

We want Peace, not Violence  
Let's together make a violence extremism free Bangladesh



# Never Give Up

**The Best Practices of**  
Community Engagement in Countering Violent Extremism in  
Chatogram Division (CEVEC) Project

**Implemented by:**  
**Young Power in Social Action (YPSA)**

**Supported by:**  
**GCERF (Global Community Engagement and  
Resilience Fund)**

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## Message of Chief Executive



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Arifur Rahman', written in a cursive style.

**(Md. Arifur Rahman)**  
Chief Executive

I am delighted to share just a few of the highlights of the YPSA Community Engagement in Countering Violent Extremism in Chattogram division (CEVEC) Project implemented by Young Power in Social Action (YPSA) in collaboration and engagement with the Bangladesh Government, Local Elected Bodies, Youth, Women, Religious leaders and Education Department of Chattogram and Cox's Bazar.

It collaborates with the Country Support Mechanism (CSM), relevant Government departments, Law enforcement agencies, Local elected bodies and Development Partners. The project engages the Youth, Students, Teachers, Women, Religious Leaders, journalists and community people to build a resilient community against Violent Extremism. The publication of Best Practices of YPSA CEVEC Project is a set of engagement, achievements, empowerment and skills development of target population like Youth, Students, Women and vulnerable community people.

Thanks to the YPSA staff for their efforts in this initiative which is the asset of the organization and development partners. Conveying thankfulness to the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF) for their heartfelt support to YPSA. As Chief Executive of Young Power in Social Action (YPSA).

I acknowledged the Best Practices of CEVEC and wish it is an exemplary document for others. Finally, thanks to the YPSA CEVEC staff for their hard and sincere work.

# PREFACE

To strengthen communities' resilience against the threat of violent extremism in the Chattogram division, Young Power in Social Action (YPSA) has been implementing the project of Community Engagement in Countering Violent Extremism in Chattogram division (CEVEC) since 2016 with the support of GCERF (Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund) and the direct involvement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Bangladesh (Chairperson of Country Support Mechanism). In Round 01, the project was implemented at all upazilas of Cox's Bazar District by forming a consortium with local partners and in Round 02 it was implemented in Cox's Bazar Sadar, Ramu Upazilla, Chakaria Upazilla, Moheshkhali Upazilla and Forcibly Displaced Myanmar National (FDMN) in Ukhiya Upazila under Cox's Bazar district and in Sitakund Upazilla under Chattogram district. Round 03 of the project is being implemented by YPSA in Cox's Bazar Sadar, Ramu Upazilla, Eidgaon Upazilla, Chakaria Upazilla, Moheshkhali Upazilla under Cox's Bazar district and Sitakund Upazilla under Chattogram district.

Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) demands a strategic and collaborative approach that transcends traditional boundaries, engaging communities, governments, and various stakeholders. Best practices in PVE are the practices that contribute to creating a resilient community and a society that rejects violence and extremism.

During the project period, YPSA published guidelines for the Youth Club and Youth Forum for initiating PVE intervention on their own and produced a video documentary on effective PVE initiatives through community engagement.

Publication of the best practices of the project on Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) showcase as documentation, knowledge sharing, validation and credibility, peer learning, avoiding mistakes, continuous improvement, standardization, advancing the field, inspiration, recognition, and professional development.

This publication will provide valuable insights, strategies, and lessons learned to effectively counter the spread of extremism and promote peaceful coexistence.

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# Youth

About one-third of the total population of Bangladesh is youth. According to National Youth Policy, the age group between 18-35 years is defined as Youth in Bangladesh.

Youth can make a significant contribution to the implementation of the "Smart Bangladesh Vision 2041" by actively engaging in various sectors and initiatives aligned with the vision's goals and objectives. However, violent extremism is one of the key factors that can disrupt the youth's contribution to building a smart Bangladesh.

Socio-economic factors, lack of education, extremism in the online space, identity and social issues, political and social unrest, religious misinterpretation, and weak social and family structures are leading to the radicalization of the youth and recruiters utilize them in violent extremist activities.

YPSA CEVEC project has been experienced working with youth groups and forums in R-1 and R-2 (age 18-35) since July 2016. The consortium worked with Youth Clubs in R-2. Youth is the main steering wheel for bringing changes in society and community as well as they are the victim of Violent Extremism. Youth are engaged with the YPSA CEVEC project, through increasing their leadership capacity, and knowledge of Life Skills Education on PVE. They have been taking different initiatives such as Community Engagement Events on the prevention of violent extremism, organizing awareness sessions at the community level, and providing support to select beneficiaries for Cash for Work and skill development training followed by livelihood support during Covid 19. Youth leaders/members act as active change agents in the fight against online radicalization, through systematic content generation on alternative narratives.

Now the dropout and unemployed Youth are organized through Youth Forums and Youth Club under the formal structures and are capacitated to mobilize funds for their organizations' sustainability and able to take PVE initiative in their community along with other social activities.

## Reach

Youth Forum

85

Youth Club

55

Youth Group

767

Youth

15340



## Involve the Government Official in Training on Registration Process

Mr. Hasan Masud - Deputy Director of the Department of Social Services and Mr. Abdus Salam Sikder, Deputy Director of the Youth Department of Cox's Bazar facilitated training on the Youth Club registration process among the project staff. This training helped the project staff to understand the details process of registration and build up strong collaboration with respective Govt. officials for the registration process. After that project staff provided training to the Youth Forums and Youth Clubs on the registration process and resource mobilization.





## Youth Club and Youth Forum

Establishing local youth clubs and Youth Forums (a group comprised of unemployed and dropped-out youths) aims to increase public awareness of the need to combat violent extremism by involving the community. On their initiative, youth forums and youth clubs are holding a variety of community engagement events to increase public knowledge, over 1 lac 44 thousand people participated in more than 1500 community engagement events such as flash mobs, cycle rallies, dialogues with the religious and political leaders, signature campaigns, youth rallies, debate competitions, candlelight vigils organized by the Youth Forum members to prevent violent extremism and increase social harmony at community level, which helps to keep society harmonious and prevent violent extremism. The Youth Forums and Youth Clubs have taken the initiative to register the forum and club with the relevant government departments. They have included the Prevention of Violent Extremism issue in their organizational constitutions to ensure sustainability.





