

2022-2023

INSPIRING CHANGE

YPSA Annual Highlights



Young Power in Social Action (YPSA)

House - F10 (P), Road - 13, Block-B, Chandgaon R/A
Chattogram - 4212, Bangladesh.

www.ypsa.org

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Message from Chief Executive

Greetings from the YPSA, an organization for sustainable development. In this story-based annual highlights-2023, YPSA's major achievements of the last year have been summarized with the title Inspiring Changes. The year has passed through country-to-country wars, global post-COVID impact, migration issues, global economic recession, etc. Furthermore, I am very optimistic that in the years to come, using this experience and the lessons learned from it, YPSA will strive to further expand its qualitative reach with sustainable, creative, and innovative programs based on the needs of local populations and in collaboration with development partners.

I would like to thank all members of the YPSA family, staff, volunteers, target groups, government, and development partners for their continued sincere cooperation and support. I would like to give special thanks to the editorial board members, managing editor, and other contributors who were involved in the process of preparing the YPSA Annual Highlights-2023.

Heartfelt congratulations and gratitude to all of you for being with us in this long journey of YPSA. YPSA believes that your support and cooperation will continue with us in realizing the rights of the poor, vulnerable, and disadvantaged groups, building a developed, prosperous Bangladesh, and a world of equality.

(Md. Arifur Rahman)

Chief Executive, YPSA

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Background of YPSA

Young Power in Social Action (YPSA), an organization in Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN-ECOSOC) since 2013, is a voluntary non-profit organization for sustainable development registered with the different departments of the People's Republic of Bangladesh including NGO Affairs Bureau contributing to national goals for making a difference in the lives of the population since its establishment in 1985. YPSA, a fleet of more than 1400 full-time professional staff specializes in the six thematic areas of Health; Education; Human rights and Governance; Economic Empowerment; Environment and Climate change; and Disaster Risk Reduction and Humanitarian Response as well as has extensive experience in the field of Capacity Development, Procurement, Contract Management, Resource Mobilization, Financial Management and Research, Monitoring & Evaluation. YPSA has membership with more than 70 national and international organizations and networks including UN-DGC; UNCCD: FAO Rural Youth and Food Security Global Network, Italy; INFOYOUTH Network, UNESCO-INJEP, France; UNDCCP, Austria; UNFCCC, Germany; UNYU, USA. Besides, YPSA is experienced in establishing formal partnerships with various departments of the United Nations such as ILO, IOM, WFP UNICEF, UNESCO, UNFPA, WHO, UNDP, World Bank, and UN-NGLS.

Legal Status

YPSA is a voluntary, nonprofit, nonpolitical organization for sustainable development registered with the different departments of the People's Republic of Bangladesh including NGO Affairs Bureau, Register of Joint Stock Companies and Firms and Micro Credit Regulatory Authority, Department of Social Welfare, Copyright Office. The detail of registration related information is given below;

- NGO Affairs Bureau: NAB/916-95-26/02/1995, Renewal date 26.02.2030
- Social welfare Department: Cht: 1475/89, 10/09/1989
- Society Act Registration: CHC-227/2004, 29/02/2004
- Micro Credit Regulatory Authority: MRA 0000339 Certificate No: 00299-01249-00335
23/10/08

Vision of YPSA

YPSA envisions a society without poverty where everyone's basic needs and rights are ensured.

Mission of YPSA

YPSA exists to participate with the poor and vulnerable population with all commitment to bring about their own and society's sustainable development. Respect for diversity

Core Values of YPSA

- Patriotism and commitment to national interest, sovereignty and national pride
- Justice, transparency and accountability
- Mutual respect and gender friendliness
- Quality and excellence
- Humility and confidence
- Support for environment and ecology

Governance System

YPSA is governed by an Executive Committee consisting of seven members and elected by general members according to its constitution. The Executive Committee formulates the strategic directions and principles of the organization and the Chief Executive conducts the overall management and representation of the organization.

Geographical Coverage

- Division: 07
- District: 30
- Upazila/Thana: 186
- Union and Ward: 1,740
- Village: 15,660

Population Coverage

- Direct: 1.674 million
- Indirect: 8.50 million (approx.)

YPSA Offices

- Head office: 01
- Core Program Office: 01
- Dhaka Office: 01
- Field / Branch Office: 69
- Project Office: 61
- Training Centers: 03 (2 Residential, 1 Non-Residential)
- Health Center: 06
- Community Radio: 01 (Radio Sagar Giri FM 99.2- Located in Sitakund)
- Internet Radio: 01 (Radio Dwip - Located in Sandwip)

Donors and Development Partners

- Bangladesh Government • PKSF • USAID • UNFPA • UNDP • VSO • Action Aid Bangladesh • Oxfam • BRAC • Save the Children • Concern-Worldwide
- DAISY Consortium, Switzerland • IOM • Bangladesh NGO Foundation • Plan International Bangladesh • WINROCK International • Handicap International
- Japan Embassy • Displacement Solutions • NASP/World Bank • HSBC
- BSRM Foundation • Prime Minister's Office/A2I • ICT Division/GOB • World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) • Relief International • World Vision
- Global Affairs Canada • Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF) • Habitat for Humanity in Bangladesh • The Kadorie Charitable Foundation (KCF) • British Council • World Food Programme (WFP) • Democracy International • Help-Age International Bangladesh • New Venture Fund /Climate Justice Resilient Fund • Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK)/UNFPA • BSR
- Australian High Commission • Unilever Bangladesh • Solidar Suisse • ADD International • Summit LNG Terminal Co. (Pvt) Ltd. • DW Akademie • SUNY Korea • International Rescue Committee, Inc. (IRC) • Share-Net International
- Human Relief Foundation-HRF, UK • The Federal German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) • Muslim Aid UK • Qatar Charity
- EMK Center • Pathfinder International • KODDI, Korea • ICDDR/ NASC • US Forest • Muslim Aid USA • The Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN)
- BBC Media Action

YPSA Programmatic Themes

1. Health
2. Education
3. Human Rights and Good Governance
4. Economic Empowerment
5. Environment, and Climate Change
6. Disaster Risk Reduction and Humanitarian Response

Health

Population Reached (Directly): 65,475

YPSA believes that access to healthcare services is a fundamental right of every human being and essential for building a developed nation. As Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries in the world, the health risks here are serious. Health problems in Bangladesh include communicable and non-communicable diseases, malnutrition, sanitation, reproductive health problems, etc. Marginalized populations are particularly vulnerable to these health problems. In that context, since its inception, YPSA has been working at the grassroots level as a support service as well as advocating with the government to improve the health system needed by marginalized groups. During 2022-2023, YPSA implemented 5 health-related projects and **directly reached a total of 65,475 population, where males were 44% and females were 56%.**



▪ Education

Population Reached (Directly): 24,683

Education is the basic right of every human being. Education is recognized as a fundamental right in the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. YPSA works, in coordination with the government, to ensure and promote universal education for all. YPSA's education program aims to increase the literacy rate of marginalized groups through formal and non-formal education systems; help to increase the number of students in formal educational institutions and increase the quality of education; prepare youth, adolescents, and vulnerable groups for career development and entrepreneurship through technical and skill-enhancing education; ensuring inclusive education for persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups using ICT. YPSA has been implementing the Emergency in Education program for forcibly displaced Rohingya children in addition to education programs for Bangladeshi children. YPSA implemented 5 educational projects during the reporting period 2022-2023 and **directly reached a total of 24,683 population, where children were 62% adolescents were 23%, and adults women and men were 15%.**



