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# **Bangladesh**

## **Non-formal education**

Zia-Us-Sabur  
2007

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UNESCO Country Overview of the Provision of Basic Non-Formal Education for Youths and Adults:

## **Bangladesh Country Report**

*Prepared by:*

*Zia-Us-Sabur, consultant on assignment for IED (Institute of Educational Development)*

*2007*

### **Abbreviations**

ADB- Asian Development Bank

BNFE- Bureau of Non-Formal Education

CAMPE- Campaign for Popular Education

CBA- Center Based Approach

CE-Continuing Education

DAM- Dhaka Ahsania Mission

DCO- District Coordinating Officer

DNFE- Directorate of Non-Formal Education

DT- Divisional Team

FIVDB-Friends in Village Development in Bangladesh

FPDA- Free Primer Distribution Approach

GMR-Global Monitoring Report

HRD- Human Resource Development

MA- Monitoring Associates

MIS- Management Information System

MIS- Management Information System

NFBE- Non-Formal Basic Education

NFE- Non-Formal Education

NGO- Non-Governmental Organization

NPA- National Plan of Action

PIMU- Project Implementation and Monitoring Unit

PLCE-Post Literacy and Continuing Education

TLM- Total Literacy Movement

UNCEDAW- United Nations Convention on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women

UNCRC- United Nations Conventions on Rights of the Children

UNCRC- United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Children

UPO- Upazila Program Officer

WB- World Bank

WCEFA- World Conference on Education for All

## **PART 1: COUNTRY LEVEL INFORMATION ON NFE: Organization, Governance, Finance and Assessment**

### **1. Introductory remarks**

This study provides a brief account of youth and adult NFBE program in Bangladesh according to the guidelines provided by the UNESCO GMR team. The purpose of the exercise is to provide a brief overview of the provision of Non-Formal Basic Education (NFBE) for youths (over the age of 15) and adults (over the age of 25) in Bangladesh.

The NFBE program, which is spearheaded by the government, started with basic literacy, numeracy and life skills. This form of NFBE remained unchanged until 2000. The later NFBE initiatives incorporated livelihood skills, following the realization that basic education alone cannot lead to sustainable poverty reduction.

### **2. Conceptualization of NFE**

There is a widely held belief among policymakers about NFE as a people-activated mode of education delivery, which is able to address poverty reduction effectively. According to the National NFE Task Force comprising of members from different ministries, donors, NGOs, civil society and experts, headed by the Adviser, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, elaborated policy statement entitled “Non-Formal Education Policy” (2006), definitions clarifying concepts of key NFE related terminologies are as follows:

- ***NFE***

Non-Formal education is purposeful and systematically organized form of education that generally occurs outside the formal institutions; it is designed to meet the learning needs of educationally disadvantaged persons of different ages and backgrounds, flexible in terms of organization, time and place, and may cover basic and continuing educational programs to impart basic literacy, including life skills, work skills, general culture, and facilitates lifelong learning and enhancement of earning capabilities for poverty reduction. It ensures equity in access and human resource development; it may or may not follow a ‘ladder’ system, and may be of varying duration.

- ***Literacy***

Literacy is the ability to read, understand, interpret, communicate and compute in verbal and written forms in varying contexts; it involves a continuum of learning that enables individuals to develop their potentials and knowledge base and to participate fully in community affairs and wider social and developmental context.

- ***Continuing Education (An alternative term for Life Long Learning)***

Continuing education is the provision of opportunities for lifelong learning beyond basic education (literacy and primary education) in response to the needs of disadvantaged individuals and groups to enrich their socio-economic lives.

### **3. Legal provisions, national policy reforms and international commitments**

The Article 17 of the Constitution of Bangladesh, established in 1971, enjoins the state “to adopt effective measures for a) establishing a uniform, mass-oriented and universal system of education and extending free and compulsory education to all children to such stage as may be determined by law; b) relating education to the needs of society and producing properly trained and motivated citizens to serve those needs and c) removing illiteracy within such time as may be determined by the law”. The Constitution further makes it clear that access to education is not a privilege but a right of every citizen of Bangladesh. In addition, Bangladesh is a signatory to Jomtien and Dakar declarations. The MDGs also directly and indirectly support the cause of NFBE. In addition to that the PRSPs are also playing an important role in setting the pace of development agenda. The PRSP clearly links the potentials of NFE to poverty reduction. Other important milestone that reminds the nation about its obligation to education are; World

Conference on Education for All (WCEFA), United Nations Convention on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (UNCEDAW) and United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Children (UNCRC).

The legal provisions, policies and international commitments have been translated into the following goal in the national policy framework, which states, “To contribute to fulfilling EFA goals and alleviating poverty as spelled out in the National Plan of Action II, 2004-2015 and the PRSP by creating a community-based network of learning centers aimed at reducing illiteracy by at least 50% by 2015, extending opportunities for effective skill training and continuing education and creating lifelong learning opportunities”.

#### **4. Governance and financing of NFBE**

Government level-1

- ***Overall coordination of NFBE programs***

GOB retains the centralized structure of policy-making and its implementation. The Ministry of Primary and Mass Education reviews, guides and approves policies. In the NGO sector the role of coordinating NGO initiatives is undertaken by CAMPE (Campaign for Popular Education). Unlike government, CAMPE does not exert any form of control through its monitoring activities. In addition, due to largeness of operations, institutional capacity and innovativeness, a number of NGOs like BRAC, DAM (Dhaka Ahsania Mission) and FIVDB exert a considerable influence in the process of coordination in the NFBE sector, under CAMPE’s umbrella.