The YPSA CEVEC Project has linked youth forums and youth clubs with various government departments for capacity building and support to build collaboration with local government representatives to organize activities that are effectively preventing violent extremism and maintaining harmony in the community. It has also provided youth forums and youth clubs with life skills education focused on the Prevention of Violent Extremism, as well as organization management, registration process and local resource mobilization, leadership development, and facilitation skills training. These days, Youth Forums and Youth Clubs organize LSE sessions and carry out community involvement activities independently in their local communities. Youth Clubs and Youth Forums that just enrolled have already taken steps to fortify their groups.



## Training to Youth Forum and youth Club

YPSA CEVEC project provided training on trainers (ToT) to Youth Forum and Youth Club members representatives on PVE focused Life skills Education which helps to introduce them to the Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE), and identify the role of PVE. Through this training, Youth Forum and youth club representative members enhance their skills in facilitation, leadership, communication and positive use of social media. After receiving training Youth forums and Youth Clubs members conducted LSE sessions on PVE among their organization members and disseminated messages on PVE in the community.



**Youth Forum and Club** Members who received TOT are facilitating LSE sessions at their respective Youth Groups. Through this training, Youth Forum and Youth Club members enhance their skills in facilitation, leadership, communication and positive use of social media. After receiving ToT, Youth Forums and Youth Clubs members conducted LSE sessions on PVE among their organizations' members and disseminated messages on PVE in the community. This session makes the youth aware of violent extremism, its bad impacts, the positive use of social media and their rules to prevent them from violent extremism. It helps the youth to take action to prevent violence and extremism in their society. Youth Clubs and Youth Forum participate in awareness-raising activities in different events where they disseminate PVE messages and organize various events in society to create mass awareness of PVE.

Over 1 lac 44 thousand people participated in more than 1500 community engagement events such as flash mobs, cycle rallies, dialogues with the religious and political leaders, signature campaigns, youth rallies, debate competitions, candlelight vigils organized by the Youth Forum members to prevent violent extremism and increase social harmony at community level.



Activities aimed at fostering community involvement, such as intergenerational conversations, football games, tree planting, candle lighting, cycling rallies, and human chain activities, are coordinated by youth forums and youth clubs. The PVE messages are passed on by the organizer throughout the event, and attendees take an active part in it. Participants in these events commit not to indulge in violent entertainment (VE) and to raise community awareness of PVE concerns. They learn through these community outreach programs to respect different viewpoints, faiths, and cultures, as well as to refrain from disseminating hostile remarks on social media.



*'We have created our club to empower women and develop their economic status. We have been working on different types of social development activities. However, after getting involved with the YPSA CEVEC project, we realized that we should also work to establish social cohesion as different religious practitioners and different ethnic groups living in this area. Since our club members are trained and aware of preventing VE in the community we are organizing this community engagement event to bring community people under PVE awareness. It is our responsibility to establish peace in society along with other social and economic development work. I think together we can reduce violence in our society and also the country.'*

**- Ms. Rubi Rudra**

president of Khuruskul Sukher Thikana  
Mohila Unnoyon Somobai Samiti.



*The 'YPSA CEVEC project enlightens us on PVE issues. Before involvement with this project, we didn't have proper knowledge of Preventing Violent Extremism Issues and forms of violent extremism. We were in dark sight about the way of prevention of violent extremism. YPSA supported us to skilled up on preventing violent extremism through various training and helped to get registration from the office of the Department of Youth Development. We are determined to work on Preventing Violent Extremism issues as front-line activist."*

**-Nasima Akter**

General Secretary of Youth Forum  
Cox's Bazar.



# Local Government Authorities (LGAs)

Local Government Authorities (LGAs) have a deep understanding of local communities, their needs, and the dynamics that can contribute to or mitigate violent extremism. Their local knowledge is crucial for designing targeted and effective preventing violent Extremism (PVE) interventions. Their involvement in preventing violent Extremism (PVE) initiatives can enhance community engagement and trust and also make it easier to convey preventing violent extremism messages. Working through LGAs enables preventing violent Extremism (PVE) programs to be tailored to the specific needs, challenges, and cultural nuances of the local context in Bangladesh. This customization enhances the effectiveness of interventions.

YPSA CEVEC project has oriented the Local Government Authorities (LGA) so that they can play an active role in sustainably preventing Violent Extremism.

**Reach**

**Local Government Bodies**

**1372**



## District Level Advocacy Meeting With LG

The Local Government Authorities have been engaging in Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) initiatives since R-1 and increased their participation in PVE. Local government bodies' engagement in PVE plays a vital role in Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) to keep harmony in the community. YPSA CEVEC project provided a series of orientations on Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) to Local Government Authorities and organized District Level Advocacy Meetings with relevant government and local government departments (DDLG, UNOs, Mayor, and Union Chairmen) to mainstream PVE initiatives through the local government which helps to share their views, initiatives and contribution to make sustainable intervention on Prevention Violent Extremism (PVE) into their ongoing activities by allocating fund in their budget. The local government representatives have been inspired by the District Level Advocacy meeting to contribute in PVE intervention by their initiatives and take the initiative to allocate funds for Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) intervention for its sustainability.





## Orientation with Local Government authorities on PVE

YPSA CEVEC project provided orientation to Local Government Authorities on PVE. These orientations encourage in delivery of messages on Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) by Local government representatives to their community people while conducting their activities and social programs. Local government representatives are now mainstreaming PVE in their regular events/ activities.

*“Most extremist groups use religious sentiment to fulfill their bad ambitions. The main target of extremist groups is to create conflict and use religion for their ill intentions. Community leaders and local administrative bodies have an important role in preventing violent extremism. If the community leaders discuss PVE in public gatherings then the communities become aware of violent extremism.”*

**- Upazila Nirbahi Officer,  
Sitakund, Chattogram.**

# Educational Institutions

Students are very potential for radicalization. Through the YPSA CEVEC project, they improved their knowledge of PVE issues, but a sustainable structure was absent in the educational institutions to have their own PVE session plan. In the recent history of Bangladesh, radical and extremist groups sought out very bright students from educational institutes. Out of these students, a lot of them get attached to these radical groups and spread radical ideologies to their peers. Some radical groups have even taken some professional groups, such as teachers, under their wings and used them to preach their ideology indirectly at educational institutes. Besides that, the trend through online radicalization, where a significant portion are students as they are very prompt to use social media.

