



Newsletter April-June 2022

Dear Members, Advisors and Friends,

Warm greetings from Shuchona Foundation. The second quarter of 2022 was a very eventful one and we are having a hard time choosing which activity to highlight. The much-awaited *Pracheer Periye*, a Shuchona Foundation publication, is out and available for online purchase. We launched the book in April 2022.

In May, our Chairperson travelled to Geneva for the 75th World Health Assembly, and then to Bali for the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GPDRR) 2022. In June, she went to Kigali for the 26th Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) where she participated in two high-level side events.

There were workshops and meetings attended, and technical assistance provided in various platforms by the rest of the team. On top of all these, we were busy reviewing our work of 2021-22 and finalizing plans and strategies for 2022-23.

Please let us know if you would like to learn more about our work. We would love to hear from you!

With best wishes,
Shuchona Foundation Secretariat

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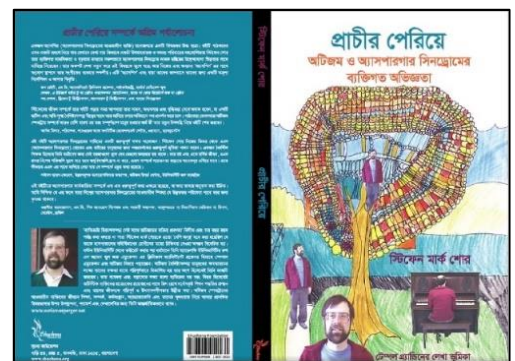
Publications

Pracheer Periye

Our latest publication, *Pracheer Periye* is the Bangla translation of a self-advocate, Dr. Stephen M. Shore’s book, *Beyond the Wall*, aiming to raise more awareness and reduce the stigma around autism.

As part of observing the autism awareness month this year, we launched *Pracheer Periye* during an online event. (Details of the online book launch event below.)

The book is available for purchase online from Rokomari.com:
<https://www.rokomari.com/book/234951/prachir-periye>



When is Too Much Autism Awareness Not Enough?

On 01 April 2022, Inter Press News published "When is Too Much Autism Awareness Not Enough?" written by our Chairperson, Saima Wazed and EC member, Zain Bari Rizvi in observance of World Autism Awareness Day 2022. The op-ed gives the readers an insight into the common misconceptions around ASD and how this led to founding an advocacy, capacity-building, and research-based not-for-profit organization. The article can be accessed here: <https://www.ipsnews.net/.../much-autism-awareness-still.../>



Events

Shuchona Foundation's Presence at the 26th Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM)



Chairperson Ms. Saima Wazed participated in the 26th Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) held in Kigali, Rwanda from 22–25 June 2022.

The biennial meeting of leaders from Commonwealth nations was an opportunity to discuss global issues. Our Chair participated as a panel discussant in the side event "Violence Against Women and Girls" organized by Commonwealth and the No-More Foundation. The side event which was attended by senior official representatives from 54 countries, had several high-level participants including the Duchess of Cornwall.



During CHOGM week, Saima Wazed was the keynote speaker at another high-level event, titled "Rethinking Mental Health: A Commonwealth Call to Support, Care and Transform." The event was co-hosted by the Governments of Bangladesh and Rwanda supported by Commonwealth Secretary-General, with institutional support from Shuchona Foundation.

The objective of the side event was to mobilize a Commonwealth-wide awareness campaign and policy interventions as well as sharing of best practices on tackling post-covid Mental Health challenges, reducing social stigma and exclusion, and ensuring inclusive and affordable mental health care, welfare, and empowerment of individuals with Mental Health (MH) conditions and Neurodevelopmental Disorders (NDDs) across the Commonwealth. Commonwealth member states, CSOs and regional/international organizations working in the mental health sector who attended the CHOGM 2022, participated in the event.

SF Chair at the 75th World Health Assembly



Our Chair, Ms. Wazed was in Geneva for the 75th World Health Assembly (WHA). In addition to participating in the event 'Walk the Talk', and attending the opening, she met with a number of delegation members and WHO officials including SEAR Regional Director Dr. Poonam Khetrpal Singh, WHO Director-General, Dr. Tedros Adhanom and SEAR health ministers and PRs.



