

Udayankur Seba Sangstha (USS)

Jordarga, Nilphamari -5300.

Community people fighting against injustice & poverty

Strategic Document 2016-2020.

Reviewed by Executive Committee of USS.

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1. Introduction

The present strategy document is the outcome of a Participatory Strategic Planning (PSP) exercise, conducted by USS in cooperation with Action Aid Bangladesh. On June 16-20, 2016 a four day PSP workshop was conducted at USS head office, participated by all level staff of USS and the members of the Governing Body. In this workshop participants have discussed the socio-economic Context, aspirations of the People and development challenges. The formulation of future Strategic Directions was the main objectives of the workshop.

The strategy document contains analysis of the critical issues in the context, factors and forces contributing as causes for deprivation, inequality and injustice, future societal aspirations, development challenges and future program design. This is the first vision and perspective exercise of USS, where the PSP exercise was limited and short, nevertheless a significant step for future direction.

1.1. Background of USS and Program Implementation

USS started development journey 1997 at Sadar Upazila of Nilphamari District. Till 2003 the period was to gather experience without much well defined strategy. In 2003 USS defined the goal and objectives of the organization in specific term and undertakes PAR (Participatory Action Research) as main approach to work with poor and marginalized people in the area. USS envisions a democratic society free of poverty and inequality where all the people are enjoying freedom, self-reliant, confident and contributing to the development of country and nation as a citizen with democratic values.

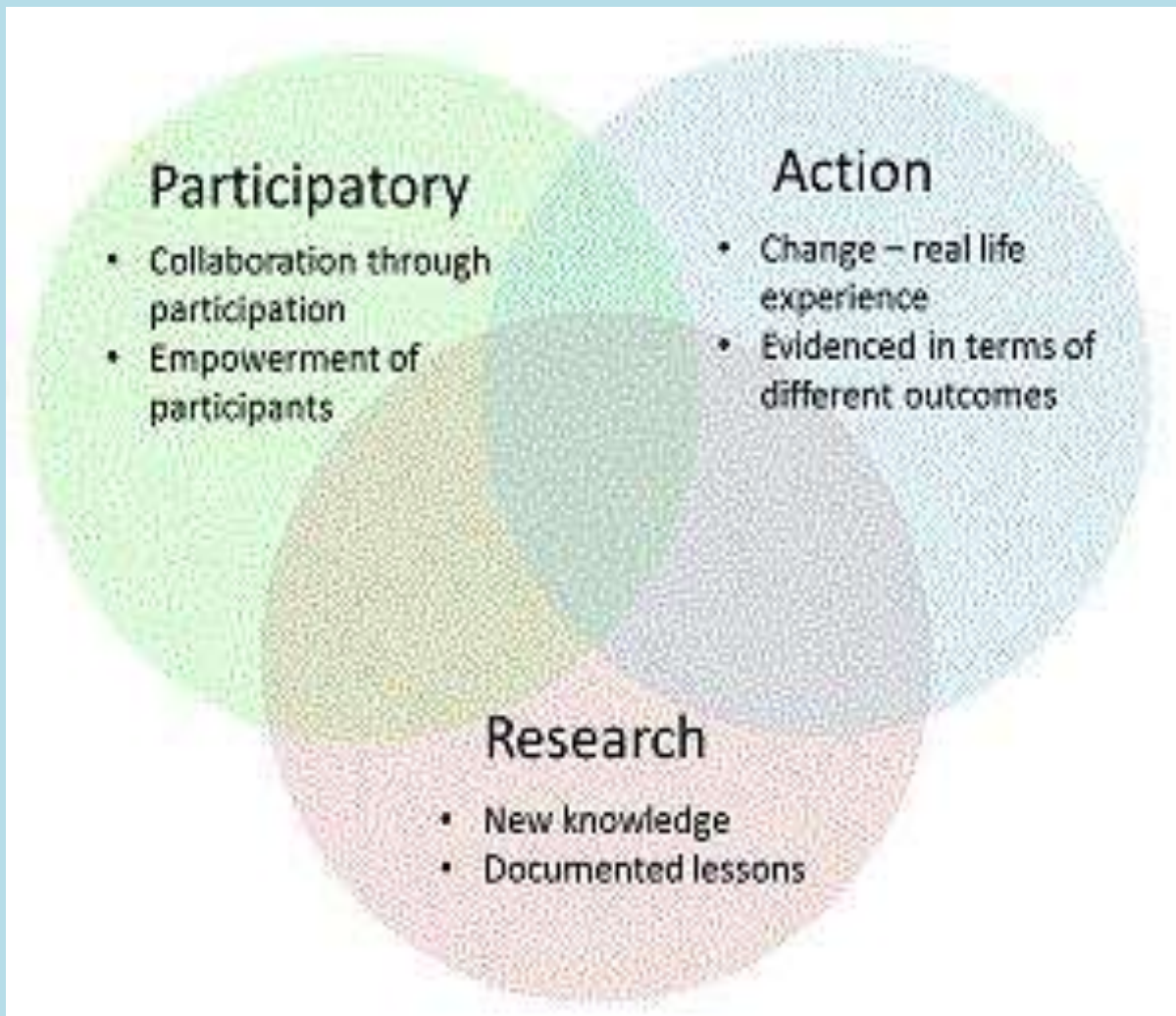
To achieve the vision, USS facilitate a process among the marginalized people so that they can unmask the apparent and underlying causes of poverty and take initiatives to overcome the problems collectively.

At present USS is implementing 12 types of program, those are:

- Poverty alleviation through PAR including food rights.
- Education governance & Non Formal Primary Education
- Women rights and gender equality.
- Right to just & democratic governance.
- Participatory Early Child Development and Community Empowerment
- Climate resilience sustainable agriculture
- Seeds of survival including seed production & market linkage.
- Promote quality education & through expansion of science education.
- Persons with disability & their development.
- Youth/ adolescent development & HIV/AIDS Prevention
- Theater for Development (TFD).

