



Newsletter

January - March 2021

Dear Members, Advisors and Friends,

Warm greetings from Shuchona Foundation. After months of working from home, we eased into the new normal and decided to go back to the office. Following safety protocols, ensuring that most meetings and events were still held virtually, and juggling multiple time zones for external events has been a challenge, but we were happy to at least be able to see our colleagues again. Something that this pandemic is teaching us over and over again is that we are very adaptable. We are constantly changing plans, being mindful of what needs to be done under these changed circumstances. While changing plans sometimes may cause frustration, at other times, it is a great motivator to remain relevant in the face of adversity.

On the occasion of World Autism Awareness Day 2021, we announced the publication of "Pracheer Periye" (প্রাচীর পেরিয়ে), the Bangla translation of Dr. Stephen Shore's book "Beyond the Wall". Please keep an eye on our Facebook and Instagram for updates on its availability.

Hope you and your loved ones stay safe and healthy, and wishing you all the best for the Bengali New Year. Shubho Noboborsho!

Warm regards,
Shuchona Foundation Secretariat

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

Interview

"Shaping the Future: From Pandemic to Climate Change"

On 24 January 2021, our Chairperson Ms. Saima Wazed, Thematic Ambassador, Climate Vulnerable Forum, and Advisor to the Director-General, WHO on Mental Health and Autism, participated in a podcast interview series titled "Shaping the Future: From Pandemic to Climate Change". The interview series focuses on how to build a better future for all in the face of climate change. Nick Breeze, Co-founder of the Cambridge Climate Lecture Series (CCLS) wanted to hear Ms. Wazed's perspective and her thoughts on how Bangladesh, as well as other vulnerable countries within the CVF, are having to deal with the very real consequences of climate change today.

Furthermore, there were discussions on what CVF is and the aims of the CVF as a grouping of nations on the frontlines of climate impacts, how vulnerability is represented by the CVF, what are the top priorities and demands of the Climate Vulnerable Forum, amidst others. The interview is featured as part of the Cambridge Climate Lecture Series (CCLS) and the podcast series is available on all major online media channels (Apple iTunes, Spotify, Google, etc.) and as a transcript in *The Ecologist*, where Nick Breeze is a regular contributor.



Projects & Activities

Developing Framework of the Psychological First Aid (PFA) Training Manual

Over the last few months, we have been engaged with the Secondary Education Sector Investment Program (SESIP) under the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE), developing the Mental Health orientation guideline for the Secondary School teachers under the 'School Mental Health' program and conducted several 2-hour long online sessions in nine different zones of the country. Shuchona Foundation contributed as a content expert in this initiative. Our colleague, Salowa Salam Shaoli, was one of the content experts among 8 members of content development team. Ms. Nazish Arman, Lead coordinator, Content development, and Ms. Saima Wazed, Chairperson from Shuchona Foundation reviewed the orientation guideline as well. Considering the importance of mental health needs at the secondary school level, the Honourable Minister of the Ministry of Education has guided to expand the scope of the training and instructed to conduct face-to-face training through developing master trainers to disseminate the basic psychological first aid skills among the secondary level schoolteachers.

As part of the program, on 13-14, March 2021, Ms. Aneeqa Ahmad, Coordinator, Secretariat and Acting COO, and Ms. Salowa Salam Shaoli, Assistant Coordinator, Content Development from Shuchona Foundation as the content expert assisted in the development of the Psychological First Aid (PFA) Training Manual for the School Mental Health Program (SMHP). Being part of the SMHP program, a two-day long residential workshop on "Developing Framework of the Psychological First Aid (PFA) Training Manual" was organized by SESIP, DSHE, and UNICEF. The workshop was inaugurated by Chief Guest, Syed Md. Golam Faruk, Honourable DG of DSHE and moderated by Prof. Dr. Mahjabeen Haque, Chair, Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology, University of Dhaka. Experts from NCTB, BEDU, UNICEF, other development partners along with the government officials from SESIP and DSHE participated in the workshop.



