Due to the demographic window, Bangladesh has the opportunity of harnessing youth potential for achieving long term development objectives. Even though Government of Bangladesh (GoB) has associated investment in youth with the development trajectory of the country through various plans and policies, youth related discussions are not contextualized due to absence of policy coherence and consensus on intended outcomes. Lack of structured and holistic approach towards these discussions result in ineffective implementation of well-intended policies. Hence, this policy brief construes that Bangladesh requires a formal, well-structured Youth Budget Framework (YBF) as part of the national budget to attain vital objectives by cashing in on demographic dividend.

A youth centric budget is intrinsically a framework of goals and visions to empower youths economically and socially. The designated monetary allocations in the budget will be analysed through a youth centric lens to equip the evidence-based policymaking process. In short, the youth budget framework will serve to represent the commitments of the Government of Bangladesh to invest holistically in youth development, alleviate challenges and bottlenecks which uniquely affect youths through various channels.

In Bangladesh, the analysis of youth sensitivity of proposed ADP for FY 2019-20 and FY 2020-21 reflected that among the 22 ministries who have youth related programs, 57 percent and 58 percent respectively were not youth focused budgetary allocation (SANEM and ActionAid, 2019). Figure 1 presents why adopting a Youth Budget Framework is crucial for Bangladesh.

**Figure 1: Reasons for adopting Youth Budget Framework**

In Bangladesh, the analysis of youth sensitivity of proposed ADP for FY 2019-20 and FY 2020-21 reflected
Formulation of the framework begins with identification of the youth development mechanism. The mechanism refers to transmission channels that impact youths thus mandating policy actions for their holistic development. To align the YBF with national policies, relevant documents such as National youth policy 2017, Sustainable development goals among various others have been inspected. The entire youth budget framework method has been illustrated below in Figure 13.

The budget will be differentiated in three categories, direct, induced and not youth focused. The guiding channels are: health, education, employment, income, poverty and domestic violence. Secondly, the programmes and projects under different government ministries and departments will be identified according to their relevance to youth. In the third step, the allocated budget of ADP of the ministries will be inspected to their relevance to youth. In the third step, the allocated budget of ADP of the ministries will be inspected to decide youth sensitivity.

As depicted, first step of designing the framework is deciding upon the transmission channels. The transmission channels are: health, education, employment, income, poverty and domestic violence. Secondly, the programmes and projects under different government ministries and departments will be identified according to their relevance to youth. In the third step, the allocated budget of ADP of the ministries will be inspected to their relevance to youth. In the third step, the allocated budget of ADP of the ministries will be inspected to decide youth sensitivity.

Steps of Youth Budget Framework

As depicted, first step of designing the framework is deciding upon the transmission channels. The transmission channels are: health, education, employment, income, poverty and domestic violence. Secondly, the programmes and projects under different government ministries and departments will be identified according to their relevance to youth. In the third step, the allocated budget of ADP of the ministries will be inspected to their relevance to youth. In the third step, the allocated budget of ADP of the ministries will be inspected to decide youth sensitivity.
principle for assigning the components of the categories will be based on the Youth sensitivity matrix provided in Table 1.

In the fourth step, the operating budget has to be measured by the Key Productivity Indicators of the respective ministry. The average score will be computed to assign the final sensitivity score. Finally, the summary of the youth budget will be provided in the summary table mentioned in the template of YBF. SANEM has previously listed 22 ministries which have youth centric ADP allocation.

### Table 1: Youth sensitivity matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL</th>
<th>Relevance category</th>
<th>Relevance range (%)</th>
<th>Determining characteristics (Breakdown of percentage)</th>
<th>Source: Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Strongly Relevant</td>
<td>81 to 100</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Significantly Relevant</td>
<td>61 to 80</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Moderately Relevant</td>
<td>41 to 60</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Somewhat Relevant</td>
<td>21 to 40</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Few</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Implicitly Relevant</td>
<td>6 to 20</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Few</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Not Relevant</td>
<td>0 to 5</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The planning and managing of new budget framework have always been labelled as one of the foremost dilemmas in developing countries like Bangladesh. During budget preparation, much trade-offs must be made between programs and priorities to meet the policies and goals of the government. Thus, major challenges exist in planning, developing and executing the Youth Budget Framework due to insufficient resources, institutional constraints and inefficiencies existing in the system. The challenges have been grouped into broad categories in Figure 14.
of the youth budget. Accurate target group for the correct projection of financing needs is required. With regards to financing strategies, the government should ensure that the additional financial requirements of the youth budget do not exert more pressure on the local banking system.

Participatory approach

Without an institutional setup for civic participation, the budget loses its efficiency. In various countries, the participatory approach has been undertaken in various stages of budgeting such as formulation, analysis, tracking and evaluation (Wagle et al., 2002). Furthermore, participatory budgeting approach provides the target groups a sense of ownership and active engagement in the monitoring and evaluation process. Figure 15 depicts the three phases of youth budgeting process following the present budgeting process as well as the participatory approach and other mechanisms to ensure effective implementation of the Youth Budget.

National Youth Development Cell

In order to address the concerns of youths and perform the steps of youth budgeting process, National Youth Development Cell may be formed under the Prime Minister’s Office. This cell will effectively address the potential institutional barriers faced by the ‘Youth Budget Framework’. This cell will ensure effective stakeholder consultation followed by ministerial action plans for the ministries with youth focused programs to realize the targets set to maximize demographic dividend.
The proposed Youth Budget Framework would serve to be a reflection of the government’s efforts to integrate youths in the development process and attain national goals. The proposed framework will allow the government to incorporate a formal youth budget in the national budget, identify existing inconsistencies in the system for effective implementation of the budget as well as obtain input from relevant stakeholders to address youth development comprehensively.

This document is jointly developed by ActionAid Bangladesh and SANEM.

The authors are Dr Selim Raihan, Eshrat Sharmin, Dr Sayema Haque Bidisha, Zubayer Hossen, Fabiha Bushra Khan, and Mir Ashrafun Nahar.

From ActionAid Bangladesh the document is contributed by Nazmul Ahsan and Iqbal Hossain.

References


