



Partnerships for Advocacy

Going beyond projects for long-term advocacy

ADVOCACY PARTNERSHIPS

As nature of CARE Bangladesh's work changes, so should the forms of partnerships. This report outlines the guiding principles for taking advocacy work beyond projects to have long-term relationships with partners for successful advocacy as an organization that believes in rights-based approach to development.

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SUMMARY

This report is part of Learning Agenda Pilot, started by CARE USA Multiplying Impact Team, to look at organizational learnings for CARE Bangladesh specifically beyond the needs of donors or CARE International. CARE's presence in terms of partnership currently is extremely complex and varied. Most partnerships are project driven and sub-grant focused. Currently if we look into CARE's engagement portfolio in terms of partnership CARE is mainly connected with partners through Sub-grant agreements, MoU (funded and non-funded), learning institutions etc. 00

To influence and scale CARE's impact, it is important to clarify the purpose, with greater emphasis placed on purposes that connect to social change and scaling impact. It is important to put greater emphasis to relationships with CSO's not just for ease of the project implementation, but for learning, influencing and collaborating to leverage resources for wide scale impact beyond project's scope and duration.

While discussing CARE's role over the years it was evident that CARE needs to play a more active, visible and externally – focused role to maintain its relevance in the country. To achieve a dynamic role it is important to join with others in advocacy networks, sharing its evidence and learning to influence policy and programs of others, and strengthening collaboration with Government, partners in the civil society and private sector.

A country rapidly developing in economic terms, aimed to reach MIC status in 2020 the development needs to be equitable for men and women across different economic, social and political strata. At the same time, inequality is rising in various forms. Multiple issues exist around power imbalances, between genders, wealth, political and social lines. However, for advocacy to bring effective change, long term focus on specific issue is required. Thus for CARE Bangladesh advocacy issue have to be narrowed down in terms of alignment with:

1. CARE's future priorities;
2. Alignment with CARE's core impact group;
3. Multiplying impact and scale;
4. Build from CARE's current strengths.

The issue which was found through this filtration method was Gender-based Wage Discrimination against female agricultural day-labor particularly in the North Western Region of the country. Severity of poverty is at its highest in the region (especially in Kurigram). Additionally, seasonal unemployment, heavy migration, wage gap is very high. This partnership strategy to advocate for equal wages for female agricultural labors will have immense potential for impact and scale through working with policy makers, resource distribution, collective bargaining, sensitization of labors and land owners etc. Through effective partnership tools and approaches can help CARE make a greater impact on the lives of the disadvantaged female agricultural labors.

PATHWAYS – a multi country project in CARE has worked specifically in this component with its objective to address the issue by reducing gender gap in pay. While achieving significant sustained changes, it remains limited within the unions it worked in. Thus, to scale the impact to regional level requires different approach and consequent partnerships building on the learning from PATHWAYS project.

The following issues of scaling impact have been identified in going from project-based union-wide impact to advocacy-based regional impact:

- 1. Scaling to regional impact:**
 - a. Rights-based message
 - b. Delineate role

2. Stakeholder Management

- a. Changing Target Group for Change
- b. Government Engagement
- c. Bold steps
- d. Advocacy Champions

3. Impact on modality and approach

- a. Modality of advocacy
- b. Expand towards top-down approach
- c. Share Resources
- d. External trends

4. Research complexity; communicate simplicity

- a. Understanding core issue
- b. Clarity of content

5. Social Norms & Psychosis

- a. Setting scale of impact
- b. Social psychosis
- c. Underlying causes

The principles were applied to the issue and with the insights collated and organized, looked to choosing optimal partners for advocacy of this issue. The principles of advocacy led the study to understand that for successful advocacy on wage inequality requires a balance between bottom-up and top-down approach with CARE Bangladesh working as liaison between different stakeholders.

For insight on bottom-up approach in grassroots-level activism, Local NGOs in Northwest region were engaged and the following organizations were deemed most potential for partnership with following roles:

Organization	Data Collection	Large Impact group	Mobilize Impact Group	Local Governance influence	Evidence gathering
ESDO	X	X	X	X	X
GBK		X		X	
RBNS	X				X
Solidarity	X		X	X	

These organizations were selected from a larger set as they had strongest cumulative match on compatibility, capacity and willingness with CARE Bangladesh's principles on advocacy for this issue. CARE Bangladesh's role in the process is envisioned as a go-between – leading the process of generating evidence-based papers for pushing policy changes or ministerial directives, and then guiding local NGOs to mobilize impact groups so the directives or policy changes result in direct benefits to impact groups.

