

**BASIC EDUCATION FOR
HARD-TO-REACH
URBAN WORKING CHILDREN:
STUDY ON BENEFITS,
SUSTAINABILITY AND COST**



Prepared for



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Executive Summary

Purpose and Methodology

The accompanying study is aimed to examine the various costs associated with the different outcomes of BEHTRUWC project. The study is also aimed to examine the benefit streams and the sustainability-replicability aspects of the project. Data/information collected in the study are both quantitative and qualitative in nature. Data/information have been collected from the six city corporations – at both office and field level. Data collected at the office level are mostly program and financial data. At field level, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) have been conducted with teachers/supervisors, parents, PNGO-staff, centre committee members, and city implementation monitoring units.

Benefit Streams

The title of the project “*Basic Education for Hard to Reach Urban Working Children*” itself expresses the target groups and the services it delivers and the kind of benefits it is likely to provide. The working and out-of-school poor children who had no opportunity and possibility for education are getting basic education and education stationery free-of-cost. Other poor and out-of-school children also get inspiration from children attending the Learning Centres (LCs). Education and skill development training enable children to manage a better job with a better pay. Their siblings in the family also learn reading and writing from them. These children get an entertaining and pressure-free environment during the school hours which enables them to think and aspire for of a better future. Many boys and girls now want to learn about modern technologies such as computing and mobile phone servicing.

Children are becoming aware of different social problems such as sexual abuse, trafficking, child marriage, use in political demonstrations, picketing, etc. They are being aware of these problems attending the LCs and thus protect themselves and the other children from such abuses. As they learn about healthcare and cleanliness at the LCs and practice them, those get less sick.

Learning Centres, Learners, Teachers

As of June 2009, a total of 6,635 LCs have been opened of which 1,990 are in stage 1, 1,309 in stage 2, 2,071 in stage 3 and 1,265 in stage 4. All these LCs are now functional and will complete five cycle course in November 2009 (stage 1), November 2010 (stage 2), July 2011 (stage 3) and October 2011 (stage 4).

The total number of learners as of June 2009 was 158,811 of which 93,848 girls and 64,963 boys. The overall ratio of boy and girl learners is 40:60 with little variation in different stages and cities.

In total, 20 PNGOs are implementing this project in six divisional cities namely Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet, Barisal, Rajshahi and Khulna. More than two-thirds of the LCs have been operating in Dhaka. About 18 per cent of the LCs have been established in Chittagong; 8 per cent in Khulna and the rest 8 per cent in the remaining three cities.

A total of 5,982 teachers have been employed in this project out of which 5,226 are female and 756 are male. The discrepancy between the number of LCs and number of teachers is due to the fact that a good number of LCs has been operating two shifts with the same teacher. In Dhaka, more than 65 per cent teachers have been working. Among them almost 90 per cent are female teachers. About 19 per cent teachers have been working in Chittagong and the rest 16 per cent have been working in the remaining four cities- Sylhet, Barisal, Rajshahi, Khulna. Most of the teachers are female and the proportion of female teachers varies between 72 per cent and 87 per cent in different cities. Under this project, 656 supervisors have been recruited. Each supervisor has to supervise 10 LCs. Training on teaching methodology and the content of the subjects of the learners have been provided to the teachers and supervisors. Three training organizations (CDS, EADS, DAM) have conducted these trainings before starting of each cycle.

Cost Issues: Financial and Non-Financial

The estimated unit cost of graduation of one urban working child (completion of 5 cycles i.e., 40 learning months) is about BDT.11,250 provided the current trend of expenditure continues. The highest portion of expenditure in BETHRUWC Project is incurred under the major cost component group: Basic Education and Life Skill Based Education (BDT.10,428 per graduate). The group of component comprises of (i) curriculum and material development (BDT. 112 per graduate), (ii) training to teachers and supervisors (BDT.13 per graduate), (iii) learning center operation (BDT.10,298 per graduate), and (iv) others (BDT. 5 per graduate). The estimated cost of learning center operation per learning-month per child is BDT.257.

Unit Cost of BETHRUWC Project Graduates

Major Components	Unit Cost of Graduation
Basic Education and Life Skill Based Education Cost	10,428.54
⊕ Curriculum and Material Development	112.04
⊕ Teachers and Supervisors Training	13.19
⊕ Learning Centre Operation	10,297.89
⊕ Others	5.42
Advocacy, Social Mobilization and Program Communication	76.76
Capacity Development	29.23
Capital Cost	78.44
Fixed Cost	395.90
Other Operational Cost	241.42
Total Cost	11,250.29

Note: Figures in parenthesis indicate million US\$ (estimated @ 1 US\$ = BDT 69.00)

Replicability and Sustainability: Problems and Suggestions

The project is providing the most deprived, excluded and underprivileged children with basic education (up to cycle 5). If this intervention had not been taken place, these children would have remained illiterate and a burden to their parents. They are receiving education on many important issues related to their day-to-day life such as good manner, cleanliness, primary healthcare, etc. The children are also being aware on many social problems like child marriage, sexual abuse, trafficking, etc.

Although BEHTRUWC focuses both girls and boys, it becomes sometimes hard to convince the parents of girl children to send them to the LCs particularly when the girls reach their adolescence. Therefore many girl children are remaining out of the project. Many of the students find their English course as hard to understand. Some of the teachers/supervisors have suggested making the course easier. The time allocated for English class is 20 minutes which is insufficient as viewed by the teachers/supervisors. Skill development training is insufficient although importance of this is felt much. If children at the end of their cycles are provided with trainings such as cell phone repairing, computing etc, it would help them find skilled and high paid jobs.

The dropout rate of children is estimated at about 11 per cent. The most common reasons for the dropout have been reported to be “family displacement” and “displacement of slum”. The dropout of teachers and supervisors is a major concern. Almost all key informants have stressed the significance of increasing the salary of teachers and supervisors. The issue of convincing parents and employees is another major challenge. It has been suggested that the discussion on issues like physical and psychological changes during puberty period should be held in separate places among male and female children and the parents should be convinced more on the issue. It has been viewed by the key informants that the replication of the project needs increased manpower and cost, addressing the existing obstacles in implementing the project, development of infrastructural facilities, and ensuring increased motivation of local people. They have also stressed the need for establishing an effective linkage between the teachers/ supervisors of the LCs and the authority of the formal education system and introducing certification system of the graduated children. Also it has been suggested that there is need for improving the quality of the teaching-learning materials and introducing stipend and school feeding program and developing the physical infrastructure of the LCs. The age condition for getting admission of the working children has been suggested to be relaxed. The coverage of the technical and vocational training should also be increased. It has been suggested that effective measures be taken to make the CMC s more effective and ward committees functional. With regard to achieving the financial sustainability of the project, it has been learnt that the parents would be able to pay maximum 10 per cent of the management cost. So if the project has to sustain, the government should come forward and provide the necessary financial support.