USS working Approach :

PAR for poverty alleviation is considered the main program of USS, and the approach and methodology of PAR is considered useful and ideologically appropriate to implement other program activities. Working step of PAR.



Guiding Principle of PAR:

We think that every approach has own identity as guiding principle. Guiding Principles are bellow:-

1. **Recognizes community as a unit of identity.** This research should work explicitly with communities, which may be defined by a geographic area, or defined as a community of identity that is geographically dispersed but members hold a sense of common identity and shared fate.
2. **Builds on strengths and resources within the community.** This research should clearly identify, support and reinforce social structures, processes, and knowledge already existing in the community that help them work together to improve their lives.
3. **Facilitates collaborative partnerships in all phases of the research.** This research should involve community members in every phase they want to participate in, including but not limited to: problem definition data collection, interpretation of results, and application of the results to address community concerns. This may involve applying skills from outside the community, but should focus on issues identified by the community and create situations in which all parties can truly influence the entire research process.
4. **Integrates knowledge and action for mutual benefit of all partners.** Though the research project itself might not include a direct action component, all parties must have a commitment to applying the research results to a social change effort intended to benefit all partners.

5. **Promotes a co-learning and empowering process that attends to social inequalities.** This research should recognize the inherent inequalities between marginalized communities and researchers, and attempt to address these by emphasizing knowledge of community members and sharing information, resources and decision-making power. Israel et al offer the example that researchers learn from the knowledge and local theories of the community members, and community members acquire further skills in how to conduct research.

6. **Involves a cyclical and iterative process.** This research should involve trust-building, partnership development and maintenance in all phases of the research.

7. **Disseminates findings and knowledge gained to all partners.** This research should disseminate information gained in a respectful and understandable language that acknowledges all participants contributions and ownership of the knowledge production.

USS is implementing all the abovementioned programs in cooperation with national and international organizations for instance, Research Initiatives Bangladesh, Nagoric Uddyog, Green Foundation, RDRS, Plan International Bangladesh, Diakonia Bangladesh, USC Canada, Action Aid Bangladesh, Bangladesh Freedom Foundation etc. However, it is important to mention that USS is getting support from local and national civil society.

1.2. Conduction of PSP in USS

Participatory Strategic Planning (PSP) in USS is to refer a definite concept and method intended to ensure authentic participation to all concerned, beneficiaries, social workers at the field level and involved in governance. The use of label "Participatory" could be confusing as there are various ways organization tends to ensure participation, nevertheless, in many cases it remain token, partial or symbolic participation. From a theoretical perspective PSP for development organizations is to democratize the planning process in a self reliant way so that all the stake holders own the process, have knowledge to plan and to eliminate knowledge dependency on external consultants. However, due to shortage of time the intended process was not followed in the PSP exercise in USS. In USS it was only a four day workshop and discussions with the governing body member for analysis and strategy formulation. The most appropriate and value congruent PSP process, as it should be, is shared bellow.

Participatory Strategic Planning (PSP) is a strategic planning method that involves all level of the organizational staff/activist/volunteer and the members of the Peoples Organization (POs) in the working area. The people and the development activists collectively analyze the social political context to identify critical and strategic issues, their causes and probable trends, and based on this analysis POs and NGDOs articulate their future aspirations and formulate their Vision, Mission, Role, Objectives and Strategy for future and design the Program.

To ensure conscious and active participation for analysis, formulation and design of Strategic Plan, it requires a substantial level of *Orientation* and *Capacity Building* of the activists and the PO's members to undertake the planning exercise in villages, project level and in central level. The expected outcome of this capacity building process is to have several groups of PSP facilitators in both organization and people's level, who will conduct the PSP exercise.

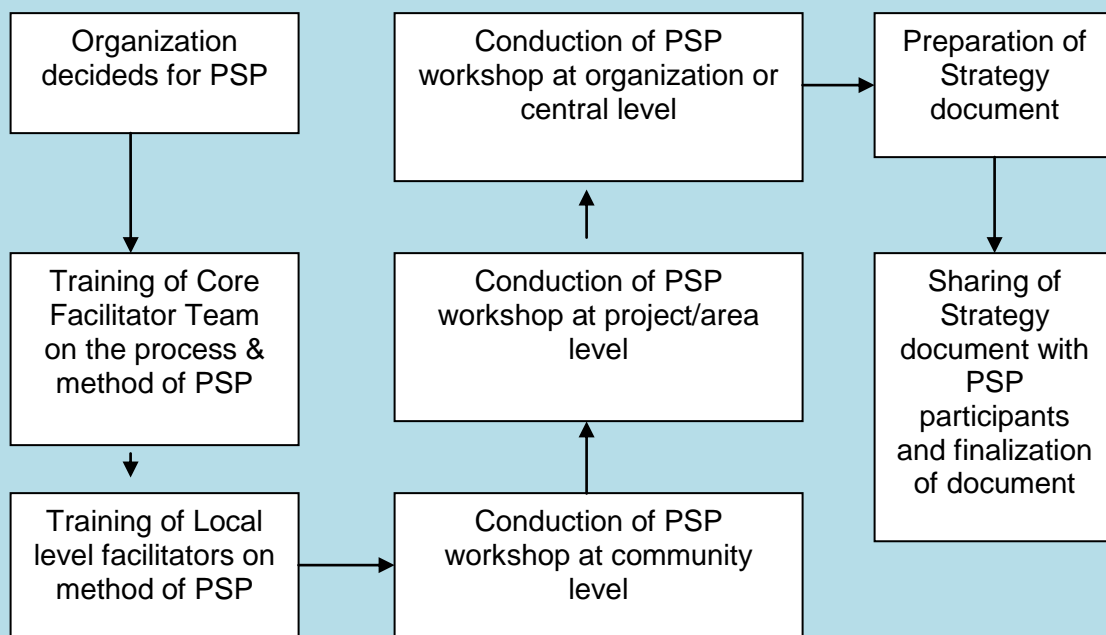
The orientation and preparation phase start with the formal acceptance of the mandate vis-à-vis willingness from all concerned people in the organization with regard to the introduction of PSP. Nevertheless, without a proper preparation, orientation and capacity building of facilitators, the exercise may not produce expected quality result.