With the bottom-up network of partners identified, next was identifying national and international NGOs, alliances and platforms that would help CARE Bangladesh to place its work at the ministerial cabinet-level. As per aforementioned principles and expected role, the following organizations were tapped and assessed for the following roles in top-down approach:

Organization	Advocacy Strategy	Promoting Paper	Event-based movements	Ministerial Influence	Parliamentary Placement
CSRL		X	X	X	X
Oxfam	X	X	X		
BMP			X	X	X
Concern Worldwide	X	X	X		
KHANI			X		
MJF	X	X	X	X	X
KN			X	X	
WE CAN			X		
RtF		X	X		
NCA		X	X		
APPG				X	X

Discussions with these national and international NGOs and national alliances revealed key next steps. Section 31.3 of Women's Development Policy is the key piece of legislation to be used to push the government for accountability.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

APPG	All-Party Parliamentary Group
BMP	Bangladesh Mohila Porishod
CI	CARE international
CO	Country Office
CPR	Country Presence Review
CSO	Civil Society Organization
ESDO	Eco-social Development Organization
GBK	Gram Bikash Kendra
KHANI	Khaddo Nirapotta (Food Security Network)
KN	Kormojibi Nari
L NGO	Local NGO
MIC	Middle Income Country
MJF	Manusher Jannya Foundation
MJSKS	Mahideb Jubo Somaj Kallayan Somity
MoU	Memrandum of Understanding
MP	Member of Parliament
NCA	National Char Alliance
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PACC	Program Advisory and Coordination Committee
RBNS	Ramnathpur Bohumukhi Nabayan Sangha
RDRS	Rangpur-Dinajpur Rural Services
RtF	Right to Food
SKS	Samaj Kallyan Songstha
SMT	Senior Management Team
ADB	Asian Development Bank
APPG	All-Party Parliamentary Group
BMP	Bangladesh Mohila Porishod

OBJECTIVES

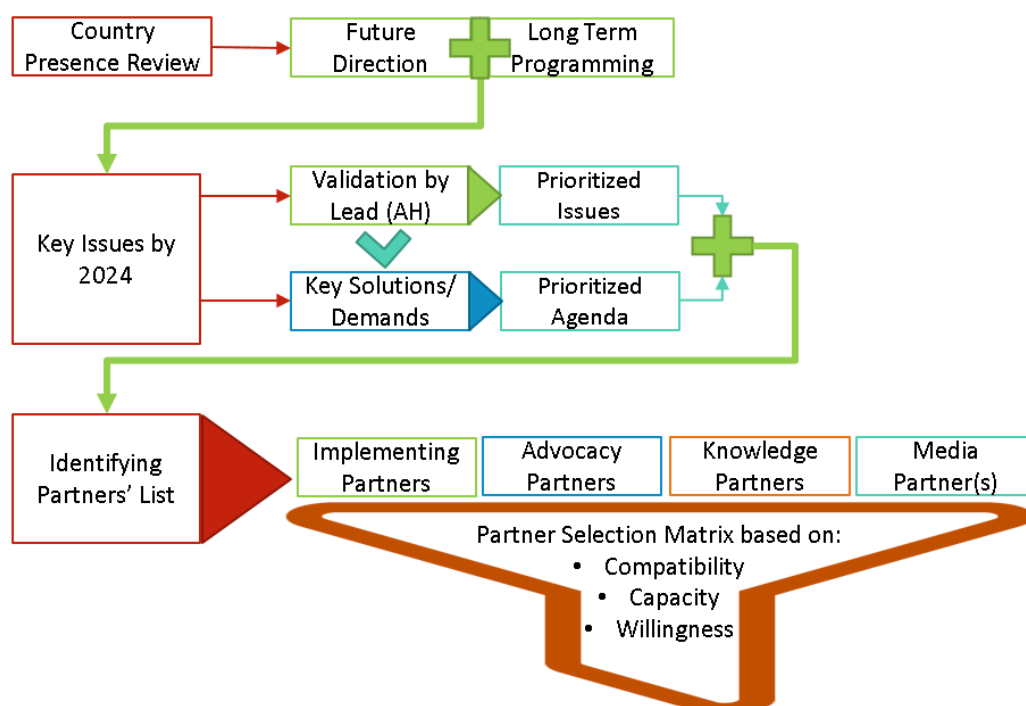
1. Identify principles of scaling advocacy from project-based to long-term national level changes
2. Formulate unified Advocacy Strategy for both policy changes and grassroots-level movement
3. Identify most potential partners for chosen advocacy issue

CONTEXT OF THE PILOT

Shift to working through partners has defined CO transition in last decade. CPR indicates building social movements around core issues will be among core goals of CO for the next decade. In 5 years (2010-15) CO has worked with 13 Government Ministries, 81 Private sector organizations, 11 research organizations, 29 national NGOs, 17 International NGOs, 23 civil society platforms. Despite its sheer range, or rather because of it, CO faces challenge in extracting applicable understanding of how partnerships should work for CO.

METHODOLOGY

Illustrated below is the methodology of the study. Keeping long-term goals of CPR in mind, issues were chosen which would remain relevant in the future of 2024. It was eventually decided that the time and resources available led to focusing the study on only one kind of partner – for advocacy.



