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# A STUDY ON CHILD RIGHTS RELATED UPR AND UNCRC REPORTING CAPACITY OF CSOS IN BANGLADESH



## **Final Report**

A Study on Child Rights related UPR and UNCRC reporting capacity of  
CSOs in Bangladesh

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## **Acronyms**

ASK	Ain o Salish Kendra
BNPS	Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha
BNWLA	Bangladesh National Woman Lawyers' Association
BSAF	Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CRAC,B	Child Rights Advocacy Coalition, Bangladesh
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CAT	Committee Against Torture
CED	Committee on Enforced Disappearances
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
CRPD	Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSA	Civil Society Actors
CMW	Committee on Migrant Workers
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
INGOs	International Non-Government Organizations
MJF	Manusher Jonno Foundation
MFI	Micro Finance Institutions
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
NHRIs	National Human Rights Institutions

OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
SuR	State under Review
UN	United Nations
UPR	Universal Periodic Review

## Executive Summary

This study titled “A Study on Child Rights related UPR and UNCRC reporting capacity of CSOs in Bangladesh” has been conducted as an initiative of the European Union funded project "Civil Society Organizations Advancing Child Rights Activism through the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) Mechanisms in Bangladesh”, being implemented by Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), the Secretariat of CRAC, B. The overall objective of this study is to assess the reporting capacity of the CSOs and explore the scope and opportunities to enhance the capacity of the CSOs in participating in the UNCRC and UPR mechanisms.

The study used both primary and secondary data utilizing qualitative tools, such as literature review, focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and consultation meetings with the relevant stakeholders.

The study found that there are number of UN human rights mechanisms on child rights, such as UPR, Special Procedures on child rights issues, and UN Committee on CRC. Besides, other human rights mechanisms are also relevant for children's issues. CSOs in Bangladesh can access all the charter-based bodies/mechanisms, such as UPR process, Special Procedures, Complaints Procedure etc. and can engage with the treaty bodies provided that the state already ratified the particular treaty. Since Bangladesh has already ratified ICCPR, ICESCR, CEDAW, CRC, CAT, CED, CERD, CMW, and CRPD, CSOs in Bangladesh can engage the treaty bodies formed within the scope of these treaties to monitor the implementation of the respective treaties.

The study recognized the long history of CSOs participation in UN human rights mechanisms in the advancement of human rights in general as well as in the promotion of child rights in Bangladesh. There has been participation of CSOs on child rights specific UN mechanisms, such as UNCRC since 1996. However, the study found that participation of CSOs in UN human rights mechanisms are limited to a few national and international NGOs.

The study also found that the local CSOs mainly serve as a data provider rather than active stakeholders in engaging with UN human rights focused advocacy. The national level organizations and/or network members engage their partners at local levels in consultation or in getting data for the reporting purpose, and the local CSOs who are not affiliated with any national or international organizations do not get the scope of such engagement.

With regard to challenges and constraints for CSOs to engage in UN advocacy on child rights, the study identified lack of knowledge and experience on UN human rights mechanisms, lack of financial resources, and lack of organizational priority as the main challenges for the CSOs in Bangladesh to engage in UN advocacy on child rights. Lack of English language skills have also been identified as a barrier for the local CSOs to participate in UN advocacy on child rights.

Lack of activism on child rights has been identified as the fundamental blockade to increased participation of CSOs in UN advocacy on child rights. The study findings indicated that CSOs in Bangladesh are more involved in service delivery than in advocacy on child rights, such as facilitating education and health services for the poor and disadvantaged children. Though new generation youth organizations are doing commendable jobs in different areas of child rights, but they also mainly work on service delivery than the advocacy on the protection and

promotion of child rights. Individual Interviews with the 24 organizations revealed that all these organizations are engaged in service delivery on child rights issues, and community awareness where only nine are engaged in advocacy. Participants of FGDs and consultations confirmed this reality, and shared that there are no such local advocacy on child rights.

The study also disclosed a gap in knowledge on overall UN human rights mechanisms. Majority of study participants recognized the knowledge gaps as one of the main barriers in engaging with UN human rights mechanisms. Several study participants highlighted the specific gaps in capacity on report writing and data generation. Besides, lack of sharing and coordination between local, national and international organizations and resource constraint have been identified as other barriers in ensuring wider engagement of the CSOs in different UN centric advocacy on child rights.

Furthermore, the study revealed several interconnected problems that adversely affect child rights advocacy endeavors. These problems include donor reliance on child rights advocacy, short-term projects, insufficient knowledge and devotion to child rights matters, a lack of commitment from the leadership of the organization concerning child rights advocacy, and an unfavorable perspective from the government actors regarding advocacy. These issues also have negative impact on CSOs' involvement in UN human rights advocacy on child rights.

With regard to the available scopes and opportunities for capacity building of the CSOs on UN advocacy on child rights, the study identified some initiatives by CRAC, B, and Joining Forces Bangladesh (JFB). These initiatives include holding consultations during the report preparation process, printing and publishing the recommendations in Bangla, and organizing training sessions for NGOs to increase their capacity for advocating for child rights at the UN. However, these initiatives are very limited in number and coverage.

Besides, the study found different capacity building opportunities offered by the OHCHR and other non-government organizations that can be explored by the CSOs in Bangladesh. However, the study indicated that CSOs lack information about the available scopes and opportunities for the capacity building of the CSOs on UN human rights advocacy.

The study indicated the need for exploring alternative funding opportunities to address the resource constraint of the local and national CSOs. The stakeholders suggested mobilizing the micro finance institutions to spend certain amount of their profit on the protection and promotion of child rights as part of CSR, and emphasized on the communication and collaboration with the diplomatic missions to explore funding availability to build capacity of the local CSOs ensuring wider participation of the CSOs in relevant UN advocacy. The study participants also emphasized on the urgency of revitalizing the wider networks and platforms on child rights, like Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum (BASAF) to mobilize the local CSOs promoting activism on child rights.

Informed by the findings, a set of recommendations have been put forward to facilitate wider participation on CSOs in UN advocacy on child rights.



## **Recommendations for CRAC, B and other national and international NGOs on child rights**

- Carry out a nationwide mapping and analysis on the CSOs comprising NGOs, academia, media, and individuals to identify the potential CSOs to promote child rights activism.
- Explore the scope and opportunities for collaboration and engagement with other civil society actors, such as academia, professional groups, cultural organizations, and media, and youth organizations in the UN advocacy on child rights.
- Organize strategic workshops with the leadership of the CSOs at different divisions and outline strategies on increased engagement of the CSOs in UN advocacy on child rights.
- Take strategic actions to ensure increased and effective engagement of CSOs from all across the country at every stage of the UN advocacy including report preparation, and post-report follow-up to monitor the implementation of the recommendations.
- Mobilize the NGOs affiliated with the recognized network on child rights, such as BSAF members across the country, as many of them have previous experience of contributing to the CRC alternative reports, and have keenness to be engaged in the process.
- Organize capacity-building events targeting local CSOs from across the country, and develop e learning courses in Bangla on UN human rights mechanisms.
- Design capacity-building activities targeting law students from the different public and private universities to promote child rights activism and develop pool of experts on child rights.
- Facilitate dissemination of information on different available opportunities for capacity building on UN human rights mechanisms among CSOs across the country.
- Connect the local CSOs and NGOs with the available resources and opportunities offered by OHCHR and other NGOs.
- Connect the local CSOs with the human rights desk in UN Resident Coordinator's Office in Bangladesh as the office can provide support and technical assistance in information dissemination and capacity building on UN human rights mechanisms.
- Introduce an online Resource Hub on UN human rights mechanisms on child rights with contextualized resources in Bangla.
- Introduce mentorship/exchange learning/internship programme on UN human rights advocacy on child rights targeting CSOs/NGOs from all geographic locations.
- Extend communication and collaboration with different diplomatic missions to mobilize fund to build capacity of the local CSOs on UN human rights mechanisms on child rights.