YPSA has taken different initiatives (involving District and Sub District Educational Authority, Educational Institution Management Committees, teachers and students) for developing a system among the educational institutions, where teachers conduct sessions on PVE-focused life skills as part of their extracurricular activities.

**Reach**

**Teachers**  
**780**

**Students**  
**39250**



## Teachers Training

YPSA CEVEC project provides Training of Trainers (ToT) to the Teachers of Educational Institutions on Life Skills Education with a focus on PVE. The training helped the teachers to identify the risk of VE for the student and facilitate LSE sessions on PVE for their students in their respective educational institutions. Teachers have been involved with these initiatives as teachers are much more acceptable among the students and make the PVE session effective. Earlier, the YPSA CEVEC project provided training to the students but the knowledge was not sustained in educational institutions while trained students left the institutions. Considering the situation YPSA CEVEC project includes teachers from the institution to sustain PVE intervention.



**LSE Session** After receiving ToT on LSE, teachers conduct LSE sessions among the students in the class room in Educational institutions. Through this session, students can identify the negative consequences of violent extremism and declare self-confidence that they can say 'NO' to VE and also positive use of social media.



Joint monitoring with the Education Institution Management Committee at the Educational Institution during the Life Skills Education Session on PVE.



Through these initiatives, which included more than 400 student engagement events like quiz contests, essay contests, debate competitions, art competitions, and signature campaigns, more than 30,000 students learned about their roles in preventing violent extremism. The Main focus of these events is to disseminate PVE messages among the students and make them self-confident that they can say 'NO' to VE and also a positive use of social media.

More than 30,000 students were informed about their roles in preventing violent extremism through these programs through more than 400 student engagement programs such as quiz competitions, essay competitions, debate competitions, art competitions, signature campaigns.



***'As a student, we have some responsibilities towards our society. Our society does not expect any kind of bad activity from us. As a student, our behavior should be polite and our conversation should be elegant. It is also one of our responsibilities to work on PVE issues. I have learned in detail about violence and extremism from Student LSE sessions. From this session, now I know how the extremists recruit in their groups and how to protect ourselves from radicalization. I will share this learning with my friends and family.'***

***-Mr Mohammad Jahangir,  
a student of Class 9 of Mithachari Madrasa,  
Ramu, Cox's Bazar***



**Mr. Asheq Ullah Rafiq, Honorable MP of Cox's Bazar-02 visited a student event at the Educational Institution at Moheshkhali.**





***District Education Officer, Cox's Bazar visited an Educational Institution to observe a Life Skills Education Session on PVE after an advocacy meeting with the Education Department on the importance of PVE issues in Educational Institutions.***

***'The issue of violence and Extremism is a harmful issue for the family, society and also the country. So we must say 'NO' to violent extremism and make our students aware of PVE and also play their role for keeping harmony in educational institutions and communities.'***



***-Mr. Abu Zafar Md. Sadek,  
Vice Principle, Cox's Bazar City College.***

# Women

Traditional gender roles and societal expectations can limit women's opportunities for education, employment, and participation in public life. When women feel marginalized or restricted, they may be more susceptible to extremist ideologies that promise empowerment or a sense of purpose. Economic challenges, including limited access to education and employment opportunities, can contribute to women's vulnerability. Extremist groups may exploit economic hardships to recruit individuals who feel disappointed and economically marginalized. Limited access to education, especially for girls, can leave women without the tools to critically assess information and resist extremist propaganda. Lack of education can make women more susceptible to manipulation and recruitment. Besides that radicalization within families, social and political unrest, online radicalization, lack of awareness and counter-narratives, and exploitation of religion can influence women.

Extremist groups target women by building trusting relationships and later employ them to preach their narratives. Women have easier access and can change the mindsets of other women with more efficacy than their male counterparts. At the same time, they are also the main victims of violent extremism. YPSA CEVEC project has arranged many courtyard meetings to aware women of the PVE issue so that they can play a positive role and disseminate the knowledge among others. As women take care of their family members, they have opportunities to be aware of VE issues to their family members and can take initiatives to keep away from violent extremism and its negative impact.

**Reach**

**Women**  
**1,24,985**



## Courtyard meeting

YPSA CEVEC project organized courtyard meetings with women in Cox's Bazar and Chittagong (Cox's Bazar Sadar, Ramu, Maheshkhali, Chakaria in Cox's Bazar and Sitakund in Chattogram). Through courtyard meetings, women became aware of VE issues, their confidence levels increased, they could identify signs of a peaceful family and society, and shared messages of PVE among their family members and neighbors. Through this program, their leadership skills, decision-making and opinion-making skills have increased. Earlier, according to social norms, it was difficult for women to come out of the house and it was difficult for them to speak in front of others and to express their opinions. Court Yard meetings help women overcome their limitations.

***“In this COVID-19 pandemic, it is shown that gender violence has been increasing in many places and also one kind of instability exists among the youth. As a result, there is a possibility that they may engage in extremist groups. So we have to look after our family members, relatives and neighbors. We have learned details about PVE from this meeting and we should discuss this issue with our family members. I hope that, from now on every participant of this program will be aware to prevent violent extremism.”***

***-Mrs. Deluara Begum***  
***a local women leader from***  
***Shaplapur of Moheshkhali Upazilla***

# Religious Leader

Religious leaders often hold significant influence over their respective communities. Their moral authority and ability to shape public opinion can be pivotal in challenging extremist ideologies and promoting tolerance and understanding. Religious leaders are often viewed as credible and trustworthy figures within their communities. Their involvement in PVE activities can help build trust and credibility in the efforts to counter extremist narratives. Religious leaders, with their deep understanding of religious texts and traditions, can provide authentic interpretations and counter the misuse of religious teachings. Religious leaders can serve as bridge builders between different religious and ethnic communities. By fostering dialogue and promoting interfaith understanding, they can contribute to social cohesion and harmony, which are essential elements in preventing the spread of extremism. Religious leaders are often well-connected with the local population and can play a role in addressing the grievances that may contribute to radicalization. They can act as mediators, helping to resolve conflicts and create an environment where extremism finds less fertile ground. Religious leaders can contribute to building community resilience by promoting a sense of belonging, identity, and shared values. This can serve as a deterrent to the appeal of extremist ideologies that often prey on individuals seeking a sense of purpose or belonging. Religious leaders can actively promote the principles of peace, tolerance, and coexistence. Their messages can counteract the divisive narratives propagated by extremist groups and contribute to the creation of a more inclusive and harmonious society.