- ***Key feature and challenges of policy and coordination***

While there exists a reasonable NFE policy statement elaborated by the NFE Task Force and approved by the government, the structures and systems, which ought to be in place for sustainable and effective implementation of such policies, are yet to be mobilized. NFBE programs in Bangladesh continue to remain highly centralized. The culture of inflexibility, predictability and conformity combined with hierarchical mode of operation, which characterize government bureaucracy are often not suited for an NFE mode of approach, which should be flexible, responsive and inclusive, and promote participation and innovation. There is a widely held conviction that government ought to take a more regulatory and standard setting role, while people and institutions embedded in the wider civil society should mobilize their resources in implementing NFBE programs, in a manner, which is sustainable. The prevailing lack of resources will not make such transition possible in the short or mid-term period, rather if the strategic orientation is focused more distinctly on local resources, perhaps this could be achieved progressively in the long-run.

#### **5. Other government level 1, 2 and 3 organizations involved in income generation/non-formal vocational training/life-skills training**

- ***Other official bodies***

The income generation and non-formal vocational training component of NFBE is being addressed in one way or the other by 18 ministries in Bangladesh. Of late, major initiative is underway by the World Bank, ADB and European Union to bring market oriented reforms in vocational training, of which, income generation and non-formal vocational training is a component running parallel to the mainstream formal vocational training system. The prominent ministries, which are dealing with these issues in addition to the formal stream of vocational skills development, are Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labor and Employment, Ministry of Expatriate Welfare, Cooperative Ministry, Ministry of Women and Children’s Welfare etc. The Islamic Foundation is another semi-governmental autonomous institution, which provides NFBE programs for the youths and adults. However, these activities are yet to be considered as part of NFE systems.

## 6. International organization/development agency

### • **Main Sources of NFE financing**

Most of the basic education programs of NGOs are external donor financed. Sedere, M. Upali and -Us-Sabur, Zia (1999, pp. 58-70) listed 136 external donor agencies that finance NGO basic education programs. This list (containing key donors) can be divided into the following categories:

**NGOs financed under government's projects.** ADB (Asian Development Bank), WB (World Bank), and SDC (Swiss Agency for Development & Cooperation), Sida (Swedish International Development & Cooperation Agency), Norway, DFID (Department for International Development), UNICEF (United Nation's Children's Fund), ILO (International Labor Organization), UNESCO (United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization), WFP (World Food Program), UNHCR (United Nations High Commission for Refugees) and UNFPA (United Nations Fund for Population Agency).

**NGOs financed under bilateral grants.** Bilateral donors assist NGOs in Bangladesh, AusAid (Australian Aid), Cida (Canadian International Development Agency), DANIDA (Danish International Development Agency), JICA (Japan International Development Agency), Norway, Sida, SDC and USAID.

**NGOs financed by international foundations.** Aga Khan Foundation, Ford Foundation, Japan Foundation, Damien Foundation, Helen Keller Foundation, Pally Karma Shayaak Foundation (PKSF).

**NGOs funded by international NGOs.** Action Aid, Save the Children, USA, UK, Sweden, Australia, PLAN International.

## **7. Strategies, organization and management of NFBE (basic literacy and life skills) programs**

### • **Key features of NFBE approaches and their mode of operations**

One of the approaches of implementing NFBE was, *establishing contractual relationship with NGOs*, who were assigned with the responsibility to implement NFBE projects under a number of pre-determined guidelines and criteria given by the BNFE. This approach was known as CBA. The CBA approach continues to remain the central strategy for implementing PLCE (Post Literacy and Continuing Education) projects. However, the contents of projects under PLCE have changed since PLCE combines livelihood skills with literacy and life skills. The main *criteria for selecting* NGOs are years of experience in implementing education projects and financial ability to offset running cost in case of delays in project fund disbursements, which are released in installments.

### • **National monitoring and implementation mechanisms**

The main monitoring effort of the NFBE program at the national scale is led by BNFE supported by its MIS department, which is able to produce computer generated monitoring reports. A number of evaluation reports suggest that such a monitoring system is mainly quantitative in nature, which emphasizes on enrollment, number of drop outs, number of completers, availability of primers etc. and often lacks the analytical sharpness, which an effective monitoring system requires. As a result of its abolishment, the former DNFE's institutional capacity to deliver NFE has been affected considerably. During this institutional vacuum, the World Bank played a lead role in monitoring and implementation of PLCE programs. The key elements of the PLCE-1 monitoring system are as follows:

Each upazila consists of one Program Monitoring NGO, and 2 Program Implementation NGOs. The program monitoring NGOs are responsible for monitoring the 2 Program Implementation NGOs in a given upazila (sub-district). There are 30 Monitoring Associates (MAs) located at the central office, who are responsible for providing monitoring support directly to the decision makers at the central office. There are 54 newly recruited District Coordinating Officers, who are responsible for the administration and supervision of Program Monitoring NGOs and Program

Implementation NGOs. The World Bank supported technical assistance team provides technical, as well as, monitoring support to the PLCE projects through 6 divisional teams located at the 6 administrative divisions of the country, each consisting of 4 technical personnel. All the above activities are coordinated and directed by the Program Implementation and Monitoring Unit (PIMU), located at the central office. In the absence of full-scale national NFE program, the overall management of NFE is being run within this project-based structure (Annex-2).

