

THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATION KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION EXCHANGE (KIX)



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1. Executive Summary

The project advances Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) in schools by institutionalizing student-led initiatives that strengthen children's capabilities, leadership, and participation. Specifically, it seeks to (i) establish and scale Learning, Innovation, and Knowledge Exchange (LIKE) Clubs as platforms for inclusive learning, (ii) implement Children's Valued Educational Capabilities (CVEC) campaigns at school and community levels, (iii) strengthen student leadership, peer engagement, and democratic practices, and (iv) generate evidence on institutional readiness for scaling inclusive, capability-based education. By embedding GESI principles in school activities, the project ensures equitable access to resources, leadership opportunities, and participatory learning experiences, supporting the broader KIX objective of enhancing inclusive education systems.

During this period, the project made notable progress in institutionalizing inclusive education practices across eight schools in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. Student-led LIKE Clubs were established through formal elections, creating structured leadership roles and participatory spaces for students to voice concerns, lead activities, and engage in co-curricular activities. These clubs are now functioning as participatory governance spaces within schools. Hygiene corners were established in all participating schools, improving well-being, attendance regularity, and gender-sensitive learning environments.

CVEC campaigns engaged a lot of participants, including students, teachers, parents, and education officials, strengthening understanding of the Capability Approach, promoting inclusive learning practices, and fostering local ownership of student-led initiatives. Activities included structured assemblies, quizzes, art expression, career inspiration sessions, and student suggestion boxes, demonstrating active participation across genders and marginalized groups.

Regional collaboration was enhanced through a Consortium Partners' Meet and Annual Planning Workshop with Nepal partners, aligning methodologies, MEL frameworks, and scaling strategies. These exchanges refined tools, including the Activity Book, and addressed context-specific gaps. A LIKE Club-led debate competition further strengthened student agency and leadership, engaging 200 students with equal gender representation, fostering leadership approaches as positive behavior change.

Complementary interventions, including Winter Blanket Distribution and an Oral Health Survey, addressed seasonal and health-related barriers to attendance, demonstrating the importance of multi-sectoral collaboration alongside education activities. Adaptive strategies, such as the simplified Activity Book, reduced teacher workload while maintaining quality implementation and reinforced stakeholder engagement.

Key research outputs include the primary report assessing institutional readiness to scale LIKE Clubs, showing strong readiness in governance, leadership, participation, and inclusion, with targeted improvements needed in curriculum integration, communication, and monitoring. Scaling is feasible with technical support, clarified roles, and strengthened systems. The Baseline Survey brochure highlighted gaps and enablers in converting school resources into children's capabilities, providing actionable strategies for inclusive, child-centered education.

Knowledge mobilization activities strengthened capacity across students, teachers, parents, ad-hoc committee and education officials. Peer-led debates and activities demonstrated that student

agency effectively drives peer engagement, leadership, and gender awareness. Policy engagement led to formal recognition of LIKE Clubs as scalable interventions, with education authorities considering replication in non-pilot schools. Adaptive management and cross-sectoral collaboration enhanced resilience, participation, and project continuity, while GESI principles ensured equitable participation and recognition.

Institutional capacity was reinforced through workshops, training, and regional exchanges, improving partner understanding of MEL systems, capability-based learning, and scaling strategies. School-level reflection, teacher coaching, and structured facilitation enhanced the sustainability and replicability of student-led interventions.

In the next phase, the project will consolidate achievements and prepare for scaling toward 2026. School-level activities include formalizing hygiene corners and deepening curriculum integration of LIKE Clubs and CVEC activities into the school routines. strengthened curriculum alignment, institutionalized hygiene management, and enhanced monitoring systems.

Community engagement will expand to include parents, local leaders, and education officials to reinforce inclusive norms and foster school-community collaboration. Policy engagement and knowledge dissemination will continue through regional workshops, exposure visits, and dissemination of evidence-based tools. Cross-country collaboration with Nepal and Bhutan will refine tools, share lessons on institutionalization and scaling, and align MEL frameworks. A phased roadmap for scaling will guide the expansion of LIKE Clubs to non-pilot schools by 2026. Multi-sectoral integration of health, well-being, and humanitarian support will continue to ensure participation and inclusion, while gender-balanced leadership and equitable engagement remain central to all project activities.

