Knowledge and Learning Event:
Shongjog Multi-Stakeholder Platform for CwC
1st June 2016, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Preface

This was the first Knowledge and Learning event of the Shongjog Multi-Stakeholder Platform (MSP) in Bangladesh. The members of the Interim Committee, which currently leads Shongjog, participated in the event, along with the Disaster and Emergencies Preparedness Programme (DEPP) team from World Vision U.K. and the Project Manager of the DEPP in Bangladesh, hosted by BBC Media Action. I was responsible for designing the programme in collaboration with the DEPP team in a way that best addressed the current needs of the MSP members. We were planning across countries, in Bangladesh, India and the UK. Nabin Al Razwan, the DEPP Project Manager in Bangladesh, who is also part of the two-member Secretariat of Shongjog, was the interface between the design team and the MSP. At every stage of design – to decide on who should take part in the event, when should it be held, what should be the process and duration, what kind of issues required review and reflections – Nabin brokered the discussions between the team at the drawing board and the MSP members. Thus the programme design evolved from discussions at diverse locations and different levels. It was a messy as well as an enjoyable process. An unwritten alignment on one key principle kept us on track, that there was no chief architect of the programme who had the last call on decision making; each played their role as per their expertise and contributed from the perspective that they represented, for the best possible outcomes for the MSP and the DEPP project, both of which seek to incorporate two-way communication with communities (CwC) as integral part of disaster management.

The report has been written with three main purposes. First, it is for use by the MSP to plan ahead. The report tries to capture and synthesise the collective reflections of the MSP members as well as raises questions and issues that may require further deliberations. Second, it is to share learning on the collaborative process in Bangladesh with the wider circle of DEPP portfolio partners; and third; it is for use by the DEPP partners to reflect on the strategies and outcomes of the CDAC Network project, which are deeply invested in the collaborative approach. The report has been finalised after sharing with the MSP members to seek their inputs and endorsement.

As the external partnership broker and lead facilitator of the event, I would like to thank the MSP members for contributing to the design and taking part in the event and the DEPP team for co-facilitating the event and assisting in preparation of the report. Special thanks to Chris Ford of World Vision (DEPP) for editing the report.

Bulbul Baksi   28 August 2016
Partnership Brokers Association
www.partnershipbrokers.org

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Acronyms

ACF	Action Against Hunger International
BBC MA	BBC Media Action
CwC	Communicating with Communities
CDAC Network	Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities Network
DDM	Department of Disaster Management, Government of Bangladesh
DEPP	Disasters and Emergencies Preparedness Programme
FFM	Flexible Funding Mechanism
4W for CwC	'Who, What, Where, When' on CwC Activities
IOM	International Organization for Migration
JRP	Joint Response Plan
MSP	Multi-Stakeholder Platform
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures

1. Summary: Knowledge and Learning Workshop - Discussions and Reflections

Introduction

In June 2015 a group of non-governmental humanitarian organisations with a presence in Bangladesh, and the Department of Disaster Management (DDM) of the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) gathered at a workshop in Dhaka. They decided to form a multi-stakeholder platform (MSP) in order to change policy and practice to make Communicating with Communities (CwC) an integral part of disaster preparedness, response and post disaster reconstruction and rehabilitation in Bangladesh. The MSP adopted the brand 'Shongjog', meaning 'linking' in Bangla, and is now called the 'Shongjog Multi-Stakeholder Platform' (MSP). The workshop was convened by BBC Media Action (BBC MA) in its capacity as the host of the CDAC Network Disaster and Emergencies Preparedness Programme (DEPP) project in Bangladesh.

The MSP is prescribed by the DEPP project as one of its major outputs. A hypothesis underpinning the project is that a structured collaboration is necessary to bring about the required changes in disaster management practices. Enshrining the MSP as a project output may well have influenced the inclination of participants to support its formation. There was also an existing 'CwC in Emergencies Working Group' in Bangladesh, chaired by a DDM representative and co-chaired by UNICEF and BBC MA, when the idea of the MSP was introduced under the DEPP. The concept of an MSP was not challenged either in the consultations that led up to the workshop, or during the workshop, though discussions were frank and participants were outspoken on several occasions.

The Shongjog MSP now has a Terms of Reference (ToR), which has been endorsed by about fourteen organisations, including the DDM. A task force was created in the June 2015 workshop to design the group's structure. The task force was dissolved in November 2015 to form an Interim Committee to lead the entity until the formal structure was put in place. In terms of participation in the group, the Interim Committee essentially constitutes the MSP, with several other organisations loosely associated with it. It is guided by the vision and role envisaged in the workshop in June 2015 (pg.8). A further workshop in January 2016 defined the strategic focus areas of the MSP. It took roughly six months to agree on a structure, complete a gap analysis study on CwC in Bangladesh, and move from visioning and structural design to strategic priorities.

A year on it is a good time to reflect on the decisions taken in 2015. *Were there more effective approaches to promote collaborative action and embed CwC in policies and practice?* This and other reflections were discussed by the Shongjog MSP members at a 'Knowledge and Leaning' event held in Dhaka on 1st July 2016, a year after the initiation of the MSP. The purpose of the event was to **reflect on the collaborative journey so far**, to learn, celebrate, problem solve collaboratively and consider the strategies and actions required to make the MSP vision a reality*.*

Design of the Knowledge and Learning Event

BBC MA and the DEPP representatives consulted with the Interim Committee members and it was agreed to confine the event to the Interim Committee members themselves due to their on-going engagement in the MSP. It was designed as a two-part process: first, a pre-event survey questionnaire was sent out to the members via Survey Monkey; second, the members gathered in a workshop to discuss the survey findings and use them as entry points to discussions. The key areas of review that guided the discussions were: the inclusiveness of the MSP, the relevance and efficiency of the governance structure, the relevance of the vision and strategic priorities, the appropriateness of the collaborative approach versus dependence on BBC MA for facilitation of the

collaboration, the effectiveness of MSP in terms of impact, and the added value of Shongjog to individuals and organisations.

Key Reflections on the Shongjog MSP by Interim Committee Members

Ten out of fourteen members responded to the survey, and nine members joined the workshop at various times throughout the day. The timing of the event coincided with Cyclone Roanu which swept through coastal Bangladesh in late May 2016 killing at least 24 people. Whilst this made it inconvenient for many members to participate and led to low turn-out, it at the same time provided a relevant context within which the effectiveness of the platform could be reviewed.

Most members felt that the set up process was **inclusive**; although there were two members who gave low scores to inclusiveness in the survey. In terms of **reach**, it was noted that certain key stakeholders, such as the **media and the telecom sectors** or **UN agencies**, were still not engaged in the MSP, and **national NGOs**, with the exception of BRAC, **still remained outside its purview**.

The **governance structure** was perceived as **collaborative**, with a caveat that there was sometimes almost **too much consultation** without necessarily leading to robust decision making or a high degree of buy-in. This had at times resulted in the group being quite **low on efficiency.** The **need to improve efficiency** was a concern that was echoed throughout the workshop.

The members remained **committed** to the **MSP vision**. The response to the strategic priorities identified in January was cautious, mostly because it was considered too early to predict how far they would lead to the desired changes. The need for a **structured collaborative platform** was perceived as still being necessary, but there was a concern that it may tend to be less efficient, which could lead to important partners losing interest in the platform.

Members also observed a **high level of dependence on BBC MA and the DEPP funded Secretariat**. Despite efforts to encourage more self-organising among members, the collaboration in its initial stages had required intensive facilitation support from the BBC MA and the DEPP-funded staff. Nevertheless, it was acknowledged that there had been brief spurts of **self-organisation** when activities have been linked to **specific outputs** – such as working in small groups to design local projects for the DEPP's Flexible Funding Mechanism (FFM).

In June 2015 the founding members discussed, debated and agreed that the platform should be independent of the existing official humanitarian architecture, but should work closely with it. They wanted to set up a system that was open, equitable and collaborative on its own account. To date this has meant that participation in the MSP is not officially mandated in the way engagement with the humanitarian clusters is. The Interim Committee members, notwithstanding their interest and sustained support, continue to consider their involvement 'voluntary', because they are not obliged either by their organisations or by the humanitarian architecture to invest their time and energy in the MSP. This is a forum where they participate from their own interest, while more 'official' priorities take precedence over both the MSP and CwC.

The workshop also revisited the individual and organisational interests for participating in the MSP. The members present were quite clear on the **added value** of participating in the MSP and promoting CwC, but they had internal struggles aligning these with their organisational interests.

In terms of reflecting on the MSP's **effectiveness** to date, the members noted a moderate level of impact. Some organisations have started to take up projects on CwC outside of the group, and the

DDM has begun issuing needs based messages to communities. The local projects to be funded by the DEPP FFM have also been finalised.