- Organize targeted capacity building events on report writing and data generation for the CSOs enabling them to produce and provide authentic data for the reporting purpose.

### **Recommendations for the local CSOs**

- Consider advocacy and UN advocacy on child rights as organizational priority, devise strategy and carry out implementation accordingly. Seek cooperation and support from the national level organizations/networks to carry out planned interventions on UN advocacy on child rights.
- Mobilize themselves through local alliances (possibly at the divisional level) to promote activism on child rights and carry out local level advocacy on child rights.
- Explore alternative funding opportunities, such as individual philanthropists committed on child rights, private sectors, and MFIs to address the resource constraint on advocacy on child rights

## **Introduction**

Since its establishment in 2013, Child Rights Advocacy Coalition, Bangladesh (CRAC'B), an alliance of national NGOs, networks and INGOs has been actively engaging with different international advocacy mechanisms, particularly with Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) to advance the fulfillment of child rights in Bangladesh. Some significant achievements of the Coalition in engaging with the UN Advocacy mechanisms include submission of the UPR stakeholders' report on child rights, submission of alternative report to the UNCRC, attending the UPR Pre-sessions in Geneva before each review to present child rights issues, and conducting evidence-based advocacy at national level for the protection and promotion of child rights in Bangladesh.

However, the Coalition felt the necessity of wider collaborations on UN human rights advocacy engaging stakeholders from all levels, i.e., local, regional, national and international, to make the voices of CSOs stronger and bring effective changes both in policy and practices on child rights. Nevertheless, in reality only a small number of child rights-focused organizations are involved in UN advocacy, despite the importance of UN human rights mechanisms in holding the government accountable for their commitments and obligations to uphold the human rights of the citizens. Lack of capacity among non-government stakeholders regarding UN human rights mechanisms has been identified as the main barrier for the CSOs to engage with UN advocacy and ensure robust collaborative efforts to strengthen UN advocacy on child rights in Bangladesh, a powerful tool for influencing the government from multiple ends. Furthermore, regional and local level organizations have fewer opportunities and expertise in these aspects.

In such a context, Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), the Secretariat of the CRAC,B commissioned this research on the "A Study on Child Rights related UPR and UNCRC reporting capacity of CSOs in Bangladesh" under the project "Civil Society Organizations advancing Child rights activism through the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) mechanism in Bangladesh", funded by the European Union in Bangladesh.

## **Objectives and scopes of the study**

The overall objective of this study is to assess the reporting capacity of the CSOs and explore the mechanisms available in this regard. The specific objectives of this study include:

- To identify the gaps in the implementation of child rights, as well as obstacles that CSOs encounter in relation to child rights advocacy and other related initiatives;
- To assess the capacity requirements of the CSOs for the participation in UN human rights mechanisms, particularly in UPR and UNCRC;
- To identify the mechanisms available for the CSOs in Bangladesh to enhance their capacity on UN advocacy; and

- To formulate recommendations to enhance the capacity of the CSOs in reporting and conducting advocacy using these two UN mechanisms.

## **Methodological approach**

The study used both primary and secondary data utilizing qualitative tools, such as literature review, focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and consultation meetings with the relevant stakeholders. However, the study also generated a small volume of quantitative information from the individual interviews with the CSOs on capacity in engaging with UN human rights advocacy mechanisms.

The study applied a participatory approach and engaged relevant ASK representatives in different stages of the study including the finalization of the study methodology, selection of the stakeholders for the primary data collection.

### **Literature review**

The study reviewed documents that contain information and analysis on participation of CSOs in UPR and UNCRC mechanisms on child rights issues that includes Stakeholders' Report on UPR, State Party Reports on UNCRC and Alternative/Shadow Reports on CRC. The study also reviewed documents containing information on the capacity building opportunities for CSOs on UN advocacy.

### **Individual Interviews (IIs)**

The study conducted 24 individual interviews with the representatives of the local, regional, and national CSOs from across the country to assess the capacity of the organizations on UN human rights advocacy focusing on child rights. The individual interviews focused on the knowledge and awareness of the organization/staff about the UN human rights mechanisms, status of participation in UN advocacy, challenges and constraints in engaging with UN advocacy, aspirations and commitment to participate in UN advocacy. These individual interviews were conducted online to ensure that the maximum number of organizations could be covered from different locations in a cost effective manner.

### **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)**

To ensure validation and triangulation of the data received from the individual interviews, the study conducted four FGDs with the CSOs covering all geographic divisions. FGDs targeted to reach CSOs/individuals implementing different types of interventions, such as service providing organizations (facilitating education, health, providing legal aid, shelter support etc.), research, advocacy and awareness raising organizations.

### **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)**

The study conducted seven KIIs with the representatives of different national and international NGOs/UN offices working on child rights that included the CRAC, B members to get their views on the capacity gaps and about potential scopes to enhance capacities of the CSOs enabling their engagement in UN human rights advocacy on child rights.

## Consultations

The study also organized three consultations in three divisional headquarters, i.e. Sylhet, Chattogram and Dhaka with the CSOs/individuals working on different issues of child rights.

Data collection tools		No of stakeholders reached		
Tools used	No of tools	Women	Men	Total
Individual Interviews (IIs)	24	9	15	24
Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)	4	8	11	19
Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)	7	4	3	7
Consultations	3	17	19	36
<b>Total number of stakeholders consulted</b>	-	37	48	85

## Ethical considerations

The study ensured compliance with basic ethical principles, such as voluntary and informed participation of the respondents, maintaining confidentiality and anonymity in the entire data collection process and report writing. The study also ensured compliance with the do no **harm principle** so that the respondents did not experience any harm because of their participation in the study.

Ethical issues regarding gender sensitivity, child protection and respect to cultural diversity have been maintained in all stages of the assignment.

## Study limitations

The scope of this study was limited to two specific UN mechanisms, namely UPR and CRC, and other mechanisms, such as the Special Procedures and Complaints Procedure and other treaty bodies mechanisms were beyond the scope of the study. The study was also limited to reviewing the participation of the NGOs in UN advocacy on child rights, and other civil society actors, such as academia, media, and community based organizations, professional groups were beyond the scope of the study.

