



Newsletter

October-December 2021

Dear Members, Advisors and Friends,

Happy New Year!

None of us had imagined that we would still be living through a pandemic, yet here we are. At Shuchona Foundation, we tried to make the best of the situation, operating in a hybrid mode; and conducting and participating in in-person trainings and meetings whenever possible. After waiting for more than a year, we started a project, and after a delay due to the pandemic, this year, we finally concluded another project. This Quarterly Newsletter highlights some of our activities from October onwards.

We hope that 2022 will be the best year yet for all of us! May you and yours remain safe and healthy.

With best wishes,

Shuchona Foundation Secretariat

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Publications

Inter Press Service (IPS) published a two-part opinion editorial by our Chairperson Saima Wazed and our Lead Coordinator, Content Development, Nazish Arman, titled "Mental Health Achievements in Bangladesh" on 27 October 2021 and "Mental Health Strategic Plan for Bangladesh: An Overview" on 28 October 2021.

The first part discusses mental health wellbeing along with measures our government has undertaken to address this. It gives an insight into the Mental Health Act, Mental Health Policy, and plans. The second part discusses the measures undertaken by our government to address mental health related issues and the mental health strategic plan. Shuchona Foundation is part of the working group for developing the National Mental Health Strategic Plan, and our Chairperson is the Chief Advisor of the group.

The links for the two articles are:

Mental Health Achievements in Bangladesh: <http://www.ipsnews.net/.../mental-health-strategic-plan.../>

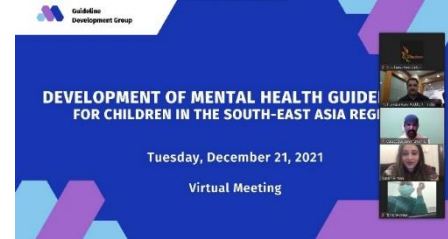
Mental Health Strategic Plan for Bangladesh: An Overview: <http://www.ipsnews.net/.../mental-health-achievements.../>



Research

Development of Mental Health Promotion Guidelines in Children Aged from Prenatal to Early Childhood Periods for Primary Healthcare Providers in the South-East Asia Region

Shuchona Foundation Chair has been invited to join as an expert and Co-Chair of an expert team to work on the Development of Mental Health Promotion Guidelines in Children Aged from Prenatal to Early Childhood Periods for Primary Healthcare Providers in the South-East Asia Region, a research project coordinated by Dr. Saowalak Langgopin, and Chaired by Dr. Samai Sirithongthaworn of Rajanagarindra Institute of Child Development, Thailand.



Expert team consists of members from Thailand, Japan, India, Myanmar, and Bangladesh. The research project commenced from December 2021. Shuchona Foundation is providing secretariat support to facilitate this internationally collaborative research. An introductory meeting was held virtually on 21 December 2021 with the guideline development group (experts).

Capacity Building

Inclusive Education

In collaboration with MoPME (Ministry of Primary and Mass Education), Shuchona Foundation developed a training package on Inclusive Education (IE). The aim is to design and implement a program to explore scope and challenges on inclusive education for the mainstream primary schools of Bangladesh creating a direct impact on increased access, participation, achievement, and acceptance of student (with/without disabilities) in schools. 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.



Over three weeks starting from 21 November 2021, SF provided ToT training on Inclusive Education for PTI instructors under “Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities through ICT Project” using the newly developed Inclusive Education manual by Shuchona Foundation for the first time. The trainings were held in 3 batches, =of about 44 participants each. A brief inauguration ceremony took place, attended by SF colleagues, including our Vice-Chair, Prof. Pran Gopal Datta MP, and COO, Dr. Saqui Khandoker, along with ICT Ministry officials and PTI Institute officials.



On 23 December 2021, Shuchona Foundation and the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) of the Ministry of Primary Mass Education (MoPME) signed an MoU at the DPE office. The MoU anticipates collaboration between DPE and Shuchona Foundation on the capacity development of government primary school teachers on Inclusive Education through the training package developed by SF.

