



Newsletter

April - August 2020

Dear Members, Advisors and Friends,

Warm Greetings from Shuchona Foundation. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to change the way we do everything, including the way we operate in our professional lives. Since March 2020, with the emergence of the first cases in Bangladesh, we have all been working from home to ensure the safety of our colleagues. However, our work had not stopped. It seemed like almost overnight, we became used to online meetings, and developing a system that works for us while maintaining social distance.

Having said that, we are looking forward to getting back to our workstations as soon as possible because nothing can replace face to face interactions. This is a special edition in a sense, we always cover a quarter of a year, but this time the bulletin issued is for five consecutive eventful months.

NEWS FLASH: We are proud to announce that our Chairperson, Ms. Saima W. Hossain has been appointed as a Thematic Ambassador for “Vulnerability” by Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF). *(Read the details of the news below)*

Along with Facebook, we are happy to announce that we are now on Instagram and have also added a number of videos to our YouTube page. Do “Like”, “Follow”, and “Subscribe” to get regular updates on our activities.

Warm regards,
Shuchona Foundation Secretariat

SF Chairperson’s New Role as Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) Thematic Ambassador

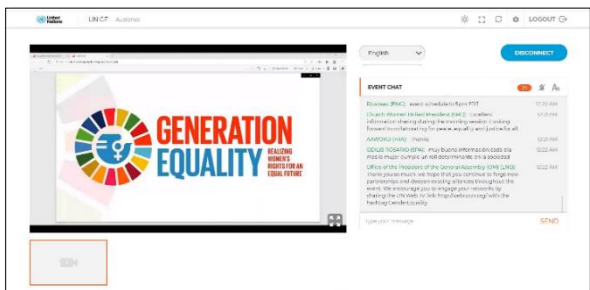
Our Chairperson, Ms. Saima W. Hossain’s recent appointment as a Thematic Ambassador for “Vulnerability” by Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) opportunity for her to access a wide-reaching forum, bringing her unique insights into the discourse on climate change. As a Thematic Ambassador, Ms. Hossain will work for specific fields concerning vulnerabilities and solutions that includes migration and displacement, health and human rights.

In her position as the representative for the unheard voices and concerns of the most vulnerable segments of society, severely threatened and impacted by dangers and effects caused by human-driven changes to the Earth’s climate, she will support the most threatened populations by the climate crisis and mobilize support from the international community.



The vulnerable segment includes vulnerabilities which are associated with health, and welfare. As a means to address climate vulnerability, Bangladesh gained the Presidency of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF), a forum of 48 countries who are vulnerable to climate change, earlier this year.

Shuchona Foundation’s Participation in Multi-Stakeholder Hearing by UN Women and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality



Screenshot of the UN-Women Multi-Stakeholder Hearing

Our colleagues, Md. Serajus Sadekin Chowdhury and Khadiza Akter attended a virtual multi-stakeholder hearing organized by United Nations Headquarters on 21 July 2020, supported by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). Other participants for this interactive hearing were representatives from UN, intergovernmental organizations, and specialized agencies that have observer status with the Assembly along with representatives of CSOs with ECOSOC consultative status, national human rights institutions

amongst others.

This virtual hearing was organized by UN General Assembly as part of the preparations of the upcoming high-level meeting (HLM), scheduled to be held on 23 September 2020. The overall theme is “Accelerating the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls” and the interactive session was coordinated to ensure the active participation of stakeholders in the process.

Chairperson’s Participation in IPS Webinar

On 14 July 2020, our Chairperson, Saima W. Hossain's participated in a webinar hosted by Inter Press Service UN Bureau on “The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Women and Girls”. The online discussion was conducted by five esteemed speakers and a moderator. Each



List of participants who spoke at the webinar



Screenshot of the speakers during the session

speaker highlighted specific areas of importance in accordance with their respective expertise, related to the theme.

The discussion at the webinar focused on bringing the collective strengths of the participants together to



influence policy and decision makers to confront the inequalities which women and girls encounter globally. The objective of the webinar was to encourage individuals and nations and revisit their roles in battling with this phenomenon.

Furthermore, they discussed the challenges women face on a daily basis and what measures could be taken to make women and girls a priority in every corner of the world. Ms. Hossain's opinion editorial on the same theme, published by IPS is available in: <http://www.ipsnews.net/2020/07/quiet-survivors-global-pandemic/>

Mental Health Support During COVID-19

The global pandemic, along with physical health, brought attention to the need for mental and emotional well-being. We were suddenly facing a unique but collective situation and it was evident from formal and anecdotal reports that people were and still are struggling to make sense of it all.