2. Project Implementation and Management

This section describes the implementation and management of the project, measuring operational progress towards achieving the objectives outlined in the grant agreement. The project remains on the pathway to meet its objectives, with key activities executed according to the original plan. No significant deviations have occurred, ensuring timely completion within the grant's timeframe.

2.1 Overall Progress Toward Objectives

The project is on track to complete its objectives as outlined in the original plan. The primary activities conducted so far have significantly advanced gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) within schools across Bangladesh. During this reporting period, implementation remained aligned with the grant agreement and approved work plan. No changes were made to the overall project scope or objectives.

Activities conducted during this period were largely part of the original implementation framework agreed upon during the inception phase. The reporting period focused particularly on the Formation of Clubs in school levels, CVEC Campaign at the School and Community Levels, student leadership strengthening through LIKE Clubs activities, cross-country collaboration as an annual planning workshop, and the debate competition on GESI at the school and subdistrict levels.

2.2 Summary of Main Activities

2.2.1 Formation of Clubs in school level

The project successfully established student-led LIKE Clubs along with separate rooms across eight schools through formal election processes, marking significant progress toward institutionalizing democratic practices and student leadership at the grassroots level.



This activity was part of the original project plan and supports the core objective of promoting participatory, gender-responsive, and socially inclusive education practices. The club formation process followed a structured approach: first, the shared purpose, vision, mission, and goals of the LIKE Clubs were communicated to students and teachers to ensure common understanding. Clear guidelines outlining club rules, structure, membership criteria, and leadership roles were developed and shared with all prospective members. The outcome has been strengthened student leadership, enhanced participation, increased voice-raising capacity, and the practical application of democratic practices among children. Students are now actively engaged in decision-making at the school level and collective activities, demonstrating the effectiveness of this capability-based approach in fostering confident, engaged, and inclusive young people.

2.2.2 GESI Capabilities Capacity building for Safe, Inclusive and Supportive School Environment

The project established hygiene corners in eight selected schools, equipped with essential materials to promote a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment. This activity supports the objective of integrating gender equality and social inclusion by ensuring that all students, especially girls and vulnerable groups, have access to necessary hygiene resources. In addition, the initiative specifically addressed menstrual hygiene management (MHM) as a key component of promoting girls' dignity, health, and continued participation in education.



By ensuring access to menstrual hygiene materials and relevant information, the project helped reduce stigma and barriers that often affect girls' regular attendance and engagement in school

activities. Each hygiene corner displayed visual and informational materials on personal hygiene, cleanliness, healthy practices, and menstrual hygiene to encourage positive daily behaviors. As a result, students' hygiene awareness and practices have improved, contributing to a cleaner, safer, and more inclusive learning environment that supports well-being and dignity.

2.2.3 CVEC campaign in Community level

RDRS Bangladesh organized a series of CVEC (Children's Valued Educational Capabilities) Campaigns across Teknaf, Ramu, Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar Sadar, and Maheshkhali. The key objectives of the CVEC campaign were to institutionalize CVEC and LIKE Clubs at both school and community levels while promoting participatory, gender-responsive, and socially inclusive education practices. The initiative aimed to enhance understanding of the Capability Approach and its application in school-based learning, strengthen collaboration among education offices, schools, Ad hoc Committees, parents, and communities for long-term sustainability, and build ownership and accountability among local stakeholders to ensure the continued success of these inclusive educational interventions. The events convened 115 participants (79 male, 36 female) including the District Primary Education Officer, Upazila Nirbahi Officers, education officials, head teachers, Ad hoc Committees, parents, and community leaders.



