World Vision Bangladesh Co-hosts 3rd Urban Dialogue 2015

To bring the undialogued urban issues in a discussion table, share actions and good practices on different urban issues, ensure collaborations among all levels of stakeholders and recognizing a common platform of actions, the 3rd Urban Dialogue 2015 was jointly organized by Urban INGO Forum, Bangladesh (a consortium of 12 International Non-Government Organizations) and Department of Disaster Science & Management of University of Dhaka. The two days long dialogue was held from 25 – 26 August 2015 at Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhaban at University of Dhaka. The theme of the 3rd Urban Dialogue was ‘Resilience’. Among other NGOs, World Vision Bangladesh was co-host in organizing the dialogue where the organization hosts two parallel sessions on Urban WASH and Solid Waste Management and one side event on children’s living experiences in the cities.

World Vision Bangladesh in 3rd Urban Dialogue 2015

In 3rd Urban Dialogue 2015, World Vision Bangladesh (WVB) hosted two parallel sessions on WASH reality in Urban Low Income Communities and Waste Management in Urban Areas: Challenges and Opportunities. The waste management session was jointly contributed by Swisscontract, Oxfam and Islamic Relief.

Besides, World Vision Bangladesh organized a children’s session on sharing their living experiences in the cities where children participated from different areas of the capital and shared their living experiences. Along with, World Vision Bangladesh also participated and contributed in organizing inaugural and concluding session of the dialogue.

3rd Urban Dialogue: At a Glance

- Inaugural and Concluding Session
- Six parallel sessions on Waste Management, WASH Challenges, Urban Livelihood, Urban Disaster Risk Reduction, Resilient Cities for the Children, Urban Housing.
- One side event on cities for children
- 700 + participants in two days long dialogue
- University of Dhaka was strategic partner
- 12 INGOs jointly organized
- Urban Declaration as outcome of the dialogue
In the welcome speech, Wilfred Sikukula, Senior Field Operations Director, WVB mentioned that this is the vital time organize dialogue for popularizing the urban issues. Referring the ever increasing trend of growing population in urban, he mentioned that urban is a reality that transcends the boundary of a country and is a global phenomenon. To address the challenges of urban including increasing risk of urban disasters; collaboration among the stakeholders particularly among the organizations is inevitable.

Professor ASM Maksud Kamal, Chairman of Disaster Science and Management, University of Dhaka focused on the complex nature of urban. He hoped the 3rd Urban Dialogue will unfold opportunities to address the urban challenges in close association with all stakeholders.

Professor Dr. Sheikh Tawhidul Islam, Department of Geography and Environment, Jahangirnagar University presented the key note of the dialogue. He pointed out that the objectives of urban planning or management were not sufficiently aligned with reducing disaster risks hence resulted in limited scope for accommodating disaster risk reduction issues and measures in current urban planning process. He also identified the spatial problems, lack of planning for low income communities and possibilities of the extension of secondary cities in his presentation.

“30% of urban people are contributing to 65% of GDP. So there is direct economic benefit from urbanization” – Prof. Dr. Nazrul Islam

Urban expert and key discussant in inaugural session, Prof. Dr. Nazrul Islam remarked that INGOs often face problem to understand urban challenges and design their program accordingly. Urbanization has expanded globally. Currently, 53% population of the world is dwelling in cities. Percentage wise it is still low for Bangladesh, 30% but the number is huge in terms of the population of Bangladesh. By 2030, more than half of the population of Bangladesh will be in urban. Urbanization in Bangladesh is spatially non-balanced. He underlined, 30% of urban people are contributing to 65% of GDP. So there is direct economic benefit from urbanization. He pointed out that though Bangladesh has made significant economic progress since liberation, still around 50% of its population belongs to lower income group.
He mentioned data on urban population is scarce. The data provided by BBS in 2011 census does not clearly define urban. Also, the number of slum dwelling population provided by BBS is not convincing. Also, segregated data is not available. He suggested for scientific mapping to generate accurate data because data provided by government and other organizations do not match and show significant discrepancy.

Outlining government’s initiatives for urban, he shared that Govt. has established Bangladesh Urban Forum but it has limited their intervention. Dr. Islam emphasize on preserving hills, water bodies and greeneries where personal safety and security of women and children is another concern in urban area. He requested NGOs to join hands with research organizations to address urban challenges and believed that these issues should be addresses to build an equitable and efficient city.