- ***Key features of monitoring and implementation system of second and third generation of NGOs***

According to a study undertaken by the Sida TA team entitled “Challenges to Human Resources Development (HRD) in Post Literacy and Continuing Education in Bangladesh”(2002), the NGOs, which have been in existence for 11 to 20 years are second generation and those, which have been active for a decade, or less, are termed as third generation NGOs. The large number of second and third generation NGOs are often grossly under-resourced, and do not have technical capacities of running effective NFBE monitoring systems. However, the lack of monitoring capacities is often compensated by their smallness of scale of operations and their close relationship with the grassroots.

- ***Key features of monitoring and implementation system of first generation of NGOs***

The first generation NGOs according to the study are NGOs who are around more than 21 years. These NGOs are generally large reputed NGOs with nationwide operations like BRAC, Proshika (it has recently become dysfunctional for a number of reasons), DAM (Dhaka Ahsania Mission) has elaborate monitoring system run by adequately trained staff and are often well supported by their respective in-house research departments. Each of these NGOs has their own distinct monitoring mechanisms.

- ***Key features of training system***

As the central national coordinator of NFE activities, BNFE has a central training system in place. A Sida research document reveals that a large number of GOB institutions and NGOs have trained trainer/manpower, but the proportion of such trainers is lower in NFE than in other forms of development interventions. There is an absence of well-documented training policy among GOB (Government of Bangladesh), as well as, NGOs. The organizational and physical capacities of providing training varies among NGOs, while the GOB’s organizational and physical structures have some kind of consistency, owing to centralized nature of its operations.

Experiences from PLCE projects, which combines literacy skills with livelihood skills suggest that the dynamism and effectiveness of such programs are contingent upon the effectiveness of core-trainers, who are assimilation of teachers, trade trainers, supervisors, master trainers, government appointed monitors, and who constitute important actors in a multi-level large scale NFE interventions. BNFE’s training strategy follows the cascading system, with master trainers at the top and teachers at the bottom, who are recruited for the course duration, which is 9 months.

### ***Evaluation initiatives***

As a national coordinating body, the BNFE has a separate evaluation function placed under the technical support services department. However, due to institutional reorganization, the technical services are yet to become fully operational. This activity has been largely taken by the World Bank’s external technical assistance team, which comprises of national and international consultants. Two kinds of evaluations are carried out, which are: internal and external. Government led institutions and NGOs generally lack adequate capacity to carry out effective evaluations, while external evaluations, which are conducted by a combination of national and external experts, are perceived as relatively more credible.

## **PART 2: INFORMATION ABOUT MAJOR TYPES OF NFBE ACTIVITIES: Provision, Access and Participation, Teaching and Learning, and Outcomes**

### **Note of attention: A few statistical concerns**

This exercise has revealed the absence of consistent, valid and reliable information for youth and adult NFBE activity in Bangladesh.

The nature of information available is highly project-specific. Therefore, comparable national information suited for the assignment is in short supply.

Statistics vary according to sources; the following instance is a case in point.

### **Adult Literacy Rates in Bangladesh 1970-2000**

YEAR	INDEPENDENT SOURCE	GOB SOURCE
1990	35%	35%
1995	38%	47%
1997	39%	....
2000	42%	64%

Source: The World Bank “Regional Education Database for South Asia Countries” 2000; CAMPE, 2002; and the GoB: Education Policy 1974, Second FYP, Third FYP and NPA 1993.

Even though the recent national policy framework somewhat addresses the problem of providing common understanding of key terminologies like literacy, NFE, life skills, livelihood skills etc., there exists considerable difference in the operational meanings of key terminologies.

In the absence of adequate national birth registration mechanisms, the age of learners are determined by the learners themselves, who often are not able to say the year and date of their birth, or at times they are determined by the NFBE personnel on the basis of visual observation. This makes the determination of various age groups unreliable.

The government determined age group for national NFE program is between 11 and 45 years, while for adolescent programs, the target age group is generally between 11 and 14 years. As a result, the age groups as required by the TOR could not be collected, and there are obvious overlaps. Similar variations are observed in case of NGO activities. However, it could be assumed based on observation and field experiences that in youth and adult programs, the participation of children between 11 and 14 years is 10% on average.

### **• *GOVERNMENT-RUN NFE PROGRAM***

#### **1. Core Categories of NFE in Bangladesh**

The NFE in Bangladesh largely consists of multiple core activities. NFE activities are a combination of literacy and numeracy/life-skills training/income generation. Even though, the literacy and numeracy for youth and adult is supposed to be equivalent to formal grade three, in reality this aspect of NFE is not considered as important by the policy makers.

#### **2. Main providers of NFE programs**

The Bureau of Non-Formal Education (BNFE) (level-1 & 2) under the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (level-1) is the central coordinator of NFE programs for youth and adult in Bangladesh. Under BNFE, there are 54 District Coordinating Officers located at various districts, who are responsible for coordinating and monitoring NFE activities at the district level. BNFE

implements its NFBE programs through over 300 contracted national NGOs/Local Branch of National NGOs/Local NGOs across the country.

