



# 2014

## Lesson Learning Report: Plan Bangladesh Bringing Economic Empowerment of Street Children (BEES) Project

**EEP/shiree**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS .....	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	4
INTRODUCTION .....	6
Economic Empowerment of the Poorest (EEP)/Shiree .....	6
Innovation Fund Round 3 .....	6
The Lessons Learning Report .....	6
The Report Format and Limitation .....	7
CHAPTER ONE: PROJECT SUMMARY .....	8
<b>Background</b> .....	8
Beneficiary Selection .....	9
Skills and Vocational Training.....	10
Saving at Drop-in-Centres (DICs) .....	11
Advocacy and Outreach.....	12
Feedback from Simultaneous Impact Learning and Process Audit (SILPA) and Other Challenges .....	12
Challenges and Reflections .....	13
Conclusion.....	14
Documents Cited.....	14
CHAPTER TWO: BASELINE - ENDLINE FINDINGS.....	16
Household Characteristics .....	17
Occupation .....	18
Income .....	19
Change in poverty thresholds .....	20
Expenditure .....	20
Assets .....	21
Savings and Loans.....	22
Housing Characteristics and Access to Basic Services.....	22
Food Security .....	24
Graduation .....	24
Conclusion.....	25
CONCLUSIONS: PROGRESS AGAINST LOG FRAME .....	26
Annex 1: Financial Overview .....	29
Annex 2: Impact of Hartal and Political Violence.....	30
Annex 3: Exit Plan .....	32

## ACRONYMS

---

BBS - Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics

BEES - Bringing Economic Empowerment of Street Children

BHH - Beneficiary Household

CMS - Change Monitoring System

DMC - Drop-in-Centre Management Committee

DFID - UK Department for International Development

DIC - Drop-in-Centres

DSS - Bangladesh Department of Social Services

EEP - Economic Empowerment of the Poorest

FGD - Focus Group Discussion

GoB - Government of Bangladesh

HIES - Household Income and Expenditure Survey

IF - Innovation Fund

IGA - Income Generating Activity

MDG - Millennium Development Goals

PSTC - Population Services and Training Centre

SDC - Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

SF - Scale Fund

SILPA - Simultaneous Impact Learning and Process Assessment

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

---

Dhaka, Bangladesh is home to thousands of street children. Poverty, lack of rural employment opportunity, landlessness, river erosion, natural disaster, family conflict and weak law and order cause rural families to migrate to urban cities for better prospects which expose a number of children to deprivation and abuse becoming street children. Plan International Bangladesh in partnership with local NGO, Population Services and Training Centre (PSTC) has implemented '*Bringing Economic Empowerment to Street Children (BEES)*' project with support of EEP/Shiree for the period of February, 2011 to December 2013 with the aim to lift 2500 extremely poor street children of Dhaka from extreme poverty by 2013.

BEES has focused on a right-based framework to expand the income-generating capacity of street children and generate assets to sustainably lift themselves from extreme poverty. A lesson learning process was undertaken to capture the key learning from the project and to examine progress made and challenges faced during implementation.

### **Child-friendly savings**

There are several key lessons to be learned from the Plan BEES project. With regards to the innovation itself, the project provides evidence that children can and will save with a flexible savings product. Previously, the street children had no options for a safe savings place as formal institutions would not open accounts for minors, and therefore faced constant risk of theft living and working on the street.

The savings product was successful because of its flexibility, as there was no fixed deposit amount, and its accessibility at any of Plan's 13 Drop-In-Centers (DICs). Since the accounts were in the names of the children, they also had direct control over their finances and during the project 88% of children were able to save more than 1000 BDT each.

### **Challenges managing heterogeneity**

However, success was not the same for all beneficiaries. Perhaps the greatest challenge for implementation of the Plan BEES project was managing the heterogeneity of their beneficiaries. Selecting beneficiaries from a variety of family circumstances (children living/working on the street without a family, to children working on the street who return to families at night, etc.) as well as ages and abilities meant that the project had to be tailored specifically to each child. Less than 30% of beneficiaries received vocational training and internships (3-6 months), which had a larger impact than the skills transfer programs (2 day training). While the skills transfer program was increased from one to two days, more time should have still been given to the training to ensure that children would retain the skills after the completion of the project.

Also, the question remains as to the appropriateness of promoting children to engage in income generating activities. While Plan has released a statement on child labor detailing the rationale, it has not adequately addressed the extent to which this approach might be limiting the future earning opportunities of street children by providing skills training as opposed to school enrolment. Unfortunately, the aspirations and thus the future expectations of children might be limited by providing training in relatively low-skilled activities.

## **Lack of Accountability for Long-Term Strategy**

The experience of the Plan BEES project also highlights the importance of long term planning and the country strategy of the partner NGO. Sustainability of the project was founded on the DIC services, but the Plan country office made the decision to close all centers in December 2013. While the continued operation of the DICs was part of the initial framework for sustainability, there was no way to hold Plan accountable for this.

With the sudden closure of the Drop-In-Centers, 307 children who were taking shelter overnight had to hurriedly find other places to live. While the majority of these children had families to go back to, the children feared that their education will be hampered if they rejoin their families. 14% of these children had no place to go, and while the project attempted to find space for them with other organizations or organize a group living arrangement it is uncertain what will happen to these children in the future without support. The closure of the DICs also meant the closure of the savings accounts, and due to logistical issues 807 children were not able to withdraw their savings before their accounts were closed. While the project team tried to locate these children to hand over their savings directly or to another organization, the extent to which this occurred is unknown.

## **Inappropriate evaluation framework**

Finally, this project highlights the importance of developing an appropriate evaluation framework in the design phase of a project. To illustrate, hartals and political unrest during the final months of the project forced street children to cut back hours or stop working all together. This unavoidable under/unemployment forced children to dip into their savings, and by the end of the project average savings per child dropped to 218 BDT. If we just look at data from before and after the project, it appears that the project did not have much of an impact on savings and wellbeing. However, we don't know how much worse off children would have been in the absence of the project (i.e. we have no comparison).

This was a missed opportunity to not just have a rigorous evaluation of the innovation being tested, but also for Plan to provide evidence that its beneficiaries were better off than other children who did not have access to savings during the hartals. Furthermore, many socio-economic indicators were collected at the child level at baseline and at the household level at endline, and without comparable data it would be misrepresentative to claim that any change or seeming improvement is due to the project. This highlights other tensions with having an intervention at the individual level and evaluating graduation from extreme poverty at a household level.

## **Sustainability**

The closure of the DICs as well as the political unrest at the end of the project dealt serious blows to overall project impact and sustainability. It is doubtful that any gains made during the lifetime of the project will be sustained in the future given the lack of support that the still vulnerable children will be able to receive. While some children gained valuable skills through vocational training and internships, the majority did not receive enough skills to make an impact on their wellbeing. Also, those that did receive vocational training and internship have acquired skills in relatively low-skilled sectors (ex. tailoring) and thus there is a limit to how far they will be able to rise from poverty overall.

## INTRODUCTION

### Economic Empowerment of the Poorest (EEP)/Shiree

The Economic Empowerment of the Poorest (EEP)/Shiree Project is a partnership between UKAID from the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) that aims to lift one million people out of extreme poverty by 2015. During 2013, Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) joined the project as a co-funder and the duration was extended slightly to March 2016. The programme has adopted the name *Shiree* meaning steps in Bangla, reflecting the approach towards helping people to progress Innovation Fund. The Scale Fund supports proven approaches to addressing extreme poverty, while the Innovation Fund enables more innovative approaches to be tested. Both are distributed to NGO implementing partners via a competitive process with selection made by an Independent Assessment Panel. Scale Fund (SF) grants are each typically around £3million and reach approximately 10,000 direct beneficiary households. Innovation Fund (IF) grants average £300,000 and 1,000 households. As of May 2014, there were 26 active sub-projects, 14 Scale Fund and 12 Innovation Fund, working with approximately 250,000 households.