Key presentations introduced the Capability Approach and the 16 child-identified valued educational capabilities, while detailing the LIKE Club structure featuring student-led leadership roles, inclusive membership, and participatory tools like the Activity Book aligned with capability-based learning. Reflections from guests highlighted improvements in student attendance, confidence, leadership, and peer learning, while officials and Ad hoc Committee members expressed interest in scaling and sustaining the initiative. Outcomes included strengthened coordination between RDRS and education offices, enhanced understanding of participatory approaches, renewed institutional commitment to sustain LIKE Clubs, and increased ownership among teachers, parents, and communities toward building inclusive, child-centered learning environments across Cox's Bazar district.

2.2.4 CVEC campaign in School level

The project is on track to meet its objectives, with the CVEC Campaign at the school level representing a key milestone in institutionalizing student-centered, inclusive education practices. The scope remains unchanged from the original project plan, and implementation is progressing on schedule for completion by June 2026, with these campaigns continuing as ongoing activities across eight schools. For instance, on 11 November 2025, the campaign engaged 600 participants (243 male, 367 female) at Chainda Government Primary School in Ramu Upazila, featuring nine structured activities including a student-led assembly, speech series, quiz competition, art expression, career inspiration session, and installation of a student suggestion box. All activities were part of the original project design, following the LIKE Club manual supporting the objective of institutionalizing CVEC and LIKE Clubs. Strong GESI integration was demonstrated with female participants and inclusive participation across all activities regardless of gender, ability, or background.



Stakeholder engagement was strengthened through direct involvement of the Upazila Nirbahi Officer, District Primary Education Officer and Upazila Primary Education Officer, who witnessed the campaign's impact and expressed strong support for sustaining these initiatives. Project management proceeded effectively with strong coordination among the Project Manager, Research Associate, five Education Facilitators, and Upazila Education Office, ensuring successful implementation as these campaigns continue rolling out across schools through June 2026.

2.2.5 Consortium Partners' Meet & Annual Planning Workshop with Nepal

RDRS Bangladesh organized the Consortium Partners' Meet and Annual Planning Workshop with Nepal, representing a significant milestone in strengthening regional collaboration and evidence-informed implementation. The workshop was conducted from 11 to 16 January 2026 at Hotel Bengal Canary Park in Dhaka, Bangladesh, bringing together 12 participants (8 male, 4 female) from consortium partner organizations in Nepal, along with RDRS Bangladesh's Executive Director, Head of Social Development, Head of MEL, Head of Finance and Administration, Manager Accounts, and GESI project representatives, with cross-country collaboration inputs from Bhutan. This activity was part of the original project plan and directly supports the objective

of strengthening collaboration among education offices, schools, parents, and communities for sustainability, extended to the regional level.



Over six days, the workshop achieved several key outcomes: strengthened cross-country collaboration and alignment between Nepal and Bangladesh teams; shared understanding of project methodologies, MEL frameworks, and scaling approaches; development of a clear and actionable one-year plan for Nepal; enhanced capacity on data analysis, social auditing, and outcome-based learning; identification of pathways for refining project tools including the Activity Book; and agreement on producing knowledge products to capture and disseminate learning.

2.2.6 Debate competition on GESI at school and subdistrict level

A LIKE Club-led Debate Competition was held on 9 February 2026 at Chainda Government Primary School in Ramu, advancing gender equality and social inclusion objectives. This activity supports strengthening student and stakeholder capacities to enhance GESI in schools. The debate theme, "Students are the Key Change Makers in Building Plastic-Free and Inclusive Schools," engaged six student debaters and 200 student observers.



LIKE Club members facilitated discussions, demonstrating strong student leadership. Distinguished guests included the District Primary Education Officer as Chief Guest and the Assistant District Primary Education Officer as Special Guest, with judging by the Upazila Primary Education Officer and two head teachers. Key outcomes included improved student confidence and public speaking skills, with Samia Sultana named Best Speaker. Government stakeholders commended the initiative and recommended replication in other schools. The activity promoted student agency, peer learning, and embedded GESI values in co-curricular activities. The cost-effective model is easily replicable during awareness weeks or regular LIKE Club sessions, ensuring sustainability.