Initial discussion with external PSP facilitators or resource sharing agencies or people from organizations who have gone through the PSP process would normally set in motion the beginnings of PSP in a concerned

organization. After organizational decision of undertaking PSP, capacity building of and designing the PSP process for the organization by a Core Team of facilitators would be the essential step. The core team would take the responsibility to prepare, orient and build capacity of all others in the concerned organization. This starts with the selection of potential facilitators; help them to learn PSP concept and method through a series of learning workshops in various levels. This is the preparatory phase of PSP.

The second phase is conduction of workshops at all levels: community level with POs and CBOs, local level with local staff and relevant stakeholders and at the central level with the senior management and policy makers. Conduction of PSP workshop involves using various participatory methods, especially the PAR methods and tools.

The third phase is to prepare the strategy document and share it with all types of participants who contributed in the planning process. The PSP process is illustrated bellow:



In PSP workshop the participants analyze the Context, evaluate the Concept (poverty and development understanding, strategy, program etc.) and examine the capacity and character of the organization. After the critical examination of context, concept and organization, participants Formulate the Strategic direction, includes; core values, vision, mission, role, strategic objectives, strategy, program and activities.

The formulation of Strategic Objectives is based on the understanding of challenges emerged from the context analysis and challenges emerged from the vision exercise where the Aspired Society is conceptualized.

It is expected that in future USS will be undertaking a PSP process, according to the abovementioned features. The present PSP was an introduction for the future PSP method and process. Given the experience of PAR methods and tools, and strong commitment of the USS to follow an authentic people centered approach, the PSP is the most appropriate and value congruent approach that ensures true participation of all, especially beneficiaries.

2. Analysis of the Context

Context analysis includes all dimensions of social and human reality: economic, social, political, gender, culture and environment. Context analysis considers both *time* and *space* dimension of a particular social reality. Context analysis also considers the most wider or global context while analyzing local context. The objective of context analysis is to identify and describe the *critical issues, trends, opportunities, threats and challenges*.

2.1. Critical Issues in the Context

The perceptions of *critical issues* vary across social class, gender, and individuals depending of life conditions. It was agreed that critical issue would be defined from the perspective of poor, women and marginalized. Critical issues are those issues that affect the life and livelihood of the people in critical way. Critical issues are those Issues which are critical for the survival, autonomy and aspiration of the changes of the poor and marginalized people.

To identify critical issues the following questions was asked:

Is this issue are critical for the poor and marginalized?

Is it an issue at all or it is the manifestations of another issue?

Is it urgent and immediate concern of the people?

Is it structural issue/ cases?

Is it possible to address by the people?

Identification of Critical Issues leads to understanding of apparent and root causes and further analyzes the trends, opportunities, threats, challenges, and finally identifies the strategic challenges in the context for USS to be addressed.

Identification of Critical Issues is to identify all the aspects, specifically agriculture, rural and cottage industries and employment of the people in the area, the critical issues in education, health, gender, environment and development.

2.1.1. Agriculture

USS is working in an area, known as poverty prone area in northern part of Bangladesh. While referring agriculture and the conditions of farmers in the context, it is about all the farmers who are working in the field for their livelihood. The category “farmer” includes poor and marginal farmers and landless farmers who are in most cases wage laborers. Usually in dominant discourse the women are excluded as farmers. Here the issue of wage differences and recognition of women as farmers are highlighted.

There are two types of critical issues in the agriculture; one is urgent and immediate concerns of the farmers to get agriculture input, product price and access to services. Another type is structural, which means it is about policies, international institutions like WTO and World Bank and MNCs who are transforming agriculture for commercialization (corporatization) instead of means of food and livelihood security. From the perspectives of farmers the following are the major critical issues:

- Unequal distribution of land and land ownership concentration
- Crisis of fertilizer, adulterated fertilizer impact on low productivity and income
- Denial of access to Agriculture credit entitlements, higher rate of interests
- Crisis of quality Seeds
- Crisis of environmentally sustainable Pest control (insecticides)
- Higher price of Irrigation; diesel, electricity etc.
- Crisis of Agriculture equipments

- Inadequate Agriculture infrastructure
- Crisis of Feed (Cow, fish, poultry bird etc.)
- Crisis of Livestock & poultry Vaccination
- Access to Khas land & water bodies
- Low Price of agro-product while selling and higher while buying, domination of traders and “middle men”
- Inadequate Advice from Agro-extension officials
- Inequality in Wages, especially lower wages of women, exploitation
- Non-recognition of women as farmer

2.1.2. Health

- The poor are the most deprived from the health service, as there is few and in cases no infrastructure, medicine and quality technologies/tools in remote areas
- Adolescent children faces problems to get information about their physical changes
- The living conditions are unhygienic, open toilets and polluted environment
- There are various types of disease; water bound disease, skin disease, phileria
- Women are more deprive in getting health service, reluctance to spend money for women members in the family
- Unsafe food (many cases adulterated food, polluted unsafe water and poisonous food due to pesticides etc.)
- Commercialization of health service, costly treatment and high price of medicine, thus the poor are most deprived
- There are many doctors who are not in duty on time, and doing private practice in office time
- Unskilled birth attendants and village quacks are not able to provide quality treatment to mother and child
- The differently able people have less access to health services
- There are superstitions regarding health practices in the rural areas

2.1.3. Education

- Education is getting expensive for the poor, thus they are deprived from higher education
- Inadequate and in cases no infrastructure for education in remote areas
- The education is with out societal vision (it is not known what kind of value orientation, character and skills are expected)
- Commercialization of education (coaching, private tuition, kindergarten, private universities, buying of certificates).
- The education curriculum and materials are influenced by party politics and vested interest groups
- Teachers have low income and lower motivation for inappropriate education policy
- Corruptions are in case of teacher appointments.
- Lack of education governance in Rural area.