Considering this, Chairperson along with Dr. Joanne Byron, M.S., S.S/P, NCSP, a certified crisis and trauma trainer and responder developed self-help videos on well-being, which were adapted and translated into Bangla and Bangla sign language with help from Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed and assistance from Center for Disability in Development. The videos have been shared on our social media platforms and YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/feed/my_videos).



Projects & Activities

Collaboration with WFP

Assessment of the Effect of the Mother and Child Benefit Program on the Cognitive Development of Children

We signed an MoU with United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) on 29 April 2020 for the project titled "Assessment of the Effect of the Mother and Child Benefit Program on the Cognitive Development of Children". The project is designed to understand the impact of our Social Communication and Emotional Skill Development (SCESD) intervention with nutrition programs. This is to facilitate the multisectoral approach for cognitive, social, and emotional development with the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MoWCA), using the SCESD manual developed by Shuchona Foundation. The project emphasizes on seeking an expert for early identification when deemed necessary.

A six-month work plan has been shared with WFP by Shuchona Foundation. The project was scheduled to be effective from 01 May 2020 to 30 April 2022. However, due to the current global pandemic situation, the project will commence in September of this year.



Collaboration with CIPR, Bangladesh

Enhancing Social Communication and Emotional Development in under 5 children: Intervention Strategies for Inclusive Child Care Practices in Bangladesh

Before the global pandemic hit, Shuchona Foundation signed an agreement with Centre for Injury Prevention and Research, Bangladesh (CIPRB) for a research project that they have undertaken for the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. This resulted in designing a project named “Enhancing Social Communication and Emotional Development in under 5 children: Intervention Strategies for Inclusive Child Care Practices in Bangladesh”. The project focuses on understanding the efficacy of our SCESD manual, which is already in operation with all the relevant tools finalized. As of this moment, an operational manual is being developed, allowing the concerned parties to be engaged in further paperwork and meetings.

Shuchona Foundation is part of a consortium with CIPRB and National Institute of Mental Health and Hospital (NIMH), where SF will be providing technical input for this project. While field work may be on hold, desk work is on-going, and relevant staff from all concerned organizations meet every week to give updates and discuss next steps.

Relief Coordination Activities during the COVID 19 Pandemic

Soon after the Government of Bangladesh gave the stay-at-home order in March 2020, Shuchona Foundation coordinated with donors and the Neuro-Developmental Disabilities Protection Trust (NDDPT) to facilitate the distribution of daily essentials to needy families of persons with disabilities in different parts of the country. We were the bridge between the NDDPT who have access to stakeholders (organisations) to obtain information on families in need, and donors who have the resources to organize the relief including procurement and distribution.



Photos of Distribution of Essentials (April – May 2020)

Although we are not a direct-service organization, this was an opportunity for us to come forward and have a positive impact during a very unique situation. We are happy that we were able to facilitate people to come together to provide much-needed assistance to those in need. We also donated to this cause, all



the proceeds to date from the sale of Unique Glimpses, a picture book edited by Saima W. Hossain in 2017.

In phases, a total of number of 11,100+ packets have been distributed in a number of districts, received by almost 4100 families, with an additional 1600+ families receiving Eid gifts.

Update on our Manual on Inclusive Education

In February 2020, our Chairperson reviewed the progress of the Inclusive Education Manual with SF colleagues and Executive Committee member and Special Education expert, Shirin Zaman Munir, Ph.D. With the incorporation of Chairperson's suggested guidelines and further direction, the manual is finalized with the support of external experts, Mr. Iqbal Hossain, Education Specialist, UNICEF Bangladesh and Professor MD. Tariq Ahsan, Ph.D. Institute of Education & Research, University of Dhaka. At this moment, we are in discussion with MoPME on ways the manual can be used effectively in the post-pandemic time. We are also in discussion with the ICT Division of the Ministry of Education to explore ways to convert at least parts of the manual into digital content for the convenience of conducting the training.

The manual is 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. Shuchona Foundation has been working with the Ministry of Education, Dhaka University's Department of Educational & Counselling Psychology, Institute of Education and Research, and other experts in developing the training manual on Inclusive Education since January 2019.

Changes in SF Management

With a heavy heart, recently we said goodbye to our Chief Operating Officer, Ms. Malka Shamrose. She has been a great asset and helped the foundation to grow in the last three and a half years. The EC members and the management team are thankful for the dedication and effort Ms. Shamrose gave in fulfilling the objectives of Shuchona Foundation during her tenure. She successfully created a



Ms. Malka Shamrose with the SF Management Team



collegial and supportive environment which helped the team accomplish in great lengths. We miss Ms. Shamrose and wish her all the very best in her future endeavours.