

Moktab-based Pre-School for Quality Education

January 2009- December 2013

Implemented by



COAST Trust



Impact Evaluation Report

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Acronyms

CMC	:	Centre Management Committee
DAM	:	Dhaka Ahsania Mission
ECD	:	Early Childhood Development
FF	:	Field Facilitator
FGD	:	Focus Group Discussion
KII	:	Key Informant Interview
MPS	:	Moktab-based Pre-School
SF	:	Stromme Foundation
SMC	:	School Management Committee

Acknowledgement

The impact assessment of Moktab-based Pre-School (MPS) for quality education in Cox's Bazar district implemented by Coast Trust was conducted over a period of September - October 2014. During the evaluation we were assisted by a number of people in the field and in Dhaka who were related with the intervention. Mr. Jacob Kumer Sarker, Country Coordinator, Stormme Foundation, Bangladesh briefed the background of Moktab-based Pre-School intervention which helped us to understand the context. He emphasized on getting a clear impact created by the project.

Mr. Emamul Hoque, Program Coordinator, SF mentioned the linkage of the intervention with the total Early Childhood and Development. He described this intervention as a part of ensuring quality primary education.

Our field visit was guided by Mr. Sonjit Leo Gomes, the Senior Program Coordinator (Education), SF. Without his sincere cooperation, this evaluation would not be possible. He also gave feedback on the tools which we developed for the assessment. We were supported by Mr. Jahangir Alam, Program Officer, Education and Adolescent Empowerment, COAST Trust, Cox's Bazaar and the upazila office staff of Ukhia and Moheshkhali. They gave their best efforts during the interviews and FGDs conducted by us.

In the field, the major elements of the evaluation were the facilitators, CMC members and parents of the learners. We met eight MPS facilitators and 40 parents of the learners during this assessment. All of them were very much cooperative during their interviews and FGDs. We are very much thankful to all of them.

There were also some important people in Dhaka who helped in different stages of this evaluation. Mr. Mujibul Hoque Munir, Assistant Director, COAST Trust gave his valuable opinions in designing the tools as well shared his observations even in assessment process. We are taking the opportunity to offer our cordial thanks and sincere gratitude to all of them.

Mr. Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, Executive Director of COAST Trust arranged a sharing meeting on its first draft with the participation of education experts for getting constructive feedback. We have been much benefited from the feedback. We are thankful to Mr. Chowdhury for arranging the sharing meeting.

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Executive Summary

In 2008, while Stormme Foundation (SF) had the scope for funding in Early Childhood and Development, COAST Trust came up with a proposal to work with the children in the Cox's Bazar who had been studying in Moktabs - the traditional Islamic religious education centres. At the age of 6 plus, most of these children got admission in madrasas and deprived from primary education. The COAST Trust proposed to have a pre-primary education for these children through Moktab-based Pre-School (MPS) and to ensure their enrolment and retention in primary schools. Stormme Foundation found it a very timely proposal and started funding from 2009. COAST Trust conducted MPS in 6 upazilas of Cox's Bazar namely Ukhia, Moheshkhali, Teknaf, Cox's Bazar sadar, Chakaria and Ramu. Each centre was run for one year with 30 learners who were mostly 5 years old. The MPSs were conducted for six days a week and two hours a day from 9 to 11 a.m. A total number 148 MPSs were established with an enrolment of 4,440 learners during the period of 2009 to 2013. Of these children 97% were enrolled in primary schools. These MPSs were supposed to run by the community after five years and accordingly there was no fund for further MPSs in these upazilas from 2014. During the assessment, two MPSs were found running with contribution of the community.

The objectives of the impact assessment was to (i) trace the learners of the MPS who passed and went to mainstream primary education, (ii) measure the community contributed in running the MPSs (iii) assess capacity of the Imams as MPS facilitators (iv) observe the scopes of sustainability do exist there and (v) recommend for future implications.

The scope of the work was to assess the impact of the intervention, reflect the experience of the MPSs in terms of input and the result, and documents the best practices through case studies to demonstrate evidence and example, interviewing the parents, teachers, CMC and the leader of the community. The scope of work also extended to sharing draft report to SF and COAST Trust.

The impact assessment was started with reviewing the project documents and getting a brief from the management of Stormme Foundation. Based on that the check lists were developed for conducting FGDs and interviews. Three types of FGDs were conducted in the field with one group of teachers, with two groups of CMC and Community people and with the field staff of COAST Trust. In Key Informant Interviews (KII), SF and Coast Trust management

staff were interviewed mainly on policy issues. A good number of children who were the learners of MPSs from 2009 to 2013 were asked to perform the activities they did in MPSs. They also answered about the questions on joyfulness of the intervention.

Coast Trust started its Moktab-based Pre-School (MPS) through traditional moktabs in 2009 in three upazilas. The same venues were used for MPS from 9 to 11 a.m. The same group of children was taught by the same Imam in the MPSs. The objectives of the MPSs were to run pre-school through moktab, to prepare the children for schooling, to make the Imams acquainted with Early Childhood (ECD) methods and to ensure the admission of the children in primary schools.

The facilitators were provided with seven days basic training and refreshers training for two days. The facilitators received the same training in following years for conducting new MPSs. The training enabled them to teach in a joyful manner.

During the impact assessment all the activities related to MPS were reviewed thoroughly and some findings were documented. From 2009 to 2013, a total of 4,440 learners were enrolled in MPS and 97% of them were mainstreamed to primary schools. Most of these children have been studying to the grades corresponding where they supposed to be. Few learners have been studying in madrasas or kindergartens. According to the school records, the learners who are in primary schools after MPS are doing better than others. Although, they are the first generation learners, but they have no fear with the schools. From the FGDs with the parents it is learnt that they love to send their children in primary schools. The training which was rendered to the MPS facilitators was not adequate in one hand and on the other hand these were not systematic. There was supervision in the MPSs by Field facilitators, but MPS facilitators were not benefited from this kind of supervision. The textbook was not attractive to the learners and from interviewing the MPS facilitators it was found that they knew a very little about the early childhood development. Supply of teaching learning aids was also inadequate. It is true that the Imams moved to some extent towards early childhood development, but still they need more training. There were some initiatives for co-curricular activities in the MPSs which need to be expanded. Nine months after closing the MPSs, the CMCs have been found proactive. They were found very much concern about the financial contribution of the community in running the MPS. Two MPSs were reported as being run by the community. COAST Trust did not develop any plan for sustainability of the MPSs. If five years is a period for phasing out, only Moheshkhali and Ukhia might fall under this criteria. In other upazilas, MPSs were not run for five years. The numbers of MPSs were also not

same or there was no smooth progression. The MPSs were run with the boys and girls and the number of girls was slightly higher than that of boys.

