



Social Security Policy Support

Partnering with the Government of Bangladesh to implement the National Social Security Strategy

PROGRESS REPORT 2014 - 2017



research



technical



policy



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Author:

Daniel Winstanley, Results-Based Management Analyst,
United Nations Development Programme in Bangladesh.

Supervising Editors:

Aminul Arifeen, Social Security Policy Support National
Project Manager, United Nations Development
Programme in Bangladesh.

Göran Jonsson, Senior Programme Advisor, United Nations
Development Programme in Bangladesh.

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Contacts:

Aminul Arifeen

Phone: +880 17876-87034

E-mail: aminul.arifeen@undp.org

Göran Jonsson

Phone: +880 17300-14041

E-mail: goran.jonsson@undp.org

Daniel Winstanley

Phone: +880 17054-07586

E-mail: daniel.winstanley@undp.org

www.socialprotectionbd.org

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Acronyms

BFID	Bank and Financial Institutions Division
CODI	Core Diagnostic Instrument
DFID	Department for International Development
FD	Finance Division
G2P	Government to Person
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
IP	Implementation Plan
LGD	Local Government Division
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoDMR	Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoHFW	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
MoLE	Ministry of Labour and Employment
MoPME	Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
MoSW	Ministry of Social Welfare
MoWCA	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
MPs	Members of Parliament
NILG	National Institute of Local Government
NSIS	National Social Insurance Scheme
NSSS	National Social Security Strategy
SSPs	Social Security Programmes
SWAPNO	Strengthening Women's Ability for Productive New Opportunities
ToT	Training of Trainers
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VGD	Vulnerable Group Development

Letter from the National Project Director

The Social Security Policy Support (SSPS) project is a critical partnership with the Government of Bangladesh with the purpose to bring about radical and life changing reforms to the social security system in Bangladesh. In 2015, with support from SSPS, the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) was finalized and approved by the Government. The NSSS is the guiding strategic document behind all of SSPS's work. The founding principle of this document can be traced directly to the constitution:

It shall be a fundamental responsibility of the State to secure to its citizens – “The right to social security, that is to say, to public assistance in cases of undeserved, want arising from unemployment, illness, or suffered by widows or orphans or in old age, or in other such cases.”
Bangladesh Constitution, Article 15 (d)

At its core, the NSSS adopts a Life Cycle approach, ensuring that those Bangladeshi citizens who need support most, are covered at any stage of their life, from birth to death. Further, the NSSS lays out a bold vision for reform, including revising and / or consolidating the portfolio of approximately 100 social security programmes (SSPs), implementing a grievance redressal system, strengthening Government to Person (G2P) delivery mechanisms, institutionalizing and standardizing targeting and selection criteria for SSPs recipients, and developing a world class model for monitoring and evaluating individual SSPs and the NSSS as a whole in a holistic manner.

In pursuit of these national objectives, SSPS has diligently worked with the Government, providing support in the primary areas of research, technical assistance (including through focused NSSS training events), and policy guidance. Additionally, SSPS has served as a focal point for inter-ministerial communication and collaboration for the purpose of implementing the NSSS vision collectively.

Reforming an entire national social security system is no small task. In fact, the reforms laid out in the NSSS outline a 5 - 10 year vision. Moving forward, one of the most important objectives will be to begin the implementation of ministerial action plans which have been fine-tuned to meet NSSS standards.

On behalf of the entire SSPS team, a special thank you to all of our partners who have helped shape and make this endeavor possible.



Faizul Islam
National Project Director,
Social Security Policy Support
Deputy Chief at Planning Commission,
Government of Bangladesh

Brief of SSPS

Objective

Ensuring that the Government of Bangladesh develops a fully functional social protection system, which supports and facilitates best practice delivery models.

Expected outcome

Poor people are less vulnerable to external shocks through greater access to financial and insurance services and social safety nets with clear graduation strategies.

