



Newsletter

September - December 2020

Dear Members, Advisors and Friends,

We are nearing the end of 2020, a year that will go down in history as the year when we are learning to live through a pandemic. It has been a unique global experience, which has made us stop in our tracks and re-think what we value and how we operate in every aspect of our lives.

This past quarter has been busy for us here at Shuchona Foundation with project activities, and some fieldwork (whenever we could, following proper health guidelines). We tried to stay on top of our project work as much as possible, while acknowledging that the current situation is forcing us to either postpone some activities or re-design them. There were many important and interesting events that took place this past quarter, and in this last newsletter of the year, we would like to share those with all of you.

From August 2020, we have started going to the office in a limited basis, with still more days being spent working from home. We are eagerly looking forward to the days when we can move around freely, go to the office regularly, and get back to life as usual. As we step into the new year, we wish you and your loved ones all the best. May we all learn to cope better with our fears and stressors.

Stay safe and healthy,

Warm regards,
Shuchona Foundation Secretariat

Please "Like", "Follow", and "Subscribe" to get regular updates on our activities.

Publication

Inter Press Service (IPS) released an e-publication on December 2020, based on the webinar on Impact of Covid-19 on Women and Children (14 July 2020: details in our last [newsletter](#)). The e-publication has been developed using the information and knowledge shared by the six participants during the webinar. As one of the participants, our Chairperson, Ms. Saima Wazed's full article on "Bangladesh's Response to the Pandemic: A Case for Women" can be accessed through http://www.ipsnews.net/documents/E-Publication_IPS.pdf

Projects & Activities

Accelerating Protection for Children (APC) Project

Implemented by the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA) with support from UNICEF Bangladesh, a Standard Adolescent Empowerment Package (SAEP) has been developed with the intent to create a resource pool of core trainers from Adolescent Clubs (Kishor Kishori Clubs) administered by the Department of Women Affairs (DWA) under MoWCA. Abridged 'Social-Communication and Emotional Skills (SCESD)' manual is incorporated in this adolescent package. Shuchona Foundation has reviewed the SCESD related content of that package where Shuchona is contributing as one of the members of the content review committee. The 12-day virtual training was conducted, aiming to prepare master trainers for the project. Including Shuchona Foundation colleagues, 52 representatives from different governmental and non-governmental organizations are also preparing to become master trainers.



The SAEP package concentrates on eleven thematic areas namely, Life Skills Based Education (LSBE), Income Generating Skills, Health and Hygiene, Pre-Parenting, Food and Nutrition, Information and Communication Technology, Gender, Emergency and Disaster Management, Child Protection, Human Diversity, Ethics and Morality. The sessions of the training are marked by the active participation and practical discourse of the participants.

Building Parents'/Caregivers' Capacity to Develop Children's Social-Communication and Emotional Skills from Birth to Five Project

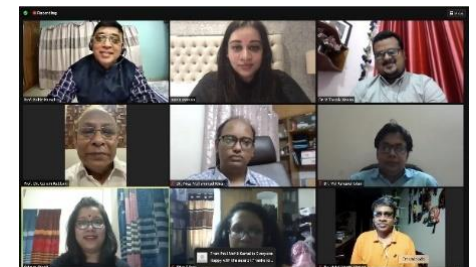
In the last quarter of 2020, Shuchona trainers conducted a refresher course for previously trained peer leaders of adolescent clubs affiliated with the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA) as part of their *Building Parents'/Caregivers' Capacity to Develop Children's Social-Communication and Emotional Skills from Birth to Five* project. Delayed due to the pandemic, it was reinitiated in September, completing all the refresher training for the adolescent clubs by early December ensuring extreme safety precautions necessary for COVID-19.



Our team conducted five 2-day long refresher trainings at Moluvibazar, Chudanga, Rangamati, Sirajganj, Gopalganj, and two 4-day long training at Thakurgaon and Jhalokathi. The training focused on the skill development of parents/caregivers on the social-emotional development of the child from birth to five. The participants shared their experiences including challenges faced during the implementation of the manual. Based on the feedback, Shuchona trainers guided and worked alongside the participants, and assisted them in demonstrating activities from the SCESD training manual. As young leaders of their communities, the participants will now be able to have a significant contribution in disseminating knowledge on early child development.