The MPS program faced some challenges during the time of implementation which include transforming traditional moktab teachers to MPS facilitators, inadequate and inappropriate space for centers, mind set of community towards sending children to madrasa and mobilizing local resources. However some of these challenges were overcome and some will be faced during next interventions.

This impact assessment has been ended with some recommendations. The intervention need to be continued in the villages where five years have not been completed. MPS should be clearly linked with the existing government curriculum for the pre-primary education. MPS facilitators should be well trained with structured training curriculum. There should be an online MIS system and it could be linked with Union Parishad Information Centre (UISC) so that facilitators can update the information on a regular basis. The MIS Cell should ensure appropriate monitoring and reporting system. Within the MPSs there should be a good networking system so that facilitators learn from each other. The learners who are enrolling in primary schools, they should be monitored by keeping contact with the teachers. A linkage and network need to be established with UISC of the local government which can keep record of all MPS learners of the respective union. For restarting MPS survey should be conducted to avoid overlapping. There should be a comprehensive phase out strategy to ensure sustainability. The MPS should have the opportunity to include the children with disabilities and children of all religions.

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1. Background of Moktab-based Pre-School Program

Most of the coastal children between 4 to 5 years were not generally given any sorts of preparatory education with entertainment which leads to the negative attitude in relation to mainstream education. The children could not adopt themselves when they were enrolled in primary school directly without any pre-preparation. This made the children scared of education and that also causes high dropout and exclusion in the poor families in coastal areas. In this regard initiatives were taken by COAST Trust along with some activities ensuring opportunities to the coastal poor children as well as to mainstream children through Moktab with the contribution of SF.

Moktabs are the centers for early child education, managed by the community, established usually in the premises of Mosques and in any community selected places. At these centers children learn religious education, Islamic norms and culture and to read The Quran. These centers starts very early in the morning and usually the Imam of the Mosque or community selected religiously educated person provides teaching.

COAST in partnership with SF implemented Moktab-based early childhood education for two basic reasons, (i) the Moktab passed students who have possibility to go to Madrasa ultimately they were supposed to enroll into mainstream primary education, (ii) As community is the owner and manager of the Moktab then this Moktab would have better institutional anchorage with mainstream school for their participation and sustainability.

The intervention also included capacity building of local Imams (the religious leaders of mosque) so that they could act as community catalyst to contribute to school retention of poor children.

Main competencies for Moktab i.e. early childhood education were (i) Pre-reading (Bangla & English), Pre-writing, Pre-math etc. related to early childhood curriculum of mainstream primary education. (ii) Co-curricular activities for physical, mental, social and cognitive development.

COAST Trust had been facilitating its interventions since 2000 in the Cox's Bazar district covering 7 upazilas within in a partnership with SF. During life time of the project completed 2 phases of education program; 1st phase 2000 to 2008 and 2nd phase from 2009 to 2013. The moktab graduates were enrolled in primary schools. COAST ensured regular follow-up with the primary schools for retention of learners and to assist the children in keeping them in right track of progress.

Since the project completed in 2013 so this is the high time to capture the impact of completed interventions and to assess the impact of the project as well as to document the good practices for scale-up.

2. Objective of Impact Evaluation

The objectives of the impact assessment were to –

- trace the learners of the MPS who graduated and enrolled into mainstream primary education;
- assess the retention and performance of moktab-based pre-school learners in mainstream education;
- assess the capacity of the Imams as MPS facilitators;
- observe the impact on mind setup of the parents as well as the community to enroll and retain their children in mainstream education;
- know how the community contributed in running the MPSs;
- assess the scopes of sustainability do exist there; and
- recommend for future implications.

3. Scope of work

- 3.1 The study's prime focus was to assess the impact of Moktab-based pre-school interventions of education program;
- 3.2 To capture time line experience and input tracking of Moktab intervention by consultation with project staff and studying periodic progress report;
- 3.3 Documenting case studies and best practices to demonstrate evidence and example;
- 3.4 Interview and consultation to parents, teachers, Centre Management Committee and community leaders ;
- 3.5 Sharing the draft report with COAST Trust and Stromme Foundation (SF) for feedback;
- 3.6 Submission of final report.

4. Methodology

4.1 Documents review

In order to conduct the impact study, following documents were collected and reviewed:

- Project documents and periodic and annual reports, mid-term assessment reports developed and used under implementation period;s
- Reviewed teaching-learning materials used under the project;
- Reviewed guidelines and manuals and promotional materials.

4.2 Assessment of learners' performance

During the field visit of impact assessment available MPS learners of all the cohorts from 2009 to 2013 of Sikdar Beel of Ukhia Upazila were asked to attend. The learners were present as follows:

Cohort	# of children attended	Present grade of studies	# of children still in School
2009	04	Class Five	20
2010	02	Class Four	20
2011	04	Class Three	25
2012	10	Class Two	27
2013	14	Class One	30

The children were asked to perform some of the activities which they practiced during their study in MPS. They were asked about the advantages they got in primary schools for being learners in MPS.

4.3 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Two FGDs were conducted with guardians of the learners and community leaders, one was with the facilitators and one was with the staff members of Coast Trust. From the FGDs with guardians and community leaders it was learnt about the role of facilitators, participation of the community, role of COAST Trust and expectation from them. The FGDs with the facilitators was focused on teaching learning and their present role. The FGD with the staff members of COAST Trust was focused on sustainability and future direction;



4.4 Key Informant Interview

Information were gathered from the SF management and Coast Trust management staff to understand their views about the project;

4.5 Visiting primary School

One primary school was visited at Moheshkhali to examine the learners' present status comparing with the statement made by the adjacent MPS facilitator. Teachers were interviewed to give information about the learners who have been studying in their school after completion of MPS course;

4.6 Sharing draft report with expert group

A sharing meeting was held with education expert group to have a discussion and getting feedback on the draft report. The meeting was convened by the Executive Director of COAST Trust on 20 October 2014 at the head office in Dhaka. The draft report was sent with the expert before hand of holding the meeting. The key finding, challenges and recommendations were shared in the meeting through powerpoint presentation. It was a lively meeting and each and every one participated in the discussion. The meeting appreciated the overall MPS intervention approach and gave their feedback in some specific areas of the report. The report has been finalized through incorporating the feedback of expert group.