Activities will be implemented under the Fourth Primary Education Development Program (PEDP4). The MoU was signed by Alamgir Mohammed Mansurul Alam Director General, DPE, and our Vice-Chair, Dr. Pran Gopal Datta, MP in the presence of the Additional Director General, Directors, and officials of different departments of DPE along with our COO Dr. Saqui Khandoker and SF team.

Social Communication and Emotional Skills Development



Shuchona Foundation and WFP Bangladesh's project titled "Assessment of the Effect of Mother and Child Benefit Program (MCBP) on the Cognitive Development of Children" was inaugurated on 28 October 2021. The inauguration was attended by colleagues from MoWCA, WFP, and CIPRB at the Department of Women Affairs. Our Vice-Chair, Dr. Pran Gopal Datta, MP explained the broader vision of Shuchona and how the project fits into it, followed by a brief introduction of all the relevant personnel involved in the project by Dr.

Saqui Khandoker, Chief Operating Officer. Md. Serajus Sadekin Chowdhury, Coordinator, Program also attended the meeting. Other attendees were Ram Chandra Das, DG, Directorate of Women Affairs and Rubina Ghani, Program Director, MCBP from MoWCA; Rezaul Karim, Program Head, Masing Newar, Senior Program and Policy Officer (VGD Reform), and Mamunur Rashid, Program Policy Officer from WFP; Dr. Saidur Rahman Mashreky, Director, and other colleagues from CIPRB.

Following the inauguration, SF trainers conducted a 5-day ToT on Social Communication and Emotional Skills Development as part of f MCBP. The training was organized by Shuchona Foundation in partnership with World Food Programme and Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs from 14-18 December 2021 in Rajshahi. The training content and activities focused on the social-emotional development of children from birth to five. Since June 2019, Shuchona Foundation has been part of the technical team which is supporting the development of a comprehensive mother and child benefit program.



The Best Start in Life: Early Childhood Development for Sustainable Development

Shuchona Foundation took the initiative to translate the content and provided subtitles for one of the courses available on SDG Academy to Bangla, titled *The Best Start in Life: Early Childhood Development for Sustainable Development*, which is very useful for professionals, and practitioners of various levels in diverse sectors. Already translated in a few other languages, this was done with the objective to ensure that the maximum number of Bangla-speaking professionals from relevant sectors can benefit from this course. SDG Academy Best Start in Life Bangla translation, and subtitle work was completed during this quarter. Currently Shuchona Foundation is in discussion



with the SDG Academy to figure out ways to publicise the availability of this course in Bangla and work on strategies to encourage professionals to do this course as a part of their professional capacity development.

National Curriculum Framework 2021

Our colleagues, Pranay Bhuiyan and Salowa Salam Shaoli from Content Development team have been participating in several workshops and meetings on learning materials development starting from 31 October 2021, based on the National Curriculum Framework 2021. The workshops are organized by National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB).



As one of the members of the material development team, Pranay Bhuiyan is contributing to developing experiential teaching-learning strategies with a focus on inclusion and alternative communication and Salowa Salam Shaoli is working on the subject 'Physical and Mental Health and Wellbeing'. They also attended a meeting at National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) as members of the material development team on 20 December 2021. At the meeting, Dr. Dipu Moni, Honorable

Minister of the Ministry of Education, provided her guidance and instructions for ongoing teaching-learning material development for the National Curriculum 2021.

Events

World Congress on Information Technology

Shuchona Foundation organized a workshop at World Congress on Information Technology (WCIT) titled, "Employment of Persons with Autism Spectrum Disorder: How can Digital Inclusion help us better support them in the workplace?" in line with Shuchona's mission and vision. The virtual workshop helped introduce prospective and current employers to the unique characteristics of persons with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), as well as common procedures that will help enhance the job experience of persons with ASD and ensure that they feel like included members of the workplace. The workshop aimed to sensitize interested employers to the unique needs of persons with ASD and provide them with an overview of certain practices that will help enrich the experience of an employee with ASD, as well as examples of practical strategies that will promote positive interactions with employees with ASD.

SF designed the 90-minute session around the theme of 'Digital Inclusion and Equality', moderated by Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed. Speakers were Dr. Liliana Mayo, Sajida Rahman Danny, and Md. Shahadat Hossain Khan. Nazish Arman gave a presentation on Employing Individuals with ASD, based on a manual developed by SF. The session was broadcasted on 12 November 2021.