Cyclone Roanu and the response to it was used as an example to discuss how far the MSP has gained a momentum to take forward the agenda of CwC in the context of a disaster. Immediately after Roanu, BBC MA sent out a call to Interim Committee members to put together a proposal on CwC for inclusion in the UN Joint Response Plan (JRP). It had a very short turnaround time of just a few hours. Two organisations responded with plans, but others could not manage to do so despite acknowledging that it was critical to include CwC in the JRP. It seemed that in spite of the growing interest in CwC, it was generally not prioritised during the disaster response. This may have been due to a **lack of technical as well as systemic capacities** to develop response plans that included CwC. Another possible barrier was that the members represented at the MSP were **individual champions**, and were struggling to link CwC to the **strategic interests** of their organisations.

Key Findings on the MSP and Recommendations for Further Reflections

The Shongjog MSP has displayed a reasonably high degree of resilience, openness and commitment from individual members over the past year. The group's aspiration is to mobilise resources for CwC and change organisational practices so that communities become collaborators rather than beneficiaries, ultimately enabling disaster management to become more inclusive and effective. But has the Shongjog MSP identified the **'levers[1]'to drive this change?** If not, **what is needed now?**

To date the Shongjog MSP has achieved:

- **An official structure** endorsed by the Government and chaired by a Director in the DDM.

- Continuous **support and commitment** of a small group of approximately fourteen Interim Committee members from the DDM and non-governmental organisations (national and international) to discuss, debate and decide on core issues related to its functioning and activities.

- An **openness in discussing challenges,** including personal and organisational challenges, which has promoted the principle of transparency in collaboration.

- A few significant steps undertaken by the DDM to **officially promote CwC**. Some of the non-governmental organisations have also started to take an internal interest in CwC projects and activities.

- **Finalisation of FFM projects**, which have been prepared by self-organising groups of members. Most of the projects will be jointly led by two or more member organisations.

However, the following findings should be the basis for further reflections for making the collaborative process more robust and fit for purpose:

1. Is building a structure such as the MSP a necessary starting point for initiating a collaborative process? What if strategic champions, capable of moving the system by influencing the key levers of change, were first identified and rallied informally to create shared leadership? What kind of **project design** can leave exploration of such options open while retaining focus on its goals?

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[1] The concept of identifying 'levers' in change processes has been adapted from Otto Scharmer (2009), *Theory U – Leading from the Future as It Emerges*

2. Does collaboration necessarily require an overdose of consultation, which can slow down action and sometimes discourage engagement? How does a collaborative platform achieve a **balance** between collaborative decision making, efficiency in operations, and action? It is critical to manage the dual axes of process versus goals.

3. Commitment of members sitting around the partnering table does not ensure engagement of the organisations they represent. Is the MSP engaging with the key strategic decision makers who can influence organisational policy and practice? How do Shongjog members **deepen organisational engagement** when strategic opportunities associated with the envisaged change processes may not be immediately clear?

4. There seem to be different levels of seniority among the members who attend meetings and workshops. This can hold up decision making because the members sitting around the table are not necessarily senior enough to take decisions on behalf of their organisations. This feature is characteristic of global networks as well. With regards the DEPP project, an underlying assumption was that global CDAC Network members would influence their in-country counterparts to take part in the collaborative efforts. However, there has been less engagement from the in-country CDAC Network partners than expected. Can the entire responsibility of collaboration be left to in-country players when the strategic interests of organisations at the country level are closely tied to those at global level? Can global CDAC Network support be better harnessed to influence the participation of CDAC Network members in Bangladesh?

5. There are obvious advantages as well as pitfalls of being external to the central, and most influential operating system, which in this context is the humanitarian architecture led by the Cluster System. How does the MSP **leverage advantages by creating strong links** with the formal system, **without compromising on equity and transparency** achieved through the open engagement to date?

6. The strength of the MSP lies in the continuous engagement of a small group of committed members who contribute their time despite not being obliged to do so. This strength is also an impediment because, without an official mandate, neither their participation in the MSP nor promoting CwC is prioritised by their organisations. How can this engagement be **mandated**, without compromising the strengths of informal engagement?

7. Aside from a few notable exceptions, individual members as well as organisations need to **strengthen technical as well as systemic capacities** to integrate CwC so that they can represent the CwC agenda in cluster meetings and influence response plans. What is the best and most efficient means to achieve this? And to what extent does the portfolio of FFM projects address the technical gaps?

8. What is the role of a Secretariat in supporting a collaborative network or a platform? The members of MSP are in favour of an expanded Secretariat, even though the MSP has not yet begun its programme activities. Is an expanded Secretariat expected to reduce dependence on BBC MA? Is it expected to strengthen the collaboration? If so, how?

9. How can the three roles of the current DEPP staff in Bangladesh - providing secretariat support to the MSP, managing the DEPP project, and partnership brokering - be delineated and shared among members to help the MSP achieve its vision? What kind of an internal partnership brokering role, currently played by the DEPP Project Manager, can strengthen the platform and help it achieve its vision?

10. The contracting of FFM projects has taken a long time, which may not be unusual, but is reducing effective time for activities. Do the members need to focus on aligning inter-organisational processes and build organisational capacities to expedite collaborative action? Is it receiving the attention that it deserves?

Action Points

At the workshop Interim Committee members agreed on short term action points to be undertaken within fifteen days to six months. The identified **priority** is to focus more on activities and programmes rather than on the structure and the governance of the entity itself; the latter having taken up most of the group's time in the last year.

1. To increase **reach** and bring on board critical stakeholders, the group will utilise the **FFM advocacy project** rather than focusing on a membership drive which requires time and attention that is scarce. The group will also **create a provision** for enrolling members on the **Shongjog website** to make the process accessible to any organisation who wants to contribute.

2. To increase the efficiency of Shongjog, members decided to make use of the **principle of alignment**, as enshrined in the ToR, for regular decision making. This means that members carrying a task or a role will make the decisions that they are mandated to on the basis of agreed principles or criteria. **Self-organisation** among members will be promoted to the extent possible. It is only for strategic decisions that all members will be convened to take decisions collaboratively.

3. A schedule of meetings for the next six months was agreed to enable members to plan ahead, increase attendance, and reduce time spent by the Secretariat organising meetings.

4. The Interim Committee should be **extended for another six months**, rather than investing time and energy in forming a core committee at this point, as laid down in the MSP structure document.

5. To enhance capacities of organisations to incorporate CwC in disaster response it was decided to prepare an **agreed set of 'off the shelf' Shongjog activities with costings** so that they can be fed into preparing proposals quickly.

6. To improve coordination during emergencies and enhance the effectiveness of the Secretariat the members formed a small team, led by the DEPP Project Manager (who is also the internal partnership broker) to prepare a **ToR for an expanded Secretariat**, explore options for hosting it, and solicit funds from donor agencies. The expanded Secretariat will have an **emergencies focal person** and will prepare an SOP for the MSP in emergencies.

7. To strengthen interface with the wider humanitarian architecture the group decided to follow a **systematic approach** in which MSP members should play the roles of resource persons, **advocates and ambassadors** and develop **clear and joint messages on CwC**.

8. In order to make Shongjog more visible and enhance its impact it was proposed that there should be **campaign/content** on the website; provide on the ground **disaster response services**, e.g. information messages and contextualization training; and review and update the emergency **message library pre and post disaster** with support from DEPP.

Indicators to Monitor MSP Efficiency and Effectiveness in the Next Few Months

a. To what extent is the response to Cyclone Roanu effective in incorporating CwC in organisational responses?

b. To what extent is the next response to a disaster by the MSP structured and cohesive?

c. To what extent does the Interim Committee focus on programme deliverables, rather than the MSP's structure and formation?

d. Does the Interim Committee keep to the meeting schedule agreed at the workshop?

e. Can a funding source other than the DEPP be secured to fund the MSP Secretariat?

2. Reflections on the Shongjog MSP Formation

The MSP Formation

Several Government and non-governmental organisations gathered in a workshop on 28th-29th June and 1st July 2015 and decided to form a multi-stakeholder platform (MSP) to promote two-way Communicating with Communities (CwC) as an integral part of disaster management and response. The workshop was convened by BBC Media Action (BBC MA) which hosts the CDAC Network DEPP project in Bangladesh. The participants at the workshop formulated the vision, role and responsibilities for the MSP.