▪ Human Rights and Good Governance

Population Reached (Directly): 280,337

Ensuring good governance is important for the establishment of human rights. YPSA believes that human rights are one of the tools to ensure equality, justice, democracy, and good governance. The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh identifies "human rights" as one of the main goals of state governance. For this, the protection, development, and confirmation of human rights is the responsibility of the state. YPSA works as a supplementary force with the government to protect, develop, and ensure human rights. It works to promote equality, justice, protection of rights, equality of law, and access to services for marginalized, vulnerable, special populations, women, youth, and children. Through human rights and good governance activities, YPSA implemented 18 projects on human rights and good governance during the 2022-2023 reporting period and **directly reached a total of 280,337 population, where males were 47% and females were 53%.**



▪ Economic Empowerment

Population Reached (Directly): 206,155

YPSA believes that one of the prerequisites for development is economic empowerment. YPSA works to build a dynamic, sustainable, innovative technology-focused economy, where youth employment, women's economic empowerment, economic inclusion of special populations, and decent employment are prioritized. YPSA implemented 18 projects on economic empowerment during the reporting period 2022-2023 and **directly reached a total of 206,155 population, where males were 32% and females were 68%.**



▪ Environment, and Climate Change

Population Reached (Directly): 23,321

Due to climate change, the world is in a cycle of various crises such as natural disasters and environmental pollution, food shortages, employment crisis, etc. Global concern over global warming and climate change has gained a new dimension in recent times. According to the Global Climate Risk Index, Bangladesh ranks first among the top 10 affected countries in terms of damages due to climate change. Bangladesh alone will be affected by sea level rise, salinity problems, river direction changes due to Himalayan ice melting, floods, etc. Various natural disasters have increased in Bangladesh due to climate change. YPSA has been working alongside governments in climate change mitigation and adaptation and promoting appropriate resilience mechanisms and environmental management systems through environment, and climate change programmes. YPSA implemented 4 projects on environment and climate change during the reporting period 2022-2023 and **directly reached a total of 23,321 population, where males were 52% and females were 48%.**



▪ Disaster Risk Reduction and Humanitarian Response

Population Reached (Directly): 174,460

Bangladesh is a disaster-prone country due to its geographical location. Various natural disasters have increased in Bangladesh due to climate change. Moreover, the number of man-made disasters is also increasing. YPSA has been working in coordination with the government and donor agencies to provide humanitarian assistance to the recently forcibly displaced Rohingya from Myanmar and implementing disaster risk reduction and emergency response interventions for the vulnerable population. During the 2022-2023 reporting period, YPSA implemented 4 projects related to disaster risk reduction and humanitarian assistance and **directly reached a total of 174,460 population, where males were 50% and females were 50%.**



From Victim to Policy Advocate

Fatema Tuz Zohra Akhi is a well-known advocate against child marriage, particularly among youths in Chattogram. However, the beginning of her journey was challenging, as she was emotionally pressured into marrying at the age of 16. Her family and relatives were in the process of arranging the marriage when she was in the eighth grade. With strong protests and support from friends and teachers, she was able to overcome the situation.

Recognizing the potential destruction of a girl's dreams and the associated mental, physical, and social vulnerabilities, she realized the importance of raising awareness about such events. Fortunately, she discovered the CEMB project and expressed her interest in working with it. After attending the orientation session, she actively participated in various activities, learned about laws and regulations related to marriage, and acquainted herself with relevant stakeholders. Gradually, she gained confidence and began advocating against child marriage.

By this point, she has successfully prevented seven child marriages with the support of the CMPC network. She recounted an experience where one of her friends, previously excelling in class, suddenly became absent from school. Initially thinking she was sick, they later discovered her parents were planning to marry her off. Akhi and her friends intervened, trying to dissuade the parents. Despite their efforts, the parents were swayed by the financial capacity of the prospective groom. However, Akhi, equipped with knowledge gained from the CMPC orientation and workshop, called the hotline number, and contacted the local police station and administration, leading to the swift intervention that halted the child marriage. Despite their success, Akhi emphasized the lasting psychological trauma her friend endured, facing two years of silent treatment from her father. This experience underscored the need for comprehensive social awareness and sustainable plans.



Presently, Akhi serves as an advocate against child marriage, actively participating in meetings, workshops, seminars, and campaigns on the issue. Beyond advocacy, she seeks out and nurtures new leaders in this field. She mentioned the existence of a club named "Bhorer Pakhi," where they organize campaigns and social awareness programs with the support of the YPSA-CEMB project and the Department of Women Affairs. Regular sessions cover various topics, including child marriage, gender-based violence, and adolescent health. Akhi highlighted the challenges of running a juvenile club without support and expressed gratitude for creating a friendly environment where information can be disseminated through recreational activities. She also expressed interest in creating a pool of youth leaders working on similar issues, emphasizing the importance of collaboration for a consolidated impact in society

The Culinary Journey of Chef Rafiya Yesmin Rumpa



Rafiya Yesmin Rumpa, a determined 23-year-old resident of Cox's Bazar, had a dream to become a chef and run her restaurant. With the backdrop of her hometown known for its scenic beauty, she saw a potential opportunity to make her culinary dreams a reality.

While pursuing her studies, Rumpa aspired to be a chef and open a restaurant in Cox's Bazar. However, she realized the importance of acquiring professional training and education in the field of food and beverage production. Determined to achieve her goals, she began searching for opportunities to gain a degree in her chosen field.

Fate smiled upon Rumpa when one day her teacher informed her about the USAID-funded YES Activity managed by YPSA, which provided skills development training to local youths to eliminate unemployment. This opportunity aligned perfectly with Rumpa's aspirations. Without hesitation, Rumpa contacted the YPSA office and expressed her keen interest in obtaining training in food and beverage production. She promptly completed the required forms and embarked on her journey of skill development.

Rumpa's dedication and hard work paid off, as she excelled in the training and successfully passed the training exams. Through this experience, she gained a wealth of knowledge beyond just cooking; she learned the significance of hygiene, sanitation, and safety in food service, as well as how to provide excellent service to guests.

With her newly acquired skills and determination, Rumpa was ready to pursue her dream job. A friend informed her of a job vacancy at the prestigious Best Western Hotel in Cox's Bazar. She applied for the position and received an interview call. Nervous but prepared, Rumpa faced the interview. To her delight, she found the questions to be easier than what she had learned during her training. She answered confidently, showcasing her proficiency in the culinary arts. Her dedication and knowledge paid off, and she was offered the role of a Kitchen Helper at Best Western.

Before joining her job, Rumpa faced the challenge of convincing her family. Initially hesitant, her family had doubts about her career choice. However, with her determination and the knowledge she had gained from the course, she successfully persuaded her family to support her aspirations.

Rumpa's ambitions extend beyond Cox's Bazar. Her goal is to work in a prestigious restaurant in China, furthering her culinary expertise and exploring international culinary horizons. Her unwavering determination and commitment to her craft will undoubtedly lead her to success on an international stage.

Getting Rid of Drug Addiction

Md. Abu Hasem, a 32-year-old truck driver from the village of Daulatdia in Alokdia, Chuadanga Sadar, had his life marred by drug addiction. His addiction began in his school days, as he started hanging out with friends who introduced him to various intoxicants.

Initially, he would consume whatever was available to him. However, the situation took a dangerous turn when he started injecting drugs intravenously. This shift led him to engage in theft to fund his addiction, adding to the turmoil within his family. Despite working as a truck driver, Abu Hasem's irregular job attendance due to his addiction plunged his family into deep despair. As he progressed from common drugs to injecting substances, his family life and social connections suffered immensely. Abu Hasem attempted to break free from the grip of addiction but found no support from his acquaintances who were also entangled in drug abuse. Instead, he faced discouragement and, as a consequence, became involved in even more dangerous drugs.