2.1.5. Gender relations

- Decisions are imposed on women (marriage, mobility, dress etc.) by male members of the family and community, women are excluded in major decision making
- Women rights are violated in participation of local dispute resolution systems
- Women are violated, tortured within the family and society in various forms such as; child marriage, divorce, polygamy, dowry, fotwabazi, etc.
- Women are discriminated in property rights
- Women role in economic production and reproduction is non-recognized, in cases women are used as a source of income (access to micro credit, trafficking)
- Patriarchal socialization teaches children to be anti-women, and women as inferior
- Religious discourse is used to spread the patriarchal message against women
- Women are sexually harassed in work place and transports

- Women are secluded face every day threats in mobility outside home, limited mobility

2.1.6. Environment

- The temperature fluctuation is high; cold at night and hot at day time
- The environment pollution is increasing in alarming rate due to industrial waste, sound pollution, deforestation, biotechnology, chemical agriculture etc.
- The water level is going down, arsenic contaminated water
- Water logging increasing, rivers and water bodies are silting, river erosion
- Dust, drought, flood, hit, thunder storm and river erosion is increasing, changing of climatic conditions
- Killing of rare species of insects, animals and birds

2.1.7. Culture

- Social constrains to organize cultural events due to local conservative elites
- Women face difficulties to move at night, patriarchal imposition of mobility
- Girl children are prohibited in participating in cultural event, especially dance
- Indigenous and folk culture is eroding
- Fundamentalism and superstitions
- Domination of land lords and elites
- Authoritarian culture of domination by elders
- The level of popular consciousness is influenced by magical and naïve perceptions of reality

2.1.8. Political

- Use of black money and muscle power to gain political mileage, in election
- Greed for power and selfishness is the prime motivation for political party affiliation
- People at grassroots level are divided by political party allegiance
- Voting rights of the poor are violated by money or muscle power
- Influence of political leaders in distribution of entitlement and state services
- Poor and marginalized are excluded
- Judiciary is dominated by political party leaders

2.1.9. Development Initiatives

- I. The gap between poor and rich are increasing, and the number of poor are increasing due the increase of population growth rate.
- II. Without peoples participation and opinion the development plans are conceived, and implemented by donor agencies with the help of Government and NGOs
- III. The present “Neo-modernist” development approach in the name of “alternatives” or “empowerment” the capital and commodity market is expanding to poor to exploit surplus value created by them and increases “self-exploitation” and deprivation
- IV. Due to short term project approach support by donors (1-3 years) small and innovative local organizations are in uncertainty and increased dependency on donors/funding agencies
- V. The self reliant “Peoples Organization” are on paper but very few exist in reality (most of the so called PO s are Service Recipient Organizations, SROs)
- VI. The transparency and accountability of development sector is in question.

2.2. Trend Analysis

There are both declining and increasing trends in the context:

Declining:

Certain kind of violence against women, for instance acid violence, child marriage, seclusion of women is declining. The number of child labor, illiteracy, and drop out rates are declining. In health sector, open toilets, use of contaminated water, and excessive use of pesticides are declining. The religious fundamentalist influence on culture is declining.

Increasing:

Poverty in terms of number and in terms of gap between poor and rich is increasing. Insecurity, psychological violence against women is increasing. Unemployment, exploitation and deprivation are increasing due to decline of real wages and high commodity prices. Number and types of diseases are increasing with the threats of HIV Aids. Environmental pollution is increasing.

2.3. Opportunities, Threats and Challenges**2.3.1. Opportunities**

- People are peace loving and have political understanding to stand for rights, freedom and justice
- People are hard working and there are numerous labor forces who would like to take challenges and have strong willingness to transform the present conditions
- Natural resources; Khas land, fallow land, water bodies, forests etc., the land is very fertile and possible to grow multi-crop, herbal plants, and develop livestock and fisheries
- Local level women leadership, women UP members, local groups of poor and marginalized, answer, VDP etc., and the vast experience of local people to form organizations and have leadership skills
- Majority of people have desire to lead modest and simple life, not greedy, get happy with moderate living condition and know lots of indigenous technology
- Service providing institutions and NGOs having committed social workers
- There are various government and NGOs working on credit service, they have resource and delivery systems, (subject to lower rate of interests) these institutions could be a great opportunity
- There are knowledge, skill and practice of organic method of agriculture
- Some of the policies and laws are pro-people, such as laws against child labor, violence against women, health, environment, land use etc.
- Still there are social customs and practices that promote the value of community sharing, caring, cooperation, empathy etc.
- The media is enjoying freedom of speech, and institutions checking price and quality of consumer goods; BSTI, regulatory body of quality control
- Local and national committed leaders, professional groups and civil society
- Local markets provide opportunity for exchange locally by the local producer and consumers,
- Tele communications and audio visual technology

2.3.2. Threats

- Fundamentalist ideological influence, magical and naïve consciousness
- Money lenders, micro credit business, middlemen agents, local influential landlords, land grabbers, influential people belong to party manipulate power
- River erosion, drought, dust, pollution and impact of climate change
- Chemical fertilizer, pesticides, genetically modified and highbred seeds company and their retailers, multinationals
- Corrupt and influential officials in local administration, black money holders, industrialists and officials violating laws
- Insincere doctors and employers in health departments, village quacks and commercialization of treatments (clinic business)
- Anti-people education policy, morally corrupt officials of education departments,
- Blind faith (*Dharmandota*), superstitions, fatwabazi, patriarchal values and culture, use or abuse of religion for political purpose, fundamentalist terror groups

- Legislative system is complex, corrupt in many instances, costly thus out of reach of the poor and marginalized
- Policy and influences of WB, IMF, WTO etc.
- Rapid urbanization

