

A Learning Document from ECB's Learning Event in Bangladesh
11 September 2013

ECB Project Learning from Bangladesh

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Collective Wisdom and Way Forward

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Background

The **Emergency Capacity Building Project** (ECB) is a group of six international humanitarian agencies at the global level working in consortia at national and regional levels in which various different agencies are involved. The ECB aims to improve the speed, quality and effectiveness of the humanitarian community to save lives, improve welfare, and protects the rights of people in emergency situations.

In **Bangladesh**, seven international NGOs (CARE International, Concern World Wide, Catholic Relief Services, Oxfam, Plan, Save the Children and World Vision) have been collaborating since 2009 on themes such as building national staff capacity, disaster risk reduction, accountability & impact measurement and humanitarian advocacy. Now, the ECB Bangladesh Consortium is a collaboration of nine agencies since 2012 when Islamic Relief and Solidarités International joined the group. Save the Children is the lead organization in the Bangladesh Consortium. The Project has three major thematic focus areas: **Staff Capacity**, **Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)** and **Accountability in humanitarian response**. The ECB Project has made a significant contribution in Bangladesh towards working collaboratively.

As a part of its commitment to capture learning, the ECB Bangladesh Consortium organized a half day learning event at the Radisson Blu Water Garden Hotel on 11th September 2013. The event attracted a large number of participants from key stakeholder groups including the Government, the United Nations, donors, international NGOs, national NGOs, the media and individual humanitarian practitioners. This created a platform for further learning for the humanitarian actors in Bangladesh.

Format and process of the Workshop

The workshop time period was half a day. The workshop was divided into two sessions: the **Inaugural session and an open discussion session**.

Inaugural session

In the first session, participants had the chance to listen to the distinguished guests from the Ministry of Disaster Management & Relief (MoDMR), Department of Disaster Management (DDM), Comprehensive Disaster Management Program (CDMP), European Commission Humanitarian Aid & Civil protection Department (ECHO), representatives from the ECB Steering Committee and the ECB Secretariat. Mr. Abul Hasan Mahmud Ali MP, Honorable Minister, MoDMR was the chief guest. Md. Abdul Wazed, Director General (DG) DDM, Mohammad Abdul Qayyum, National Project Director, CDMP and Mokit Billah, ECHO were



the Guests of Honor.



Ms. Jesmin Hossain, ECB Project Manager, provided an introduction and outlined the objectives of the event. Mr. Wilfred Sikukula, World Vision, a representative of the ECB Steering Committee, gave a brief presentation on the ECB Bangladesh Project, its key activities and contributions from 2009 – 2013.



Nayyar Iqbal, Deputy Country Director, Save the Children and a representative of the steering committee of ECB, made concluding remarks.

The Honorable Minister for MoDMR, in his speech, emphasized how the government has transformed its activities which previously focused on relief and now work towards disaster risk reduction. He highlighted the effort of the ECB Project to facilitate and promote Joint Need Assessments (JNA) as a significant achievement. He also mentioned the harmonization process of joint programs and re-emphasized the need for collaboration between GO – NGOs in DRR activities.



Mokit Billah, an ECHO representative, emphasized ECHO's focus on DRR activities and the importance of community level capacity building initiatives on

DRR.

DG, DDM and NPD, CDMP II acknowledged the contribution of ECB Bangladesh to promote accountability and build the capacity of humanitarian workers. They highlighted the efforts of ECB Bangladesh to harmonize a training curriculum, build capacity on the SPHERE standards, institutionalize JNA and support the government to build capacity for humanitarian response in Bangladesh.



After the inaugural session, the Honorable Minister visited the ECB exhibition and launched posters produced by ECB about the Disaster Management Act which was passed in September 2012.

Open discussion session

In the second session, discussion and sharing took place in an 'open forum'. Participants were encouraged to share their learning, experiences, critical views and suggestions about the ECB Project and its future activities. To facilitate the discussion, two presentations were used– one in a PowerPoint format and the other as a 'video documentary'. Two videos were shown, one on global learning and another on achievements from Bangladesh. Later on, a PowerPoint



presentation was used to reflect key learning from the last five years of ECB's work in Bangladesh. These presentations were created to provide a wide-angle view on the Bangladesh ECB Project so that all participants were made aware of the initiatives undertaken by ECB and to stimulate discussions around them. Participants from different NGOs (national and international) and also the members of the ECB



Steering Committee highlighted that ECB has promoted some very useful tools in Bangladesh such as the [Good Enough Guide](#), the SPHERE Minimum Standards and the [ECB Accountability Framework](#). This made Bangladesh one of the most successful countries in the ECB Project.

Key achievements:

- ECB activities have changed organizations' mindsets about accountability and humanitarian organizations now include accountability in their operational frameworks
- The Project has enhanced collaboration among stakeholders in the humanitarian sector
- ECB has built linkages with UN Clusters and NGOs in Bangladesh
- Tools and IEC materials developed by ECB addressed existing gaps of knowledge in the humanitarian sector in Bangladesh.
- ECB's capacity building initiatives addressed skills development needs of the humanitarian workers in Bangladesh, including personal stress management and core competencies.
- The Project helped to establish a regular data and information collection process through a collaborative approach
- The ECB Project played a key role to promote women's capacity in the humanitarian sector as manager and leader

Now there is a need to continue ECB activities in Bangladesh and participants shared their views and suggestions for future ECB programs.

Recommendations:

- To think more about downward accountability and shift from the perspective of peer accountability
- To include urban DRR in the ECB resource '[Towards Resilience: A guide to Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation](#)'
- To integrate monitoring system to in accountability mechanisms
- To consider including conflict induced disasters as part of the [ENHance \(Expanding National Humanitarian Ability\)](#) capacity building course

Key points from the discussions

Inaugural session.

Recommendations:

- Strengthen the local elected government's (Union Parishad) capacity for needs assessment and management of disaster response and recovery work
- Standardize services to build a more accountable and transparent Disaster Management process
- Enhance partnership of government and non-government stakeholders, including private sector, for a more robust Emergency Response and Recovery work
- Invest more in the capacity building of local level staff who are based in the communities and act as the front line of action during any crisis

- Joint Need Assessment needs to be more harmonized and stakeholders need to be proactive to ensure timeliness and uniformity of the process
- All stakeholders working in the humanitarian sector in Bangladesh need to give emphasis to preparation and change philosophy of disaster management which is risk reduction and resilience building

Open discussion Session

Recommendations:

- Collaborative support is needed to build a forum for national and local organizations in Bangladesh to share learning and experiences from the ECB Project
- There is a need to promote collaborative action and advocacy to address the ‘forgotten disasters in Bangladesh’ that increase poor people’s vulnerability to shocks and large disasters
- Increase advocacy to promote ‘affected people’s right to get services and support during any disaster’
- Roll out the training on JNA process at District, Upazilla and Union level and build capacity of the local staff of NGOs and representatives of local elected bodies (Union Parishad) and local administration

Concluding remarks from moderator

- ECB Bangladesh has completed a significant 5-year journey. Its contribution needs to be analyzed through the DRR proverb ‘One dollar of investment in preparedness reduces 8 dollars of loss and damage.’
- The proposed Standardization Process for Services should not limit the scope of the ‘affected people to claim right to services with dignity’.
- A standard operational procedure including some rules for collaboration needs to be developed for JNA to foster the process, show the benefit of a joint approach to wider groups and promote at all levels.

At the end members of the ECB Steering Committee thanked everyone that joined the learning workshop and shared very thoughtful comments, suggestions, critical points and above all expressed a commitment to enhance collaborative humanitarian action in Bangladesh.

Glimpses of the learning events