In January 2022, the SP-26 project was launched, bringing a ray of hope into Abu Hasem's life. He was enlisted in the program, received counseling in various forms, and was eventually added to the mother list. Subsequently, he was referred to Baraka, Caritas' rehabilitation center, through YPSA. At Baraka, Abu Hasem underwent a transformative 15-day detoxification program, supported by regular counseling from the YPSA local team. The comprehensive treatment included primary and secondary interventions tailored to his specific needs. Today, Abu Hasem has emerged victorious over his battle with addiction. He has reclaimed a healthier, drug-free life, bringing immense joy to his family. Grateful for the support he received, Abu Hasem expressed, "Going to Baraka for detoxification through this program, YPSA has given me a new real life." His success story stands as a testament to the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs and the positive impact they can have on individuals seeking to break free from the chains of addiction.



Shahina Afroz changes fortune in native chicken farming

Here is the corrected version of the case story: Shahina Afroz, a housewife and permanent resident of Yakub Nagar in Sitakunda Sadar Upazila, lives with her husband and two daughters. In the family, she also has a son for whom she struggled to provide education and support, relying solely on her husband's income. With the meager earnings of her husband, meeting the nutritional needs of the family members and covering the education expenses became a daunting task.

Their ancestral 33-decimal residence and spacious backyard offered ample room to raise ducks and chickens. Faced with financial challenges, Shahina decided to address the family's nutritional needs and enhance their income by rearing local chickens in the backyard. In pursuit of this goal, she reached out to YPSA's field staff and underwent training on local chicken farming provided by YPSA's livestock sector. To kickstart her initiative, Shahina secured a loan of Tk 20,000 from YPSA to establish a local chicken farm.

With the technical support and materials from YPSA's Integrated Agriculture Unit's livestock sector, Shahina adopted the intensive free-ranging method. This involved providing facilities for 100 growing domestic chickens or one-day-old chicks, including intensive housing, free-ranging areas, grazing land, egg boiling nests, sprays, disinfectants, birdwatches, and electric bulbs.

Shahina began her farm by purchasing 100 one-day-old native chickens from YPSA and an additional 100 on her own. A few weeks later, she expanded her flock by acquiring 10 growing native chickens and three mother chickens. YPSA actively managed the farm, offering regular advice and monitoring of the livestock sector. They ensured consistent vaccination and proper biosecurity measures under effective management.

By the end of the year, Shahina Afroz successfully sold local chickens worth about Tk 27,000. Her total investment, which covered the purchase and food expenses of the local chicken house and the chickens on her farm, amounted to approximately Tk 21,000.

Reflecting on her journey, Shahina expressed, "I never thought that I could generate such a profit by operating a local chicken farm. Not only has it increased our income, but it has also allowed me to provide for my family. Previously, the high price of local chicken made it difficult to feed my family, but through rearing these local chickens, I've not only earned money but also met the needs of my family. Now, I am able to sell local chicken eggs and chicks from my farm."

Safe Motherhood

Tahmina Akhter is an ordinary housewife from Kalampati Union in Kawkhali Upazila, Rangamati Hill District. She lives with her husband, who is a day laborer. No one in the family has completed primary education. There was no access to formal education on family planning, safe motherhood, or pregnancy. In addition, they had a deep-rooted belief in traditional ideas and false reforms. For example, Tahmina Akhter's mother-in-law believed that pregnant women should be given less food; eating more food would cause the baby to grow and result in a cesarean delivery.

Meanwhile, Tahmina Akhter became pregnant and grew physically and mentally weak due to incorrect practices. The matter came to the attention of Parveen Akhtar, a Community Resource Pool member/volunteer of the "Sukhi Jibon" project, who quickly organized a "small group meeting" in which Tahmina Akhter participated. Tahmina Akhter said, "I got to know the need for nutritious food during pregnancy, the phone number of the nearest health center, five danger signs during pregnancy, etc." On the other day, Parvin went to Tahmina's home to serve her volunteer duties. Parvin met Tahmina's mother-in-law and husband, briefing them about how to care for a pregnant woman, nutrition, regular health checkups, and the five danger signs during pregnancy. After a long discussion, they understood how to take care of a woman during pregnancy.

As the delivery time approached, Tahmina's mother-in-law wanted to give birth through a local midwife. Tahmina was aware of the risks and tried to motivate her mother-in-law to take her to the Upazila Health Complex. Tahmina discussed the information gained from the small group awareness meeting of the Shukhi Jibon Project and the various risks that midwives can carry, including the risk of death for both mother and child. Tahmina contacted Parvin again, and Parvin quickly discussed with Tahmina's husband and mother-in-law. After showing them flipcharts and booklets, they understood, and it was decided that she would deliver at the Upazila Health Complex.

It is noted that among the various beneficiaries of the Shukhi Jibon project are teenagers, young groups, pregnant women, newlyweds, and first-time parents. Through awareness meetings, home visits, family planning counseling, etc., they receive awareness information about adolescent age, puberty, sexual and reproductive health, menstrual hygiene management, child marriage, teenage pregnancy risks, and family planning. Between the 3rd and 8th quarters of the project, 578 pregnant women, 1598 first-time parents, and 921 newlyweds received awareness sessions through the Shukhi Jibon Project.

Jannat is on track to fulfill her dream

“I thought I would never get a chance to go to school again in my life. Ever since I grew up, I wanted to become a doctor. But after coming here, that desire started dying day by day,” says Jannat, a 14-year-old Rohingya girl from Myanmar.

Together with her two siblings and her mother and father, Jannat lives in Cox’s Bazaar in Bangladesh. Both her parents are teachers. Jannat’s father works at a learning center in a camp for refugees, and her mother teaches at a community-based learning facility (CBLF) delivered by Save the Children and funded by Education Cannot Wait.

According to the social customs of the Rohingya community, adolescents rarely go out, even for study purposes. However, with the opening of 50 CBLFs led by female teachers within the shelters inside the community, they now do not need to go far to learn, so parents feel safer. Fourteen-year-old Jannat studies at her mother’s CBLF, which is in their extra room in the same shelter shed. Over the past year, due to these new CBLFs, Jannat and many other adolescent girls have been given the opportunity to learn again and fulfill their dreams, with many aspiring to become doctors or teachers. Jannat says, “Our house in Myanmar had two floors. We used to live on one floor, and a doctor used to rent the other floor. Every day I saw sick people visiting her for treatment. She seemed



A year ago, [the community-based learning facility] was started here and many girls like me got the chance to study again.” Jannat and other young women study six subjects in the CBLFs: Burmese, science, math, English, social studies, and life skills are taught. Jannat likes learning Burmese and science the most. With this newfound access to education, Jannat is daring to dream again. She knows that to become a doctor, she must study science well. “Four months ago, I went to a camp hospital and was treated by a doctor. Her kind voice and attitude clicked my old dream again,” she says. Jannat’s parents wish that she could fulfill her ambitions. They know that this is unlikely in the camps but hope if they are one day able to go back to Myanmar, it might be possible to fulfill their daughter’s dream.

Jannat’s mother Marjina says, “I studied up to class 10 in Myanmar, so I could manage to get a job after coming here. My eldest daughter is Hafiz who teaches reading the holy Quran to the girls here in the camp. My son is also studying.” She adds, “We know education is very important for us. We want our children to continue their studies as far as possible. Jannat is very attentive and interested in studies. We will try our best to fulfill her dream.”

A story of Kawchar Skipping Tobacco Cultivation

Mr. Md. Kawchar Uddin is a permanent resident of Kakara Union, aged 38, with a family comprising six members. Engaging in farming, Mr. Kawchar Uddin has been cultivating tobacco on 5-7 bighas of land for the past 4-5 years under the influence of a Tobacco Company. Unfortunately, despite his efforts, he has not witnessed any income from tobacco cultivation.