5. Description of Moktab-based Pre-School Activities

Coast Trust started its Moktab-based Pre-School (MPS) through traditional moktabs in 2009 in three upazilas of Cox's Bazaar. The course duration was for one year. The children of 5 years age used to first attend to traditional moktab early in the morning where they were taught religious education by Imam of the local mosque. The venues for the traditional moktab education were the varanda of the mosque or adjacent room of the mosque. The same venues



were used for MPS from 8 to 10 a.m. The same group of children was taught by the same Imam in the MPSs. The objectives of the MPSs were:

- to run early childhood development program through moktab
- to prepare the children for schooling
- to make the imams acquainted with ECD methods
- to ensure the admission of the children in primary schools

During five years of the project a total number of 4440 children were enrolled in 5 batches. All of these children were made prepared for admitting in class one of primary schools. Detail process of conducting MPS is described below:

5.1 Enrollment

A wide range of age group from 4 to 11 attend in the moktab for studying the Quran and values of Islam. Of them, children aged 5 years were selected for the MPS. After the moktab timing they went to MPS classes. Generally 30 children were chosen for a center. If there were not sufficient number of children in some of the moktabs, children from outside of moktab who fulfill the criteria were enrolled in MPSs. Such kind of flexibility added value to the overall programme. Year and upazila wise centre and enrolment is shown in following table:

Upazila	2009		2010		2011		2012		2013		Total	
	Centre	Learner	Cen	Learn	Cen	Learn	Cen	Learn	Cen	Learn	Cen	Learn
Teknaf	8	240	8	240	-	-	5	150	-	-	21	630
Ukhiya	11	330	9	270	10	300	5	150	5	150	40	1,200
Ramu	-	-	5	150	8	240	-	-	4	120	17	510
Cox's bazar Sadar	-	-	1	30	2	60	3	90	-	-	6	180
Moheshkhali	13	390	20	600	8	240	10	300	3	90	54	1,620
Chakoria	-	-	5	150	-	-	5	150	-	-	10	300
Total	32	960	48	1,440	28	840	28	840	12	360	148	4,440

5.2 Training of Imams - the MPS facilitators

Foundation training of the MPS facilitators was for seven days. The head of training unit of COAST Trust conducted the training with the help of his colleagues. There was no specific module for the training. The facilitators were introduced with the ECD principles to make the

learning joyful. They were trained on the technique of teaching the young kids. Every day they practiced national anthem. The activities like games, reciting, singing and dancing were also practiced by them. The facilitators who were conducting the centers for the consecutive years had to participate the foundation training with the new ones. The refreshers training course for the same groups of facilitators were held for four days. Two days of the course were spent on the reviewing the contents of the foundation training and giving feedback by the participants. The next two days of the refreshers training were mostly spent on practicing the teaching learning.

5.5 Teaching-learning process and materials

The facilitator used some teaching learning materials and aids in conducting teaching learning process. The class was started with national anthem and some physical exercises. The facilitator used to lead in singing the national anthem. The national flag was hoisted before the class starts. Everyday a rhyme was recited with body movement. The learners used to practice. During the full cycle of MPSs, the facilitator helped them to practice rhymes. After practicing rhyme the teaching learning was started with demonstration alphabet by showing pictures in the chart. Then the learners used to count bamboo sticks to learn numbers. During the cycle the learners were familiar with all the letters of Bangla alphabet and the vowel and consonant signs. They were made familiar with the numbers up to 50. 'Chara-chobir-Pora', the book for pre-primary was used to teach them alphabets through rhymes. Each letter of alphabet followed by two lines of rhymes by using the pronunciation of the letter. Every day the learners could recite these two lines and identify the letter.



5.6 Supervision

COAST Trust gave the responsibility to Field Facilitator (FF) to follow up the MPSs. FFs were multipurpose worker in the community. Maximum working time of the FFs was spent for the credit program. Many mothers of the MPS children were credit group members. Every CF was given the responsibility of supervising 10 MPSs. Each MPS was supervised by the FF once a week. The FF looks at the attendance of the learners and ensured the materials which supposed to be provided in the centre.

5.7 Assessment

The learners were assessed by the facilitators twice during the cycle. In the first assessment they had to recite at least one rhyme, read and identify 25 letters of the alphabet and numbers up to 20. Second assessment was done at the end of the course. Each learner had to demonstrate that they could identify all the letters of the alphabet, can read and identify the numbers up to 50.

5.8 Mainstreaming

At the end of the course all the learners had to get admission in class one of the nearest primary school. The facilitators submit the list of the learners to head teacher of the primary school. The learners had to attend physically and accordingly the head teacher arranged the admission of all the children to the primary school. The list of the learners were certified by the head teachers and a copy of the certification was submitted to COAST Trust Office. The date of birth of learners were decided according to the certificate of birth register.

5.9 Indoor and outdoor games

Generally in moktabs, there is no scope to practice of arranging games and sports for their learners. As a result, learning becomes monotonous to the learners and ultimately learners cannot do better in teaching-learning process. Since, COAST Trust introduced the games and sports as extracurricular activities of teaching-learning process, it worked as a tonic to the learners. The games included skipping, football and ludu. Usually the indoor games were arranged before the class start while football and outdoor games arranged after the class. Both girls and boys took part in indoor games and mainly took part in outdoor games like football.