In Round 1 and Round 2, the YPSA CEVEC project improved the knowledge of religious leaders on PVE issues by providing different training and orientations, but the sustainable structure is absent in religious institutions. YPSA CEVEC project has taken different initiatives (involving relevant government authorities, and Religious Institution Management Committees) to continue the PVE interventions engaging religious leaders as a result religious leaders have been delivering PVE messages in their respective religious congregations.

**Reach**



**Religious Institutions**

**100**

**Religious Institution Management  
Committee Members**

**1096**



# RELIGIOUS LEADER ORIENTATION

CEVEC project provided orientation on PVE to religious leaders.



After having orientation, religious leaders can identify early signs of radicalization as well as their role in PVE. The religious leaders promised to work on PVE issues and play their roles regarding this.

# PROMOTING PVE MESSAGE BY RELIGIOUS LEADERS





***“The Project is very much needed for Cox’s Bazar. We the Religious leaders of different religions can bring changes among the youth to reduce VE inspired by the CEVEC Project because we have scope to speak about PVE in various religious forums”***

***- Priotosh Dey***

# Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMN)

The FDMN are vulnerable individuals who have fled conflict and persecution in Myanmar. FDMN camps can sometimes become breeding grounds for radicalization and recruitment by extremist groups. The intervention aims to decrease the vulnerability of FDMN, promoting social cohesion between camp and host community and conflict resolution through non-violence means in the camp. YPSA Consortium worked in 9 FDMN Camps. The targeted groups in the camps are Rohingya Imam (Religious Leaders), Rohingya Majhi (Local Leaders selected by Camp management authority), Rohingya Youth and Rohingya women. The YPSA consortium conducted sensitization meetings with FDMN Youth, Courtyard meetings with FDMN women, PVE orientation to Majhi and Imam and organized community engagement with community people.

**Reach**

**Youth: 10800**  
Male: 5400 Female: 5400

**Women: 3600**    **Imam: 180**    **Majhi: 180**



The participants are praying for a violence-free society and a peaceful world at the Imam (Religious Leaders) Orientation on PVE in the Rohingya Camp.



Rohingya People attend sports programs and through this program, they have become familiar with the PVE issue and take oaths for not being involved in any kind of violence and extremist activities.

# Covid -19 Response

COVID-19 poses several risks for violent extremism (VE) in Bangladesh due to the different social, economic, and political factors. The pandemic has caused widespread economic disruption in Bangladesh, with many people losing their jobs or facing reduced income due to lockdowns and restrictions. Economic hardship can exacerbate existing grievances and frustrations within the population, making individuals more susceptible to extremist ideologies that offer promises of economic relief or societal change. The pandemic has fueled social unrest and polarization in Bangladesh, particularly regarding government responses to the crisis and measures to contain the virus. Disagreements over lockdowns, vaccine distribution, and economic relief efforts can deepen divisions within society and create opportunities for extremist groups to exploit these tensions for recruitment and radicalization. The pandemic has disrupted access to essential social services, including education, healthcare, and community support programs. Disruptions to education, in particular, can leave young people vulnerable to radicalization, as they may be more easily influenced by extremist propaganda in the absence of formal schooling and social interactions. The spread of misinformation and conspiracy theories related to COVID-19 has been a global phenomenon, and Bangladesh is no exception.

Overall, the combination of economic hardship, social unrest, disruptions to social services, misinformation, and governance challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic creates a conducive environment for the spread of violent extremism in Bangladesh. YPSA CEVEC project with the support of GCERF has implemented different activities to respond to the impact of COVID-19 for reducing vulnerability, strengthening resilience within communities to mitigate the risk of VE such as food support, education support to students, awareness of COVID-19, and providing PVE messages through Religious Leaders, awareness campaign through the digital platforms, Social Hackathon for youth on COVID-19 and PVE followed by the awards to support best ideas, promoting COVID-19 prevention and PVE messages by local Cable TV Channel, Cash for Work for COVID-19 affected community members, livelihood support and skill development training to women, health and hygiene kits distribution, distribution of health safety materials to youth volunteers and religious institutions.

# Covid – 19 Responses



# Covid – 19 Responses

করোনাভাইরাস সংক্রমণের ঝুঁকি এড়াতে সরকারের নির্দেশনা মেনে চলুন

STAY HOME SAVE LIVES      জীবন বাঁচাতে ঘরে থাকুন

করোনা প্রতিরোধে আতংকিত না হয়ে সচেতন হউন



সর্দি কাশি মানেই করোনা আক্রমণ নয়      আতংকিত না হয়ে ভাজারের পরামর্শ নিতে হবে      প্রয়োজনে ফোন করুন ৩৩৩ অথবা ১৬২৬৩ অথবা ১০৬৫৫

আসুন এই সংকটময় সময়ে কোন গুজব না ছড়াই, যার যার সাধ্যমত অন্যের সহায়তায় এগিয়ে আসি এক সামাজিক সম্প্রীতি জুটুক রাবি

www.ypsa.org      সচেতনতায় ইপসা সিতিক ক্যাম্পেইন      It is an YPSA Campaign

Digital Leaflet for social media campaign



করোনাভাইরাস সংক্রমণের ঝুঁকি এড়াতে ঘরে থাকুন এবং মুখে থাকুন

সচেতনতায় ইপসা সিতিক ক্যাম্পেইন

Printed Leaflet

Community Radio Program on Rumor and Fake news

Beautification training (Skills Training) to youth, affected by Covid-19.

The Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) have visited Cash for Work program for COVID 19 affected people





# Covid – 19 Responses



Education Support provided to Students who were affected by Covid-19 and stopped their education. This activity helped them to continue their study.



**মিডিয়া আড্ডা অন কভিড-১৯**  
রচনা প্রতিযোগিতায় বিজয়ী

প্রথম	দ্বিতীয়	তৃতীয়
		
উমে সালমা	টুপ্পা আকতার	আরিফুল হক

আয়োজনে- উই ক্যান কক্সবাজার  
সার্বিক সহযোগিতায়- ইপসা সিভিক কনসোর্টিয়াম

Youth organized Media Adda (Chat) on Covid-19



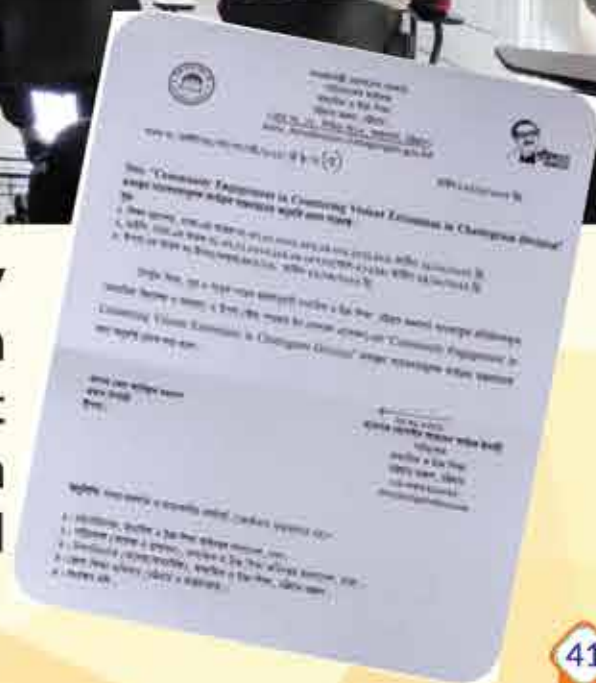


**‘Social Hackathon for Youth on COVID-19 with PVE issue’ created a platform where youth generated their ideas on PVE and COVID-19 and implemented the ideas in their community which inspired the youth and made them confident to work for society.**

# Advocacy with Govt. Officials



The director of secondary and higher secondary education, Chattogram region speaking at an advocacy meeting with education department officials. This meeting helps to get a written permission to implement PVE activities in educational institutions.





Advocacy meetings with various government officials help to get official orders to implement sustainable PVE initiatives in their respective departments.

# Memos



# Story of Changes

উগ্রবাদ  
সহিংসতা নয়, শান্তি চাই

আসুন আমরা সবাই মিলে  
উগ্রবাদ ও সহিংসতামুক্ত  
সমৃদ্ধ বাংলাদেশ গড়ি

সহিংসতা নয়, শান্তি চাই

আসুন আমরা সবাই মিলে  
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# POSITIVE INTENTION BRINGS POSITIVE CHANGES

In 2018, Mr. Arkanul Islam Rian, an 18-year-old from Islampur, Bangladesh, formed The Community Youth Development Awareness (CYDA) to support deprived children from education and work for society. The organization aimed to create a sense of purpose among children and youth, but they had no expertise in this area. In 2023, CYDA was registered as a youth-led organization under the YPSA CEVEC project, and received training on organizational management, club registration, resource mobilization, and life skills education. The organization's focus is to support deprived children from poverty, raise awareness on child abuse, child marriage, youth development, and peace building.

The President of CYDA, Mr. Arkanul Islam Rian, expressed gratitude to YPSA CEVEC project staff for providing spaces to work on PVE and their cooperation. Currently, CYDA provides free education and food for poor children, distributes educational materials, conducts courtyard meetings with parents, and conducts awareness sessions and community engagement events. They also conduct tree plantation activities for peace-building and harmony.

***“Undoubtedly, members of the CYDA are doing a praiseworthy job at such a young age whereas their fellow age holders are wasting their time by playing video games & others. I believe they will bring an outstanding change to our locality” - Mr. Nurul Alam, Chairman of Islampur Union parishod***



## ACTIVE BUY IN OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTED REPRESENTATIVE

The Sitakund upazila, the only industrial area in Chattogram district, has been included in the second round of the CEVEC project due to recent violent incidents. The area's geographical location, surrounded by sea and hills, makes it a hotbed for violent extremism. The Sayedpur Union, the largest union of Sitakund Upazila, is actively involved in the project, providing support and assistance to ward members during youth group formation and selecting educational institutions. Mr. Tajul Islam Nizami, the Chairman of the Sayedpur Union, actively participates in various programs and provides support to the youths, inspiring them to actively participate in their community. His support and engagement have contributed to the smooth implementation of the project, demonstrating how a locally elected representative can create a supportive environment for working against violent extremism.



Mr. H. M. Tajul Islam Nizami, Chairman of Sayedpur conducting taking oath on PVE at the intergeneration dialogue



Mr. H. M. Tajul Islam Nizami, Chairman of Sayedpur in the discussion meeting with Youth Forum members

*"This is the first time ever I have seen a non-government organization come up with a project to work on preventing violent extremism. I would like to thank YPSA for this. I am feeling fortunate enough to get involved with such an impactful project."*

**- Mr. H. M. Tajul Islam Nizami, Chairman of Sayedpur, Sitakund Upazilla**

# TUTELARY OF HUMANITY



Photo: Mowlana Mohammad Jahirul Hoque

On 13 October 2021, Mowlana Mohammad Jahirul Hoq, a teacher at Surutia Fazil Madrasha in Cox's Bazar, noticed extremist groups provoking the Muslim community to attack non-Muslim temples and homes in Hindu Para & Barua Para. He met with local leaders and Muslim community people to assuage the unrest and convince them that violent extremism is bad. As a respected religious leader, he received warm messages from the community. Local leaders and peace-minded community people quickly decided to protect the temples and property of other religious people, guarding them for a week.