Professor Dr. Nasrin Ahmed, Pro-VC of Dhaka University mentioned that Dhaka has been named as the second least livable cities of the world. She hoped that this forum will be a platform to showcase the best practices of the INGOs and to share and exchange their views and ideas. She expected that the dialogue will opt to make sure that Bangladesh achieves urban resilience.

Shahidullah Miah, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDM&R), Special Guest detailed out govt.’s initiatives to mitigate disaster risks and related hazards and to build equitable and efficient urban areas.

Chief Guest, M.A. Mannan, State Minister, Ministry of Finance and Planning stated that Urbanization is growing rapidly in Bangladesh and in near future the whole country could develop as one city with advancement. In such, the ensuring the access to basic services for all is vital. He hoped that all the stakeholders by sharing their knowledge, learning and views, through the dialogue may take the initiative of working together forward.

John A. Armstrong, National Director, Habitat for Humanity urged the audience to discuss and address the growing challenges of urban and take forward the solutions as actions. He stated that urban hazards are recognized but the uniqueness of this forum is collaboration among all stakeholders. One INGO organized the first dialogue, now 12 INGOs have joined hand to organize...
the 3rd Urban Dialogue where all these people are brainstorming and discussing about the urban issues and new ideas.

With Mr. Armstrong’s vote of thanks the inaugural session was concluded. The inaugural session was moderated by Mohammed Norul Alam Raju, Coordinator – 3rd Urban Dialogue organizing committee and National Urban Coordinator for World Vision Bangladesh.

Parallel Session IV:
Waste Management in Urban areas: Challenges and Opportunities

Waste management challenges and opportunities were discussed in the session focusing current and future challenges, open disposal, management authorities, public awareness, recycling, relevant policies and 3R strategy.

Dr. Tareq Bin Yousuf, Superintendent Engineer, Dhaka North City Corporation in his key note presentation mentioned that the present waste collection rate is in between 50% and 70% for disposing that to the landfills. People disposing their household waste scattered causes environmental degradation.

Open dumping, lack of formal recycling sectors, lack of improve collection system and lack of awareness (Institutional and individual level), shortage of landfills, size of landfills, distance of landfills, lack of proper initiatives for reduce, reuse and recycling of generated waste have been mentioned as core challenges.

He also mentioned that the limited manpower, proper equipment and finance thwart the responsible authorities’ initiative to develop an integrated solid waste management plan for effective management of the waste. He discussed that for reducing the burden of the generated waste national 3R strategy has been taken.

Captain Raquib Uddin, Chief Waste Management Officer, Dhaka South City Corporation (special guest) mentioned that the most of dumping container placed in front of or nearby the school,
college, office or any residents which create bed smell. Though; few areas segregated their waste influence of private sector, but those mixed up during dumping by the waste collector. And as a result people lose their interest. The transfer station and landfills are too small due to generated waste continuously. Most of the vehicles used for transferring waste from dumping station to landfills are expired. Though several private sectors initiated bins into campus of Dhaka University but the students not use those properly.

Captain Bipan Kumar Saha, Chief Waste Management Officer, Dhaka North City Corporation (special guest) pointed out that there are 2397 tons waste has been generated per day in the area under the jurisdiction of Dhaka North City Corporation.

Dhaka North City Corporation has planned to construct 72 transfer stations and for this instance they have bit tender amount of 17 crore taka. It’s a common behavior that, after discarding the waste from household the mass people thought that, they have finished their job. The City Corporation has a plan to allocate government place for landfill.

Dr. Md. Anwar Hossain Hawlader, Join Secretary, Department of Environment (special guest) discussed that the 3R strategy is not a synchronizing plan. It’s a scattered effort. No collaboration with the private and government has been ensured so far. We need to have a plan for zero waste strategy emphasizing the importance reduce and reuse of waste. If we spend more than 2 minutes to manage our waste will reduce the 200 labors effort of City Corporation.

Kazi Sarwar Imtiaz Hasmi, Additional Director General, Department of Environment (special guest) recommended to take combined strategy for proper waste management. He mentioned that it is required to produce one time use materials and for reduce the burden of disposal waste not only increase the number of landfills but also increase the recycling industry.

