



Consultation of the Handbook on Build Back Better in Recovery For Faculty and Students in Bangladesh

Centre for Advanced Research in Science (CARS)
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Introduction

1. The Institute of Disaster Management and Vulnerability Studies (IDMVS), University of Dhaka, the BUET-Japan Institute of Disaster Prevention and Urban Safety (BUET-JIDPUS), the Islamic Relief Bangladesh (IRB), the International Recovery Platform (IRP), and the Build Back Better Foundation (BBBF) had jointly organized a Consultation of the Handbook on Build Back Better in Recovery for Faculty and Students in Bangladesh, 27 March 2016 at the Center for Advanced Research in Sciences (CARS), University of Dhaka. Over 30 participants, comprising professors and lecturers as well as officials from government, came together to actively discuss the substance and form of the handbook with the end view of making it more practical and useful to faculty members and students in Bangladesh.
2. The idea of developing a handbook was one of the recommendations during the *Training of Trainers (ToT) on Build Back Better in Recovery*.¹ The handbook intends to put together relevant information to guide teachers and students of what strategies and actions can be taken in order to effectively contribute in build-back-better in recovery. It was envisioned that the handbook may be developed by: (i) consolidating the ideas and messages on build-back-better as shared during the training as well as in other related events in Bangladesh; (ii) incorporating references, articles, and case studies that were presented and emphasized by the resource speakers; and (iii) annexing relevant tools, checklists, and resource materials on build-back-better in recovery.

Consultation Version of the Handbook

3. The consultation began with Mr. Gerald Potutan, Recovery Expert of IRP and a member of the editorial board, presenting an overview of the handbook by mainly answering three questions: *Why there is a need to develop the handbook? What is the handbook all about? How to benefit from the contents of the handbook?* Mr. Potutan emphasized that the handbook is intended as a useful and handy reference on the basic concepts, principles, and messages on build-back-better in recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction. The handbook can be designed as a guide that supplements knowledge on build-back-better, specifically in the context of Bangladesh. The handbook can be beneficial to teachers and students who are interested in disaster risk reduction – either as volunteers or lecturers who intend to integrate build-back-better in the academic courses. The major components of the consultation version of the handbook include description of the key DRR challenges that Bangladesh is facing as well as the regulatory frameworks that are put in place to help address those challenges. The core of the handbook is the guidance on how to deliver an orientation-training on build-back-better with detailed description of the role of teachers and students.

¹ The Training of Trainers (ToT) on Build Back Better in Recovery and Urban Resilience: Challenges and Prospects in the Context of Bangladesh, 26-27 October 2015 at the Center for Advanced Research in Sciences (CARS), University of Dhaka was jointly organized by the Ministry of the Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR) and Build Back Better Foundation (BBBF) with support from Islamic Relief Bangladesh (IRB) and with technical inputs and expertise from the International Recovery Platform (IRP).

4. The pioneering effort of **Dr. Akram H. Chowdhury**, honorary chairperson of BBBF, to facilitate the development of the handbook was lauded by all the guests who attended the consultation. In particular, **Dr. Khondoker Mokaddem Hossain**, Pro-Vice Chancellor of Bangladesh Open University, stated that if the handbook is properly designed, it can offer information to help address “gaps in between” of the existing disaster risk reduction (DRR) efforts in Bangladesh – especially in the areas of needs assessment, scientific planning, structural and non-structural measures, and policymaking with reference to the global frameworks such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. **Brigadier General Ali Ahmed Khan** psc, Director General of Fire Service and Civil Defense, indicated that the handbook can be useful in specifying the potential linkage of volunteers (including students) with the Fire Service to improve the existing disaster mechanism at pre- and post-event. **Dr. Tahmeed M. Al-Hussaini**, Director of JIDPUS-BUET, mentioned that academic institutions have important role to play in disaster risk reduction and should get involved in pre- and post-disaster activities. It is in this role that the handbook is useful to show the way how academicians can be effectively engaged in the process. **Mr. Shabel Firuz**, Country Director of Islamic Relief Bangladesh, clearly pointed that recovery is the missing link in the disaster risk management discourse in Bangladesh, and therefore the handbook on build-back-better in recovery is very much attuned to the local need of Bangladesh. Finally, **Prof. Dr. Mahbuba Nasreen**, Director of IDMVS, noted that the handbook can be a useful tool to popularize build-back-better as “investment” and not as cost. Moreover, the handbook can be useful in helping raise awareness that build-back-better is part of Priority Four of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction – hence, need to be localized or contextualized.

Recommendations for Handbook Revision

5. The participants agreed that the handbook can be improved both in substance and form. The general recommendations were to: (i) link the contents of the handbook with the relevant components of key documents at the global and national level, such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Sustainable Development Goals, the COP21 Paris Agreement, and the local Disaster Management Act of 2012 as well as the Standing Orders on Disaster; (ii) localize key strategies and actions on build-back-better in recovery so that these are easily understood in the Bangladesh context – including option to translate the handbook into Bangla language; and (iii) engage more members on the editorial board as well as encourage more contributors.
6. *On Substance:* Recommendations on improving the substance of the handbook were:
- Describe “build-back-better” in holistic manner: It was recommended that the manner of presenting build-back-better in the handbook needs to be holistic. Specifically by describing how build-back-better applies to different sectors including gender, private sector, science and technology, mass media, agriculture, infrastructure, governance, and politics. In other words, the description must indicate the implications of build-back-better in “all-of-society”.
 - Include local case studies: The case studies might be area-wise or event-specific such as lessons from cyclone *Aila* or *Sidr*. In addition, case studies might be in the areas of housing, agriculture, livestock, and livelihoods.
 - Substantive description of Bangladesh DRR context: List of disasters that impacted the country, types of disasters, characteristics of hazards, and the national disaster management system.
 - Show how build-back-better looks like: With possible support from IRP, the participants recommended that perhaps the handbook can annex how build-back-better looks like, it might be in a form of checklist or guidance, along various sectors: livelihoods, health, governance, infrastructure, housing, etc.
 - Practical toolkits and resources: Additionally, toolkits and checklists may be also annexed in the handbook to facilitate application of knowledge and information on build-back-better in the local context.

7. *On Form*: With regard to form, the general idea is to make the handbook attractive and easy to understand. In view of this, the recommendations on improving the format include the following:
- Use illustrations and flowcharts: To describe steps or procedures how to pursue build-back-better, it is recommended that the handbook use illustrations and flowcharts.
 - Put photos and graphs: It was also recommended that case studies may be described with photos and graphs to easily get the message.
 - Use of icons: Another consideration is the use of icons, i.e. symbols or signs, can be adopted in the handbook.

Way Forward

8. *Consolidation of specific comments and recommendations*: All written comments and suggestions made by the participants will be consolidated by the BBBF. The consolidated comments or summary of the consultation will be shared to all participants to further review and guidance.
9. *Editors and contributors*: The BBBF will coordinate with all participants to encourage wider membership in the editorial board of the handbook. BBBF will also facilitate collecting articles or resource materials as contribution from the participants.
10. *Linkages and small meetings*: BBBF will keep in touch with the participants on updating the substance and structure of the handbook. Small meetings will be organized towards finalizing the handbook.

Photos