The Seventy-fifth World Health Assembly was held from 22-28 May 2022 and was the first in-person Health Assembly since the COVID-19 pandemic. The theme of WHA this year was 'Health for peace, peace for health'.

Participation in the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GPDRR) 2022

Our Chairperson Ms. Saima Wazed, in her capacity as a global expert on Disability inclusive Disaster Risk Management (DiDRM), moderated a session on 25 May 2022 titled "Inclusive Local Actions towards Effective Disaster Risk Reduction and Leave No One



Behind: Dhaka Declaration and other inspiring initiatives” during the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GPDRR) 2022 at Bali.

As the moderator, Ms. Wazed stated the objectives and background of the session, highlighting how disasters have continued to disproportionately affect vulnerable groups especially persons with disabilities and the importance of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR). She quoted the State Minister of Bangladesh regarding the strong initiatives undertaken by the government to promote inclusive disaster risk reduction strategies aligned with the Sendai Framework. During the side event, participants discussed the progress of implementation of Dhaka Declaration, which plays a key role in realizing the SDGs’ key agenda of 'leave no one behind'.



The panelists of the session were Dr. Md. Enamur Rahman, MP, Hon’ble State Minister of MoDMR, Government of Bangladesh as the Keynote speaker; Ms. Nogining Armelle Almerique, Chair, Coordinating Unit of Associations of Persons with Disabilities (CUAPWD), Cameroon; Ms. Chrysant Lily Kusumowardoyo, Country Director, ASB Indonesia and Philippine; and Mr. Carlos Kaiser, Executive Director, ONG Inclusiva/ Latin America DiDRR Network, Chile.



Along with GPDRR sessions, Ms. Wazed attended several successful bilateral meetings with other stakeholders, including Head of BNPB, Indonesia’s National Disaster Management Authority, the Chief of UNDRR’s Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, and President of the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly and Honourable Foreign Minister of the Republic of Maldives, His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid.

SF’s Lead Coordinator of the Content Development team, Nazish Arman accompanied our Chair to GPDRR 2022.

“Pracheer Periyee: Saima Wazed's Conversation with Stephen Shore on his Autobiography and Autism”

Shuchona Foundation organized an online event in collaboration with Centre for Research and Information (CRI) titled “Pracheer Periyee: Saima Wazed's Conversation with Stephen Shore on his Autobiography and Autism”, where Shuchona’s new publication *Pracheer Periyee* was launched. The event was held on 24 April 2022.

Honorable Speaker of the National Parliament of Bangladesh, Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury was present as the Chief Guest. A panel discussion was conducted with Dr. Stephen Mark Shore, author of the autobiography *Beyond the Wall* and Saima Wazed, Chairperson of Shuchona Foundation, moderated by Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed, Associate Professor of Child, Adolescent, and Family Psychiatry at the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), and Shuchona’s Executive Committee member. Other speakers who participated were Jane Pearce, Country Director of World Food Programme Bangladesh, Adiba Ibnat Poshla, a self-advocate on the autism spectrum, and Niger Rahman, one of the book reviewers of *Pracheer Periyee* during the translation process.



During the event Ms. Niger Rahman shared her thoughts while reviewing the translation and her personal journey as a mother of a child on the autism spectrum. She discussed how Bangladesh went through a transformative journey in the last decade to raise awareness on autism. She was fascinated by the lucid translation of the book and highly recommended it to professionals, doctors, academics, and parents who are impacted by ASD. Adiba Ibnat Poshla spoke about her challenges as a person with ASD, how she first went to a school and later joined a special school and got the opportunity to develop and enhance her skills as an artist and who is now a professional, working as a designer. Jane Pearce, Country Director, World Food Programme (WFP) talked



about her experience in working with colleagues on the spectrum at WFP. She believes the book *Pracheer Periyee* will play a key role in raising awareness among people by promoting tolerance towards people with ASD.



