



## Newsletter

April-June 2021

Dear Members, Advisors and Friends,

Warm greetings from Shuchona Foundation. Covid-19 pandemic continues to wreak havoc in our lives but a learning experience from this past year and a half is that we are resilient. Despite challenges, we strive to remain positive. Here at Shuchona Foundation, being part of a supportive team helps immensely.

Despite moving between operating from office and working from home, the team continues to remain engaged, working towards our organizational goals. June 2021 saw the end of the financial year and we are excited to be starting a new year, equipped with a plan that accommodates the uncertainties this pandemic presents.

Hope you and your loved ones have remained safe and healthy,

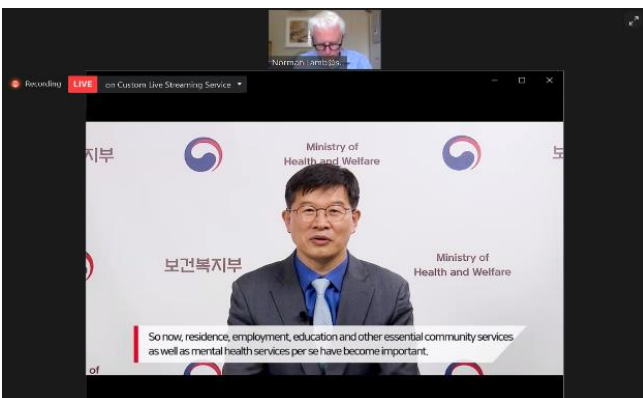
With warm regards,  
Shuchona Foundation Secretariat

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## Events

### Online Launch of the *WHO Guidance and Technical Packages on Community Mental Health Services: Promoting person-centered and rights-based approaches*

Shuchona Foundation team members attended the online launch of WHO’s new guidance on community mental health services, on 10 June 2021. This is part of WHO's ongoing work to revolutionize mental health practices and promote rights-based services. The panellists discussed the importance of rights-based approaches and shared real-life experiences of people who have used such services as well as policymakers who are driving this change.

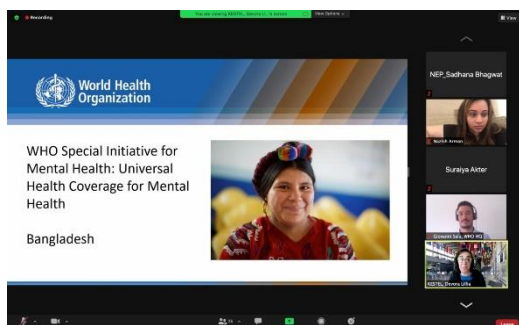


The pandemic has highlighted the inadequate mental health care system and services worldwide. The WHO guidance showcased good practices in mental health services and recommendations to support countries devoting and reforming community-based services, focusing on human rights.

The panellists and experts hope that the guidelines will play a vital role in bringing urgency to policymakers around the globe, to invest in human rights and community-based mental health services, emphasizing on removing coercive practices, contextualization, community inclusion, and recovery approach.



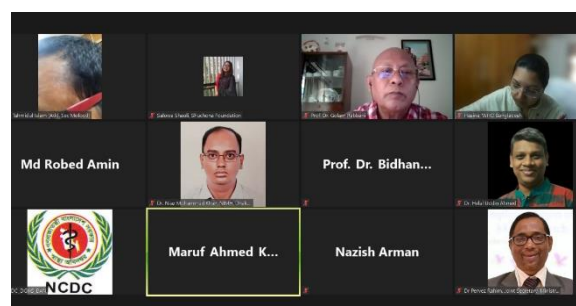
## WHO Special Initiative for Mental Health: Universal Health Coverage for Mental Health



The Consultation Planning for the WHO Special Initiative for Mental Health (2019-2030) of Bangladesh was held virtually on 15 April 2021, where our colleague Ms. Nazish Arman, participated, representing SF, who is a member of the Technical Committee. The virtual meeting was presided over by Mr. Md. Tahmidul Islam, Additional Secretary & DG, Autism Cell, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and attended by other members of the Technical Committee in addition to Ms. Dévora Kestel, Director, Mental Health & Substance Use, WHO. The inaugural session was followed by a technical session where participants discussed the plan for the execution of WHO's Special Initiative for Mental Health (2019-2030) in Bangladesh. The meeting was moderated by Dr. Sala Giovanni, Consultant,

