On 9 September 2015, Ambassador of Nepal to Bangladesh Hari Kumar Shrestha paid a courtesy visit to Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology (AUST) to thank Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) for its humanitarian help after the devastating earthquake that hit Nepal on 25 April 2015 and caused deaths and destructions of unprecedented scales. Pointing to the intensity, magnitude and the ground realities, he said, Bangladesh and Nepal are in the danger zone and face the common challenges of natural calamities. We must look at the building code, planning and designing of structures. We must develop and put in practice the disaster response mechanism in order to face such situations in the future. Highlighting the post-earthquake initiatives being undertaken by Nepal – which included relief, rehabilitation, recovery, reconstruction and rebuilding. The Ambassador stressed on the need for bilateral, sub-regional and regional cooperation in coping with the situations.

The Ambassador said, all calamities are lessons for the future. It was now high time to assess the level of our awareness and the degree of precaution we were undertaking to handle them. He said, the earthquake had a paradigm shift for us. To respond to such situations, a society must think of planned settlement. Outlining the task of rehabilitation, the Ambassador said, it was a gigantic task. For instance, apart from collapse of dwelling houses, churches, UNESCO Heritage Sites, and other important historical installations, the earthquake damaged more than 12000 school buildings which need urgent reconstruction. The Ambassador encouraged the students and the teachers of the university to visit Nepal and see for themselves the reconstruction and rebuilding work currently going on and share their knowledge and skills in the process. He thanked Bangladesh saying it was one of first nations that came forward to help Nepal after the earthquake.

In his Presidential speech DAM President Kazi Rafiqul Alam thanked the Ambassador for
Voluntary Community Worker of Madukari Ganokendra under Jhenidah Sadar Upazila was donated fifty thousand Taka from the general fund of Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM). Head, Administration and Human Resources of DAM Md. Anowar Hossain Chowdhury handed over the cheque on 9 September 2015 in presence of Education Team Leader Md. Shahidul Islam, Assistant Director of Finance and Accounts Division Nilufar Yeasmin and Project Manager of DAM CLC Md. Modasser Hossain. While handing the cheque, President of Madukari Ganokendra Md. Nurul Islam said, we have been inspired by the ideal of the villagers to work for the welfare of the people. DAM has come foreword when Rabeya Haque has fallen in danger. Rabeya Haque said, I am grateful to DAM and the members of this institution.

It is mentionable that voluntary community worker of Madukhari Ganokendra Rabeya Haque took part actively in the activities of declaring illiteracy free village in 2009 and in the activities of making a complete sanitized village in 2004.

DFED organises Free Health Camp in Narsingdi


50 Thousand Taka donated for treatment

OBITUARY

Syed Kamal Uddin Haider, son of Late Syed Saadat Ali of Khulna passed away on 10th September at the University Hospital of South-Manchester (UK). He was 75. He was buried at Chaderton Cemetary, Oldhem (UK).

Haider was associated with many social works in Bangladesh and abroad. He established an institution for the poor and under privileged boys and girls for their education and technical training in association with Dhaka Ahsania Mission.

Mobilization, advocacy and sustainable integration of the survivors

Two previous ANIRBAN members and 3 new ANIRBAN members seat with BCTIP team at Jessore on 22nd September, 2015 at BCTIP office. BCTIP project Coordinator briefed about project goal and objectives, activities and involvement of ANIRBAN under BCTIP project in community mobilization, advocacy and sustainable integration of the survivors. Previous ANIRBAN member discussed about ANIRBAN objectives, constitution, role and responsibilities of ANIRBAN before the new/potential members.
Progress review meeting held in Jamalpur

DAM-Marico CLC project of Dhaka Ahsania Mission organised a progress review meeting at Melandah Upazila of Jamalpur district on 14 September 2015 to ensure the access of dropped-out children from primary education. Executive Director of Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) Dr M Ehsanur Rahman presided over the program and the Team leader of Education Sector Md Shahidul Islam delivered the welcome address. Shahidul Islam said, Dhaka Ahsania Mission has brought 6,980 out-of-school children under the purview of this project in Jamalpur district. The project is imparting standard primary education to 3000 dropped-out children in Melandah Upazila. Acting Deputy Commissioner of Jamalpur district, also the chief guest of the meeting said, Dhaka Ahsania Mission is a unique voluntary organization, which is imparting quality education in Melandah upazila. Upazila Chairman AKM Habibur Rahman and Upazila Nirbahi Officer Jhon Keneday Jambil spoke as special guests. Dr M Ehsanur Rahman said, Dhaka Ahsania Mission has been working to contribute in education throughout the country. Among others, Melandah Upazila education officer Jewel Ashraf, Regional Manager of DAM Tapan Kumar Sarker, officers from various level of Upazila administration, representatives from civil society, journalists of print and electronic media were present on the occasion.