Included in the design of the Innovation Fund programme is the objective that these projects will be closely and continuously monitored, evaluated, and successes scaled up, either directly utilising available EEP/Shiree resource, or indirectly through other funding routes or by influencing the design of other projects and programmes. EEP/Shiree also has a mandate to research the dynamics of extreme poverty and the effectiveness of interventions. The main objective of this work is to make a significant contribution towards the eradication of extreme poverty in Bangladesh by 2022.

### Innovation Fund Round 3

The Innovation Fund is distributed via themed bidding rounds. Round Three focused on marginalised groups, a theme that was identified based on evidence that marginalised groups make up a disproportionate number of the extreme poor. These groups include elderly people, the physically challenged, religious and ethnic minorities who have been largely excluded from state and non-state interventions. In IF Round Three, EEP/Shiree encouraged NGOs to develop proposals specifically designed to improve the lives of marginalised groups. 7 NGO projects were selected of which the total value of contracts was £1,893,069 covering 7,160 direct beneficiaries.

### The Lessons Learning Report

This report is focused on the Plan Bangladesh project learning, and forms part of the Innovation Fund Round Three Lesson Learning reports. The reports have been produced for three main reasons: (1) to capture and make available the significant learning from each individual project, (2) to provide an impact assessment that can inform decisions regarding the potential replication or scale up of project activities, and (3) to provide a vehicle for a process of interaction, reflection and appreciative dialogue between the EEP/Shiree team, NGO project staff and beneficiaries, thus fostering learning and building on project experience prior to the publication of the report. Each report follows a similar structure that reflects the key elements of this intensive and interactive process.

## The Report Format and Limitation

A similar process has been followed during the preparation of each report in IF Round Three. **Chapter One** summarises the narrative of lessons learned from design and inception through completion of the project. Plan was asked to submit relevant documents to inform this chapter and the chapter was reviewed and endorsed by the NGO project staff prior to finalisation. **Chapter Two** reports the findings of the endline survey conducted according to a standard methodology for all Innovation Fund projects. This survey was conducted by trained enumerators using a similar methodology to that of the Scale Fund annual panel survey (CMS3). The baseline census (CMS1) is used for before and after intervention comparisons. The **Conclusion** is a comparison between final project achievements and the original logical framework.

This report is subject to the following limitations:

1. Reports and data available from Plan were mostly input and activity oriented, which to an extent limit their usefulness in capturing the lessons learned.
2. The methodology did not include interviews with key stakeholders such as the DIC management committee members, service providers or vocational institutes and therefore their views have not been reflected in the report.

## CHAPTER ONE: PROJECT SUMMARY

### Background

CMS-6 Summary of Plan International BEES

Beneficiary Information	2011	2012	2013	Cumulative	Target (according to log frame)
Child selection completed	943	1835	365	3143	2500
Child profiles (CMS 1) completed	635	1500	365	2500	2500
Child who dropped out or migrated	308	335	0	643	-
Child receiving asset transfer	-	817	935	1752	
Child receiving cash transfer	-	411	-	411	
Child receiving IGA/skill training/other capacity building	635	1500	365	2500	2500
Total value of assets/cash distributed	-		4,306,867		

The project '**Bringing Economic Empowerment of Street Children (BEES)**' set out to help 2,500 street children in Dhaka expand their income-generating capacity and generate assets to sustainably lift themselves out of extreme poverty by 2013. Plan International is the lead NGO and the implementing partner NGO is the Population Services and Training Centre (PSTC). The project ran from February 2011 - December 2013, and the project memorandum from 2011 summarises project goal, purpose, activities and outputs as such:

### Overall Goal

The goal of the project is to support the Government of Bangladesh in meeting MDG target 1 on eradicating extreme poverty and hunger by 2015. The purpose of the project is for 2,500 street children in Dhaka city to expand their income-generating capacity and generate assets to sustainably lift themselves out of extreme poverty by 2013. The project will work with four different categories of street children as defined by Bangladesh's Department of Social Services (DSS). Since many children live alone, the project does not work entirely at the household level. The four categories of street children are:

**Category A:** Children up to 18 years of age who work/live on the street day and night *without their family*.

**Category B:** Children up to 18 years of age who work/live on the street day and night *with their family*.

**Category C:** Children up to 18 years of age who work on the street and return to *other family*.

**Category D:** Children up to 18 years of age who work on the street and return to *their family*.

## Major Activities

The project will enable children living and/or working on the street to increase their income generating opportunities and negotiating capacity through skills-transfer training, internships and vocational training designed to prioritize attainment of core competencies. The Drop-in-Centres (DICs) form a key part of the project as both the space where children will be able to stay and through which the project team will communicate to children on the project activities. 13 DICs have been established in a previous project and will be part of the BEES project. Other major components of the project include a savings product (or mechanism) which will run through the DICs – essentially a way by which children can save at each DIC, and withdraw their savings from any other DIC using an ID card with a unique number assigned to each child.

An outreach campaign for the implementation of Child Safeguarding Standards in workplaces will be implemented and will be monitored through follow-up activities. Advocacy for improved access to basic services targets the local community and government through community campaigns and establishing direct linkages between participants and duty-bearers. Lastly, the project depends on developing ‘peers’ for street children. Peers are street children who are trained to mentor other street children and help recruit them to the project and bring them into the safety of the DICs. This is under the premise that children will only trust other children.

## Project Outcomes

1. Street Children are supported to have better control over safer employment and increased income generating capacity
2. Street children demonstrate responsible financial behaviour through sustainable asset generation
3. Street children are supported in accessing basic literacy, rights awareness, health and disease prevention, and increased protection and security, through basic services in the community

In addition to the documents cited, the Lesson Learning Report process includes evidence from street children taken from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) in order to provide qualitative evidence of their experience. The FGDs were held on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2013 at the Rampura Drop-in-Centre (DIC) with 9 beneficiaries. The document also cites an informational interview with Plan International project staff, which was held on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2013.

## Beneficiary Selection

The initial phase of the project focused on beneficiary selection and other project logistics. 31 core project staff members were hired by April 2011, and various preparatory and planning activities were accomplished during the intensive inception period from February - June 2011.

Targeting was perhaps the main challenge that Plan BEES project faced in the inception period, but was corrected by further training and orientation on the selection process of street children. A draft list of 447 street children were selected as beneficiaries in May 2011, but during the verification process by EEP/Shiree, it was observed that around 40% of the

street children initially selected did not meet the selection criteria. Most of the children that did not meet the selection criteria were either not working or earning more than 32 BDT/day.

To address this challenge, further orientation and a two-day workshop was conducted and by the end of the first project year, Plan had selected 781 children for involvement in the project who were successfully verified as extreme poor by EEP/Shiree. In the second year, a cumulative total of 2,195 children had been selected and verified by EEP/Shiree, bringing the project very close to its target of 2,500 street children according to the BEES Annual report. In 2013, Plan had finished selecting all beneficiaries, of which the final 356 children were selected in the first quarter.

Some of the children found and chosen to be part of the project were trained to become 'peer monitors,' who were then tasked with finding children on the streets, informing them about the project, and bringing the most vulnerable to the DIC.

## Skills and Vocational Training

By the end of 2011, Plan BEES project had delivered skills-based training to 419 children to improve their employment prospects. The type of skills training varied depending on the DIC, whether the children had been engaged in earlier jobs, and the children's own personal preference. For example, during the FGD, most of the girls mentioned that they received a sewing machine from the project for a tailoring business. The girls mentioned that they preferred a sewing machine as they could leave it at the DIC and be able to move freely. Some had received training on 'batik' block printing.

Additionally the project had identified and sought commitment from 20 locations for vocational training to serve 172 children. For example in the FGD, one boy had received mobile phone service training. In this case he had received training at the DIC for 2 days and the on-the-job training with a small business that was linked to the project, with BEES project staff providing oversight. The project team looked for appropriate places of work for those who received vocational training, but there is no data on the proportion of children who were employed at the end of the project.