Better Governance

Improved governance of social protection by strengthened institutionalisation, coordination, planning, M&E, and reporting functions, and stronger research and analysis capacity building for a more effective evidence base for policy development.

Systems Strengthening

Modern social protection infrastructure developed and capable of supporting a nationally integrated delivery system for reliable, transparent, and developmental GoB social transfers, while promoting linkages to ensure effective coordination.



Areas of Work

1 Technical

Expert, evidence-based technical support to the Government.

2 Research

Evidence-based research filling the knowledge gaps of social protection.

With the NSSS as the guiding document for project related support, SSPS contributes valuable expertise on many fronts. The driving force behind this support is always evidence: evidence-based technical assistance, evidence-based research, and evidence-based policy guidance.



Additional Deputy Commissioners receive orientation and training on the NSSS, June 30, 2016

3 Policy

Analysis and policy guidance toward implementing reforms.

4 Training and Communication

Building capacity for line Ministries, Divisions, and Departments to implement coherent reforms.

NSSS

National Social Security Strategy

Through intensive research, input from academics, government counterparts, and direct support from SSPS, the National Social Security Strategy of Bangladesh was developed. This guiding strategic document lays forth the path for everything related to social security reforms.

The long term vision of the NSSS is to: “Build an inclusive Social Security System for all deserving Bangladeshis that effectively tackles and prevents poverty and inequality and contributes to broader human development, employment and economic growth.”

Beginning in the 2015 - 2016 fiscal year, the goal of the NSSS over the following 5 years is to: “Reform the national Social Security System by ensuring more efficient and effective use of resources, strengthened delivery systems and progress towards a more inclusive form of social security that effectively tackles lifecycle risks, prioritises the poorest and most vulnerable members of society.”

The NSSS serves as the primary policy tool for Government social security law and policy makers to develop action plans for relevant ministries in order to implement the envisioned reforms.

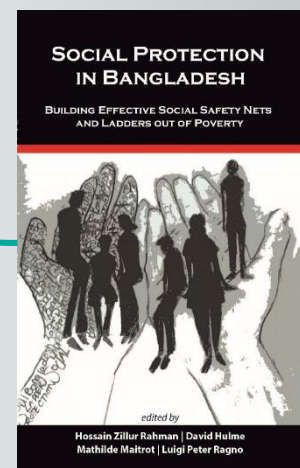
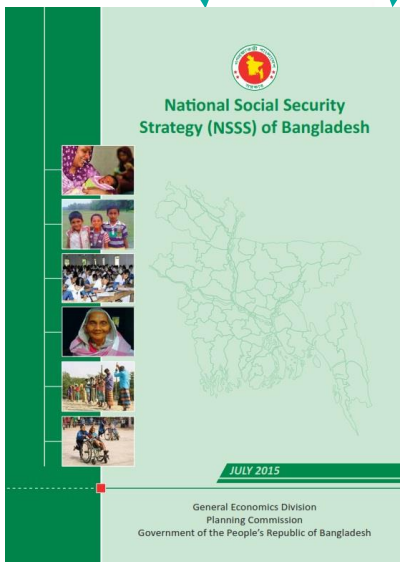
Inputs

Evidence-based research

To facilitate the preparation of the NSSS, eleven background papers, prepared by a team of international and local experts, were commissioned on the various issues relating to the NSSS. The papers include:

1. Framework Paper for Developing National Social Protection Strategy for Bangladesh
2. Poverty, Vulnerability and Inequality in Bangladesh
3. Building a Social Security System to Address Urban Poverty in Bangladesh
4. Social Security Strategies to Address Social and Gender-based Exclusion, including Disability, High-risk Groups and Minority groups
5. Social Security Financing and Affordability
6. Social Security Strategies to Address Idiosyncratic and Covariate Risks and Shocks, including Seasonal Poverty, Economic Recession and Natural Disasters
7. Taking Stock and Moving Forward: Enhancing Labour Strategies for Bangladesh's Vulnerable Groups
8. State of Governance within Social Security Sector in Bangladesh
9. Building a Social Security System to Address the Demographic Challenges Faced by Bangladesh
10. International Best Practice in Social Security: Implications for Bangladesh
11. A Review of Bangladesh Social Security System

