

Non-Formal Education (NFE) Policy



**Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
Government of the People's Republic
of Bangladesh**

List of Abbreviations

ADB	=	Asian Development Bank
BNFE	=	Bureau of Non-formal Education
CBO	=	Community based Organization
CMC	=	Centre Management Committee
DG	=	Director General
DNFE	=	Directorate of Non-Formal Education
DPs	=	Development Partners
ECCE	=	Early Childhood Care and Education
EFA	=	Education for All
ERD	=	Economic Relations Division
GOB	=	Government of Bangladesh
IMED	=	Implementation Monitoring and Evaluations Division
MOPME	=	Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
NFE	=	Non-Formal Education
NGO	=	Non-government Organization
NTF	=	National Task Force
PLCE	=	Post Literacy and Continuing Education
PRSP	=	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SDC	=	Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation
M&E	=	Monitoring and Evaluation

Non-formal Education (NFE) Policy Framework

A. The Context

1. Constitutional obligation and national commitments

Bangladesh Constitution recognizes education as a fundamental right of every citizen and enjoins on the State "to adopt effective measures for (a) establishing a uniform, mass-oriented and universal system of education and extending free and compulsory education to all children to such stage as may be determined by law; (b) relating education to the needs of society and producing properly trained and motivated citizens to serve those needs and (c) removing illiteracy within such time as may be determined by law". Non-Formal Education has come to occupy an important place in national efforts at development, both in the public and private sectors, particularly following the World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA) and the World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) adopted at Jomtien, Thailand in March 1990 and Dakar Framework for Action (DFA) in 2000. As signatory to international instruments like, United Nations Convention on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (UNCEDAW) and United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Children (UNCRC) among others, those re-affirms and enshrine the right to education. Bangladesh is fully committed to achieving the EFA goals by providing quality basic education for all with the aim of building a democratic polity to fulfilling people's aspirations and meeting the requirements of poverty alleviation and national development.

2. Background of NFE Policy Framework development as an important component of human resource

Illiteracy and poverty, and abeyance of democratic values, institutions and norms are hindrances to participatory development and progress. The government recognizes that NFE, by expanding literacy and continuing education opportunities, especially to disadvantaged groups, can equip people with knowledge and skills to improve life and livelihood. The government looks upon NFE as a key element of the effort to offer lifelong learning opportunities and create a learning society in order to meet the challenges of the 21st century. The Government has emphasized the link between education and poverty reduction, removal of illiteracy and building human capital for national development. The Government priorities and goals are reflected in the periodic national development plans, Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), and the National Plan of Action for EFA, as well as various NFE projects with the support of development partners. Partnership building among all who can contribute, especially the role of NGOs & CBOs has been well recognized.

3. In May 2003, MOPME formed a National Task Force (NTF) headed by the Advisor to the Honourable Prime Minister for Primary and Mass Education, for the development of a National Policy Framework for NFE. The consultancy team, which assisted the NTF, submitted report to the NTF in June 2004, following a series of meetings and workshops. The proposed policy framework report for non-formal education in Bangladesh, prepared under

the auspices of the National Task Force, presented the vision, mission, goal, objectives and scope of NFE and its potential clientele groups. As an input to discussions and consideration of policy and organizational framework, an analysis of effectiveness of erstwhile DNFE as an organizational entity was also undertaken. Both these reports were discussed in the final National Workshop held on 21 July, 2004.

4. The main features of the proposed National Policy Framework and institutional arrangements for NFE are as follows: -

B. Major Elements of the National Policy Framework for NFE

Major elements of the proposed NFE Framework are summarized below:

5. Definitions:

- a) **Non-Formal Education:** Non-formal education is a purposeful and systematically organized form of learning that generally occurs outside the formal educational institutions. It is designed to meet the learning needs of educationally disadvantaged persons of different ages and backgrounds, flexible in terms of organization, time and place and may cover basic and continuing educational programs to impart basic literacy, including life skills, work skills, general culture, and facilitates lifelong learning and enhancement of earning capabilities for poverty reduction. It ensures equity in access and human resource development; it may or may not follow a “ladder” system, and may be of varying duration.
- b) **Literacy:** Literacy is the ability to read, understand, interpret, communicate and compute in verbal and written forms in varying contexts. It involves a continuum of learning that enables individuals to develop their potentials and knowledge base and to participate fully in community affairs and wider social and developmental context.
- c) **Continuing Education:** Continuing education is the provision of opportunities for lifelong learning beyond basic education (literacy and primary education) in response to the needs of disadvantaged individuals and groups to enrich their socio-economic lives.