Besides, the study encountered several limitations during primary data collection. It was quite difficult to find the CSOs (NGOs) with focused works on child rights, and though the study team tried to access the contact of the child rights focused CSOs from different publicly available databases, such as database of Bangladesh Sishu Adhikar Forum (BSAF) and CAMPE, both the databases were quite old, and the contact addresses were not updated. There was also delay in getting schedule from the respondents due to their busy schedule, and at the very last moment, some expressed unwillingness to participate in the study given that they do not have any particular advocacy on child rights.

## Key study findings

### Overview of UN human rights mechanisms

The United Nations human rights system consists of the two main types of bodies: Charter-based bodies and Treaty-based bodies. Charter-based bodies (or charter bodies) are those created under the United Nations Charter, which includes Human Rights Council, Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and Special Procedures. Treaty-based bodies (or treaty bodies) are those created under the international human rights treaties. The treaty bodies are committees of the independent experts that monitor the implementation of the core international human rights treaties. They are created in accordance with the provisions of the treaty that they monitor<sup>1</sup>. There are ten human rights Treaty Bodies to monitor implementation of the core international human rights treaties.

These different mechanisms have varying mandates, procedures and activities, but their observations and recommendations serve to inform political and legal action to improve human rights situation across the world.

**The Universal Periodic Review (UPR)** is a unique process that involves a review of the human rights records of all UN Member States. The UPR is a state-driven process, under the auspices of the Human Rights Council, which provides the opportunity for each State to declare what actions they have taken to improve the human rights situations in their countries and to fulfill their human rights obligations. The UPR is a cooperative mechanism, based on an interactive dialogue with the State under review. This mechanism creates a unique platform for policy dialogue between Governments, civil society, and other relevant stakeholders. The outcomes of the review are a document with recommendations made to the State under Review (SuR) by the reviewing States; the response of the SuR to the recommendations, as well as any other voluntary commitment by the State. Currently, the UPR operates on a 5-year review cycle. Forty-two States are reviewed each year during three 2-week sessions of the HRC's UPR working group (14 States each session). The UPR working group is made up of the 47 members of the Council<sup>2</sup>.

**The Special Procedures** mandate holders are made up of special rapporteurs, independent experts or working groups composed of five members who are appointed by the Council and who serve in their personal capacity. They may have either thematic or country-specific mandates. They undertake country visits; act/intervene with States on individual cases and/ or broader human rights situations; conduct thematic studies and issue annual reports; raise public awareness; and provide advice for technical cooperation. The experts report at least once a year to the Council on their findings and recommendations, as well as to the UN General Assembly<sup>3</sup>.

An important characteristic of these monitoring mechanisms is that they can address human rights situations at a worldwide level, even if a country has not ratified a particular human rights instrument.

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<sup>1</sup> Qumrunnessa Nazly, United Nations Human Rights Mechanism, ASK (2011)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.glowm.com/pdf/AWHHR-chapter2.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/special-procedures>

**The complaint procedure** addresses consistent patterns of gross and reliably attested violations of all human rights and fundamental freedoms occurring in any part of the world and under any circumstances. The Council Institution building resolution (HRC resolution, 5/1) set out the working modality of the procedure. The complaint procedure is based on communications received from individuals, groups or organizations that claim to be victims of human rights violations or that have direct, reliable knowledge of such violations. The Council's complaint procedure is the only universal complaint procedure covering all human rights and all fundamental freedoms in all States.

A complaint under this procedure can be submitted against a state and state does not need to be a party to a treaty for a complaint against it to be submitted under this procedure. However, the procedure deals with consistent patterns of gross human rights violations in a State, in other words affecting a larger number of people, rather than individual cases<sup>4</sup>

**The human rights treaty bodies** are committees of independent human rights experts, nominated and elected by State parties for a period of 4 years, renewable to another term of 4 years. Treaty bodies perform a number of functions in accordance with the provisions of the treaties that established them. The primary mandate, common to all treaty bodies, is to monitor the implementation of the relevant treaty by reviewing the reports submitted periodically by State parties<sup>5</sup>. Indeed, when a State ratifies a treaty, it accepts to submit periodic reports to the relevant treaty body on how the rights defined by the treaty are being implemented in the country and provide information on any challenge they have encountered, as well as on the measures the State has put in place to overcome them. There are currently ten human rights treaty bodies that monitor implementation of the core international human rights treaties.

### **Scope of participation of CSOs in the UN human rights mechanisms**

There are opportunities for CSOs to participate in all the UN human rights mechanisms. Engaging with the different UN human rights mechanisms is an important way for the civil society to contribute to the implementation of human rights and the development of concrete human rights guidelines. At the national level, civil society plays a critical role through monitoring, awareness raising and follow-up activities relevant to the different mechanisms.

### **CSOs participation in UPR process**

CSOs can contribute to each of the three stages of the UPR process, a unique opportunity for the CSOs to advance human rights at intergovernmental and national levels.

- CSO can contribute to the elaboration of the national report prepared by the SuR, and they can submit information to the OHCHR, to be incorporated into the summary of stakeholders' document.
- They can attend the review of the State at the Working Group on UPR, although they cannot take part in the interactive dialogue, and can attend the plenary HRC session.

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<sup>4</sup> [https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/complaint-procedure/hrc-complaint-procedure-index#:~:text=The%20complaint%20procedure%20addresses%20consistent,1%20of%2018%20June%202007\).](https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/complaint-procedure/hrc-complaint-procedure-index#:~:text=The%20complaint%20procedure%20addresses%20consistent,1%20of%2018%20June%202007).)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/NgoHandbook/ngohandbook4.pdf>

- NGOs with ECOSOC-status can make “general comments” before the adoption of the outcome report and can submit written statements.
- CSOs can also follow-up the implementation of the UPR recommendations, and can carry out different activities, such as disseminating the UPR outcome report in the country.
- They can review the progress on a regular basis; and lobby with the Government for the submission of a mid-term report.

### **CSOs participation and engagement with special procedures**

- CSOs can submit complaints on alleged human rights violations or provide information on specific human rights concerns to the special procedures.
- They can provide information and analysis on specific human rights concerns; and provide support for special procedures’ country visits.
- CSOs can work locally or nationally to advocate, disseminate, follow up and implement the work of special procedures; and invite special procedures mandate-holders to participate in their own initiatives;
- They can meet individual mandate-holders throughout the year and participate in the annual meeting of special procedures mandate-holders.
- Once a visit has been scheduled, they can send written information on the relevant human rights issues.
- Civil society actors can also nominate candidates as special procedures mandate-holders.

### **CSOs participation and engagement with UN treaty bodies**

There are opportunities for civil society actors to engage with human rights treaty bodies in all stages of the reporting cycle. All treaty bodies provide general information/guidelines for civil society organizations on participation in the work of the Committee, as well as specific information on participation for upcoming sessions of the treaty bodies.