In 2012, 1,114 children were trained in 119 batches. A total of 259 children were selected for internships, of which 230 children completed. A total of 93 children were enrolled across 9 different vocational courses. Additionally a total of 1,705 children received basic literacy and numeracy training, and 455 children participated in 259 basic rights awareness sessions. Through the basic rights awareness sessions the children were made aware about the DIC as a safe spot as well as how they would be able to build up their skills and become more independent through the project interventions. This would allow them to assert a level of confidence for life planning as well as think about saving for the future with the help of the DIC and project. The basic message through these sessions was to impart a future planning mindset for the children. Several Work Place safeguarding meetings were conducted to identify relevant employers and work places, with 40 employers offering internships implementing child safeguarding standards.

It was recognised that the training duration was not sufficient for transferring proper skills to the children, so the training duration was increased by 2 days and specific linkages with appropriate small businesses were identified once training completed. This is in line with the changes to the project based on the challenges found earlier in the project. According to

the quarterly reports, the BEES project had some success in linking children with major private sector employers in Bangladesh. Three children were linked with Jatra, a renowned handicrafts outlet in Bangladesh, as artists and receive 4000 BDT/ month for a half day's work.

### Case Study: Providing Links to Private Sector Employers

*Shirin* is 15 years old and has completed her education through Class 8. Shirin has no father and her mother lives in Korail slum. She has an older sister and brother-in-law living with her mother in Korail, but there is little room for Shirin to stay there. Her mother is a cleaner (stair sweeper) and earns 4000 BDT per month. Her sister is pregnant and her brother-in-law doesn't look after her properly, so Shirin and her mother look after her sister. Shirin received training at the DIC on block printing and tailoring in addition to a sewing machine. Through the project she has been employed by Jatra, a large art and handicrafts business in Bangladesh, where she works part time 4 hours/day painting products. Shirin says her life has changed for the better because of the skills training she received.

### Saving at Drop-in-Centres (DICs)

As the Drop-in-Centres are a core part of the project for bringing the street children together, one field organiser and one field facilitators were hired to be based at each of the 13 DICs. Another key component of the project was setting up the savings mechanism, which was launched and incorporated in each DIC in the inception period.

The savings system, called the 'ATM Booth' saw an increase in both the number of children saving as well the amount of savings per child. ID cards were distributed to children for use in withdrawing savings from any DIC. During the FGD, the children mentioned that the savings system was ideal for them because they wanted to open formal bank accounts but were unable to do so at their age, and so the system allowed them to formally save in safe way. The Annual report states that up to December 2012, 81% of BEES children were saving with the DICs and other non-DIC sources. The total value of savings was BDT 1,425,620 with an average savings per child of BDT 802. According to the Annual Report, financial and life planning profiles were completed for 1,046 children, which were used to understand what the children may have been occupied with previously and taking into account what they would like to do in the immediate future.

As all DICs closed at the end of the project, the Plan BEES project team had to search for other savings organisations to which they could transfer the children's savings. However, Plan found this difficult because most other organisations require a fixed deposit rate and therefore are not as flexible, as children do not have fixed amount of money to deposit on a regular basis. Plan has explored opening bank accounts for the children *with* families. For the children *without* families, Plan explored non-formal savings organisations with other NGOs.

Up to December 2013, 2603 children saved with 13 DICs where they saved total BDT 3,225,944 and transacted BDT 2,658,053 in addition to non-DIC savings. Some of the savers saved with both the devices i.e. with DIC, employers or other organization. Among the savers, 2195 savers (87t80%) had more than BDT 1,000 savings (which was the target of the project) however, prolonged political unrest, strike and blockade forced street children to

stop working on the street that depleted the savings gradually and at the end of project period average savings stood at BDT 218.

## Advocacy and Outreach

Guiding documents on child safeguarding standards were developed during the inception period in 2011. Awareness campaigns were also organised to sensitise stakeholders and duty bearers on their roles and responsibilities towards street children. The project launching workshop was held on 29<sup>th</sup> June at the Engineers Institute of Dhaka. During 2012, multiple stakeholder meetings and workshops were held to sensitize and involve actors in the project. Stakeholder meetings included local businesses that had been linked with the DICs before the project started.

In the BEES Advocacy Activities report, the project team mentioned the problems they faced including that because most employers were profit oriented it thus took a long time to convince them of child protection issues (a big component of the project) and ensure child safeguarding standards in their work place. In practice, and as mentioned by the Plan team, this varied from employer to employer and some realised the benefits of safety measures for the children and made efforts to improve these whilst others did not.

An important statement of intent was made by the Information Minister Hasanul Haque at a National Level advocacy event in 2013. According to the Advocacy activities report the Minister said that “...necessary steps would be taken to make additional budgetary allocation for the disadvantaged street children...” Another major event was that of an Art Exhibition called ‘Chotto Danar Ural’ at the National Museum in April. The works of art were painted by children, who received money from sales. The children kept the money in their savings account and the project ensured that the savings were kept secure during the course of the project.

## Feedback from Simultaneous Impact Learning and Process Audit (SILPA) and Other Challenges

In July 2012 a Simultaneous Impact Learning and Process Audit (SILPA) review was conducted by an external consultant in liaison with EEP/Shiree. The purpose of the report was to highlight project progress to date, the challenges it has faced and to present recommendations for the remainder of the project period. According to the SILPA review team the project had a series of strategic issues which required attention and review. The report noted that the project team were working with extremely challenging and vulnerable group, but were unclear how the activities will lift children out of extreme poverty.

The report highlighted a tension that underlined the entire project in the morality of providing livelihoods support and facilitating employment (child labour) for vulnerable children. According to Plan’s Child Labour Statement, their rationale for targeting street children directly is that,

“...their ability to survive, develop a healthier life and access the basic services and protections to which they are entitled to depend on their ability to earn an income that provides them with sufficient security. Through the BEES project, Plan will directly support street children who are already working to have better control their lives and gain access to safer employments, in line with national legislation and international standards on child labour. The BEES project will not engage with

children who are not already in employment, thereby avoiding the creation of new jobs for street children. The project will prioritise assisting those children employed in hazardous forms of labour.”

At the time of the SILPA review the more challenging aspect of the project – individual Income Generating Assets (IGAs) had yet to start (and were also not covered in the log frame). Skills training were seen as minor skills that were not deemed to demonstrate significant transformational capacity. The report also noted that the activities were street based which led to the assumption this would deepen the children’s street life rather than change it.

The SILPA team’s recommendations in the final report included Plan ensuring that the IGA component received priority and clarification to determine exactly which IGA strategies would and would not be promoted. The report also suggested that the skills training element should have been upgraded because the children needed much more substantial skills. During the interview with Plan, the project team explained that the vocational skills training lasted between 3 to 6 months. In discussion the issue was raised that it should take longer for children to gain the skills and raises the question of the adequacy of time allotted for this. The report also suggested that linkages with government departments and other donor programmes should be developed. However, during the Plan discussion, the team revealed that the Drop-in-Centre Management Committees (DMCs), although primarily comprised of elite community members, local business people and landlords, also contained government Ward leaders. However, this was not the case for all DMCs, and relied on the leaning of the Ward leader as to whether they wanted to be personally affiliated with the DMC or not. Hence there was no systematic structure of including the government. It also questioned how much responsibility and monitoring Plan had outside of the DMCs.

## Challenges and Reflections

Many more challenges were recognised by the Plan BEES team and documented in the BEES Annual report. The report notes that discipline is difficult and the project team has to continually communicate and motivate the children to get them involved in different activities. High staff turnover made it difficult to accomplish assigned activities within the stipulated timeframe, since new staff had to be oriented again. The report also mentions that service centre visits (from local hospital, police station, legal aid support, etc) had positively changed the attitude of services providers towards street children and that children felt more comfortable using their services. Another challenge highlighted in the report is the insufficiency of one day skills training for some children. To mitigate this, the project planned to increase the duration of training to two days and organise more refresher courses for all participants. During discussion with the Plan project team, they mentioned that they think it would have been better to have had more time attached to the skills training to ensure that all children had sufficient skills after they complete the project.