6. Vision, Mission, Goal, Objectives

a) Vision:

In pursuance of the constitutional commitment to ensure educational opportunities for all citizens and to build a just and equal society, all citizens will have the opportunity to participate in education to fulfil their individual potential, be effective members of their family and community and be productive and responsible citizens, capable of facing the challenges of the 21st century.

b) Mission:

To provide access to life-long learning opportunities for improving the quality of life of children, youth and adults including those with special needs and who have missed out formal education; and equip them with adequate knowledge, productive skill and life-skill through relevant and high quality learning opportunities, including literacy, basic education and continuing education programs.

c) Goal:

To contribute to fulfilling EFA goals and alleviating poverty as spelled out in the National Plan of Action II, 2004-2015 and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), by creating a community-based network of learning centres, aimed at reducing illiteracy by at least 50% by 2015, extending opportunities for effective skill training and continuing education and creating lifelong learning opportunities.

d) Specific Objectives:

With priority to children, adolescents and youth:

- i) Provide quality and relevant NFE programs and skill training which meet the assessed learning needs of the identifiable and potential clientele groups,
- ii) Provide opportunities for individuals and groups of persons with learning and skills needs to develop self-reliant, productive and empowered citizens through engaging in income generating and life skills related activities,
- iii) Establish a working mechanism of government, NGOs and broader civil society including the private sector for policy co-ordination, planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation to reduce illiteracy, poverty and promote human resource development,
- iv) Establish an organization for management and governance of NFE sub-sector, and
- v) Institute a decentralised operation system involving local bodies, NGOs, CBOs and communities including learners to ensure community ownership and sustainability of NFE program, structures and facilities for lifelong learning.

7. Scope of NFE:

NFE activities will accord priority to children, adolescents and young adults and reflect the need for special attention to various disadvantaged groups, including children and youth with physical and mental disabilities; ethnic minorities; people living in ecologically difficult locations such as haors, chars, and coastal areas; and marginalised groups, such as, street children, working children, and people otherwise disadvantaged or living in especially difficult circumstances. The NFE program areas will include:

- a) Early childhood care and education (ECCE),
- b) Alternative opportunities through non-formal channel for basic education of children not able to participate in formal primary schools for various reasons,

- c) Second-chance opportunities for non-formal basic education of adolescents and adults of 16-24 and 25+ age group, who never enrolled in or dropped-out from of primary schools,
- d) A full menu of continuing education programs for lifelong learning opportunities, and
- e) Training through non-formal channels in vocational, entrepreneurship, and employment related skills together with support for access to micro-credit or micro-finance.

8. Quality Assurance:

A variety of measures will be taken to ensure and maintain professional approach, effective implementation procedures and quality and introduce a “culture of quality” in NFE programs, including:

- a) Determination of the status of knowledge, skills and learning needs of potential candidates for all NFE activities,
- b) Adequate monitoring and documentation of the individual learner achievement,
- c) Standardized learner assessment procedure, instruments and systems,
- d) Attention to mechanism for mainstreaming of NFE graduates,
- e) Core NFE national curriculum and learning modules including competencies to be achieved by learners in different courses,
- f) Attention to establishing equivalency between formal and non-formal programs where applicable,
- g) Adequate system of training of facilitators and supervisors,
- h) Third party involvement in assessment of program effectiveness
- i) Attention to inherent soundness of program objectives and design, adequacy of resources, internal operations and management, circumstances that affect learners’ ability to participate effectively and the manner of defining and assessing quality indicators, and
- j) Reliable mechanisms for program management, monitoring, evaluation and long-term capacity building

9. Co-ordinations with and Linkage to Other Programs:

Establish linkage with other ministries / departments including technical and vocational training and education, NGOs, CBOs and private sector for promotion of NFE and poverty alleviation through NFE.

10. Sustainability and Community Ownership:

- a) Ascertain on practicality of any program components in terms of need, costs and possibility of developing needed facilities and financing,
- b) Evaluate whether programs undertaken actually meet the assessed learning needs,
- c) Establish institutional arrangements, management of programs and their ownerships by the community and other stakeholders,
- d) Establish a CMC formation process to ensure a broader community organization as the base of the CMC and the learning centre,
- e) Assess continuing relevance and effectiveness of programs,
- f) Introduce measures to assess quality of programs as reflected in learning outcomes, and identify changing needs and demands of learners and adapt,
- g) Introduce community support service for information flow, advisory purpose, linkage, credit, market etc services to sustain skills acquired through NFE.