- CSOs can submit additional information to the committee through written reports also called “alternative” or “complementary” reports. Although the modalities for submitting information vary from one treaty to another, civil society actors should submit their additional information after the State party has submitted its own report and before the constructive dialogue takes place.
- In some cases, Committees welcome written information by civil society actors also at the pre-sessional working groups, to inform the process of identification and elaboration of the list of issues [as in the case of Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)].
- CSOs can also register as observers at sessions or pre-sessional working groups of any of the Committees.



- However, most Committees set aside time for oral submissions by civil society actors during their reporting session, either in the plenary meetings or in separate closed meetings.
- CSOs can also organize informal meetings and lunchtime meetings with Committee members.
- CSOs can also submit information in the framework of the follow-up procedures established by different treaty bodies. CSOs can also submit individual complaints to different treaty bodies.

### **Child rights specific UN human rights mechanisms**

The generic human rights mechanisms as outlined above are equally applicable for the children's rights. However, there are some specific mechanisms for children, such as UN Committee on CRC, Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons etc.

#### **List of Special Rapporteurs relevant for children's rights**

- Special Rapporteur on the right to education
- Special Rapporteur on the right to food
- Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health
- Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context
- Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights
- Special Rapporteur on the sale, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children
- Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children
- Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences
- Working Group on discrimination against women and girls

CSOs can engage with the advocacy using all these charter based mechanisms, and treaty based mechanisms as highlighted above to advance children's rights. However, in case of engagement with the UN treaty bodies where CSOs can nationally advocate for the ratification of a particular treaty, they can only engage with the concerned treaty bodies once these are ratified by the concerned state and submit the state party report.

Accordingly, CSOs in Bangladesh can access all the charter-based bodies, such as UPR process, Special Procedures, Complaints Procedure etc. and can engage with the treaty bodies provided that the state already ratified the particular treaty. CSOs can also engage with the treaty bodies formed within the scope of the different treaties to monitor the implementation of the respective treaties, such CEDAW, CRC etc.

## **Current scenario of CSOs participation in UN human rights advocacy on child rights**

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play vital role in the international human rights system. The work of the UN human rights machinery is underpinned by the participation of CSAs. At the international level, civil society contributes expertise, awareness-raising, and monitoring and reporting on human rights issues and violations. CSAs help develop new human rights standards, mechanisms, and institutions, and mobilize resources and public support for human rights issues<sup>6</sup>.

The basis for NGOs' involvement in UN is article 71 of its charter. In article 71, it has been said, "The Economic and Social Council may make suitable arrangements for consulting with non-governmental organizations which are concerned with matters within its competence. Such arrangements may be made with international organizations and, where appropriate, with national organizations after consultation with the member of the United Nations concerned." Through this provision, ECOSOC is authorized to organize consultations with the non-governmental organizations concerned with the matters dealt by the ECOSOC. Based on this ECOSOC has framed rules to enable participation of NGOs in order to facilitate consultation with them. This arrangement enabled NGOs to participate in some important UN fora, such as UN Human Rights Council, Sessions of the CSW, treaty bodies etc. However, NGOs without UNECOSOC status can also participate in UN human rights advocacy in different ways.

Bangladesh has a long history of engaging UN human rights mechanisms in the advancement human rights in general as well as in the promotion of child rights in Bangladesh. There has been participation of NGOs on child rights specific UN mechanisms, such as UNCRC since long. The literature review found submission of alternative reports to the UNCRC since 1996. It found the records of submission of alternative reports to UNCRC by different NGOs and networks, such as Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum (BSAF), MJF, ActionAid, BNWLA, NGO Coalition, Network of NGOs working in Protecting and Promotion of the Rights of the Children in Bangladesh, Save the Children Alliance etc.<sup>7</sup>. In recent times, Child Rights Advocacy Coalition in Bangladesh (CRAC, B), Joining Forces Bangladesh (JFB), and actively participate in UN child rights mechanisms.

However, the study found that participation of NGOs in UN human rights mechanisms are limited to a few national and international NGOs, and participation of local CSOs are limited to the participation in consultation and in providing data as and when required by the national organizations. The study found that national level organizations and/or network members engage their partners at local levels in consultation or in getting data for the reporting purpose, and the local CSOs who are not affiliated with any national or international organizations do not get the scope of such engagement.

The individual interviews conducted with the 24 CSOs from eight different geographic divisions find that only five CSOs out of total 24 CSOs are engaged in UN human rights advocacy, and almost all of them are engaged through different national level organizations or

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<sup>6</sup> [https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/CS\\_space\\_UNHRSysytem\\_Guide\\_0.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/CS_space_UNHRSysytem_Guide_0.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> <https://childrightsconnect.org/alternative-report-archive/>

networks. They mentioned different organizations and the networks, such as BNPS, Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum, ASK, Breaking the Silence, Steps Towards Development through which they (the interviewed NGOs) are engaged with the UN human rights advocacy.

The study indicated that despite that, national level platforms feel the need of active engagement of the local CSOs/NGOs, there are lack of initiatives from the existing platforms on UN advocacy to engage them, and the underlying reasons are lack of proper planning and resource constraints. Another important aspect to be noted that though CSOs comprise different types of actors, NGOs, academia, media, community based organizations, professional groups, cultural organizations etc.; the participation in UN advocacy is limited to NGOs only.

### **Challenges and constraints for CSOs to engage in UN advocacy on child rights**

The study found lack of knowledge and experience on UN human rights mechanisms, lack of financial resource, and lack of organizational priority as the main challenges for the CSOs in Bangladesh to engage in UN advocacy on child rights. Lack of English language skills have also been identified as a barrier for the local CSOs to participate in UN advocacy on child rights.

Lack of activism on child rights has been identified as the fundamental blockade to increased participation of CSOs in UN advocacy on child rights. The study findings indicated that CSOs in Bangladesh are more involved in service delivery than on advocacy on child rights, such as facilitating education and health services for the poor and disadvantaged children. Though new generation youth organizations are doing commendable jobs in different areas of child rights, but they also mainly work on service delivery than the advocacy on the protection and promotion of child rights. Individual Interviews with the 24 organizations revealed that all these organizations are engaged in service delivery on child rights issues, and community awareness where only nine are engaged in advocacy. Participants of FGDs and consultations confirmed this phenomenon, and shared that there are no such local advocacy on child rights.

The study also disclosed a gap in knowledge on overall UN human rights mechanisms. Almost all the study participants recognized the knowledge gaps as one of the main barriers in engaging with UN human rights mechanisms. Several study participants highlighted the specific gaps in capacity on report writing and data generation. Besides, lack of sharing and coordination between local and national organizations and resource constraint have been identified as other barriers in ensuring wider engagement of the CSOs in different UN centric advocacy on child rights.

Out of total 24 participants of individual interviews, 14 participants could name the mechanisms, such as UN CEDAW Committee, UN Special Procedures, UNCRC and UPR etc. where the rest 10 do not have any idea on the UN human rights mechanisms. With regard to a question on knowledge on different interventions that CSOs can undertake using UN human rights mechanisms, only two participants of the individual interviews could rightly mention about the activities, namely reporting on child rights issues, and follow up on the implementation of the recommendations of the different UN bodies.