- ▶ International Lessons Learned
- ▶ Strategic Recommendations
- ▶ Life Cycle Approach



Key Achievements



Supporting Diagnostics and Research

- ✓ NSSF Gender Diagnostics
- ✓ NSSF Research Needs Assessment
- ✓ NSSF Monitoring and Evaluation Framework Outline
- ✓ Policy Assessment of NSSF Programming
- ✓ Policy Diagnostics to Enhance NSSF Implementation (Core Diagnostic Instrument)
- ✓ Urban Inclusion of NSSF Implementation



Governance: Institutionalization and Coordination

- ✓ Central Management Committee reforms and NSSF Action Plan guidance
- ✓ 5 Thematic Clusters for programme coordination and consolidation
- ✓ Policy integration at Union, Upazila, District, and National levels
- ✓ Orientation from national to local level
- ✓ From only Monitoring to Management and CMC Secretariat Established



NSSF Action Plans

- ✓ Action Plan Subcommittee formed under the CMC
- ✓ Technical Committee for Action Plan format
- ✓ Draft Action Plans prepared by 23 Ministries / Divisions
- ✓ To be approved by CMC

5 NSSS Clusters

- 1 Social Allowance
- 2 Food Security & Disaster Assistance
- 3 Social Insurance
- 4 Labour and Livelihood
- 5 Human Development

The creation of 5 thematic clusters is an important step forward for implementing NSSS objectives. Currently, over 20 Line Ministries implement nearly 100 social security programmes. Bringing these programmes under these 5 banners will increase efficiency by improving coordination, limiting duplication, and consolidating resources. Eventually, the NSSS calls for 1 implementing social security administering Ministry.

NSSS Action Plans

Line Ministries have developed their action plans in alignment with the NSSS and numerous reforms are currently underway. SSPS supported Line Ministries by holding workshops with Government members and providing technical assistance and policy guidance on action plan development. Reforms include both operational and programmatic. Operational reforms include improving monitoring and evaluation, targeting and selection, and consistency across programmes. Programmatic reforms range from changes in the number of beneficiaries per year to changes in cash transfers sums to improved vocational and education training. A full list of ongoing programmatic reforms is listed as an annex to this report.

Grievance Redress System

A grievance redressal situation analysis study was completed, which received validation at a national workshop. A detailed terms of reference for strengthening grievance redressal through an online platform has also been prepared. This work will contribute to improving the supply side (Government) of social security by allowing the demand side (beneficiaries) to effectively raise complaints.



Grievance Redress System in Bangladesh - National Validation Workshop, April 6, 2016

Diagnostics and Research

NSSS Gender Diagnostics

Social security is a key driver for reducing poverty and vulnerability, and this is of particular importance when it comes to girls and women. The SSPS driven gender diagnostics research will directly support the formulation of gender informed social security policies.

NSSS Research Needs Assessment

The NSSS research needs assessment outlines the gaps in knowledge in terms of social security in Bangladesh as acknowledged directly or indirectly in the NSSS. Further areas of research are presented to address these knowledge gaps and improve NSSS implementation.

NSSS Monitoring and Evaluation Framework Outline

This framework provides an overview of the current state of monitoring and evaluation in relation to social security and provides a results-based outline for measuring for systematic results. A guideline for developing an indicators and monitoring framework is also included.

Policy Diagnostics

A comprehensive policy assessment of NSSS programming, identifying key areas where programmatic reforms are needed, with actionable items. The Core Diagnostics Instrument (CODI) is also presented as an international standard for measuring NSSS performance.

Urban Inclusion

As Bangladesh continues to urbanize, a systematic overhaul of social security will need to consider the specific needs of the urban poor. The diagnostics identifies areas of concern, knowledge gaps, and further research needs in this large policy area.

