



Newsletter

July-September 2021

Dear Members, Advisors and Friends,

Warm greetings from Shuchona Foundation. After pushing back some of our plans for more than a year, this past quarter we started few trainings online, following health guidelines. We simply did not want to wait any longer to do in-person sessions.

In August, we welcomed our new COO Dr. Saqui Khandoker who joined our team armed with years of experience in both governmental and non-governmental sector as a public health and operations professional. We look forward to her taking forward Shuchona's mission and vision successfully.

Please find below a few highlights of the past quarter, which includes SF co-authoring articles which has been published in the British Journal of Psychiatry.

With best wishes for you and your loved ones' health and safety,
Shuchona Foundation Secretariat

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Publications

The renowned British Journal of Psychiatry International recently published two articles on behalf of the Royal College of Psychiatrists on "The Current State of Mental Healthcare in Bangladesh: Part 1 – an updated country profile" and "The Current State of Mental Healthcare in Bangladesh: Part 2 – setting priorities".

From Shuchona Foundation, Saima Wazed, Chairperson, Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed, and Nazish Arman, Lead Coordinator, Content Development are co-authors amongst others.

Part 1 of this two-part profile on mental health in Bangladesh describes the current situation of mental health in Bangladesh in its wider sociocultural context, outlining existing policies and highlighting mental illness as a neglected healthcare problem in the country using a narrative synthesis method. Part 2 describes the state of mental health research in the country and presents a set of priorities for addressing improvements to the fundamental gaps in mental healthcare highlighted in part 1.

The articles can be found in the following links:

<https://www.cambridge.org/.../19B7DE453E1ED7B460CC25F29A4...>

<https://www.cambridge.org/.../6DAE1850E9328BEB0EA1E0EBE81...>

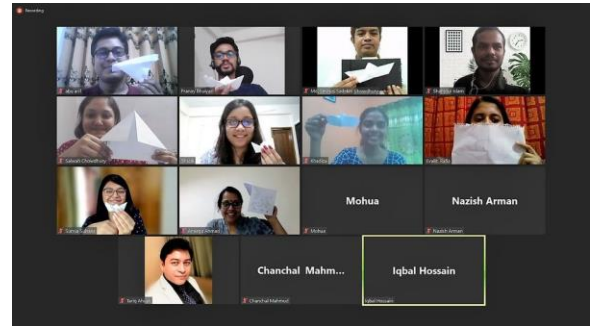


Capacity Building

Inclusive Education

From 14 September, SF team has started receiving virtual internal training on the IE training manual, which will continue till mid-October. At present, the resource persons are conducting 2-hour long sessions twice a week. One of our EC members Shirin Zaman Munir, Ph.D.; Professor M. Tariq Ahsan, Ph.D., University of Dhaka; and Iqbal Hossain, Education Specialist, UNICEF Bangladesh are the resource persons conducting the sessions.

The IE manual has been developed to support mainstream schoolteachers in developing and expanding their capacities to facilitate the learning of all students in their classrooms. With reference to the National Strategic Plan for Neurodevelopmental Disorders 2016-2021 of the Government of Bangladesh, Shuchona Foundation has developed a training manual on inclusive education strategies. We are in the process of discussing with the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME) ways this manual can be used to build capacity of teachers in government schools across the country.



School Mental Health Program (SMHP): A Part of the Secondary Education Sector Investment Program (SESIP)

Since June 2019, Shuchona Foundation has been part of the technical team which is supporting the development of a comprehensive School Mental Health Program (SMHP) for the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) of the Ministry of Education (MoE). This has included the revision of the master training manual titled “Addressing Mental Health of Secondary Level Students of Bangladesh” based on feedback from the pilot master training held in 25-29 June 2019. As part of continuous engagement, from mid-August of this year, SF has been contributing to developing content for the manual’s app-based digitisation, aiming to use it as a pre-requisite to attending the basic training for schoolteachers. The content expert team of SMHP shared draft content to DSHE on 15 September 2021, which was later shared with UNICEF to carry forward the technical work of digitization. Dr. Mahjabeen Haque, Professor of the Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology (DECP), University of Dhaka, is leading the content expert team and the pool of core trainers. SF, as a part of the content expert team of SMHP, has also been providing support throughout the digitization process to ensure that the content is not being misinterpreted.