### **Challenges and constraints for CSOs**

*Lack of knowledge and understanding on UN human rights mechanisms; Resource constraint; Lack of willingness and organizational priority; lack of commitment on child rights; Lack of English language skills; Lack of capacity on report writing; and lack of expertise on data generation*

The study found that there are some initiatives by the CRAC, B and Joining Forces Bangladesh to engage the local CSOs, such as organizing consultations as part of the report preparation process, printing and publications of the recommendations in Bangla language, organizing capacity building training for the NGOs on UN advocacy on child rights. But, these initiatives are very limited in number and coverage.

Interestingly, consultations with the local NGOs highlighted that since engagement of local NGOs is limited to providing information, they remain in darkness about the output of the relevant international advocacy. This trend demoralizes the local CSOs to have ownership in the process.

Furthermore, the study revealed several interconnected problems that adversely affect child rights advocacy endeavors. These problems include donor reliance on child rights advocacy, short-term projects, insufficient knowledge and devotion to child rights matters, a lack of commitment from the leadership of the organization concerning child rights advocacy, and an unfavorable perspective from the government actors regarding advocacy. These issues also have negative impact on CSOs' involvement in UN human rights advocacy on child rights.

The study also indicated the need for exploring alternative funding opportunities to address the resource constraint of the local and national CSOs. The stakeholders suggested mobilizing the micro finance institutions to spend certain amount of their profit on the protection and promotion of child rights as part of CSR, and emphasized on the communication and collaboration with the diplomatic missions to explore funding availability to build capacity of the local CSOs ensuring wider participation of the CSOs in relevant UN advocacy. The study participants also emphasized on the urgency of revitalizing the wider networks and platforms on child rights, like Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum (BASF) to mobilize the local CSOs promoting activism on child rights.

Finally, capacity building of CSOs through training, information sharing and engaging local CSOs in all the cycles of the different UN human rights mechanisms have been suggested by the study participants as the way forward to mobilize the wider CSOs to engage in UN advocacy.

### **Scope and opportunities for capacity building of the CSOs**

Considering the importance of the participation of the local CSOs in UN human rights advocacy to promote and protect human rights at the state level, OHCHR and other non-government organizations provide capacity-building support to the CSOs across the world. However, the study indicated that CSOs lack information about the available scopes and opportunities for the capacity building of the CSOs on UN human rights advocacy.

This study highlights different training programs and resources offered by OHCHR and other non-government organizations.

### **OHCHR Fellowship and Training Programmes**

The fellowship and training programmes have been created by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to increase civil society's role and participation in human rights mechanisms.

OHCHR organizes workshops and seminars for national actors in their own countries to strengthen their capacity to contribute to the treaty reporting process and follow up on the recommendations of treaty bodies. OHCHR engages with NHRIs, NGOs and representatives of the media at the national level in these workshops to build capacity and encourage the creation of networks of national actors to support the implementation of the respective human rights treaty body recommendations.

### **OHCHR Publications and Resource Materials**

The publications programme of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) aims to raise awareness of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and to publicize ways of promoting and protecting them worldwide.

There are five major categories of publications, such as fact sheets, special issue papers, training and educational materials, reference materials etc. Of these publications, **fact sheets** provide information on a wide range of human rights topics; **special issue papers** explore selected issues in greater depth. And, **OHCHR training and educational material** consists of guides, manuals and handbooks for indigenous peoples, minorities, professional groups and educational institutions; **reference material** provides human rights practitioners with key human rights instruments and jurisprudence; and **human rights basics** inform the general public about United Nations human rights work.

### **Other OHCHR resource materials**

The OHCHR website is a useful resource for finding publications, reference material and other documentation related to international human rights mechanisms and to OHCHR activities. The main page of the OHCHR website has search boxes that direct users to human rights information, including official documents, by country, by issue or by professional interest. All official United Nations documentation can also be accessed online through the Official Document System of the United Nations.

Besides, there are a number of funds and grants, some of which are directly managed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), which directly benefit civil society actors, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), grass-roots organizations, professional associations and individuals. These can provide financial support for civil society activities in certain human rights areas.

**OHCHR's Civil Society Unit** also offers services to strengthening engagement between civil society and the UN human rights programme and provides information on a broad range of issues. This unit facilitates learning, knowledge transfer and sharing of experience in the realization and promotion of human rights and strengthening of national institutions; deliver human rights education programmes as to promote a human rights culture; raising human rights awareness; facilitating dialogue among diverse stakeholders on human rights issues; and supporting engagement and functioning of the International Human Rights Mechanisms.

**UPR Info** is a Geneva-based NGO that aims to raise awareness of the UPR and supports the effective and meaningful participation of civil society in the UPR process. This organization raises awareness and provides capacity-building tools to all UPR stakeholders, including UN Member States, CSOs, and NHRIs.

**Child Rights Connect** is a unique resource for children's rights defenders, including children, to be more effective in holding States accountable by using the UN human rights system for their advocacy.

The organization provide knowledge, advice and connections to children's rights defenders, including children, on how to influence and use the UN human rights system for sustainable change at national level. It provides capacity building on the UN human rights mechanisms to children's rights defenders through direct or online trainings and seminars, as well as through making training materials available on its website. Direct training is provided preferably to member organisations of Child Rights Connect, who can ensure multiplication of the knowledge through their organization and networks at regional, national and local levels.

**Internship Programme of Forum Asia** also offers the opportunity for the local CSOs to gain practical experience and skills on United Nations Advocacy Programme, particularly on UN Human Rights Council and its related bodies, and UN human rights treaty bodies through monitoring, individual communication, documentation (counter-report), lobby, implementation etc.

#### **Customized Training Courses offered by Geneva Academy**

Training Hub of Geneva Academy organizes customized training courses for international organizations, NGOs, governments or National Human Rights Institutions related to their engagement with the United Nations (UN) human rights mechanisms or on specific human rights. These courses are tailored to the needs of partners and audiences and combine the Geneva Academy's human rights expertise with the network and outreach of the Geneva Human Rights Platform.

#### **Publications and resource materials in Bangla**

There are also publications and resource materials of Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), and other existing networks, such as CRAC, B and HRFB on UN Human Rights Mechanisms, and on advocacy on child rights.

## Conclusion and recommendations

Participation of CSOs from the grass root levels in the UN human rights mechanisms is crucial to bring the grass root issues and realities to the world forum and make the respective governments accountable for their national and international commitments. However, in practice, the participation of local CSOs in UN human rights mechanisms is very poor. Financial constraints, lacking of sufficient knowledge and skill on UN mechanism, advocacy not being priority work, and UN not being in the priority platform in their advocacy strategies etc. are the main reasons behind the low participation of local CSOs in the UN human rights advocacy.

In order to increase involvement of CSOs in UN advocacy for children's rights, deliberate and proactive efforts must be made to address all underlying causes as highlighted in the study. To ensure a holistic view on children's rights, it is also necessary to ensure that CSOs' participation extends beyond the fringes of NGOs and includes other civil society actors, such as academia, media, professional groups, cultural organizations, and community activists. Additionally, strategies for advancing child rights activism in the country must be developed, guaranteeing successful child rights advocacy involving various national and international platforms, such as UN mechanisms.