### **3. Main objectives of NFE programs**

According to the recently approved national NFE policy the objectives of NFE are as follows:

- i) Provide quality and relevant NFE programs and skill training, which meet the assessed learning needs of the identifiable and potential clientele groups.
- ii) Provide opportunities for individuals and groups of persons with learning and skills needs to develop self-reliant, productive and empowered citizens through engaging in income generating and life skills related activities.
- iii) Establish a working mechanism of government, NGOs and broader civil society including the private sector for policy co-ordination, planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation to reduce illiteracy, poverty and promote human resource development.
- iv) Establish an organization for management and governance of NFE sub-sector.
- v) Institute a decentralized operation system involving local bodies, NGOs, CBOs and communities including learners to ensure community ownership and sustainability of NFE program, structures and facilities for lifelong learning.

P.S. While the national NFE policy is much broader and inclusive, the individual NFE project objectives often do not adequately reflect the stated multi-dimensionality of NFE interventions.

The objectives of NFBE have undergone change over the period of last 15 years. The NFBE program, which is spearheaded by the government, started with basic literacy and life skills. This form of NFBE remained unchanged until 2000. The later NFBE initiatives incorporated livelihood skills, following the realization that basic education alone cannot lead to sustainable poverty reduction.

The objectives of PLCE-1, which is the main national NFE project being implemented are as follows:

- i) Development of human resources of the country through implementation of post literacy ad continuing education;
- ii) To include 1.36 million neo-literate in post-literacy programs to consolidate, maintain, and upgrade the literacy skills they have acquired previously;
- iii) To include an equal number of learners, who have completed the post-literacy course in country education;
- iv) To involve the target population in life-long educational programs;
- v) Evolving national framework of non-formal education and develop definitions.

### **4. Target group for NFBE program**

The target group for NFE program for the period between 1990 and 2000 was illiterate youth and adult males and females, who never had the chance to attend school. The target group also included the dropouts, who had relapsed into illiteracy. The age group for the NFE program was between 11 and 45 years.

From 2000 onwards, the target group is the neo-literates, who are exposed to at least 9 months of basic literacy program. The age group is the same as before (males and females between 11 and 45 years). This target group is exposed to basic literacy, numeracy and livelihood intervention.

While the government has specified age limit, in reality the age factor is not emphasized. Ultimately, it is the learners' interest and commitment to learn that decides their participation in the NFE programs.

Given the reality that most of population in Bangladesh is economically poor, and also the fact that generally, the demographics are quite homogenous, with agriculture as the main source of livelihood, the target-groups are largely similar across the country. They are largely rural farm and non-farm workers in case of males, and homemakers in case of females.

### **5. NFE coverage by population**

Between 1990 and 2000, according to the information available from the government, 13 million people were exposed to basic literacy and numeracy programs.

From 2000 onwards, under the mainstream government-run PLCE (Post Literacy and Continuing Education) total of 1565,100 learners have been brought under the basic literacy, numeracy and livelihood programs. A total of 1459,800 learners are at present undergoing basic literacy, numeracy and livelihood intervention. 50% of the target population under this project is women, and 50% districts have been covered under the project. The government is implementing this project with the assistance from the World Bank. The government is also looking forward to initiate a new project with the assistance from ADB, DFID and SDC, which is presently being negotiated.

### **6. Teaching-Learning activities**

#### ***Main teaching learning activities***

The mainstream NFE program, as stated, which is being implemented by the government, is known as the Post Literacy and Continuing Education (PLCE). The terminology is suggestive of two phases, one is, post literacy and the other, continuing education. The main activity, which is carried out during each of these phases are as follows;

- i) PL (Post Literacy) phase- Ensuring retention and consolidation of basic literacy and numeracy acquired from basic literacy, numeracy/lifeskills program (carried out before 2000).
- ii) CE (Continuing Education) phase-Providing livelihood skills along with the continuation of basic literacy, numeracy/life skills, but at a lower intensity.

The contents of NFE literacy is very different from the contents of primary schools in that the NFE targets the youth and adults, and attempts to inform them about their real life situation from which they can readily benefit. This is much different from primary school curriculum, which is based on attaining 52 different child-centered competencies spelled out by the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education.

#### ***Teaching-learning methodology & contents of learning***

The teaching-learning methodology under government-run PLCE combines direct lecture, as well as, participatory processes. Learners are encouraged to undertake individual and group learning under the facilitation from the teacher.

Three primers, developed by BNFE, known as Chetona ('consciousness')-1,2 & 3 are used. These primers are same as the primers, which were used during basic literacy, numeracy/lifeskills programs before 2000. The assumption is, use of same primers would be more effective in the retention and consolidation of literacy skills. The contents of the primers address social, environmental, health, human rights and other matters that are relevant to the lives of learners. In addition 125 types of supplementary materials dealing with 8 life skills related issues, which are: i) Safe drinking water (arsenic contamination); ii) Family planning; iii) Gender; iv) Disaster preparedness; v) Environment preservation; vi) Plantation; vii) Legal rights

awareness; viii) Self-employment are used. The 125 supplementary materials also include booklets dealing with 20 different livelihood skills like poultry, embroidery, nursery, motor mechanic, plumbing etc.

