DAM wins Citi Micro entrepreneurship Award

Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) won 9th Citi Microentrepreneurship Award as Runner-up in category of “Best Microentrepreneur of the Year in Agriculture”. DAM-MFP beneficiary Ms. Anju Sarker, Vill: Mulgram, PS: Keshobpur Dist: Jessore, a flower farmer and business women won that prize as DAM participant in that national level competition. As recognition of her outstanding performance in promoting floriculture, Ms. Anju Sarker of DAM received a Crest, a Cheque of BDT 100,000/- (One Lac) and a Certificate from Mr. M. Abdul Mannan, State Minister, Finance & Planning, Government of Bangladesh and the Hon’ble Guest of Honor Dr. Atiur Rahman, Governor, Bangladesh Bank on June 14, 2014.

Citi Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Citigroup, for the 9th consecutive time launched this Citi Microentrepreneurship Award (CMA) program to recognize and honor leadership, entrepreneurial skills and best practices of individual micro entrepreneurs in the country. “The main objective of the award is to promote micro enterprise and increase awareness of the financial service needs of micro entrepreneurs,”

The Award Giving Ceremony was held at the Grand Ball Room, Pan Pacific Sonargaon, Dhaka on June 14, 2014. Mr. M. Abdul Mannan, MP, State Minister for Finance & Planning, Ministry of Finance and Dr. Atiur Rahman, Governor, Bangladesh Bank were present as Chief Guest and Guest of Honor respectively. The distinguished guests presented a crest, cheque and certificate to each of the eight winners in five categories. Key guests at the ceremony included Ms. Rokia Afzal Rahman, President of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Acting Chairperson of the 9th CMA Advisory Council; Mr. Richard Tesvich, Managing Director and Regional Head of Corporate Affairs, Citi Asia Pacific Region; Mr. Md. Abdul Awal, Chairperson of the 9th CMA Screening Committee and Executive Director of Credit and Development Forum (CDF), and Mr. Rashed Maqsood, Managing Director and Citi Country Officer for Bangladesh.

DAM Executive Director, Dr. M. Ehsanur Rahman, Assistant Director and Team Leader, MFP, Mr. Md. Asaduzzaman and DAM-MFP beneficiary Ms. Anju Sarker were also present in the Award Giving Ceremony. More than 100 NGO MFIs took part in that competition.
In each 9 minutes and 26 second one person is dying due to tobacco related illness or disease. If urgent action is not taken, more than 80 lac people will die per year by 2030. Eighty percent of death will be in developing countries.

These information, recorded by World Health Organisation (WHO) was revealed at a discussion meeting marking World No Tobacco Day. Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) and Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) jointly organised the meeting at Gulshan Youth Club on 1st June 2014. The Speaker said, tobacco is the world’s leading cause of death. Ten crore people died in 20th century across the world. They also informed, Tobacco products means tobacco, tobacco leaves and any other mould made by the substance of tobacco which can be taken through inhaling. Bidi, Cigaret, Churute, Gule, Jarda, Whiteleaf (Sada pata), Hukka includes tobacco products.

The Chief Health Officer of DNCC Brig. Gen. AKM Masood Ahsan delivered the speech as the chairperson of the program while Director, Bangladesh Program of Tobacco Free Kids (CTFK) Taifur Rahman, President of Gulshan Youth Club Rafez Alam Chowdhury were present as special guests. Coordinator of National Tobacco Control Cell Amin-Ul-Ahsan presented the key note paper. DAM Coordinator Shekhar Banerjee delivered the welcome speech. Earlier of the seminar program, a rally was brought out to mark World No Tobacco Day. Chief Executive Officer of DNCC BM Enamul Haque led the rally.

Ahsania Mission Children City (AMCC) project has organized an exceptional Mini World Cup Football Tournament at its Campus of Jalapara Village of Hafizabad Union under Panchagarh District to make the football game enjoyable among the street children. Mini World Cup inaugurated at its campus on 28 June will continue upto 12 July 2014.

A total of four teams are participating in this tournament. The teams are Argentina, Brazil, Germany and Ahsania Mission Children City Panchagarh. The street children residing at the AMCC centre in Panchagarh will be divided into four groups and will compete in the tournament.
Lemon cultivation makes Sabina self-reliant