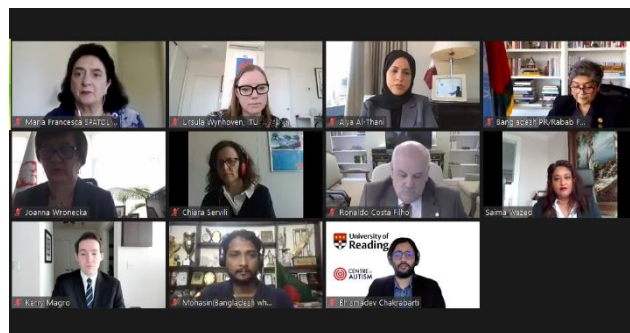
WHO Special Initiative for Mental Health, Department of Mental Health and Substance Use, WHO HQ.

On 08 June 2021, another virtual meeting of the Technical Working Committee was held focusing on program design and development for WHO's Special Initiative for Mental Health (2019-2023) in Bangladesh. Shuchona Foundation's EC member (ad-hoc) Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed participated in the meeting as a mental health professional, along with Nazish Arman and Salowa Salam Shaoli representing Shuchona Foundation.



## Virtual Roundtable on Autism and the Covid-19 Pandemic

On 06 April 2021, our Chairperson Ms. Saima Wazed, who also Chairs the National Advisory Committee on Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders, Bangladesh, participated in a virtual roundtable discussion on *Autism and the Covid-19 Pandemic: How Technology Can Support Equitable Global Response and Recovery*. The session was moderated by Dr. Andy Shih, Ph.D., Senior Vice-President, Public Health & Inclusion, Autism Speaks, in the presence of other distinguished expert panellists which included government representatives, UN representative, WHO representative, academics, service providers, and self-advocates from Qatar, Kenya, Poland, Bangladesh, UK, and USA.



Ms. Saima Wazed in response to Bangladesh's pandemic effort, emphasized that Bangladesh has an extremely good infrastructure for ICT, social support system, as well as a robust community-based health system, which have been very useful to provide support to families in various ways during the pandemic. She mentioned that the Ministry of Social Welfare throughout the pandemic has provided special assistance. Furthermore, Ms. Wazed focused on the challenges that people with autism face along with their families including social stigma, due to which sometimes the interventions are not translatable to real life in spite of having the best of it. She said that stigma still prevents PwDs from being valued in a society where economic contribution to country, community, and family is given more importance. Unless and until that aspect is addressed to help an individual with disability to reach that goal, there isn't going to be a really big difference in that person's life.



## Projects & Activities

### Engagement with the School Mental Health Program



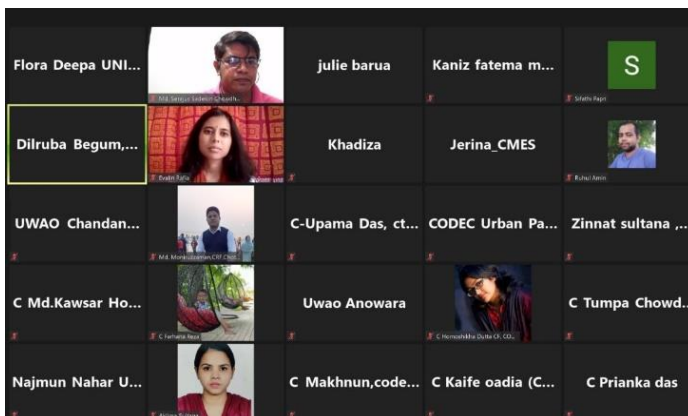
The Secondary Education Sector Investment Program (SESIP) under the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) arranged a manual finalization workshop for the master training manual on Addressing Mental Health of Secondary Level Students of Bangladesh as part of their School Mental Health Program. Ms. Salowa Salam Shaoli participated in the workshop as a member of the content development team. After the workshop, the manual has been finalized to begin the pilot training for master trainers.