From 7-11 September 2021, two batches of a five-day master training program were held to develop a pool of master trainers on this manual, where Shuchona’s Salowa Salam Shaoli was one of the core trainers, and Md. Abu Arif joined as one of the participants. 53 psychology professionals and practitioners from 24 governmental and non-governmental organizations took part in the training. SMHP aims to develop master trainers to facilitate training for secondary-level teachers on this manual, who will provide initial mental health support to secondary-level students. The revision process of the manual will be ongoing based on the feedback from the first few batches of training.





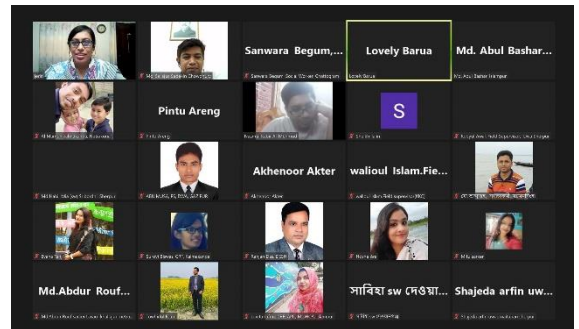
Standardized Adolescent Empowerment Package (SAEP)

In the last quarter, our engagement with SAEP project as trainers continued when Shuchona conducted a few virtual ToTs in July and September. 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). Our colleagues, Md Serajus Sadekin Chowdhury and Evalin Rafia facilitated the virtual training sessions.



On 06 and 14 September, the sessions titled 'Healthy Mother & Child: Diversity and Disability' and '(Pre-Parenting) Early Childhood Development' under the Pre-parenting thematic area were held. Selected participants from Sherpur, Jamalpur, Netrokona and, Gazipur under the Mymensingh division including Deputy Director (MoWCA), Upazilla Women's Affairs Officer (UWAO, MoWCA), Field Supervisor (MoWCA), Child Right Facilitator (CRF, MoWCA), Social workers, and NGO workers participated amongst others.

On 18 and 27 July 2021, sessions were held on Early Childhood Development. This particular training has been implemented by APC, MoWCA, and the Sustainable Social Services in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (SSSCHT) project, and was attended by District Women



Affairs Officer, Deputy Director, Upazila Women Affairs Officer, Child Right Facilitator, Training Instructor, and Program Officer-Child Protection from three hill tracts district who actively and enthusiastically participated virtually in these sessions, understanding the basic stimulating strategies on expressive and receptive language development and relevant topics.

More details on the SAEP Package, and SF's involvement in it can be found in our previous newsletters.

Events

National Mental Health Policy Dialogue

As part of policy advocacy for mental health for all, a national level round table organized by ADD International Bangladesh and Daily Prothom Alo was held on 9th September 2021. Nazish Arman from Shuchona Foundation attended the 'National Mental Health Policy Dialogue' as a panel discussant. Nazish provided an overview of the National Mental Health Strategic Plan and shared information on process development and overall objectives of the plan, which is currently in the final stages of development. Other attendees who participated in the virtual roundtable discussion were representatives from government agencies involved in developing the National Mental Health Policy, the Strategic Plan, and its implementation. Shuchona Foundation in collaboration with other relevant stakeholders were involved in the development of the draft policy and strategy document.



SF at the launching ceremony of BRAC's Mental Health Strategy



On August 26, 2021, our colleague, Nazish Arman spoke at the launching ceremony of BRAC's Mental Health Strategy, which is focused on the organization. Other speakers included the Line Director, Non-Communicable Diseases Control, DGHS and the Additional Director General, Planning and Development of DGHS, amongst others. At the ceremony, Nazish spoke on the national mental health strategy and how BRAC's mental health strategy can align with it. The national MH strategy has been developed by a working group of relevant professionals spearheaded by SF Chairperson Saima Wazed, taking input from all stakeholders including those with lived experiences. The comprehensive strategy document, which has taken into account various aspects of mental health including the effects of the pandemic, is now awaiting final approval from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Please access the following link to watch the recorded FB live: <https://fb.watch/7D86iqqmSr/>



Image from *Unique Glimpses*

Compiled and edited by Saima Wazed, the book showcases a powerful art collection created by unique young artists. These artists have been encouraged by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina, and befittingly, she wrote the foreword in the book.