However, a positive change occurred when he was selected for the Tobacco Control Project, encouraging farmers to explore alternative crops to tobacco. Under this initiative, Mr. Kawchar Uddin received training on cultivating various crops as alternatives to tobacco.

This training enlightened him about the harmful effects associated with tobacco cultivation. With the economic and technical support of YPSA's tobacco control project, Mr. Kawchar Uddin transitioned to cultivating strawberries and various other crops as alternatives to tobacco. As a result, Mr. Kawchar Uddin reaped significant benefits, earning 160,000 takas from strawberry cultivation and 80,000 takas from vegetable cultivation.

This proved to be much more profitable than his previous tobacco production endeavors. Recognizing the potential, Mr. Kawchar Uddin realized that cultivating alternative crops allowed for the possibility of growing 3-4 crops on the same land in a year, a feat not achievable with tobacco cultivation. Considering these advantages, Mr. Kawchar Uddin has decided to abandon tobacco cultivation. Instead, he plans to dedicate 1.5 bighas of land to strawberry cultivation and explore various other crops as alternatives to tobacco in the future. This strategic shift in farming practices reflects his commitment to a more profitable and sustainable agricultural approach.



High value's vegetables Crop Production in tobacco field



Proper education materials help students with disabilities speak and listen

Nur Fatema is a 10-year-old girl living in Balukhali, Camp-18, with her parents and five siblings. Previously, they resided in Buchidong in the Rakhine state. Her mother is a housewife, and her father is unemployed in the camps.

On August 25, 2017, Nur Fatema, along with her family, was forcibly displaced from Myanmar to Bangladesh. They sought refuge in Balukhali, Camp-18. Since the beginning of her schooling, she has been attending the Rhythm-2 Learning Center under the YPSA EiE project, studying at level -1. Nur Fatema has had a disability in speaking and listening since birth.

"Nur Fatema attends the learning center regularly, which is located near their house," said Ruhul Amim, her Burmese teacher. Sometimes, it becomes challenging for her to understand the lessons due to the lack of proper materials in the class. "We use different no-cost and low-cost materials to make the lessons easy for Nur Fatema," added Ruhul Amim. He emphasized, "If we want to teach her properly, we need to arrange proper materials that help students with disabilities speak and listen." "I always try to help my children study at my house," said Abeda Khatun, Nur Fatema's mother. "After Magrib, Nur Fatema sits to study with her other siblings in the house. She can work with letters in English and Burmese languages.

Besides this, she also writes numbers from the math subjects," added Abeda Khatun during her conversation. At the end of the day, the question remains: will she be able to complete or continue her studies properly, like a child without a disability or not?

A brave woman who triumphantly implements willpower

Shahina has been employed at Flamingo Fashion Ltd. She was born in the Gazipur district and grew up there. She comes from a humble background, and her father had a very low income. After her S.S.C exam, she had to discontinue her studies for various reasons, but her insatiable interest in learning persisted. Despite facing financial constraints, she harbored a strong desire for education. Unable to pursue her studies due to family income limitations, she began exploring alternative options. She started implementing her thoughts into actions.

At one point, she considered joining the garment industry but encountered numerous family and social barriers. No one in her family supported the idea of working in the garment industry. Initially, she kept her job a secret, but when her family discovered her employment, she did not reveal the truth. Instead, she claimed to hold a significant position, although she was working as an operator. Over time, her family became dependent on her, including her husband, who relied on her income. She mentioned, “When I gave birth to our first baby, I covered all our medical costs.”

Throughout this journey, she remained steadfast in her determination to continue her studies alongside her job. Consequently, she pursued a diploma in computer science from an IT institute (MIST). She recounted, “Meanwhile, the HER Project came into my life.” She added, “I diversified my skills through this project and became a leader peer educator.” Subsequently, she was promoted to supervisor in September 2022. Initially apprehensive about the responsibilities associated with the higher position, she credited the HER Project training program for providing her with the courage needed. Reflecting on the challenges she faced at work, she stated, “I really didn't understand how to perform as a supervisor. I was terribly afraid and stressed. The HER Project stress management training significantly helped me. In short, it made my work easier and more enjoyable.”

Addressing the work pressure, she continued, “We face a lot of work pressure here all the time, with targets to meet. It stresses us out, and though we realize it, we struggle to find a way out. But after the training, we learned how to cope with work pressure and stress.” Having received HER Project training from the beginning, she concentrated on the program and extended outreach to her colleagues. Overall, she gained valuable experience in receiving training and conducting outreach. She expressed, “One of the greatest benefits I've gained from the training is stress reduction. Balancing the responsibilities of being a supervisor, managing colleagues, and handling household chores was challenging. The training taught me how to strike a balance between my job and household responsibilities.” She further shared, “I can now communicate more openly with my husband, despite having had a love marriage. We work together to solve family problems and have learned to believe that every problem has a solution. We've realized that life involves facing various challenges, and we must move forward with them.”



Post-training, they became more focused on saving. Previously, they saved money without a DPS, but now recognizing the need for it, they opened a DPS account with a formal bank. Shahina highlighted the benefits of HER Project training, expressing her joy in becoming a Peer Educator. This role allows her to assist others with digital money issues and achieve the training modules' objectives.



Determination Makes Gias Uddin a Success

People with disabilities can achieve self-reliance with the necessary support, encompassing both emotional and financial assistance. Md. Gias Uddin, a 45-year-old physically challenged individual, expressed his gratitude for the support he received from YPSA, enabling him to thrive. Born in the village of Natunpara in the Barabkunda union of Sitakunda Upazila, Gias Uddin is the son of the late Saber Ahmed and Chakina Begum.

From a young age, Gias Uddin exhibited bravery and intelligence, but due to family crises and self-neglect, his education was limited after primary school. Despite this, he found employment in a shipyard company in Chittagong to support both his family and personal needs. He harbored aspirations of starting a business alongside his job but faced setbacks. A major accident at work resulted in the loss of his right leg, rendering him physically impaired.

"When I became physically challenged, going out with one leg became embarrassing," shared Gias. The transition from a normal life to one with physical challenges was difficult, facing discomfort and derogatory remarks when interacting with neighbors and friends. Determined to overcome these challenges, Gias initially set up a small shop, but the income was insufficient to sustain his family.

During a crucial moment, Gias encountered an employee of YPSA's Inclusive Finance program, who introduced him to the Inclusive Development Program. YPSA provided a loan of TK 20,000/- at a low service charge, aiming to expand the scope and offerings of Gias Uddin's shop.

Gias Uddin recounted, "I repaid the initial loan and subsequently took a loan of Tk 50,000/- on easy terms. This cycle repeated several times." Utilizing the loan funds, he purchased bicycles and sports boards for rental services. Currently, he owns 25 bicycles and two boards, earning an average of Tk 6000-8000/- monthly from renting them to the local community. His shop now generates an average income of TK 15,000-16,000/- per month. To further enhance his success, YPSA granted him Tk 6,000 through PKSF.

With this grant, Gias bought a fridge, enabling him to sell a variety of products like mango juice, Seven Up, ice cream, speed, and Tiger to cater to diverse customer needs. Consequently, his family's income has increased, allowing him to pay monthly installments, support his children's education, and provide nutritious food.

Currently, Gias saves an average of Tk 3000/- in the bank monthly to meet his family's needs. Through YPSA's Inclusive Finance program, he received income-enhancing and technical training, as well as skills development for improving the quality of life. Gias is now a member of the Sitakunda Disabled People's Organization (DPO), organized by YPSA, and has received crutches for walking.

Eager to advance his business further, Gias aspires to expand it with the continued support of YPSA. His social standing has improved, earning respect from the community. He invites others to provide more support, akin to YPSA and PKSF, to empower people with disabilities to achieve self-reliance. Gias envisions a society where all disabled individuals can thrive like him.

