

Workshop of "Favorable Urban Services for the Homebased Workers In Dhaka City: Reality, Challenges and Way forward"

A half day city official workshop has been held in Dhaka, BIAM Centre on 4th June, 2012. City officials from different department of Dhaka City Corporation, Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (DWASA), Dhaka Power Development Corporation (DPDC), NGOs, Trade Union representatives, Representatives from Homebased Workers were present in the workshop. The major objectives of the workshop were:

- To aware the city authorities about the current homebased workers project activities
- To aware the city authorities about the basic amenities issues related to homebased workers in the project areas
- To start a dialogue with the city authorities about the identified issues
- To find possible solutions of the problems identified.

In this half day workshop Mr. Nazrul Islam, Chief Executive Officer of North Dhaka City Corporation was present as a Chief Guest. Ms. Sapna Joshi, Regional Coordinator, HomeNet South Asia was also present in this occasion as a Special Guest. Ms. Firoza Merothra , Director, Programme and Monitoring, HomeNet South Asia was present as a key Moderator to conduct the Key Discussion session. Mr. S.M Morshed, Chairman of OSHE Foundation was also present as facilitator of the program.

In her speech ,Ms. Sapna Joshi, Regional Coordinator of HomeNet South Asia focused on homebased workers in the international level, definition of homebased workers, statistics of Homebased Workers in South Asia, organizing as a key factor for HBW empowerment, program focus of HomeNet south Asia, Inclusive Cities Program, explaining the IUP cities program Ms. Joshi elaborated the two thrust of the program: a) *Building MBOs of homebased workers;* b) *A City with inclusion of homebased workers in policy and programme.* In her presentation it was also reflected that these IUP has been implemented mainly in Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Nepal, Philippines, Pakistan and Thailand.

She also explained that, IUP is mainly urban poor city centric program where studies conducted in total 16 cities, 7 countries in South Asia on issues which are affecting the livelihood of the homebased workers. Each of the country 2-3 studies has been conducted in the cities. In Bangladesh, the study conducted mainly in three cities namely Dhaka, Tangail and Jamalpur. Under the study few categories have been identified like land and property,

infrastructure, civic services, safety and security where specific urban issues under these categories have been identified.

In Ms. Joshi's presentation it was also clearly reflected, how the IUP has progressed in different countries like Pakistan, Cambodia, and Bangkok.

Mr. Nazrul Islam thanked everyone specially OSHE Foundation and HomeNet South Asia for taking such initiatives. He thanked Ms. Joshi for explaining the key concept of the project and its objectives. He thanked for inviting and for involving Dhaka City Corporation in such initiatives. It also realized the fact that, how these homebased workers are suffering from basic amenities issues worldwide and in Bangladesh as well. He also gave his word to give cooperation in solving the issues which are affecting the homebased workers at the moment. Mr. Nazrul also assured that there would be upcoming budget by DCC where Homebased workers issues will be incorporated accordingly.

The Key Discussions Session was conducted by Ms. Firoza Merothra , Director Monitoring of HomeNet South Asia. In this session five key speakers from different departments and projects of Dhaka City Corporation and Ministries of Bangladesh and one NGO participated.

Present situation related to slum development of Dhaka from Dhaka City Corporation experiences

Answering his question Chief Former Slum Development Officer, Engineer Mr. Anwar Hossain Patwary from North Dhaka City Corporation said, at the moment in Dhaka city nearly 5 million people living in the slum. Under DCC a good number of projects have been implemented in Dhaka. Elimination of child labor project is one of them which have started in December, 2011. Under this project skill development training has been provided to the child labors. The child labors used to get 1,200 taka per month previously but after getting the training they started to get 4,000-5,000 taka monthly. Tailoring, motor cycle repair was part of the skill development training of the project.

UPPRP is one of the pioneer projects implemented by LGED (Local Government Engineering Department). Under this project different schemes have been provided to the slum dwellers of Dhaka. Improvement of the footpath, reconstruction of the sewerage and drainage system is some schemes. At the moment, there is no proper documentation of the slum dwellers as a result of which providing water supply facilities in the slum areas is very difficult. So the water supply of the slum area has been provided by forming Community based organization (CBOs) through NGOs which has partial solved the problem.

Bondhu Chula or improved oven is one of the options for the urban poor which have been provided to the beneficiaries of the Urban Partnership for

Poverty Reduction Project (UPPRP) project. Socio economic categorization has been done to identify potential beneficiaries to provide the services of Improved Oven.