C. Guiding Principles and Characteristics of the Organizational and Management Structures for NFE :

11. The organizational and management structure should be consistent with the policy framework and should serve the policy objectives and strategic goals in NFE. As implied by the proposed NFE policy framework, the government proposes the organizational and management structures for NFE with the key characteristics described below:

- a) **National Level.** Bureau of Non Formal Education (BNFE) is established for management and governance of NFE sub-sector at the national level. A national advisory council consisting of representatives from policy makers, professionals, NGO and other stakeholders will be formed to advise the government on NFE.
- b) **Decentralized management.** NFE management will be decentralized in phases at the district and local levels in order to respond to varying needs and circumstances and to manage a broader range of activities serving various learner groups.
- c) **Facilitator and provider of financial and technical support.** The national level agency for NFE will facilitate and co-ordinate financial and technical support to implementing agencies.
- d) **A mechanism for partnership building.** The organization would have a working mechanism for building partnership and collaboration between government agencies, providers of education and training, business and trade bodies, employers, and those who can help in entrepreneurship development and marketing of products.
- e) **Developing policy framework.** Bureau of Non Formal Education (BNFE), the national level agency for NFE would provide the professional leadership to policy framework and priorities in non-formal education as a part of overall national development priorities and national human resource development strategy. An

important task for this purpose would be to eventually develop a long-term programme approach for the non-formal education sub-sector, moving away gradually from isolated projects.

12. Key Roles and Functions of the NFE Organization:

Key roles and functions of the organization and management structures would be as follows:

i. National Level.

It is envisaged that a national level agency for NFE would have the following key roles and functions:

- a) A co-ordinated Sub-sectoral Approach: The Government will facilitate the development and implementation of a coordinated NFE sub-sector program with support from GOs, NGOs, and broader civil society including DPs. The emphasis will be on coordination of NFE activities by and among different Government and non-government organizations.
- b) Policy, Coordination and Facilitation: This comprises development and periodic review of the NFE framework, supporting and encouraging development of periodic and annual national and local plans and programs covering NFE activities of both public and private sector, adopting a program approach in the sub-sector.
- c) Mobilizing Funds: This involves mobilizing and receiving funds for NFE activities in the country from the government, international and bilateral development partners, communities and other sources.
- d) Technical Support: This includes providing advisory services and on-site technical assistance, and support for training, curriculum and material development, assessment and capacity building for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of implementing agencies.
- e) Database and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Activities: This comprises development of MIS and operation of national data base covering entire NFE sub-sector, carrying out M&E activities to ensure conformity to set national standards and monitor and evaluate programs directly supported by it.
- f) Implementation of Development Projects: This entails assuming the role of an executing agency of the development projects. However, the national agency would not be confined to executing specific donor-funded projects, but would assume oversight responsibility for the whole NFE sub-sector.
- g) General Administration: This is related to general administration (day to day operation, financial management, procurement management, capacity building, personnel management etc) of the institution itself.

ii. Field Level

Initially, local level NFE management structure would be formed at the district level. A district level agency for NFE would work in close collaboration with the national level

agency for NFE. It is envisaged that district level agency for NFE management would have roles and functions synchronising those of the national level agency. These would include:

- a) Planning NFE programs in the district in cooperation with principal actors and stakeholders,
- b) Mobilization of resources from different sources and its utilization,
- c) Maintaining a Database and carrying out M&E for NFE activities in the district,
- d) Coordination and facilitation of NFE work,
- e) General internal administration of the district agency.

13. The Organizational Structure

Major highlights of the proposed structure are given below:

i. National Level Structure

Bureau of Non-Formal Education is established at the national level. The features of the Bureau are as follows:

- a) The Bureau would have full authority for NFE oversight and management in the country. The Bureau will also serve as the executing agency, on behalf of the government, for projects funded by development partners, as needed.
- b) A Director General (DG) will work as head of the NFE Bureau. It has other 36 staff all recruited by the government.
- c) The government will provide annual allocations from its own budget to meet the operational expenses for running the Bureau and its affairs.
- d) The approved organogram of the Bureau of Non Formal Education is shown in Annex-A.
- e) Bureau of Non Formal Education (BNFE) was established with 37 staffs is shown in Annex-B.
- f) Terms of References (TOR) for key positions are given in Annex-C.

ii. District Level Structure

A district level structure will be established in each of the 64 Districts for NFE management and oversight in the District. Three staffs will be recruited in each of the 64 Districts for Non-formal Education (Annex-D). The District level structure will perform the functions as mentioned in Para 12 (ii).