National Support for NSSS

130 Members of Parliament (MPs) attended an orientation session on October 2nd and 4th, 2016, for the *National Social Security System and Scope for Reform* at the National Parliament House. Amongst issues which were discussed were on implementation of social security schemes, targeting beneficiaries, facilitative role of the MPs, increase in benefits, limiting leakages and monitoring and evaluation. The workshops were organized by the Cabinet Division and Bangladesh Parliament with support from the SSPS. Advocate Mir Showkat Ali Badsha MP Bagerhat 2, said, "I am glad that the government is making social protection a top strategy, surely this strategy will carry our country to the top middle income bracket by 2021 and I thank the Cabinet Division and Bangladesh Parliament for taking this kind of initiative."



The Speaker of the Parliament, Deputy Speaker, Chief Whip, Secretary, Cabinet Division, Senior Secretary of General Economics Division, Planning Commission and Secretary Parliament, jointly shared a common platform to address questions and suggestions from the MPs regarding the National Social Security Strategy and social safety nets.

More Achievements



Training

- ✓ ToT courses for 572 resource persons (Upazila Resource Team) to train Union Parishads
- ✓ Advanced training of 13 GoB officials in Chiang Mai, Thailand
- ✓ Orientation on the NSSS for 64 DCs and 120 ADCs
- ✓ Orientation of 130 Members of Parliament

Governance: Institutionalization and Coordination

- ✓ Survey (Kurigram and Satkhira)
- ✓ Draft TNA report
- ✓ Validation workshop
- ✓ MoU with National Institute of Local Government (NILG)
- ✓ Training module on NSSS implementation at Union Parishad developed, based on TNA

Communication and Visibility

- ✓ Brief on National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) and Reforms
- ✓ Op-eds (newspaper articles, opinion papers, others) published
- ✓ SSPPS communication and advocacy strategy

Website

- ✓ SSPPS website
www.socialprotectionbd.org

Strengthening G2P

As part of UNDP's strong relationship with the Government, and in collaboration with SSPS's sister project, Strengthening Women's Ability for Productive New Opportunities (SWAPNO), SSPS undertook a micro pilot on transferring social security cash transfers to 648 women in Kurigram and Satkhira, 8 times, through bKash. This micro test helped initiate further support for research.



SWAPNO women from Kurigram waving

iData Studio and Innovation Facility

Millions of Bangladeshi citizens are enrolled in social security schemes where the benefit is a cash transfer. Citizens collect these cash transfers physically, at local Government offices, or at banks throughout the country, despite not having a bank or mobile-money account. The NSSS calls for significantly improving G2P delivery mechanisms. Following the joint micro study between SWAPNO and SSPS, project team members presented proposals to both UNDP's regional iData Studio and global Innovation Facility. As a result, a combined amount of USD 100,000 was awarded for the specific purpose of carrying out further digital cash transfers research.

In the format of a randomized controlled trial, 1300 SWAPNO women will be introduced to either bKash or DBBL's Rocket; an additional 650 SWAPNO women will act as a control group. Surveys and focus groups will be conducted, with findings being presented to all supporting partners, including the Government of Bangladesh's Planning Commission.



SSPS and SWAPNO team members present their proof of concept presentation at the iData Studio in Bangkok