Advocacy workshop on HIV/AIDS

12 September 2015, Islamic Foundation & Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) jointly organized a Advocacy workshop with officials under different ministries to support policies and programs on HIV and AIDS, with the support of Save the Children in Bangladesh under Global Fund RCC phase-II program. The meeting was chaired by Muhammad Taher Hossain, director of Imam Training Academy, Islamic Foundation.
CTC activation is one of the key activities of National Plan of Action for Combating Human Trafficking 2015-2017. The CTCs are from union to district level. Five CTC activation meeting targeted during this quarter. Two CTC reformation and activation meeting were held in two unions Shorupdaho and Shukhpukuria of Chowgacha Upazila, Jessore on 22nd September, 2015 and 30th September, 2015. Before this reformation and activation meeting, the CTC in Shukhpukuria did not formed according to government order. DAM BCTIP Project Coordinator, Rafiqul Islam provided a copy of a letter signed by assistant commissioner, LGRD section, DC office Jessore to UNO Chowgacha to provide information of trafficking of Chowgacha Upazila for Country Report, 2012 with copy of TOR of Upazila and Union CTC. The UP chairman and members became motivated and agreed to reform the CTC committee according to the government order. A quarterly work plan has been in both the unions with activities like rescue, rehabilitation, reintegration and follow up of trafficked survivor, information collection and record keeping on human trafficking, missing and abduction, social protection to rescued survivors and their families, awareness session/discussion on prevention of human trafficking at different level etc. Three CTC activation meeting were pending for lack of communication with CTC members due to torrential rain during this quarter. Besides that limited time to implement activities of quarterly targets within mid-august to September. Shorupdaho union CTC member, Johrul Islam said, ‘If we prepare a list of ultra poor, and organize meeting regularly with them on the consequences of trafficking, make them aware, then they will not leave his or her house without knowing information about safe migration.’ UP member, Shagor Ali, (Shukhpukuria Union) said, ‘We are all responsible persons, so we should work from our own position. If anybody wants to go abroad, he/she should inform union parishad before leaving.’

Networking and partnership for referral and reintegration of Trafficked Survivors

Five Networking and Partnership meetings were targeted during July-September quarter. Two meetings were held, one in Jessore Sadar and another in Chowgacha Upazila. NGOs like WVB, RJ, BWLWA, BACHTIE SHEKHA, JAGORONI CHAKRA F O U N D A T I O N, BOMSA, ACD, JJS, BLAST AND FPAB. The government service providing institutions like Department of Women Affairs, Department of Social Welfare, Member of Counter Trafficking Committee etc were present. CBOs like Gon Kendra, member of ANIRBAN were present in the Jessore Sadar meeting. In Chowgacha, District Child Affairs Officer, Women Affairs Officer, representative of Department of Youth and Department of Social Welfare. NGOs WVB, Ashraf Foundation, RJ, CTC, UP member, CBOs like Kopotakka Gon Kendra, AB Club-Andherkota, Divine group etc. From the networking and partnership meeting, several categories of services like Skills Training, safety net, life skills, loan support, job placement, legal support were agreed to provide by the GO/NGO and private organizations for referral service for the survivors. Social welfare officer of Chowgacha Upazila said, ‘We need dissemination of National Human Trafficking Prevention & Suppression Act, 2012 among the mass people. We should not blame a trafficked survivor rather create awareness to family, neighbors and society surrounding him/her.’ Assistant Director, Ashraf Foundation (NGO, in Chowgacha) said, ‘If we provide various services to the trafficked survivor from our own position, then the survivor will be in better position than before and will be free from vulnerability of trafficking. Then we can talk that we made a success in prevention of trafficking.’ Local journalist Shahanur Islam said, ‘If we work together and disseminate the success story of the ANIRBAN Survivors, then local people can get lessons from their success and became aware.’
Drug addicts at high risk of suicide

The drug addicts are at high risk of suicide, because they suffer from crisis due to intake of drugs in an uncontrolled way, depression, indecision due to excess use of drugs, failure to be free from drugs after treatment, and non-cooperation and suspicion from family and other mental problems for drug addiction.