Vision, Role and Strategic Priorities of the Shongjog MSP

Vision of MSP	Role of MSP	Strategic Focus Areas
"Maximise the abilities of both communities and organisations – based on an analysis of hazards – to prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters by developing a comprehensive and inclusive mechanism for genuine two-way communication and information exchange"	"The CwC multi-stakeholder platform should be a strong national network/working group to lead on CwC with a genuinely collaborative approach and strong links with local level. It should secure official recognition and endorsement to ensure its sustainability and influence"	- dvocacy for policy support and resources - echnical coordination and support for products and services - earning and sharing knowledge and information

The working hypothesis of the DEPP is that collaborative action is required to integrate two-way CwC in disaster management processes - CwC requires a transformation in the way organisations respond to disasters. It is important to note that the multi-stakeholder platform was envisaged as an output of the DEPP project in the original project design. There was also an existing 'CwC in Emergencies Working Group' chaired by a representative of the DDM and co-chaired by UNICEF and BBCMA. Despite consultations and discussions before and during the June 2015 workshop on the extent to which an MSP was required, the idea of the MSP was not challenged. However, some caveats to this
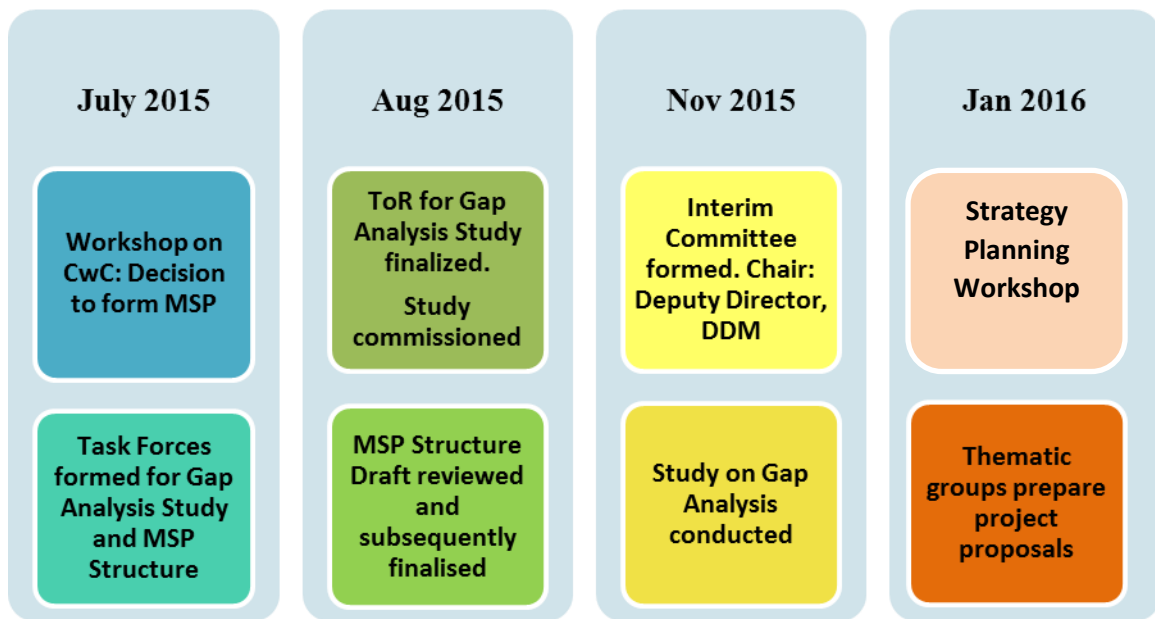
were suggested and agreed, such as the MSP should not be formed to create a permanent edifice, but that it should operate only as long as it was required.

Two task forces were created at end of the workshop, one of them to prepare a Terms of Reference (ToR) for a gap analysis study into CwC in Bangladesh which would contribute to defining the strategic focus areas of the MSP, and the other to design the structure of the MSP. The task forces, which had overlapping members, met in August 2015 in Dhaka to finalise the ToR of the study and the proposed structure. While the ToR was finalised and the study outsourced to a technical agency, the discussions on the MSP structure generated disagreement over the extent to which the structure and procedures should be determined at the outset. Some members felt that the structure should be more flexible in order leave scope for adaption once it began to function. There were also different opinions on whether or not to go for a membership drive before finalising the strategic focus areas. These could not be resolved in the workshop, which generated considerable frustration among participants and task force members.

The task force persevered to work through the contentious issues over the weeks that followed, separating the constitutional and procedural sections and finally agreeing to a structure which had enough flexibility to enable quick adaptations. In place of an executive group an Interim Committee was formed, chaired by a Director of the Bangladesh Government Department of Disaster Management (DDM), to lead the MSP during an initial period. The Interim Committee is the core group that has now met regularly since the June 2015 workshop, and led the activities of the MSP so far - albeit with too much dependence on the two-member Secretariat currently hosted by BBC MA and supported by the DEPP.

Milestones: Shongjog MSP, Jul 2015 - Jan 2016

July 2015	Aug 2015	Nov 2015	Jan 2016
Workshop on CwC: Decision to form MSP	ToR for Gap Analysis Study finalized. Study commissioned	Interim Committee formed. Chair: Deputy Director, DDM	Strategy Planning Workshop
Task Forces formed for Gap Analysis Study and MSP Structure	MSP Structure Draft reviewed and subsequently finalised	Study on Gap Analysis conducted	Thematic groups prepare project proposals

Status June 2016: FFM (Flexible Funding Mechanism) Projects approved, contracting arrangements are being worked out. Expected to be commissioned in mid July 2016.

It appears that the decision of participants to get involved in the MSP, which was named 'Shongjog' (meaning 'linking' in Bangla) in November 2015 as part of a new brand for the group, was born largely out of an interest in the subject matter and the excitement generated by the opportunity to work on something relatively new and unexplored. Individual champions were backed by their CEOs or supervisors who themselves met for half a day on 1st July 2015 and readily supported the

establishment of the MSP. However, despite this backing, involvement of the members has remained relatively informal. Organisations have supported the participation of their CwC champions to the extent that it does not conflict with their other 'official' commitments; but the involvement of the champions in the MSP has not been reflected in their job descriptions or 'official' roles, and the influence that many of these champions have had on their organisations' core decision making processes or in managing change processes seems to have been limited to date. Indeed, currently, many members refer to their involvement as 'voluntary', which on the one hand indicates that they engage spontaneously out of their own interest; but on the other hand implies that they are not officially mandated to provide the time that they do. The voluntary nature of their involvement is also influenced by the fact that the MSP is not situated in 'official' disaster response structures. There were discussions during the formative stages on whether or not the MSP should be located in the current humanitarian architecture in Bangladesh, as a working group within a cluster for example, but members seemed to prefer a more flexible, equitable and collegial way of working which was expected to be more conducive to collaborative innovations.

This absence of formality, both in the MSP's links to disaster response structures and the official roles of its members, has at times impacted on the ability of members to participate in Shongjog meetings and activities, and has probably impacted on the pace and the volume of its activities. It has also led to an excessive dependence on the Secretariat, and the collective potential of the group has been harnessed only to a limited extent.

Characteristic Features of MSP Structure

The structure of the MSP is enshrined in the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the group which the member organisations have endorsed. The Shongjog MSP has been conceived as a collaborative structure, which can operate with relative flexibility within a broad framework of procedural obligations, based on alignment on key principles.

The leadership of the platform is vested in a 'core group' comprised of nine members, with at least one representative from the DDM and the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society. The rest of the core group have to be selected from their respective sectors, with representation from international NGOs, the UN agencies, and national NGOs. Any member organisation hosting a grant on behalf of the MSP will be a member of the core group for the grant's duration. Once formed, the core group will, in normal circumstances, be functional for a year, after which core group members may change, with the exception of DDM and Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, who are permanent members. The core group will be supported by a Secretariat, which will receive guidance from the core group.

The general membership of the platform is open to any organisation involved in disaster management and willing to contribute to the MSP. There are provisions through which members can be held accountable if they are not active.

The MSP ToR lays down principles of decision making, and makes use of consensus, modified consensus, and the principle of alignment as the context may require. The intent was to make decision making processes transparent, accountable, as well as fit for purpose and efficient, rather than being impeded by more rigid bureaucratic processes.

In November 2015, eleven members formed an Interim Committee to provide temporary leadership to the MSP while it organised itself into a more formal structure and a Core Group was selected. Most of these members also took part in the initial task forces. The DDM deputed one of its directors to the Interim Committee, who was selected as the committee chair. Since then the Interim Committee has led the MSP. Some members have been more active than others in terms of

participation in meetings, discussions and preparation of necessary documents, while others have been supportive but not necessarily able to find time to participate in consultations.

Current status of the MSP

As of July 2016 the Interim Committee continues to function and lead the MSP. There hasn't been a membership drive, although organisations demonstrating an interest in engaging in the MSP have been included in consultations. There has been at least one major workshop since its formation where the wider membership has been invited for collaborative decision making - the Strategic Planning Workshop help in January 2016. The workshop was attended by most of the organisations from the initial workshop in June-July 2015. This ensured that the group's strategic focus areas were defined through a wider consultation, though in most cases, aside from a few exceptions, the key organisational decision makers were not present at the workshop.

