



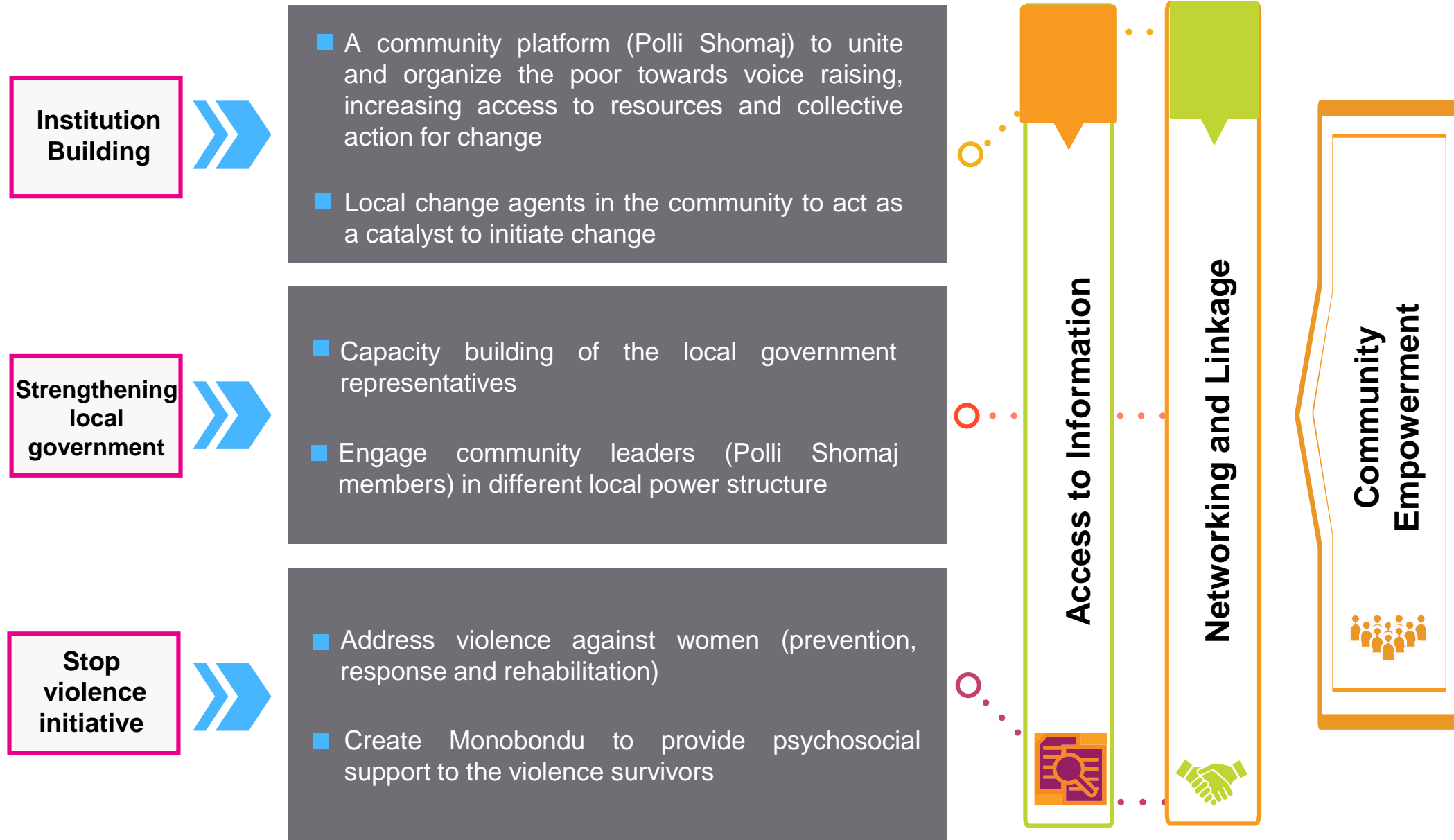
The Community Empowerment Model BRAC

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Background

- ▶ Established in 1972 in Bangladesh, BRAC is now world's number 1 NGOs for 5th consecutive year in 2020
- ▶ The Social Development Programme started in 1998, and in 2010 a separate programme initiated for Community Empowerment (CEP) which still remained one of the core programmes of BRAC
- ▶ CEP aims to empower the community by increasing their human, social and political assets so that they are aware of their rights, can claim their entitlements and resist exploitation

Community Empowerment Approach



Institution Building: the Polli Shomaj (PS)

(Centre for all community interventions)