To combine entertainment with learning each center is also provided with a TV and a radio. The learners also get daily newspapers, which helps them practice literacy.

The teachers are trained to carryout individual and group evaluation, and follow a detailed manual, which guides the teacher to monitor learning progress of the learners. The teachers are also trained to deal with the weaker and slower learners.

Having stated that the teachers are not adequately trained to assess the degree of real life application of the acquired literacy, numeracy/life skills of the learners.

External resource persons belonging to government, NGOs and private vocational institutions provide the livelihood training. The methodology of livelihood training is practical demonstration based, where the learners get opportunity of hands-on training (However, experience suggests that technical skills only are not enough for sustainable application of income generating skills. A wider combination of skills including entrepreneur skills, marketing skills, finance management skills along with seed capital to start a business are also needed).

### ***Language used***

Bangladesh has only one national language, which is Bangla and is understood by all its citizens. However, there are many regional dialects. Since the teachers come from the same region as learners, they often use local dialect to clarify or to explain a given text from primers or supplementary materials.

In the Chittagong hill tracts, located at the southeast extremity of the country, however, the language of the tribal people is different. Apart from a few NGOs, a comprehensive NFBE program tailor-made for the tribal people is yet to emerge.

### ***Frequency of program offered***

The learning centers remain open 6 days a week. Each teaching-learning session is of 2 hours duration. During CE phase, livelihood training is provided 4 days a week and for the rest two days the PL activities are carried out 1 hour for each session. This suggests that PL phase does not really end after 3 months, rather it is carried out at a lower intensity during the entire CE phase.

### ***Overall minimum duration of NFBE program***

The overall duration of mainstream NFE program, which is known as PLCE, is 9 months. The first 3 months are for (PL) post literacy and the last 6 months are (CE) continuing education, which is of 9 months duration.

### ***Flexibility, participation and needs of the targeted groups***

The project implementation is reasonably flexible in the sense that community/learners have a say in identifying learners, deciding location of centers and in deciding on the timing of teaching-learning process. During harvesting, as well as, major cultural and religious events, the centers are closed or timing is shifted in consultation with the center management committees (CMCs). These committees comprise of members from the community, who have a say in day-to-day running of the centers.

However, the PLCE programs are yet to have an impact in fulfilling the learners' needs. There is not sufficient elements within the PLCE projects, which can make sustainable income generation possible by making effective linkages with the market. In addition, due to the lack of application of literacy skills, it is highly likely that the learners will soon relapse into illiteracy once such projects are discontinued.

### ***Background of educators/trainers***

For female teachers, the minimum requirement is secondary school certificate (grade 10), while for males, the minimum requirement is higher secondary certificate (grade 12). Some of the teachers, both males and females, are graduates. They are young (usually below 25 years).

The supervisors, who are responsible for monitoring centers are graduates, and are mostly males.

The qualifications of the Monitoring Associates (MAs) and the District Coordinating Officers (DCOs), who represent government officials conducting field-monitoring activities have Masters degree. Such degrees are not necessarily directly related to education, but the bulk of the Masters degree holders belong to social science. However, the senior decision makers from the government do not stay on the same post for long as a result, there is a permanent lack of capacity in running NFE programs at the top.

The experts who can be located in the technical assistance team, in the academia, as well as, in the development sector are Masters degree holders, and many of them have PhDs, with long years of experience.

The community leaders at the village levels may not be educated, but they are generally literate with reasonable knowledge about their respective communities, with effective communication skills, which help them become leaders.

### ***Remuneration of NFE educators***

The NFE educators do not have any job security, once they complete their course. Each center has one senior teacher, can be either male or female, who receives a salary of taka 825 per month (US\$ 12, considering US\$ 1 = Taka 70), while the junior teacher gets salary of taka 775 per month ( US\$ 11), during 3 months PL phase. During CE phase the senior teacher receives taka 1025 per month (US\$ 15) while the junior teacher receives, taka 975 per month (US\$ 14). Compared to this, primary school teachers at their entry level receive taka 3,500 (US\$ 50), which can increase three times in fifteen years. The primary teachers' job is permanent in nature, where they receive retirement benefits with pension. The salary of supervisors for NFE program is taka 1600 (US\$ 23). For vocational trainers, resource persons from government, NGO and private institutions receive taka 500 (US\$ 7) per session. These salaries represent educators and trainers of the mainstream national NFE program.

P.S. Salaries of NFBE educators are considered as an honorarium or allowance, since the people are not full-time employee; they are part-time staff, who spend a few hours a week as instructors.

### ***Teaching-Learning materials available***

Even though the government primers were used during the adult NFBE program, which has ended by the 2003, they exert considerable influence in the post literacy scenario, since the PLCE programs strives to retain and upgrade the literacy skills of the learners based on what they have been taught during the literacy phase. The extent of distribution supports the fact that these learning materials have been widely used in Bangladesh. These materials have been developed by experts from government and NGOs under BNFE's facilitation.