2.3.3. General Challenges in the Context

Economic

1. Secure basic needs such as food, health and education for the poor and marginalized, create opportunities for whole year employment (at least 200 days).
2. Free local markets from middle men and build unity of small producers to get fair price of the product and streamline contract farming and share cropping systems
3. Stop price hike and keep it within the reach of poor, especially the price of essentials
4. Ensure access to credit in simple terms and conditions and receive credit service with low interests and without bureaucratic hassles from government institutions
5. Abolish child labor.
6. Establish control over life sustaining natural resources by the poor and marginalized
7. Fair distribution of Khas land to the poor and deserved, protect the bio diversity, fish resources, and the fertility of cultivable land
8. Re-establish traditional professions to increase the employment opportunity of the poor Ensure that the agriculture policy is for poverty alleviation and implement that policies
9. Make local government institutions strong, transparent and accountable
10. Build self reliant solidarity economy and create resistance against the aggression of corporate hegemony
11. Ensure access to VGF and VGD by poor and marginalized

Education

12. Education policy and curriculum for human resources development to promote moral standards and technical skills
13. Access for all children in education and ensure adequate infrastructure, instruments, books, library etc
14. Motivated teachers, well paid and taking education as mission for life
15. Poor and disadvantaged children getting assistance for education from schools such as nutrition and scholarships
16. Eradicate magical and naïve consciousness and promotion of critical and progressive perspectives

Health

17. Community level fully equipped infrastructure for health service to all
18. Doctors, nurses and health worker are committed and skilled for health service
19. National health policy for all and special support for poor and marginalized
20. Community based health system in terms of knowledge, prevention and care
21. Hygienic living condition for all citizens
22. Women health awareness are adequate in terms of child marriage and reproductive health
23. Community based production and supply of required nutritious food for all the community members
24. Healthy culture conditions for the development of mental health
25. Awareness prevails against all types of superstitions, especially on women health

Gender

26. Women participation in all sphere of social life, especially in decision making and dispute resolution system

27. Ensure women rights and build awareness among male on the women rights issues
28. Stop child marriage, divorce, dowry, polygamy, physical and psychological torture and violence against women
29. Reform inheritance law and implementation of equal legal status
30. Create awareness about the role of women in national economy
31. Create awareness about hegemonic masculinity
32. Create awareness among imams and preachers regarding patriarchal ideology masked in religious discourse
33. Ensure safety and security condition for the free movement for women
34. Ensure equal and fair wages for both men and women

Environment

35. Reforestation, greenery and awareness for environmental protection
36. Awareness among business and industrialists to be sensitive to environmental protection
37. Reconstruction and protection of water bodies/ canal, stop excessive use of ground water
38. Create mass awareness on climate change
39. Use of appropriate technologies and organic method of agriculture

Development

40. Authentic participation of people in formulation of development vision, goal, strategy and program as basic human rights
41. Initiate people centered, vision oriented and democratic development approach
42. Promote self reliant Peoples Organization (PO) and their networks
43. Formulate long term development strategy based on societal vision to establish the “rights of development”
44. Establish solidarity, coordination and cordial relations among the development organizations
45. Well coordination between Government and NGOs
46. Enhance capacity and commitment of all levels of leadership
47. Sensitize donor agencies to be participatory and cooperative
48. Ensure respectful attitude and behavior of the development workers to general people

3. Analysis of Concept

The “concept” in this document is to refer the theoretical understanding of the nature and causes of problems and development perspectives including the choice of appropriate strategy, approach, methods and tools. Development perspective includes vision, mission, role, objectives etc.

3.1. Understanding Poverty and underdevelopment

USS recognizes the fact that the poverty is increasing despite various poverty “reduction” interventions. The existence of economic poverty of the people is as a consequence of human and social historical causes. The economic poverty is the symptomatic, the real problem lies with human social relations and there are non-economic underlying and root causes.

To put it more explicitly the abject economic poverty is the manifestations of deprivation and exploitations due to the emergence and existence of an unequal and unjust social structure. The emergence of the present social system has a historical, specifically colonial past and the present inequality and deprivation is produced,

reproduced and maintained by forces and factors functioning globally, namely neo-liberal global financial institutions such as WTO, World Bank, IMF etc. However, there are national and local actors benefiting from the exploitative systems and acting in favor of neo-liberal economic order.

3.2. Understanding Development and Strategies for Development

Contrary to economic reductionism, that perceives development as only in economic term and measure it with the indicators of increasing per capita income, or Modernism, that considers development as economic “growth and mass consumptions”, USS perceives development in human and social term, “a democratic society” based on equality and people are living with “dignity” and prosperity.

The formulation of strategy for development initiatives of USS is based on and influenced by a critical theoretical paradigm. USS has a critique to dominant development strategy as “naïve” due to their emphasis on symptoms of the problems and inability to recognize the underlying or root causes. Secondly, and most importantly USS believes in peoples’ moral practical knowledge and people’s creative power to achieve social transformation from inequality and injustice. Thus the emphasis is given on “emancipation” of the poor and marginalized in strategy formulation. In other words, it is a people centered strategy, using “critical consciousness” as means of transformation towards an authentic democratic society.

The concept of “establishing a sustainable village economy by human development through participatory action research” is indicative to the operational approach illuminating the emphasis of local economic regeneration, sustainability and prosperity with equal sharing of resources.

The choice of Participatory Action Research (PAR) as method of consentient (action, reflection, action) for empowerment and emancipation of poor and marginalized is congruent with the conceptual understanding of sustainable development and people centered strategy.

3.3. Understanding Role and Objectives

USS role could be defined as it was articulated in the profile: “encouraging the poor for changing their socio-economic condition on their own”.

In other words, USS’s role is to facilitate a process that create opportunity for the poor and marginalized to be empowered and transform the social conditions. The “facilitative” role is congruent with the understanding of poverty and development, and adopted strategy.

USS articulated the “Mission” and “objectives” in specific term. The mission is to “eliminate poverty” and “empower people to ensure sustainable development” in the “underdeveloped area of country through participatory action research with shared actions”. The general objective is to “establish sustainable village economy by human development through PAR. Side by side preparing the groups members for local leadership and by giving them training on institutional management, command over local resources, and ensure that benefits are equally shared by themselves”.