She cannot believe she made it! Five years! That’s what it took for Sabina Akter to fulfill the pledge she made to herself for alleviation of poverty. Sabina still chokes as she recalls that day. “I had three children and I did not know what to do. But I swore I wouldn’t give up, I would stand on my feet.” True to her words, Sabina Akter of Hoglakandi village in Narsingdi Sadar, now has three lemon gardens from where she earns several lakhs of taka. In the backyard two milky cows chew the cud. Sabina was worried about how she would increase her family income. In 2007, she enrolled herself as a member of Hoglakandi Paira Mohila Unnyan Samity, an micro-finance group for advancement of rural women, being run by local microfinance programme of Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM). She took a loan amounting to 10,000 taka from DAM for doing agricultural activities at the courtyard of her house. With the micro-finance loan and a lot of labour, Sabina was able to dramatically improve the production of seasonal crops and vegetables. She sometimes cultivated chilly, sometimes gourd and sometimes jute or potato. This way, she continued for 5-6 years. Although her family income increased but it was not that much significant. At this stage, an agri-official of DAM advised her to cultivate the crop which has commercial value. He also asked her to apply improved technology and take help from the local Department of Agriculture Extension. Being inspired by the success of other farmers who became solvent by cultivating lemon through application of improved technology, Sabina decided to conquer poverty through lemon farming on commercial scale. When asked for capital, local DAM official assured himself necessary support. That made a world of difference to Sabina’s life. This is the beginning of her journey towards economic emancipation from poverty. Since 2012, fortune favoured her. She thought for extending her garden. She dreamt of earning lemon worth 3-4 lakhs within a period of three months. Excluding all expenses, she will get a net profit of two-and-a-half taka.

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But this time she won’t buy lemon saplings from others, rather she prepared her own bed of lemon saplings. She extended her garden. This time, she owned three gardens wherethere are more than 200 trees. She herself took care of those. Sometimes, her husband and children extended their helping hands. This year, she targeted to sell 1,000 saplings, from where she expects to get more 50,000 taka as additional income. “When the first lemons grew, I could not believe my eyes,” Sabina recalls. “The fruits of my labour. My only lifeline to survival.” The lemons were reaped. Her husband sold them at the market. Ultimately, she earned a good profit.
IYCG visits DAM CLC

A team of Investing in Young Children Globally (IYCG) from Washington, USA visited on 6th June 2014 Reading for Children (FfC) program of DAM at CLC/Ganokendra.

The team from Washington, USA through Aga Khan Foundation visited Reading for Children (RFC) program of Dhaka Ahsania Mission at Mirpur, Dhaka. Children and their mothers are participating RFC session. And learners of UCLC were performing a cultural program for the visitors.

DAM has been implementing this program based on its Ganokendra/UCLC both urban and rural area. Reading for Children-RFC program promotes the parents and caregivers of the children to read books with children, telling story and spend more time with the children and for the children.

Training Workshop in Panchagarh

Ahsania Mission Children City (AMCC) organised a five-day long employee training workshop on the way forward of the care-givers and psycho-socio service strategy at Panchagarh Campus.

The workshop started on 9 May 2014 continued upto 14 May 2014. With the assistance of KNH Germany the training workshop was facilitated by Bharoty Basu.

In the workshop the employees were trained on the house rule, children right, importance of caring, communication, adolescent, counseling and importance of psycho-socio assistance for the street children.
In observance of the World Tobacco-free Day, the EC Bangladesh and the Dhaka Ahsania Mission jointly organized a Human Chain in front of the National Press Club on 4 June 2014. The theme of this year’s observance is: Impose increased tax on Tobacco – Reduce deaths and diseases.

According to WHO statistics, one every nine minutes, and 57000 people every year die of smoking and tobacco-related diseases in Bangladesh. If the current situation continues unabated, by 2030 the death toll will climb up to 8 million a year, claiming most of the deaths in the developing countries like Bangladesh. Increased taxation on Tobacco is therefore a must, demanded the organizers.

Speakers at the Rally said, due to minimum taxation on tobacco-related materials, the costs of Bidi, cigarettes and other tobacco items are negligible in Bangladesh. Research findings indicate, the more the rates of taxation on tobacco, the less are its users. There are no instances in the world where tobacco use could be lessened without increased taxation. Developed countries could limit the numbers of tobacco users through higher taxation. The organizers stressed on the need for community awareness and stricter implementation of government regulations. Pointing towards the mal-practices of deceiving the people, and alerting against the interests of the tobacco companies, the organizers demanded higher taxation on tobacco-related materials in the coming budget.

The Human Chain was attended among others by Deputy Director of Dhaka Ahsania Mission Iqbal Masud, the Programme Manager of Campaign for Tobacco-free Kids (CTFK)-Bangladesh Eva Naznin and Project Coordinator of EC-Bangladesh Emdadul Haque Bhuiyan. Moreover, members of different organisations were present in the human chain.

Why hospitals won’t be declared no-smoking zone: HC

The High Court has issued a rule asking authorities why a directive should not be issued to keep hospitals smoking-free as per law.

The bench of Justices Salma Masud Chowdhury and Zafar Ahmed issued the order on Monday on hearing a writ petition. The health secretary, director general of health directorate and authorities of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) hospital, Shahid Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital, and Government Employees’ Hospital will have to reply to the rule in four weeks. Four NGOs — Dhaka Ahsania Mission, Ubinig, EC Bangladesh and Pragya — filed the petition. Advocate Shahdin Malik argued for the petitioners while Deputy Attorney General Md Mokhlesur Rahman stood for the state.