**Materials developed and distributed by the government (BNFE) during the youth and adult NFBE phase**

PARTICULAR	TARGET AUDIENCE	NATURE OF MATERIAL	DISTRIBUTION
Chatona Primer-1	Learners	Basic literacy, numeracy & life skills	14,349,361
Chatona Primer-2			13,873,176
Chatona Primer-3			12,600,914
Chatona Shohayaka-1	Teachers	Teachers guide to use the primers	514,000
Chatona Shohayaka-2			512,674
Chatona Shohayaka-3			366,766
Teachers training manual	Master trainers	Manual	497,505
Supervisors training manual	Master trainers	Manual	36,761
Flip chart	Teachers/supervisors		487,771

Source: Begum, Rawshan Ara. Cooperation Mechanism of GO and NGOs Implementing NFE Program with Special Focus on Material Development and Distribution. Undated.

**Materials developed by PLCE technical assistance team under the government (BNFE)**

PARTICULAR
<b>Core Trainers</b> Manual for Training of Master Trainers
<b>Master Trainers</b> Manual for Training Facilitators
<b>Facilitators</b> Guide/Handbook for use by facilitators
Handbook for <b>Core Trainers</b> for use by Core Trainers
<b>Supervisors</b> Manual for use by Master Trainers
<b>Supervisors</b> Guide/Instruction Book for use by Supervisors
<b>UPOs</b> Handbook for use by UPOs
Linkage Development manual for use by <b>Divisional Team (DT)</b> and <b>UPOs</b>
Divisional Team Manual for Use by <b>DTs</b>
Updated PLCEHD-1 Implementation of PLCEHD-1 Project
Trade Skill Course Handbook for <b>Learners</b> of CE Courses (Synopsis of 11 CE Courses)
Evaluation Questionnaires and Learners Assessment Guide for use by the <b>facilitators</b>
Monitoring Formats for use by <b>Monitoring Associates</b> and <b>UPOs</b>

Source: Ministry of Primary and Mass Education. First Tracer Study of PLCEHD-1 Project: An Impact Assessment.

The government will soon embark on another project known as PLCE-2, which is supported by ADB, SDC and DFID. This would be similar to PLCE-1 project. The project has not been approved yet.

**• NGO-RUN NFE PROGRAMS**

**1. NGO supported NFBE programs and overall state of youth and adult literacy**

For the last five years, the policy preference for youth and adult NFBE in Bangladesh is on the decline, and with it, resource allocation for the same has also progressively dwindled. Given this reality, *at present only PLCE-1 project run by the government (described above) at a large scale is actively providing basic literacy (with other interventions).*

While a number of NGOs like BRAC, FIVDB (Friends in Village Development, Bangladesh), DAM (Dhaka Ahsania Mission) have larger program, in reality, individually they do not have much national impact in terms of providing basic literacy and numeracy. Therefore, a sectoral representation of NGOs in the domain of NFBE would be more realistic.

## **2. Core-category of NGO-run youth and adult NFBE programs**

NGO NFBE programs could be categorized as basic literacy, numeracy with life skills. As stated, the literacy programs are designed to help the illiterates acquire and retain literacy skills.

## **3. Main providers of NFE program**

According to CAMPE statistics, as of 2004, more than 400 NGOs were engaged in adult literacy program. Out of these, as stated, BRAC, FIVDB, DAM are a few notable NGOs.

## **4. Main objectives/aims of NFE program**

Programs focusing only on basic literacy and numeracy through non-formal education are virtually non-existent.

The central objective of NGO run NFBE programs continue to emphasize on acquisition and retention of literacy, as well as, provision of life skills.

The above stated objective has been further expanded by transforming NFBE centers into CLCs (Community Learning Centers) where the neo-literate have the opportunity to get together in order to get access to reading materials and have social interaction, with minimal external interventions from the NFBE educators.

At the moment, NGOs are looking to yet further expand their activity through the provision of marketable livelihood skills through such CLC centers.

## **5. Target group**

The target group consists of poor male and females, who are either illiterate or neo-literates. In case of males it is mainly the farm and non-farm workers, while in case of females, it is largely the homemakers, who are the participants of NGO youth and adult NFBE programs.

## **6. Coverage**

According to CAMPE statistics (2004), total number of people served through youth and adult literacy programs stands at 651,502, out of which more than 60% are females.

## **7. Teaching learning activities**

In most of the cases, the key features of adult NFE resembles between NGOs, since a large number of smaller NGOs tend to follow, either the government model or programs run by larger and more efficient NGOs. It is also quite visible that expertise of developing teaching learning materials also confined between a few NGOs (BRAC, FIVDB, DAM etc). Therefore, in general teaching learning activity follow a general trend in case of NGOs, which has been discussed below:

### ***Main activity***

The central activity of adult NFBE program run by the NGOs is ensuring provision, as well as continuation of practice of literacy and numeracy in order to ensure that retention becomes sustainable (i.e. reading newspapers). In addition to that the learners prepare their own literacy materials like collectively preparing wallpapers, writing poetries and writing on a specific topic. They also read books, which are related to acquiring life skills. At times, they organize cultural

events for recreation. These centers also provide a platform where the learners can discuss and resolve any given social issues affecting their lives.

***Teaching learning methodology employed***

Most of the NGOs use participatory approach for teaching learning process. A large number of NGOs use BNFE’s method of introducing alphabets, which starts from a sentence, then moves to words and finally words are further dissected into alphabets. Individual and group works are encouraged. Even though, the teaching learning materials might differ from NGO to NGO, they invariably address life skills covering social, environmental, health and legal issues.

***Frequency of program offered***

The timing vary from NGO to NGO but generally the learning centers remain open 6 days a week. Each teaching-learning session is usually of 2 hours duration.