Speakers said these while addressing a press briefing at Dhaka Ahsania Mission auditorium at Dhanmondi in the city on 10 September 2015.

Ahsania Mission Female Drug Treatment Centre organized the conference marking the World Suicide Prevention Day-2015.

President of Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) Kazi Rafiqul Alam, deputy director of DAM and internationally certified addiction counselor Iqbal Masud, eminent psychologist Dr. Akhtaruzzaman Selim, among others, spoke at the programme. Councilor of Ahsania Mission Female Drug Treatment Centre Jannatul Ferdous presented the key-note paper.

Citing statistics of World Health Organization (WHO), the programme was told that around 20,000 people on an average annually resort to self-killing in Bangladesh.

Referring to a report of Shaheed Sohrawardy Medical College Hospital (2010), the speakers said that about 65 lakh people are now at risk of suicide in Bangladesh.

While presenting the keynote paper, eminent psychologist Jannatul Ferdous said 90 percent of those committed suicide had more or less mental problem. The tendency to suicide increases when mental problem arise, she said, calling for taking up steps for preventing the problem. The tendency of suicide is more prevalent among the youths, aged 25-30. Drug addiction, poverty, family feud, torture, sickness, failure in love and examinations, sexual harassment and unexpected pregnancy are responsible for the suicide, said Ferdous.

The speakers said it is possible to check the increasing trend of self-killing through change of outlook, fellow-feeling, sympathy and proper counseling. Right decision at right time by all concerned can bring a positive result in eradicating the bad practice, they said.

They also called for providing proper treatment to the affected people.

“The affected people should get mental and other supports to prevent suicide. All concerned, including families and educational institutions, should come forward in this regard”. Disseminating relevant religious message on suicide could act as deterrent, said the speakers.

They called upon all concerned, including the mass media, to raise awareness among people about suicide and also motivate the risky people to take treatment for psychiatric problem.
Teenage girl’s journey

Including Moni there were 19 other child delegates from all over the world including Afghanistan, Mexico, China, Italy, Australia, Kenya, Norway, Tanzania and Nicaragua and they exchanged their thoughts on specific issues and learned about the cultures of each other. The first day was spent in familiarising the young delegates with others and helping them understand the challenges each of them face back in their countries.

Moni conveys to New Age Youth that language is not a barrier for communication. ‘Although English wasn’t the first language of the other delegates we managed to communicate well and became close friends. I am no master at English but I understood what they were saying. It was amazing! Fay, the girl from Indonesia told me what she does at school. She also talked about her boyfriend and it was amazing. Samir, from Afghanistan said that his school emphasises on learning English,’ Moni says.

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Moni also conveys that she had no idea that other countries also had severe problems about the wellbeing of children and young adults.

Flora, the girl from Mexico conveyed to Moni that children are used for drug trafficking in her country. In Afghanistan, children are deprived of standard education whereas India has the problems of child trafficking.

Moni delivered her speech at the assembly on four days; each day she was allowed to speak three minutes, with a total of 12 minutes. ‘I translated her speech at the assembly. Most of her speeches were written by herself,’ Tahrim tells New Age Youth.

Moni also went to the launch of UNICEF’s WeThePeople Media Youth Hub at the UN. She had the opportunity to meet top leaders personally at the event. She took an autograph and talked to Ban Ki Moon, secretary-general of UNGA. Moni and her fellow delegates attended the opening ceremony of UNGA where Pope Francis and Malala Yousafzai were present, and they enjoyed a live Shakira performance. She also met Save the Children CEOs from US, UK, Canada and talked about ending child marriage.

On the second day of the assembly Moni was the only person to have asked a question to the former British Prime Minister David Cameron. ‘I asked David on his ideas of lessening gender bias. Cameron stressed on leaders, teachers and parents working together on the issue and taking action,’ Moni says.