The underlying values of the articulated mission and objectives are: equality, freedom, justice, sharing, caring and participation.

USS designed several long term and short term objectives, indicative to address the development intervention in a holistic perspective: institution building, critical awareness raising, wealth generation, promotion of democratic culture, gender equality and women participation, conflict and violence prevention to achieve peace and harmony, abolition of child labor and promotion of children rights, education for adolescent, linkage with service providers, and raise voice for rights of deprived, women and children. USS designed to work with all the actors in the society, nevertheless, especial focus on poor and marginalized, women and children.

The following short term objectives articulated in the USS document indicated the areas of intended intervention:

- To organize the poor into groups in rural areas
- To aware group members on social issues/problems through participatory workshop
- To empower poor men and women to take part in the decision making process
- To contribute to uphold peoples voice against violence and all kinds of social injustice and undemocratic practices in the community
- To help group to be engaged in income generation activities
- To increase awareness among group members on legal issues in order to bring positive changes in gender equity, women's participation, different kinds of abuses, child labor and so on
- To encourage parents to give emphasis on children's development and meeting their needs by setting up child organization.

As it expressed in the short term objectives, USS perceives its role to encourage poor to undertake a comprehensive and diverse activities, with both long and short term objectives. The conceptualization of objectives is congruent with the development understanding and it could be assumed that if activities according to objective are implemented it would transform all sphere of life.

3.4. Vision Perception: Conceptualization of Aspired Society

USS agrees with the concept that to eliminate poverty "creative transformational" mode is appropriate compare to "problem solving" mode for development intervention. Therefore, quite a time was devoted to vision exercise and the perception of aspired society is articulated:

Economic System

- People at the grass roots level are planning development of local economy and that is the basis of national economic plan,
- All the technologies used for production and service are appropriate, environment friendly and sustainable,
- Local cottage and small industries are functioning well by using agricultural raw materials,
- Every community is self reliant in terms of productive assets and own capitals,
- The productive assets, for instance land and technologies are equally shared, and the agriculture and other consumer products are equitably distributed,
- Every household is having enough resources for living, the food is secured at the community level,
- Every house hold uses electricity generated from solar energy and they have bio gas plants for cooking,
- People are using internet to get information and communication with local and global level
- In every house hold at the village cultivate herbal medicinal plants, the emergency health service is quick
- The market is part of welfare service where fair price and fair exchange is maintained by the community,
- Financial institutions are supporting the initiatives of the community by providing credit support.

Political System

- Local government is democratically elected and the centre of policy discussion and planning of local governance,
- The parliament members are involved only national policy decisions based on local recommendations,

- The political power of the state is decentralized
- All the laws ensures equality among man and women, among race and cast
- There is regular forums where peoples representatives are presenting the report of their work and people evaluates the performance
- Political parties are respecting each other and the disputes are solving through dialogue and non-violent means,
- The political system is called Peoples democracy
- State is responsible for ensure citizen rights of survival and freedom of speech
- There is periodic elections to select peoples representatives
- Local leaders are selected through community dialogue and based on consensus methods,
- People have access to information about political policy and rights to intervene

Cultural System

- People are live in a culture of creative, open, freedom of expression where all person have opportunity to flourish their potentials
- People believes in humane values, respecting and trusting each other and people are living with dignity
- People are analytical, critical to ideas and perceptions that are discriminatory and inhuman,
- In all the cultural events all the citizen irrespective of gender, ethnicity etc. are participating equally,
- Men and women have equal rights and position in the family and society
- People are enjoying freedom and live in a joyful cultural environment,
- Young people have freedom of choice to select their life partner, marriage is based on love relation,
- Culture is actively promoting peace and harmony, cooperation and recognition of the contribution of individuals,
- Education is to support students to be aware of science, language, society and skilled to be an analytical person with high moral.

The above aspired social condition is indicating the following “Values” USS believes to inculcate among social activists and the people:

Democracy (authentic, participatory, peoples), Cooperation, Participation, Freedom, Equality, Justice, Empathy, Sharing (equal, just distribution of wealth), Caring (love), Free thinking (secular, rational, critical/analytical), Self reliance, Sustainability, Collectiveness, Autonomy.

USS identified the following forces and factors (threats and opportunities) exist in the present local and global society would be the decisive factors in achieving the Vision (Aspired Society):

Factors against Change	Factors in favor of Change
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundamentalist ideas, blind faith, religious superstitions • Discriminatory law, corrupt and anti people bureaucracy, • Patriarchal values and practice • Selfish and exploitative elites/leaders • Conservative political ideology • Frustrations, dependent mentality, greed, naive perception and culture of competition • Abject poverty and dependency on power 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People take stand in favor of justice and progress • Organizing people is relatively easy as they have experience of making organization (for change) • The number of deprived people are more and they want equality and freedom • People have long history and experience of freedom struggle • The technology, wealth and natural resources are enough to met the needs of

<p>structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global institutions that are supporting exploitative and discriminatory social and political systems 	<p>the people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is possible to build international solidarity.
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3.5. Challenges to Achieve the Vision

- Resist the expansion of fundamentalist ideas, patriarchal values, superstitions, capitalist ideology of consumerism and commodity fetishism, conservatism, frustrations, self-centeredness, greed and attitude of competition promoted through education and dominant media,
- Transform magical and naïve worldview into a critical analytical perspective, self reliance in access to information and promotion of a knowledge based culture,
- Transform the legal and social systems and structures that are discriminatory, unscientific and inhumane,
- Promote the humane values such as equality, cooperation, sharing, peace, caring, and justice,
- Promote alternative leadership at all levels and promotion of democratic and collective leadership,
- Sustainable use of natural resources, renewable energies etc. and be self reliant in production and wealth creation,
- The bureaucracy is honest, free of corruption and accountable to people and serving the interests of the people,
- With a vision of just and egalitarian society, build networks and solidarity with like minded organizations and individuals at local, national and international level,
- Promote dialogue and discussion on Aspired Society/ Vision exercise with all the relevant actors and promote practice congruent with the values and vision of aspired society,
- Create and establish institutions and policies that are congruent with the aspirations of future egalitarian society, advocacy for educational and economic systems based on aspired society,
- Build and promote organizations who will be self reliant and promote a people centered process of creative transformation

4. Analysis of Organization

Organization analysis contains the analysis of existing organization, the Strength, Weakness, Capacity and Potentials of USS and conceptualization of required organization need for achieving the vision of aspired society.