From 13 to 19 October 2021, Muslim mobs instigated communal violence against Hindu communities across Bangladesh during the Durga Puja festival. More than 120 temples and makeshift worship arrangements were vandalized, and the Bangladesh government deployed paramilitary Bangladesh Border Guards (BGB) forces to quell violence. As of 22 October 2021, at least 10 people have been killed, including 7 Hindus. Mowlana Mohammad Jahirul Hoque, a stakeholder of the YPSA CEVEC consortium, learned about the harmfulness of PVE and decided to work on the issues through religious interpretation.

*He states, 'I feel proud to work for PVE & I realize since I have performed as an Imam at Cox's Bazar Kutubdia Para Jame Mosque that as a religious leader, it is easy for me to deliver messages on PVE issue to the community people through religious context & community people also warmly receive those messages. These messages strike them to think about the harm of VE. I know the importance of Religious Harmony from the YPSA CEVEC Consortium during Teachers' Orientation, held on 24, September 2021.'*



## EDUCATION INSTITUTION STARTS PVE SESSIONS AS EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Gorokghat High School, Moheshkhali Upazila, has been incorporating Life Skills Education (LSE) sessions on PVE (Peace, Violence, and Equality) as an extra-curricular activity since 2019. The English teacher, Mr. Zia Uddin, has been involved in the PVE activities under the YPSA CEVEC project since 2019. Uddin has participated in teacher orientations, received ToT on PVE, and recently received refresher training. He has been involved in organizing student events and influencing the headmaster and school management committee to include PVE intervention as an extra-curricular activity in their plans for classes eight, nine, and ten. The PVE intervention has been approved as an extra-curricular activity for the institution, helping students become aware of PVE and prevent radicalization. Gorokghat High School Head Teacher Shristi Ram Dey praised Zia Uddin's dedication and commitment to PVE, stating that the institution will continue to incorporate PVE as an extra-curricular activity in the long run.



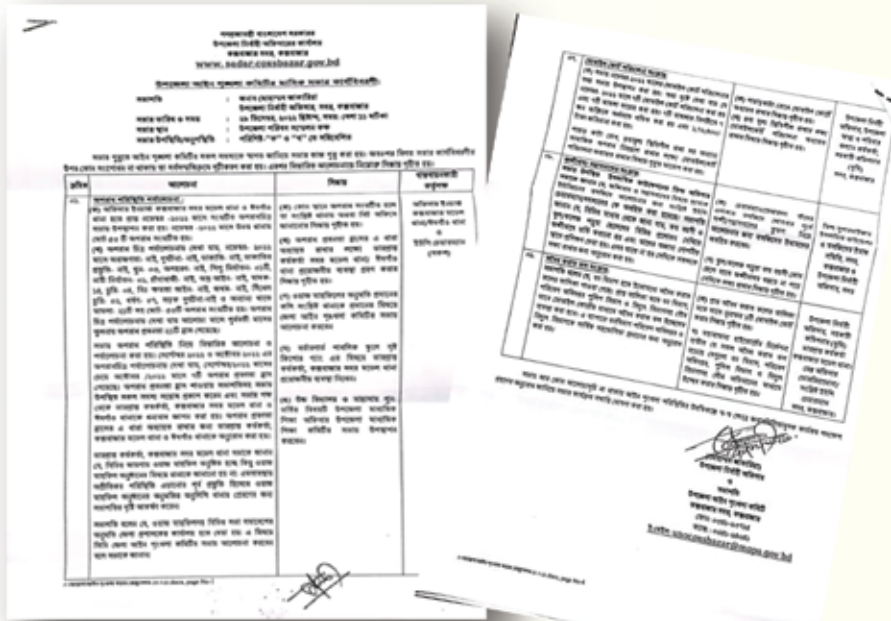
*Teacher Conducting Life Skills Education Session on PVE at Gorokghat High School in Moheshkhali under Cox's Bazar District*

***“Training on PVE showed me the way to aware the students on PVE. I believe it helps the students to be aware of VE and keep them away from radicalization”.***

**-Mr. Zia Uddin, Teacher of Gorokghat High School, Moheshkhali Upazila,**

# EFFORT BRING SUCCESS

On 29 December 2022, the Upazilla Law Enforcement Committee discussed on violence and extremism at a meeting and this meeting Chaired by Upazilla Nirhbahi Officer, Cox's Bazar Sadar. The agenda on violence and extremism placed by Maulana Md. Abul Foyez and he is Field supervisor of the Islamic Foundation, Cox's Bazar Sadar. During this discussion he shared that Islamic Foundation, Cox's Bazar, issued a memo to religious institutions to discuss the PVE issue before Khutba and requested local government representatives to supervise discussions. The meeting decided to follow up with Imams of mosques to discuss the PVE and its harmfulness before Khutba in Jumma prayer in their respective areas. Maulana Md. Abul Foyez, Field supervisor of the Islamic Foundation, Cox's Bazar Sadar, participated in the orientation on PVE under the YPSA CEVEC project. He was a stakeholder in the project and participated in an orientation with the religious leader and Advocacy meeting with the Islamic Foundation, Cox's Bazar.



**“My curiosity has risen on PVE after joining the orientation on PVE under the YPSA CEVEC project. There are many queries roaming in my mind about VE and got answers which made me pleased. Due to my curiosity, I discussed this issue with YPSA staff when they visited our office and through telephone conversation. The Curiosity and willingness of the Deputy Director of the Islamic Foundation, Cox's Bazar on the PVE issue influenced me to make a special effort to PVE. I'll keep my effort to contribute to PVE”**

**- Md. Abul Foyez, Field supervisor of the Islamic Foundation, Cox's Bazar Sadar**

Copy of Meeting Minutes , which was circulated in January 2023

# LALITO SHOPNO LIBRARY



Lalito Shopno, a youth-based organization from Chakaria, was awarded 20,000 BDT taka for their idea through Social Hackathon for establishing a library to eliminate violent extremism. The organization was given 20,000 BDT taka for implementing the library at the local community level. The library was inaugurated on 19 March 2022, with fifteen readers taking books and taking an oath not to engage in violence and extremist activities. The library's books are based on social reform stories or fictional stories or life skills. In addition, it makes the readers aware on extremism and violence. A book reviews competition began on 22 March 2022, with prizes given to 20 participants. The library has attracted esteemed personalities, including SM Moinuddin Chowdhury, chairman of Dhemushia Union. The library is the first and only public library of Matamuhuri Upazila, and it is expected to bring positive change to students, unemployed youth, and educated people in the area. The YPSA-CEVEC project supports the organization in implementing this great initiative.