Structure

- A ward level institution comprising of 50-55 representatives of the rural poor, especially women
- The decision making body of PS is consisting of 11 members including President, Secretary, Cashier
- Total of 12487 Polli Shomaj comprises of 750,000 active women members in 54 districts (our of 64)

Objectives

- strengthening leadership capacity of women towards voicing their demands, creating solidarity and prevent exploitation
- Actively participate in power structures to influence decisions and raise voices against discriminatory practices
- Support violence survivors
- Mobilizing local resources and enhance linkages with local institutions and service providers

Strengthening local governance

Objective

- To make the local governments more responsive to the needs of the poor specifically women
- To ensure the local governments are more accountable in promoting women's right and VAW free community
- To increase community participation & improved service delivery by local government

Interventions

- Capacity building of the local government representatives
- Functionalizing the standing committees and ensuring community participation in the open budget discussion
- Facilitate social accountability tools (i.e. Public hearing, community score card, ward shava), and social cohesion
- Advocating for pro-poor and women friendly local governance

Stop violence initiative

Prevention

- Awareness messaging and behaviour change
- communication
- Engaging men and boys
- Activating and strengthening local mechanisms
- Economic independence / IGA linkages of women



Response

- Identification and reporting of incidents of VAWC
- Emergency medical aid and legal aid services
- Provide (and refer) for Psychosocial counselling
- Shelter homes referral
- Referral systems