2.2.7 Progress Review Meeting with Steering Committee

A Steering Committee was officially formed to support and guide the project implementation. The meeting was attended by key education stakeholders, including the District Education Officer, Primary Education Officer, head teachers, and other relevant representatives. The session also featured the presentation of the update of second year activities, providing an overview of current school practices and areas needing improvement in terms of gender equality and social inclusion.



The output of the meeting was that the committee reviewed the project's overall progress and discussed actionable steps to ensure inclusive implementation and active engagement of all stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle.

2.2.8 Winter Blanket Distribution Program & Oral Health Survey and Student Engagement Initiative

The project facilitated two external initiatives in January that demonstrate growing stakeholder interest and support for project schools, though these activities were not part of the original project plan but rather represent additional collaboration opportunities coordinated by RDRS Bangladesh. The project coordinated with Uttaran NGO to implement a Winter Blanket Distribution Program at Inani Government Primary School in Ukhiya, providing 40 blankets to vulnerable students and their families, including 15 boys, 15 girls, and 10 parents or guardians selected through needs-based verification.



The project also coordinated with the Dental Unit of MH Samorita Medical College to conduct an Oral Health Survey and Student Engagement Initiative at Chainda Government Primary School in Ramu, engaging 40 dental students, 10 faculty members, and 100 primary students (50 boys, 50 girls) in dental health assessments and awareness sessions, while also showcasing the LIKE Club and Hygiene Corner to visiting academic professionals. Both activities demonstrated strong GESI integration with equal gender participation and targeted support to vulnerable students. These collaborations strengthened project visibility, expanded organizational networks, and provided students with additional humanitarian and health support beyond planned activities.

2.3 Challenges and Adaptations

The project demonstrated strong adaptive management during the reporting period by effectively addressing implementation challenges through strategic solutions. During severe winter conditions that threatened student attendance, the project proactively partnered with Uttaran NGO to distribute blankets to 40 vulnerable students and families, ensuring continued participation and demonstrating commitment to student well-being. To address teacher workload concerns regarding extra-curricular activities, the team introduced the LIKE Club Activity Book, a simplified facilitation tool that reduced preparation time and enabled seamless integration of GESI activities into regular school routines. These adaptive strategies not only mitigated challenges but also strengthened stakeholder relationships, enhanced project visibility, and ensured uninterrupted progress toward objectives.

2.4 Integration of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

Throughout the reporting period, the project has prioritized GESI considerations by embedding inclusivity in training programs, stakeholder engagement, and participatory research efforts. Activities have been structured to ensure gender sensitivity and equitable participation. The project made significant progress in integrating gender equality and social inclusion across all activities during the reporting period, with GESI principles serving as central pillars of implementation. The debate competition demonstrated strong gender parity with 50% female participation among debaters, and the Best Speaker award was won by a

girl, Samia Sultana, highlighting female leadership and achievement. Health surveys conducted maintained equal representation with 50 boys and 50 girls participating, while actively including marginalized students regardless of background or ability. LIKE Clubs continued to provide safe, student-led spaces where children from diverse backgrounds engaged in discussions on inclusion and environmental sustainability, fostering leadership and voice among all students regardless of gender, grade level, or social status. These intentional GESI integration efforts ensured that project activities not only promoted awareness of equality and inclusion but also actively modeled these values through equitable participation and recognition.

2.5 Research Uptake and Knowledge Mobilization

The project achieved significant progress in research uptake during the reporting period, particularly through vertical scaling and policy engagement. Policy dialogues with District Primary Education Officers resulted in formal recognition of LIKE Clubs as scalable interventions with strong potential for systemic integration within the broader education framework. Education officials actively endorsed student-led debates as effective platforms to address pressing social challenges, including child marriage and drug abuse, validating the relevance and applicability of project methodologies beyond academic outcomes. Furthermore, replication of LIKE Club models in non-pilot schools is now actively being considered by district education authorities, demonstrating tangible interest in expanding evidence-based practices to new institutions. These achievements reflect the successful translation of research findings into stakeholder recognition and policy discourse, laying the groundwork for broader institutional adoption of capability-based and inclusive education approaches.