4.1. Strength, Weakness, Capacity and Potentials of USS

Strength:

- Conceptual clarity regarding development understanding, a people centered and holistic approach is adopted by combining vision oriented, rights based, sustainable and people centered theoretical perspectives, and effective methods and tools are employed to achieve outcome (PAR etc.)
- An organization culture that allows expression of opinion, opportunity to creativity and critical examination of concepts and methods
- Committed social workers at governance and operation level have appropriate attitude of participation and cooperation
- Moderate infrastructure and communication with funding partners based on transparency and accountability

Weakness:

- High turnover of the social workers
- Fund and resource constrains
- Dependent on donor fund (major part of resource)

Capacity:

- Facilitate and encourage people to organize and take initiatives for change
- Provide support to people to undertake practical actions for income and education
- Build network and communication with likeminded organizations
- Critically analyze the context, activities, outcome and impact
- Courage to take challenging tasks

Potentials:

- To be self reliant organization by mobilizing resources
- Undertake activities required for achieving vision of aspired society

4.2. Aspired Organization: USS aspired to be an organization with following characteristics:

- A learning organization, facilitating for enhancement of critical consciousness to poor and marginalized,
- Reached all poor and deprived nationwide either through own organizational structure or through networking with likeminded groups and networks
- Able to address the urgent concern of the poor and deprived specially women and children.
- A social movement for social change towards an egalitarian and peoples democratic social system
- Self reliant in terms of ability to continue activities uninterruptedly
- Part of global solidarity (i.e. world social forum) network.

4.3. Organizational Objectives

- ✚ Poor and landless people have increased access and control over natural resources and promoted sustainable diversified agriculture practices.

- + Women and girls are empowered for breaking the silence of the violence and involved in building economic alternatives
- + Government service providing agencies taken steps for accountable government services and provided improved quality services to poor & marginalized.
- + Community secured quality education with child rights & protection where students grown as active citizen for future.
- + Legal aid providing agencies, institutions and SVAW networks taken initiatives to protect women and girls against HTP and GBV

5. Strategic Direction and Course of Action

Strategic direction includes the core values of USS, Vision of Aspired Society, Mission, Role, Strategic Objectives, Strategy, Program and Activities

5.1.1. Core Value: (Core Value six)

Participation, accountability, transparency, Efficiency, Justice and Dignity

5.1.2. **Vision;** A Society citizens enjoyed equal opportunity and have human rights and living with dignity.

5.1.3 Mission

Creative social transformation through promoting, assisting and encouraging deprived and marginalized people to build institutions, capacities and processes towards prosperity, sustainability and democratic governance.

5.1.4. Role of USS

USS primary role as facilitator, in supporting people to critically analyze the situation, identify the causes, define the solutions, formulate the alternative vision, plan for action and strategies to achieve desired results. Facilitation of an emancipator process that enhances their capacity and strengthens people's institutions and solidarity to address their urgent crisis as well as building alternative systems.

5.2. Strategic Objectives

- To promote gender equality and social justice
- To promote youth lead mobilization for social change
- To create enable environment for child development through emphasis education governance.
- To protect environment through climate resilience sustainable agriculture.
- To establish democratic self-governance & access to public services.
- To promote justice for marginalized including persons with disability.
- To ensure food and livelihood security

5.2. Strategy/ theory of Change.

The **strategic concern** for USS is to address two types of issues; the urgent and immediate crisis as well as the policy and actions of remote forces that maintain structural deprivation. In case of urgent issues, the deprived and marginalized people facing, instance- unemployment and abject poverty, violence against women, girls & child, drop out from primary and secondary schools and common issues. The exploitation through market mechanisms, denial of access to entitlement rights and services, and neo-liberal policies are the issues have structural dimensions and long term implications.

Concerning **strategic options**, given the threats, opportunities and challenges in the context, and considering the value premise and societal aspirations of USS, choice of educative/facilitative approach with multiple strategy options would be appropriate.

Considering the capacity and resources, the educative/facilitative strategy is the combination of following components:

- I. Empowerment to the poor people through Capacity development.

- II. Strengthening people organization at community level.
- III. Campaign & Advocacy in local level to national level.
- IV. Partnership development in different organization.

5.3. USS has designing the programmatic intervention according to strategic objectives which as follows:----

5.3.1 To promote gender equality and social justice

Objective of the strategy : Women and girls are empowered for breaking the silence of the violence and involved in building economic alternatives

Core area of work:

- Critical awareness rising on gender based violence & HTP.
- Leadership development for the women at community level to national level.
- Build common understanding on Law policy & practices through group discussion.
- Provide technical support to conduct the advocacy to reform the discriminatory law.
- Stop wage discrimination between men and women.
- Ensure secure cultural environment for women.
- Providing the technical support to conduct the gender audit & monitoring.
- A support woman in the working areas of USS is gaining control over their own bodies.
- Fight all forms of gender based violence.
- Advocate for women's right to property and livelihood opportunities through legislative and policy reforms

Intended Outcomes

- Women's influence in decision making processes both in public and private sphere enhanced.
- Social movement against all forms of violence against women and girls strengthened
- Women, particularly poor and marginalized, determine their reproductive role.
- Legislative and policy reform for women's rights including minority women's right to property initiated.

5.3.2 To promote youth lead mobilization for social change.

Objective of the strategic:To promote youth as social change agent and support to the leadership.'