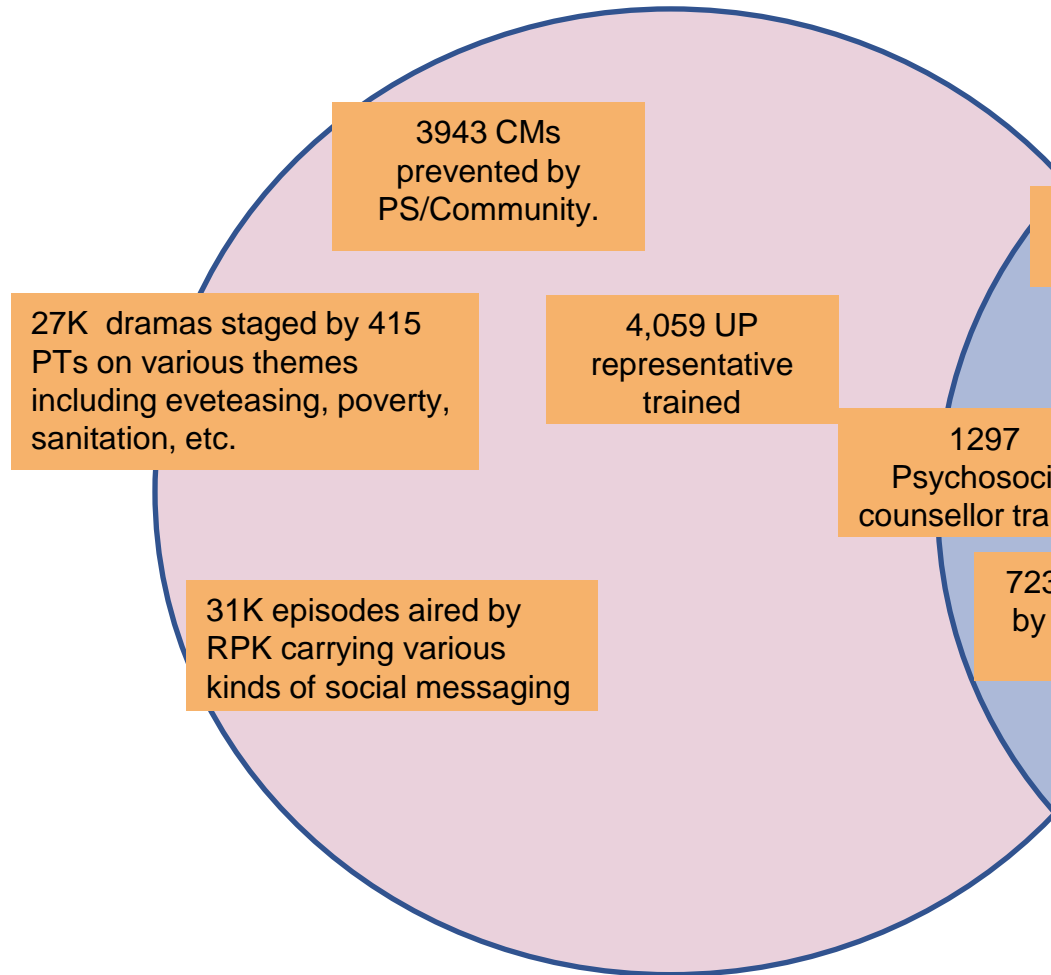


Rehabilitation

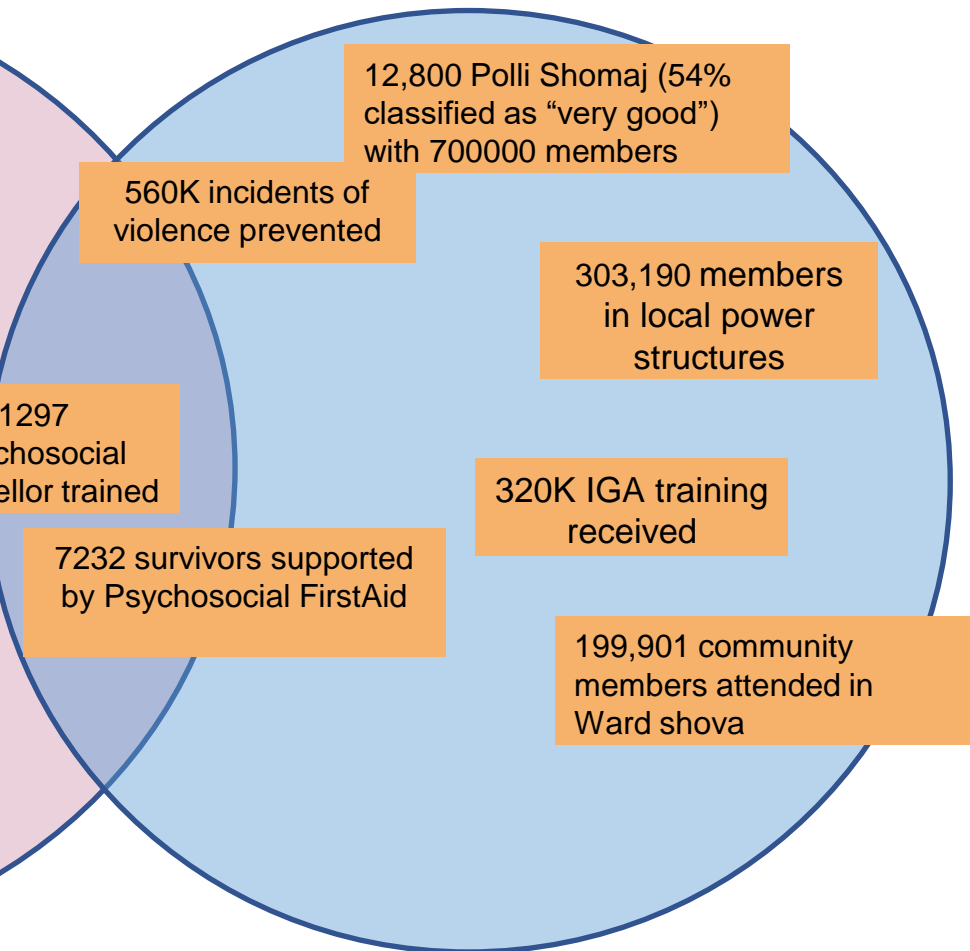
- Livelihood support
- Psychosocial support counselling
- Social reintegration
- Inclusion in local forums