Rozina can make the right decision for her daughter's future

Rozina Akhter is the mother of two daughters and one son. Unfortunately, her husband passed away due to cancer. Following his death, she faced challenges in covering the expenses for her children's education and household needs. Initially, she was unaware of the role women play in establishing empowerment, safety, and rights for women globally. The responsibility of taking charge of the family seemed overwhelming after her husband's demise.

Previously, Rozina had no say in decisions regarding her daughters' marriages, as authority rested with her father and her late husband's guardians. Her family relied on donations from relatives. A significant development occurred when her elder daughter entered the ninth grade, leading relatives to advise her daughter to marry. Despite the financial crisis, Rozina's daughter resisted the idea. Against Rozina's wishes, her eldest daughter was married off at the age of 15.

Reflecting on this, attending an EMAP (Engaging Man through Accountability and Practice) session became a turning point for Rozina. She acknowledged her mistake, regretting that with the power and ability to assume responsibility, her daughter wouldn't have married so young. Feeling burdened by the strained relationship with her daughter due to the forced marriage, Rozina decided, inspired by the practical examples and ideas from the EMAP sessions, to take responsibility for her younger daughter's education and marriage. She was determined to prevent a similar incident in her younger daughter's life.

Realizing the importance of financial independence from the EMAP sessions, Rozina understood that women earning money in the family reduce dependence. She lamented not being able to secure a suitable marriage for her daughter after completing her education, which could have prevented family sorrow and turmoil. If she had pursued education, obtaining a job would have alleviated the family's scarcity. Rozina emphasized the significance of early access to such sessions in her life.

Although Rozina initially listened more than she spoke in the first three EMAP sessions, she opened up in the fourth session, expressing her feelings, sharing her inner pain, and shedding tears when thinking about her daughter. EMAP, as a preventive project against violence towards women, aims to protect and empower women. It endeavors to create a safe, violence-free world where women are secure, and valued, as well as their rights are safeguarded.

Rozina, a member of the EMAP Women's Group, attested to the transformative impact of the program on her life. However, she acknowledged that her situation remains challenging, akin to her elder daughter's experience.



Roadside temporary house before Relocation

Community-based Relocation for Climate Displaced People in Bangladesh

Nur Mohammad (50) and his family were forced to be displaced seven times from ward no-3 (Premasia village) of Khankanabad Union of Bashankhali sub-district under Chattogram district as an impact of Climate Change and finally took shelter on the roadside of Ward no-8 (Raichata village) of the same union. Before being displaced (5 years ago) he had a house, the land asset, and had a tea stall, and was living well. But coastal erosion, due to sea-level rise, grasped everything of Nur Mohammad, and all of a sudden he became the poorest of the poor even though he could not find shelter for his family. As a result, his 8 members' family took temporary shelter on the roadside (public land) and started to live in a very vulnerable condition. The temporary home had minimum spaces to live for this eight-member family. After being displaced he was compelled to change his profession to fishing and was earning an average BDT 6000 per month but in the fishing banning period, his family had to face difficulty to maintain their daily need.

There are 100 climate-displaced families temporarily living on the roadside in Premasia, Khankhanabad union, Banskhali sub-district of Chattogram district. YPSA (Young Power in Social Action) conducted a needs assessment survey for providing need-based support to the climate displaced families in this area, which includes awareness raising, improvement of WASH and housing facilities, introducing alternative livelihood, linking with the existing facilities of the government, and community-based relocation. YPSA formed the Community Team comprising 8-10 displaced people in each location followed by capacity building of the team so that they can mobilize their community to claim their rights and come forward to volunteerism. As per project modality, there is an activity for community-based relocation of the displaced family. YPSA consults this scope with the community team along with the criteria of family selection. As per the recommendation of the Community Team, the Nur Mohammad family was finally selected as a beneficiary for relocation.

The family is relocated within the community in the same culture and religion with four decimal lands in a safer place, a semi pucca (brick structure with steel on top) house with two bedrooms, one kitchen, one Baranda, Latrine, and tubewell. So far YPSA successfully relocated 11 families in the Chattogram under community-based relocation of the displaced family. This community-based relocation is focused on relocating one or two families to a nearby community with the same culture, not a large number of families in the isolated area, which stigmatizes them as an outsider.

Nur Mohammad said “Through the community-based relocation program of YPSA, my family members get the opportunity to stay in a good and durable house. Since the relocated area and my ancestral home area are in the same union and for that reason, my neighboring people welcome us in their community and I have good access to the mosque, educational institutions, health center, and local market, as before. YPSA also provided tailoring training with a Sewing Machine to my wife for income generation. Our livelihood condition is better than before. I had a dream to live safely with family in a pucca house and my dream became a reality. I am now living with my family in peace and happiness. There is no fear of coastal erosion, no problem with safe drinking water, and no unhygienic latrine. I will be grateful forever to YPSA”.



Relocated area with new pucca house



Hasina become self-sufficient in Vegetables Cultivation

Hasina Akter, aged 45, is a farmer with a family comprising one son, three daughters, and a mother. She resides in Guliakhali, a small village in Sitakunda Upazila. This village, flourishing through the connections of about 80 families, primarily relies on agriculture, with 80% of households engaged in farming. Those possessing land cultivate it to sustain their families. Hasina's sole source of income is a 50th-century plain land and a house inherited from her grandparents. Through cultivation, she provides sustenance for her family of six, enduring the sun's scorching heat and the rain's wet embrace.

During a group meeting, YPSA learned about Hasina's aspirations and introduced her to an agriculture officer in 2017. Since then, she has been associated with YPSA but has not received any agricultural assistance. The agriculture officer informed her that the 6 decimals of land in front of her house could be cultivated, offering an alternative income. Hasina agreed and expressed her desire to cultivate the land. Following her wishes, she underwent a two-day residential training in vegetable cultivation. YPSA supported her by providing bamboo, net, wire, etc., for fencing in the initial stage and various vegetable seeds for cultivation in Kharip-1,2, and Rabi seasons.

Her earnings from vegetable sales have reached 2000 taka, with an additional 700 takas expected from remaining crops. She dreams of expanding her cultivation area. Managing the cow house, Hasina has also planted local beans, generating an additional income of 800 rupees. With vegetables from the garden, fish from the pond, cow's milk, and chicken eggs, she no longer needs to buy anything from the market. Farming has not only provided nutrition for her family but also a steady income. Now, she no longer needs to seek employment elsewhere and can meet her needs through her own earnings.

With officials, Hasina recognized her mistakes. Previously, she cultivated single crops, and used excessive fertilizers and pesticides, resulting in increased expenses due to a lack of understanding of their compatibility. Presently, Hasina cultivates cucumber, pepper, brinjal, coriander, red cabbage, and banana in her homestead. She has shifted to using neem leaf juice, ata leaf juice, poison katali leaf juice, etc., instead of insecticides in green vegetables, employing a bordo mixture as a fungicide.

Swapna's story to be an entrepreneur

Swapna Akhtar, aged 36, is a member of YPSA as a micro-entrepreneur. During her childhood, she faced a lack of educational opportunities due to her father's poverty, leading to her educational qualification being Class 8. Instead of attending school at the expected age, Swapna Akhtar began working as a garment worker at the age of 17, enduring hardships in the industry.

In 2007, at the age of 21, she married Abul Kalam, who was 25 at the time. The couple now has two children: SM Samrat, 14 years old (studying in Class 7), and daughter Karima Akhter Riya, 10 years old (studying in Class 4).