5.10 CMC meeting

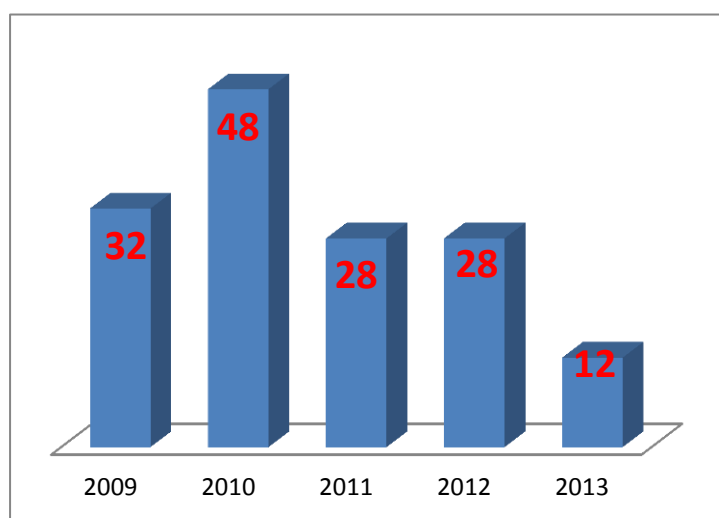
There was a Centre Management Committee (CMC) for each of MPS. Though the MPSs were run cycle wise, but the same CMC of an MPS remained unchanged for the years. There were five members in a CMC at the beginning. Later two women members were included as mandatory and the number of CMC members rose to seven. The MPSs were closed in December 2013, but still the CMCs are existing. Some CMCs included more than two women members. CMC used to meet at least once a month to review the progress of MPS. They also took part in community motivational activities for sending their kids to MPS. They contributed significantly in arranging meetings of mothers' group. Although the project was

closed in December 2013 yet they still meet together to discuss the issue of their children's education.

6. Data Analysis

6.1 Enrollment in Moktab-based Pre-School (MPS) Program

- Enrollment in Moktab-based Pre-School (MPS) - a total of 4,440 children were enrolled in 148 moktab-based MPSs under different cohort since 2009 to 2013. Total girls were 2273 while 2167 were boys. The table below presents the upazila and year-wise data of MPS and learners:

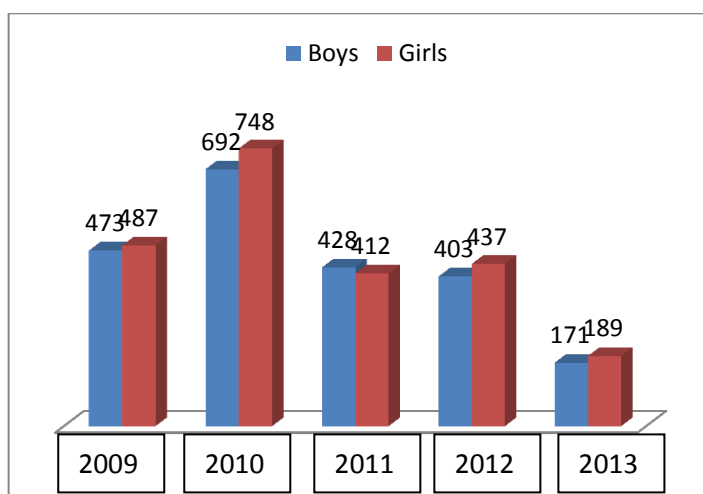


Year-wise total no. of MPSs

- The enrolment in MPSs in 5 years were not maintained any smooth progression;
- In 2010, the highest number of MPSs were established with 14,400 learners;
- In 2013 only 12 MPSs were started with 360 learners.

- Year-wise enrolled girls and boys** – a total of 4440 children were enrolled out of them 2273 were girls and 2167 were boys. The table below presents the year-wise total girls and boys:

- The enrolment of girls were slightly higher than that of boys.
- Only in 2011 less number of girls were enrolled
- Actually ratio of boys and girls depend on the children available in the specific catchment area.
- The difference between two sexes is so insignificant that no comment can be made in gender
- But all facilitators were men.



Year-wise enrolled girls and boys

Upazila and year-wise MPSs and learners

Teknaf

Year	Centre	Boys	Girls
2009	8	117	123
2010	8	125	115
2011	-	-	-
2012	5	76	74
2013	-	-	-
Total	21	318	312

- In Teknaf 212 MPSs were opened with a total number of 630 learners;
- No MPSs were opened in 2011 and 2013;
- Irregular intervention found in Teknaf.

Ukhiya

- In Ukhiya MPSs were opened every year
- From 2009 to 2011 number of MPSs was from 9 to 11
- In 2012 & 2013 less number of MPSs were opened

Year	Centre	Boys	Girls
2009	11	155	175
2010	9	124	146
2011	10	146	154
2012	5	78	72
2013	5	78	72
Total	40	581	619

Ramu

Year	Centre	Boys	Girls
2009	-	-	-
2010	5	71	79
2011	8	128	112
2012	-	-	-
2013	4	52	68
Total	17	251	259

- In Ramu quite a few number of MPSs were opened;
- No MPSs were opened in 2009 & 2012.

Cox's Bazar Sadar

- In Cox's Bazar Sadar, few number of MPSs were opened;
- Only 180 learners were enrolled in three years;
- No MPSs were opened in 2009 and in 2013.

Year	Centre	Boys	Girls
2009	-	-	-
2010	1	16	14
2011	2	30	30
2012	3	40	50
2013	-	-	-
Total	6	86	94

Moheshkhali

Year	Centre	Boys	Girls
2009	13	201	189
2010	20	276	324
2011	8	124	116
2012	10	145	155
2013	3	41	49
Total	54	787	833

- In Moheshkhali a good number of MPSs were opened in every year
- In 2013, only 3 MPSs were opened
- A total number of 1620 learners were enrolled in 5 years

Chakoria

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Chakoria MPSs were opened only in 2010 and in 2012; • A total number of 300 learners were enrolled in 10 MPSs; • In 2011 there was no MPS in Chokoria; • Again in 2013 there was no MPS intervention; • It is found that there was irregular MPS intervention 	Year	Centre	Boys	Girls
	2009	-	-	-
	2010	5	80	70
	2011	-	-	-
	2012	5	64	86
	2013	-	-	-
	Total	10	144	156

Upazial and year-wise overall centre and enrolled learners

Upazila	2009		2010		2011		2012		2013	
	Centre	Learner	Centre	Learner	Centre	Learner	Centre	Learner	Centre	Learner
Teknaf	8	240	8	240	-	-	5	150	-	-
Ukhiya	11	330	9	270	10	300	5	150	5	150
Ramu	-	-	5	150	8	240	-	-	4	120
Cox's bazar Sadar	-	-	1	30	2	60	3	90	-	-
Moheshkhali	13	390	20	600	8	240	10	300	3	90
Chakoria	-	-	5	150	-	-	5	150	-	-

- It is found that out 6 upazila only 2 (Ukhiya and Moheshkhali) had regular MPS interventions although variations found from year to year;
- The other 4 had very irregular MPS intervention both in operating years and no. of MPSs.

