

# NGOs In Bangladesh

Searching Better Roles in  
Partnership.

# Country Context

- Economic,
- Social
- Political

# Economic: 1% poverty reduction per annum

- Steady growth in agriculture, development in transport and communication, even distribution of employment throughout the year, MF in the rural sector by the NGOs, MFA in the urban area by the garments manufacturers, external remittance by the nonresident Bangladeshies, 7 % growth in the non farm sector characterize a positive Bangladesh in the fourth decade of liberation.

# Social

- Education
- Health
- Weakening rural power structure as a new found opportunity
- HIV-AIDS- Trafficking  
(threat)/migration(opportunity)
- Feminization of poverty, ethnicization of poverty



# Where did we perform better?

- As a nation we performed better in economics than in politics as indicated by 7% robust growth in non farm sector.
- A modicum of positive change in politics will push the economy far forward in achieving faster rate of poverty reduction
- A modicum of reduction in corruption will liberate many economic forces in making a jump- in changing gear.

# Three Decades of NGOs in Bangladesh

- Decade of seventy : empowerment mode
- Decade of Eighty : MF Mode
- Decade of ninety : Advocacy mode

# Decade of Seventy

- Target group approach / empowerment / social mobilization – first realization that previous community approach can be viable amid realities of rural power structure
- Wider popularity among the NGOs of functional education as a tool of social mobilization that attracted progressive donors
- NGO approach got more recognition among the academics & donor community as a better way of reaching the poor compared to government field extension approach

# Decade of eighty

- Decade of MF- mere conscientization without something concrete was not working. Most in the NGO community became obsessed with the idea that the poor are bankable and in fact perform better than the rich in terms of repayment. Freedom fighters turned NGO activists found changes harder than earlier perceived. Increased realization that development is a long process. Sustainability must include economic components.

# Decade of ninety

- Decade of realization that mere effectivity in a little village community alone is not going to bring bigger changes without addressing policy issues.

# The reality is not that much too general.

- I over simplified to present the dominant trend over the last three decades. There many other smaller permutations and combinations.

# Where are we in the fourth decade?

- What have we learnt from the first decade of social mobilization?
- What have we learnt from the decade of micro finance? When- under what circumstances MF is human right and under what different circumstances MF can also emerge as violation of human right?
- How far do we see the connectivity between subsidies in the rich countries and potential advocacy areas as surrogate roles in taking side with the poor citizens?

# Characteristics/Strengths of Local NGOs

- Better prospect of sustainability of the projects/ programs
- Better exposure to localized dimension of poverty
- Better exposure to the other stakeholders in the vicinity
- Financial insolvency push them in making many compromises

# Characteristics of International NGOs

- Better exposure to international dimension of poverty
- Better access to information and resource mobilization
- Financially capable of mobilizing more professional staffs
- Better located for international advocacy

# Why Partnership ? Is it a win win situation?

- Banking on localized experience on poverty
- Involvement of other stakeholders in the vicinity in promoting the rights of the poor citizens
- Leadership has a big role in development. Enabling environment of promoting the next generation of NGOs and development leaders ?

# ActionAid Bangladesh

Two decades of ActionAid  
Bangladesh

One decade of partnership:  
Partnership had its start in the  
year 1994 . (1994 – 2004)

# CSPs (Country Strategy Papers)

- So far we have done three CSPs.
- CSPI during
- CSPII during
- CSPIII during 2004 - ....draft

# ALPS

- Earlier APRS (Annual Planning & Reporting System) was replaced during 1999 by ALPS (Accountability, learning and Planning System ) as organizational method of operation as well as philosophical position.

# Who are our partners

- AAB partnership are mainly DA partnership. Besides we have non DA thematic / issue based partnership, campaign partners, individual activists in promoting campaigns.
- Total .....DA partnership are spread across the country, both in the rural specially in the remote offshore islands, char areas, areas where the ethnic minorities live as well as urban slums. .

# Challenges

- Partnership versus donorship
- Interactive mode of participation
- Downward accountability versus lateral / upward accountability, to the poor citizens

# Partnership Process

- Appraisal
- PRRP
- TYRPB
- MPR
- DA Partnership phase out – transformed into campaign partners

# Desirable Partnership Roles

- Non negotiable principles
- Downward accountability to the poor citizens, built on participation and empowerment
- Taking grassroots learning into policy campaigns, ensuring right to access to policy information that affect the life and livelihood of the poor citizens.
- Capacity nursing, capacity building & capacity managing
- Financial transparency