Issues	Agenda	Implementing Partners	Advocacy Partners	Knowledge Partners	Media Partner
Issue 1	Agenda 1	Partner 1 Partner 2 Partner 3	Partner 1 Partner 2 Partner 3	Partner 1 Partner 2 Partner 3	Print/Online Visual Events
Issue 2	Agenda 2	Partner 1 Partner 2 Partner 3	Partner 1 Partner 2 Partner 3	Partner 1 Partner 2 Partner 3	

TEAM STRUCTURE AND ROLES

Research Action	Responsibility	Reporting to	Who
Key Learning Question	Focal Point	Question Lead & PEARL	Focal Point – KML-C, PEARL Question Lead – Director, ERPP
Learning Needs	Focal Point	CO Program Team (PEARL)	PEARL – Director, PEARL
Methodology	Focal Point	Question Lead Research ;Technical Expert	Research Expert – STAAR Coordinator
Workplan	Focal Point	Question Lead	CO Program – ACD-Program
Research Asst. Hire	Focal Point Procurement	Question Lead PEARL	
Secondary Research	Focal Point Research Asst.	Question Lead, PEARL, CI, Project Lead and Project Implement	CI- Korinne Chiu Research Asst. – External Hire Materials from CARE Vietnam, Myanmar and other countries
Primary Research Design	Focal Point Research Technical Expert	Question Lead PEARL, CI	Technical Assistance in Issue selection by C-USA
Primary Research Logistics	Focal Point Regional Logistics Respondents	Question Lead PEARL Regional Office Team	Respondents – External organizations
Primary Research Questionnaire	Focal Point Research Technical Expert Project Teams	Question Lead PEARL CI	
Research Conduct	Focal Point	Question Lead PEARL	
Sense-Making & Reflection	Focal Point Project Team Implementers Admin Support Research Asst. Program M&E	Question Lead Technical Assistance- W&GE	Technical Asst.-W&GE – TL- Tipping Point project Program M&E – Program E,M&E Coordinator, PEARL
Report-writing	Focal Point Research Asst.	Question Lead PEARL Team	
Publication & Dissemination	Focal Point Publishing & Graphic Designer (Hired) Procurement	Question Lead PEARL Team PR & Comm	Procurement Team PR & Comm – Manager, Media & Communications
Pilot Wrap Up	Focal Point	Budget Holder Finance Team Admin Team	Budget Holder – Director, PEARL

LEARNING QUESTIONS

1. Compile current state of partnerships for CARE Bangladesh
2. What are the key principles for scaling advocacy work from project-based to national-level?
3. In scaling advocacy work, who are the potential partners and what would be their roles?

DATA COLLECTION

First took stock of information available, identified learning gaps then consequent Workshop Agenda for filling those gaps. Secondary Information review came from multiple sources. Successful advocacy is highly contextualized. It is dependent on the country, issue, socio-economic structure, policy and government attitude and the interactions between those factors which open up windows of opportunity for advocacy to push through into successful legislation.

SECONDARY INFORMATION

1. Partnership review – Andrea Rodericks
2. Project documents – PATHWAYS
3. External – CI documents of advocacy work in Myanmar and Vietnam

PRIMARY RESEARCH

One KII with technical expert in advocacy. 2 workshops with Local NGOs and National and International NGOs, alliances and platforms for bottom-up and top-down advocacy strategic discussion respectively.

ANALYSIS

Learning Question	Analysis Process	Detail
Compile current state of partnerships for CARE Bangladesh	Meta-analysis	Collecting, collating partnership related information from prior projects from Organizational Archive Extracting, synthesizing Need-specific information
What are the key principles for scaling advocacy work from project-based to national-level?	Expert Consultation	KII with technical expert with strategic insights and validation by other relevant organizations
In scaling advocacy work, who are the potential partners and what would be their roles?	Selection Matrix	Assessing organizations' responses on specific issues of advocacy strategy on chosen topic to select most relevant partners and their consequent roles

RESULTS

Given below are the results of the Study presented according to the key learning questions outlined above:

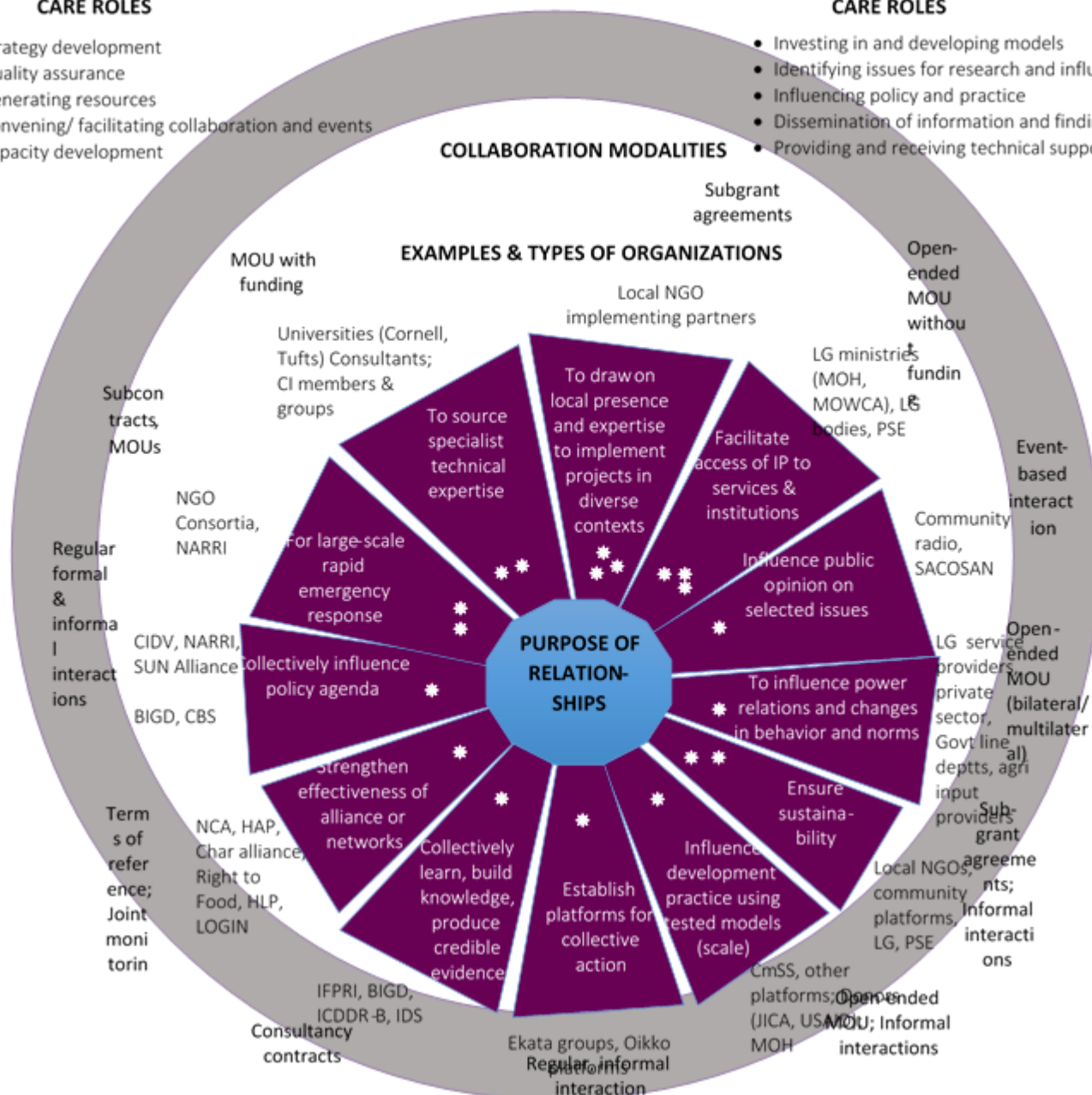
CURRENT STATE OF PARTNERSHIPS FOR CARE BANGLADESH

CARE's presence in terms of partnership currently is extremely complex and varied. Most partnerships are project driven and sub-grant focused. Currently if we look into CARE's engagement portfolio in terms of partnership the diagram below provides a clear understanding. If we put emphasis on the grey rim in the figure it depicts various collaboration modalities being used to cultivate relationships. Currently the collaboration modalities that are used in CARE B are mostly

1. Sub grant agreements: A sub grant agreement is an agreement made between two organizations using fund previously granted to it by another for certain activities.
2. Open ended MoU without funding / with funding: An MoU is a formal alternative to a gentlemen's agreement. It describes an agreement between two (bilateral) or more (multilateral) parties intended with a common line of action. An MoU can be financially funded or just contributed through technical assistance.
3. Event based interaction: This modality of partnerships are mainly based on specific events through various means such as media, conferences, seminar etc.
4. Open ended MOU (Bilateral/multilateral): An open ended MoU which can be bilateral or multilateral is which leaves to one of the parties a certain amount of discretion to define the scope or precise measure of their obligations under it, or an agreement for an indefinite period of time.
5. Informal sector: An informal business contract is an agreement between two parties that has the intent of a formal contract without the seal of a government agency or witness. In other words, it is a mutually agreed upon decision between two parties not formally documented by an agency or witness. For example, NARRI – a national platform for disaster risk reduction – provided technical advice informally on project designs. They also arranged events and conferences with CARE invited to participate without formal agreements.
6. Regular informal interactions: Informal interactions can occur between two organizations, groups, and platforms to collectively learn, build knowledge, and produce credible evidences. It can also create platforms for collective actions.
7. Consultant contract: A consultant contract is a legal agreement between consultant and a client/organization, by means of which the client/organization buys services of the consultant.
8. Terms of reference/ joint monitoring: ToR define the purpose and structures of a project committee, meeting, negotiation or any similar collection of people who have agreed to work together to accomplish a shared goal. ToRs are often used to work with consultants to identify organizational or project-specific issues together.
9. Joint Monitoring: A joint monitoring program is made between two organizations tasked with monitoring progress of a specific goal or agenda. Examples are the Joint-Needs Assessment (JNA) project which works with other organization to jointly monitor disaster response and relief distribution response performance nationally.