Prof. Dr. Md. Akhter Mahmud, General Secretary, Bangladesh Institution of Planners (special guest) introduced some of the basic point of waste management like the image of Dhaka city from waste management perspective, problems in waste collection systems, limitation in the process of waste collection and strategic plan for waste collection.
Dr. Moinul Haque Ansawary, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Forest and Environment (special guest) mentioned that considering the huge population in Dhaka city; the waste management is mostly challenging for lack of manpower, land, finance, technical expertise and synchronizing plan with the other sector like private sector, communities.

During his speech Md. Ekramul Haque Titu, Mayor, Mymensingh Pouroshova (special guest) said that to compost, to produce power, to the recycle into new products it is required proper management of the municipal waste. He suggested ensuring waste management in our infrastructural development plan, improving the collection facilities and recycling of medical waste and to aware people regarding waste management issues.

In the interactive question and answer session the audience asked their questions to the guests and the guest answered to the audience.

In the session ‘Waste Management in Urban Areas: Challenges and Opportunities’ all the stakeholder from policy level to implementing institutes along with the academia discussed about the challenges of municipal waste management and the way out of that. The NGO representative also discussed about their experience in the session.

The session was also a platform to unite all the stakeholders working with urban waste management and learn their initiative and experience.
Parallel Session V:
WASH Reality in Urban Low Income Communities

WASH session was inaugurated by a 30 minutes Drama on WASH by Aranyak Nattadal (theatre troop). The drama highlighted the sufferings of the slum dwellers for having illegal water connections and lack of access to sanitation. Followed by the drama, people from low income communities shared their problems regarding WASH that they face in their daily lives. They stated that they had to suffer for lack of access to water, sanitation and hygiene. However, interventions at Beguntilla slum by WVB changed their lives from many aspects.

After the sharing from the low income communities, the speaker state that integration of government’s efforts with other private efforts and community ownership can ensure cost-efficient and safe WASH practices.
The guest mentioned that about 50% of the low income communities do not have access to formal supply lines of water in Dhaka. As a result, sometimes they depend on illegal water vendors for illegal water connections at a higher price. Regular supply of safe water gets disrupted as these vulnerable illegal connections get broken and mixed with drain water or wastes sometimes. Consequently, the water gets polluted and water borne diseases spread. Particularly children get severely affected.

Speaker shared that drainage and sewerage systems in low income communities are unplanned and unhealthy. Many of the people in these communities use a common sanitary latrine for several families. Faults in drainage and sewerage system ultimately pollutes the surrounding environment mostly the canals, lakes and rivers. In some worst cases, these people use the polluted water from these canals or rivers for bathing and washing necessary household materials. Other good hygiene practices are also rarely seen in these communities.

**Side Events:**

**Children’s Living Experiences in the Cities**

As part of the dialogue, a side event was organized where children shared their living experiences in the cities. More than 50 children were participated in the interactive session where they discussed the problems they face in their daily lives and the future city that they want for them. The core problem identified by the children were eve teasing, sexual harassment, early marriage, school and education system, lack of play ground, risk of disasters, traffic jam, water logging and waste management. Prominent actor, dramatist and writer of Bangladesh Mamunur Rashid was present as mentor in the session.

The children feel with the digitalization the eve teasing is even being digitalized. Use of mobile phone has become massive for eve teasing. Sending irritating messages, taking photos in the mobile phone has spread. Even most of the girls present in the session reported that either they faced or witnessed sexual harassment in the schools. Even, parents consider marriage as a solution for eve teasing. The children mentioned that many of their friends got married by this time. Though, the child forum members were successful in preventing early marriage several times; in few months the marriage actually took place in a different place. Another problem to prevent early marriage
mentioned by children is fraud birth registration. The parents spend some money to get a fraud birth registration that certify the false increased age.

About the education, the children stated that most of them cannot afford to go to private schools. And the public school education system is very poor with low quality of education. At the same time, most of the schools do not have a playground. Also, the schools do not provide instructions about the urban disasters like earth quake.

To state the intensity if traffic jam, the children mentioned that that they had to start before 2 to 3 hours and to travel only 8 to 10 km and to reach the session timely. They also mentioned about severe water logging and waste management problems particularly at rainy season.

Mamunur Rashid shared his childhood moments and scenario to compare with the present challenges of city lives. He mentioned that interventions are vital for addressing the urban issues and all should work together for ensuring a safer city for children. In addition to increasing community and parent’s awareness, policy implementations are necessary.