Points for further reflection

- *A year on, a point for reflection is: were there more effective alternatives to creating the MSP in order to facilitate collaborative action and generate a transformation in organisational practices? What if the champions capable of influencing the system had first been identified then rallied informally to create shared leadership, rather than forming a structured collaboration at the outset? Would it have had a greater impact?*

- *A further point to reflect on at this stage is: assuming the MSP was the most suitable vehicle for change making, what can it now do to bring on board key decision makers who can shake up the system to make fundamental changes possible?*

- *Does Shongjog's strength lie in its mode of relatively informal engagement? How can this best be leveraged?*

3. Knowledge and Learning Event: Design and Key Reflections by Members

Objectives and Design

With a view to capturing lessons learned from the first year of the MSP a 'Knowledge and Learning Event' was held on 1st June 2016. The event explored the MSP's collaborative journey to date and any necessary course correction with three key objectives:

1. Review progress to date to identify lessons and learning – to celebrate achievements, identify challenges and disseminate knowledge
2. Look forward to next steps and expectations
3. Problem solve collaboratively to address challenges

Through a process of discussions and negotiations with members it was decided to involve only the Interim Committee members in the review process. With the MSP only just beginning to undertake specific activities, such as commissioning the FFM projects, it was felt that convening a larger group for review would be more appropriate only once activities were underway and more visible. The review was supported by an external partnership broker but designed collaboratively and co-facilitated with the DEPP team, seeking inputs from the MSP Interim Committee members throughout the process.

Prior to the workshop a brief questionnaire was sent out to participants through Survey Monkey to help them reflect on the journey. The questionnaire asked respondents to rate their levels of satisfaction with various aspects of the MSP's performance on a scale of 1-5; questions were asked in the categories of:

- Inclusiveness
- Relevance and efficiency of Governance structure
- Relevance of Vision and Strategic Priorities
- Appropriateness of Collaborative Approach versus Dependence on BBCMA
- Effectiveness of MSP in terms of impact and
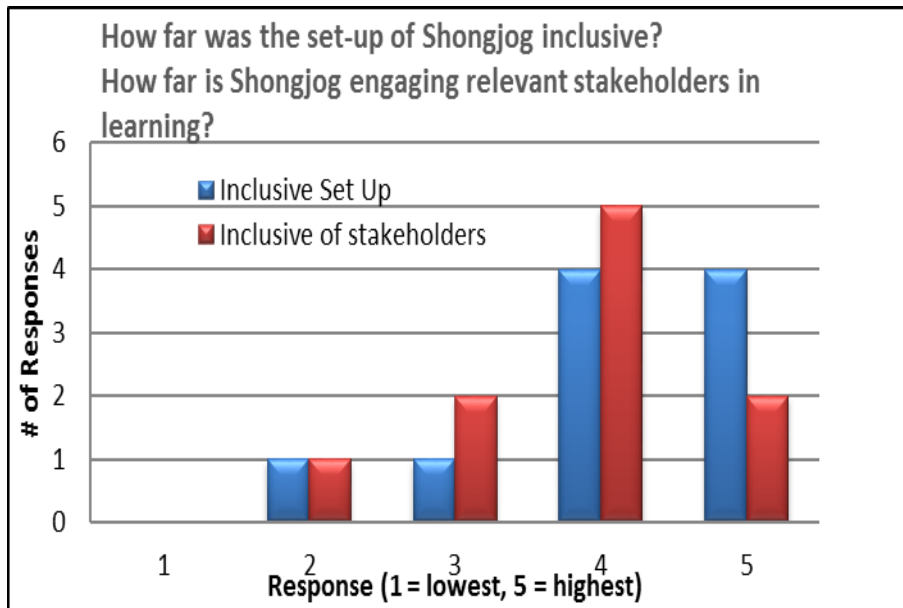- Added Value of Shongjog to individuals and organisations

Respondents were also invited to give additional feedback if they had anything else to share. **Ten out of fourteen members** responded to the survey. The results of the survey were analysed and shared with the Interim Committee members at the one-day Knowledge and Learning event at which participants dug deeper into the questionnaire findings and collectively identified actions to move the MSP forward.

The workshop was rather thinly attended; this was partly because Cyclone Roanu hit Bangladesh ten days before the event resulting in some Interim Committee members being busy with their agency's disaster response. However, absentee members made time before the workshop to share their experiences and observations on the MSP individually. **Seven of the fourteen members** participated in the workshop throughout the day. **Two other members** joined for a brief period of time.

Reflections by MSP Interim Committee Members

The questionnaire responses are represented through the graphs below, which were shared with members and became the entry point for conversations during the workshop. The discussions that followed are also reflected below.

i. Inclusiveness

How far was the set-up of Shongjog inclusive?
How far is Shongjog engaging relevant stakeholders in learning?

Inclusive Set Up
Inclusive of stakeholders

Questions:

"How far do you feel that the set up process of Shongjog MSP was inclusive? i.e. key stakeholders were involved in dialogue and consultations and their views and concerns influenced the process (1 = lowest, 5 = highest)"

"How far do you think the MSP is engaging important stakeholders in the learning process on CwC? (1 = lowest, 5 = highest)"

The graph shows that eight out of ten respondents gave scores of 4 or 5 to the question **how far was the set-up of Shongjog inclusive?** i.e. it included **genuine participation** of key stakeholders. Seven respondents also gave a score of 4 or 5 to the question **how far is Shongjog engaging relevant stakeholders**? For both questions, there was only one respondent who gave a score below 3.

Following on from discussions on inclusiveness of the platform, discussion turned to the growth of the MSP membership. It was generally agreed among the group that while there is a need to engage with more agencies, especially in the telecom and media sectors, a membership drive will take energy and effort and may not be a very good use of time given the limited human resources available to the MSP. Besides, the MSP must be visible through its activities in order to engage stakeholders and potential partners. It was therefore decided that in lieu of a membership drive the FFM advocacy project should reach out to appropriate stakeholders in a more targeted way to engage them in the MSP, and that the project would consult with MSP members for brainstorming and suggestions in this regard. There was also a suggestion that associations representing specific stakeholders should be identified rather than reaching out to them individually. For example, in order to involve the broadcast media, it would not be feasible to approach each media house individually, rather identify and approach a broadcast association as the first entry point.

In order to **increase the reach** of the Shongjog MSP and **include other relevant stakeholders**, the following action points were agreed:

✓ The FFM project on advocacy, will identify potential stakeholders of **strategic importance** to the Shongjog MSP**,** which may lead to a growth in membership

✓ There should be a **smart system** by which potential members can join the platform, so that the process of joining does not discourage involvement. For example: create a **provision on the website** for organisations to apply for membership. In this way, it is open, voluntary and any agency can access it.

ii. Relevance and Efficiency of the Governance Structure

Expansion of the spider web towards the periphery indicates a higher score. Most respondents to the first question felt that their **views were heard during the set-up phase**, with only one respondent giving a score below 3. The **suitability of current governance arrangements** was scored between 3 and 4 (six 3s and four 4s) indicating that there may scope for further improvement; significantly there is no score lower than 3 for the suitability of governance. With regards to **collaborative problem solving**, five respondents gave a score of 4 and one gave a score of 5, which indicates that the majority felt the group to be satisfactorily collaborative. Two respondents gave scores of 3 and one a score of 2 indicating scope for improvement. For **efficiency,** no respondent gave the top score, four respondents gave scores of 4, another four gave scores of 3 and there were two scores of 2, probably signifying frustration with levels of efficiency.

Based on the survey results the MSP scored better on matters of consultation and collaboration, but lower on efficiency and the suitability of its governance structure.

In discussions members generally thought that too many hours were spent discussing minor issues. This is reflected in the responses above, and also that four of the ten respondents felt there were aspects of the MSP approach that were not appropriate or conducive to reaching its vision. As detailed in the 'Yes' responses below, this suggests the efficiency of decision making could be improved. The responses also referred to the influence of strong personalities with very definitive opinions within the group as often leading to protracted discussions. It was generally agreed in the discussions that not every decision required the involvement of all

"Is there anything in the approach of the MSP that is not appropriate or conducive to reaching its vision? (Yes/No)"
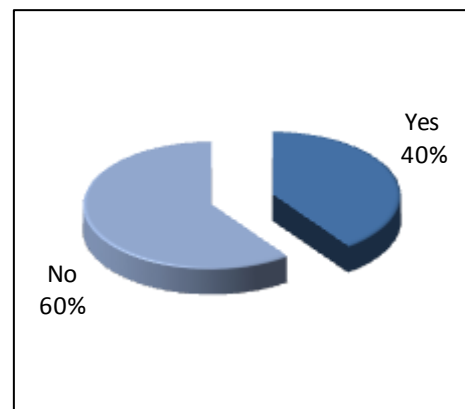
members, and there should be a process to make judicious use of the time and interests of the members. The need to improve efficiency was echoed throughout the discussions.

'Yes' Responses that explain the concerns of 40% respondents regarding governance of MSP:

I. Too much time spent on debating the governance structure in a collaborative way led to some members of the MSP becoming disillusioned with the process. The decision-making process has sometimes been held up by strong personalities on the MSP that has led to time consuming debates between members on very trivial matters.

II. Providing fund to its members can create expectation in future and as a result they might be inactive in the MSP

III. Perhaps a little too 'consultative'. Being consultative doesn't always translate into 'buy-in'. The strategy makes sense, but in practice, it is difficult to get the level of priority sought within organisations, especially in an environment where decision making is very hierarchical.

