



Dhaka Outcome and Action Agenda

11 December 2017

Adopted at the workshop on “Innovations in Service Delivery: The Scope for South-South and Triangular Cooperation” convened in Dhaka, Bangladesh, 09-11 December 2017.

Background

The Honorable Prime Minister of Bangladesh, on the sidelines of the 71st session of the United Nations General Assembly at the United Nations Headquarters in New York in September 2016 proposed a collaborative South-South Network on Public Service Innovation. The idea was supported by high-level UN officials and representatives of member states that participated in the discussion. The Network would facilitate deeper understanding and broader exchanges among Southern countries on public service innovation. The Network would identify important innovations and scaling-up novel solutions to public service challenges. This proposal was in recognition that governments around the world – in both developing and developed countries – are rapidly modernizing service delivery, through innovative tools and approaches, as a step towards becoming more citizen-centric, responsive and participatory. Furthermore, public service innovation can transform people’s lives in a significant and tangible way in a very short time. Such changes could contribute to the achievement of sustainable development goals.

Interestingly but not surprisingly, a remarkable number of these innovations are emerging in the global South including Bangladesh. The adoption and upscaling of these innovations in Bangladesh and other examples discussed show that unprecedented leapfrogging can take place. If these Southern innovators –from the public sector but also increasingly from the for-profit and non-profit private sector – can develop and operationalize the right platform to showcase their public service innovations, more people could benefit.

Subsequently, in follow-up to the proposal made in 2016, on the side-lines of the 72nd United Nations General Assembly, in September 2017, the Honorable Prime Minister of Bangladesh, along with four other heads of states and governments, launched the publication “South-South in Action: Citizen-friendly Public Service Innovation in Bangladesh” in partnership with the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation. This publication captures South-South success stories and offers knowledge on Bangladesh’s public service delivery success pathway that can act as a resource for other Southern partners.

Following work and consultations in New York among country Missions to the UN, during the 2016 South-South Development Expo and during capacity Development workshops in Africa (all undertaken between the two UNGA Sessions), the UN Office for South-South Cooperation and the Government of Bangladesh concluded that there was sufficient interest for a knowledge-sharing platform. The ‘**South-South Network for Public Service Innovation**’ (SSN4PSI) was launched at the Global South-South Development Expo on 27 November 2017 in Antalya, Turkey. This Network will not only assist countries to help achieve their pledges under Agenda 2030 for sustainable development and Agenda 2063 for Africa but also help countries to achieve citizens’ demands for efficient public service delivery consistent with their development goals.

Dhaka Workshop

As the first meeting of the SSN4PSI, the Dhaka Workshop on **Innovations in Service Delivery and the Scope for South-South and Triangular Cooperation** was held at the Prime Minister's Office in Dhaka, Bangladesh from 9 to 11 December 2017. The Workshop was jointly convened by Access to Information (a2i) Programme of the Prime Minister's Office, Bangladesh (which is supported by UNDP) and the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC).

Architect Yeafesh Osman, Honorable Minister, Ministry of Science & Technology, Bangladesh, Mr. Dina Nath Dhungyel, Honorable Minister, Ministry of Information and Communications, Bhutan, Dr Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury, Principal Secretary to the Honorable Prime Minister, Prime Minister's Office, Bangladesh, Mr. Kazi Shofiqul Azam, Secretary, Economic Relations Division, Ministry of Finance, Mr. Jorge Chediek, Envoy of the UN Secretary General on South-South Cooperation and Director, UNOSSC, Mr. Kabir Bin Anwar, Director General (Admin), Prime Minister's Office and Project Director of a2i and Mr. Anir Chowdhury, Policy Advisor, a2i, Prime Minister's Office led the Opening Ceremony. Mr. Mohammed Shahriar Alam, M.P., Honorable State Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh, Mr. Md. Abul Kalam Azad, SDG Principal Coordinator, Prime Minister's Office, Bangladesh, Ms. Mia Seppo, UN Resident Coordinator, Bangladesh, Mr. Jorge Chediek, Envoy of the UN Secretary General on South-South Cooperation and Director, UNOSSC, Mr. Kabir Bin Anwar, Director General (Admin), Prime Minister's Office and Project Director, a2i, and Mr. Anir Chowdhury, Policy Adviser, a2i, Prime Minister's Office led the Closing of the Workshop.

Participants from the following countries participated in the Dhaka Workshop:

- 18 countries – Bangladesh, Bhutan, United Kingdom, Fiji, India, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mexico, Philippines, Singapore, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Thailand, Tunisia, Uganda, USA;
- 17 NGOs and private sector agencies – BRAC, The Asia Foundation, EkStep Foundation, Oxfam, Partners in Population and Development (PPD), International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B), D. Net, Lykke Asia Pte Ltd, David South Consulting, DohaTech New Media, DataSoft Systems Limited, XGen Systems, LIRNEasia, Tiger IT, CTO Forum Bangladesh, Carter Centre, Prism Project;
- 3 academic organizations – National University of Singapore (NUS), University of Dhaka, Bangladesh; Nanyang Polytechnic International, Singapore;
- 8 development partner organizations – United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), International Labor Organization (ILO), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), US Agency for International Development (USAID).