Incorporation of homebased workers as beneficiaries in UPPRP

Responding the second question, Chief Former Slum Development Officer, Engineer Anwar Hossain Patwary responded that, it is possible to incorporate HBWs in the schemes. To initiate this, **it is necessary to form CBOs within the HBW group and also active partnership is needed with NGOs who will be working to implement this.**

Tariq bin Yusuf, Engineer, Waste Management Officer, Dhaka North City Corporation responded ,under Local **Government it is difficult to do direct service delivery** as the beneficiaries are not the tax payers of the Government. Partnership with different organization may be one of the better options to provide services for the HBWs. We have already signed MOU with NGOs for implementing some schemes. We have signed a MOU with Oxfam to work on Disaster Risk reduction issues.

At the moment, Slum Development Department and the Social Welfare Department of the DNCC have been merged to form one department of Slum Development and Social Welfare but no officer has been appointed to head that important department. There is also lack of coordination within the departments in Bangladesh. Duplication of work is visible in different sector of Government.

Representatives from homebased workers group can interact with the city officials for initiate the project work regarding getting schemes

In waste management side of DNCC there are Standing Committees where different NGOs are getting involved for decision making policy and agenda settings etc. So the representatives from the project can also include in such committees.

Present Components of UPPRP

Presentation on UPPRP Project Components , Deputy Director, Naznin Sultana focused on Urban poor communities mobilized to form representatives and inclusive subgroups and prepare community action plan, Poor and Urban communities have healthy and secure living environments, Urban poor and extreme poor people acquire the resources, knowledge and skills to increase their income and assets, Partnership and urban development models and strategies developed to influence pro-poor local and national level policies

and practices, Effective project management systems established and operational.

Role and mode of work of Coalition for Urban Poor (CUP)

Answering the question Executive Director of CUP, Ms. Rebeka Yet Sun responded, Coalition for Urban Poor (CUP) is basically working as a regional networking organization linking different NGOs for implementing different schemes. CUP is basically working for the urban poor of Dhaka city. It has strong network of 80 NGOs at the moment works for the urban poor, including HBWs especially living in the pavement.

At the moment, there is very little budget allocated for urban slum development sector. Very recently, Draft National Urban Sector Policy, 2011 has come out which has not been finalized and implemented. Urban Primary Healthcare is also a scheme not directly evolving under DCC; this project is executed by Local Government Division. Under this project GOB is providing few

components. Women and children are two main focus of the project. Under this project some Private Organizations are also working to implement the components.

Urban Primary Health Care is providing health care in reproductive health, child health care , communicable disease control, limited curative care , management and prevention/Control of RTI/STI, VCCT for HIV/AIDs, management of violence against women, primary eye care, TB control and treatment, Behavior change communication, diagnostic services. This program is providing Red Card schemes to the beneficiaries where people are entitle to get free health services, diagnostic tests and medicine under the Urban Primary Health Care Project.

Land tenurship is a major problem in Urban Development in Dhaka. Most of the empty spaces where slum dwellers are living are Government properties and in many a times it has been observed that different departments and ministries try to establish set up in their own infrastructures without thinking the consequences of the people in theses land like slum dwellers. This sort of eviction makes the people homeless and vulnerable. There are lots of duplication and over lapping of work at the moment. A draft Land tanurship policy 2011 has been come out which is not been implemented yet. Under UPPRP some land tenureship problem has been solved in selected areas like Korail Slum eviction.

There is planning gaps in urban poor education sector at the moment. These planning gaps are perhaps no more apparent than in schooling. Primary school attendance for children living in Bangladesh's urban slum areas is considerably worse than the national average (65% against 81%). And when it comes to secondary education, urban slum children are grossly underserved: just 18% attend compared to the national average of 45%.

There appears to be no overall plan to bring all slum children to a primary school of acceptable quality.

For the last couple of years CUP is working in advocacy and awareness of Amrao Manush Project. It has worked as a key actor to create pressure on different bodies of Government for proper implementation of the different policy issues related to Urban Poor.

