

**BANGLADESH HEALTH WATCH**  
**STRATEGY PLAN OUTLINE**  
**May 2019**

**1. Context**

Bangladesh Health Watch (BHW) was established in 2006 as a civil society initiative to monitor Bangladesh's progress towards achievement of the goal of good health for all its citizens. It was envisaged to provide the platform for citizens' groups to take an active interest in understanding and sharing the challenges and choices, policy and programme options of the country's health sector.

Publication of the Bangladesh Health Watch Report has been a flagship activity of BHW. Providing in-depth analyses on topics of contemporary relevance to the health sector, BHW reports have played important role in bringing issues to the forefront through media coverage of the reports and the launching events attended by various luminaries and scholars, in addition to adding to the body of knowledge. So far six issues have been published and the seventh one is currently under development. In addition, in 2013 a series of health bulletins were also published.

BHW's activities are guided by a Working Group (WG), consisting of ten members. Major decisions are taken by the WG and implemented through a Secretariat, hosted by JPGSPH of BRACU. A senior team member of JPGSPH supports implementation of WG's decision. More recently, a Coordinator has been appointed to lend more strategic support to gear up BHW. The WG in turn is supported by an Advisory Committee which was constituted at the time of inception and has met only once since then. With more than a decade having elapsed since its constitution, this Committee can be considered as defunct.

BHW's activities have so far been limited to the publication of its flagship reports. However, given the challenges facing Bangladesh's health sector today and the almost complete absence of citizens' voices in the policy arena, the need for a strong platform to raise issues and concerns, suggest solutions and support and lobby the government in achieving its programmatic goals and international and national commitments is being strongly felt by various sectors of the society including academics, programme experts, development partners. In this context, the WG feels that there is need to re-invigorate BHW to play a wider and stronger role in influencing policies and bringing citizens' voice to the forefront. Since the WG is the main driving force of BHW, developing a set of terms of reference for the WG to enable it to meet the expectations of its key stakeholder is therefore essential.

**2. BHW's Challenges**

BHW has received sporadic funding from various development partners aimed at supporting the publication and launching of the BHW Reports. The first issue was supported by BRAC, the next two by SIDA and the later three by Rockefeller Foundation as part of a bigger grant to BRACU. The resources for carrying out day to

day tasks- financial and administrative, communication support and day to day strategic support has been provided by JPGSPH pro-bono. While this level of support enabled BHW to carry on activities related to the publication of the Reports, it is recognized that this way of functioning cannot nurture and sustain a stronger and more active BHW. Therefore a stronger Secretariat with the right skills mix and leadership capacity, a strong WG and a strong Advisory Committee to set the broad directions for BHW is needed. Alongside, a strategic plan to set BHW's course for the next few years and resources to finance the activities of the strategic plan is also essential.

### **3. Strategy Plan Development Process**

The strategy plan is being developed in phases to make the most effective use of time from all stakeholders:

- In the first phase, a small team under the guidance of the Convener of the WG had a half day facilitated discussion to develop the outline of the plan.
- In the next stage, the plan will be presented to the WG members for their consideration, inputs and feedback.
- The plan will then be shared with major stakeholders after incorporation of the feedback from the WG. The stakeholders at the stakeholders sharing event will consist of members of GoB, development partners, NGOs and media representatives. The feedback from this event will be the final stage after which the Plan will be finalized.
- A work plan and budget will then be developed on the basis of which BHW will explore funding and other support/partnership.

This paper presents the outline of the Strategic Plan developed during the first stage.

### **4. Vision, Mission, Objectives**

#### **Vision:**

A country where all citizens are able to achieve optimum health through policies and programmes driven by evidence and citizens' voice

#### **Mission**

To provide a strong platform through which health care professionals and programmers, researchers and citizens can get their voices heard and thereby influence policies and programmes impacting citizens' health.

#### **Objectives**

1. To create a platform for drawing in the voices/opinions of citizens and other stakeholders to voice their concerns
2. To help generate/identify new evidence for changing practices/policies
3. To disseminate latest research based/best practices evidence

4. To actively engage with GoB and other interested parties in formulating and changing policies in light of evidence/citizens' demand
5. To develop technology based mechanisms for collecting feedback for optimal delivery of health care services

## **5. Strategies**

### ***5.1 To create a platform for voicing concerns***

#### Strengthen BHW's Working Group, Advisory Committee and Secretariat:

- Review composition of WG and Advisory Group; ensure that only members are willing to give time and energy
- Recruit new members to bring in new ideas and wield greater influence
- Develop terms of reference for both the groups
- Draw up a new organogram for the Secretariat which would be capable of executing Strategic Plan
- Continue to be based at JPGSPH and draw on its institutional support
- Develop a distinct identity of BHW within JPGSPH (branding, dedicated website, clearly allocated space for the Secretariat etc.)

