



**Newsletter**  
January - March 2018

Dear Members, Advisors, and Friends of Shuchona Foundation,

We hope that 2018 has been great so far and continues to be so. Please see below our newsletter for January - March 2018. We hope that you find the content interesting. Please feel free to reach out to us should you have any queries on any of our work.

Taking this opportunity to inform you to please visit and “like” our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/ShuchonaFoundation/>). We hope to post regular highlights of our current activities on it.

*Shubho Noboborsho!*

With warm wishes for a happy and productive Bangla New Year,

Shuchona Foundation Secretariat

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## March 2018

### **Executive Committee Meeting, 31 March**

The second Executive Committee meeting of 2018 was held slightly earlier than planned, to accommodate for times suitable for members to attend. Various pertinent organizational matters were discussed at the meeting along with the COO presenting a progress report of the quarter.

### **Chairperson Saima W. Hossain’s article on IPS News Agency, 29 March**

On the occasion of World Autism Awareness Day (02 April 2018), an article titled *Responding to Needs of Families Living with Autism Spectrum Disorder* written by Saima W. Hossain was published by Inter Press Service News Agency. The link to the article is <http://www.ipsnews.net/2018/03/responding-needs-families-living-autism-spectrum-disorder/>.

### **Meeting of Experts from the Steering Committee of the “Faith/icddr,b/Shuchona Project”, 29 March**

Experts on the steering committee of the “A Comprehensive Approach to Identify Children with Disability Through Capacity Building of Government and NGO Health Workers and Disability Service Mapping in Bangladesh” (“Faith/icddr,b/Shuchona Project” in short) met to discuss ways to address the objectives of the project. The meeting was chaired by Saima W. Hossain. Meeting attendees discussed disability service mapping, screening, and diagnostic tools, and project methodology and field implementation.

### **Chairperson’s meeting with WHO-SEARO’s Regional Director Dr. Poonam K. Singh, 28 March**

WHO-SEARO’s Regional Director (RD) Dr. Poonam K. Singh and WHO’s Goodwill Ambassador for Autism in the South East Asia region Saima W. Hossain met during the RD’s trip to Dhaka in March. It was an opportunity to discuss various issues including how to support the mental health needs of Rohingya refugees. Additionally, the Regional Director and the Goodwill Ambassador discussed plans on helping countries in the South East Asia region formulate ways to implement the goals of the Thimphu Declaration (ANDD2017) and guidelines outlined in the WHO-SEARO Collaborative Framework on Addressing ASD in the SEA Region.

### **Chairperson at UNESCO’s True Colors Festival – Asia-Pacific Festival of Artists with Disabilities, 22-25 March**

For the first time ever, UNESCO and the Nippon Foundation organized a festival for music, dance and performance arts in the region with the aim to promote the rights of persons with disabilities. A conference, and a discussion forum was additionally organized where the importance of cultural inclusion of PwDs and potential artists with disabilities was discussed.

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Held from 22-25 March, the festival was grounded on the belief that the artistic and cultural integration of persons with disabilities is interconnected with the improvements of other disability-related issues and gender equality, which consists of an integral part of sustainable development.

**Pre-Interview of Sensitization Program on Employment of Persons with ASD, 12 March**

Shuchona Foundation is developing a comprehensive employment training program for persons with ASD in Bangladesh. The first step was to develop a sensitisation manual based on research data for current and prospective employers on how to make an environment conducive to persons with ASD to be functional employees. For the above, the Foundation started with conducting pre-interviews of top and middle level management of Renaissance Group on 12 March and Picard Bangladesh Ltd. on 19 March.

**Training on ADOS, 4-8 March**

An Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS) training was conducted by Shuchona Foundation to nine professional psychologists in March 2018. The objective of the training was to build capacity of practitioners for diagnosis of autism in Bangladesh.

**Follow-up meeting on Crisis Intervention Coordination, 01 March**

The follow-up meeting on Crisis Intervention Coordination was held at the Shuchona Foundation office with representatives from Ministry of Disaster Management, WHO-SEARO, UNHCR, IOM, Director General of Health Services, CDD, and Shuchona Foundation.