***Overall minimum duration of NFBE program***

NGOs have different adult education programs of their own and they run such adult education program according to their own project design. An idea of different course duration has been given below. The minimum duration is 3 months, but overall minimum duration of NFBE programs is 12 months as shown in the table below.

Course duration of NGOs engaged in adult education

Duration of courses of adult education (269 responding NGOs)	3 months (27 NGOs), 6 months (85 NGOs), 9 months (51 NGOs), 12 months (72 NGOs), 18 months (6 NGOs), 24 months (10 NGOs), 36 months (13 NGOs), 36+ months (5 NGOs)
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Source: Directory of NGO Education Program 2004. CAMPE

***Flexibility, participation and needs of the targeted groups***

NGOs are flexible in their approach. The learners and communities are amply consulted. The timings, center opening and closure depending on social and economical events are done with due consultation with the learners and the communities.

However, NGO run NFBE programs apparently have made little impact in the lives of the learners. Learners, in general, believe very strongly that literacy should lead to poverty reduction in the form of sustainable income generating activities.

***Background of educators/trainers***

For teachers, both males and females, the minimum requirement is secondary school certificate (grade 10). They are young (usually below 25 years). They are provided with foundation training. The supervisors, who are responsible for monitoring centers are graduates, are mostly males. Foundation training is also provided to supervisors.

The NGO experts usually have a Masters degree mainly in social science, with long years of experience.

The overall status of personnel distribution in youth and adult education program is as follows:

Personnel distribution in education program	Administrative staff- Full time female staff-3015, Part time female staff-5279, Full time male staff-7219, Part time male staff 8429, Teachers- Full time female teachers-16,133, Part time female staff-39,785, Full time Male staff-40,83, Part time male staff-, 3236
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CAMPE directory; 2004

The community leaders at the village levels may not be educated, but they are generally literate with reasonable knowledge about their respective communities, with effective communication skills, which help them become leaders.

### ***Remuneration of NFE educators***

The NFE educators in case of NGOs do not have any job security, once they complete their course. Their salary is taka 500 (US\$ 7) per month on an average. This salary is much lower than those of the primary school teachers, who have job security. It logically follows that the commitment and morale of the NFE educators are quite low.

### ***Teaching learning materials produced by NGOs***

The categories of teaching learning materials produced by the NGOs (mainly by BRAC, FIVDB, and DAM) for NFBE projects include, primers, flip charts, posters, leaflets etc. Specifically for PLCE projects the various categories of teaching learning materials include books, folders, card set, charts, tabloids, monthly newsletters etc. Most of the teaching learning materials is either manuals or materials for continuing education.

## **• EQUIVALENCY, ECCD, OUTCOMES OF NFE PROGRAMS**

### **1. Equivalency issue**

The equivalency issue has not become important for youth and adult NFBE programs in Bangladesh, as stated earlier. However, a general understanding is, the basic literacy and numeracy programs are supposed to be equivalent to what is taught at grade 3 in the formal primary schools.

As for the livelihood skills, the government system requires the participants of its formal courses to be at least grade 8 completer. This archaic notion is now breaking down, and relevant ministries, who provide vocational training are being organized and pooled together by the BNFE contracted NGOs, who are working together for designing livelihood training programs, which could become effective for the adult NFBE literate.

A number of NGOs have equivalency programs, for instance Dhaka Ahsania Mission's various vocational education (basic) is equivalent to Upper primary (grade III-V), vocational education (advanced) is equivalent to Junior Secondary (grade VII-VIII) and vocational education (certificate course) is equivalent to Secondary (grade IX-X). Such programs are not very well reported.

### **2. Early Childhood Care & Development (ECCD)**

ECCD programs have been of recent interest; as a result they have started to gain momentum. NGOs like BRAC, DAM, Save the Children USA, Plan International, Unicef, including the government are active in this field and they have a number innovative programs to that end. However, these programs are still in their pilot stage and are being run on relatively small scale. The key target audience for ECCD programs are mothers, facilitators, community monitors etc.

### **3. Outcomes/Impact**

A number of field tests conducted by the Swedish Technical Assistance Team to the former DNFE, for the period between 1999 and 2002, coupled by similar tests conducted by other agencies suggest the following overarching trends in outcomes:

- i) If the neo-literates are not able to practice their acquired literacy, they tend to rapidly relapse into illiteracy within a period of 6 months.
- ii) The acquired literacy of the learners are not sufficient to enable learners to read and decipher meaning effectively from real life materials (being able to read posters, sign board, instructions, prescriptions etc.).
- iii) Ability to write and communicating simple thoughts remains a problem;
- iv) Ability to take dictation and recording instructions remains a problem;
- v) No linkages could be established between acquisition of literacy and poverty reduction.

Recently conducted tracer study entitled “Report on First Tracer Study of PLCEHD-1 Project: An Impact Assessment” (2005), by the World Bank supported Technical Assistance team have come out with the following conclusions;

- i) A greater proportion of learners did not practice or rather had no opportunity to practice their literacy skills particularly in writing.
- ii) Gains achieved in empowering household members in decision-making particularly the women, appeared to be stable.
- iii) Gains made in hygienic and sanitary practices, assisting children in their studies also appeared to be stable.
- iv) The impact of PLCE on employment generation and in increasing income was positive but appeared to be below potential.
- v) Number of learners involved in community activities was on the decline.