IV. Process is not transparent. Key partners are not informed and engaged in some important programmes/actions.

The level of efficiency of the MSP is related to the levels of self-organisation among its members. The scope for a higher level of self-organisation envisaged in the group's ToR should be utilised to result in a higher level of efficiency. Whilst levels of self-organisation were generally considered low, there was noteworthy self-organisation among members during discussions on FFM projects, especially among the organisations that led on proposal development. This is possibly because the work was tied to specific outputs that the self-organising members took an interest in. Some organisations which contributed to the process, but were not part of the final projects, dropped off after a point. However, their contributions were valuable.

Another issue affecting efficiency is that the representatives of some organisations have frequently rotated, creating some challenges. Notwithstanding the challenges, the process of developing proposals collaboratively was regarded by members as among the most productive areas of the MSP's collaboration to date.

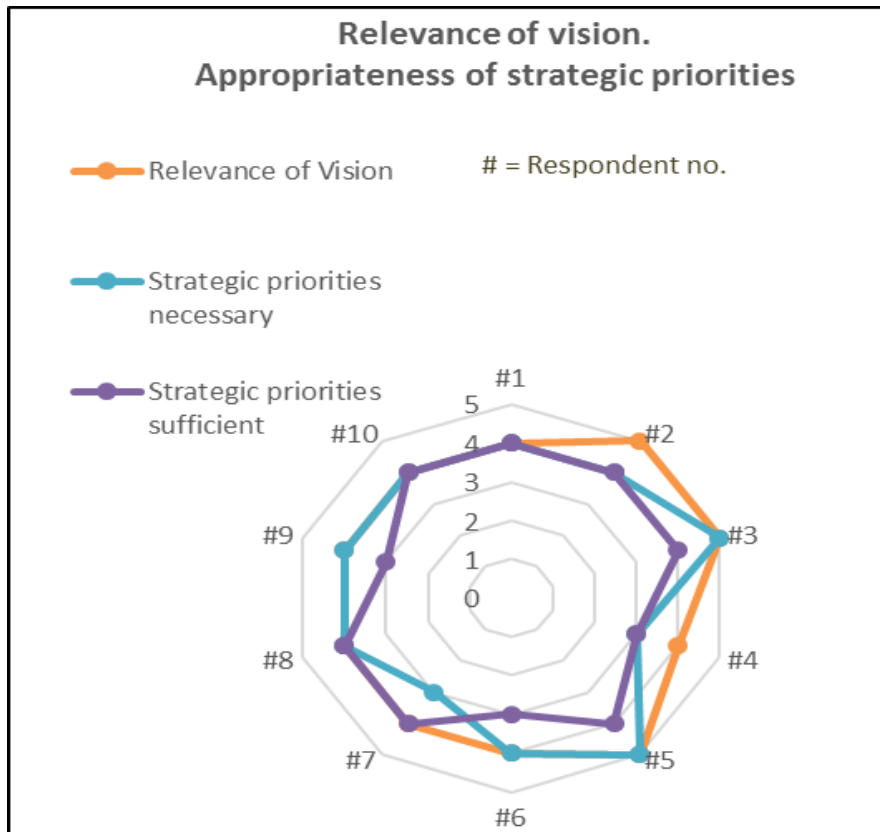In order to **increase efficiency**, participants at the workshop agreed to take the following actions:

✓ Follow the **principle of alignment** in regular decision making, as enshrined in the ToR of the MSP. This means that member/s mandated by the group to carry out a task or responsibility may take the associated decisions without requiring further consultation with the wider group. Instead the justification for decisions should be documented by the member/s and made available to the wider group. The full membership should only be convened for strategic decisions.

✓ Promote self-organisation among members, who should lead on specific areas as per their interest and expertise.

Questions for further reflection by MSP members:

- *Does collaboration entail decision by committee at every instance of decision making?*

- *How can a collaborative entity strategise on making its operations more efficient, while maintaining the principles of equity, transparency, mutual benefit and building on diversities?[2]*

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[2] These are principles that underpin partnering. There is a fifth principle, having courage to hold space during uncertainties. Source: Partnership Brokers Association www.partnershipbrokers.org

iii. Relevance of Vision and Strategic Priorities

Relevance of vision. Appropriateness of strategic priorities

— Relevance of Vision
— Strategic priorities necessary
— Strategic priorities sufficient

= Respondent no.

In response to the question on the **on-going relevance of the MSP's vision**, three respondents gave scores of 5, and seven gave scores of 4, indicating a high level of confidence in the vision. In terms of whether the **MSP's strategic priorities were necessary**, two members gave scores of 5, six gave scores of 4 and two gave scores of 3 suggesting a high level of confidence in their necessity; members were less convinced that the **MSP's strategic priorities were sufficient,** seven giving a score of 4, and three scores of 3. This indicates that there is scope for exploring additional priorities to achieve the MSP's vision.

Whilst more nuanced discussions related to the MSP's strategic priorities are captured in Section v. on effectiveness, **most of the members present at the Knowledge and Learning workshop were quite comfortable with the vision and strategic priorities** and therefore this issue did not require extensive discussion.

iv. Appropriateness of Collaborative Approach versus Dependence on BBC MA

Responses to the two questions on **appropriateness of the collaborative approach** and **dependence on BBC MA** have been represented in the graph together because the two appear contraindicated. In the discussions, almost all participants felt that a collaborative approach was necessary for changing policy and practices around CwC, albeit with some concerns regarding the approach's efficiency; these concerns are reflected in three respondents giving scores of 3 or below in the survey. On the other hand, there was an acknowledgment of an acute dependence on BBC MA for facilitation of the collaboration, especially on the two-member Secretariat currently hosted by BBC MA. To the question on dependence there were five scores of 5, and four scores of 4, and one of 3, indicating perceptions of excessive dependence on BBC MA and the DEPP. Most members felt that

this was to be expected in the initial stages of convening the platform. However, the challenge remains that BBC MA, through the Secretariat that it is hosting, is driving the collaboration. To date it has not taken on a momentum of its own, despite the representatives around the table remaining committed to it.
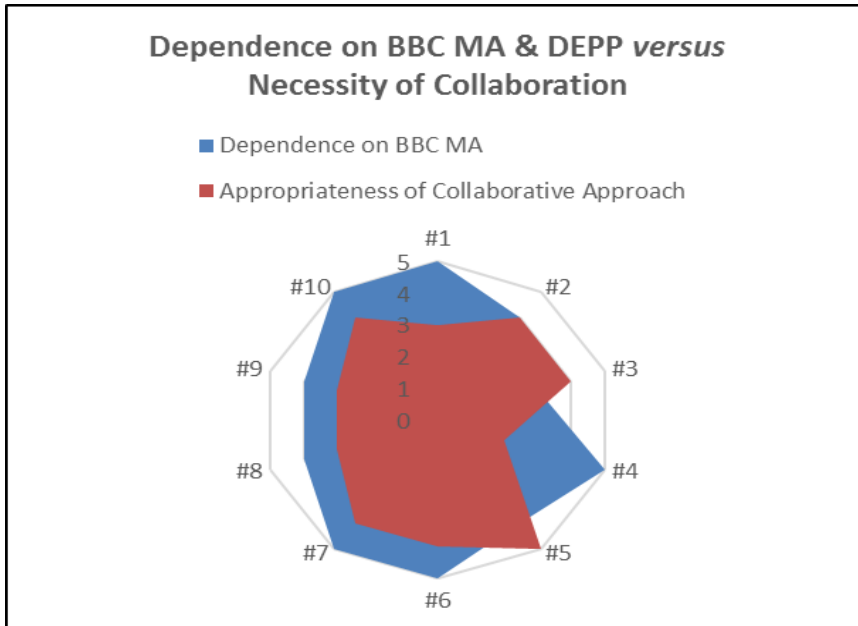
Dependence on BBC MA & DEPP *versus* Necessity of Collaboration

The over-reliance on BBC MA is probably related to the 'voluntary' nature of members' participation in the MSP. The Interim Committee members, notwithstanding their interest and sustained support, continue to consider their involvement 'voluntary' and their participation in the group is not enshrined in their job descriptions. It seemed from the discussion that this has an impact upon the extent MSP activities are prioritised, especially when faced with competing priorities. The MSP remains largely a collection of individuals, and their organisational backing has not been formalised beyond a general approval for participation in the MSP. This leads to a constant juggling of time and increases the coordination tasks of the Secretariat. Ideally, each organisation should have a CwC focal person, who should be officially mandated to participate in the MSP.

Another factor that increases dependence of BBC MA is that many of the member organisations do not have in-house specialisation on CwC, which limits their abilities to prioritise CwC in planning and strategy development. It would probably be fair to say that the prioritisation of participation in the MSP is linked to the priority CwC receives in each member organisations.