- Strategy development
- Quality assurance
- Generating resources
- Convening/ facilitating collaboration and events
- Capacity development

- Investing in and developing models
- Identifying issues for research and influence
- Influencing policy and practice
- Dissemination of information and findings
- Providing and receiving technical support



However, to truly want to influence and scale CARE's impact it is important to clarify the purpose, with greater emphasis placed on purposes that connect to social change and scaling impact. It is important to put greater emphasis to relationships with CSO's not just for ease of the project implementation, but for learning, influencing and collaborating to leverage resources. However, CARE will need to build strategies to engage more effectively as a group with government development plans or the creation of specific forums that nurture space for civil society. It is also very important to keep in mind that government policies are not enough to safeguard the civil society; thus building partnerships with local community and people are crucial

CARE's collaborative partnership landscape provides a scenario of the main purposes of partnerships, collaboration modalities, types of organizations with which CARE is cultivating partnerships and CARE's role in these relationships. This depiction of CARE's partnership landscape has been used to as a tool to understand the various kinds of relationships that CARE has and what may be required to have a more structured, meaningful and impactful partnerships, given the changing context of Bangladesh. At this point this figure depicts various collaboration modalities being used to cultivate relationships, both formal and informal, bilateral or multilateral. However, while most of the emphasis is provided on sub-grant agreements and Memoranda of Understanding, CARE realized that the type of modalities used were immensely varied.

To bring solidarity amongst the current practices and develop a strategy and guideline CARE will need a clarity of purpose, with greater emphasis placed on purposes that connect to social change and scaling impact. It will be important to gather alignment and linkages across the four dimensions of the landscape (Purpose of the relationships, modalities, types of organizations and CARE's role). Reflections from a few partners mentioned that to achieve a sustainable impact Bangladesh requires to have an action oriented people's social movement and network that connects CBO's NGO's, local government, media, INGO's both horizontally and vertically. Some also mentioned that the power structures which prevail within the Bangladeshi landscape cannot be bypassed for a sustainable model to hold if we want people to come out of poverty, we will need different kinds of engagements with CSO's.

Examples from CI shows to strengthen the voice of the civil society – involving local partners can prove to be effective. It helps in having better access to information, improved capacity and improved organizations strategies (CASI Partnership, 2016). To have a greater effect at national level it is important to involve national level NGO's in addition to its local partners. CARE's working evidence shows that, working with civil society organizations where partners implement core project activities, engage in policy dialogue has a greater impact in strengthening civil society by working together. CARE is able to provide technical and organizational support while CSO's promote the voice of the civil society. The challenge will be to keep these kinds of collaborations with CSO's separate from funding arrangements and donor funded project coordination.

KEY PRINCIPLES FOR SCALING ADVOCACY WORK FROM PROJECT-BASED TO NATIONAL-LEVEL

Given below are the 7 points of scaling advocacy work beyond projects explained, with example of Gender-based wage inequality for female agriculture day-labor in Northwest Bangladesh

1. **Key message** does not do enough to speak of gender equality as much as wage equality. Messages must be rights-based or solutions will get derailed
2. **Different target Group for change**, targeting land owners over farmers may work at Union level where the biggest land owner is still a relatively small and works as farmers in their own land. However, as you spread your work further, you will have to work with very big land owners who only lease their land to smaller farmers on rent-basis. They have no control over the wages to be paid, so would not matter anymore. It will be the farmers hiring day-labours that would have to be influenced in order for this movement to be effective.
3. **Government Engagement:** The wage-gap issue is clearly a labour concern and thus the Ministry of Labour and Employment should be concerned. However, the Ministry is completely dedicated to the RMG workers as that is a major priority concern for Bangladesh's growth. As such, one strategy *could* be to sensitize the Ministry of the situation and why it should also be in focus for them. As each system of governance is different, there are rules, both explicit (the constitution) and implicit (political influence) which govern advocacy actions. Addressing the discrepancies in understanding between different branches of the government is required for passing an advocated policy or ministerial directive.
4. **Be bold:** Since this venture is not project driven, and the advocacy strategy does not have to answer to any other donor, what is there to lose? Be bold, be ambitious. Rather than scaling from union to sub-district to district level; add focus on influencing the Ministry right from the start. However, approaching the ministry is best done *after* the wage-gap issue has been thoroughly researched with clearly defined issue, key message, target group and agenda.
5. **Advocacy Champions:** Organizational partnerships are important for overarching advocacy role of CARE-BD. However, for specific advocacy issues, advocacy champion(s) (individual or few individuals) is crucial to focus the issue in order to take it for advocacy to action.
6. **Modality of advocacy:** Don't limit organizational approach to rallies and meet-and-greets. Target important local newspaper and media influences in Rongpur, kurigram and other targeted districts. Local newspapers reporters are an oft-ignored advocacy partner who are especially useful for sensitization levels of advocacy. The recommended modality to approach would be local Journalists' Union. A simple invitation for tea or iftaar invite would be much more effective at generating regular noise and visibility for lower costs.
7. **Expand towards top-down approach of engaging local MPs**
Community mobilization approach to build social movements is ideally suited when you came to see visible change in a short time in a very small specific area (union-level). However, the approach must change in order to scale up. With larger scope, the influential become much more powerful and the power differentials become so large that social movements that worked in union level would not sustain long enough to bring similar changes at district level.
That is why, in order to reach Union to district level scaling, let alone National level scale, top-down approach is the way to go with clear evidence gathered from the initial movement documented, analysed and share.
Even large projects like SHOUHARDO II with significant resources (financial, time and people) could not make sustainable advocacy units like the PACC. Bottom-up creates solid change; but does not sustain and does not scale.
8. **Share Resources:** While advocacy is long-term work, it is relatively low resource intensive. Even researches can be done in shared resource by using the network of projects of CARE Bangladesh and partners.