Lalito Shopno Library is the first and only public library of Matamuhuri Upazila. The local chairman and president of Jinnat Ali Chowdhury High School allotted a room for this library at school. A publisher called “Chandra Bindu Prakashani” also donated several books as a result of publicity about the library through various media and social media.

Abul Kashem, Organizers of Lalito Shopno Library said. "it was our dream to make a library where people could be used to reading and the habit of reading will develop. YPSA CEVEC project makes our dream true. I am grateful to the YPSA-CEVEC project for supporting us in the implementation of such a great initiative."

SM Moinuddin Chowdhury, chairman of Dhemushia Union, said, ***"Before, there was no library in our area due to which educated youth are wasting their leisure time and engaging in various anti-social activities. Now, They go to the library and read books."***

# MITIGATION THROUGH NON-VIOLENT MEANS

Mohammad Ekram (pseudonym), the head Majhi of a Rohingya camp in Cox's Bazar district, believes non-violent means are more effective than violence in resolving problems. He has learned this from an orientation conducted by the YPSA-CEVEC Consortium in Rohingya Camp. One such action occurred when sub-majhi Keramot Ali engaged two families in conflict to get money from them. He took advantage of their illiteracy and helplessness, taking their data cards and depositing them with a friend. The families in Rohingya Camp were irritated by his actions and fearful of potential harm. Ekram organized a meeting with Keramot Ali, other sub-majhis, locals, and camp authorities to discuss the negative impact of his misdeeds. Keramot Ali promised not to repeat such actions in Camp.

*“non-violent means are the best ways to solve the problem. If I would prefer to physically punish or violent ways to solve any problem then there is a high chance that the problem would persist in the long run in the camp. But through non-violent means, there is a scope for discussion and let people think about the misdeed they did.”*

*Mohammad Ekram (Pseudonym), the Head Majhi of a Rohingya Camp, Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar*

# NEXUSES OF LIFE

Imran Ullah, president of the Choto Moheshkhali Youth Forum, was born in poverty in a crime-ridden area in Moheshkhali. His family struggled to manage their finances and educate their five children. Imran's family crisis led him to engage in criminal activities and eventually joined the Youth Forum. He received training under YPSA CEVEC Project on Life Skills Education and cultivated betel leaf, which helped him change his views on violence and extremism.

After completing the training, Imran started cultivating betel leaf and conveying messages about PVE to his family, friends, and neighbors. He also formed a football club to raise awareness about PVE and promote a peaceful, healthy society. Imran's father, Md. Lokman Hakim, expressed gratitude for the YPSA CEVEC project for initiating activities that help vulnerable youth find a way to survive in a respectable life and encourage others to build a peaceful society.

Mr. Rahim, a member of the Football Club of Deil Para, praised Imran for his role in promoting PVE and promoting involvement in sports and cultural activities. He often organizes events through football clubs, delivering messages on PVE through speeches, posters, banners, and commentary on football matches. Imran's efforts have helped raise awareness and promote a safer society for his family members.



***The YPSA CEVEC project has changed my views and changed my lifestyle. If I didn't know about the messages on PVE then maybe I would involve myself in illegal activities, maybe I would spend my life in jail or I could be murdered. Many youths involve themselves in risky lives for being helpless and earning money at any cost."***

***Imran Ullah, President of the Choto Moheshkhali Youth Forum***

# WAVES OF PEACE

Bariyadhala Fakir Jame mosque in Sitakund under Chattogram Division has been delivering PVE messages twice a month during khutba in a Jummah Prayer. The mosque's Khatib, Moulana Touhidul Islam, has been involved with the YPSA CEVEC project since 2020 and has received orientation and refresher training on PVE. The management committee of the mosque agreed to continue PVE intervention by delivering PVE messages during khutba in a Jumah prayer.

Khatib Moulana Touhidul Islam, a 35-year-old Khatib, is known for his respectful and acceptable behavior towards the community. On April 28, 2023, the Upazilla Manager of Sitakunda, Mr. Shah Sultan Shamim, visited the mosque to observe the implementation of PVE messages. He noted that the discussion on PVE is essential for maintaining peace and harmony within the community and respecting other religions and their followers.

Khatib Moulana Touhidul Islam expressed gratitude to the YPSA CEVEC project for providing space to work on PVE and for the YPSA CEVEC project's initiative in orienting committee members on PVE. He expressed confidence in continuing to deliver messages on PVE in public gatherings for the sake of the community and keeping it free from VE.



*"We will continue to deliver messages on PVE in public gatherings for the sake of our own community and keeping our community free from VE'.*

***Khatib Moulana Touhidul Islam,***  
*Religious Leader*  
*Bariyadhala Fakir Jame mosque,*  
*Sitakund*

# YOUTH DEFENDER

Mr. Azizul Hoque, the son of Abul Kalam and Hamida Begum, is the president of the Islamabad Union Youth Forum in Eidgah, Cox's Bazar. In October 2021, a communal riot in Bangladesh for the desecration of the Holy Quran in Comilla led to a panic among Hindu and Buddhist religious people in Dandi Bazar. Azizul Hoque and Soykot Kanti Das, members of the Islamabad Youth Forum, stayed in Dandi Bazar, involving other youth and community people to repel outside attacks and create harmony among religious people. In November 2021, he organized a peace and harmony meeting with religious leaders, community members, and local leaders, resulting in the safety of Dandi Bazar and non-Muslim religious believers. Azizul Hoque became President of the Islamabad Youth Forum under the YPSA CEVEC consortium and organized awareness-building activities, such as PVE meetings and courtyard meetings for women. He received a computer course from the consortium, which helped him build awareness and run a computer shop in his area. His father, Abul Kalam, is proud of his son's efforts and grateful to the YPSA CEVEC consortium.