'Strengthening Capacity for Addressing Mental Health Conditions' Project

Our Chairperson, Ms. Saima Wazed along with members of her team Ms. Nazish Arman, Lead Coordinator and Ms. Salowa Salam Shaoli, Assistant Coordinator from Content Development department, and external consultant for this project, Dr. M. Tasdik Hasan, reviewed relevant literature including survey and study reports, plan, job description, organisation of DGHS services as a means to facilitate the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in developing the National Mental Health Strategic Plan (NMHSP). SF conducted a series of focus group discussion (FGD) and in-depth Interview (IDI) from October to November with stakeholders representing relevant ministries, Bangladesh Association of Psychiatry, Bangladesh Clinical Psychology Society, Bangladesh Educational and Counselling Psychology Society, Bangladesh Mental Health Network, and Youth led mental health organizations. IDIs were conducted with persons with lived experience sharing their experiences and suggesting priority areas, challenges to be expected and ongoing initiatives available in the country. The purpose of this focus group discussion was to understand the perception of mental health priority areas in the country as part of the *Strengthening Capacity for Addressing Mental Health Conditions* project and garner specific recommendations for effective implementation of the NMHSP.



The information will be incorporated into the government's 4th Health, Population and Nutrition Sector Programme (4th HPNSP) from January 2017 to June 2022, being implemented by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The 4th HPNSP's objectives include strengthening governance, institutional efficiency, expanding access and improving quality within the universal health care system and addressing mental health within the existing health care system of the country as part of the universal health care.



EVENTS

Shuchona Foundation's Participation in Digital World 2020

On 10 December 2020, our recording of a phenomenal discussion with experts was shown on national TV. The session titled discussion, *A Roadmap for Ensuring the Employment of Persons with Neurodevelopmental Disorders* was organized as part of this year's Digital World 2020 organized by the ICT Division of the Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology, held virtually from 9-11 December. In line with Shuchona's mission and vision, it focused on the employability of persons with NDDs, including how to help them prepare for employment starting from early learning, how to make the work-place inclusive, understanding the impact of the pandemic on the employment of persons with NDDs along with sharing personal experiences of the current work environment shared by an employed self-advocate.



The lively discussion included lessons learned, challenges faced and suggestions for the way forward. The panelists were: Dr. Liliana Mayo, Founder and Executive Director, Centro Ann Sullivan del Peru, Ms. NuNu Supaanong, Networking & Collaboration Officer (Community Development Department), Asia-Pacific Development Centre on Disability in Thailand, Ms. Nazish Arman, Lead Coordinator (Content Development), Shuchona Foundation, Bangladesh and Ms. Mahbuba Akter, Teacher at Proyash School Dhaka, Bangladesh. The session was moderated by our Chairperson, Ms. Saima Wazed.

The event was organized by the ICT Division in association with Bangladesh Computer Council (BCC), Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services (BASIS), and Access to Information Program (a2i) of the Prime Minister's Office.

CVF-CoP-26 Dialogue: 'Meeting the Survival Deadline towards Maximal Resilience'

Shuchona Foundation Chairperson, Ms Saima Wazed spoke at a virtual event titled "CVF-CoP 26 Dialogue *Meeting the Survival Deadline towards Maximal Resilience* held on 30 November 2020, organized by the Bangladesh High Commission in the UK. Ms Wazed participated in the event in her capacity as the CVF Thematic Ambassador for 'Vulnerability'.

The Rt Hon Lord Zac Goldsmith, UK's Minister for Pacific, Environment & COP 26 graced the event as the Guest of Honour and His Excellency Mr. Md. Shahriar Alam, MP Hon'ble State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh on behalf of CVF Presidency participated as the Chief Guest. CVF High Commissioners and Ambassadors based in London representing their countries and regions also spoke at the event. The dialogue aimed to provide a platform for the CVF countries represented in London to voice their expectations and ambitions leading up to the CoP-26 under the UK's Presidency towards achieving maximal resilience for the CVF countries facing existential threat due to climate change.

Participation in 'Race to Zero Dialogue on Climate and Health'

On November 10, 2020 our Chairperson, Ms. Saima Wazed, in her capacity as the Thematic Ambassador on Vulnerability to the Climate Vulnerable Forum, spoke at one of the sessions from 'Race to Zero Dialogue on Climate and Health'.

The virtual event was organized by the World Health



Organization (WHO) in collaboration with Race to Zero, the Global Climate and Health Alliance (GCHA), the Wellcome Trust, Glasgow Caledonian University and its'

Centre for Climate Justice, the UK Health Alliance on Climate Change, and the Centre on Climate Change and Planetary Health of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.



High-Level Roundtable on Integrating Mental Health into Universal Health Care

A Chatham House discourse titled *High-Level Roundtable on Integrating Mental Health into Universal Health Care* was addressed by SF Chairperson, Ms. Saima Wazed as the keynote speaker.

