

Case study

Children's Advisory Committees (CAC) in Dhaka and Barishal/ Bangladesh

Location

Bangladesh

Project type

Participation of children

Case study of Tamanna from Bangladesh

In 2021, the non-profit organisation [CSID](#) (Centre for Services and Information on Disability) from Bangladesh started to implement two Children's Advisory Committees (CAC) in Dhaka and Barishal/ Bangladesh. Since then, 30 working children with disability are meeting regularly, learning more about various types of rights of children with disabilities, child labour, right for education, types of violence and abuse and techniques to protect oneself from this. One of them is Tamanna, approximately 18 years old.

Background description

Tamanna lives together with her mother and two sisters in Dhaka City. The father left the family when Tamanna was a child and doesn't pay for any of their necessities. The house has only one room, which is crowded with furniture, clothes, kitchen instruments etc. as everyone in the family has to share that one room. Tamanna is the eldest daughter. She is a kind girl and helps her mother to do household chores. She is well aware of her disability, but this does not prevent her having dreams about her future. She has a strong personality and a tremendous will-power that makes it easier for her to cope with the difficulties she meets in her daily life.

Tamanna was born as a healthy baby without any symptoms of illness or deformity. Her physical and psychological development was normal up to the age of ten years. Her family was very poor. For that reason Tamanna used to work a small garment related factory. One day on her way back to home from work, she became unmindful while crossing the rail-line and the train ran over her feet cutting them off. Finally, her two legs have gone. Her physical condition started deteriorating and at times, she lost her ability to walk.

Tamanna studied till grade 4 at the school in their locality. After that, her mother could no longer afford the costs to send her to school anymore given their financial struggles. Instead, she sent her daughter out for work so that she could help earn some money for the family.

Tamanna's participation in the CAC

Tamanna loves being a member of the CAC and participating in the Child rights related training/ workshops and most of all, she loves to spend time with the other CAC members who face similar problems as her. She learns about advocacy on child rights issues, amongst other things.

Impact through participation

Through her representation in the different issue of child related issues, Tamanna's confidence was boosted and her leadership skills developed when she was elected as leader of the CAC by

other children. In the first CAC meeting, she didn't speak, felt shy, didn't associate with anyone. But after a few meetings, she got to know about child rights and became aware. Her friends came to the CAC meeting. Now she speaks on behalf of all as a representative of the CAC team at various local level meeting. The CAC also implements different child-led advocacy dialogues with different community stakeholders, families, etc. Therefore, Tamanna collects information on child labour, child rights in various ways, disability Issue, birth registration, production of Golden Citizen Card for the persons of disability and shares them with the community.

CSID also provided a new wheelchair, so that she could move around more smoothly. The new wheelchair made her very happy and by selling all the things she made, Tamanna became self-sufficient. CSID also gave cash support to Tamanna for small business. Using those, Tamanna started making different kinds of showpieces, bags, jewellery and began selling them to different people.

However, due to the pandemic, both her mother's and her work has stopped due to which they are now facing extreme financial struggles and also mental health problems.

“I want to be a woman entrepreneur”

Tamanna says that “due to poverty, I need support my family. I have a dream of becoming a woman entrepreneur so that children like me can take me as an example and get courage to chase their dreams as well. Before the CAC training, I was aware about some types of violence and abuse, but I did not know how to protect myself from it. But now I know about body boundaries, how to detect abuse and seek assistance from others. I am capable of protecting myself – I can sense the attitudes and nature of people around me, both in my own local community, but also outside of this, and even if its people I don't know, I can better read their character and attitudes. I am not alone. I have CSID and the CAC with me.”

About the Global Campaign “Dialogue Works”

The global campaign “[Dialogue Works](#) – Anchoring working children's participation in societal and political processes” (Dialogue Works, 2020-2024) was initiated by the two child-rights organisations Kindernothilfe (KNH) and Terre des Hommes International Federation (TDHIF). The project aims to expand and institutionalise spaces for working children to participate in local to global political debates and to express their individual experiences, perspectives and recommendations to political stakeholders. The core of the campaign are Children's Advisory Committees (CACs) that have been formed in 15 countries worldwide and that serve as a platform for working children to plan and implement advocacy dialogues with key stakeholders, thereby realising their right to be heard (Art. 12 UNCRC). We believe that the participation of children and youth is the key for identifying policy measures that tackle the problem in a nuanced way and create the ground for sustainable change.

About CSID/ Bangladesh

The local CACs of Dialogue Works are meeting on a regular base and implement an annual advocacy dialogue on a self-chosen topic and identified stakeholder. One partner is CSID who is working with disenabled children and youth in Bangladesh. CSID envisions “an inclusive society where all disadvantaged people including Persons with Disabilities are living with equal rights, opportunities, access and dignity in comparison to other citizens of the country”.

More information

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This case study is part of the [Inclusive Participation Toolbox](#) by CBM.