

EN-REACH Education workshop shows efforts for disability-inclusive pre-primary education in Bangladesh

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Online Desk : icddr,b hosted a very engaging design workshop with the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) for their newly developed EN-REACH Education project at the DPE Auditorium in Dhaka on 31 December 2024. The workshop brought together relevant higher officials from DPE, university professors, and icddr,b representatives to discuss how to advance disability-inclusive pre-primary education in Bangladesh, as well as areas where this project can contribute to the goal of strengthening the existing system and the society.

Dr. Md. Abdul Hakim, Director General of DPE, was the chief guest while Mohammad Atiqur Rahaman, Additional Director General (PEDP4) of DPE was the special guest at the workshop. Md. Luthfur Rahman, Director (Policy and Operation) of DPE, chaired the session. Dr. Jena Hamadani, emeritus scientist of icddr,b, opened the workshop with a presentation about icddr,b's impact in global health and early childhood development in Bangladesh.

Mohammad Abdul Awal Miah, Research Investigator at icddr,b, discussed the history and research findings from EN-REACH parenting intervention project, which significantly improved school-readiness scores among preschool-aged children, which laid the groundwork for the EN-REACH Education initiative. Utpal Mallick, Disability and Education Coordinator at icddr,b, presented an overview of the EN-REACH Education project, including its objectives, operational strategies, and expected outcomes. He also acknowledged that the project is supported by the Global Partnership for Education Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (GPE KIX), a joint endeavor with the International Development Research Centre, Canada, will continue until March 2027.

Dr. Nazmul Haq, former professor at the University of Dhaka, unveiled draft session plans for parenting and teacher training manuals which will be developed under the project. A subsequent open-floor discussion gave participants the opportunity to offer insightful comments and suggestions. Md. Atiqur Rahaman, Additional Director General (PEDP4) of DPE and special guest praised the project for considering marginalized children with disabilities and their families and pledged officials of the directorate to provide support for this sacred cause and for scaling up of the impacts of the project.

He also stressed harmonizing the project's training manuals with government guidelines. Dr. Md. Abdul Hakim, Director General of the DPE, shared his visionary insights for nurturing human resources through evidence-based interventions and he reiterated his commitment to advancing the pre-primary education of the country. He hoped that icddr,b's efforts will lead to effective education policies and interventions for Bangladesh's future generations. Md. Luthfur Rahman, Director (Policy and Operation) of DPE and chair of the workshop called for continued collaboration from everyone concerned with this project and thanked all the attendees for their presence and contributions. He also thanked icddr,b for setting up these crucial discussions and sharing with the directorate in order to reach a consensus.