Abul Kalam, Swapna's husband, holds a part-time job and owns a dumper truck that was rented out. Their total savings amounted to ten lakh taka. However, in 2019, Abul Kalam lost his job due to the impact of COVID-19, and the rental truck business ceased. Despite using their savings, the family faced financial challenges, especially when Abul Kalam fell seriously ill and required hospitalization. To cover medical expenses, Swapna sold the truck at a reduced price. With their funds nearly depleted, Swapna, along with her innocent child, started a hawker business on the roadside, facing days without food. Despite efforts, she couldn't secure employment or financial support from relatives, leading to a challenging year in 2021.

Drawing on her skill in sewing, Swapna initiated a home-based tailoring business with a secondhand sewing machine. As her clients grew, working from home became challenging, prompting her to consider opening a small tailoring shop near her home in Foy's Lake, Khulshi, Chattogram. Despite lacking savings, she secured small loans from YPSA, aware of the loan assistance for entrepreneurs affected by COVID-19. After applying at the Khulshi branch, she received approval for a four-lakh BDT loan. With the funds, she fulfilled her dream, establishing "Darji Bari Tailors" at Abdul Hamid Road, Foy's Lake, and purchasing necessary furniture and equipment.



After starting the shop, Swapna reached out to schools, colleges, and madrassas in Khulshi, offering tailored dresses. Campaigning in various houses of Khulshi, she received positive responses, leading to the employment of two assistants, one being a designer. Embracing new techniques, such as home delivery and working with schools, she gained recognition in the area, expanding her business. As her husband recovered from illness, Swapna prioritized saving for the family, repaying the loan without issues. Both her sons and daughters attend school regularly, with private tutors hired for them. Considering taking her husband abroad for better treatment, Swapna has provided employment for four individuals through her shop and envisions opening another shop.

She received training on "Risk Management and Business Continuity" under the YPSA RAISE project, enhancing her skills in business accounts and expanding her business sustainably. Swapna aims to establish herself as a successful entrepreneur and develop expertise in women's leadership, emphasizing the importance of proper planning for financial success and reputation.



Imran Hossain finds his way to survive

A young man named Md. Imran, 18 years old, along with his late parents, Late Nurul Amin, and Late Nurbanu, had been residing with his parents and siblings in Mohammadpur, Matiranga, Ward no. 7, Khagrachari. Unfortunately, Imran's parents passed away when he was only 4 years old, leading him to live in his maternal grandfather's house. Imran's uncle's friend took him to Dhaka as a day laborer, but instead, he was taken to Khulna. The broker subsequently took him to Khulna and confined him in a room for two months, where he was deprived of regular meals and subjected to constant beatings.

Subsequently, when Imran was being smuggled to the India-Bangladesh border, he cried out, attracting the attention of local people who rescued him. They contacted YPSA and sent him to the Cox's Bazar YPSA Shelter Home, Shanto Nilay. Imran stayed at YPSA Shanta Niloy Shelter Home from November 13, 2022, to November 16, 2022, receiving counseling services and life skills training.

During this period, Imran secured a job through a referral mechanism and continued working at ANIRBAN Member Md. Kabir Ahammad's shop at Kotupalong Bazar, Ukhia, Cox's Bazar. Kabir Ahammad provided Imran with a three-month learning opportunity, along with food, accommodation, and a monthly salary of 3000 Taka. Imran accepted 45,000 Taka in cash from Md. Kader Hossen, with Mrs. Hosna Ara Rekha, the Project Manager of YPSA FSTIP, was present during the transaction.

Additionally, activities commenced involving elites of society, YPSA FSTIP Staff, and ANIRBAN members. Mohammad Quader Hossain, a well-known personality of Sabrang, Teknaf, Cox's Bazar, contributed Tk 45,000 in cash for YPSA Survivor Imran, and Standard Bank deposited Tk 45,000 in cash for him into an account in the same bank in Cox's Bazar.

Looking ahead, the future plan for Imran involves renting a shop in the Sabrang, Teknaf area, facilitated by YPSA FSTIP staff and Anirban members Ishaq and Ismail Kashemi. This initiative aims to support Imran in starting his own business in that area.

Overcoming Adversity: Legal Aid Resolves Family Strife

Ayesha Siddika, a 42-year-old woman from Dakshin Naya Para, PM Khali Union, had her life turned upside down due to marital tensions that led to a breakdown in her family. In 2002, she married Md. Shahjahan, 53, from Rajapur, Jhalkati, Barisal. Initially, their married life was filled with happiness and peace as they settled into a rented home near their neighbors.

However, after some time, the couple started experiencing daily quarrels and tensions, which put a strain on their relationship. To make ends meet, Ayesha Siddika would bring cash, rice, and curry from her father's house, doing her best to sustain the family. Amidst the struggles, they were blessed with two daughters, whom they worked hard to provide with a good education.

Unfortunately, Shahjahan began behaving deceitfully after the birth of their children. This led to a prolonged period of detachment between the couple, leaving Ayesha Siddika to bear the burden of child-rearing without proper support. The couple remained estranged for a decade, and as their two daughters reached the age of marriage, Ayesha Siddika found it increasingly difficult to manage the expenses for their weddings and family upkeep.

Seeking a way out of her predicament, Ayesha Siddika sought assistance from various sources, eventually learning about legal aid through a local project's yard meeting. Grasping this opportunity, she reached out to the Legal Aid Office for help. The legal officer, Kabin, took up her case and pursued a divorce for her, citing order No. 18 of Namar. Additionally, they pursued the recovery of the dowry owed by her husband.

Through negotiations facilitated by the Legal Aid Officer, both parties reached an agreement. Shahjahan committed to paying the dowry owed to his wife in monthly installments and undertook the responsibility of covering the marriage expenses for their two daughters.

This resolution brought a sense of relief and hope to Ayesha Siddika's life, as she found the support she needed during these trying times. Legal aid proved to be a valuable resource, helping her overcome the adversities that had threatened to tear her family apart.

It is essential to recognize the significance of legal aid in resolving family disputes and offering a helping hand to those facing challenges. Ayesha Siddika's story highlights the transformative impact such support can have in mending fractured relationships and fostering a brighter future for those in need.

Abu Taher Succeeded in Planned Polyculture

Climate change significantly impacts land cover in coastal areas. At a time when people are abandoning farming due to salinity, the mixed cultivation of Vetki-Tilapia in salty coastal areas proves to be a blessing. In collaboration with the Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) and the implementation efforts of YPSA, a mixed cultivation project was implemented involving Vetki-Tilapia-Carp fish in Saidpur.

Abu Taher from Sitakund, Chattogram connected with the YPSA Technical Officer through Sajjad Hosain, a Credit Officer of YPSA. Having lost his business capital during the pandemic, Abu Taher, unemployed, sought assistance. As they did not have anyone to support them, they decided to explore the potential of their pond, spanning about 40 decimals.

Initially unplanned for fish farming due to the adverse effects of salinity, some fish stocked during the monsoon yielded poor production. Faced with the challenge of excessive salinity causing fish mortality, Abu Taher contacted YPSA. Following the project officer's guidance, they repaired and fully cultivated the pond's dyke.

The project officer provided materials to implement the project and advised applying lime at the rate of 0.5 kg percent. The project's technical officer offered necessary guidance for cultivating vegetables on the dyke.

With about 500 pieces of small vetki fish (less than 100 grams) collected from the local Sitakund coastal area, Abu Taher initiated vetki-tilapia mixed cultivation. The presence of tilapia fish in the pond kept food costs low, as tilapia reproduces frequently, providing a food source for Vetki fish. The Vetki fish, being sold at a high price, resulted in a significant profit margin. The total income from the sale of fish and vegetables produced on the dyke amounts to approximately BDT 75,000. However, the cost of purchasing food and feed is BDT 25,000, resulting in a net profit, including dyke-grown vegetables, of around BDT 50,000. This model has garnered substantial positive feedback in the area, leading to the adoption of Vetki-Tilapia mixed farming in ponds along with vegetable cultivation on dykes.