3. Project Outputs, Outcomes, and Results

This section presents the progress of the project toward achieving its proposed annual milestones, along with key results related to knowledge generation, knowledge mobilization, and capacity strengthening. The table below summarizes the project's outputs and outcomes, indicating the progress made and explaining any variances encountered.

3.1 Project Milestone Progress Table

Output or Outcome #	Indicator #	Projected Annual Milestone	Actual / Achieved Annual Milestone	Explanation of Variance
Outcome Cases	2	Two outcome case reports have been completed and disseminated	Two outcome case reports have been completed and disseminated	No variance. Milestone fully achieved as planned.
Primary research output on scaling	1	Research report completed and disseminated	Research report completed and disseminated	No variance
Brochure on Baseline survey	1	200 copies printed and distributed	200 copies printed; distribution ongoing	Distribution was partially delayed due to printing delays and temporary school closures.
Uptake	3	Two mentions and one endorsement completed	Two formal mentions and one endorsement secured from relevant stakeholders	Positive variance. The project exceeded the target for mentions (two achieved against one planned)

3.2 Research Outputs

Primary research output on scaling

This study assessed the institutional readiness of eight community schools in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, to establish and scale the Learning, Innovation, and Knowledge Exchange (LIKE) Club, a student-led initiative promoting Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), child participation, and holistic well-being based on 16 child capability indicators. Using a quantitative approach and the Institutionalization Tracker tool, data were collected from eight Headteachers and eight GESI Focal Persons to evaluate readiness across governance, human resources, curriculum, monitoring and evaluation, stakeholder engagement, and inclusion practices. Findings show that most schools demonstrate strong readiness, particularly in leadership, governance, participation, and inclusion practices, with high commitment from school authorities. However, areas such as curriculum integration, material distribution, communication systems, and M&E require further strengthening. Overall, the study concludes that scaling the LIKE Club is feasible and strategically aligned with school capacities, recommending targeted technical support, clearer role definitions, and strengthened systems to ensure long-term sustainability.

Brochure on Baseline Survey

A complete brochure presents findings from the Baseline Survey Report, which examines the conversion of school resources into children's capabilities through a Gender Equality, Social Inclusion (GESI) lens. It highlights how children experience gender equity and inclusion in eight schools across Cox's Bazar district, Bangladesh. The study captures children valued educational capabilities, assessing access, satisfaction, and importance of resources while identifying barriers and enablers for inclusive learning. The brochure emphasizes critical GESI dimensions such as bodily integrity, social relations, participation, autonomy, and GESI curriculum integration, reflecting gaps between perceived freedoms and actual achievement. It provides actionable recommendations for strengthening gender-responsive, inclusive, and child-centered education, including improving sanitation, adaptive learning materials, psychosocial support, and equitable participation opportunities for girls and boys.

Knowledge mobilization events or capacity strengthening events

The LIKE Club has been implemented in 8 schools across 5 Upazilas, establishing student-led platforms that create safe and inclusive spaces for discussions on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI). These clubs encourage student participation, leadership, and peer engagement in addressing issues related to equality and valued capabilities. CVEC Campaigns were conducted across 5 Upazilas to raise awareness about Children's Valued Educational Capabilities (CVEC). These campaigns focused on enhancing students' understanding of their rights, aspirations, and the importance of inclusive school environments. The LIKE Club Debate Competition strengthened student leadership, confidence, and gender awareness through structured debates. To address winter-related absenteeism, a Winter Support Initiative was implemented in Ukhiya and Ramu through blanket distribution among vulnerable students. This intervention aimed to reduce seasonal barriers to attendance and ensure continued participation in school activities. Additionally, a Consortium Partners' Meet was held in Dhaka to strengthen regional alignment and coordination around Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL).

frameworks. The workshop facilitated knowledge sharing, tool harmonization, and collaborative planning among partners.