6.2 Mainstreaming of MPS graduates

It is known from different enrollment registers of mainstreaming primary schools and interview with CMC, teachers, facilitators and project staff that around 97% of total MPSs graduates were enrolled in mainstreaming primary schools;

6.3 Retention of enrolled learners in mainstreaming primary schools

The school registers and other documents related retention of enrolled learners in mainstreaming primary schools shows that the learners who were enrolled in primary schools found regular in different grades up to June 2014;

6.4 Efficiency of Imams to facilitate MPS activities

Since the evaluation took place after 7 months of completion of the MPS intervention so the efficiency of Imams could not be assess directly. Instead, the activities other than conducting MPS sessions such as liaison with community, primary school and quality of

learners who got enrolled in primary schools shows that some of the Imams were adequately efficient while some others were lagging behind.

6.5 Project activities adequate to realize the objectives

Some of the activities planned for MPS were very relevant such as linking with moktab, mainstreaming MPS graduates into primary schools and community while there was need to plan more activities specially for linking with primary schools, local resource mobilization, community campaign, ensuring delivery of adequate learning materials, adequate supervision, monitoring, documentation, reporting and above all effective strategy for strengthening capacity of facilitators and phase-out mechanism.

6.6 Impact in the lives of participating children, their families and communities

Before starting the MPS program most of the moktab going

children used to get enrolled in local madrasa. The parents of concerned children preferred the

Sufia Khatun set her all three children to Shikdarbill Moktab-based Pre-School under Ukhia upazila. They studied there in three consecutive years from 2010. Now Parvin Akhter (9) is in class 3, Rasel is in class 2 and Joynal is also in class 2. These children attended in a gathering and recited some rhymes with acting which they learnt during their study in MPS. Sufia Khatun is happy with the performance of her children. She described that if they were not be in MPS she would send them nearby madrasa. She also mentioned that her children are love to go to school. Now she has no children who can study in MPS, but for the betterment of the children of her village she wanted its continuation. Sufia Khatun proposed to the CMC members of the MPS that although she has no child to be here, she would donate Taka 50 for the continuation of the MPS. She urged to all of her villagers to contribute in running the MPS for the interest of the children of the village.



religious based education. After starting MPS, a significant portion of concerned families and community people have become aware enough about mainstreaming education. Children were found more enthusiastic in studying in primary schools.

6.7 Effectiveness of moktab-based intervention

In some areas, moktab-based MPS intervention created a good impact both at family and community. There instance that even three consecutive children graduated from moktab-based MPS course and currently studying in govt. primary schools. In some areas, some kind of frustration was created about MPS intervention due to irregular intervention.

7. Findings

The impact evaluation process has come up with the following findings based on interview with teachers and learners, statement of teachers of primary school, examining student attendance registers, project related records of COAST Trust, field observation, FGD and KII.

7.1. Mainstreaming rate is satisfactory

Since 2009 to 2013 a total number of 148 MPS batches completed with the enrolment of 4,440 learners. As per the record of COAST Trust, the rate of mainstreaming is approximately 97%. The first cohort i.e. learners who got enrolled in MPS in 2009, 80% of them are in grade 5 in 2014 in primary schools. The rest of the learners are in one grade below i.e. in grade 4 because they were not considered for promotion either from grade 1 or 2 or 3;

7.2. Learners' performance in mainstreaming schools is better than that of other

The MPS mainstreaming learners are able to demonstrate some of the activities especially used on those MPSs i.e. reciting poems, rhymes and telling stories using body languages. Because of practicing joyful learning in MPSs. They find the lessons easy and so they are doing better. Roll number of the learners in their respective classes based on the annual examinations results and teachers' remarks show that they did better than others;

7.3. MPS created scope for first generation learners

During FGDs with learners 28 guardians participated. Of them 8 were male and 20 women. Of male ones, three had schooling up to grade 3. Out of 20 women, only one had the schooling up to grade 5. This shows that most of the learners were first generation school going children;

7.4. Family interest increased for mainstreaming

During interviewing the learners it was confirmed that one out every five children's families used to send their kids in primary schools before the MPS started;

7.5. Inadequate training of the facilitators

The training of the facilitators was not systematic. COAST Trust did not develop any modules or use any module developed by other organizations. Trainers depended on their own skills which they used to outline before conducting training sessions. The facilitators did not receive any handouts during the training.

7.6. Non-academic supervision

The workers from education program of COAST supervised the MPSs. They were not skill and efficient enough to assess and monitor the overall activities specially the academic part of MPS. Effective and systematic training could help them to strengthen the teaching-learning process at MPS. The focus of their supervision was mainly on the attendance of the learners and keeping the guardians motivated to send their children;

7.7. Inadequate of joyful teaching-learning process

From the FGDs with the facilitators and the parents it was understood that the facilitators were sincere in conducting teaching learning. But the methods used in the MPS were very much traditional. The children were learning through memorizing the lessons in most cases. Although, the facilitators demonstrated some joyful activities for learning but those were inadequate;

7.8. Inadequate learning materials

During pre-schooling the development of a child is multi-dimensional. . The child needs social, intellectual and psychological development. The COAST Trust did not introduce a full package of child development through pre-schooling. Instead, a two colour thin book was given to each learner. Children were also given slate and pencils for writing practice. Alphabet chart was provided by COAST Trust. Children were not supplied papers or pencils for drawing. The materials which were given to learners are insufficient for conducting pre-schooling considering the learner centred activities. For last one decade a good number of materials for pre-primary class have been developed by different agencies. Those materials could be collected and/or adapted for MPS;

7.9. Co-curricular activities were to some extent -

Each MPS was provided with a football, a ludu and some skipping ropes. Children had some opportunity to play after or before the MPS started every day; but these materials were inadequate for the children.