Dr. Stephen Mark Shore began the panel discussion thanking Shuchona for translating the book in Bangla. The inspiration behind writing *Beyond the Wall* was his gratitude towards his parents who sought institutional recommendations when they realized that he was on the spectrum. He talked about the importance of early intervention at home. SF Chairperson, Saima Wazed said that the world of autism is same everywhere around the globe. The challenges, prejudices and struggles are the same. She shared her motivation to initiate autism awareness, which came from the parents who share the same struggle. *Pracheer Periyee* is a small step on autism awareness among many others, targeted specifically towards Bangladesh and Bangla

speaking communities around the globe.

Chief Guest Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chowdhury, Honorable Speaker, Bangladesh National Parliament appreciated Shuchona Foundation's initiatives for familiarizing the people of Bangladesh with ASD and spearheading the ASD and mental health related policy advocacy in Bangladesh and beyond. Recording of the event is available on our YouTube channel.

Pracheer Periyee is now available for purchase online from Rokomari.com: <https://www.rokomari.com/book/234951/prachir-periye>

Content Expertise

Inclusive Education



As part of our work in providing technical assistance for the implementation of inclusive education in primary education, UNICEF and Shuchona Foundation have been providing input to revise the Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Framework. Shuchona Foundation colleagues attended a meeting with officials from DPE and UNICEF on 06 June 2022 to follow up on the final changes discussed in the workshop "Stakeholder Validation Workshop for Finalization of SEND Framework", organized by DPE and supported by UNICEF in May 2022. Pranay Bhuiyan, Evalin Rafia, and Khadiza Akter from participated in the workshop. The SEND framework was revised based on feedback from different levels of stakeholders and presented to the Director General of DPE. The DG and other officials from DPE were content with the revised framework which is currently awaiting official approval.

SF and DPE signed an MoU in December 2021 for the capacity development of teachers of government primary schools on Inclusive Education through the training package developed by Shuchona Foundation.



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National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) Framework 2021

The competency-based curriculum developed is in process and will be implemented from 2023 to 2027. Based on the new curriculum in 2023, the students of grades 6 and 7 will receive new textbooks and teachers will be trained accordingly. This program is being piloted in 62 secondary schools from 62 Upazilas under 24 districts across Bangladesh.



Since October 2021, Shuchona Foundation's Assistant Coordinators, Salowa Salam Shaoli and Pranay Bhuiyan have been contributing to developing teaching-learning material for the subjects, 'Wellbeing' and 'Bangla' respectively. Our colleagues are providing technical assistance



continuously in this national work as part of resource persons' pool. This quarter they have participated in three 3-day long residential technical workshops organized by NCTB.

The first workshop of the quarter was held from 13-15 May 2022 for the teachers of secondary level piloting schools as part of dissemination of the new curriculum. The second one from 31 May-02 June 2022 on assessment strategies for the National Curriculum Framework 2021, and the last one was arranged to finalize the teaching-learning materials for Grade 6. At present, the work for Grade 7 curriculum is ongoing.

Mental Health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP) training

Non-communicable Disease Control Program (NCDC) in association with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the National Institute of Mental Health and Hospital (NIMH) organized a five-day-long program on "mhGAP Training for Trainers and Supervisors" from 23-27 April 2022. Md. Abu Arif, Trainer, Research and Capacity Building participated in the training, which was attended by psychiatrists and psychologists from different medical institutions and not-for-profit organizations. The facilitators were psychiatrists from BSMMU, NINS, and NIMH.

Launched in 2008, mhGAP is a WHO programme developed to scale-up care for MNS (mental, neurological, and substance use) disorders. This programme was first introduced in Bangladesh in 2011. The approach was implemented in response to the crisis in Cox's Bazar in 2017 by DGHS, with the support of WHO and psychiatrists from NIMH and the National Institute of Neurosciences (NINS). The objective of the training was to develop a pool



of master trainers and supervisors to provide training and supervision for general and family physicians, nurses who are not specialized in mental health; and explore ways to utilize the mhGAP-IG to address the national mental health treatment gap in the coming years.



After the training, Md. Abu Arif said, "Through this program, I had the opportunity to learn immensely from experienced and learned facilitators and participants. I believe by implementing this training for the health care professionals in primary care settings, we can significantly contribute to addressing the national mental health treatment gap."