



Newsletter 2019

Dear Members, Advisors, and Friends,

Warm greetings from Shuchona Foundation. As we take the time out to look back on 2019, we realise that it has been a busy and fulfilling year. We started new projects, traveled as far as Peru to take forward a program, built new partnerships, organized and participated in trainings, and wrote strategic plans, to just name a few. Amidst all this, we had regular Executive Committee meetings, our Annual General Meeting, strategic planning meetings, and of course numerous internal and external discussions. One thing we were unable to do is to keep up with our quarterly newsletter but hoping to be more regular in 2020.

In this edition we are trying out a different format for the newsletter and have focused on just a few of our highlights of the year. Do let us know if you like the new format or not!

With best wishes for a happy, peaceful, and successful new year and decade,

Shuchona Foundation Secretariat

For regular activities regarding our current projects, please visit and "like" our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/ShuchonaFoundation/>).

Workshop to Review and Revise Shuchona Foundation's Inclusive Education Training Manual for Teachers

The year began with the Review Workshop on "Strategies for Effective Inclusion in Schools: Training Manual for Educators" held on 31 January 2019. Shuchona Foundation developed a manual for training teachers as per one of the ascribed requirements in the National Strategic Plan for Neurodevelopmental Disorders 2016-2021 of the Government of Bangladesh. The manual was developed to support teachers in expanding their own capacities to facilitate the learning of all students in the mainstream classroom, with a focus on the inclusion of students with disabilities. The workshop was organized by the Ministry of Education for the manual to be reviewed by experts who are esteemed in the field of education. The team including a pool of experts who has since been working on implementing the proposed revisions are from Dhaka University's Department of Educational & Counselling Psychology, Institute of Education & Research, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, the National Curriculum & Textbook Board, and Shuchona Foundation Management Team.

National Strategic Plan on Autism Spectrum Disorder & Neurodevelopmental Disorders for Bhutan

Shuchona Foundation worked closely with the Royal Government of Bhutan, particularly the Ministry of Health, in order to develop a multi-sectorial collaborative national strategic plan for autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and other neurodevelopmental disorders in Bhutan. The purpose was to collate all existing information on disability and NDDs, meet with necessary stakeholders including but not limited to government officials, professionals, experts, parents, educators and self-advocates, in order to identify specific actions and objectives that can be implemented systematically and incorporated as part of the national development plan for Bhutan. This year, the Shuchona team submitted the final draft of the National Strategic Plan to the Government of Bhutan. This plan was developed with support from WHO-SEARO.

Special Consultative Status with United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

In addition to becoming a member of UNESCAP's Working Group on Disability in May 2018, in 2019, Shuchona Foundation gained special consultative status with UN ECOSOC. This will enable us to extend our advocacy efforts which focus on our multi-sectoral approach in addressing life-span needs of persons with any disability nationally, regionally and globally.



Outreach for this includes exploring and engaging appropriate platforms to facilitate the promotion of multisectoral approach to ASD/NDDs including in relevant UN forums.

Launching of the Empowerment of Families program

The program পরিবারেরাta ক্ষমতায়ন (Empowerment of Families) was launched in July 2019. This is a joint initiative of Shuchona Foundation, Centro Ann Sullivan del Peru (CASP), Proyash Institute of Special Education & Research, and is supported by Leathergoods and Footwear Manufacturer & Exporter's Association of Bangladesh (LFMEAB). The purpose of the program is to adapt CASP's model to Bangladesh, using Proyash's set-up with the aim to expand beyond that over the next few years. The CASP model emphasizes training families and professionals to work together to prepare students with disabilities to be independent, productive, and happy. CASP is a nonprofit educational organization founded in 1979 by Liliana Mayo Ph.D., to serve the community of people with different abilities such as autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy or developmental delay, and their families.

Appointment of Shuchona Chairperson as an Advisor to WHO's Director-General

Ms. Saima W. Hossain, Chairperson of Shuchona Foundation has been appointed as Advisor to Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, World Health Organization, as of September 2019. This role will enable Ms. Hossain to provide high-level expert advice to the DG related to mental health and autism including relevant analyses, strategies, and pragmatic approaches to address priority issues in the broader context of WHO's programmes with a special view to advance towards 'triple billion goals', and suggest guidance on identifying innovative approaches for mental healthcare, and addressing mental health stigma, including policies and global best practices.

UNGA 74 Side Event on Sustainable Health Coverage – Comprehensive primary care inclusive of mental health and disabilities

At the 74th session of the UN General Assembly in September 2019, we had the opportunity to co-sponsor a side event along with the Royal Government of Bhutan, Government of Nepal, WHO, UNICEF, and UNFPA. The side event was organized by the Bangladesh Permanent Mission in the UN and sponsored by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Bangladesh. The Prime Minister of Bangladesh and Bhutan, and Deputy Prime Minister of Nepal along with other dignitaries spoke during the high level segment, while a range of experts informed those in attendance new approaches and strategies which are being explored to achieve UHC, progress being made in different countries, and showcased good practices which are innovative and creative, and which force practitioners and policy-makers to think differently. The high-level segment was chaired by Minister of Health and Family Welfare of Bangladesh and the technical segment of the side event was moderated by Saima W. Hossain.

National Mental Health Strategic Plan

In January 2019, under the leadership of the Director General of Health Services, a working group was established with the purpose of developing a National Mental Health Strategic Plan (NMHSP), in line with the National Mental Health Policy which has already been submitted for endorsement. Comprised of representatives from academia, multiple ministries, civil society and experts, the working group's goal is to identify priority areas and help create a roadmap of activities which include awareness and advocacy, policies and human resource development plans so that mental health can be integrated into the existing system of care, using a holistic, multi-sectoral life course approach.

Shuchona Foundation is a member of both the working group and the technical task team, responsible for developing the strategic plan. Our Chairperson is the Lead Consultant for the NMHSP Working Group.

The situation analysis and strategic plan document is being developed at the request of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's Department of Non-Communicable Diseases, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, with funding from DFID and technical support from the WHO-SEARO Office.