

Governance and institutional reform

Local actors work together to reduce child poverty

Working children become child rights advocates

"I was a shy and nervous girl. Now I know how to speak in front of people and lead a team – now I can see a future for myself", says 12 year old Urmi. Coming from a poor background, she had to start working when she was only 8 years old. Today, as member of the Children Forum, she plays a leading role in mobilising her community on child rights.

Picture: Shafiqul Alam Kiron



EU Partners

Save the Children
Bangladesh

Prodipon

Bangladesh
Development Service
Centre (BDSC)

Manob Seba O
Samajik Unnayan
Sangstha (MSSUS)

Rupantar

Local Government
Bodies and relevant
Ministries at central
level

Facts and Figures

- EC contribution:
€ 800 000 (75 % of
total)
- Duration: 3.5 years
(2010 to 2013)
- Of the 7.4 million
working children in
Bangladesh about
80% don't attend
school



Context Child labour remains a huge challenge

In Bangladesh more than one third of the population live on less than one dollar a day, and about 7.4 million children have to work for their living. As both a cause and effect of poverty, child labour creates a vicious cycle for the affected children. A major challenge for the government, local authorities and NGOs is to reach the most disadvantaged and remote households and their children. The project targets areas most affected by poverty, empowering all stakeholders at local level, from government and civil society, to support the poorest children in their community. As this work is built on new legislation, the project has done important pilot work and developed a community-based model that is now being implemented in other areas as well.

Objectives

- Improve the lives of ultra-poor children.

Impact Services at the doorsteps of the most vulnerable families

- 72 500 working children benefit from basic social services in the areas of health, education, recreation and participation
- 80 % of the children in target areas have now better conditions at work: They receive timely wages and have access to clear drinking water and sanitation facilities at work.
- Negotiations with employers have shown some success: in line with local labour laws, working children are now granted leave and leisure.
- Around 3 000 children are enrolled in school, up to 2 000 children are saved from entering into dangerous work.

Governance and institutional reform

Local actors work together to reduce child poverty

Working children become child rights advocates

Rony's life is a struggle

"I wish I had a life where I did not need to think about work and money - free from every day struggles. I wish I had enough time to play and had a chance to go to a regular school and one day be an office-goer," says 12 year old Rony.

After the death of his father the family had to move to Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh. They came from Bhola – one of the coastal belt districts of the country, where the rate of poverty is very high. Rony lives with his mother and younger sisters in the slum Lalbagh in the old part of Dhaka. This densely populated area is crowded with little factories, often packed to the roof with chemical products, posing extreme health and fire hazards to the workers and the environment. Thousands of children from poor families are working in these factories because their labour is cheap.

Rony works in a small steel factory producing food boxes. He starts his day early in the morning. With support of the project he can now go to a vocational training facility at 7 am, from where he continues to work. He stays in the steel factory from 11 am to 8 pm earning 1 200 Taka (€ 11) a month. Noise, dust and heat inside the factory often make him suffer from headache and fatigue, but his family needs the income.

After the project started in Lalbagh, many of the factory owners signed a Code of Conduct allowing for better working conditions for their child workers and basic services and facilities. Now Rony is also getting a chance to learn for a better future.



Rony working in a small steel factory in a slum in Dhaka