On the fourth day Moni addressed the speech to the president of General Assembly Mogens Lykketoft and discussed the problems of child marriage, teenage pregnancy leading to increased school dropouts and lack of health rights. She also talked about violence against children in Bangladesh highlighting the case of Rajon Murder in Sylhet.

Fortunately, Moni was the only girl of her family who wasn’t forced to be married before she grew up. Three of her sisters were school dropouts due to poverty and were married off before turning 18. Now her parents finally realise that a girl can make a change after seeing the accomplishment of their daughter.

NHK, a Japanese news TV channel already shot a 45 minute documentary film focusing on Moni’s work.

Moni affirms that she intends to continue her studies as long as she can and she wants to continue working for social causes. ‘If I don’t study well, no one will follow me. If I grow up with dignity and achieve a good position, younger girls would get inspiration. I ask every parent in this country to spend money for the education of their daughters instead of saving money for their marriages. Today parents may regret that an apparently good marriage proposal has slipped away, but in future when your daughter grows up and succeeds, marriage proposals would come at your door,’ Moni concludes.

Courtesy: daily NewAge
Teenage girl’s journey from Bangladesh’s rural area to UN

You never know what is coming towards you and how an opportunity would appear that you never thought of. Moni Begum, a 16-year-old girl who never even thought of visiting Dhaka, made an amazing trip to New York to attend the 70th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) from September 20 to 28. Moni advocated the cessation of child marriage and improving access to health care for every mother and child. Her speech was heard by 193 delegates from all over the world; among them were 160 head of states at the assembly. Moni’s slogan at the assembly was #LetHerGrow.

‘I never thought that I might come to Dhaka. And yet I had the opportunity to visit New York and meet the most influential people in the world. New York life is so busy. I have learnt so many things within the short trip,’ Moni tells New Age Youth.

Moni presented her case confidently about issues like the negative repercussions of child marriage including pregnancy related complications for teenagers, inaccessible healthcare, dropping out of schools, getting deprived of reproductive health rights, about the possibility of employing doctors for mothers and children at every community hospital, and making further progress on stopping preventable diseases among children.

The girl from Kulaura of Sylhet lives in a remote village of North-East part of Bangladesh with her rickshaw puller father Morom Ali and homemaker mother Hawa Begum.

Moni has been active about social issues at her school. She is a 10th grader business student at Sultanpur Girls’ High School in Sylhet and harbors the dreams of becoming a pilot, lawyer and a singer. She is an avid reader at her school’s reading club and passionately discusses social issues with her peers. She believes in respecting the opinions of everyone. Moni got GPA 4.94 at the Junior School Certificate examination.

Besides, advocating against child marriage, Moni emphasised on issues regarding preventable diseases and drowning, a leading cause of death among children under the age of five in Bangladesh at the UN Assembly.

As part of ‘Every One Campaign’, a five-year project of Save the Children, Moni got the opportunity to attend the assembly as she was a youth leader who works in her community against child marriage and its repercussions on a girl’s life such as dropping out of schools, getting deprived of reproductive health rights. Moni also advocates for ending preventable diseases such as pneumonia and diarrhea. Initially, Moni was chosen after a question-answer session with 180 other young leaders who participated in the Save the Children project from several schools of Sylhet, Chittagong and Barisal.

Later, she was shortlisted in the top 15 and had undergone a thorough assessment process in Dhaka. ‘Dhaka Ahsania Mission and Bangladesh Pediatric Association (BPA) was also a partner in the project. They wanted to inspire youths to engage in community development by mobilizing the community to eradicate child mortality and end child marriage. Moni emerged as the deserving candidate to go to UN as a delegate. She is a determined and talented young girl. She was selected due to her confidence in speaking, writing and reading skills along with critical analysis that were better than everyone else,’ says Tahrim Zinath Chaudhury, who has chaperoned for Moni on her trip to New York.

‘Moni is intelligent, talented, confident, and she is very outspoken. She is the voice of Bangladesh. Moni never fears to speak her mind. She feels passionately about the issue of child marriages,’ Tahrim adds.  

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Monis Participation at UNGA held on September 20 to 28, 2015