**Translation of the ECD manual**

The translation of the manual on Early Childhood Development written by Shuchona Foundation is complete and has been printed for wider dissemination. During translation the manual was updated with technical additions to make it more robust based on feedback obtained on it during the first wave of training sessions.

**February 2018**

**Steering committee meeting of "Faith/icddr,b/Shuchona Project", 28 Feb**

After the project "Faith/icddr,b/Shuchona Project" was launched, the Steering Committee of the project met to discuss the next steps to take forward the project's aims. The steering committee is comprised of experts in the field of disability in Bangladesh including representatives from the organizations in charge of the project, along with other stakeholders.

**Launch of UNICEF supported "Faith/icddr,b/Shuchona Project", 28 Feb**

The project "A Comprehensive Approach to Identify Children with Disability Through Capacity Building of Government and NGO Health Workers and Disability Service Mapping in Bangladesh" to be conducted by Faith Bangladesh and icddr,b to which Shuchona Foundation will be providing technical guidance, was launched at the Sasakawa Auditorium of icddr,b. The chief guest at the event was Saima W. Hossain, Chair of the National Advisory Committee on Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders, Chairperson of Shuchona Foundation, and WHO's Goodwill Ambassador for Autism in the South East Asia Region. The project aims to validate identification tools, strengthen capacity of field workers, and develop linkages for services available through service mapping.

**Crisis intervention Coordination meeting, 27 Feb**

Ministries of Health, Disaster Management and Relief, and development partners met together in order to develop a mechanism to standardise mental health support and content provided to disaster-hit areas. Shuchona Foundation's Chair is the focal person for Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Management, and Shuchona Foundation is assisting in coordinating this initiative.

**First session of Pilot-run of the Teachers Training Project, 11 Feb**

The first session of the Pilot-run of the Teachers Training Project for Inclusive Education was held in Scholastica on 13 February 2018. The pilot-run is being conducted in two schools which are Auronee Biddaloy and Scholastica School. 12 sessions are





planned for each school, with the option of adding a few more sessions if needed. The aim is to train teachers on inclusive education, and the research component attached to it will record all the input from the trainee teachers to understand the efficacy and effectiveness of the manual. Accordingly, the manual will be revised, which has been developed primarily by Shuchona Foundation.

## **January 2018**

### **Meeting with Bangladesh Computer Council, 29 Jan**

Shuchona Foundation attended the first meeting of the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities including NDD through ICT Project hosted by the Project Director. The project is being coordinated by the Bangladesh Computer Council (BCC). The meeting was attended by a number of stakeholders including representatives from different ministries and organizations. During the 3-year project, Shuchona will help develop training modules, support training activity, and identify potential areas for the placement of NDDs.

### **Training on Early Childhood Development Manual, 18-19 Jan**

With the primary aim to develop resource in the sector of Early Childhood Development, Shuchona Foundation organized a training on its ECD manual. Conducted by Dr. Nusrat Y. Ahmed, the participants of the training consisted of 8 practitioners from CRP, BAF Shaheen College, APON, CDC, and Proyash, along with two colleagues from Shuchona.

### **Shuchona Foundation's first Executive Committee meeting of 2018 held, 17 Jan**

The first meeting for 2018 of Shuchona Foundation's Executive Committee was held on 17 January 2018. The meeting was attended by most members with some joining via skype. The quarterly EC meetings are an opportunity for the management team to give a progress report on all the current activities, obtain approvals for future ones, and receive guidance and advice on plans.

### **Second and Third ToT on Strengthening Capacity of Crisis Responders on addressing Mental Health Issue within Crisis Preparedness and Management, 04-08 Jan, and 9-13 Jan**

The second and third ToT on crisis responding addressing mental health issues were organized by the Department of Disaster Management of the Ministry of Disaster Management & Relief (DDM/MoDMR) in collaboration with Shuchona Foundation, Centre for Disability and Development (CDD), and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The ToT for the first batch was held in August 2017. The trainings were conducted by Joanne Byron, M.S., S.S/P, NCSP and co-facilitated by Prof. Dr. Shaheen Islam. The objective of the trainings is to continue the process of developing a pool of trainers with the capacity to respond to crisis and provide mental health support.