9. **Broadening Horizon – Future trends:** Considering future trends the wider system you are working in, to help integrate advocacy and policy viewpoints into project design from an early stage. One thing to note is as agriculture is going through rapid development, there is an indication that agriculture might get mechanized in the future cutting down on requirement of day-labors. In such a scenario, day labors who become proficient in use of agro-tech and machineries will become high in demand.

GUIDELINES ON FORMULATING ADVOCACY STRATEGY

1. **Champion-led advocacy with personal contact:**

The thing about advocacy is while approaches and procedures appears to be structured, the real work is not. Every advocacy issue has a unique challenge, a legal complication with a certain mental resistance to change backing it. The change in mindset that is required for those in authority occurs in unstructured on-the-spot kind of way. It is a full-time work requiring regular networking and keeping in touch, which is unlikely to be successful if the organization approaches it as a “side-strategy”. Thus, national level of advocacy requires a reputed champion of the cause who work with individual decision-makers in policy and governance on an ongoing basis of regular contact.

2. **Clarity of message, an ask and solution**

This is the singular most important factor - the content of advocacy must be crystal clear to all at all level. First thing to do is to validate the idea with women's rights groups as mentioned before, namely We Can Alliance, Bangladesh Women's Federation, Nari Pokkho. Oxfam also has some work done in this area. Coordination with various platforms and branches of government requires unity in message, ask and solution. Without an ask and solution, advocacy initiatives get stuck in discussion stage indefinitely.

3. **Repurpose for larger impact group**

Migration Patterns would be important to see, when choosing which district to start to work from. Also, presence of female government heads (if possible) like female Sub District chairman. Also, unions to district scaling the target a bit low for advocacy by CARE Bangladesh. Advocacy does not scope similar to projects under program approach. The concept of incremental scaling steps, minimizing risk, would not give suitable strategic guidance in setting next targets

4. **Understand Social Psychosis:**

CARE-BD must understand social psychosis behind gender-based wage gaps. Why do *both* men and women accept it? It is not a rich-vs poor issue as wage discrimination occurs from agriculture day labor to high level executive managers at Multinational companies. If you do not first understand the society's mind, how can CARE-BD attempt to change it?

5. **Address underlying cause**

Weakness of current advocacy issue in wage-gap is *not* whether woman should get equal pay to man. It is not about getting equal pay for equal work as that is but a symptom of a deeper belief set. In order to advocate change successfully, the campaign has to convince people (both men and women), that women work *equally* well as men. Is there sufficient research-backed evidence to prove that for agriculture day-labor? The trick is to think like the targeted group for change – those who hire day labors. During harvest season, prices fluctuate daily so the land owners need labor that can complete harvest in one day, even if it takes straight 18 hours of work. If a woman does that work in 2 days because she had to go home early for her familial responsibilities, then does that served the purpose of that farmer? No.

So, do you have a way to change *that* mindset? The wage-gap, day laborers agriculture behavior – all stemming from the core mindset that women *cannot* work as hard or as long as men.

6. **Maximizing impact by working in partnership and coalitions**

Working with other organizations who have different relationships, capabilities and insights, including NGOs, think-tanks, academics as well as ‘non usual suspects’ that hold sway over governments like business associations or military figures .