As noted in the previous section 'Reflections on the Shongjog MSP Formation' (pg.9), an interesting insight shared by one of the members in a separate interview was that participation in the MSP would be more likely to be officially mandated and prioritised by organisations if it was recognised as part of the existing formal humanitarian architecture in Bangladesh. The members discussed in detail during the set-up of Shongjog whether or not they should try to locate the MSP within the humanitarian architecture, but ultimately decided that it should be external to the formal system yet create strong links with it. However, as the example of Cyclone Roanu in the following section suggests, when agencies collaborate in planning for and responding to emergencies, it is the initiatives of the mainstream humanitarian architecture that take precedence.

A further point that was discussed was the role of the MSP Secretariat, which currently comprises two staff members - the DEPP Project Manager and Project Coordinator. The ToR of the MSP defines the role as supportive, i.e. the Secretariat should organise meetings, support preparation of reports,

maintain records and support disaster response with regard to CwC, if necessary. But the DEPP project envisages that the DEPP Project Manager in Bangladesh will also play a partnership brokering role, in addition to the other responsibilities as project manager. Therefore, the project requires three different roles for one individual - administrative and logistic support to MSP, coordination and project management, and partnership brokering - which may lead to boundary overlaps that are not helpful for facilitating a collaborative process.

A 'partnership broker', as defined by the Partnership Brokers Association is, "A **partnership process manager**… who is an active 'go-between' who supports partners to more effectively navigate their partnering journey, create a map, plan their route, choose their mode of transport, and understand how and when to change direction when necessary."[3] The DEPP Project Manager in Bangladesh is, therefore, an internal partnership broker, who is both a **partner representative** as well as the 'go-between' in maximising the partnership's effectiveness. An internal partnership broker will more often than not play multiple roles. But the extent to which s/he can effectively play the various roles depends on the volume of tasks as well as how far playing one role jeopardises the effectiveness of another. The participants at the workshop touched upon the need to detail the role of the Secretariat and define the specific tasks of each of its members. As noted in the following section on the MSP's effectiveness, they also felt that the Secretariat should be expanded.

Questions for further reflection by MSP members:

- *How do the DEPP Project Manager's three roles of support to the Secretariat, management and coordination of the project, and partnership brokering align with each other? What are the specific functions of the Secretariat, and how can they be distributed among the Secretariat staff? Is there scope for making more effective use of the existing resources at the Secretariat by modifying the current delineation of responsibilities between the two members of staff?*

- *What is the role of an internal partnership broker? What kind of a role will strengthen the platform and help it achieve its vision as well as add value to the members?*

- *Is an expanded Secretariat the answer to the MSP's challenges? Can it strengthen collaboration to a significant extent? If so, how?*

- *What will shift the perception of 'voluntary' involvement among members to a more concrete involvement in the MSP, without compromising on the levels of equity and transparency achieved through open engagement to date?*

v. Effectiveness of Shongjog and Impact on Organisational Practices and Public Policy

In terms of the **expected influence of FFM projects on public policy**, all respondents scored 3 or 4 with the exception of one member who marked a 2, indicating moderate expectations regarding their influence on policy.

The **expected influence of FFM projects on organisational practices** was also mixed; 50% of respondents giving scores of 4 or 5. The other 50% of respondents were cautious in their expectations from FFM projects regarding change in organisational practices three of them assigning scores of 3, and two scores of 2.

[3] Source: Workbook of the Partnership Brokers Training

Questions:

"The MSP is finalising projects for funding through DEPP flexi funds. How far do you think these outputs will impact upon the following? Public Policy; Organisational Practices (1 = lowest, 5 = highest)"
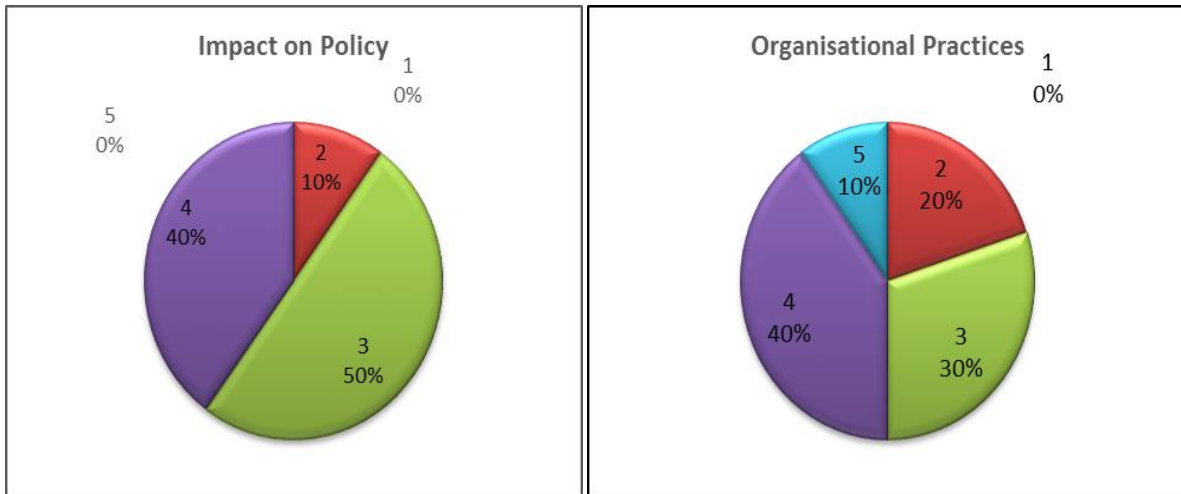
The members present were mostly involved in design of the FFM projects, and were waiting for them to be commissioned. It was quite an achievement for them to influence their organisations to undertake the projects, which are small and therefore not financially lucrative; and this may help explain why 50% of respondents felt positive about the impact of FFM projects on organisational practice. At the time of writing, the process of contracting the FFM projects was taking a long time necessitated by working through diverse organisational systems and requirements and thus reducing the effective time for undertaking the activities.

Question:

"Can you think of public policies on disaster management that have been influenced by the activities of the MSP? (Yes/No)"
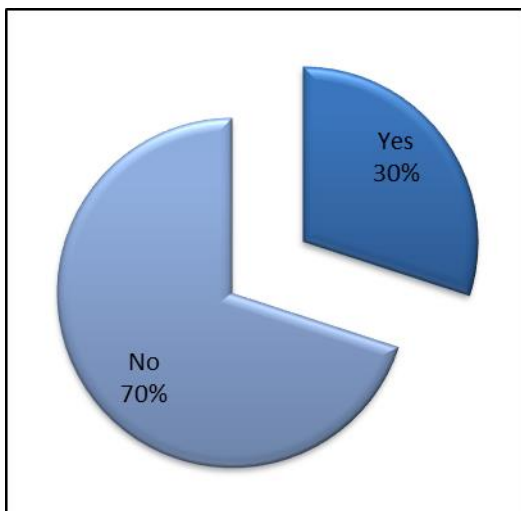

'Yes' responses giving examples of public policies that have been influenced by activities of MSP:

I. Recent inclusion of CwC in the UN JRP for cyclone Roanu

II. Government is now aware about CwC. DDM is circulating need wise messages to community.

III. Armed Forces Division is considering CwC as an issue for their DREE.

IV. Comment- At this stage MSP is not in a position to influence and say 'yes'

V. The activities of the MSP are sensitizing the DRM professionals and policy makers in Bangladesh on the importance of CWC. It will eventually influence policy formation, revision and implementation

30% of survey respondents claimed to recall a public policy that had been influenced by the MSP compared to 50% who reported being aware of changes within organisations. However, among the specific 'Yes' responses for both questions there are three concrete examples of CwC influencing public policy, whereas there is only one concrete example of organisational change. The reasons for this were not explored, but this is a point that may benefit from further reflection. In the discussions

it was mentioned that one member planned to recruit a CwC focal person. Respondents in the survey also said that some organisations were exploring options for taking up CwC projects, which they credited to the influence of MSP.

Question:

"Are you aware of changes/developments in policy and/or practices of individual organisations due to the activities of MSP? (Yes/No)"
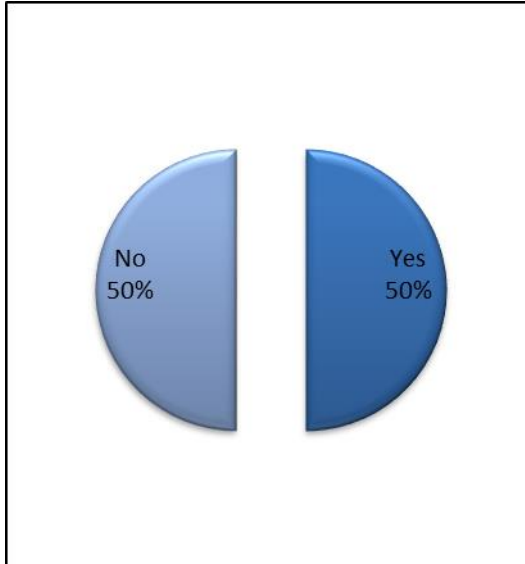
'Yes' responses citing examples of organisational practices and policies influenced by MSP:

I. CwC training module prepared for DDM
II. IOM CwC project
III. Movement in IOM to institute CwC is based on our PDO team's involvement with the DEPP project through BBC MA and Shongjog
IV. Some MSP member organizations have already started initiatives around CwC (non-DEPP). I believe MSP has major influence on this.
V. Activities taken by individual organizations are mostly business as usual. No new intervention is thought of yet.
VI. CwC is not new in many organizations. It was already happening in different ways and to varying degree.