14. Implementation Strategies for NFE

The comprehensive and enhanced NFE will use the following strategies for its implementation :

- a) Adopting NFE initiatives
- b) Motivation of local teachers
- c) Participant centred learning approach
- d) Flexible learning Approach: NFE programs will adopt a flexible approach to learning, which gives learners as much control and choice as possible regarding the content, sequence, time, place and method of learning within limited resources.
- e) Introduction of lateral entry between the formal and non-formal institutions.
- f) Cross-cutting issues: NFE programs and activities will address, support and promote cross cutting issues such as equity, gender sensitivity, poverty alleviation, environment sensitivity, good governance, prevention of HIV/AIDS, and inclusiveness where necessary; these will also be reflected in teaching learning, teacher/supervisor training contents and delivery mechanisms of NFE.
- g) Use of local level government departments, NGOs and CBOs for skills training and access to micro-credit.
- h) Enlisting the support and participation of the private sector and NGOs, (where necessary) to provide skill training, apprenticeship and employment.

15. Operational Strategies of the NFE Organization (BNFE)

The operational strategies of the NFE organization, based on the principles and rationale of the NFE management and organizational structure, are as follows: -

- a) **Oversight, facilitation and support:** The NFE organization at the national and district levels will help formulate policy and priorities, and facilitate and support implementation of various programs.
- b) **Multiple sources of funding:** Multiple sources of funding for NFE activities such as external grants and loans, government contributions and learners' fees would be explored and mobilized. Government would make commitment to provide necessary funds to support approved programs and maintain a core structure of the NFE organization.
- c) **Slim and competent staffing:** A small core professional staff would be maintained through the NFE Bureau by the government. HRD policy and practices will support and encourage professionalism and retention and utilization of professional skills in the organization. Similarly, a professional capacity would be maintained by the district agencies.
- d) **Outsourcing:** Whenever needed, outsourcing of technical support, training, materials development, assessment and evaluation and other activities through cooperative and partnership relationships with academic and research organizations, capable NGOs, various government agencies and the private sector will be done.
- e) **Capacity - building:** Professional and technical capacity building, both of the NFE organization itself at the national and field level and of implementing partners, will be a key task.

- f) **Promoting decentralization:** Working with and through district level semi-autonomous bodies consisting of the principal local actors in NFE will promote decentralisation of planning and management of programs in phases which will be responsive to local needs and local ownership.
- g) **Performance orientation:** All actions of BNFE would be driven by cost-effectiveness, operating efficiency and a focus on results. Financing mechanism to support partner organizations for service delivery will be based on set rules, performance and capacity of these organizations.
- h) **Clientele orientation:** BNFE will adopt strategies to ensure effective and meaningful cooperation and participation among all implementing actors and promote greater self-reliance to implement such programs. Strong commitment of key players and their ownership of programs are fundamentals for the success of the NFE programs and their sustainability.

16. Conclusion

The proposed NFE Policy Framework would guide priorities and future activities in the Non-Formal education sub-sector, which is expected to meet the constitutional and international commitment of the country to implement **Education For All**.

Posts of BNFE With Salary Structure

Sl. No.	Name of the Post	No. of thePost	Pay Scale (NPS 2005)
1.	Director General	01	Tk. 16,800/--20,700/-
2.	Director	02	Tk. 13,750/--19,250/-
3.	Deputy Director	03	Tk. 11,000/--17,650/-
4.	Assistant Programmer	01	Tk. 6,800/--13,090/-
5.	Assistant Director	06	Tk. 6,800/--13,090/-
6.	Computer Operator	06	Tk. 3,500/--7,500/-
7.	Library Assistant	01	Tk. 3,500/--7,500/-
8.	Personal Assistant	03	Tk. 3,300/--6,940/-
9.	Data Entry Operator	02	Tk. 3,000/--5,920/-
10.	Accountant	01	Tk. 3,500/--7,500/-
11.	Cash Sarkar	01	Tk. 1,750/--3,300/-
12.	Machine Operator	01	Tk. 2,600/--4,870/-
13.	Driver	02	Tk. 3,000/--5,920/- TK. 3,100/--6,380/-
14.	Store Keeper	01	Tk. 3,000/--5,920/-
15.	MLSS	05	Tk. 2,400/--4,310/-
16.	Despatch Rider	01	Tk. 2,400/--4,310/-
	Total	37	