Participants at the workshop developing the *Psychological First Aid (PFA) Training Manual*

Standardized Adolescent Empowerment Package

A Standard Adolescent Empowerment Package (SAEP) has been developed with the support from UNICEF Bangladesh, administered by the Department of Women Affairs (DWA) under the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA). Shuchona Foundation has contributed content in this package. 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 SAEP package is to create a resource pool of core trainers from Adolescent Clubs (Kishor Kishori Clubs).



Our colleagues at the workshop to review and finalize SAEP assessment tools with other experts



A day-long review workshop on the package's contents was held on 11 March 2021, at Bangladesh Shishu Academy, under the Accelerating Protection for Children (APC) project of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs. This project was supported by UNICEF.

The workshop was chaired by S M Latif, Project Director of the APC project, MoWCA, and facilitated by Monira Hasan, Child Protection Specialist, Child Protection section, UNICEF. 11 experts from National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB), and 4 experts from Bangladesh Examination Development Unit (BEDU) attended the workshop, along with experts from NGOs of relevant areas, including the team of writers of the package. Md. Serajus Sadekin Chowdhury and Evalin Rafia from Shuchona Foundation participated in the workshop to review the content, and items of the assessment tools developed for the adolescent package.

A questionnaire was developed to assess the adolescent package for the certification process, and participants divided themselves into relevant groups to review contents from the 11 thematic areas, guided and facilitated by experts from NCTB.

Feedback was provided to improve certain areas on the adolescent package from the participants, which were highly appreciated by the experts from BEDU, UNICEF and PD. The experts gave a positive response on incorporating the feedback at the final version of the Adolescent Empowerment package which will commence from June 2021.

"Strategies for Inclusion in Schools": A training manual for the educational professionals

We, along with some external contributors have been working on our Inclusive Education manual titled *Strategies for Inclusion in Schools* (IE manual, in short) for a while and are pleased to inform that the manual is ready to be deployed. Considering this, we have been discussing with MoPME on how the IE manual can be incorporated within their existing programs. Our Vice Chairperson, Dr. Pran Gopal Datta along with the Shuchona team had a meeting with the Honourable Secretary of the Ministry of Mass and Primary Education (MoPME) on 4 February 2021, where the discussion focused on how the manual can be used by MoPME.



Honourable Secretary and officials of MoPME with our Vice-Chair and colleagues from Shuchona Foundation

Furthermore, MoPME proposed an in-depth discussion on Inclusive Education, which took place on 12 February 2021 at Dhaka PTI, in the presence of the Honorable Secretary of MoPME, DG of the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE), our Vice-Chairperson Dr. Pran Gopal Datta, members of Shuchona's Management Team, and officials of MoPME. The aim of the second meeting was to address the special education needs of children with disabilities, ASD and NDDs.

Based on discussions at the meetings, available scopes in the different components of PEDP4 to incorporate in the Inclusive Education manual developed by Shuchona Foundation, will be explored. Further online meetings will take place between the Shuchona team and MoPME develop the preliminary plans, keeping the current pandemic in mind.

Shuchona Team went on a Retreat!

Working from home for almost a year had taken its toll on the staff. An opportunity to reconnect face to face was necessary, so on 27 January 2021, taking all the necessary precautions, SF staff went on a retreat to Zinda Park. It was a day filled with fun, laughter and outdoor activities. The staff engaged in team-building activities, allowing them to forget the pandemic for a while, and recharged them to get started with work for the months to follow.



SF Management Team posing for a group photo



The Association of Koreans in Bangladesh's generous donation to Shuchona Foundation

In appreciation of Shuchona Foundation's work in the sectors of ASD and NDDs, mental health, and disabilities, the Association of



SF Vice-Chair, Executive member, and COO (Acting) with His Excellency, Mr. Kee Jang-keun

Koreans in Bangladesh made a generous donation to the Foundation. On 28 January 2021, our Vice-Chair Prof. Pran Gopal Datta, Executive Committee member Dr. Muzharul Mannan and the Shuchona Foundation Management team had the pleasure of welcoming His Excellency, Mr. Lee Jang-keun to SF's office who was accompanied by Kim Cheol-sang, DCM of the Embassy of the Republic of Korea; Yu Yong-oh, President and Kim Sung-joon, Director of the Association of Koreans in Bangladesh. At the meeting, Shuchona Foundation accepted



Our Vice-Chair accepting donation from the Association of Koreans in Bangladesh

the donation and discussed the vision and future plans of the Foundation.