**Zia-Us-Sabur, February 12, 200**

## ANNEX-1

### **Methodology adopted for the study**

Given the time and the scope of the study, and a single person with the responsibility to conduct the study, mainly secondary sources were utilized. A limited number of key informants from the government and NGOs were consulted. The senior, representatives from the government included the Director General of BNFE, representatives from planning section, official responsible for statistics, a consultant from the World Bank Technical Assistance team to BNFE. Other NGO representatives included senior persons responsible for NFBE program implementation from BRAC, CAMPE and Dhaka Ahasania Mission.

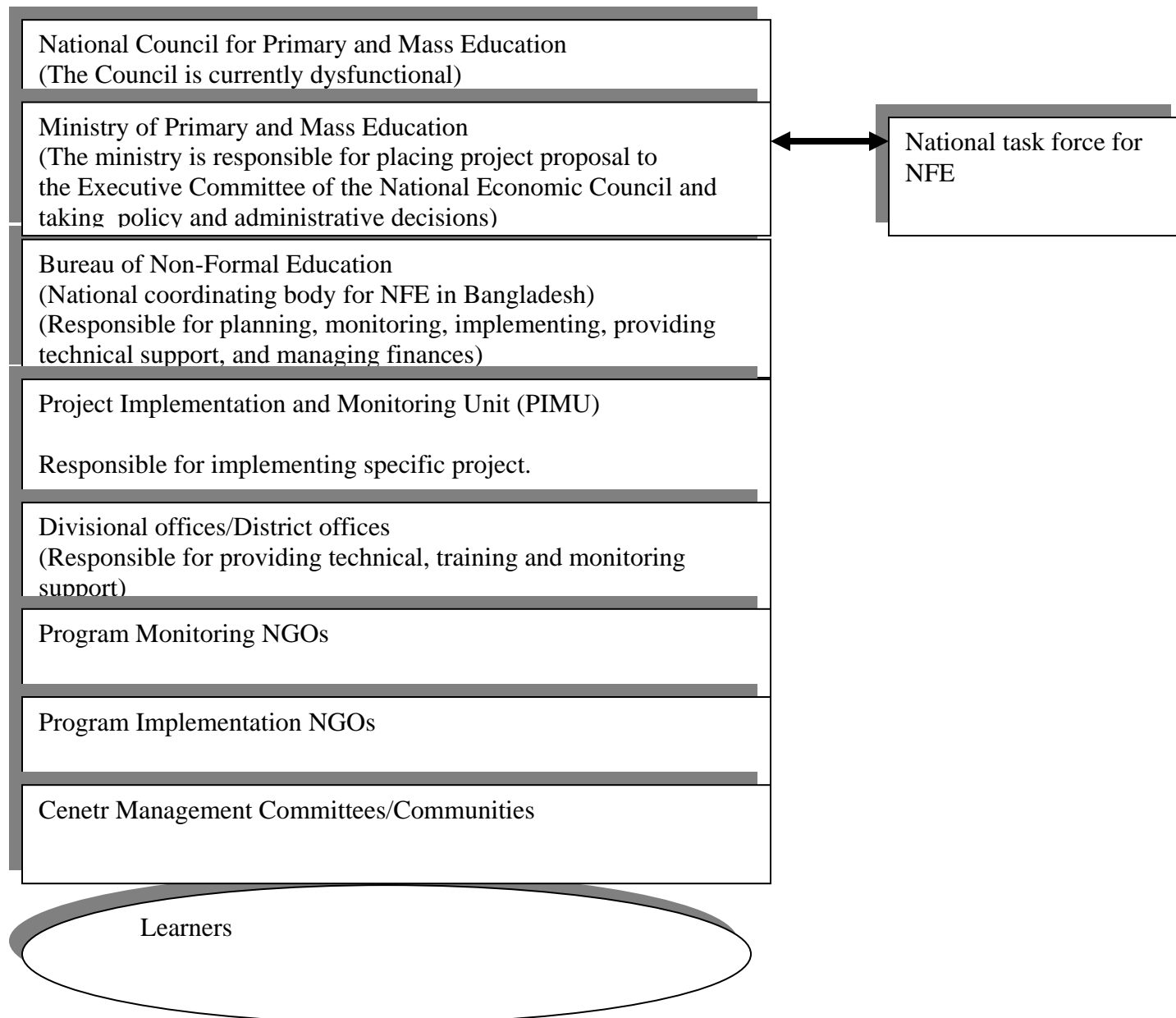
Even though BNFE is still to gather momentum after its reinstating, major information are available and the officials showed their spontaneous interest in sharing information.

The problem with NGOs was that each NGO has their own way of collecting information, which does not help the cause of comparability. However, upon investigation it was found that CAMPE's directory on NGO education collected information in a simple, clear and consistent manner. This made CAMPE the main source of information.

The private sector provides literacy to a limited extent. For want of time NFBE initiatives by the Islamic Foundation, who are supposedly involved in literacy activities could not be investigated. However, in the whole scheme of things, it could be claimed that major NFBE programs carried out by the lead agencies in the government and NGOs have been reasonably covered.

## ANNEX-2

### Overall structure of government-run NFBE implementation structure



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