Cyclone Roanu

The response to Cyclone Roanu was used as an example around which to discuss the impact of the Shongjog MSP, as well as the role played by BBC MA. Cyclone Roanu prompted BBC MA to instigate a proposal for CwC to feed into the UN Joint Response Plan (JRP) in consultation with the MSP Interim Committee members. Organisations were asked to contribute to the proposal, based on the activities that they could undertake to promote CwC as part of their disaster response, with a very short turnaround time of practically a few hours. Two organisations responded immediately while the rest did not respond. Ultimately BBC MA went on to attend JRP meetings on behalf of Shongjog, and a CwC component was included in the JRP. The ability of the two agencies that responded to prepare proposals so quickly was partly due to their greater capacities as large organisations; however, it also indicated the levels of organisational interest in CwC and their technical capacities to plan CwC activities within a short time. The members represented in the Interim Committee from these organisations had enough influence and authority within their organisations to make this move.

Some members said that their organisations were trying to provide information to communities more systematically as part of their work, but that working with communities to plan for relief was still several steps away. Some members, however, said that they were aware of community needs as they work with communities very closely. This points to different levels of engagement with CwC among member agencies.

An additional observation that emerged from the discussions was that organisations who

took a lead in preparing CwC projects (before Roanu struck Bangladesh) did not necessarily prioritise communication with communities while responding to Roanu.

All interim committee members thought that the inclusion of CwC in the JRP was critical, and took the opportunity to discuss their challenges in doing so, as well as how they could better influence their organisations to initiate CwC activities in their disaster response programmes. The issues that emerged can be summed up as follows:

- There was a lack of organisational capacity to develop CwC proposals within a short time frame.

- Even if there were capacities, organisational culture was not inclined to prioritise CwC. Though organisations are generally supportive of the concept of CwC, the fact that agencies plunge into relief operations indicate that CwC is still not being prioritised by agencies.

- The MSP member representatives function as individual champions and their involvement to date is largely due to their own interests rather than organisational strategic interests.

- To deepen organisational engagement the champions need to have enough influence and authority in their organisations to drive the CwC agenda.

- In order to represent the CwC agenda at official meetings convened by the Government or the formal UN systems, each of the individual MSP members needs to build CwC technical capacities.

The members felt quite strongly that the tipping point for organisations to take greater interest in the MSP will come when it begins to undertake higher level activities, which will lend it the required visibility and recognition. This is also the reason why they decided to focus more on activities in the coming months rather than on further governance mechanism issues.

In order to enhance the **capacities of member organisations** to incorporate CwC in disaster response planning and activities, the following action point was agreed:

✓ Prepare an agreed set of Shongjog "off the shelf" activities with costings, by hazard, that can be quickly put into proposals during a disaster.

In order to **improve coordination during emergencies and make the Secretariat more effective**, it was agreed:

✓ The Secretariat should be expanded and there should be an assigned emergencies focal person drawn from the Secretariat

✓ A team was constituted to prepare a detailed ToR for the expanded Secretariat and job description for the staff, with a view to securing additional funding for the Secretariat. The team will also explore hosting options for the Secretariat.

✓ Initiate a 4Ws (Who, What, Where, Who) for CwC led by a member agency and feed that into disaster response processes and formal information management systems.

In order to strengthen interface with the humanitarian architecture, it was proposed at the workshop (and will be discussed at the next Interim Committee meeting) to:

- Devise a system through which identified members of the MSP can develop clear and joint messages and raise CwC and Shongjog related issues in cluster meetings.

In order to **increase the visibility of Shongjog and its impact**, the following were discussed, but the discussions were inconclusive:

- Provide on the ground disaster response services, e.g. information messages, contextualisation training by making use of experts from the Humanitarian Communications Roster (hosted by NORCAP)

- Review and update the emergency message library pre- and post-disaster by utilising expert services from the roster

- Develop content and messages for the Shongjog website.

Questions for further reflection by MSP members:

- *How does Shongjog identify two-way communication needs on the ground that can be fed into national level discussions as well as influence the response closer to communities?*

- *What role should the Shongjog Chair play during a disaster? What kind of support does s/he require from the members?*

- *Is there a risk that CwC may become simply another hook to mobilise project resources, rather than genuinely changing organisational practices to include disaster affected people as partners in disaster management processes?*

- *The time taken to work through organisational systems to contract the FFM projects; does this impede the effectiveness of the MSP? Does this require greater sensitisation of organisations' administrative units and forging collaborations with them?*

vi. Added Value of the Shongjog MSP

Question:

"Is there any added value of working through the MSP? (This means, is the MSP expected to achieve anything that organizations may not have individually achieved; and/or, are there any unexpected benefits of working through this platform?) (Yes/No/Other)"
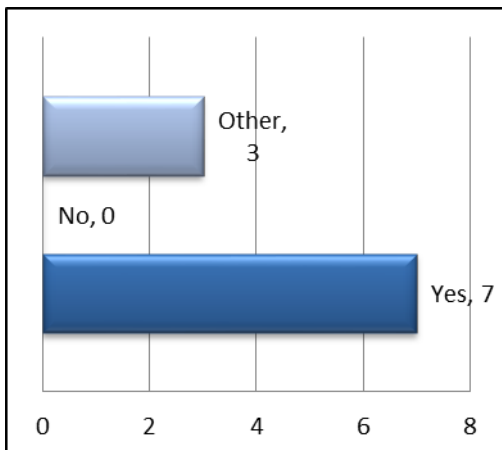
'Other' responses:

I. Yes - much easier to advocate for CwC as part of a platform - for example, the UN JRP for cyclone Roanu. The flexible funding mechanism is an excellent way of getting buy-in for activities from multiple agencies - for example, we expect that the take-up of 2-way CwC training for organisations will be much better because it's being offered through the Shongjog platform, as opposed to just being offered by Media Action.

II. Sharing of experiences and knowledge, develop skills and knowledge on CWC, greater influence on the policy makers

III. Yes but too early to say just now.

Seven of the ten survey respondents felt that there was an added value to working through Shongjog. No one reported that there was no added value. Three respondents gave 'other' responses as per the box above. This aligns with members' views that the collaborative approach is still the best way to achieve the group's aims on CwC.

At the first workshop in June 2015, the participants explored their organisational drivers and interests for taking part in MSP. At the Knowledge and Learning event, they undertook the exercise once again with some modifications. Since the survey response indicated a confidence in the added value of MSP, but at the same time the discussions indicated that the members participated more as individual champions than as organisational leaders driving change in their respective agencies, it was decided to think through the drivers in three parts:

1. What are your individual interests in taking part in Shongjog?
2. What are your organisation's strategic interests in taking part in Shongjog?
3. How can collective participation in Shongjog help the cause of CwC?

It seemed that although there was no radical change in the way the benefits of Shongjog were conceived, the thinking around them had become much clearer and more focussed compared to when the exercise was conducted a year ago. This was also the first time that they were thinking through the three aspects separately. The synthesised output from the individual exercise, which they later discussed in groups, is presented below.

Individual	Organisation	CwC
Networking, making personal contacts with professionals of diverse organisations	Share and learn from inter-organisational experience	Engagement with a wider range of actors, and mobilising joint efforts with them, leading to more efficiency due to coordination of resources, and shorter response time.
Acquire experience in partnership facilitation	Access to diverse stakeholders, and opportunity to engage with diverse communities at the field level, even if you do not have extensive field presence.	Effectiveness: Making use of range of ideas to get to more robust solutions and produce evidence on interventions that are effective.
Increase learning and knowledge through sharing experiences, especially with regard to CwC	Develop expertise on CwC and help to mainstream it in programmes	Championing the emerging concept of CwC, and keeping it on the agenda of key policy and operational fora.
	Access to potential funding	Opportunities for more attractive offer to donors – so can pull more money for CwC than organisations can do if they work individually.
	Promoting communication with people with disabilities during emergencies	Capture best practices and provide a learning platform

Questions for further reflection by MSP members:

- *In order for a collaborative approach to be effective in changing the landscape for disaster management, do organisations need to revisit their own modes of engagement with each other? How can interests, such as those reflected above, be leveraged to bring about change?*

- *There were opinions, indicated in earlier sections, on how participation in the MSP can be formalised. But what is the real issue here? How far are organisations ready to accept communities as partners, rather than as beneficiaries? This recognition will have far reaching consequences for the modes of engagement with communities and with other stakeholders.*

vii. Other thoughts from the pre-event survey

Question:

"Please share any other thoughts, insights, comments or concerns that you have about the effectiveness, efficiency, influence and value added of the Shongjog MSP"

I.   Concerns over sustainability - the Shongjog platform is very reliant on Nabin to bring partners together and co-ordinate activities. Need to look at how we can create a sustainable secretariat.