**Photo: Mr. Azizul Hoque**

*Mr. Azizul Hoque, the son of Abul Kalam and Hamida Begum, is the president of the Islamabad Union Youth Forum in Eidgah, Cox's Bazar. In October 2021, a communal riot in Bangladesh for the desecration of the Holy Quran in Comilla led to a panic among Hindu and Buddhist religious people in Dandi Bazar. Azizul Hoque and Soykot Kanti Das, members of the Islamabad Youth Forum, stayed in Dandi Bazar, involving other youth and community people to repel outside attacks and create harmony among religious people. In November 2021, he organized a peace and harmony meeting with religious leaders, community members, and local leaders, resulting in the safety of Dandi Bazar and non-Muslim religious believers. Azizul Hoque became President of the Islamabad Youth Forum under the YPSA CEVEC consortium and organized awareness-building activities, such as PVE meetings and courtyard meetings for women. He received a computer course from the consortium, which helped him build awareness and run a computer shop in his area. His father, Abul Kalam, is proud of his son's efforts and grateful to the YPSA CEVEC consortium.*

## THE STORY OF A BOY WHO DROPPED OUT OF SCHOOL AND CAME BACK

Md. Ismail, born in 2008 in a poor family, faced financial struggles due to his father's financial struggles. His father went missing when Ismail was four years old, and his elder brother is getting married, leaving his family in a different life. Ismail is now 13 years old and reads in class Nine. He works as an employee in a nearby tea shop, earning Tk 2,000, to pay for school and family needs.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Ismail struggled to attend school and receive education support from a good teacher due to financial constraints. In September 2021, under the YPSA CEVEC project, Field Officers visited Ismail's house and discussed an agreement to provide educational assistance. Ismail's mother expressed her disappointment in the lack of education support for students from families affected by COVID-19, but the project's arrangement of free education support was fortunate for Ismail, allowing him to continue his education.

Ismail's mother thanked the YPSA CEVEC project for providing him with the opportunity for educational and coaching support, expressing her gratitude to the consortium.

***"My son's chances of getting an education were completely cut off. There is no chance for him; I can't support him from the family either. But the great work you are doing, arranging for free coaching is very fortunate for Ismail. Ismail will be able to study from now on. "***

*Stated by Mother of Ismail*



## AN ACTIVE BUDDHIST RELEGIOUS LEADER



Sree Taposh Sen, a monk from Rajarkul Union Historical Rangkut Buddhist temple, has been involved with the YPSA CEVEC project since November 2019. He received training on the Prevention of Violent Extremism and participated in inter-religious dialogue. Sen realized the risk of spreading anomy, smuggling, and terrorist activities into the community and took an oath to make a peaceful society. He continues to deliver messages through his religious speech and advice to his followers and community members, aiming to prevent communal incidents and maintain brotherhood. The Ramu Tragedy, a tragic incident in 2012, occurred when communal people attacked and burned down biddhist temples. Principal Sree Jyotisen of Historical Rangkut Buddhist Temple praises Sen for his honesty and principled nature, and thanks the YPSA CEVEC project for involving monks in this initiative. Sen shared the training and information on PVE with other monks and plans to continue discussing the issue with his followers.

***'I got training and information on PVE from the YPSA CEVEC project and I shared all those messages with our other monk. I requested them to disseminate the messages on PVE to their follower and practitioners. I also discussed this issue with my followers and practitioners and I will continue.'***

**' - Sree Taposh Sen, Rajarkul Union Historical Rangkut Buddhist temple under Ramu Upazilla, Cox's Bazar**

## ENDURING LIBRARY AND PLAYGROUND HAS INITIATED BY SHAPLAPUR UNION PARISHAD CHAIRMAN OF MOHESHKHALI UPAZILLA



*Infrastructure developing for Library*

Adv. Md. Abdul Khalek Chowdhury, Chairman of the Shaplapur Union Parishad, has been involved in the YPSA CEVEC project since 2016. He has been involved in various programs, including education support for Covid-19 affected students, teacher orientations, life skills training, cash support programs, and alternative livelihood activities. Adv. Md. Abdul Khalek Chowdhury is supportive of the smooth operation of the project and has recently participated in a district-level meeting with government and local government representatives to reconsider the sustainability of PVE initiatives. He has decided to establish a permanent library and playground to prevent violence and extremism, educating youth about the risks and consequences of engaging in extremism. He has initiated development infrastructure and allocated a field for play in front of the library. Adv. Md. Abdul Khalek Chowdhury believes that timely action by YPSA to prevent extremism and violence has opened the door for him as a citizen and social worker. He plans to engage with the Union Parishad to discuss the issue of preventing violence and extremism through youth gatherings and regular awareness activities.

***"Since people of any age, any class, any profession have the opportunity to come to the Union Parishad, there is an opportunity to spread the relevant messages on PVE among many people. Because people see the light of hope through the act, discussion, and advice of an ideal local Government Representative."***

Adv. Md. Abdul Khalek Chowdhury, Chairman of the Shaplapur Union Parishad, Chakaria, Cox's Bazar.

# YPSA CEVEC Project Launching Ceremony Round-01 (July 2016- April 2019)



# YPSA CEVEC Project Launching Ceremony Round-02 (Nov. 2019- Dec. 2022)



উগ্রবাদ বিরোধী জাতীয় সম্মেলন - ২০১৯  
NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PREVENTING / COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM 2019



## National Conference on Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism 2019

## Round Table Meeting with Civil Society on their role in PVE





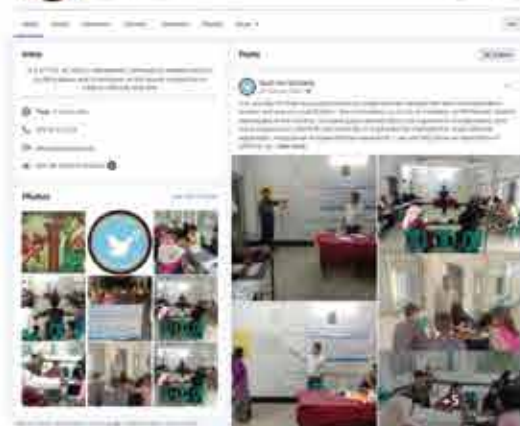


**YPSA  
attended  
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