Abu Taher expressed gratitude to PKSF and YPSA for introducing them to this technology. They believe that cultivating a mixture of Vetki-Carp-Tilapia fish in fallow and cultivable ponds can bring significant benefits to farmers.





Parveen Akter's Journey to Success

Parveen Akter, a 30-year-old woman, has not only defied the odds but has also transformed her life from one of desperation to remarkable success. Parveen was born into a family of eleven children, her parents, Badiul Alam and Rahima Begum, struggled to make ends meet with limited resources. Life took an unexpected turn when she got married while still studying in Class 8, facing responsibilities far beyond her age. Within a short period, her husband, Md. Shamim, tragically passed away, leaving her with the daunting task of raising their three daughters. With no other option, she moved back to her father's home, where life seemed to be an unending struggle.

Education was no longer an option, and employment opportunities were scarce. Parveen found herself unemployed, feeling like a burden in her father's household. However, she was determined not to succumb to her circumstances and took matters into her own hands. She decided to learn sewing and started doing sewing work to make ends meet.

Just when things seemed bleak, the world was hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, casting an even darker shadow over the lives of the poor family.

However, amidst these trying times, a ray of hope emerged. Parveen came to know about YPSA-US-AID's YES Activity program that was providing sewing training right in her village.

With unwavering determination, Parveen gathered the necessary documents filled out the required forms, and was accepted into the program. Over 48 days of training, she honed her sewing skills and gained invaluable knowledge. Parveen's diligence and commitment ensured that she completed the training.

Following the training, Parveen opened a small tailoring shop right next to her house. With each stitch, she began to weave her path to success. Her income gradually started to rise, and the burden she once felt in her father's household began to shift. Parveen transformed from a dependent to an independent asset for her family.

Today, Parveen Akter is a beacon of hope in her village. She has not only secured her future but has become a source of inspiration for others facing similar challenges. Through her hard work and the opportunity provided by YPSA-US-AID's YES Activity, she now earns approximately 12,000 taka per month.

Raihan finds a way to earn money as a Facilitator

Md. Raihan (21) is the eldest among two sons and one daughter in his family. His father, Abdul Hamid, is 55 years old, and his mother's name is Asma Akhtar, aged 46. They reside in Noapara village, Ward No. 6, in the Sabrang Union of Teknaf Upazila. Raihan, being the first child of Abdul Hamid, belongs to a financially challenged family, facing turmoil in their daily lives. The father's illness added to their struggles, making it difficult to manage the family's education and food expenses for the younger siblings.

During his younger days, Md. Raihan spent his time engaging with boys of similar age in his ward. His activities included harassing girls, engaging in fights, and using abusive language. In 2018, when Md. Nurul Absar, the CoC Facilitator, conducted a household survey for boys aged 10-19, Raihan initially showed no interest in joining the YPSA-CoC project. However, motivated by CoC facilitators, he eventually joined the project, attended sessions regularly, and successfully completed 20 sessions. As he grasped the topics discussed, Raihan recognized the importance of these sessions and became fully engaged. This realization sparked a change within him, and he shifted his focus from aimless activities to meaningful work.



Raihan no longer loiters at shops but, instead, dedicates his time to productive efforts. He worked as a peer leader in the YPSA-CoC project until 2022 while continuing his studies. As of 2023, Raihan is an HSC examinee.

The YPSA-CoC project brought significant positive changes to Raihan's life. He currently serves as a Union Facilitator under the YPSA-BMZ project, providing financial support to his impoverished parents for the education expenses of his younger siblings while pursuing his education. Raihan has not only contributed to economic prosperity but has also played a pivotal role in achieving the objectives of the YPSA-CoC project.

Parveen Akhter, a Successful Koral Fish Farmer

Parvin Akter belongs to the Saidpur union of Sitakunda Upazila. Her husband, Abu Taher, is a local fisher. During the fishing season, he earns a living by fishing in the sea with his boat. For the rest of the year, the family somehow makes ends meet by repairing different types of nets.

YPSA's fisheries officer, Parvin Akter, contacted Abu Taher and found out that a 140-acre land identified through his ancestral sources was lying idle. She intended to explore some additional income from this land. A thorough inspection of the land revealed that it was slightly low, and there was a stream of saltwater flowing along the land, which is also related to the tide. Considering these aspects, Parvin Akter was advised to cultivate Koral fish by renovating the pond.

In the beginning, Parvin Akter and her husband couldn't believe that cultivating Koral fish in the pond was an ever-possible thing. However, after participating in a training organized by YPSA under the Integrated Agriculture Unit, financially and technically supported by PKSf, he was inspired to cultivate Koral fish after learning about the possibility of Koral fish farming in the pond. He cultivated seasonal vegetables on the dyke of the pond. With utmost care, he started producing fish in the pond. Besides, vegetables also yielded good returns.

At the end of one year, Parvin Akter earned a net of Tk 80,300 by selling fish and vegetables, excluding all expenses. Parvin Akter received special honors at a seminar organized by the fish farmers of Sitakunda upazila on the occasion of Fisheries Week in 2021 for converting the entire fallow land into an economically important farming process on the advice of the Fisheries and Agriculture Officer of the Integrated Agriculture Unit of YPSA.





Home-stay Service under Eco-tourism Project

Arif's Homestay Service

In the village of East Bhuiya Para of Khaiyachara Union under Mirsarai Upazila, life took an unexpected turn for Arif and his family. The village, picturesque in its simplicity, served as a gateway to the enchanting Napittachara Falls, with Arif's house standing proudly along the road leading to the cascading beauty of the falls.

As one entered Arif's house, a two-storied wooden shop immediately caught the eye. Beneath it lay two toilets and a bathroom, all meticulously crafted by Arif's skilled hands. The house was adorned with blue tin piles. Arif has versatile expertise in electrician work, bathroom fittings, furniture mechanics, and plumbing. He had transformed his home into an ideal stay.

The Alam family, comprising Arif, his father Md. Shafi Alam, younger brother Shah Jahan, and mother faced a sudden challenge in early 2018 when Arif fell seriously ill.

A visit to the doctor revealed stomach stones, demanding a hefty medical expense of 1 lakh 28 thousand. This illness and medical treatment brought a double load to their poverty.

In their time of need, YPSA, a partner organization of PKSF for sustainable development, came to their aid through the Economic Development Program (EDP). Arif contacted the YPSA Eco-Tourism Project Office in Sitakuda- Bazar amidst the swings of hope and disappointment to get some help regarding his income. YPSA, with its Value Chain Development Project named 'Development of Eco-Tourism Industry in Mirsarai and Sitakuda in Chittagong,' extended a helping hand to Arif. The YPSA team visited Arif's home. Recognizing the potential, they suggested turning the available space into a bathroom service. After consultations with YPSA Mirsarai Branch Manager Sukumar Nath, Arif received a loan of Tk. 20,000 from YPSA Micro Finance.

Arif, determined to overcome adversity, built two toilets and a bathroom, charging Tk. 10 for the service. The facility gained popularity, especially on Fridays, attracting 40-50 visitors seeking the refreshing amenities. During the rainy season, the usage multiplied fivefold, indicating the service's vital role in the community. Embracing the potential of Napittachara Jharna as a tourist destination, Arif expanded his venture. He ventured into homestays, constructing bamboo and wood accommodations. Tourists flocked not only for the stay but also for the fresh food. Arif's dream homestay showcased locally grown vegetables and fruits, providing tourists with an authentic culinary experience.

The YPSA Ecotourism Project played a pivotal role in promoting Arif's services. With an online presence featuring various services, including booking facilities, on the project's website, Arif's homestay gained visibility. YPSA Web Manager Abdullah Al Sakir highlighted the ease of booking directly, enhancing accessibility for tourists from both home and abroad.