#### Establish issue based thematic groups

- It is assumed that BHW would be working on several advocacy initiatives and publications
- Thematic Groups will be set up by the WG consisting of members of the WG and other members co-opted from among experts to carry an issue forward.
- The Thematic Groups will report to the WG Convener/any other nominated WG member
- The Group will be dissolved once the advocacy agenda is fulfilled

#### Establish divisional chapters

- Divisional chapters will be set up in each division to extend BHW's reach to sub-national level
- The Divisional Chapters will meet on a regular basis to hear from citizens, government officials and NGOs
- The content of discussions from the Divisional Chapters may help to identify advocacy agenda
- Divisional Chapters may also take lead in resolving local level problems
- The Divisional Chapters will share meeting minutes with Secretariat who will present the highlights to WG
- The Divisional Chapters will be designed to continue sustainably through perhaps allowing different NGOs strong in that particular division to lead the Chapters

#### Bi-annual BHW conference

- Once every two years all the Advisory Group and WG members as well as the Thematic Group and Divisional Groups will come together in a conference

- to meet, strengthen networking among themselves and share new knowledge and ideas
- The Conference will be high-profiled with wide media coverage

#### Partnerships with media houses

- Partnerships will be developed with like-minded media houses to get wide coverage of issues BHW would be focusing on, and generate discussions and debates.

### **5.2 To create/facilitate creation of evidence**

#### Facilitate research, analyses and debate on issues impacting policies

- Identify potential areas of policy research and catalyze such research
- Disseminate findings from latest policy related research/new best practices among policy makers, programme planners, scientific/academic communities and media, as appropriate
- Create platforms for national/sub-national level details on important policy issues
- Facilitate research, analyses and debate on issues impacting policies
- Using the Divisional Chapters, hold community level dialogues to generate evidence on specific issues

#### Proactively monitor the implementation of national programme

- Provide inputs into the annual, mid-term and end-line appraisals of health sector programme
- Partner with government in designing and monitoring interventions
- Be the bridge between GoB and communities

### **5.3 Dissemination of new knowledge/information**

- Continue publication of bi-annual BHW Report on topic of contemporary importance
- Publish 6 monthly bulletins to new information/learnings to all stakeholders
- Use online portals for dissemination
- Develop strong presence in social media, providing a platform for citizens and professional to voice concerns, engage in debates and generate awareness of issues
- Maintain strong presence in mainstream media

### **5.4 Engagement with stakeholders for policy change**

- On the basis of the information/knowledge available with BHW
- High profile media events
- Constant noise in the social media
- One to one lobbying
- Use Advisory Committee members to open doors and also partner in advocacy
- Develop collaborations/partnerships with civil society

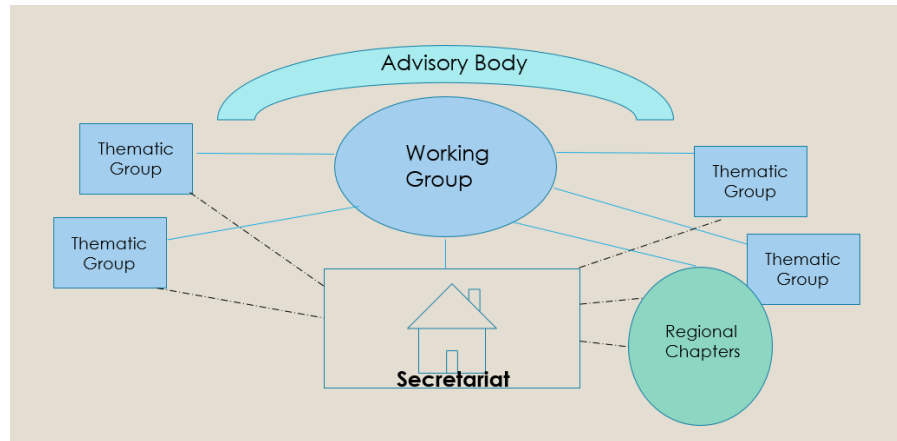
### **5.5 Optimal use of technology to disseminate information and generate debate**

- Extensive use of social media

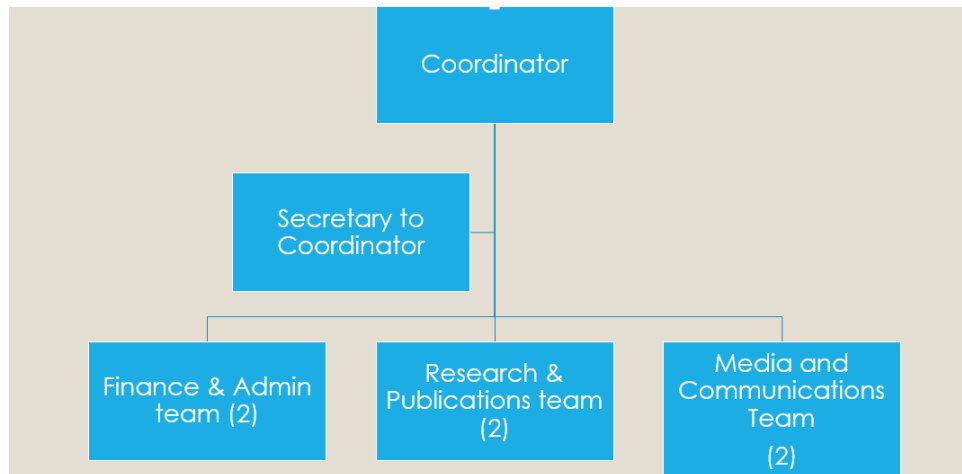
- Webpage
- Connect with existing call centres to collect and analyse feedback for feeding into advocacy/research topics

## 6. The structure of BHW

### Overall Structure



### The Secretariat



## 7. Next milestones

- Finalise strategy and complete detailed write up: Jun 2019
- Revise concept note: Jul 2019
- Approach donors: Jul 2019
- Set up Secretariat: Oct 2019
- Review composition of WG and Advisory Committee: Jun 2019
- Develop Y1 work plan: Nov 2019