The challenges faced by the project, mentioned in the BEES Annual report, included difficulties in ensuring child safeguarding standards of employers, promoting working discipline amongst street children who enjoy their freedom, children being worried about travelling to and from work on the street due to political unrest (hartals) and frequent staff turnover has delayed project implementation. The Plan BEES project tried to actively

promote ensuring child safeguarding by sensitising employers to the most basic measures they could take, including providing light protective gear.

According to the CMS-4 self review session which took place in July, around 42% of children responded that life was better as a result of being involved in the project, whereas only 10% indicated that it had got worse. Those who said their life had gotten worse were jobless and could not find suitable work. The Plan team noted in the report that vocational training is the most promising method by which children can gain new skills, but also noted that the project's support to develop children's entrepreneurial skills had only reached a small number of children. In the FGD the children described that choosing the IGAs by themselves was empowering because it gave them choice. The main types of activities that the children engaged with were tailoring, block batik printing and beauty parlour for the girls. The girls that received sewing machines described tailoring as being convenient and felt that a tailoring business would always be in demand. However, this only seems to apply to children who have basic shelter and a place to live.

The children felt that block printing was not profitable and, more critically, that it would be difficult to continue block printing after the closure of the DICs without another adequate space to do this. Additionally, some of the girls mentioned that while travelling to the training venue they would be teased and harassed by people on the street, so much so that the location of a training venue had to be changed because of this issue. In the FGD the children said that they would prefer if the project carried on for another 1-2 years because they still needed the support from the project team. Some of the children mentioned that the DMC members will support them in the future, but is not the case for all the children in all of the DICs. Sustainability of project impact in the absence of the DICs and the safety of the children that relied on their support is seriously questionable.

## Conclusion

The experience of Plan International shows that the BEES project has been a complicated one, not least because of the target beneficiary group of street children, the difficulty of protecting the children beyond the DIC, safeguarding them during work, and finding vocational placements given a weak regulatory environment. From the experience of Plan, it is clear that engaging in livelihoods activities has been a mixed experience and there is no clear picture of what strategies are best suited to developing the livelihoods of children. However, from the skills imparted by the project, and from the children's own experience, skills training leave a more sustainable legacy than simply transferring assets.

However, the time bound nature of the project leaves to question the optimal time for children to advance their skills beyond the project. The DICs have been recognised by the project, the children and their families as a valuable space of safety for the children but their dependency on them for support brings to question the sustainability of the project after their closure. The savings component of the project has been successful in empowering the children, but the continuance of any future savings without the ATM Booths remains uncertain given the difficulties for street children accessing formal, safe savings places. The issue of justifying engaging street children with livelihoods activities has also not been adequately answered by the experiences of the project. Much of the benefit that has been accrued is on the psychological side for the children who have all felt that they have been valued and empowered simply by being part of the project.

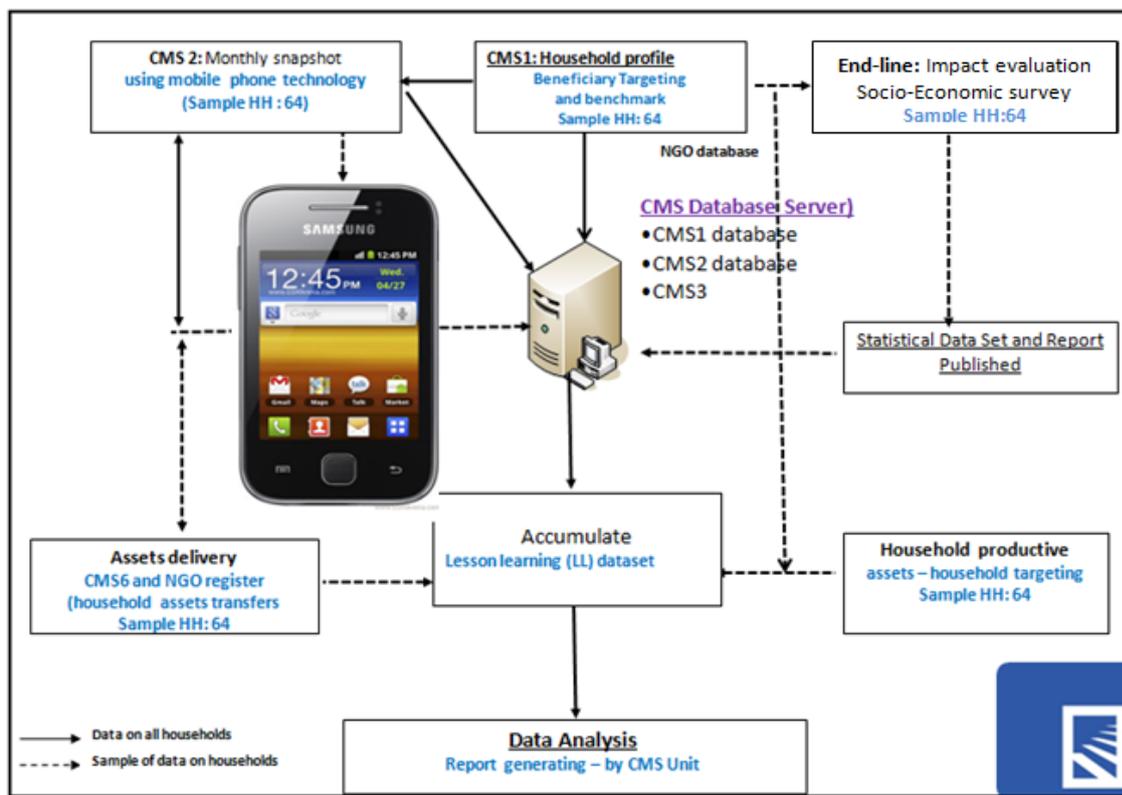
## Documents Cited

- Inception Report, 2011; EEP/Shiree and Plan
- BEES Annual Report 2012
- Project Memorandum, 2011
- SILPA Report, 2012; EEP/Shiree
- EEP/Shiree Annual Reports 2011 and 2012; [www.EEP/Shiree.org](http://www.EEP/Shiree.org)
- CMS-4 Change Report
- FGD Interviews
- Interview with Plan International team
- Completion Report, January 2014
- Exit Plan

## CHAPTER TWO: BASELINE – ENDLINE FINDINGS

The following section seeks to establish the efficiency and effectiveness of the BEES project innovations in uplifting street children and their families from extreme poverty in Dhaka by comparing socio-economic conditions at the end of the intervention (December 2013) with baseline information (November 2011 – April 2012) using specific indicators. Based on these indicators, the Shiree Multidimensional Graduation threshold is then applied to identify whether households have exited from extreme poverty over the 3 years of the project period.

**Study design:** A formal survey through the Endline to Baseline Survey was conducted to collect standardised and comparable information from 64 randomly selected children and their households. These households were chosen from the baseline database (CMS1) to analyze change over time. The diagram below outlines the various instruments of EEP/Shiree’s Change Monitoring System (CMS) that together contribute to the lesson learning dataset.



**Statistical basis for sample size:** The sample size is based on a power test with 80% power and 5% significance to detect significant improvement in income and expenditure as well as a household head and household demography.

**Data Collection & Fieldwork:** A pre-tested questionnaire with well trained field staff was used to collect information. A total of 6 enumerators, 2 Research Assistants from Scale Fund organizations, 2 Shiree CMS personnel, and 1 Monitoring officer conducted the necessary field work. Data collection was done under the remote guidance of a researcher from

Cambridge University and closely monitored by the CMS Unit of EEP/Shiree. The enumerators interviewed household heads using a multi-module questionnaire on household socio-economic conditions, including assets, expenditure, income, loans/savings, and food security with additional modules specific to the innovation.

**Constraints:** It should be noted that data for the endline was collected during a single month, while the baseline data was collected at different times as beneficiaries were phased into the project. Moreover, data collection for the endline was conducted by more experienced enumerators in comparison to the baseline. Therefore, the data may contain time-based and other variations.