7.10. Encouraging community participation

From the attendance of parents and CMC members and community leaders in FGDs and their proactive role it was observed that the community is ready to participate in the activities of sustainability. The community was responsible for the house of the MPS and they did well. After the closing of the MPS centers in 2013, the parents and CMC members joined in several meeting to continue the MPSs in their localities. They started collecting contributions from the community by this time;

7.11. Inappropriate policy for phase-out and sustainability

The FGD and interview at field and KII with project personnel, it was learnt that Stromme Foundation had clear message to COAST Trust to prepare the community so that from 2014 they could take the responsibility for smooth running of MPSs. From the mid-term review, this message was discussed in several meetings of the policy makers. The COAST Trust personnel mentioned during the FGD that they thought, the message could make the community frustrated and so they did not share the message to the community people. The community people were hopeful about continuation of MPSs but COAST Trust closed the MPSs in December 2013. Since the sustainability doesn't mean attaining only economic ability, it is linked with technical capacity for managing the MPS, readiness of community to participate actively, establishing ownership, community accountability and social responsiveness. However, the field observation shows that the community is ready to perform their responsibilities. It should not be expected that community will take over everything on their shoulder. As the rights of the children concern, the development partner and implementing agency should be with them upto it taken as the responsibility of the government;

7.12. MPS contributed to raising awareness of community

The field observation and by conducting FGDs, it is understood that the all the MPSs communities are financially poor. Existence of MPSs and other works of COAST Trust have made the community more aware about children's education and some other social issues;

7.13. In adequate documentation and reporting

COAST Trust has the list of learners of each year with the names of the facilitators. They collected the statement of mainstreaming children in primary schools. There were no specific reports on the MPS intervention;

7.14. No formal linkage with primary school

Facilitators of MPS have informal contacts with the primary schools to know the progress of their learners. Formal linkages and official systems could alleviate the situation in a better way between moktabs and primary school. Official follow-up system also could help learners in doing better;

7.15. Local level human resource emerged through MPS

It was found that the facilitators who were also the imams of mosque with Dakhil and Fazil graduation from madrasa education did good in conducting the MPS classes. They could do better if they were provided with appropriate training. This was very helpful for them to

come-out of a traditional system. Now they can conduct joyful learning process through reciting, singing, acting and even playing with learners. Local level human resources have been emerged through the project. Since the frequency of mobility of imams is very low and turnover rate is also very low so the human resources developed through project assume for a significant period of time.

7.16. Irregular intervention

The intervention was very uneven. Same numbers of MPSs were not opened in all upazilas and the number of MPSs in one upazila in different year varied from 8 to 20 MPSs. This unevenness took place because of inappropriate planning;

7.17. Gender parity

In covering the number children there were some difference between girls and boys. The number of girls is 1.5% higher than that of boys. But as the MPSs are linked with traditional moktabs and all of the moktab teachers are male, so the facilitators remain male;

7.18. Integrated programme approach

COAST Trust implemented approach in those upazilas. The programmes included micro-credit. The female members of poor families were members of credit group. Sanglap was another programme for adolescent girls and MPS for the young kids mostly of those families. So, the integrated approach also helped to facilitate the overall development of the community.

It comes through the literature review, interview, FGD and field observation that the overall objectives were achieved significantly except continuation of MPS after the phase-out of initiatives. It was very relevant to implement MPS as a part of an integrated approach. On the other hand, MPS established some good examples that instead of establishing separate structure for pre-schooling, moktabs can be used for conducting ECD programme. The authority handled the programme very efficiently so that it was mainstreaming around 97% of intervention created a good mothers of the children to have regular basis about the children. These mothers to joint in literacy classes if created for them. Community the women feel the necessity of creating a common fund for the education support of their children. As a whole, these intervention could not achieve much sustainability during funding period of COAST Trust but it was observed that a trend of self reliance among the community members thus exists to rum the MPS. It needs much nurture and directions.



8. Challenges

- 8.1 **Turning traditional moktab into MPS** - the project authority including facilitators had to come through a very hard-way to present the MPS theme within a traditional moktab system. They had to arrange several types of advocacy, campaign and community level programs to make the community people understand that MPS initiatives are not contrary to religious point of view. At the end, the project came up with great success;
- 8.2 **Inadequate and inappropriate space**- the facilitators had conduct MPS classes either at the open varanda (balcony) of mosque or within the mosque which is the place for prayer. Some of the community people used to raise questions regards to conducting MPS classes within prayer place but imams managed all the issues with the help of CMCs;
- 8.3 **Religious and mindset of community people**- the community people generally believe that in the tender age of their children should be taught basic religious education and accordingly they send their children to madrasa after completing moktab. They used to think that madrasa education useful both for current life and eternal life which starts after death. Such type of mindset sometimes refrained them from sending their children to primary schools. The project was success to make community people to understand the end result of primary education. Consequently 80% of MPS graduates were enrolled in primary school;
- 8.4 **Mobilizing local resources**- Only two MPSs could mobilize sufficient local resources and those two are running smoothly. Tireless and appropriate efforts are essential at the initial stage. Using moktab venue for MPS program is another example of community contribution to manage;
- 8.5 **Retention of learners in primary school**- since most of the learners were from poor families and first generation learners on the one hand, on the other hand there was no strong advocacy program built-in so the facilitators played the prime to motivate and encourage both the learners, parents and school authority to give special care and attention to the learners towards retaining them in the schools;

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 **Standard curriculum for MPS program** – Appropriate curriculum, primer and teaching materials are very essential for MPS program. Since there is national curriculum for pre-primary education so the project should either follow the national

curriculum or they can follow any other proven effective system. Since this is the preparatory stage for the children so games and activity based learning materials should adequately be supplied. Appropriate training should be imparted to the facilitators so that they can effectively and efficiently conduct the joyful teaching-learning process;

