Two agent outlets of Bank Asia inaugurated

To provide banking services at grassroots level in Bangladesh, Bank Asia is providing agent banking services by establishing two agent outlets in Jessore’s Khajurah Bazar and Kayemkola Market through DAM Foundation for Economic Development (DFED), an institution of Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM). The inauguration ceremony of the programme was organized in Jessore Khajuraj Bazar on 6th August, 2017.

The agent outlets will provide services such as opening of customer accounts using biometric system, accepting cash deposits and withdrawal, accepting bills, payment of foreign remittance, fund transfer and DPS.

The guest of honor of the ceremony was Kazi Rafiq Alam, President of Dhaka Ahsania Mission and DFED Chairperson. Deputy Managing Director of Bank Asia Jahirul Alam and Md. Ahsanul Alam, Vice President of Bank Asia, Agent Banking Division were present as special guests. Dr. M. Ehsanur Rahman, Executive Director of Dhaka Ahsania Mission and Secretary General of the DFED presided over the ceremony. The welcome address was delivered by head of DFED Md. Asaduzzaman.
Celebration of A-card’s 1st Anniversary in Faridpur

The A-card is a unique initiative of the Agricultural Extension Support Activity (AESA) project where the farmers received agricultural loans directly from the commercial bank with the assistance of the local microfinance (MFIs) with a low (≤10% per annum) interest rate and with a flexible payback period of six months. Through this A-card model, the farmers can buy necessary agricultural inputs from selected local retailers using the NFC (near field communications) enabled smartphones and this is the first time that an NFC has been used for financial transaction for the farmers in rural Bangladesh.

The A-card was first launched in Faridpur on 17 August 2016 and now it successfully completes its first year. To rejoice the occasion, the project along with Bank Asia and local MFI Society Development Committee (SDC) who operates A-card in Faridpur organized a gathering to celebrate A-card’s first anniversary on 17 August, 2017 at the Ambika Memorial Hall, Faridpur.

Kbd. Mr. Kingkar Chandra Das, Additional Director, DAE, Faridpur was present as the Chief Guest on the occasion while Mr. Mohammad Syed Shibly, Agreement Officer’s Representative, USAID Bangladesh was present as the Guest of Honour. Mr. Kazi Ashraful Hassan, Executive Director, Society Development Committee (SDC), Faridpur, Mr. Mahabubul Hasan Pikul, General Secretary, Press Club, Faridpur, Ms. Rumana Akhter Tulee, Senior Executive Officer–Agent Banking Division, Bank Asia and Mr. Arshad Muhammad, Assistant Country Director–Programs, CARE Bangladesh were present as Special Guests at the event. The event was chaired by Dr. M. Ehsanur Rahman, Executive Director, Dhaka Ahsania Mission.

At the beginning of the event, Mr. Bidyut K. Mahalder, Chief of Party of the AESA project welcomed all the guests to celebrate the occasion and provided a summary on the A-card progress to all.

The A-card holding farmers and the retailers who are involved with the A-card initiative shared their experiences with all at the event. An “A-card Operational Manual” was also unwrapped at the event to understand the use of A-card with its full potential.

Appreciating the unique initiative of A-card and celebrating its first year, all the guests hoped that it will keep benefitting the farmers in the coming years as well.

Senior officials from USAID, Bank Asia, SDC and the project including representatives from different national and international development partners, representatives from different government organizations, farmers, retailers and journalists were also present to celebrate the first anniversary of the A-card.
Social Vocational Training on Jute Product Development starts in EduEmp Project

EduEmp Project (Educating and Empowering Disadvantaged Children through NFE) of DAM Education Sector have organized a Social Vocational Training on Jute Product Development at their office in Mirpur area. To empower the learners who are from poor families, enhance their capabilities, build them as agents of social transformation, particularly for the desired changes in their situation this training was organized. The training was conducted from 16 to 26 August 2017.