Rahman said the court also issued an interim order and the rule was meant for all hospitals. The three hospitals were ordered to report on what they did to keep hospitals free of smoking under sections 4 and 6 of Tobacco Product Control Rules-2006 and build mass awareness, Rahman said. Dhaka Ahsania Mission’s Deputy Director Iqbal Masud said they had recently conducted a survey on five hospitals. The hospitals are BSMMU hospital, Shahid Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital, Government Employees’ Hospital, Shishu Hospital and BIRDEM. They observed that people were smoking at all the hospitals. “Even we saw people smoking near an operation theatre at the Shishu Hospital. “Many shops were set up inside the Shahid Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital to cater the demand,” Masud said. He said they did not find ‘no-smoking sign’ in any of the hospitals.

Masud said they had sent legal notice after the survey. “Shishu Hospital and BIRDEM moved to implement the law but the others did not. That’s why we have filed the writ petition,” he said. (www.bdnews24.com)
CATT Cross-border experience sharing workshop at Elenga

Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM)’s CATT project organised workshop on Cross-border experience sharing at Elenga resort of Tangail district on 18-19 June, 2014. The objective of workshop is to share the experience and knowledge update on value chain focusing MSE, collection point, SPA, sustainable business model and twenty participants of four partners participated.

Before the day of workshop the participants visited three upazilla namely Jamalpur sadar, Sharishabari and Melandhah where DAM is implementing the project activities. During visiting, total participants divided into three groups and visited MSE (Micro and Small Enterprise) groups (chili, vegetables, chicken) collection points, Service centre, Service Provider Association (SPA), Vermi-compost plant, demonstration of chili & Vegetables plot.

In the workshop there was a feedback session on field visit and after that shared the experience and updated the knowledge on ongoing activities in Bangladesh & Assam, Country Director with Project Manager, Assistant Project Manager, Project Officer (Implementation & Monitoring) of Concern Universal, Country Director with Deputy Program Manager, Adviser (Marketing & Service provision) of Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation, Executive Director with Project Manager, Technology Transfer Coordinator, Human & Institutional Development Coordinator, Admin & Finance Manager of RGVN, Team Leader of livelihood with Project Manager, Human & Institutional Development Coordinator, Admin & Finance Manager, Monitoring Evaluation and Documentation officer, Area Coordinator of DAM took part in the workshop. In the closing speech, Country Director of Concern Universal made encomium the project activities run by DAM & RGVN and gave emphasis for maintaining the quality and quantity of the project activities in the days to come.
With the assistance of Comic Relief, Dhaka Ahsania Mission launched the activities of Urban Community Learning Centre (UCLC) Project in 2006 to make the Street Children and Working Children self-reliant and build up as responsible citizen. The project was ended in 2012.

Dhaka Ahsania Mission with the same view kicked off ‘Drop-in-Centre for the street and working children in Dhaka City’ (DIC) Project for five years. Through this project about 1200 street and working children (boys and girls) will get the familial opportunity, they will make them efficient, be free from any kind of fear and able to protect themselves from various types of repressions.

The children will get education, health service, counseling, entertainment and overall with self confidence, they will build their life with proficiency. The family centered, awareness and vocational training will be conferred through this project.

Seven types of children ranging at the age of 8-18 years are enrolled here and three types of activities including community outreach, Drop-in-Centre base advocacy and networking are conducted in the centre. Community outreach activities include survey, baseline information, awareness session, courtyard meeting, meeting with employees, advocacy meeting with community people and day observation. Drop-in-Centre base activities include scheduling, preparing profile, personal cleanliness, awareness session, counseling (single and team), multi-grade education, exposure visit, recreation, training, saving, case study. And advocacy and networking based activities include, health service, vocational training, job placement, legal aid, communication with various schools for the children mainstreaming and advocacy seminar/workshop.

**Expected change in children**

Through the activities of Drop-in-Centre the family bondage between the street children and their family members will be strengthened, the students will get better services with their efficiency provided by Drop-in-Centre and overall they will get the social recognition in the society.

**Success of Drop-in-Centre**

A total of 1418 street children got benefited and 4297 male, female and street children have become aware about their fundamental right so far. With the assistance of Drop-in-Centre birth registration has been completed of all most 400 children. A total of 86 children took vocational training from the centre and of them 47 have been replaced in services. Through the awareness program the community people have change their mind towards the street children. Now Breaking the Silence, Caritas, Plan Bangladesh, Mari-Stops, BNWLA are aiding the children from different angles as their networking organisation of Drop-in-Centre.
DAM IN FRAME

DAM DIC Project activities