PARTNERS AND ROLES

LOCAL NGO FOR GRASSROOTS MOVEMENT

Assessing local NGOs

Organization Name	Compatibility	Capacity	Willingness
PUSHPU Bangladesh	LOW	LOW	HIGH
RDRS	HIGH	HIGH	LOW
Moshfeka	LOW	LOW	HIGH
UDDYOG	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	HIGH
RBNS	MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH
SKS Foundation	HIGH	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
GBK	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
ESDO	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
Solidarity	MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH
MJSKS	MEDIUM	LOW	MEDIUM

Details of ranking are in main report

ROLES

Organization	Data Collection	Large Impact group	Mobilize Impact Group	Local Governance influence	Evidence gathering
ESDO	X	X	X	X	X
GBK		X		X	
RBNS	X				X
Solidarity	X		X	X	

PARTNERS FOR NATIONAL ADVOCACY

For national advocacy to influence policy and ministerial directives, national and international NGOs and national platforms and alliances were assessed

Organization Name	Compatibility	Capacity	Willingness
CSRL	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	HIGH
Oxfam	MEDIUM	HIGH	LOW
BMP	HIGH	HIGH	MEDIUM
Concern Worldwide	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW

KHANI	LOW	LOW	HIGH
MJF	HIGH	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
KN	HIGH	MEDIUM	HIGH
WE CAN	HIGH	MEDIUM	HIGH
RtF	LOW	LOW	HIGH
NCA	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	HIGH
APPG	LOW	HIGH	LOW

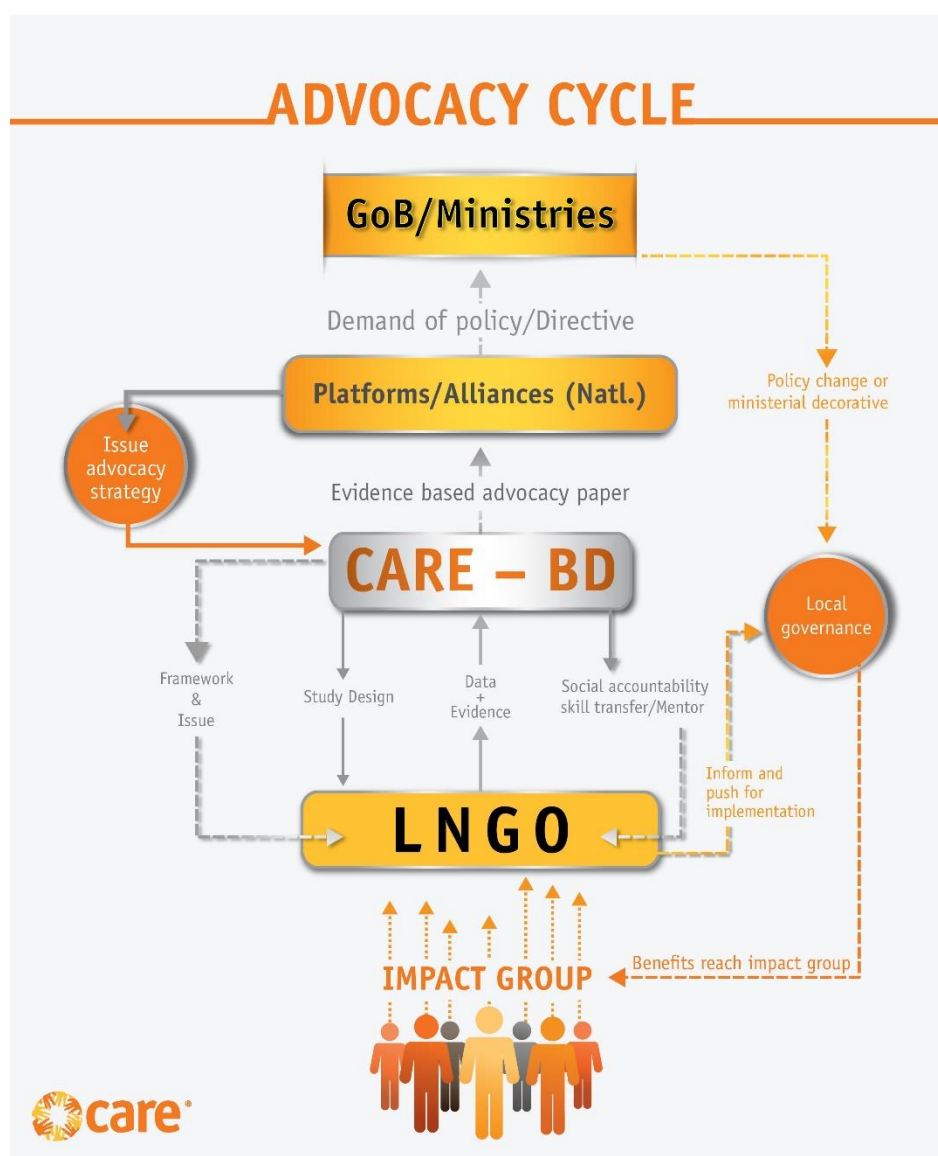
ROLES

Organization	Advocacy Strategy	Promoting Paper	Event-based movements	Ministerial Influence	Parliamentary Placement
CSRL		X	X	X	X
Oxfam	X	X	X		
BMP			X	X	X
Concern Worldwide	X	X	X		
KHANI			X		
MJF	X	X	X	X	X
KN			X	X	
WE CAN			X		
RtF		X	X		
NCA		X	X		
APPG				X	X