Shamima Akter, Managing Director, Improving Trading Ltd, Shahana Begum, Proprietor, Fine Fair Craft and Afjal Hossain Founder & CEO, Jute Craft Company conducted the training session. The learners of UCLC, Parents, Teacher and Staff of project attended the training. Through the training, 14 learners & staffs are learning how to develop different Jute Products.

The EduEmp project is financed by The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited (HSBC), Bangladesh. The project started on 16 August 2015 and will continue till 12 August 2018.
DAM distributes relief materials among the flood affected people

On 25 August, 2017 Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) started distributing relief materials among the flood affected people. Primarily, flood victims of Malandaho, Islampur and Dewangonj Upazila under Jamalpur Districts were provided with relief goods.

The relief distribution event was formally opened in Chinaduli Union, Islampur Upazila by DAM Assistant Director Md. Jahangir Alam. Project implementation officer of Islampur upazila Mehti Hasan Titu and Chairman of Chinaduli Union Md. Abdus Salam were present on the occasion.

Among others, Dhaka Ahsania Mission Regional Manager Tapan Kumar Sarkar, Humanitarian Trainee Md. Khairul Islam, Technical Officer Md. Joynal Abedin and other officials of the Dhaka Ahsania Mission were also present.

Each of the relief packets contained rice, pulse, soya-bean oil, salt, potato, onion and oral saline good enough to use for 7 days by a family.

Anti-Narcotics bike rally was held in Sathkhira to create awareness about the harm of drug addiction
Advanced training on Pedagogy held at DAM

To enhance the capacity of the teachers and teacher trainers, a five-day long training programme on 'Advanced Training on Pedagogy' was organized by the Center for International Education and Development (CINED), Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) in collaboration with the Michigan State University, USA. Teachers of secondary and higher secondary level, trainers from government and private teacher training institutions took part in this training.

The training was held at Dhaka Ahsania Mission Auditorium at Dhanmondi in the capital. Executive Director of Dhaka Ahsania Mission, Dr Md. Ehsanur Rahman, Pro-VC of the University of Development Alternative Ahmedullah Mia and Shahnewaz Khan, Chief Executive Officer, CINED of Dhaka Ahsania Mission were present at the opening ceremony.

The training was conducted by the teacher training expert of Michigan State University Prof Dr Samantha Caughlan.

It focused on the concepts of teaching and learning in Bangladesh & USA, theories of learning, recent research on learning, interactive teaching methods and assessment of learning.

On completion of the training, Dhaka Ahsania Mission and Michigan State University jointly issued course completion certificates to the participants.

AMCC children celebrate "International Literacy Day"

Panchagarh Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Amal Krishna Mondal celebrates "International Literacy Day" with the children of Ahsania Mission Children City
Success of female shrimp farmer: dedication brings government award

Sujata Rani Gayen, a female shrimp farmer of the Dari Saidalipur Fisheries group of Ratanpur union under Kaliganj upazila of Satkhira district proved that sincere efforts and dedications are always recognized.

Sujata received training on improved practices on shrimp farming from the USAID Agricultural Extension Support Activity (AES) project which is implemented by Dhaka Ahsania Mission and learnt to select quality post-larvae and fish fingerling, proper nursery management, efficient feed management, prevention and control measures against diseases, and soil and water quality management, etc. from the training session.

Sujata along with her husband Deepak Kumar Gayen are now following all their technical learning from the training session and culturing shrimp in their 66 decimals of gher (water body to culture shrimp, prawn and fish).

Sujata said “before joining the project, I used to release Shrimp larvae directly to my gher with poor preparation and did not follow any types of improved management practices. After receiving the training form the project, I have learned about nursery preparation, stocking, proper way to apply feed, lime and fertilizer in my gher. As a result, I am now getting better yields. Many women farmers close to my community, are already applying these improved practices in their ghers.”

Sujata added, “after adopting all these improved farming practices and with the assistance from local fisheries office, I successfully harvested 95 kg of shrimp worth BDT 55,100 from my gher that is one and half time higher than my previous production.”

Through the facilitation of AESA project, Sujata was linked with the Local Extension Agent for Fisheries (LEAF) of her union and Field Assistant of Upazila Fisheries Office from where she also received different advisory services on Shrimp farming initiatives.