Objectives

The main objective of the Dhaka Workshop was to make progress from the launch of the Network to the first event that provide a timely platform to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, experiences and expertise among relevant stakeholders and on to develop pathways for future Network organization and activity to achieve the vision set by the leaders at the UN General assembly side-events.

mobilization, and very importantly, institutionalization of innovation to create sustainable impact.

4. **Analysis of twenty examples of public service innovations** from participating countries, conducted in parallel under the three major themes, and extraction of important lessons that allow effective South-South Cooperation. Many of the case studies were selected from for-profit and non-profit sectors where major innovations in public service delivery innovations frequently come from the non-state actors. Various approaches to public-private partnerships were examined in these sessions.
5. **Institutionalization experience-sharing with ministers, senior government officials and experts** from participating countries on the critical need and different approaches to institutionalize South-South and Triangular Cooperation. The underlying approach to the Network is South-South and triangular cooperation. Thus it was important to review the alternative approaches adopted by various countries to institutionalize South-South and triangular cooperation.

Output

The deliberations in the workshop generated 38 possibilities for partnerships under the South-South Network under the thematic areas of health, skills, and public service delivery – the numbers were 6, 20 and 12 respectively. These were generated by the following 13 countries:

Table 1: Countries showed interest in number of ideas

Country	Health	Skills	Public Service Delivery	Total
Uganda	-	11	-	11
Malawi	-	4	-	4
Bangladesh	2	2	-	4
Singapore	-	1	-	1
India	2	1	-	3
Malaysia	-	1	-	1
Tunisia	1	-	-	1
Thailand	1	-	-	1
Somalia	-	-	3	3
Fiji	-	-	3	3
Sri Lanka	-	-	1	1
Philippines	-	-	4	4
Maldives	-	-	1	1
13 Countries	6 Partnerships	20 Partnerships	12 Partnerships	38 Partnerships

Institutionalizing South-South and Triangular Cooperation in the Context of Public Service Innovations

Two plenary sessions facilitated by the UNOSSC provided a platform to discuss the need to operationalize and institutionalize South-South cooperation. The discussions from the sessions drew some crucial conclusions:

- The SSN4PSI can play an active role in the operationalization and institutionalization of the South-South cooperation.
- The role of NGOs, CSOs and the private sector is crucial in advancing South-South cooperation.

- South-South Network will require triangular cooperation to share good practices and catalyze further upscaling of public service innovations.
- Innovative financing mechanism, collaboration and knowledge exchanges will be crucial in ensuring that the network brings tangible benefits for its members in leapfrogging public service improvements.

Other workshop Outputs

Even though this was in the inaugural meeting of the Network, some partnerships were concluded. The workshop also witnessed signing of three MoUs: 1) between a2i and Lykke Asia Pvt. Ltd., 2) between a2i and EkStep Foundation of India, 3) between UNDP Bangladesh and UNDP Fiji to bring in cutting edge approaches in financial inclusion of the poor, educational transformation, and development of one-stop service delivery centers for remote and under-served citizens.

Way Forward

The participants of the three-day long Dhaka Workshop made the following major recommendations:

- Take SSN4PSI from concept to action by active match-making between countries that are interested in sharing their public service innovations and countries that are interested in customizing and implementing these innovations in their own context;
- Create a solutions database for knowledge management, advancing learning and facilitating the ‘import’ and ‘export’ of South-South cooperation initiatives. This will also assist adoption and scaling-up successful initiatives;
- Organize SSN4PSI events as part of disseminating, exporting, importing and following-up of innovations among stakeholders to provide a platform to share ideas and new key innovations in service delivery;
- Organize field visits, web-conferencing, online meetings, study tours, assessment meetings, and capacity development for potential and interested stakeholders to facilitate better knowledge sharing, coordination and enhance the efficiency of partnerships;
- Provide technical, advisory and advocacy assistance on customization of solutions to the importing countries in implementing the adopted South-South solutions to attain their national priorities and other internationally agreed development goals;
- Maintain communication through continuous social media networking (like Facebook page/blog, etc.) for sharing, discussing, and disseminating knowledge, experiences, and ideas. A closed Facebook page would also generate planned discussions and provide information of the Network easily and effectively;
- Develop an annual workplan and choose key personnel (the ‘faces’ of the network) who will be the key focal points responsible for the proper functioning of the Network;
- Establish a SSN4PSI Innovation Fund to operationalize and institutionalize South-South Cooperation and to encourage collaboration and knowledge exchanges among stakeholders;
- Develop Key Performance Indicators (KPI) for the Network to provide stakeholders information about the activities and performance. KPI is also important to measure South-South cooperation initiatives, and to review activities and outcome.
- Yearly annual report covering reviews of the most impactful SSN4PSI cooperation stories.