EVENTS

SF Chairperson at the 20th WPA World Congress of Psychiatry, Virtual Congress: Bangladesh's National Mental Health Strategic Plan 2020-2030

Ms. Saima Wazed presented at the session titled, *The Journey Towards Excellence: Mental Health Policy Strategy* where she discussed Bangladesh's National Mental Health Strategic Plan 2020-2030 (NMHSP). This strategic plan was developed because the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (GoB) is deeply committed to addressing the mental health needs of all its population in a sustainable, cost effective as well as a culturally and socially adapted manner. She also discussed the plans of GoB in alignment with WHO's Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2012-2020, to establish a comprehensive, inter-sectorial, integrated, and responsive system that will improve the quality of current mental health and psychosocial wellbeing services. By doing so, Bangladesh will be able to achieve its Universal Health Care ambitions and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Furthermore, Ms. Saima Wazed during the virtual congress discussed the core objectives of NMHSP, the factors associated with Mental Health and the key objectives of the plan. The event was held from 10-13 March 2021.

Untold Stories of Women Champions in Climate Change: The 7th Gobeshona Conference



Participants at the *Untold Stories of Women Champions in Climate Change* session

The 7th Gobeshona Conference took place from 18-24 January 2021, hosted by ICCCAD. One of the sessions in the conference was chaired by Shuchona Foundation's Chairperson Ms. Saima Wazed and moderated by Dilruba Haider, Program Specialist-DRR, CCA, HA, UN Women. The target of this session was to celebrate and talk about women's leadership and work in climate action which was aimed to recognize, acknowledge, and celebrate different roles played by women.

The speakers were experts and activists from the grassroots, national, and international level, who shared their experiences leading them to the work they do, the struggles they faced, and how and what they have done to reach their current destination. As the session chair, Ms. Saima Wazed reflected on the experiences shared by the speakers and shared her own journey as a school



psychologist to a global climate activist. As an individual, she plays different roles, but continues to focus her work in the sector of disability, and mental health; believing in inclusiveness in all aspects of life and recognizing that experiences of marginalized populations are often different.

Shuchona Foundation's Annual General Meeting

On 16 January 2021, Shuchona Foundation had its Annual General Meeting for the fiscal year 2019-2020, where almost all members were present. The AGM was conducted virtually by our Vice-Chair, Dr. Pran Gopal Datta, in the presence of our Chairperson Ms. Saima Wazed, Executive Committee members, General members, and Advisory Council members. At the meeting, a report of the previous year's activities, the audited financial report, and the year's budget and plans were presented and approved. Furthermore, the meeting included the election of the Executive Committee and welcomed a new general member on board.