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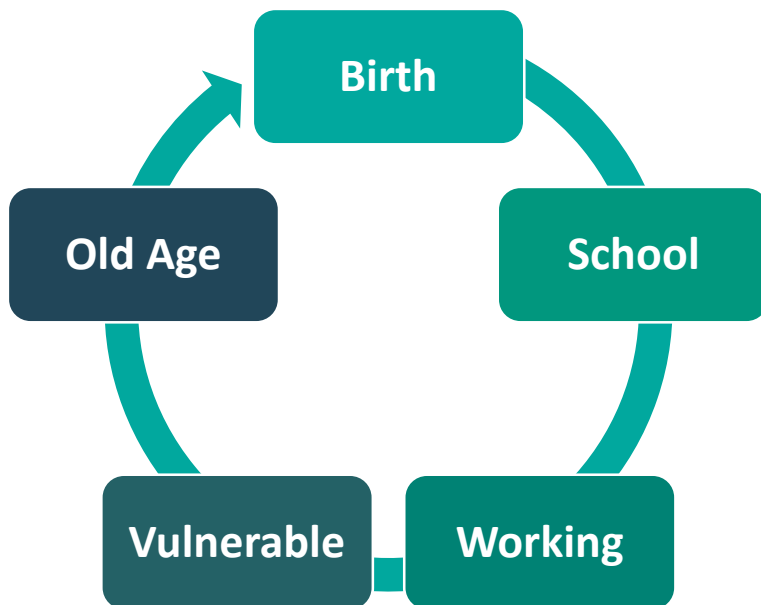
Ongoing Action in 2017



- 1** Finalization of NSSS action plans (23 Ministries, 5 Thematic Clusters and a cross-cutting plan for the entire NSSS).
- 2** Development of NSSS Gender Policy / Strategy.
- 3** Partnership with BPATC for Mainstreaming NSSS in civil servants' training curricula.
- 4** At least 1 more orientation for Members of Parliament, for Upazila and District representatives and officials, to institutionalise the NSSS within the government system for better governance.
- 5** Support CMC and five Thematic Clusters to ensure better coordination and consolidation of programmes' delivery, incorporating reform issues in ministries' annual plans and reporting.
- 6** NSSS monitoring and evaluation framework with link to indicators of 7th Five-Year Plan and SDGs and common annual reporting.
- 7** Conference on the major theme 'Strengthening Government Social Protection' with launch of the NSSS action plans.



Life Cycle Approach



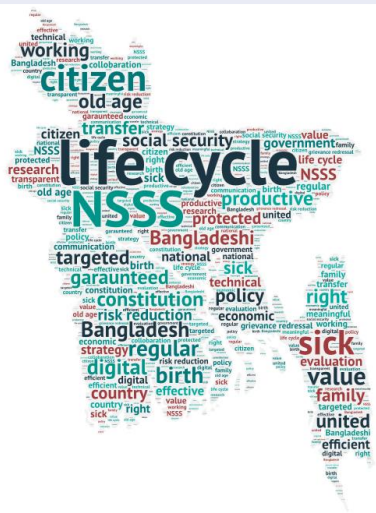
Adopted in the NSSS, the life cycle approach is a critical component behind ongoing reforms. From birth to death, NSSS reforms are geared toward ensuring that Bangladeshi citizens who need support, get it, no matter what stage of their life they're in. Whether it be from school stipends, vocational education, protecting persons with disabilities, ensuring maternal health, or taking care of elders.

Annex - Summary Progress of NSSS Programmatic Reforms

Category	Progress to Date
Child Benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoWCA started work on reform ideas within their existing Social Security programmes and Implementation Plan (IP). The number of beneficiaries of education allowance for disabled at primary school level is increased from 60 thousand to 70 thousand.
Primary and Secondary School Stipends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoPME and MoE have been working on stipend programme reform. One of the visible progress in stipend is that payment system has gradually been digitized, with an aim to whole system digitization by 2017. IP indicates reform for stipend only to needy students. Thus, stipend amount can be increased.
Continuing Orphan's and School Meals Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoSW IP indicates - existing programmes (e.g. government orphanages / shelter homes) for the orphans are being continued.
Ensuring Child Maintenance Payment for abandoned children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoSW IPs indicate - existing programmes are directly or indirectly related to child maintenance. Allowance for transgender increased from BDT 500 to BDT 600 (last year the beneficiary allowance number was 2340).
Strengthen Immunization, Child Healthcare, Nutrition and Water and Sanitation Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoHFW IP indicates – sector programme emphasised on strengthening of their existing programmes with reform ideas within the programmes.
Strengthen Education and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoPME and MoE IP informs on 6 on-going programmes with reforms on qualitative improvement in education by use of IT. Improved and expanded vocational / technical training programmes nationwide.
Strengthen Workfare Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoDMR and LGD IP informed on-going programmes and suggest consolidation will be happened in due process. The 100 days programme has been changed to 40 days in the first phase; and then another 40 days.
Introducing Unemployment, Accident, Sickness and Maternity Insurance under NSIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The MoLE plans to upscale of their small scale programmes for unemployment insurance. The allocation for tea garden labourer is increased from BDT 100 million to 150 million. Bank and Financial Institutions Division in collaboration with Finance Division has been working on formulating a plan for implementing NSIS. This is yet at the inception stage.
Consolidate into one VWB programme on a cash basis (taka 800 / month).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoWCA IP indicates VW job opportunity programmes in 400+ upazilas. Widow and deserted women allowance increased from BDT 400 to BDT 500. The number of beneficiaries is increased from 1.113 million to 1.15 million.
Provision of Childcare across all Formal & Informal Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoWCA plans run 'Day Care Programme for Lower and Middle Income Working Women', will be replicated at the district and upazila levels.