As previously mentioned, the project works with four different categories of street children:

- (1) **Category A:** Children who work/live on the street day and night without their family
- (2) **Category B:** Children who work/live on the street day and night with their family
- (3) **Category C:** Children who work on the street and return to other family
- (4) **Category D:** Children who work on the street and return to their family

Certain modules of the baseline survey were asked only to certain categories of children. Questions on household characteristics and assets were only asked to children from Categories B and D (27 children), questions on expenditures were only asked to children from Categories A and C (23 children), and questions on income were only asked at the child level (i.e. not the household) and to all categories of children (50 children). The baseline data for these key indicators is also missing for 14 of 64 households.

The endline however was conducted with all categories of children at the household level. Therefore, there is baseline data for less than our sample of 64 households (between 27 and 50 households depending on the variable) at endline. The following analysis compares only these households with both baseline and endline data, as children from different categories are fundamentally different from one another. Occasionally, statistics for all 64 households at endline are also shown to serve as a snapshot of beneficiaries at the end of the project. However, without comparable baseline data, it would be misrepresentative to claim that any change or seeming improvement is due to the project.

## Household Characteristics

**Table 1.1: Average household size by sex of household head<sup>1</sup>**

		Male		Female		Both	
		<i>mean</i>	<i>sd</i>	<i>mean</i>	<i>sd</i>	<i>mean</i>	<i>sd</i>
Baseline	<i>N</i>	4.8	1.5	4	1.4	4.6	1.5
		4.8	1.5	4	1.4	4.6	1.5
Endline	27	6.1	1	4.1	1.7	5.3	1.6
	64	4.2	2.5	3.7	1.8	4	2.3

Average household size increased for both male and female headed households, suggesting that family members who have previously separated may have rejoined their families. This

<sup>1</sup> *N* is the sample size, *mean* is the simple average, and *sd* is the standard deviation. Note that a large standard deviation indicates that the data is spread out over a large range of values.

is consistent across EEP/Shiree, where research shows that economic empowerment often lead to the recombination of families.

However, when we consider all 64 households at endline there is a decrease in overall family size, which is a result of the endline including children without families (hence the smaller overall family size and larger spread) while baseline only considered children with families when asking questions regarding household characteristics.

## Occupation

**Table 2.1: Primary occupation of household head**

Occupation	Baseline	Endline	
Unemployed	4%	7%	30%
Agriculture day labour	4%	-	-
Other day labour	19%	-	2%
Domestic maid	7%	19%	14%
Skilled labour	11%	-	3%
Industrial/garment labour	4%	4%	2%
Petty trade/business	11%	22%	14%
Cottage industry/handicraft	4%	-	-
Service	-	22%	11%
Transport worker	-	7%	3%
Rented rickshaw/van/boat/push cart	11%	7%	8%
Owned rickshaw/van/boat/push cart	-	4%	3%
Other	26%	7%	11%
N	27	27	64

**Table 2.2: Primary occupation of beneficiary**

Occupation	Endline	
Unemployed	4%	19%
Other day labour	-	8%
Domestic maid	4%	3%
Skilled labour	30%	17%
Industrial/garment labour	7%	3%
Petty trade/business	11%	6%
Cottage industry/handicraft	-	2%
Service	19%	13%
Student	19%	17%
Rented rickshaw/van/boat/push cart	4%	2%
Repair vehicles	-	2%
Other	4%	9%
N	27	64

There is a change in main occupation of the household head between baseline and endline. At baseline, most household heads were involved in day labour (23%), skilled labour (11%), petty trade/business (11%), or rented a rickshaw/van (11%). At endline these same

households are mostly involved in service (22%), petty trade/business (22%) and are employed as domestic maids (19%), which are more stable sources of income. At baseline, there was no specific question on beneficiary employment. However, at the end of the project, most of the children are now engaged in skilled labour (30%), the service industry (19%), or are students (19%). Note that this is for the 27 children with families (Categories B and D)

However, when we consider all 64 households at endline, 30% of household heads and 19% of beneficiary children remain unemployed. This provides further evidence of a gap between children with families, and those children without families or children who return to other families. It should also be noted that the endline survey was conducted in December 2013 in the midst of violent hartals during which many businesses were closed, disproportionately affecting the poor who often rely on daily wages.

**Table: 2.3: Proportion of households by number of income sources**

Number of Income Sources	Baseline	Endline	
1	19%	-	34%
2	15%	44%	36%
3	56%	41%	19%
Greater than 3	11%	15%	11%
N	27	27	64

At baseline number of income sources was not asked directly, but number of income sources was calculated based on how many household members reported earning an income. There is a significant increase in the proportion of households with 2 or more income sources, from 81% at baseline to 100% at endline.

However, when we consider all households at endline, 34% of households still rely on a single source of income, illustrating the higher vulnerability that children without families still face compared to those with families at the end of the project.

**Income**

Income data at baseline was only collected for children’s monthly cash income, and therefore data at the household level and for in-kind income (i.e. goods, services and transactions not involving money) before the project is not available. According to this data, children earned on average 783 BDT per month at baseline, which is an average of 26 BDT/capita/day.<sup>2</sup>

**Table: 3.1: Average monthly cash income (BDT)**

Children at Baseline			Households at Endline					
<i>N</i>	<i>mean</i>	<i>sd</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>mean</i>	<i>sd</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>mean</i>	<i>sd</i>
50	783	241	50	9295	7015	64	9371	6803

<sup>2</sup> BDT/capita/day for children at baseline was calculated by dividing the average monthly income by 30 days, as the income reported was only that earned by the child.

Income data at endline was collected at the household level for both cash and in-kind income. Monthly household cash and in-kind income for all households averages 9371 BDT/month and 578 BDT/month respectively at endline. Total average monthly income at endline is 9949 BDT/month per household, which is an average of 102 BDT/capita/day. However, without household level baseline income data, conclusions cannot be drawn as to the impact of the project on household income.

## Change in poverty thresholds

Using the average income in the 2010 Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), the extreme poverty line corresponding to the lowest 10% was calculated in taka per person per day. Government of Bangladesh inflation rates were used to generate the extreme poverty lines for each year; 43.25 BDT/capita/day at baseline and 53 BDT/capita/day at endline for urban areas.

At endline, 76% of households are above the extreme poverty line, while 23% of households remain below. Relative to projects from other Innovation Fund Rounds, this is a fairly low level of households rising above the poverty line, which questions how well interventions at the child level may lead to improvements in household conditions.

## Expenditure

**Table 4.1: Average monthly cash expenditure (BDT)**

Children at Baseline			Households at Endline					
<i>N</i>	<i>mean</i>	<i>sd</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>mean</i>	<i>sd</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>mean</i>	<i>sd</i>
23	757	248	23	5897	4272	64	8828	6868

Because cash expenditure data was also only collected at the child level at baseline, conclusions cannot be drawn as to the impact of the project on household expenditure.

At baseline, child expenditure averages 757 BDT/month, which is an average of 25 BDT/capita/day. Household level expenditure data at endline averages 5897 BDT/month for children without families, and average monthly expenditure for all households is even higher at 8828 BDT/ month or 84 BDT/capita/day.

**Table 4.2: Poverty level according to cash expenditure per capita/day by sex of household head**

	Endline		
	<i>N</i>	Extreme poverty	Above extreme poverty
<b>Male</b>	41	37%	63%
<b>Female</b>	23	35%	65%
<b>Both</b>	64	36%	64%

Assets

There has been an increase from 59 to 96% of households who now own at least one type of working equipment, which include items such as sewing machines and rickshaws. Although shop assets were not specifically asked about at baseline, 11% of households own shop assets at endline.

When we consider all households at endline there is a smaller increase in households who own working equipment to 86%. Also, there are still 11% of households who do not own any household items, including a bed, fan or blanket. This provides further evidence that children who did not have families before the project are still worse off than other children with families, as information on assets at baseline was only collected for children with families.