Terms of Reference (TOR) of the key positions of BNFE

Director General:

1. Lead, manage and supervise the operations of the Bureau of Non-Formal Education (BNFE).
2. Review, update and develop NFE policies, plans, programs and standards.
3. Provide guidelines for District Bureau of Non-Formal Education in the implementation of NFE programs.
4. Mobilize and utilize resources for Non-Formal Education.
5. Coordinate the activities of the Project Directors and Project Implementation Units of NFE projects.
6. Monitor and Evaluate NFE programs.
7. Recruitment, transfer and disciplinary matter of the employees of BNFE.
8. Signing of agreement on behalf of the BNFE.
9. Determine the need and areas of consultancy services.
10. Coordination with ERD, Finance Division and other relevant Ministries and Development Partners.
11. Any other assignment given by the government.

Director (Admin, Finance, Logistics and Training):

1. General and Financial Administration of the employees of the BNFE.
2. Mobilize and utilize resources for Non-Formal Education.
3. Recruitment, transfer and discipline of the employees.
4. Preparation of the budget, fund release and preparation of statement of expenditure for BNFE and non-formal education programs.
5. Coordination and supervision of NFE program implementing NGOs.
6. Procurement of goods and services for BNFE.
7. Ensure reimbursement claim and audit of the projects under BNFE.
8. Processing of NGO selection for program implementation.
9. Social Mobilization & Media Management.
10. Prepare training schedule arranging training programs for the officers and staffs, implementing NGOs and Center Management Committee (CMC).
11. Any other assignment given by the government.

Director (Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and MIS):

1. Develop NFE policies, plans, programs and standards regarding non-formal education.

2. Prepare Annual, Mid-term and Long-term plan for BNFE.
3. Coordinate with the Development Partners (DPs).
4. Preparation of Project Documents.
5. Arrange program monitoring and suggest corrective actions accordingly.
6. Preparation of reports for MOPME, ERD, IMED and Development Partners (DPs).
7. Any other assignment given by the government.

Deputy Director (Admin, Finance and Logistics):

1. General and financial administration.
2. Mobilize and utilize resources for non-formal education program.
3. Budget preparation, fund release and audit.
4. Procurement of goods and services for NFE programs.
5. Maintenance of office building, furniture and equipment.
6. Settle the audit objections.
7. Any other assignment given by the government.

Deputy Director (Training and Implementation):

1. Support the Project Directors in Project implementation.
2. Supervise and coordinate the activities of program coordinating NGOs.
3. Preparation of training calendar and implementation of the training program.
4. Social mobilization and media management.
5. Nominate officers and staffs for NFE related training courses and material development for the training courses.
6. Processing of overseas training for the officials.
7. Any other assignment given by the government.

Deputy Director (Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation):

1. Prepare NFE policy, plans and programs.
2. Prepare Annual, Medium-term and Long-term Plan for BNFE.
3. Prepare Project Documents.

4. Prepare reports for MOPME, ERD, IMED, Planning Commission and Development Partners.
5. Monitor NFE programs and suggest corrective action accordingly.
6. Any other assignment given by the government.

Assistant Programmer:

1. Development of Information Bank through MIS.
2. Supply information for Monitoring and evaluation of NFE program.
3. Collect, preserve and up-date the all NFE related information.
4. Solve all computer related problems.
5. Programming for monitoring of NFE programs.
6. Any other assignment given by the government.
- 7.

District Level posts of BNFE with salary structure

Sl. No.	Name of the Post	No. of the Post	Pay Scale
1.	Assistant Director	01	Tk. 6800/--13090/-
2.	Office Assistant cum Computer Operator	01	Tk. 3300/--6940/-
3.	MLSS	01	Tk. 2400/--4310/-
	Total	3x64 = 192	

WORKING ORGANOGRAM OF BNFE

Functions:

1. To Provide access to lifelong learning opportunities for improving the quality of life who have missed out formal education.
2. To Contribute to fulfilling millennium Development Goal (MDG) as spelled out in the poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) by creating a community based net-work of learning centres.
3. Review, update and develop NFE polices, Plan, Programme and standards.
4. Mobilize and utilize resource for NFE
5. Monitor & Evaluate NFE Programme.
6. Co-ordinate the activities of the project Directors and project Implementation Units of NFE projects
7. To meet the government commitment of NFE activities.
8. To develop and review NFE curriculum, guide and teaching learning materials.