The virtual event co-organized by the Chatham House and Imperial College, London, supported by Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) on 08 October, explored ways forward for Mental Health and Universal Health Care in Bangladesh with contributions from experts, colleagues academics, and policymakers from Bangladesh, the UK and around the world ensured that the event was one of shared learning.



The 'Climate Vulnerable Leaders' Event'

Ms. Wazed spoke at the Climate Vulnerable Leaders' Event on 07 October 2020 which focused strategies to be implemented with the theme in mind *'Midnight Survival Deadline for the Climate'* implemented by CVF and partners. The primary goals were to encourage as many countries as possible to deliver on UN commitments and strengthen their national climate action targets by the end of 2020. Creating a momentum behind countries to accelerate adaptation efforts in the process, and publicly celebrate countries that deliver by midnight of 31 Dec 2020 "survival deadline". The event was chaired by Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina, Honourable Prime Minister of Bangladesh.

The 'Sixth Session of the Working Group on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities'

The Sixth Session of the Working Group on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities was held from 24-25 September 2020, hosted by United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). Our Chairperson, Ms. Saima Wazed along with Ms. Nazish Arman (Lead Coordinator, Content Development), and Ms. Salwah Chowdhury (Assistant Coordinator, Secretariat) of Shuchona Foundation participated in the virtual meeting.



The discussions included the recent progress of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities (2013-2022)'s implementation of the Incheon Strategy, focusing on SDG goals 1, 6, and 7 (poverty and employment, gender equality and women's empowerment, and disaster risk reduction and management respectively) and the preparatory process for the conclusion of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022.

A special segment was organized as part of the virtual event, where the Working Groups discussed present and potential initiatives to protect and empower persons with disabilities in the pandemic.

Event on Unlocking Early Childhood Education

As part of the 75th United Nations General Assembly, *Unlock Big Change – Education: The Key to a Better Future* was organized by Theirworld and Global Business Coalition for Education, where Ms. Saima Wazed spoke at one of the sessions titled 'Unlocking Early Childhood Education' on 21 September 2020.

The discussion of the ECD specialists evolved around the importance of education, the pathways towards becoming more effective advocates, and the mobilization of concrete, tangible progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 4, that is, equitable and inclusive quality education for all.





Launch of the Global Center on Adaptation (GCA) Youth Adaptation

The GCA South Asia Partnership Forum and launching of the GCA Youth Adaptation Network was held on 08 September 2020. Along with our Chairperson, Ms. Wazed's participation, prominent experts including youth representatives from across South Asia were part of the international seminar. Youth play an important role in the advocacy and activism surrounding climate change as they are the future leaders who will have to face the worst effects of climate change.



Earlier that afternoon, an inaugural ceremony launching the regional office of Global Center on Adaptation (GCA) was. It was inaugurated by H.E. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and H.E. Ban Ki-moon, 8th Secretary-General of the United Nations and Chair of the Board of Global Center on Adaptation.

Other Notable Engagements



Promoting the participation of stakeholders who work in the field of disaster inclusive disaster risk management, the *First Global Digital Summit on Inclusive Management of Disaster and Disability Risk* organized by Inclusiva, a non-profit organization in Chile. The summit focused on "Inclusive Reconstruction of the World" and was held from 27-29 October 2020. Our Chairperson spoke on the second day of the summit when she discussed ways to construct a better society in a disability-inclusive world with other esteemed panelists.



Ms. Saima Wazed spoke at a webinar titled *A Day Centre for People with Mental Health Needs: A Model of Care in Bangladesh* as Chief Guest, organized by Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed (CRP) on 18 October. Participated by various national and international experts and stakeholders, other speakers at the event included, our Executive Committee member, Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed who prevented the situation of mental health in Bangladesh.



On 14 October 2020, Ms. Wazed launched the campaign '*Women Safety in Public Places (WSPP)*' at a virtual event organized by Centre for Research and Information (CRI), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).



Shuchona collaborated with Instagram to celebrate World Mental Health Day 2020 on 10 October to promote awareness on mental health and well-being.



SF Chairperson, Ms. Wazed spoke at the plenary session of Young Bangla's *Let's Talk on COVID19 Recovery: Youth Development* on 06 September as part of the discussion on youth development issues in post-pandemic Bangladesh organized by CRI as part of a series of virtual discussions held from 04-06 September, exploring aspects of the pandemic which have impacted the lives of young people in Bangladesh.