Shuchona Foundation has been providing content related technical support from the very beginning of the program to ensure quality mental health service school level. The workshop was held on 17 June 2021.

### Standardized Adolescent Empowerment Package

In the last quarter, our engagement with SAEP project as trainers continued when Shuchona conducted a few virtual ToTs on the 'Parenting' theme on 10-11 April 2021, and on 19 April 2021. Our colleagues, Md Serajus Sadekin Chowdhury and Evalin Rafia facilitated virtual training sessions on 'Provision of Basic Social Services for Children, Pregnant and Lactating Women & Adolescent Girls in selected urban slums of Chattogram City Corporation'.

These sessions, held virtually, were supported by UNICEF Chattogram zone and organized by CODEC. Participants were from Chattogram Division's DWA upazilla officials, Deputy Directors, CODEC staff, Child Right Facilitators (CRF), and Upozilla Women's Officer.



On 04 May 2021 Shuchona Foundation's colleagues conducted virtual training sessions titled 'Early Childhood Development' and 'Healthy Mother & Child: Diversity and Disability' which are part of the 'Pre- Parenting' theme of the SAEP package. Additionally, on 24 May 2021 sessions were conducted on 'Empowerment of Children and Adolescents for Ending Child Marriage'. These were all organized by Rupantor, an NGO based in Khulna, and was supported by UNICEF Khulna. 32 participants attended these sessions. The training sessions focused on basic stimulating strategies on expressive and receptive language development, following instruction, age-appropriate social development among children up to two years old.

\*The Standard Adolescent Empowerment Package (SAEP) has been developed with support from UNICEF Bangladesh administered by the Department of Women Affairs (DWA) under the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA). 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 aim of this package is to empower the Adolescents through Kishor Kishori Clubs across the country.

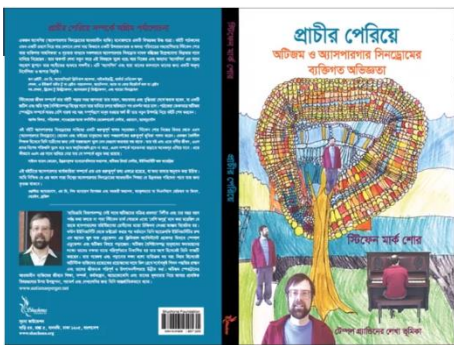


## SF Capacity Building by CASP for Empowerment of Families project

Shuchona Foundation staff has been continuing virtual training sessions with CASP trainers since August 2020. Considering the “new normal” and experiences from the virtual training so far, CASP has revised the program focusing on the capacity building of SF staff in March 2021. SF team re-started the weekly training session based on the revised plan from April 2021. As of June 2021, 31 sessions have been conducted focusing on developing the leadership skills of the team along with technical content, to implement the model in Bangladesh. One of the sessions which took place on 20 April 2021 was facilitated by Dr. Liliana Mayo, Director and Founder, and Dr. Holly Sweeney, International consultant from CASP. The trainers shared the fundamental philosophy of their model and their journey towards the inclusion of person of different abilities in life. After every session, the trainers give constructive feedback to the SF team for improvement. These sessions are to continue till March 2022.



## Upcoming Publication: Pracheer Periyē



On 02 April 2021, on the occasion of World Autism Awareness Day 2021, Shuchona Foundation announced the publication of *Pracheer Periyē* (প্রাচীর পেরিয়ে), the Bangla translation of Dr. Stephen Shore's book "Beyond the Wall" on 02 April 2021. This book is an autobiographical account of Dr. Stephen Shore, which illustrates his journey as a person with autism, the struggles, and the successes he faced as a person with autism. The book will be available by the end of this year.

## Notable Mention

### Shuchona Foundation's Written Statement on UN ECOSOC High-Level segment

As a consultative status holder with ECOSOC, Shuchona Foundation was provided the opportunity to contribute to issues of critical concerns to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This year's ECOSOC High-level Segment was guided by the theme of the 2021 High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on "Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, that promotes the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: Building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development." SF's written statement can be accessed through this link:

<https://www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/2021doc/2021-ECOSOC-HLS-Written-Statements-by-NGOS-in-ECOSOC-Consultative-Status.pdf>