**Table 5.1 Proportion of households owning at least one asset by category**

Asset	Baseline	Endline	
Livestock	-	-	2%
Poultry	4%	15%	9%
Working equipment	59%	96%	86%
Household Belongings	100%	96%	89%
Shop	-	11%	8%
N	27	27	64

**Table 5.2: Average value of assets owned by category (BDT)**

Asset	Baseline	Endline	
Livestock	-	-	3000
Poultry	800	675	783
Working equipment	1181	4115	4075
Household belonging	1969	18721	13702
Shop	-	4567	13540
N	27	27	64

Total household asset value increased from 2,736 BDT at baseline to 30,671 BDT at endline. Considering all households, total asset value at endline is lower at 20,654 BDT. It should be noted that with such a small sample size, the average asset value is strongly influenced by outliers, and the median household asset value is much lower at 12,750 BDT.

**Table 5.3: Average total household asset value by sex of household head (BDT)**

	Baseline			Endline					
	N	mean	sd	N	mean	sd	N	mean	sd
<b>Male</b>	22	2714	1282	17	29713	27036	41	20608	22938
<b>Female</b>	5	2834	2071	10	32301	43559	23	20737	31409
<b>Both</b>	27	2736	1410	27	30671	33290	64	20654	26050

## Savings and Loans

There is a significant increase in the proportion of households with savings from 56% at baseline to 80% at endline. Considering all households at endline does not significantly change the overall savings levels.

The average amount of savings has also increased from an average of 531 BDT per household at baseline to an average of 19,766 BDT at endline (23,316 BDT when considering all 64 households). The average value of savings is also strongly influenced by outliers, and the median household asset value is much lower at 7,500 BDT.

**Table 6.1: Proportion of households by level of savings**

Savings (BDT)	Baseline	Endline	
No savings	44%	20%	25%
< 1000	44%	16%	14%
1001-5000	12%	16%	14%
5001-10000	-	20%	17%
10001-15000	-	4%	5%
15001-20000	-	10%	9%
> 20001	-	14%	16%
N	50	50	64

While loans were not asked about at baseline, 48% of households had a loan at endline, mostly informal loans without interest (71%) and informal loans with interest (19%). Most loans were taken out for other reasons (42%), medical treatment (24%) and income generating activities (12%).

**Table 6.2: Source of loans and average outstanding amount per household**

Source of loan	Percent of Households	Average amount (BDT)
Informal without interest	71%	11,834
Informal with interest	19%	26,167
MFI with interest	6%	6,000
CBO or shomiti with interest	16%	26,000
N	31	18,044

## Housing Characteristics and Access to Basic Services

Unfortunately, questions on housing and services were not asked at baseline in urban areas. At endline, most household walls and roofs were made of either tin/CI sheets (48% walls; 76% roofs) or cement/brick (40% walls; 18% roofs). The majority of households (90%) rent their dwelling. The average housing area per household is 186.24 square feet, which is an average of 62.96 square feet per capita.

Table 7.1 Housing characteristics

<b>Housing Characteristics</b>	
<b>Occupancy status</b>	
Own	2%
Rent	90%
Rent free	3%
Other	5%
<b>Wall material</b>	
Grass/straw/jute stick	5%
Bamboo	6%
Tin/CI sheets	48%
Cement/brick	40%
<b>Roof material</b>	
Bamboo	6%
Tin/CI sheets	76%
Cement/brick	18%
<b>N</b>	<b>62</b>

At endline, 93% of households had access to safe sources of drinking water and of those who use a tube well as their main source of drinking water, 88% are owned by others and 12% share ownership. 90% of households had access to hygienic sanitation, but only 47% of households had soap or ash near their water point or latrine. All households are connected to the main line of the electric grid.

Table 7.2: Access to basic services

<b>Access to Basic Services</b>	
<b>Source of drinking water</b>	
Piped	77%
Tubewell	16%
Rain Water	2%
Purchased Water	5%
<b>Place of defecation</b>	
Hanging latrine	10%
Pit latrine	10%
Ring/slab latrine	6%
Concrete latrine	74%
<b>Electricity Connection</b>	
Connected to main line	100%
<b>N</b>	<b>62</b>

## Food Security

### FOOD COPING STRATEGIES

At endline, only 8% of households reported using any coping strategy in the last seven days, and only 3% of households reported using 2 or more strategies. Of those who reported using coping strategies, the majority (63%) ate smaller portions of food.

While food coping strategies were not asked about in detail at baseline, beneficiaries were asked how many days in the last week they ate less than three times a day. There was a significant decrease in households eating less than three meals a day from 96% at baseline to only 4% at endline.

### FOOD DIVERSITY

77% of all households at endline consumed food from 5 or more food groups at least once in the last week.<sup>3</sup> Only consumption of fish, meat/poultry, eggs and milk were asked about at baseline, and only whether the child (not other household members) had consumed food from these categories in the last week. This is shown below for comparison, but should not be interpreted as any change in dietary diversity due to the project.

**Table 8.1: Consumption of different types of food at least once in the last week**

Food Category	Percent of Children at Baseline	Percent of Households at Endline	
Fish	96%	98%	97%
Meat	58%	50%	52%
Pulse	-	96%	95%
Vegetable	-	98%	98%
Fruit	-	72%	63%
Milk	36%	28%	30%
Egg	88%	96%	97%
<b>More than 5 categories</b>	-	<b>80%</b>	<b>77%</b>
N	50	50	64

## Graduation

Graduation from extreme poverty is based on an index of multi-dimensional socio-economic indicators from which a household is deemed 'graduated' if it meets the essential criteria and any three additional supplementary criteria (see Table 10 below). Based on the Shiree Multidimensional Graduation Index, 77% of households have graduated from extreme poverty at the time of endline. The majority of households have high food security (i.e. use few coping strategies and have high dietary diversity) and are above the extreme poverty line. However, only 33% of households at endline have productive assets worth more than 7000 BDT.

<sup>3</sup> At endline, households were asked how many days in the last 7 days did any of their household members eat food from the categories, and thus we do not have information on the eating habits of individual family members

**Table 9: Overall household graduation**

<b>Graduation Criteria</b>	
<b>Essential Criteria</b>	
Food coping (less than two strategies)	97%
<b>Supplementary Criteria</b>	
PPPD Income (cash and in-kind) (Extreme poverty line - 53 BDT/capita/day)	77%
Number of income sources (two or more sources)	66%
Cash savings (1000 taka or more)	63%
Value of productive assets (7000 taka or more)	33%
Number of non-Productive assets (four or more assets)	73%
Food diversity (five or more food groups)	75%
<b>Graduation (Compulsory 1+ Supplementary 3)</b>	<b>77%</b>

### Conclusion

Overall, at the end of the Plan BEES project, 77% of beneficiary households have graduated from extreme poverty. This is relatively low given that graduation rates ranged from 72 – 98% for Innovation Round 3 projects. However, due to limitations of the data, we cannot draw conclusions as to the impact of the project on household income or expenditure. Where there is comparable baseline data, there are significant increases in the number of income sources, ownership of productive assets, overall asset value and savings. 96% of households are now eating three meals a day, but there does not appear to be a significant change in dietary diversity.

However, a gap remains between children with families and those without. Children without families have higher unemployment, fewer income sources, lower expenditure and fewer assets than those with families at the end of the project. This raises doubts as to the sustainability of the project gains for these children, as their lack of support system and lower level of improvement compared to children with families leaves them vulnerable to future shocks. It also brings into question the project’s success in managing such a diverse group of children with varying needs.