Against this backdrop, the study puts forward several recommendations targeting both the national and local CSOs to increase their active participation in the different UN mechanisms on child rights.

### **Recommendations for CRCAC, B and other national level CSOs who are already engaged in UN advocacy on child rights**

- Carry out a nationwide mapping and analysis on the CSOs comprising NGOs, academia, media, and expert individuals etc. to identify the potential CSOs to promote child rights activism.
- Explore the scope and opportunities for collaboration and engagement with other civil society actors, such as academia, professional groups, cultural organizations, and media, and youth organizations in the UN advocacy on child rights.
- Organize strategic workshops with the leadership of the CSOs and outline strategies on increased engagement of the CSOs in UN advocacy on child rights.
- Take strategic actions to ensure increased and effective engagement of CSOs from all across the country at every stage of the UN advocacy including report preparation, and post-report follow-up to monitor the implementation of the recommendations.
- 
- Mobilize the NGOs affiliated with the recognized network on child rights, such as BSAF members across the country, as many of them have previous experience of contributing to the CRC alternative reports, and have keenness to be engaged in the process.
- Organize capacity-building events targeting local CSOs from across the country, and develop e learning courses in Bangla on UN human rights mechanisms.

- Design capacity-building activities targeting law students from the different public and private universities to promote child rights activism and develop pool of experts on child rights.
- Facilitate dissemination of information on different available opportunities for capacity building on UN human rights mechanisms among CSOs across the country.
- Connect the local CSOs and NGOs with the available resources and opportunities offered by OHCHR and other NGOs.
- Connect the local CSOs with the human rights desk in UN Resident Coordinator's Office in Bangladesh, as the office can provide support and technical assistance in information dissemination and capacity building on UN human rights mechanisms.
- Introduce an online Resource Hub on UN human rights mechanisms on child rights with contextualized resources in Bangla.
- Introduce mentorship/exchange learning/internship program on UN human rights advocacy on child rights targeting CSOs/NGOs from all geographic locations.
- Extend communication and collaboration with different diplomatic missions to mobilize fund to build capacity of the local CSOs on UN human rights mechanisms on child rights.
- Organize targeted capacity building events on report writing and data generation for the CSOs enabling them to produce and provide authentic data for the reporting.

### **Recommendations for the local CSOs to be engaged in UN advocacy on child rights**

- Consider advocacy and UN advocacy on child rights as organizational priority, devise strategy and carry out implementation accordingly. Seek cooperation and support from the national level organizations/networks to carry out planned interventions on UN advocacy on child rights.
- Mobilize themselves through local alliances (possibly at the divisional level) to promote activism on child rights and carry out local level advocacy on child rights.
- Explore alternative funding opportunities, such as individual philanthropists committed on child rights, private sectors, and MFIs to address the resource constraint on advocacy on child rights.



## **Annexure**

### **Annex 1: Data collection tools**

**A Study on Child Rights related UPR and UNCRC reporting capacity of  
CSOs in Bangladesh  
Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK)  
Secretariat, Child Rights Advocacy Coalition, Bangladesh (CRAC'B)**

**July-August 2023**

**Individual Interviews with CSOs**

#### **Basic information**

1	Name of the organization	
2	Name of the chief executive and contact address	
3	Length of operation	
4	Geographic coverage	
5	Legal (registration) status: Name of the agencies registered with and the year of registration	
6	Organizational vision and mission	

This information is collected as part of data collection for the Research study on Child Rights related UPR and UNCRC reporting capacity and mechanism in Bangladesh Context, commissioned by Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), as the Secretariat of the Child Rights Advocacy Coalition, Bangladesh (CRAC'B).

The overall objective of this research is to assess the reporting capacity of the CSOs and explore the mechanisms available in this regard, and formulate recommendations to build capacity of CSOs on UN Advocacy on Child Rights. The information will not be used for any purposes other than the purpose as mentioned above.

SL	Questions	Answer (Code)	Answer (Code)
<b>1. Scope of interventions</b>			
1.1	Thematic focus of interventions		Child protection (violence against children, sexual exploitation and abuse, child trafficking, child marriage, Child labour etc.) =1 Child Education=2 Child Health=3 Rights of marginalized and disadvantaged children(Children with disability, Indigenous children, Street children, Children in climate vulnerable areas)=4 Children of tea workers=5 Dalit children=6
1.2	Type of interventions		Service delivery (facilitating education, health, birth registration, providing legal aid, shelter support etc.)=1 Research, advocacy=2 Community awareness=3
<b>2. Knowledge and understanding about UN Advocacy on Human Rights</b>			
2.1	What are different UN Human rights Mechanisms?		Please name the mechanisms:
2.2	What mechanisms can be used on child rights issues?		Please name the mechanisms that can be used on child rights issues:
2.3	What are the various interventions that CSOs can undertake using UN Human Rights Mechanisms on Child Rights?		Please describe the type of interventions that CSOs can undertake using UN Human Rights Mechanisms on Child Rights:
<b>3. UN Advocacy specific interventions</b>			
3.1	Do you have any interventions engaging UN Human Rights mechanisms?		Yes=1 No=2
3.2	If yes, What are the mechanisms?		UN Treaty Bodies(UNCRC, UNCEDAW)=1 UN Special Procedures=2 UPR=3 Others=4
<b>4. Staff composition and capacity on advocacy</b>			
4.1	How many staff your organisation currently have (with gender disaggregated data)	Total:	Women=1 Men=2 Other identity=3

4.2	Do you have staff with dedicated role on advocacy?		Yes=1 No=2
4.3	If yes, no of staff with dedicated role on advocacy	Total:	Women=1 Men=2 Other identity=3
4.4	Are staff of your organization trained on advocacy?		Yes=1 No=2
4.5	If yes, no of staff trained on advocacy	Total:	Women=1 Men=2 Other identity=3
<b>5. Staff composition and capacity on UN Advocacy</b>			
5.1	Do you have staff with specific responsibility on UN Advocacy?		Yes=1 No=2
5.2	If yes, what are their specific responsibilities?		Please describe:
5.3	Do you have of staff with training on UN Advocacy?		Yes=1 No=2
5.4	If yes, could you please specify the topics of the trainings they attended.		Training on UN advocacy in general=1 Training on UN advocacy on child rights=2 Others=3
5.5	If yes, please provide the name of the training providers		Please describe:
<b>6. Organisational experience on UN Advocacy</b>			
6.1	Are you engaged in UN Advocacy?		Yes=1 No=2
6.2	If yes, in which capacity:		Individual=1 Coalition/Network=2
6.3	If you are engaged in UN Advocacy through network, mention the name of the network		Please mention the name
6.4	If answer of 5.1 is yes, then mention the name of the mechanisms you engaged with.		UPR=1 UN Special Procedures=2 UN treaty Bodies=3 Others=4
6.5	If answer of 5.1 is yes, what was/is your thematic focus of interventions?		Child Rights=1 Women's Rights=2 Others (Please specify)=3
6.6	If answer of 5.1 is yes, is engagement with UN mechanisms part of your regular activities?		Yes=1 No=2
6.7	If answer of 5.6 is no, then when did you engage in UN advocacy?		Please mention the name of the year
6.8	(Related to 6.5). If you are engaged with UN Advocacy on Child Rights, please mention the nature of your engagement.		Individual=1 Coalition/Network=2
6.9	If you engage with any network on UN Advocacy on Child Rights,		Please mention the name of the network/coalition.