Category	Progress to Date
Maternal health care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoHFW IP indicates – poorer will be more focus under sector programme in particular ‘Maternal, Neonatal, Child and Adolescent Health’; and ‘Maternal, Child, Reproductive and Adolescent Health’ programmes. Allocation increased from 200 million to 300 million BDT for assistance to the people affected with cancer, kidney disease, liver cirrhosis, paralysis and heart disease in 2015-16 FY. With the rate BDT 500, the beneficiaries figure increased from 0.264 million to 0.5 million.
Training programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoWCA IPs suggest VGD programmes will include training components of their respective training programmes. VGD beneficiary figure increased from 0.75 million to 1 million.
Old Age Allowance (age 60+)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoSW IP proposes reforms in Old Age Allowance: increased from BDT 400 to 500 per month; beneficiary figure increased from 3 million to 3.15 million (5% increment). The freedom fighter's allowance has been increased to BDT 10,000 from BDT 8,000. Benefits shifted to universal.
Government Service Pension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FD IP indicates - Improving social protection policy-making, strategic planning, and financing, efficient resource allocation and to build individual and organizational capacity.
The National Social Insurance Scheme (NSIS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The BFID has been working to find out a suitable model of NSIS. Already they have started negotiation with the insurance companies.
Private Voluntary Pensions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Finance Division has been working to establish a ‘Pension Fund Management Authority’.
Strengthening the System of Social Security for People with disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoSW IP indicates target based programmes for male, female and children with disability will be running with existing limited programmes on disable people. Allowance for insolvent disabled increased from BDT 500 to BDT 600; while the beneficiary figure increased from 0.6 million to 0.75 million.
Strengthening the Social Security System for the Urban Poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Bank UNDP / DFID jointly arranged urban poverty seminar and urban social security is emphasised. PMO urges the importance of Urban Social Protection and instructed the Cabinet Division for more urban inclusion in NSSS. SSPS Programme present a paper on urban inclusion in NSSS in last LCG Urban at LGD.
Consolidate and Reform Food Security Type Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure food security to the rural poor with subsidize price BDT 10 / kg under OMS. Major policy shift – Food to cash in workfare programmes.
Consolidate small schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ministries are taking measures to identify the smaller programmes which need to be consolidated with or discontinued in consistence with the spirit of the NSSS.



More on the Social Security Policy Support Project

The Social Security Policy Support (SSPS) Programme is working with the government to re-configure the current social security system so that economic growth is achieved in a more inclusive manner, with economic opportunities reaching the rural and urban poor and the protection of vulnerable groups against shocks. Support is provided primarily in two areas: governance of social protection and strengthening of systems.

It shall be a fundamental responsibility of the State to secure to its citizens – “The right to social security, that is to say, to public assistance in cases of undeserved, want arising from unemployment, illness, or suffered by widows or orphans or in old age, or in other such cases.”
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