## CONCLUSIONS: PROGRESS AGAINST LOG FRAME

*This section has been provided by the Plan Project team*

Sl. No.	Interventions	Achievements	Result
<b>Output – 1: Street Children are supported to have better control over safer employments and increased income generating capacity.</b>			
1.	Baseline Survey/Household Profile of selected children	Among 3140 verified children completed profile of 2642 children	Total 2642 Child Profile completed
2.	Training on Financial Services and asset generation for project staff	All 156 staff of 13 DICs attended the training and refresher courses	Along with BEES project staff, DIC staff could support children to offer financial and asset creation services
3.	Employers Workshop to set internship core competencies	Two workshops organized where employers identified the set of core competencies that street children can acquire within course period	Children achieved the set core competency within the course period and enhanced their salary/income soon after the internship
4.	Consultation with street kids to establish skills based modules(Batch)	4 batches children consultation helped to identify the potential enterprises where children need to learn practical skills and tips.	20 Modules were developed ensuring diversity, gender and inclusion of street children
5.	Training on skill development	Total 1751 children (Girl-370 & Boy-1381) completed the training	Acquired skills support children to increase their profit margin in their current enterprises
6.	Training on Vocational Trade	Total 376 children (Girl-183 & Boy-193) attended vocational training which was 126 more than the target 250 children	SILPA review indicates that vocational training were more effective to increase income of the children
7.	Internship	Total 406 children (Girl-87 & Boy-319) completed internship in 30 different trades	Internship enhanced the technical skills and negotiating capacity of children to enter in the job market.
8.	Establish direct functional linkages	1340 Children meet with employers, Hospital, Recreation Centre, and other service providers	Children are more confident to access locally available services which are important to enhance the quality of life
9.	Meeting to Identify suitable employers for internships	In 39 meeting held with total 785 employers for children	Total 406 children (Girl-87 & Boy -319) completed internship with

		internship	different employers and most of them continue working with the same employers.
<b>Output – 2: Street children demonstrate responsible financial behaviour through sustainable asset generation</b>			
10.	Training for Savings management committee members	13 committee formed consist of 7 member in each Committee	Children learnt to administer savings project individually
11	Number Savers with DIC	Total 2603 children saved with DICs	Children saved total BDT 32,25,944 with DICs. Total 2195 children had savings BDT 1000 or more at any point of time during project period
12.	Number of street children received Non DIC financial Services	Total 1262 children (G-492 & B-770) received support to save with employers/ relatives/ financial institutions	Created access to financial service providers including family and friends
13.	Training on Financial and life planning Education	Total 2250 (G-593 & B-1657) Children received this training	Children are more knowledgeable to take informed choice about financial and life planning
14.	Capital asset/Equipment support for self employment	Under the project total 1752 children received capital asset support	Capital asset supported to run the business/income generating activities with increased income
15.	Training on collective craftsmanship-children	Total 561 children formed business groups for developing collective craftsmanship	Collective craftsmanship enhanced business opportunity through team building and intra-dependency
<b>Output –3: Street children are supported in accessing basic literacy, rights awareness, health and disease prevention through, and increased protection and security, through basic services in the community</b>			
16.	Basic literacy and numeracy skills development	Total 2595 children (Girl-584 & Boy-2011) received the training among them 302 children were supported to enrol in formal schools	Continuous education facilities enhanced the basic literacy level of the children
17.	Implement Child Safeguarding Standards through mobile campaign	Apart from one-to-one consultation with respective employers, 15 mobile campaign organized to aware employers to promote child safeguarding standard in their workplace	Working environment improved for the working children

<b>18.</b>	Number of children attended in right awareness sessions in DIC	Total 2439 children (G-558 & B-1881) attended right awareness sessions	Children know about their right, identify the abusive behaviour of adults, know the duty bearers and can claim their rights
<b>19.</b>	Mass campaign to promote access to services	Total 6 mass campaign organized where around 4500 stakeholders were involved	Raised awareness of mass people about child rights issues, prevention measures and safeguard the street children from abuse

## Annex 1: Financial Overview

Expenditure Item	Original Budget (BDT)	Revised Budget (BDT)	Actual Expenditure (BDT)	Variance (Revised - Actual)
Human Resources	7,395,400	7,020,321	6,945,826	74,495
Travel	1,023,880	943,309	938,393	4,916
Vehicle & Equipment	450,500	860,874	860,874	-
Office rent & Utilities	-	-	-	-
Administrative	1,305,450	1,346,913	1,293,673	53,240
Operational	2,247,838	2,717,403	2,566,794	150,609
Direct Delivery	15,036,830	15,036,830	14,527,969	508,861
Management cost 5%	3,157,888	3,211,450	3,120,355	91,094
Contingency	823,797	304,484	-	304,484
<b>Grand Total (BDT)</b>	<b>31,441,583</b>	<b>31,441,584</b>	<b>30,253,884</b>	<b>1,187,699</b>

## Annex 2: Impact of Hartal and Political Violence

There is no certain statistics to tell how many children are living on the street in Bangladesh, but one thing is clear--the numbers are very large and almost certainly growing. With the difficulty of quantifying the phenomenon, it is estimated that at least half of 440,000 street children live in Dhaka city. These children normally lead an unhealthy and often dangerous life that leaves them deprived of their basic needs for protection, guidance, and supervision and exposes them to different forms of exploitation and abuse. However, Hartals<sup>4</sup> expose them to enormous danger, hardship and uncertainty.

In BEES project almost every children are involved with different businesses, activities and works on or beside the streets. The present political situation<sup>5</sup> of the country specially the violent and fetal form of hartal makes the normal street life standstill, people are forced to stop normal activities for keeping them safe and secured. The situation is more difficult for the children who are involved with various street based works. The economic and other social costs of Hartals are not equally borne by all citizens. Most of the children work like day labourer as newspaper hawker in the street, van puller, workshop worker, bus and tempo helper, waiter in street food-shop, street vendor, etc. affects the most. The economic hardship is difficult to bear for their one day forgone income, so despite of violent hartal they have no other alternative than go outside in search of work. If they miss one working day they cannot regain that loss in anyway, they pay the value by holding themselves back from taking meals; or starving for entire day.

Like many others, Laily a child from Humayun Road Drop-in-Centre (DIC), has expressed her frustration over call of hartals, "During hartal market remains closed, I cannot work there. I get payment on hourly basis, if I miss one day I cannot overcome that loss."

Mamun of Krishi Market DIC said, "Street boys face more problems. If I go for selling newspapers, I become prey of violent attack of picketers or sometimes children are forced to do picketing with them."

Impact of hartal on street children:

1. **Become prey of hartal violence:** Sudden attack by picketers keep no option open for street based workers including children to hide in safe places. They become the victims of Cocktail, crackers and patrol bomb. Bus and tempo helpers are in most danger of burning alive in the vehicle by torching them alive with patrol.
2. **Health hazards:** They are exposed to a variety of toxic substances, both in their food and in the environment around them for burning vehicle tyre, bursting cocktails, crackers and patrol bombs.
3. **Forgone income:** Street children work and receive payment on daily, even hourly basis. They struggle to manage the bare minimum. It is difficult for them to bear the economic hardship of one day's forgone income.

<sup>4</sup> Work and transport stoppages usually violently enforced

<sup>5</sup> Bangladesh has been going through political conflict since July 2013

4. **Loss of assets:** When picketers or law enforcing agencies hunt with their fetal weapons, most of the cases they run away without picking their business assets and eventually loss the asset.
5. **Depletion of savings:** Starving children had no other alternative to withdraw from their meager savings with DICs. Prolonged hartals forced them to withdraw most of the savings, even the entire savings from their accounts.
6. **Capital losses:** Children who do not have savings anymore, either they are forced to sell out their assets or the running capital that the project handed over for running their business.
7. **Indebtedness:** Who has no other alternative, they are taking loans from their friends, shop keeper, employers that indebtedness has prolong effects on their future livelihood.
8. **Project activities:** BEES project has been facing difficulties in field based follow-up, monitoring and organizing some outer activities. Moreover, children are withdrawing their savings, and staying idle in the DICs that negatively impacting the project achievement. However, DICs are keeping open for all these children offering basic services that they need.

“I had no income in the last three days hartals. The owner did not operate the bus fearing damage and torching by picketers. I have joint in another bus as I have to survive. The situation is very scary during hartal, anything can be happened. Pickers always throw stones, break glasses and set fire on it. There is no option, because its’ about my livelihood” said Nayon, a bus helper, attached with Gabtoli DIC.