- 9.2 **Structured capacity strengthening training for facilitators** –The foundation training for facilitators should be for 10 days followed by 3 days refreshers training once a year. There should have structured training manual and facilitators’ guidebook. Appropriate training will help them to run MPSs more successfully;
- 9.3 **Online MIS of enrolled learners** –Since the last phase of the project there was no structured MIS for tracking the enrolled learners both in moktab and primary schools. As a result and after the end of project it was difficult to track the enrolled learners and their existing situation. So, there should have online MIS for the project and moktab facilitators should be trained appropriately so that they can maintain and update the data on a regular basis. The online MIS will also help project authority in decision making process;
- 9.4 **Appropriate monitoring and reporting system** - It is found that the monitoring and reporting system was inadequate of its own. Since appropriate monitoring and reporting system is vital for smooth functioning of the project activities so the project should have its own reporting mechanism thus helping in visualizing and dissemination of good practices produced through the project;
- 9.5 **Networking within the moktabs-based MPSs**– There were some MPSs that created better result while some others were weak. There should have some kind of mechanism built-in within the project so that MPSs can learn from each other through sharing their experiences and exposure visits;
- 9.6 **Follow-up and appropriate liaison with primary schools** – The project should have its own mechanism to maintain regular liaison with mainstreaming school. There should also have a monthly reporting system and a comprehensive and user-friendly reporting format should be in use for tracking the actual progress of learners and community mobilization;
- 9.7 **Linking with local government and other service delivery agencies** - Since the moktab has an unanimous acceptance in the community so the moktab-based MPS

could be the centre of all kinds of development initiatives. This could also be enriched through linking and networking with Union Information Service Centre (UISC) under local government. So, an effective and active networking should be established with local government and other service delivery agencies;

- 9.8 Survey for avoiding overlapping and duplication**– The directorate primary education has started the pre-primary education from last years. Each primary school has a provision of enrolling 30 children from its catchment area. So, before enrolling into MPS a combing survey should be conducted to avoid overlapping and duplication. Effective and continuous linkages with primary schools should be established in this regard because they conduct survey in their catchment area once a year. The data of that survey should considered as a reference;
- 9.9 **Restart the MPS Programme** - The MPS created a good impact at community level. Guardians are aware to some extent about their children’s education. If there is no scope within the community, they will not be able to send their children to primary schools far away from their homes. On the other hand, primary schools have provision to enroll only 25 children in preprimary class. In that case, other children of the same age will remain out-of-school. There is another impact of MPS that the MPS contributed in reducing the dropout rate at primary school. Considering the overall impact of MPS it should be continued;
- 9.10 **Comprehensive phase-out strategy**–Since there was no clear guideline and strategy of phase-out mechanism in its last phases so clear and transparent phase-out strategy should be developed. The community level stakeholders should be involved in the phase-out mechanism so that they can take preparation from the very beginning of the project to make it sustainable through community participation and contribution after a certain period;
- 9.11 **Inclusive MPS is a burning issue** – Efforts should be given to make the MPS for all children living in the concerned community irrespective of caste, religion, able, disable, rich and poor. Effective strategy should be finding out in consultation with community people and CMC of MPS;
- 9.12 **Comprehensive strategy for sustainability** - comprehensive planning should be developed for addressing the core issues of sustainability i.e. skills, efficiency, economic, environment and social. For strengthening capacity, skills and efficiency of

facilitators, CMC and community leaders, issue based training should be imparted. Since only community is not responsible for managing the MPS of their own and in practice it is not realistic, so development partner and implementing agency should continue their supports until the program is self sufficient one. In that case, after a certain period financial supports may be reduced gradually but technical and materials based supports should not be stopped. Advocacy and awareness raising programs should be continued until the favorable environment is created and community is ready to manage the MPS smoothly including establishing the ownership process. Since the sustainability doesn't mean attaining only economic ability but it is linked with community participation in decision making process. Sustainability doesn't also mean that community will take over everything on their shoulder. So, as the rights of the children concern, the development partner and implementing agency should be with them until other similar intervention takes place.

10. Conclusion

It was a nice exposure to go through the MPS activities and learn the wonderful achievements which led significant changes in the lives of graduated children. The project area is the most underserved area of Bangladesh where government, NGO and private sector have less intervention due to various socio-economic reasons. It was really good experience to interact with the children, parents, MPS facilitators and key informants to learn their views and suggestions towards the project activities and its further scaling up opportunities. Increasing the community participation and rate of retention at primary school could be one of the major drivers to improve the child development and education situation of the Cox's Bazar. Couple of observations, findings and challenges have been identified and inserted in this report for future reference and consideration in case of scaling up or design such programs for long-term perspective. Some recommendations have been made to overcome the challenges and shortcomings to plan and implement moktab-based children's education program in the context of coastal region and other underserved area of the country as well.

11 Annex

11.1 Case study

11.2 Evaluation tools

A Journey towards sustainability

Goyalmara is a village of Ukhiaupazila. COAST Trust had credit program there and their staff used to go there as follow up of the credit program with their female members. From the discussion with the mothers, COAST Trust staff could know that the 5 years old children first go to the moktab religious education. After one year some of them used to get admission in Madrasa and a few of them used to go to mainstreaming primary school their moktab education. Madrasa education In this context, COAST staff had meetings thought that the moktab learners could do well for getting enrolled into mainstreaming realization, they motivated the parents of arrange a Moktab-based Pre-School (MPS) Imam who also used to teach children in to work as facilitator. Community decided to study center of MPS children. Mr. Alam had a background of Dakhil from madrasa which is equivalent to secondary school certificate. He participated in a training of 7 days. He learned there the techniques of teaching the young kids in a joyful environment. He received another two days refreshers training. The training course enabled him to teach the children by using teaching learning aids. He learned to sing national anthem, reciting rhymes by acting and telling stories to the children.



Mr. Shafiul Alam
MPS Facilitators
and
Imam Goyalmara Mosque
Ukhya, Cox's Bazar

while some others continued system was very traditional. among themselves and better if they were prepared primary school. From this the children and proposed to there. Shafiul Alam, the moktab showed his interest use the moktab house as the

Mr. Shafiul Alam first started the MPS with 30 children of 5 plus age group. In 2010 all these children got admission in class one in the nearby government primary school. He was much inspired and organised the second and third MPSs in the following three years. Since 2011 to 2013 in three batches with 90 learners completed and they all got admission in primary schools. He monitors the retention of his learners. They all are doing well in examinations.