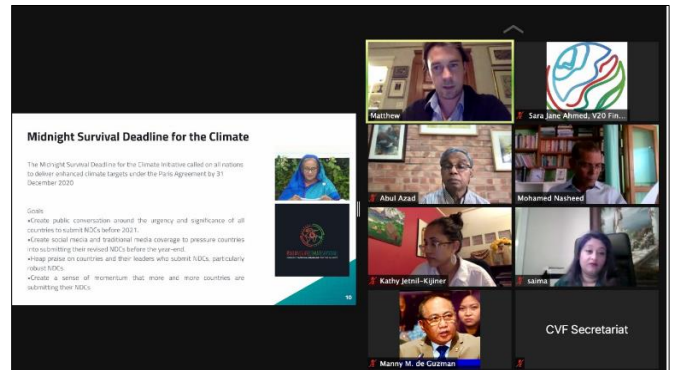


Members meeting virtually at the AGM

Chairperson's Engagement's as CVF Thematic Ambassador

CVF Thematic Ambassadors' Stock-Taking meeting

The Bangladesh Presidency of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) has appointed a number of renowned individuals- H.E President Mohammad Nasheed, MP (Maldives), Kathy Jetnil Kijiner, Climate Envoy of the Marshall Islands, H.E Loren, Hon. Deputy Speaker, House of Representatives (Philippines), Tosi Mpanu-Mpanu, Founder, LDC (Congo) and Ms. Saima Wazed, WHO Expert Advisory Panel on Mental Health (Bangladesh) to perform the role of Thematic Ambassadors in the core areas of Ambition, Culture, Parliaments, Renewable energy, and Vulnerability. The mission of the Thematic Ambassadors is to strengthen outreach, networking, communications, and engagement of key actors of 48 climate threatened nations to advance its causes in the identified core areas.



CVF Thematic Ambassadors and Secretariat attending the stock-taking meeting

On 01 March 2021, the CVF Thematic Ambassadors Stock-Taking Meeting took place virtually. During the meeting, the CVF Thematic Ambassadors presented the key milestones, discussed on delivering key CVF priorities for 2021-2022, and explored their next step of actions and further plans for progress. Our Chairperson, Ms. Saima Wazed as the Thematic Ambassador on Vulnerability, spoke About 'Changing the Public Conversation: From "Vulnerability to "Resilience"' and emphasized on the promotion of efforts to strengthen climate resilience in the areas of health, human rights, displacement, and the workplace.

Webinar "Climate Change Priorities on Health, Human Rights and Labour"

On 9 February 2021, Chairperson Ms. Saima Wazed, Member, WHO Expert Advisory Panel on Mental Health and CVF Thematic Ambassador for Vulnerability, participated in a webinar on "Climate Change Priorities on Health, Human Rights and Labour". Other esteemed participants included, H.E Mr. Mohamed Nasheed, Honourable Speaker of the People's Majlish of the Maldives and CVF Thematic Ambassador of Ambition, H.E. Ms. Monique T.G. Van Daalen, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Netherlands, Geneva, H.E. Mr. Julian Braithwaite, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great



Screenshot of respected participants attending the webinar virtually

Britain and Northern Ireland, H.E. Mr. Gian Lorenzo Cornado, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Italy, Geneva and H.E. Ms. Doreen Debran, Ambassador and Permanent representative of the Republic of Marshall Islands, Geneva (CVF Troika Ambassador). The webinar was organized by the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh, Geneva, Switzerland and the session was moderated by His Excellency, Md. Mustafizur Rahman, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh.

Ms. Saima Wazed spoke about the concerns of vulnerability for the CVF Forum. Climate change and health is the most substantial public health crisis of the recent generations, but people with disabilities are more prone to the effects of climate change; therefore, to make changes in this area, CVF has decided to work with WHO's Manifesto. Furthermore, to intensify the work

on climate change and human rights, CVF proposed to create a dedicated UN Special Rapporteur. Ms. Saima Wazed discussed the necessary steps that should be taken to mitigate the health risks of the labour.

World Economic Forum: Industry Action Group for Healthcare/Climate Change

Ms. Saima Wazed, Chairperson of Shuchona Foundation participated in the session of WEF: Industry Action Group for Healthcare/Climate Change on 20 January 2021 in her capacity as the Thematic Ambassador on Vulnerability to the Climate Vulnerable Forum.

In this session, Ms. Saima Wazed represented the stories, voices, and hardships of the people of 48 vulnerable countries. She addressed how COVID-19 came as an unexpected shock, pushing marginalised people to further edge with a number of uncertainties by causing unbearable physical, mental and emotional duress during this time. Furthermore, Ms. Wazed highlighted the fact that health and climate change are intricately intertwined, and the impact of climate change disproportionately affects those who are already vulnerable to health effects due to other factors, such as disability, age, gender, ethnicity, displacement, or socioeconomic status. More so, our Chairperson shared how the GoB is working on a few projects with WHO to reduce the impacts of climate change and health.