 4 districts</p>
<p>Data analysis and report preparation</p>	<p>Oxfam in Bangladesh and Implementing partners</p>	<p>Youth volunteers at national level</p>	<p>By February 2019</p>	
<p>District level consultation; Sharing findings and recommendations and way forward</p>	<p>UAB and DYAB members Implementing partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputy Commissioner of the district • UNO • UP chairman • District Youth Development Officer • Community elites • Community youth • Youth networks members at district level 	<p>By March 2019</p>	<p>At all 4 districts</p>
<p>National dialogue on youth budget issues</p>	<p>DYAB, NYAB members for representing local level voice Oxfam in Bangladesh PC-EYW SPO-EYW</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minister/ Secretary from of ministry of Planning/finance/youth and sports • Chairperson of parliamentary steering committee of ministry of youth and sports • Representatives from Department of youth development 	<p>By end of March 2019</p>	<p>Dhaka</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth network's' members who work at national level Other national/ international organizations that have youth agendas 		
Motivation: Cocreation of 5th spaces and Recognition and Representation of Youth				
Material development for capacity building on 5 th space	Oxfam in Bangladesh PC-EYW	SPO-EYW	By end of November 2019	
Organize workshop/orientation on 5 th spaces	Oxfam in Bangladesh EYW team Oxfam Novib (if possible then this workshop can be facilitated by Pravah representative who has introduced 5 th space concept)	Expert UAB members Implementing partners	By December - January 2019	Dhaka
Workshop at ward level	UAB members	Ward group members	Continuous process	All 4 locations
Recognition of youth at national level (award /crest)	Oxfam in Bangladesh PC EYW	DYAB and UAB members Youth entrepreneurs Role models	Day celebration event, October-December 2019	Dhaka
Recognition of Youth at Local level	Implementing partners	DYAB, UAB members/entrepreneurs, youth peer facilitators/educators Ward councilors UP Chairman UNO Local community Elite (teachers, entrepreneurs/enterprises, influential adults)	Day Celebration events December-March 2019	4 districts
Representation of youth at national and global platform	Oxfam in Bangladesh, PC-EYW Oxfam Novib	Youth from local and national level	Continuous process	
Sustainability: Setting up information Centre for youth				

Collect the demand from youth on what types of information and services they need	UAB members	Ward youth group members Community youth	By December 2019	Pairaband and Latibpur unions in Rangpur (Office of registered youth group)
Mapping out resources and information to be shared	UAB members	Government departments and local government/administration (DYD, DSS, DWCA, UNO office, UP, UDC, ICT department, agricultural extension office, animal and fisheries department) Community clinic, Union and Upazila Health and family welfare Centre NGOs Financial Institutions- bank Enterprises Community youth Community people Other youth groups and networks	By March 2019	Batiaghata union in Khulna (Space provided by UP) Padishibpur union in Barishal (Space provided by UP) [1 in each union]
Sharing with stake holders	UAB members	Community youth and above-mentioned stake holders	By April 2019	
Figure out design and operation guidelines for the Centre (explore fund for running operation cost- selling of newspaper, plastic waste and scrap)	Implementing partners Oxfam in Bangladesh	Ward group members		
Launching of information Centre	UAB members	Ward group members	By May – June 2019	
Raising fund for operational cost			Continuous process	