	please mention the name of the network/coalition.		
6.10	Which of the mechanisms do you use on UN advocacy on Child Rights?		UPR =1 UN Special Procedures=2 UN treaty Bodies=3
6.11	What is your thematic focus of interventions?		Child protection (violence against children, sexual exploitation and abuse, child trafficking, child marriage, Child labour etc.) =1 Child Education=2 Child Health=3 Rights of marginalized and disadvantaged children(Children with disability, Indigenous children, Street children, Children in climate vulnerable areas)=4 Children of tea workers=5 Dalit children=6 Others=7
6.12	What are the types of interventions you are engaged with on child rights related UN Advocacy?		Preparing stakeholders report/alternative report for UPR/UNCRC= 1  Attending sessions at UPR/UNCRC=2  Advocacy with the government to implement recommendations of UPR/UNCRC=3  Research on Bangladesh's Progress on implementation of recommendations of UPR/UNCRC=4  Others= 5
7. Any future plan ( only for those who does not have any engagement with UN Advocacy on Child Rights yet)			
7.1	If you are not engaged in UN advocacy on child rights, do you have any future plan to engage in UN Advocacy on Child Rights?		Yes=1 No=2
7.2	If no, what are the reasons behind?		Please describe:
7.3	Do you think it is important to engage with UN Human Rights Mechanisms to advance child rights in Bangladesh?		Yes=1 No=2
7.4	If yes, why do you think so?		Please describe:
8. Challenges and constraints			
8.1	What are the challenges and constraints for you to engage with UN Human Rights Mechanisms to advance child rights in Bangladesh?		Lack of knowledge and experience=1 Lack of organizational priority=2 Lack of information =3 Lack of financial Resource=4

			Others(Please describe)=5
8.2	How these constraints could be addressed?		Please describe:
8.3	How the knowledge and capacity gaps could be addressed?		Please describe:
<b>9. Scope and opportunities for capacity building</b>			
9.1	Do you know any scope and opportunities on capacity building on UN Mechanisms?		Yes=1 No=2
9.2	If yes, have you ever participated in any such capacity building events?		Yes=1 No=2
9.3	How can you avail those opportunities?		Please describe
<b>10. Any other comments</b>			

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**July-August 2023**

**FGD Checklist**

**Identification Information**

I	Total members in the FGD session	Women: Total:	Men:	Other identity:
II	Upazila/ Municipality/ City Corporation			
III	District:			
IV	Date of FGD			
V	FGD Facilitated by (name):			

This FGD is conducted as part of data collection for the Research study on Child Rights related UPR and UNCRC reporting capacity and mechanism in Bangladesh Context, commissioned by Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), as the Secretariat of the Child Rights Advocacy Coalition, Bangladesh (CRAC'B).

The overall objective of this research is to assess the reporting capacity of the CSOs and explore the mechanisms available in this regard, and formulate recommendations to build capacity of CSOs on UN Advocacy on Child Rights. The information will not be used for any purposes other than the purpose as mentioned above.

We are starting the discussion with your consent. If you allow, we would also like to record the conversation for convenience of documentation.

<b>Location of FGD session:</b>			
<b>Name of participant</b>	<b>Name of affiliated CSOs</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Mobile number</b>
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			

### Checklist of questions

- What are the overall gaps in the advancement of child rights in Bangladesh?
- What are the specific obstacles that CSOs encounter in relation to child rights advocacy and other related initiatives
- What are different UN Human rights Mechanisms?
- What mechanisms can be used on child rights issues?
- What are the various interventions that CSOs can undertake using UN Human Rights Mechanisms on Child Rights?
- What are your views on the importance of UN human rights advocacy in promoting child rights in Bangladesh?
- What prevents (the gaps/constraints) CSOs in engaging UN human rights advocacy?
- How the capacity of the CSOs could be enhanced? Who can provide the capacity building supports?
- What are the available capacity building opportunities for CSOs on UN human rights advocacy?
- How CSOs can avail those opportunities?
- Any other points, you would like to share?

**A Study on Child Rights related UPR and UNCRC reporting capacity of  
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Secretariat, Child Rights Advocacy Coalition, Bangladesh (CRAC'B)**

**July-August 2023  
KII Checklist**

**Identification Information**

I	Name	Women:	Men:
II	Position	Contact no:	
III	Name of upazila	Name of district	
IV	Date of KII		
V	Facilitator's name:		

This KII is conducted as part of data collection for the Research study on Child Rights related UPR and UNCRC reporting capacity and mechanism in Bangladesh Context, commissioned by Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), as the Secretariat of the Child Rights Advocacy Coalition, Bangladesh (CRAC'B).

The overall objective of this research is to assess the reporting capacity of the CSOs and explore the mechanisms available in this regard, and formulate recommendations to build capacity of CSOs on UN Advocacy on Child Rights. The information will not be used for any purposes other than the purpose as mentioned above.

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**Checklist of questions**

- What are the overall gaps and challenges in the advancement of child rights in Bangladesh?
- What are the specific gaps and obstacles that CSOs encounter in relation to child rights advocacy and other related initiatives?
- What are different UN Human rights Mechanisms?
- What mechanisms can be used on child rights issues?
- What are the various interventions that CSOs can undertake using UN Human Rights Mechanisms on Child Rights?
- What are your views on the importance of UN human rights advocacy in promoting child rights in Bangladesh?
- What prevents (the gaps/constraints) CSOs in engaging UN human rights advocacy?

- How the capacity of the CSOs could be enhanced? Who can provide the capacity building supports?
- What are the available capacity building opportunities for CSOs on UN human rights advocacy?
- How CSOs can avail those opportunities?
- Any other points, you would like to share?



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**July-August 2023**

**Concept note on Consultation**

**Background:**

Given that fact that despite the importance of UN human rights mechanisms in holding government accountable for their commitments and obligations to uphold the human rights of the citizens, only a small number of child rights-focused organizations are involved in UN advocacy. Lack of capacity among non-government stakeholders regarding UN human rights mechanisms is one of the main barriers for the CSOs to engage with UN advocacy and ensure robust collaborative efforts to strengthen UN advocacy on child rights in Bangladesh, a powerful tool for influencing the government from multiple ends. Furthermore, regional and local level organizations have fewer opportunities and expertise in these aspects.

In such a context, the CRAC,B commissioned to conduct a research study on the “**Child Rights related UPR and UNCRC reporting capacity and mechanism in Bangladesh**” under the project “**Civil Society Organizations advancing Child rights activism through the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) mechanism in Bangladesh**”.