II.   It still feels very driven by process, rather than the communities we are working for. There is a lot of discussion, form-filling, meetings etc... but, as yet, little (if any) engagement with communities themselves - for example, I don't feel the gap and needs analysis did enough to bring community voices into the discussion about work stream priorities.

III. Need to think more about how we can use members' time more efficiently. Do we need as many workshops/ meetings? Recently, having smaller working groups for the FFM proposals seems to have achieved more.

IV.   Need to think about how Shongjog can use existing channels, rather than trying to create its own - for example, don't necessarily start a Facebook page but think about how you can use influencers (who already have a big following) to spread the message. I think there is a tendency to try to create too much from scratch without thinking about what's already out there. Perhaps we need a dedicated communications expert?

V.   More awareness raising among the higher management of participating organizations would be worthwhile to strengthen MSP function even after the project.

VI.   Shongjog will always be slow and unwieldy. The 'buy-in' sought is more likely to be based around the enthusiasm of individuals, rather than contributions of organizations.

VII. MSP should be able to produce concrete recommendations which are actionable in different organizations under the platform of Shongjog.

VIII. It will be more effective to strengthen engagement of communication related organizations, i.e. Radio, TV, print media, ICT companies in the process

IX.   How far will organizations or individuals be committed to render support and time?

In many ways, the above comments reinforce the issues raised in the survey and in the discussions at the workshop. However, there are two fundamental issues here, which are not new, but merit further attention. Firstly, a concern has been raised that, as yet, the MSP is not focusing on how to engage communities in disaster management. This is related to the discussions around focusing on activities rather than governance processes. But there is a nuance here – it is not just about executing projects, but charting a pathway to genuinely engage with communities, which will have far reaching consequences for organisational practices in the humanitarian sector. Secondly, concerns have been raised about sustainability of the platform and of the Secretariat, which is currently funded by the DEPP. There were discussions at the inception workshop in June 2015 that the structure should not be created for its own sake – it should remain in operation only as long as it is required. Is the sustainability of the Secretariat or even the MSP the real challenge? Or is it generating the transformation required to prioritise CwC?

Finally, an additional point for reflection by the stakeholders at the global level, namely the CDAC Network members, is whether the in-country players alone can carry the responsibility to optimise the effectiveness of a collaborative process that envisions significant changes in organisational strategies and practices with regard to disaster management? An assumption of the project was that

the CDAC Network members would influence their in-country counterparts and help them identify the strategic interests involved in participating in the collaborative process. However, there is a less than expected level of participation by the in-country offices of the CDAC Network members. Can global Network member support be better harnessed to influence participation of CDAC Network member organisations in Bangladesh?

4. Action Points and Recommendations for Further Reflections

Action Points

The following action points were agreed in order to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of Shongjog. Some of the following were planned in detail including deadlines, others require further consideration, ideally by self-organising groups of MSP members.

Purpose	Action Points	Person/s responsible	Time Frame
Increase reach and include critical stakeholders	FFM advocacy project will target strategic stakeholders and seek to involve them as members. FFM project holders will consult with Interim Committee members on this	FFM project leads for Advocacy project	Depends upon closure of contracting procedures and commissioning of the project.
	A provision will be created on the website to enable potential members to join the MSP	Secretariat – to be supported by specific members (not yet named)	
Increase the efficiency of Shongjog	Follow the principle of alignment for regular decision making and convene all members for strategic decisions. Promote self-organisation among members as per their interest and expertise to lead on specific areas.	All members and Secretariat	Immediate
Enhance capacities of organisations to incorporate CwC in disaster response	Prepare an agreed set of Shongjog initiatives and activities by hazard that can be quickly put into rapid proposals during a disaster. Prepare "off the shelf" costings of CwC activities that can be quickly fed into budgets during disaster.		
Improve coordination during emergencies and increase effectiveness of the Secretariat	Create provision for an emergency focal person in the Secretariat Prepare SOP for the MSP for emergencies Prepare the following: - ToR for Secretariat (existing ToR needs elaboration) - Organogram - Explore options to host the Secretariat - Costing for expanded Secretariat - Approach donors for funds for an expanded Secretariat	Working Group was constituted with DEPP Project Manager as lead.	Three months (end September)

Purpose	Action Points	Person/s responsible	Time Frame
	• Recruitment. Initiate a 4Ws (Who, What, Where, Who) for CwC led by a member agency and feed into processes of disaster response.		
Strengthen interface with wider humanitarian architecture	o Identify primary and secondary agencies representing each cluster (email to be sent out by Secretariat) o Secretariat to prepare a short note on request from members, which members will include in regular agenda of the cluster meetings o Identify representatives who can speak for Shongjog in cluster meetings and develop clear and joint messages. o Share cluster meeting discussions related to CwC among Shongjog members o Interim Committee/core group will share monthly meeting minutes with wider group	To be decided	Agenda for next interim committee meeting
Make Shongjog more visible	Campaign/content on website	Not discussed	Not discussed
Increase the effectiveness of Shongjog in promoting CwC	Provide on the ground disaster response services, e.g. information messages, contextualisation training Review and update message library pre and post disaster. (These were options mentioned by a DEPP representative from World Vision; the MSP could choose to secure expert services from the Humanitarian Communications Roster hosted by NORCAP)	To be decided	Agenda for next Interim Committee Meeting

Extension of Interim Committee and pre-scheduling meetings

It was agreed among participants that the Interim Committee will be extended, rather than disbanded to form a core committee, since this would once again divert focus away from activities. This will be discussed in the next Interim Committee meeting.

A calendar was agreed for Interim Committee meetings for the next six months to enable members to book their calendars in advance and save follow-up time:

1. 20th July 2016
2. 8th August 2016

3. 5th September 2016
4. 3rd October 2016
5. 7th November 2016
6. 5th December 2016

Indicators for assessing improvements in efficiency and effectiveness of the MSP in the next six months

Indicators for monitoring the MSP's progress against the above actions were presented at the workshop in the form of questions, which are represented below. An attempt has also been made to rephrase each question as a measurable indicator in order to help the MSP review its functioning on the basis of these indicators.

a. How far is the response to Cyclone Roanu effective in incorporating CwC in the organizational responses?

- Number of organisations who undertake specific CwC activities in response to Cyclone Roanu; and the number of CwC activities undertaken systematically to respond to Cyclone Roanu.

b. How far is the next response to a disaster structured and cohesive?

- The steps undertaken by the MSP as a cohesive entity through a process of shared leadership to systematically influence response management next time a disaster response is required.

c. How far does the interim committee focus on programme deliverables, rather than the structure and formation?

- Number of programme activities undertaken by the MSP leading to outcomes that promote CwC.

d. How far the interim committee keeps to the agreed meeting schedule?

- Number of times the Interim Committee meetings take place as per the schedule agreed in the workshop.

e. Can a funding source other than DEPP be secured to fund the Secretariat?

Responsible for monitoring the indicators: two Interim Committee members.

Recommendations for Further Reflections

Several questions have been raised throughout the report. They are consolidated below for consideration of the Interim Committee members of the MSP.

1. *Does collaboration entail 'decision by committee' at every instance? How can a collaborative entity make its operations more efficient, while maintaining the principles of equity, transparency, mutual benefit and building on diversities?*

2. *What will shift the perception of 'voluntary' involvement among members to a more concrete involvement in the MSP, without compromising on the levels of equity and transparency achieved through the open engagement to date?*

3. *Is there a risk that CwC may simply become another hook to mobilise project resources, rather than genuinely changing organisational practices to include disaster affected people as partners in disaster management programmes?*

4. *What are the overall expected outcomes of the FFM projects? What are the gaps that they cannot meet? What kind of actions are required to address those gaps?*

5. *What is the key issue - is it the sustainability of the MSP? Or is it incorporating two-way communicating with communities into the way organisations respond to disaster? For this, do organisations need to revisit their modes of engagement with communities and with each other?*

6. *How can the MSP mobilise the champions who can shake up the system? Are they key to deepening organisational engagement?*

7. *Is an expanded Secretariat the answer to the MSP's challenges? Can it strengthen collaboration to a significant extent? If so, how?*

8. *How can the DEPP Project Manager's three roles - secretariat support to the MSP, management and coordination of the DEPP project, and partnership brokering - be delineated and distributed to help MSP achieve its vision?*

9. *The time taken to work through organisational systems to commission FFM projects – does this impede functioning of the MSP by reducing the effective time for undertaking project activities? Does this require greater sensitisation of organisations' administrative units and forging collaborations with them?*