Core area of work

- ✚ Build engagement with young people and their movements.
- ✚ Advocate for effective design and implementation of policies that are responsive to the needs of young people,
- ✚ Increase the chances of young people for meaningful participation in decision-making and leadership processes

Intended Outcome

- (a) Young leaders, activists equipped intellectually and otherwise to influence Participation of young people in social transformation and decision making processes.
- (b) Youth volunteer are playing active role for social change.
- (c) They have strong network with others youth volunteer for fighting on peoples demand.

5.3.3 To create enable environment for child development through emphasis education governance.

Objective of the strategic: Community secured quality education where students grown as active citizen for future.

Core area of work:-

- Provide technical support to the people organization for campaign for quality education at local level to national level.
- Capacity building on child protection mechanism for community actors.
- Strengthening SMC, PTA for accountable schools.
- Provide support to facilitate community based advocacy to Ensuring child-health rights.
- Ensure education materials that promoting knowledge, skills and attitude to be a humane person.
- Promoting science education through innovative idea & instrument using as learning material.
- Organize extra curriculum activities for the value orientation and creativity of the students.
- Provide technical support to operate the pre-school at community level.

- Provide technical support to organize the student council election.

Intended Outcomes:-

- Increase the enrolment in catchment area in targeting school.
- Promoting quality education for targeting schools in rural area.
- Community actors are aware on promoting rights in schools.
- SMC/PTA are playing active role toward development of school.
- Increase the completion rate of rural student & continuing their education.

5.3.4 To protect environment through climate resilience sustainable agriculture

Objective of the strategy : creating enable environment to protect the effect of climate change & sustainable agriculture through using community adaptation plan.

Core area of work:-

- Promote organic method of agriculture and environmental pesticides & insecticides
- Ensure the soil test and production plan
- Provide capacity development support for the community people on climate changes & adaptation and humanitarian response.
- Promote social forestry
- Monitoring of industrial waste management and promotion of sustainable industrial production.
- Awareness building on health and environment
- Use of renewable energy
- Stop all types of pollution; water, air, sound etc.

Intended Outcomes:-

- Communities have adaptation plan to mitigate the effect of climate change.
- Farmers are practicing climate resilience sustainable agriculture and they are benefited from this intervention.
- Provide technical support to industry for waste

5.3.4 To establish democratic self governance & access to public services

Objective of the strategic: Government service providing agencies taken steps for accountable government services and provided improved quality services to poor & marginalized.

Core area of work:-

- Enhance the leadership capacity development on using accountability tools for accountable institutions.
- Provide technical support to prepare the participatory plans & budget including development plan at union/ Upazila level.
- Strengthen people's agency particularly women and marginalized communities at local level;
- Strengthen and promote women's leadership across class and ethnicity ;
- Advocate for gender sensitive institutions and governance mechanisms.
- Advocate for people's Right to Information (RTI).
- Providing technical support to create enable environment on PWDs friendly services.
- Increase people's awareness in respect of basic services.
- Build strategic alliances with development partners for pro poor initiatives.
- Ensure participation of marginalized people (Women, Adivasis, Disable, and Adolescent) in the mobilization for access to resources and establishment of rights.

Intended Outcomes

- ✚ People's organizations developed to demand government accountability.

- ✚ Representation of women and marginalized people in local government structures enhanced.
- ✚ People's access to basic services improved.
- ✚ Persons with disability (PWD) access to public services.
- ✚ A decentralized budget for district level incorporated in public agenda.
- ✚ Government and development partners become accountable and responsive to poor people's needs in national level planning process and implementation of development projects.

5.3.6 To promote justice for marginalized including persons with disability.

Objective of the strategic:To promote equal rights and justice for the excluded and socially marginalized'.

Core area of work:-

- People organization develop for selected socially marginalized and excluded groups, namely Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), Indigenous People, Dalits, People Living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA) and Sex workers.
- USS will continue its efforts towards ensuring constitutional recognition of marginalized groups, integrating their agenda in development programs planning, implementation and policy adoption.
- USS will consider group-specific advocacy initiatives such as legal reform around disability rights in line with UNCRPD.

Intended Outcomes

- Leadership capacity of marginalized groups developed and strengthened.
- Social movement for recognition of indigenous identity and protection of their rights strengthened.
- Platforms and networks of marginalised groups promoted and strengthened

- a) cultural groups
- b) Ensure the practice of folk and popular cultural forms
- c) Theatre and other local forms to raise peoples issues
- d) Networking with other cultural organizations at district and national level
- e) Encourage children in cultural activities
- f) Promote literature, poetry etc.
- g) Use video and movie for cultural exercise

5.3.7 food and livelihood security

Objective of the strategic: -Poor and landless people have increased access and control over natural resources and promoted sustainable diversified agriculture practices.

Core area of work:-

- a) Capacity development on economic alternatives through off farm & on farm.
- b) Poor people address the food and livelihood security issue collectively
- c) Emphasis on Agricultural productivity by using sustainable and appropriate technology and improved methods i.e. multi-cropping, crop rotation etc. to achieve local food sufficiency
- d) Lobby and advocacy for agriculture credit without or low interest rate.
- e) Advocacy for land reform, especially equal distribution of Khas land.
- f) Take collective "solidarity economy" project together with affluent strategic partnership
- g) Provide technical support to establish Food bank at community level to ensure food security.
- h) Campaign for constitutional rights for basic need fulfillment by supporting basic income.

Intended Outcomes:-

- Ensure the food security in the poor people.
- Women are involved in various types on IGA.

- Increase market access to poor & marginalized farmers.
- Landless people access to Khas land & Natural resource.

6. USS Participants Criteria

In selecting target population, USS emphasizes more on the most disadvantage and poor people of the society. But in all cases, preference is given to the disadvantage women, children and person with disability. After selecting the targeted population, several group of people among the targeted population are oriented to represent the respective community. These groups of people are nourished over a time and then termed as Community based Organization (CBOs).

This document will contribute the change of socio-economic development of community people and also contribute to create enable environment to establish justice and equality.

After five years USS will review the document as per context and community demand.