Key achievements: 2016-2020

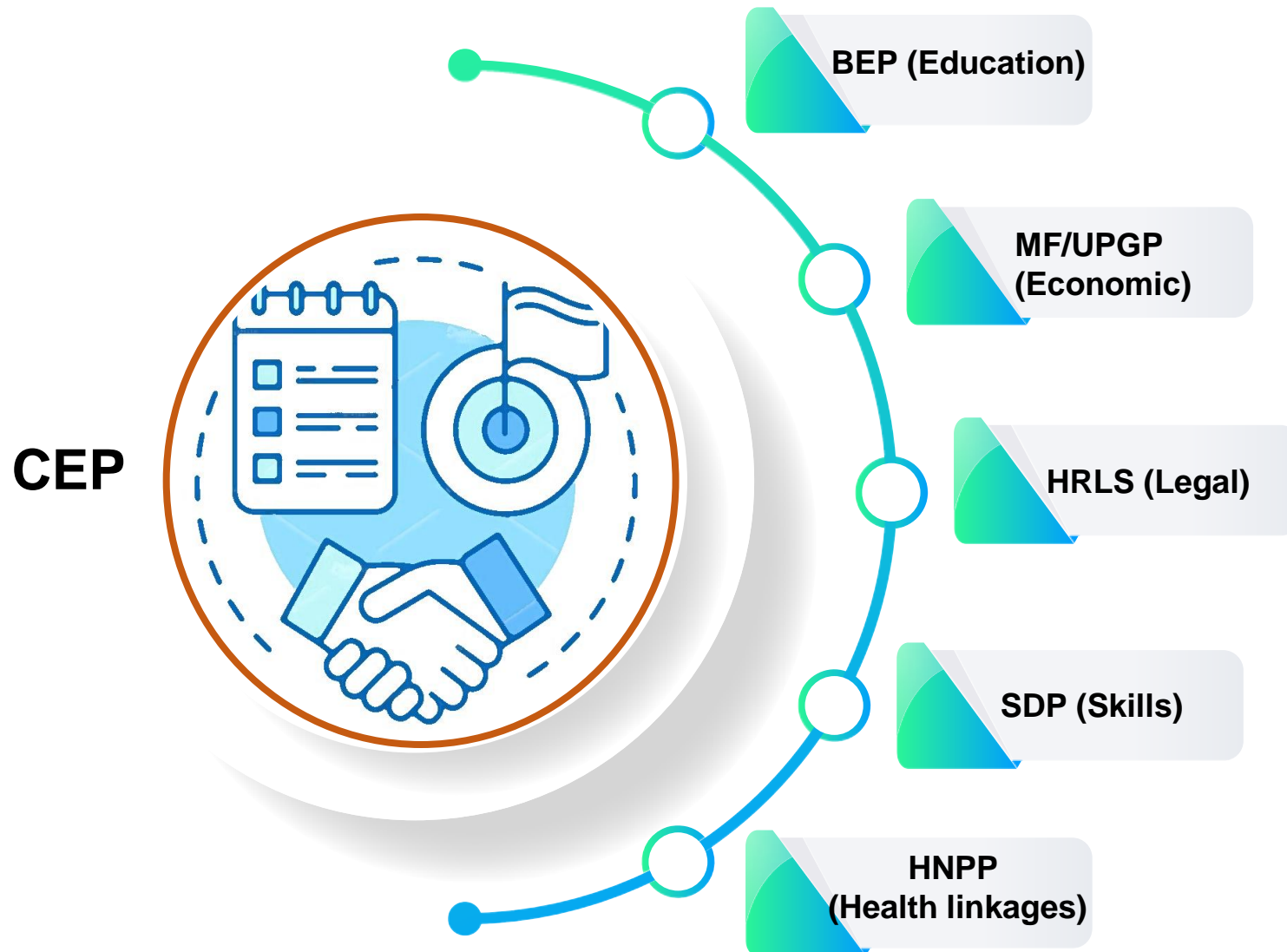
Addressing VAWC



Community Empowerment through grassroots forums (PS)



Effectiveness and sustainability: connecting with other programmes



Strategic focus for community empowerment: 2021 and onwards

Leveraging maximum effort of BRAC programme - Concentrated geographical coverage

Intensive (20 District for 2021)

- More combined effort (through involving all BRAC Programme participants) for women empowerment /leadership
- Comprehensive support in reducing VAWC and Child Marriage
- Strengthening the local government organization
- Utilize multiple channels for increased awareness (Community Radio and PT)

Light-touch (34 Districts)

- Sustain existing levels of activity in the remaining districts such as coordination and capacity building among PS leaders through Union level forums, support PS to be linked with other NGOs/ BRAC programmes/ Govt. services
- Continue the VAW Reporting and create referral linkages

Key learnings

- ▶ Local and women-led organizations are essential for strengthening the voice of grassroots women and ending the violence against women in the community
- ▶ Community based organization can play a vital role in implementing any initiatives at scale (i.e. PS has been very effective in creating COVID-19 mass awareness and responses)
- ▶ Community based psychosocial support mechanism is very useful for violence survivors
- ▶ In terms of sustainability, CBOs need supervision and mentoring for long periods
- ▶ Development programmes need to focus more on the sustainability of the empowerment within the local structure rather than the sustainability of the CBOs
- ▶ Community led approaches, especially women-led, is very effective in social cohesion building in the fragile context
- ▶ At a certain stage community led platforms may find their own avenues depending on their capacity and need, i.e. many PS registered themselves, doing business, collaborating with NGOs etc.

“Poor people are poor because they are powerless, we must organize people for power, they must organize themselves... they must understand the dynamics of their communities in such a way that they can change their lives”

**Fazle Hasan Abed, Founder and
Chairperson of BRAC**





THANK YOU