The overall objective of this research is to assess the reporting capacity of the CSOs and explore the mechanisms available in this regard. The specific objectives of this research include:

- To identify the gaps in the implementation of child rights, as well as obstacles that CSOs encounter in relation to child rights advocacy and other related initiatives;
- To assess the capacity requirements of the CSOs for participation in UN human rights mechanisms, particularly in UPR and UNCRC;
- To identify the mechanisms available for the CSOs in Bangladesh to enhance their capacity on UN advocacy; and
- To formulate recommendations to enhance the capacity of the CSOs in reporting and conducting advocacy using these two UN mechanisms.

**About the consultation:**

Organizing consultations with the CSOs working in different areas of child rights is one of the important tools of data collection for this study. And, three such consultations will be organized in four divisional headquarters, i.e. Rajshahi/Rangpur, Sylhet, Chattogram and Dhaka with the CSOs/individuals working on different issues of child rights. Each consultation will target participants approximately 20 participants to ensure interactive and truly participatory discussion. Consultation at Dhaka will be organized as national level consultation.

**Category of participants for the consultations**

The consultations will target CSOs/networks of CSOs working in different districts under the respective divisions. It will invite CSOs working on following different areas:

- ✓ CSOs working on child protection issues that includes violence against children, sexual exploitation and abuse, child trafficking;
- ✓ CSOs working on child education

- ✓ CSOs working on child health
- ✓ Rights of marginalized and disadvantaged children, such as, children with disability, indigenous children, Dalit children etc.

**Guiding questions for the consultation**

- ✓ What are the overall gaps in the advancement of child rights in Bangladesh?
- ✓ What are the obstacles that CSOs encounter in relation to child rights advocacy and other related initiatives?
- ✓ What are different UN Human rights Mechanisms?
- ✓ What mechanisms can be used on child rights issues?
- ✓ What is the importance of UN human rights advocacy in promoting child rights in Bangladesh?
- ✓ What are the various interventions that CSOs can undertake using UN Human Rights Mechanisms on child rights?
- ✓ What are the constraints for CSOs in engaging UN human rights advocacy on child rights?
- ✓ How the capacity of the CSOs could be enhanced on UN human rights advocacy on child rights?
- ✓ What are the resources available to build capacity of CSOs on UN human rights advocacy on child rights?
- ✓ What are the available capacity building opportunities for CSOs on UN human rights advocacy?
- ✓ How CSOs can avail those opportunities?

**Draft programme schedule**

10:20-10:30	Registration
10:20-10:30	Welcome & introduction of the participants
10:30-10:40	Objectives of the consultation and sharing the consultation schedule
10:40-11:40	Group discussion: guided by the above mentioned questions
11:40-12:40	Presentation on the outputs of the group discussions
12:40-1.00	Wrap up the consultation

**Annex 2: List of the stakeholders consulted with**

## List of the participants of Individual Interviews

SL	Name and organization	Contact email/phone number
<b>Dhaka</b>		
1.	Md. Abu Taher Executive Director, Surovi	E-mail: info@surovi.org Mobile: 01674977784
2.	Shaheen Akter Dolly Executive Director Nari Maitree, Dhaka Email: narimaitree.bd@gmail.com	Email- <a href="mailto:narimaitree.bd@gmail.com">narimaitree.bd@gmail.com</a> Phone- +8801713379994
3.	Dr Md Shahid Uz Zaman Executive Director Eco Social Development Organisation (ESDO)	Email: zamanesdo@gmail.com Mobile: 01713149333
4.	Jashim Uddin, Deputy Director, Society for Underprivileged Families (SUF), Dhaka,	Email: <a href="mailto:suf.chhinno@gmail.com">suf.chhinno@gmail.com</a> & <a href="mailto:Suf.csr@gmail.com">Suf.csr@gmail.com</a> Mobile: +8801985900788 01711200269
<b>Mymensingh</b>		
5.	Md. Rafiqul Alam Mollah Executive Director UnnayanSongho Dewrpar Chandra, Jamalpur Town, Jamalpur	Email: ed@us-bd.org Mobile: +880 171 8202784
6.	Swapan Kumar Pal, Acting ED Executive Director SabalambyUnnayanSamity (SUS)	Email: <a href="mailto:sabalambysus@yahoo.com">sabalambysus@yahoo.com</a> Phone: 01730325001, 01730-325083, 01713-036730
<b>Rajshahi</b>		
7.	Rumana Khatun Executive Director Program for Eco-Social Development, PESD, Bogura, Rajshahi	Email: pesd.bogra@yahoo.com Mobile: 01712923523
8.	Salima Sarwar Executive Director Association for Community Development (ACD) Rajshahi	Email: acdbd@yahoo.com Mobile: 01711819513
9.	Md. Hasinul Islam (Chunnu) Executive Director Sachetan Society, Rajshahi	Email: sachetanraj@yahoo.com <a href="mailto:sachetansocietymf@gmail.com">sachetansocietymf@gmail.com</a> Mobile Number: 01793-040270
<b>Rangpur</b>		
10.	Md. Jomil Programme Coordinator Sponsorship Programme-Nilphamari Udayankur Seba Sangstha ( USS) Jaldhaka, Nilphamari	Web: www.ussnilphamaribd.org Facebook: www.facebook.com/uss.nilphamari " Cell Phone: +8801715235179
11.	Rabiul Azam Executive Director	Email: mkptkgbd@yahoo.com Mobile: 01715051224

	Manab Kallyan Parishad	
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<b>Khulna</b>		
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### **Annex 3: List of documents reviewed**

- Qumrunnessa Nazly, United Nations Human Rights Mechanism, ASK (2011)
- [https://childrightsconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/gravity\\_forms/57-372cd51d8b8d5302d939d3212163e38e/2018/08/DAWN\\_BD51.pdf?gv-iframe=true](https://childrightsconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/gravity_forms/57-372cd51d8b8d5302d939d3212163e38e/2018/08/DAWN_BD51.pdf?gv-iframe=true)
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- <https://www.ohchr.org/en/development/publications-and-resources>
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- <https://www.ohchr.org/en/publications/policy-and-methodological-publications/united-nations-human-rights-council-practical>
- Universal Periodic Review - A Practical Guide for Civil Society, Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/PracticalGuideCivilSociety.pdf>
- United Nations Human Rights Council - A Practical Guide for NGO Participants, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/publications/policy-and-methodological-publications/united-nations-human-rights-council-practical>
- Human Rights Funds, Grants and Fellowships - A Practical Guide for Civil Society, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/publications/policy-and-methodological-publications/human-rights-funds-grants-and-fellowships>
- CSO Net - United Nations Civil Society Network
- Working with the United Nations Human Rights Programme A Handbook for Civil Society, available at: [https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/AboutUs/CivilSociety/Documents/Handbook\\_en.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/AboutUs/CivilSociety/Documents/Handbook_en.pdf)
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- <https://childrightsconnect.org/>
- <https://www.geneva-academy.ch/>
- <https://forum-asia.org/>