WAY FORWARD

As a first step towards an organizational plan for advocacy, this learning pilot was an exercise to test the waters in this arena and find the placement of CARE Bangladesh in the greater environment. The following decisions have taken place for CARE Bangladesh during and after this pilot:

- Organizational advocacy strategy has been drafted and in review
- 2 projects in NW region and regional office is keeping in touch with Local NGOs for next steps
- Oxfam has shared resources, learning and materials from their of advocacy work on selected issue
- Section 31.3 of Women's Development Policy has been identified as the potential key legislation to push for government's accountability on the matter.
- An informal agreement has been established with participants to form an alliance specific to the issue with organizations agreeing to provide time and personnel as required.
- The advocacy cycle *specific to the needs of wage-gap issue in this report* provides a summary of the overall approach (illustrated below)



USE OF FINDINGS

As mentioned above, the following uses have been found:

- PEARL team identified stakeholders and approaches to incorporate into its organizational advocacy strategy
- Meeting summary and next steps to be shared with participants of workshop with Local NGOs
- Meeting minutes, CARE Bangladesh's decisions and next steps to be shared with participants of workshop for national-level advocacy

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for other teams doing similar research:

- **Time:** Clear understanding of time requirements for internal engagement of staff is very important as for most CARE Bangladesh staff, these works have to be done along with their individual work priorities.
- **Flexible research plan:** Research methodologies have to adapt to dynamic circumstances in Country office. For example, within the research period, the month of Ramadan slowed work significantly along with other CO priorities
- **Fund management:** The key challenge of the research was in navigating the myriad policies regarding administrative, financial-management and procurement-related rules and regulations, especially for the nature of fund (Unrestricted) which required clearances from Country Director *and* both Assistant Country Directors. In addition, handling unrestricted funds was a relatively new experience for the learning agenda team, which led to delays as they took time to learn the process.
- **Budget planning:** Reflecting on the process, it was better to first plan for total budget requirement as per research plan and then ask for it than the other way around.
- **Key technical lead and the learning facilitator (focal point person):** For explorative research like model documentation in this learning agenda, choosing the right technical person especially the technical lead and topical expert is crucial in choosing the right methodology and research plan.
- **Support from the SMT** encouraging learning initiatives/pilots is extremely helpful in drawing support from various parts of the CO
- **Begin with end (Report Outline):** One helpful aspect was in designing a skeleton of the final delivery report before primary research which kept such a large team on the same page with clear idea on the final output.
- **Learning for Action and demonstration of short term benefits:** Effective dissemination and compelling consequent action is crucial for any learning agenda so allocating resources to these results is important. It is also important that the learning doesn't become an extractive process rather a symbiotic one and create win-win situation. Thus, unlike traditional research, dissemination/validation events and workshops for next actions is a primary goal, requiring sufficient commitments in resource allocation.

“Good Enough” Learning: With a wide expansive topic like advocacy, significant time was taken in whittling the scope to a specific tangible outcome driving decisions/action. Standard research practices of literature review and need-gap analysis for primary research proved to be ineffective as the final learning outcome was more an explorative discourse, the direct benefit of which could not be clarified to Country Office. The breakthrough was in finding and accessing the technical expertise of Dr. Sharmin Neelormi who sharpened the Learning agenda to its current form. Thus, to understand what constitutes “Good Enough”, learning agendas often need the right person

CONCLUSION

This learning agenda was the first step towards a long-term plan for organizational advocacy of CARE Bangladesh as it adapts to the changing dynamics of Bangladesh. This agenda identified key principles of advocacy, overarching strategy and CARE Bangladesh's role in it. Consequently, the pilot also identified potential partners and their roles for advocacy based on the issue. While the issue of wage inequality among female agriculture day labor was chosen as an exercise, the process, methodologies and systems developed during the exercise will be used by programs and projects in the future. As mentioned above, the following key actions are taken:

1. PEARL team - stakeholders and approaches integrated into draft organizational advocacy strategy
2. Meeting summary and next steps shared with participants of both workshops
3. Informal agreement of forming an alliance on this issue with various organizations
4. CO now has a set of potential partners identified and assessed for their suitability to various roles in advocacy – they will be accessed in future project proposal design with advocacy components
5. An informal agreement has been reached with major networks and organizations with a singular message (Women have equal rights to job opportunity and wage) an ask (establish equal pay in government-supported agriculture work) and a solution (local government takes active role in enforcing laws and regulations regarding equal pay).
6. A policy effectiveness research into Section 31.3 leading to legally binding influence on government to reduce gender-based pay and employment discrimination is the most viable strategy considered for the moment.