Side Event:
Showcase Best Practices

All the organizers INGOs contributed in the urban stalls that exhibited the projects, products to showcase on relevant urban theme. The organizers showcased their past and current interventions, project progress on the relevant theme, best practices, achievements, advocacy materials and initiatives.

Though these stall all the organizations working on a particular theme exhibited their activities together. These stalls demonstrated that core activities and achievements in the WASH, waste management, child protection, livelihood, climate change, DRR and housing.
Concluding Session and Urban Declaration

Preamble:

Urban INGO Forum, Bangladesh and Dept. of Disaster Science and Management, University of Dhaka, jointly organized two days long 3rd Urban Dialogue 2015 from 25-26 August. Along with inaugural and concluding session, the 3rd Urban Dialogue included six parallel sessions such as Housing and Land Tenure, Livelihood, Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation, Waste Management, WASH and Child Wellbeing. Besides, one side event was organized where children shared their living experience in the cities.

Following are the issues identified from two days long urban dialogue:

1. We recognize and find the importance of urban sector and the urbanization process for future development of Bangladesh.
2. Rapid urbanization increase through unplanned population growth, migration, unplanned settlement and expansion of administrative boundaries are the major reasons for urban poverty.
3. We also recognize; along with these, unskilled labor, limited employment opportunities, degraded environment, poor housing, road safety and hazards for the urban communities, lack of access to safe water and sanitation services, causes poverty in urban areas.
4. We also recognize that climate induced disasters and associated risks also increase the trend of rapid urbanization and increased rate of migration.
5. Hazardous and labor intensive job affects poor community’s health condition; therefore, the urban poor are in a difficult situation to escape poverty. Housing crisis for the migrated peoples is also recognized as one of the major concerns for the urban citizens. As vulnerable groups, children and women also encounter severe problems in their daily lives.
6. Furthermore, we recognize; have generally been made worse by inadequate urban governance. This is caused by over-centralization and inadequate popular participation.
7. Private public partnership.
8. We recognize City Wide Approach through inter-agency coordination and collaboration both in govt. and non-govt agencies in order to effective utilization of shared resources is essential for comprehensive urban development.

**Following are the demands which have been raised during the 3rd Urban Dialogue 2015:**

9. Government of Bangladesh will recognize the Low Income communities as urban citizens by ensuring all the basic amenities.
10. Government of Bangladesh will ensure adequate safe water and sanitation facilities to the low income communities. Like LIC Unit in Dhaka, the unit should be initiated in other major and secondary cities.
11. Government of Bangladesh needs to take immediate action to enact Urban Sector Policy.
12. Urban Disaster Management will get special attention from all the corners. Interventions for urban disaster preparedness, especially earthquake, implementation of contingency plan and Bangladesh National Building Code are necessary.
13. Government of Bangladesh will approve the draft Housing Policy and develop implementation strategy.
14. As per the ICRC commitment, Government will take necessary action to create a child friendly city ensuring all the necessities.
15. Inclusion of domestic workers and other informal workers in Labor Law and recognition as workers.
16. Coordination should be developed between implementing (Municipality) and policy making institute (Department of Environment) for solid waste management. In addition, SWM and its awareness should be included in school curriculums.

**Future Plan/ Look forward/ Look Ahead/ Commitment**

17. We jointly commit to the institutionalization of the Urban INGO Forum Bangladesh where participation of University of Dhaka adds institutional value to the joint effort.
18. We expect to handover the action points to the Government of Bangladesh and other policy institutions to take the joint initiatives forward and popularize the urban agenda.
19. We firmly believe, this joint initiative will continue in future and Urban INGO Forum, Bangladesh will develop a road map for future interventions which will cover beyond the capital city.
3rd Urban Dialogue Organizers:


Special Thanks
Central Eastern Region, WVB, Mirpur Urban Development Initiatives Program

Financial Supports
Mirpur Urban Development Initiatives Program

Report Compilation
Bipasha Dutta, WVB
Mohammed Norul Alam Raju, WVB

Report Preparation Supports
Rashadul Hassan, Swisscontact
Nandini Shahla Chowdhury, PLAN International Bangladesh

Photo Credit
Tamzidul Islam, WVB, Fatema Meherunnessa, DSK, Islamic Relief, Save the Children and Plan Bangladesh

Advisory Supports
Wilfred Sikukula, WVB
Saibal Sangme, WVB

Language, Editing and Design
Mohammed Norul Alam Raju, WVB