Recommendation and Suggestions

- In order to give voice and visibility to the issues of home-based workers (HBW) and to HBWs themselves in the policy making and agenda setting of the Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC); it is recommended that HBW's representatives be included in DNCC's Standing Committees on Water and Electricity, Waste Management and any other committee considered relevant by HBWs. There are a number of Standing Committees on different subjects that provide inputs to the DNCC.
- In view of the crucial problem of shortage of electricity, load shedding and high costs of the same as well as the unavailability to HBWs due to HBWs not having holding numbers coupled with the fact that electricity is an essential input for their work; the proposal to set up a solar plant in Dhaka should be perused by the DNCC with Urban Partnership for Poverty Reduction Project (UPPRP). HBWs organization should also lobby for this.
- Considering the damage caused to the eyes and lungs of HBWs and their children due to smoke from traditional chulahs used for cooking; it is recommended that the existing UPPRP scheme for providing *Bondu (Improved) Chulahs* to ultra poor HBWs at highly subsidized rates should be better advertised and promoted by DNCC as well as HBW's organizations/IUP project. Since the present spread of the UPPRP is limited, it is recommended that they may consider increasing their reach to areas being addressed under the Inclusive Cities Project.
- It was observed that the Slum Development Department and the Social Welfare Department of the DNCC have been merged to form one department of Slum Development and Social Welfare but no officer has been appointed to head that important department. The workshop recommended that the post be filled up as soon as possible and more importantly, the department be provided adequate budget by DNCC as it will be performing very essential functions. The CEO mentioned that the budget is under preparation and this is an opportune time to increase allocations.

- Considering the fact that the Urban Partnership for Poverty Reduction Project (UPPRP) is so multidimensional and addresses 5 crucial outputs which correspond very aptly with the objectives of the Inclusive Cities Project (IUP), it is recommended that the IUP project/HBW's CBOs follow up with the UPPRP authorities and identify areas / initiatives that can benefit HBWs and leverage the same.

The 5 outputs of UPPRP are (i) Urban poor communities mobilized and supported to form representative, inclusive and well-managed groups, (ii) Poor urban communities supported to create healthy and secure living environments, (iii) Urban poor and extremely poor people supported to acquire the resources, knowledge and skills needed to increase their incomes and assets, (iv) Development and implementation of pro-poor policies and practices supported in partnership with others (v) Effective project management systems established and operational. These are achieved through SIF (Settlement Improvement Fund) under which improvement of drainage system, improvement of footpath, toilet facilities, washing facilities and improved oven are provided.

- It was observed that on the one hand DNCC works through CBOs and NGOs and on the other hand there is a strong network of 80 NGOs called Coalition for Urban Poor (CUP) that works for urban poor, including HBWs especially those living on pavements; it is recommended that the IUP project/HBW's CBOs follow up with the CUP and identify areas / initiatives that can benefit HBWs and leverage the same. It was not possible to identify the specific issues during the workshop but the potential to work together was realized by all.

It was noted that the specific objectives of the '*Amrao Manush*' project of CUP are very akin to what the IUP aims at too and therefore the IUP project/HBW's CBOs should try to leverage benefits for HBWs from this project. The '*Amrao Manush*' objectives are to increase income of the pavement dwellers (many of whom are HBWs) by building their capacities and skills; creating opportunities for their health and child care, social security and post disaster rehabilitation; as well as do advocacy and awareness raising regarding the same.

- Considering the high cost of health care and the fragile health condition of most HBWs; it is recommended that the IUP project/HBW's CBOs explore how HBWs can get 'Red Cards' which will entitle them to free health services, diagnostic tests and medicines under the Urban primary Health Care Project. CUP can help facilitate this and should be approached by HBWs CBOs.

- It was also recommended that all stakeholders in development should advocate for and lobby for a strong effective and accountable coordination mechanism to coordinate the activities of development partners especially NGOs. It was noted that sometimes there are as many as 25 NGOs operating in the same area. Provision to put in place such a mechanism exists under DNCC/UPPRP.
- There is a strong possibility of a new ILO - US Department of Labour project coming up for skill development/income generation in Dhaka, building on an earlier Elimination of Child Labour Project which saw incomes increasing 2 to 6 times. This appears to be a good opportunity for HBWs and therefore it is recommended that the IUP project/HBW's CBOs track the developments of this initiative and leverage advantages from it, for HBWs.
- The Water and Sanitation Authority (WASA) who is in charge of providing water and sanitation presently interfaces with about 200 CBOs in slum areas for providing connections, recovering dues etc. The WASA officer has offered to work with HBW's CBOs to address their water and sanitation problems. It is therefore recommended that the IUP project/HBW's CBOs follow up with WASA in this regard.
- Since trade unions work with the constituency of (mostly) organized sector workers, there should be greater involvement between trade unions and the IUP / HBWs organizations.