

**APPEAL Resource and Training Consortium (ARTC)
Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) - ARTC Member**

Brief Report on Current activities in NFE and Literacy

Contributing to EFA Goals, DAM's NFE and Literacy endeavors includes a wide range of programmes covering early childhood education and development, non-formal primary education and junior secondary education for the out of school children, literacy, continuing education, technical vocational education and training for the youths and adults, etc. Besides implementing literacy and NFE programmes at the field level in various districts (39 out of 64 districts of Bangladesh as on March 2011), DAM provides technical support for capacity building in the form of training and study visits to the government and non-government organizations at national and international levels. Development of education, information and communication materials for literacy and NFE programmes is also strength of DAM. Because of diversity in the contents and formats of the materials, these are used by various organizations across the country. As a multi-sector organization, besides literacy and NFE, DAM activities are spread over in formal secondary and higher education, livelihood services including micro-finance, health services including running specialized hospitals, and human rights sectors. Details account of activities are available in DAM website www.ahsaniamission.org.bd . Highlights of current literacy and NFE activities are mentioned in the following paragraphs.

Promoting Community Learning Centre (CLC) approach: Dhaka Ahsania Mission with long field experience organizes CLC, named as Ganokendra meaning peoples forum, as centres for lifelong learning and community empowerment. As multi-purpose community learning centers, Ganokendra works as education centre, convening place for savings and credit activities, recreational venue, library and reading corner, place for socialization, a place for skill training, emergency shelter, center to discuss problems and settle conflicts, occasional health center and venue for social ceremonies. As on June 2011, DAM organized 865 Ganokendra and 2644 are being organized spread over 35 districts.

Ganokendra also functions as a resource base with a variety of printed materials, including booklets, posters, charts, stickers, audio-visual materials, newsletter and wall magazine designed for the peoples with limited reading skills. Development issues close to the aspirations of the people are addressed through Ganokendra, which include income generation, health awareness, water and sanitation, childcare and development, and women and adolescent rights. In the rural context of Bangladesh where the scope for access to education and development information is very limited and majority of the people still cannot read and write, CLC based initiatives like Ganokendra could bring immense benefit to the people. With technical support of DAM numbers of CLC (in different names) across the country is increased over a period of time and the scope of activities widened, resulting making CLC as a community platform for lifelong learning and people empowerment.

Establishing network of CLC: Flexibility in approach and openness for partnership, DAM could set examples of multi-dimensional partnership both at micro-level and macro-level. The local network of CLCs through establishing Community Resource Centre (CRC) ensures immediate and continuous support to the CLC at times of individual need and to raise combined voice of the community people for interaction with the service providers and the local government institutions. CRC equipped with ICT facilities currently have diverse roles, some of which are mentioned here: (a) Advocacy forum for dialogue with local government and other service agencies, (b) Information services, through news bulletin, wall magazine, (c) Services for market linkages providing information about products and price, (d) Supporting continuing education activities through link with formal education institutions, (e) Telecentre services, e.g., phone, computer compose, printing, (f) ICT portal for access and exchange of information, (g) Recreational activities like arranging sports, film show, competitions, (g) Documentation of learning and exchange of experiences. As on 2010 42 CRCs have been established by DAM and 238 are in the process of establishment.

Capacity Building and Training: DAM developed and conducted a number of training courses for literacy and NFE which include among others, training to the CLC facilitators and field level staffs, training of mid-level and senior level staff, technical support to Government NFE programmes, skills development training for income generating activities, teachers training on English language teaching in primary and secondary. Training manuals were also developed by DAM as ready resource for organizing these training courses. During 2010-11 financial year, DAM provided training to 21,225 literacy and NFE personnel, of whom 53% were female.

DAM closely worked with UNESCO for capacity building of the NFE personnel in the country and in the region. DAM organized courses on NFE sub-sector policy analysis and NFE sub-sector programme preparation in collaboration with Bureau of Non-Formal Education and UNESCO. This is one of the new activities in the country and enhances capacity of a number of NFE personnel of the Government and NGOs in Bangladesh to review NFE policy and sector-wide programme planning.

At the international level, during 2010-11, DAM organized sub-regional training workshop on capacity building for literacy materials development, life skills development, participatory monitoring, evaluation and report writing etc. Participants from different countries of Asia-Pacific region participated in these workshops. DAM provided technical support to organize study visits for practical exposure of literacy, NFE and CLC approach, under which study groups from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Timor Leste visited field-based programmes of government and NGOs in Bangladesh.

Materials Development: DAM is the pioneer organization in Bangladesh and in the region on development of diverse literacy and NFE materials. So far DAM developed and published more than 693 titles (as on June 2011) of literacy, NFE and continuing education materials and manuals. The formats of the materials are booklets, posters, charts, games, stickers, manuals, video CD etc. Package learning materials on different thematic issues is an innovation of DAM to facilitate effective use of materials in literacy and NFE centres.

Skills Development Training for Income Generation: Through vocational training institutions and community-based vocational training centres, DAM organizes livelihood skills development training courses and provides job placement services to the literacy and NFE centre participants facilitating their access to the world of work. DAM also developed and published skills based training modules and learning materials, including life skill course materials. DAM organizes customized skill training courses for the literacy and NFE projects implemented by national and international organizations.

Supporting development of Equivalency Education Framework: With support from UNESCO, in 2010-11 DAM provided technical support to the Bureau of Non-Formal Education of the government of Bangladesh for establishing an equivalency framework between formal and non-formal education. The project was aimed to design an equivalency education (EE) framework and packages of learning materials on the basis of identified core competencies and to propose a statutory body to facilitate, coordinate, monitor and selection of accredited institutions for the EE supportive programmes.

Promoting Multi-Grade Teaching Learning in NFE: Multi-grade teaching learning approach in non-formal primary education is a most effective recent initiative of DAM in accelerating the EFA goals. In a situation where the out of school children or drop out children can not cope with many ongoing education programmes because of its structured system and which in many cases are not suitable for the slower learners to adjust, multi-grade teaching learning approach promoted by DAM and practiced in 2380 NFE centres of DAM's UNIQUE project provided an answer to access and retain them in education. In this approach the children can continue learning on their own pace based on their past learning and progress in the NFE centre. A number of study on the approach proved its effectiveness and potentiality for replication for bringing strategic changes in NFE programme implementation process.

Plan for 2011-2016: Besides the regular activities in line with the education sector strategic plan of the organization and continuing activities as mentioned above, DAM plans to undertake following activities during the years of 2011 – 2016.

- 1) Organize mid and senior level staff training on mainstreaming CLC approach
- 2) Organize field level staff training on multi-grade teaching-learning in NFE for other organizations
- 3) Organize regional capacity building training workshops and exchange visits for mainstreaming CLC, multi-grade teaching-learning and package material development
- 4) Organize professional training courses on ECED for field level staffs
- 5) Development manual on participatory monitoring system and piloting for South-Asia sub-region.
- 6) Working with the government in piloting decentralized planning and management for NFE
- 7) Organize follow-up capacity building training courses on NFE sub-sector programme planning
- 8) Undertake action research on thematic issues of literacy and NFE
- 9) Organize advocacy workshops for mainstreaming of good practices in literacy and NFE
- 10) Organize ICT based courses for school teachers, trade instructors in remote locations
- 11) Implement joint literacy and NFE programmes in South Asian countries.