### **First Foundation Refresher Training on Strengthening Capacity of Crisis Responders on addressing Mental Health Issue within Crisis Preparedness and Management, 02 - 03 Jan**

The foundation refresher training, was organized by the DDM/MoDMR in collaboration with Shuchona Foundation, CDD, and JICA. The refresher training enabled the participants of the first ToT on Strengthening Capacity of Crisis Responders on addressing Mental Health Issue within Crisis Preparedness and Management to re-learn contents from the training, and also make connections between what they learned in the classroom earlier with their experiences on the field. The foundation training was held in August 2017.

## **December 2017**

### **Training on Autism Spectrum Rating Scale (ASRS), 29-30 December**

Psychologists, psychiatrists, and other experts working on the "Faith/icddr,b/Shuchona Project" received training on ASRS along with Adaptive Behavior Assessment System, third edition (ABAS3) and Developmental Profile, third edition (DP3) which was delivered by Ms. Joanne Byron, an eminent school psychologist currently working in the school district of Palm Beach County in Florida, USA. It is to be noted that capacity building is a major component of the project.





#### **Meeting with National Advisory Committee on Autism & NDDs, 24 December**

The first meeting of the new National Advisory Committee on Autism & NDDs was held at the Shuchona Foundation office. It was chaired by Chairperson of the Committee Ms. Saima W. Hossain. The meeting was attended by committee members, who discussed various aspects pertinent to ASD and NDDs. Most importantly, the discussions revolved around the roles and functions of the Committee and the NDD Protection Trust. It was agreed that the Committee will meet quarterly.

#### **1<sup>st</sup> International Conference for Rehabilitation Professionals'17, 22 December**

Chairperson Saima W. Hossain delivered keynote speech at the 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference for Rehabilitation Professionals held on 22-23 December 2017. The title of Ms. Hossain's keynote speech was *Necessity of Regulatory Body for Rehabilitation Professionals to meet the diverse health and rehabilitation needs of the people in Bangladesh*, where she acknowledged the need for rehabilitation professionals and emphasized on the need for a regulatory body to ensure dignity and quality of services provided by all rehabilitation professionals.

#### **Training of Implementors of the "Faith/icddr,b/Shuchona Project", 18-21 December**

On 18 December 2017, Shuchona Foundation in collaboration with FAITH Bangladesh commenced training of the project implementors of the pilot project. The first episode of this training was a four-day preparatory course on autism spectrum disorder. The purpose of this course was to establish a solid foundation of the diagnostic criteria for autism and the general types of interventions used to address this condition.

#### **SSFA Signing with UNICEF, 18 December**

Shuchona Foundation signed a Small Scale Funding Agreement (SSFA) with UNICEF to provide technical advice to the implementors of the project titled "A Comprehensive Approach to Identify Children with Disability Through Capacity Building of Government and NGO Health Workers and Disability Service Mapping in Bangladesh" ("Faith/icddr,b/Shuchona Project" in short). The implementors for the project are FAITH Bangladesh, and icddr,b. Shuchona will guide in selecting the right tools to identify children and provide training on the tools (trainer and content) for the project.

#### **The 2<sup>nd</sup> International Developmental Pediatrics Association Congress (IDPA), 8-10 Dec**

Chairperson Saima W. Hossain was invited to the IDPA Congress held in Mumbai from 8-10 Dec 2017 with preconference workshops on 7 December 2017. In addition to attending different sessions, she moderated a session titled *Advocacy Efforts in Early Childhood Development and Disability*.

#### **Seminar on Employment of Persons with Neurodevelopmental Disabilities in the IT Industry at Digital World 2017, 07 December**

Shuchona Foundation organized and hosted a seminar at the Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh's Information and Communication Technology Division's "Digital World 2017" expo at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in Dhaka. The seminar was organized in collaboration with Bangladesh Computer Council and the Prime Minister's Access to Information program (a2i). The seminar was titled *Employment of Persons with Neurodevelopmental Disabilities in the IT Industry*. The keynote presentation was delivered by Ms. Parul Kumtha, President of the Forum for Autism in Mumbai, India. Her presentation focused on ways to identify suitable jobs for persons with NDDs based on the individual's strengths and talents so that employers view them as valuable human resources positively impacting a company's bottom line, as opposed to being a recipient of charity. The seminar was attended by entrepreneurs from the IT industry, government officials, public representatives, and civil society members.