Immediate before the decision of COAST Trust of stopping funding to MPSs Mr. Alam convinced the CMC members about the benefits of MPS and they agreed to continue MPS. From January 2014, CMC members is mobilizing taka 800 per month from community for him. At the initial stage, they also started collecting taka 10 from each child but later on they found it indecent and stopped collecting money from learners. COAST Trust arranged textbooks, chart, slate, pencils and some paper for drawing from the stock of Ukhia upazila office of COAST Trust.

Mr. Alam has been running the MPS without financial support from outside. In an interview he said, in the price hike it is difficult to live on this income. He also mentioned that it would be better if he could get at least three years' time to mobilize local resources through which he could earn around Taka 2500 per month. So, he requested to start the MPS intervention again by COAST Trust with an aim to self-reliant within five years.

মজুব ইসিসিডি কার্যক্রম

শিক্ষকদের জন্য এফজিডি চেকলিস্ট

১. কে কীভাবে এ কার্যক্রমের সঙ্গে জড়িত হলেন?
২. আগে কে কে মজুব পরিচালনা করেছেন?
৩. আগের মতো মজুব পরিচালনা না করে এরকম মজুব পরিচালনা করলেন কেন?
৪. সাধারণ মজুবের সঙ্গে এ মজুবের কী তফাৎ আছে?
৫. মজুবে শিক্ষার্থী ভর্তির নিয়ম কী ছিল?
৬. উপস্থিতি কেমন ছিল?
৭. কে কত ব্যাচ শেষ করেছেন? মোট শিক্ষার্থী কত জন? এর মধ্যে কত জন প্রাইমারি স্কুলে আর কত জন মাদ্রাসায় গিয়েছে?
৮. আগে মজুব পরিচালনার সময় থেকে এ অবস্থা কেমন ছিল?
৯. এ মজুব না হলে শিক্ষার্থীদের কত জন স্কুলে প্রথম শ্রেণিতে ভর্তি হতো? যারা যেত না বলে মনে করছেন তারা কেন যেত না?
১০. এ মজুব পরিচালনার সময় কোথা থেকে সম্মানী পেয়েছেন? না পেলে কী করতেন?
১১. এ রকম মজুব পরিচালনায় স্থানীয় মানুষের কাছ থেকে কেমন বাধা পেয়েছেন বা সহযোগিতা কেমন পেয়েছেন?
১২. এরকম মজুব পরিচালনার সময় শিক্ষার্থীদের ছড়া গান এবং অঙ্গভঙ্গি সহকারে শেখাতে হয়? এরকম করতে কোনো সমস্যা ছিল কি না?
১৩. একানো প্রশিক্ষণ পেয়েছিলেন কি না? প্রশিক্ষণে কী শিখেছেন? প্রশিক্ষণে শেখা কী ব্যবহার করতে পেরেছেন আর কী পারেন নাই?
১৪. প্রাইমারি স্কুলে ভর্তি হওয়া শিক্ষার্থীদের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ আছে কি না? যোগাযোগ থাকলে কীভাবে?
১৫. আগামীতে এরকম মজুবের প্রয়োজন আছে কি না? অতীতে সফলতার আলোকে যুক্তি দিন।
১৬. এ রকম মজুব চালু না করলে আপনারা কি এখান থেকে শেখাকে সাধারণ মজুবে কাজে লাগাতে পারবেন?

প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয়ের শিক্ষকদের সঙ্গে সাক্ষাৎকারের চেকলিস্ট

১. আপনার স্কুলে মজুব ইসিডি প্রথাম থেকে এসেছে এমন শিক্ষার্থী কতজন হবে? শ্রেণিভিত্তিক একটি হিসাব দিন
২. ভর্তিপ্রাপ্ত শিশুদের কত জন কেবল এরকম মজুব সুরক্ষার কারণেই স্কুলে এসেছে?
৩. ভর্তিপ্রাপ্ত এসব শিশুর মধ্যে কি অন্য সাধারণ শিশুদের চেয়ে আলাদা কোনো কিছু পরিলক্ষিত হয়?
৪. এ রকম প্রাক-প্রাথমিক শিক্ষা মসজিদভিত্তিক মজুবে চালু করার ব্যাপারে আপনার অভিমত কী?
৫. আপনি কি কখনও মজুবভিত্তিক প্রাকপ্রাথমিক শিক্ষা দেখেছেন? দেখে থাকলে আপনার কী মনে হয়েছে?
৬. মজুবভিত্তিক শিক্ষার্থীদের আপনার স্কুলে ভর্তির ব্যাপারে কেউ যোগাযোগ করেছেন কি? করে থাকলে কীভাবে বা কত বার?
৭. আপনার স্কুলে প্রাকপ্রাথমিক শিক্ষার অবস্থা কেমন? কতজন ভর্তি হতে পারে? চাহিদার তুলনায় তা যথেষ্ট কি না?
৮. মজুবভিত্তিক শিক্ষার সহায়ক ইআম মুয়াজ্জিনরা এরকম শিক্ষা বাস্তবায়নে কতটা উপযোগী বলে আপনি মনে করেন?

অভিভাবকদের সঙ্গে এফজিডি চেকলিস্ট

১. কেন আপনারা সন্দ্বন্দনকে এ মজুবে পাঠিয়েছিলেন?
২. এখানে এমন কিছু ভালো দেখেছেন যা সাধারণ মজুবে নেই?
৩. এদের চেয়ে বড় সন্দ্বন্দনদের কোথায় লেখাপড়া করাচ্ছেন?
৪. এখানকার লেখাপড়া কেমন ছিল?
৫. শিশুরা এখানে কী কী শিখেছে?
৬. ইআম/মুয়াজ্জিন সাহেব কেমনভাবে চালিয়েছেন?
৭. আপনাদের কার সন্দ্বন্দনকে এখান থেকে যাওয়ার পর কোথায় ভর্তি করেছেন?
৮. এখানকার লেখাপড়া কীভাবে সন্দ্বন্দনের জন্য উপকারী বলে মনে করেছেন?