World Congress on Information Technology (WCIT) started in 1978 and is organized every year (since 2016). This is one of the largest and most prestigious ICT events in the world.



The ICT Division of Government of Bangladesh hosted WCIT on 11-14 November 2021. The congress addressed the story of digital transformation of Bangladesh, its achievements alongside global issues of digital space, along with an exhibition and programs on the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to mark his birth centenary.

Seventh session of the Working Group on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022



Our colleagues, Dr. Saqui Khandoker, Nazish Arman and Md. Serajus Sadekin Chowdhury participated in the seventh session of the Working Group on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities as representatives from Shuchona Foundation, held from 8-9 December 2021. The session was conducted virtually due to the on-going COVID-19 pandemic. Alongside the members of the Working Group, the ESCAP Secretariat welcomed additional participants who are responsible for disability work, especially on issues related to Incheon Strategy Goal 2, 5 and 9.

During the session, the participants reviewed the implementation of decisions and recommendations emanating from the sixth session of the Working Group, followed by discussion on COVID-19 and persons with disabilities, including initiatives to protect and empower persons with disabilities in the context of the pandemic. The participants also reviewed recent progress in the implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022 and resource mobilization for progress in the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022. The 2-day long meeting concluded with the discussion on the preparatory process for the conclusion of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022. The ESCAP Secretariat delivered the opening and closing statement with the Chair.

Chairperson's Participation at COP26



Our Chairperson, Saima Wazed attended the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference, more commonly referred to as COP26. It was the 26th United Nations Climate Change conference which was held from 31 October to 13 November 2021 at the SEC Centre in Glasgow, Scotland, United Kingdom in her capacity as CVF's Thematic Ambassador for Vulnerability. She spoke at the CVF Leaders' Dialogue on 02 November 2021, which was chaired by Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina, Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bangladesh. The global High-Level Meeting at COP26 was held in the presence of invited Heads of State and Government and Ministers along with heads of delegation and high-level representatives of observers and critical partners. The "Dhaka-Glasgow Declaration of the CVF" was adopted during this high-level meeting.



As part of COP26, CVF/V20 organized a side-event on Climate Prosperity Plans titled, "From Vulnerability to Prosperity: Climate Prosperity Plans" on 03 November 2021. Our Chairperson, Ms. Saima Wazed participated in the side-event as one of the panelists as a CVF Thematic Ambassador along with other esteemed participants. The Climate Prosperity Plans (CPPs) aims to expand finance mobilization across a range of sources for CVF/V20 infrastructure and economic programs. This is to promote both robust socio-economic progress and reduce emissions while building greater climate and disaster resilience, including safeguarding SDG progress to 2030. The first CPP ever developed is Bangladesh's Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan (MCPP).



Prior to COP26, Shuchona team had a meeting with CVF Secretariat on 12 October 2021, during their trip to Dhaka, to discuss Chair's participation and expected role at COP26.

World Mental Health Day 2021

World Mental Health Day annually observed on October 10 was centred around the theme "Mental Health in an unequal world" this year. Sajida Foundation hosted a series of webinars aiming to address the audience to create a more widespread awareness by inviting local and international individuals from the mental health network as panelists. During the session, the panelists discussed the definition and understanding of this year's theme, shared observations based on experience (inpatient & outpatient) in Bangladesh and Sajida Foundation's approach towards reducing inequality in accessing mental health services in Bangladesh. Our colleague, Nazish Arman was invited as one of the panelists at the Fifth Webinar in the Mental Health Campaign series, to discuss how the National Mental Health Strategy is addressing the issue of mental health in relation to inequality. Other panelists in the session were Hasina Momotaz, national Professional Officer (Mental Health), World Health Organization, Muhtasabbib Matin, Training and Operations Specialist, Kaan Pete Roi, Dr. Ashique Selim, Program Head, Sajida Mental Health Program, moderated by Sriya Sharbojaya, Chief Operating Officer, Asiatic 3Sixty.