All these statements are portraying that the situation is very risky and scary for children but they do not have any choice to get rid of this. Every moment they are spending with anxiety, uncertainty and blur future.

## Annex 3: Exit Plan

Plan International Bangladesh has been operating 'Bringing Economic Empowerment to Street children (BEES)' project with the financial assistance of Shiree since February 2011. The aim of the project was to lift 2,500 street children out of extreme poverty sustainably expand their income-generating capacity, and generate assets by 2013 in Dhaka city. Plan as lead organization operate this project with the implementing partner Population Services and Training Centre (PSTC) through 13 DICs across the city. Under the project total 2642 children age between 11 to 18 were enrolled although target was 2500 children.

As this project was for 35 months, expected to end in December 2013, Plan and PSTC started project wind up process from July '13. All the stakeholders i.e. children, parents, community, relevant service providers, drop-in-center management committee, child protection group, employers, local NGOs, government offices etc. were consulted for smooth transition of the project.

Plan International Bangladesh and PSTC wanted to share the news of project phase out in such a manner so that these children do not get panicked and feel vulnerable again. At the same time, project informed about the steps that undertaken to address the needs of the children through existing service providers around the locality and arrangement with them. Most importantly project informed about what and how would these children be supported after phase out ensuring their safety, security and wellbeing.

### A. Sharing about Project Phase out

#### 1. Sharing with children

Ensuring the safe and secure reintegration of children, project had been designed a plan to ensure safe and secure reintegration of children in different organization, family and other places. Project shared the phase out issue with children through special counselling (individual & group) sessions. According to this plan DIC staffs talked to each and every child through group counselling and individual counselling to identify their actual situation, who are the most vulnerable and who are less vulnerable. In these session counsellor try to motivate children not to back in the streets, not to involve in hazardous jobs, continue education, staying at other organization center night shelter. Such kinds of counselling help children to decide what they want to do after the closing of DIC.

On basis of counselling, project has been identified two types of children 1. the most vulnerable children who do not have parents, no shelter support, source of income; and 2. less vulnerable children who have parents or relatives and after closing of DIC they can reintegrate with family or relatives.

#### 2. Sharing with Drop-in-center Management Committee (DMC)

DMC members were very supportive over the year to run the project properly. DMC always provided lots of support for these children well-being. Project has share with

DMC members about the closing of project in special meeting. All documents regarding this sharing are in 13 DIC DMC register book.

### 3. Sharing with guardians

Around 2675 children were receiving day and night support at 13 DIC in Dhaka city. Some of them does not had any family, some children has family but they do not want to live with them, some children are come from nearby community to recieve day center support. Project inform all those parents or guardian who have contacts with their children about the phase out of project. And they all are requested to take their children from DIC in family or some safe & secured place. All these information are available in register book as meeting minutes.

### 4. Communication with Different Organization

The lists project made of most vulnerable and less vulnerable children basically refers to those children who are staying at the night in shelter home, so this type of children should shifted into any other organizations' shelter home where they can get such kinds of facilities which are they receiving here. So project tries to contact with likeminded organization that provide support to children through shelter home. Then project contacted to Aparajeyo Bangla, Mayer Achol, INCIDIN Bangladesh, Happy Home (ASD), SEEP to shift children.

### 5. Communicate with Employers

After knowing about phase out some children wish to stay at employers place. Children are working at different places around the DIC. So it'll easy for them to manage alternate accommodation at that place where they work and it also help them to manage their living cost. So those children who wish to stay at employer place are communicated personally by project staffs at field level. That place children choose to live is good for them as they think. Documents are available in reintegration and closing file.

## B. Most Vulnerable children

13 DICs/NSs have been providing its services to more than 2600 street children out of which a total of 307 children (164 girls and 143 boys) take the night shelter facilities. The project team has identified that children enrolled for night shelter facilities would be in difficult situation in comparison to other children who visits the DICs occasionally. Plan and PSTC have therefore revisited and updated the family profile of the children stay in night shelter in consultation with them. Later on the project discussed with their family members/relatives about the closer of DICs/NSs. Considering the findings from the consultation, the project come up with the following categories and action plans before the closing of DICs/NSs

**Category - 1:** Out of 307 children, 239 children are willing to go back to their immediate family or in an extended family i.e. relatives who are currently living in Dhaka. The family members are willing to take them back and are able to provide a place in their house, ensure their safety in the family and help continue their schooling.

However, 22 children feared that their schooling may be hampered when they will be back to their family mostly because of the poor economic status of their family members.

PSTC will hand over them to their families/relatives in presence of DIC Management Committee Members (DMC) and other local elites. Monthly cash assistance will be provided to 22 children for ensuring the continuation of their schooling. Children who will be living in the communities of DMC members will be followed-up by them to assess how this reintegration is going on. Other children and their family members in this category will be visited by Plan's Area Coordinators (Community Mobilisers) for a period of one and a half year time.

**Category - 2:** Total 26 children (19 girls and 7 boys) have got their family/relatives outside Dhaka and need support from PSTC for going back to their village.

For this group of children, a team from the project will take them to their home and hand over them in presence of UP member and other local elites. The team will also contact the local schools for facilitating their enrolment. Local UP Members/Chairman will be contacted periodically for assessing the status of those children.

**Category - 3:** Total 42 children (29 boys and 13 girls) do not have any place to go.

Plan and PSTC have communicated with several organizations who provide similar type of services to the street children, namely Aparajeyo Bangladesh, Mayer Anchol, Incidin Bangladesh, SEEP. Formal request has been placed to enrol and accommodate some the children them. Prior to handover the children, project team has checked all the relevant facilities, child protection procedures, and skills development opportunities etc. Plan will carry out regular follow-up with these organizations after placement of the children.

**Category - 4:** The regular DIC visiting children (who take services but do not stay at night)

The project has developed a mapping of all relevant service providers at the locality of each DIC. Project staff shared the information with children so that they can avail the services including similar DICs run by other NGOs.

## **C. Encourage in Group or Individual Living**

Some children cannot make any decision about where they will go or should go after closing of DIC. After knowing about phase out plan some children decided to live in group in a rented home in proximity to their work places. So group or individual living in a rented home seemed a good option for the children. Total 32 children from 13 DIC decided to stay in rented house in group after closing of DIC. The project provided support to rent the houses for individual living.

## **D. Help Line Card Distribution**

Project provided to every child a help line card with phone numbers. In general all children will have three helpline numbers run by PSTC. Any children or their family members can call these numbers for seeking assistance if they need be.

## **E. Mapping**

All the 13 DICs have prepared map to identify where the DIC children are relocated or currently living after closing of DIC specially for the most vulnerable children. This map indicates 307 children who are now living inside and outside of Dhaka.

## **F. Management of Children's savings**

Although dissolution of the BEES project has dislocated many children to different parts of the country, and closed down their savings accounts with PSTC, however, some children are still interested to continue their savings. Plan and PSTC have linked them with different organization considering proximity, organizational reputation, financial service availability etc. Among the organizations Aparajeyo Bangladesh, Mayer Anchol, Incidin Bangladesh, and Nari Moitree are some similar service providing organizations.

Among the savers total 807 children did not withdraw or shown interest to continue their savings during the project wind up period. Among the 807 children as per the savings pattern three major categories exist, which are 1. savers who withdrawn principal amount but did not withdraw accrued interest amount which is ranged from BDT 10 to 30; 2. savers who have the minimum amount of BDT 10 to keep the account open; and 3. savers who have a significant amount as savings and accrued interest amount in their account.

Plan International Bangladesh has taken two distinct strategy to handover these savings: 1. assign four Field Organizers for three months to find out these children and handover their savings or link them with respective organization to continue their savings accounts; 2. Hand over the rest undisbursed amount to Aparajeyo Bangladesh. Currently, in all these 807 accounts total BDT 552,761 and BDT 15,130 as principle amount and accrued interest amount respectively. BEES project is formally handing over this fund with the children list to Aparajeyo Bangladesh to administer in coming days.