She spent major portions of her earnings for children’s education purpose and rest of the amount she used for the betterment of her households after keeping some amount for savings for future needs.

As Sujata successfully get better yields from her gher by applying improved farming practices and motivating others nearby women farmers, Kaligonj Upazila Fisheries Office of Satkhira district, awarded her as “Successful Woman Entrepreneur” with a crest and certificate on the National Fish Week 2017.

Sujata expressed her gratitude to the local fisheries office and the AESA project for their technical supports. She and her husband decided to continue with shrimp farming for next season also.
Changes in lifestyle of women in Risipara

Sujapor is a small village which is situated at Kesobpur Upazila in Jessore. Risipara is situated in the Sujapor village where a small number of ethnic groups have been living for many years. The people of the Risipara community had been suffering from extreme poverty. The main source of the income is from rickshaw pulling where most of the male in Risipara is engaged. Malnutrition, illiteracy and discrimination are prevalent in this area. Due to extreme poverty and illiteracy, child marriage is a frequent occurrence there. Most of the people couldn’t afford 3 meals in a day. Children were deprived from education in the Risipara community.

At that moment, WEA project of Dhaka Ahsania Mission formed an Entrepreneurial Literacy Training for Empowerment (ELTE) group with the deprived women from Risipara. ELTE training started with the group members with a view of increasing to their capacity and awareness. Initially, many members did not attend classes regularly because they did not understand the substantial benefits of the class. After one month, the community people observed positive changes in the behavior of group members who attended class regularly. Gradually, they understood if they attend ELTE class, they will be aware of their rights and they can lead a respectful life in the society. They understood women should have contribution in their family alongside men to have the better livelihood. It will be tough to meet family cost, child education with the income of male only. To lead a respectful and solvent life, women must be empowered.

Jhorna Das, a woman of Risipara had a small business of making rocking cradle. Due to lack of capital, her business was going dull. The women from the ELTE group thought if they work with Jhorna Das they may do well. They joined with Jhorna Das and decided to make Rocking Cradle for commercial purpose. As per their decision, they all brought raw materials and gave efforts to make Rocking Cradle. Because of bulk amount of raw materials brought, the cost of materials and transportation were comparatively low. They started to make profit gradually. At a point of time, they wanted to expand their business, but they could not, due to lack of investment. WEA project of DAM came to know of their initiatives and provided them with loan facility through Mirco- Finance program of DAM.

Initially, every member received a loan of around BDT 5000 to BDT 10000 from Micro-Finance programme of DAM. Observing the prosperity, husbands have now started to help their wives in the business. A woman can make 2-3 rocking cradle in a day which they can sell BDT 180 to BDT 220. The cost of raw materials per rocking cradle is around BDT 80 to BDT 100. So the profit is BDT 100 to BDT 120 per rocking cradle. As a result a woman began earning BDT 200 to BDT 300 per day. Now the life style of the community people of Risipara is significantly changing. Their children are now going to school. Their poverty is gradually reducing and income is increasing. Observing the progress of their initiative, several Micro-Finance organizations are offering loan to them. Now they are saving money. They are dreaming of doing their business in a larger scale. The people of the neighboring community are coming to see their progress.

According to them, “We are very grateful to Women’s Empowerment Project of DAM. We think DAM is our friend, who is directing us to walk in the right path. We never thought, women of this community will have a contribution in their family. Now we are living respectful and solvent life.”
Pictures from the field

Teachers and students of AMCC observe “National Mourning Day”

Dhaka Ahsania Mission and BAF Shaheen College, Dhaka jointly organized an awareness programme on Tobacco and Drugs in BAF Shaheen College. AHM Amirul Ahsan, Captain of BAF Shaheen College was the chief guest at the programme. 270 students, 30 members of scout and 10 teachers of different departments present in the programme.

More than 1 lakh saplings were planted by DAM Education Sector in 72 Upazillas of 26 Districts in Bangladesh

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