Emerging Research Results

Emerging research findings indicate that student agency plays a stronger role in influencing peer attitudes than traditional teacher-led instruction. Debate activities proved more effective than lectures in promoting attitude change, as observed among 200 students at Chainda GPS, with 50% female participation, highlighting that peer leadership drives engagement and behavioral change. The research also identified a strong health-education nexus, where untreated ailments contributed to absenteeism, as evidenced by the Oral Health Survey, suggesting that health support and intersectoral collaboration are essential to improve sustained participation. Furthermore, equitable participation was observed across 8 schools, maintaining a 50/50 gender balance and ensuring inclusion of marginalized students, demonstrating that inclusive design leads to more equitable and meaningful impact.

Progress Markers and Behavior Changes

Students demonstrated active participation in debates and peer-led activities, transitioning into “Change-Makers” by facilitating discussions within LIKE Clubs. A total of 200 students participated in the Chainda Govt. Primary School debate, reflecting strong engagement. In terms of awareness of gender equality and inclusion, students showed improved understanding of gender roles and peer respect, as evidenced by discussion and positive teacher feedback. Education officials increased their engagement in project activities and shifted toward advocacy roles, recognizing the LIKE Club model as a scalable initiative, as reflected in government feedback. Despite environmental hardships, school attendance was largely maintained, supported by the blanket distribution initiative. Overall, 200 students were directly engaged, with 50% female participation and inclusion of marginalized groups. Students adopted leadership roles and demonstrated increased gender awareness. Education officials endorsed the scaling of LIKE Clubs, and integrated health and humanitarian support contributed to improved and sustained student participation.

4. Insights and Recommendations

This section presents key insights and actionable recommendations derived from monitoring data, field observations, stakeholder feedback, and team reflection sessions. These insights inform project adaptations and contribute to broader KIX learning.

4.1 Key Insights

Student Agency Drives Change

Student-led activities, including LIKE Clubs and debates, are more effective than teacher-led sessions in building leadership, confidence, and peer influence.

Application: Expand peer-facilitated activities and structured student leadership roles.

Broader relevance: Highlights the value of participatory, capability-based approaches for other KIX projects.

Institutional Readiness is Strong but Uneven

Schools show leadership commitment, yet gaps remain in curriculum integration and documentation.

Application: Introduce simplified curriculum guides, standardized reporting tools, and clarified staff roles.

Broader relevance: Scaling requires both buy-in and robust systems.

Health and Well-Being Affect Participation

Untreated ailments and seasonal hardships impact attendance and engagement.

Application: Continue partnerships with health providers and plan interventions for vulnerable students.

Broader relevance: Education interventions must consider multi-sectoral barriers.

Government Engagement Supports Scaling

Active participation of education officials accelerates the adoption and recognition of LIKE Clubs.

Application: Increase policy briefings and exposure visits to strengthen scaling.

Broader relevance: Visible student outcomes help promote policy uptake.

Adaptive Management Enhances Resilience

Responses to winter challenges and teacher workload strengthened trust and project continuity.

Application: Maintain quarterly adaptive review meetings.

Broader relevance: Adaptive management ensures continuity in fragile contexts.

Intersectoral Synergy

Combining health, humanitarian support, and pedagogy is essential for inclusion and sustained participation.

Application: Integrate health and well-being initiatives alongside education activities.

Broader relevance: Highlights the importance of multi-sectoral approaches in inclusive education programs.

Regional Learning

Cross-country workshops improved the Activity Book and addressed rural capability gaps.

Application: Continue regional exchanges to refine tools and share lessons.

Broader relevance: Demonstrates the value of cross-country collaboration for contextualized implementation.

4.2 Recommendations

To IDRC and KIX, the project recommends supporting physical regional workshops to strengthen technical alignment and knowledge sharing, continuing flexible funding mechanisms to enable adaptive, context-specific interventions, and encouraging integration of education initiatives with health and child well-being programs. At the project level, recommendations include deepening curriculum integration of LIKE Clubs and CVEC activities, institutionalizing student leadership within school governance, expanding community and parent engagement to reinforce inclusive norms, formalizing “Hygiene Corners” in all schools to ensure safe and inclusive learning environments, scaling LIKE Club debates to non-pilot schools, developing a phased roadmap for scaling based on institutional readiness, and continuing to promote gender-balanced participation and leadership across all project activities.

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