Through YPSA's support, Arif established a thriving business that contributes to the local economy and offers an enriching experience for tourists.



Bathroom Service under Eco-tourism Project

A story of Mostafa to be an entrepreneur

Shibpur is a quiet village located in the middle of the city of Sitakunda Upazila, between the Dhaka Chitragong highway and Guliyakhali beach in the west. The name of the successful entrepreneur of this village is Mustafa. A beautiful family of six including a son, a daughter, an aged mother, a father, and a wife is passing by.

Mustafa has no place for cultivation except five hundred houses. As both parents are old, they are not able to earn, so there was no opportunity to study in his life. Mustafa is the only support of his parents, so he has to suffer from poverty. As a result, he was not lucky to pass the primary. This lack could not stop Mustafa's momentum. Day after day he runs at a steady pace hoping to earn income.

He set up a machine for grinding rice, turmeric, pepper powder, and mixed spices on a small scale with some of the money he had. He bought dried chilies, dried turmeric, and various spices produced in a safe manner from different places in the area, mixed them in specific proportions packed them in common polybags, and started selling them in local shops in the villages.



Mustafa's long-time dream is to become a successful businessman and build a company to brand his own products and sell them across the country. In the absence of proper advice and support, cherished dreams were just dreams. YPSA's "Processed Consumer Goods Market Development Project" aims to promote marketing and entrepreneurship development of local people who are involved in production through proper processing of their produce. As Mustafa's activities coincided with the project activities, he was selected as a successful entrepreneur of the said activities, and as a part of the overall supporter of the said activities, he was assisted and advised in infrastructure development including machines for grinding turmeric, pepper and masala along with his establishment. By doing this, his company became a standard company and named its brand "Sabiha Food Products". He took a loan of Rs 1 lakh from YPSA-EDP to standardize the said activities.

At present, his products are turmeric powder, chili powder, mixed masala powder, different types of pickles, mustard oil, etc. It is his dream to produce many new products in the future. At present two more employees are working in his company. At present, he buys high-quality dry turmeric, pepper, and different types of spices from different areas and grinds them in a clean and neat way in his own machine packs them in good quality polybags with stickers, and sells them in his own engine van in more than 5 (five) hundred shops including his own area and neighboring areas. Also, as his products are unique in quality, Army Bhatiari Zone buys their monthly consumption of turmeric powder, masala powder, and chili powder from Mustafa.

Mustafa buys good quality products from Chittagong, Bogra, and hilly areas. He sells an average of 40 kg to 60kg of turmeric, pepper, and spice powder every day by processing and packaging in a clean manner in his company. When he was doing business on his own initiative, his monthly sales were 20 to 25 thousand taka, now his monthly sales are 50 to 70 thousand taka as a result of YPSA's advice and overall support.

His dream is to turn this small company into a big company, if his products are approved by BSTI, he will be able to supply the products to the local market as well as to the entire country and he will keep the people of the area and the country free from diseases by producing adulterated food. At the same time, this will create employment scope for the unemployed youth in the area.



Resilient Community Model of Nabinagar Colony

Nabinagar Colony, located in Ward 7 of Chattogram's West Sholashahar, is a residential area where a significant portion is an urban informal settlement of low-income families. Through integrated waste management and safety measures, this neighborhood has become a model for the Chattogram City Corporation and has inspired the implementation of this model in other areas of Chattogram as well.

Prior to taking this initiative in Nabinagar, dealing with waste, open drains, and waterlogging were common issues. Even a little rain might have caused waterlogging and increased mosquito infestation, further inconveniencing the residents. The clogged drains often resulted in stagnant water entering houses, leading to daily hardship.

The active participation of local residents has been instrumental in making the transformation of Nabinagar possible. Under the Proyash II project with support from Save the Children International and Chattogram-based NGO Young Power in Social Action (YPSA), initiatives were taken to implement this model in Nabinagar Colony. Various initiatives were taken to make the area habitable and safe, emphasizing cleanliness and greening. Waste bins were placed in front of every lane to reduce waterlogging, and residents were encouraged to dispose of their daily waste in designated bins instead of draining it. Separate women's and children's groups were formed to spread awareness about



Sayed Mehedi Hasan (17), a resident of Nabinagar, said, "It is our responsibility to create awareness among children about keeping this area clean and green. We have worked hard to make our area clean and beautiful in Nabinagar. We do not want this place to be like it used to be. Teaching children these good habits is very important to sustain our efforts. That is why we are always making every possible effort."

Alongside cleanliness, fire safety was another significant initiative taken at Nabinagar. Under the initiative, the gas and electricity connections of every household in Nabinagar were examined to identify and repair faulty electric wires, faulty gas connections, and missing circuit breakers. Upon inspection, it was identified that due to defective wires and electrical equipment and the absence of circuit breakers, most houses in the colony were at risk of fire. The residents were informed of these findings so that they could take necessary steps for repairs and fire hazard reduction. Many families have already taken the initiative to repair their electricity lines.

Alongside local residents, ward councilor Md. Mobarak Ali played a significant role in implementing this waste management model in Nabinagar. "We have designed the model by including 80 houses and 300 families, as an exemplary waste management model. We will establish waste disposal units in various locations where people in the area will properly dispose of their waste. We have hired waste collectors on behalf of the community. The Nabinagar Development Committee is working on development initiatives and monitoring," he said.

When the model was presented to Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, Mayor of Chattogram City Corporation, he expressed interest in implementing it in other wards as well. "Nabinagar's initiatives have gained broad acceptance. By following these initiatives, we can ensure proper waste management across the city," he said.

The transformation of Nabinagar showcases the power of community participation and collective effort to ensure a clean and resilient community. Creating a replicable waste management model in an area that was once known for indiscriminate waste disposal is an extraordinary success story. YPSA is also implementing this model in some other areas of Chattogram City under other projects. It demonstrates that the success of the Nabinagar model has not only improved the living conditions of the local community but also inspired similar initiatives for sustainable waste management and resilience in other communities.





Vermi Compost Production Makes Karim Self-Reliant

Environment-friendly vermicomposting, a compost produced using earthworms, has sparked a positive trend among hundreds of farmers in Mirsarai upazila of Chattogram. The compost proves beneficial for both farmers and the environment, requiring less investment compared to chemical fertilizers, as mentioned by farmers.

"Market Development of Safe Meat and Dairy Products," a sub-project of the Rural Microenterprise Transformation Project (RMTP) under the Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation (PKSF), is executing an environmentally friendly vermicomposting program in Chattogram city, Sitakunda, and Mirsarai upazila in the Chattogram district. The initiative aims to make rural people self-reliant through vermicompost production, facilitating product connections with buyers in the local market. YPSA implements this project.

Mr. Karim, a resident of the Hadi Fakhirhat area in Mirsarai upazila, Chattogram, has achieved self-reliance by producing vermicompost, an organic fertilizer. His success has inspired many other farmers to venture into vermicompost production to improve their fortunes. Initially working as a day laborer, Karim faced difficulties finding regular employment to support his household, leading to a challenging and hand-to-mouth existence. Under dire circumstances, he joined YPSA's RMTP (Meat and Dairy) project, focusing on engaging both men and women in sustainable, market-driven activities to increase household income. Enrolling in a two-day training on vermicomposting production and marketing marked a new beginning for Karim. The training provided practical knowledge and skills, along with two instructors, 25 thousand takas, and 300 grams of live earthworms.

Leveraging the skills and inputs from the YPSA-RMTP project, Karim started vermicompost production in his small yard, constructing a large tin shed house with twelve six-feet by three-feet brick basins. Each basin contains a mixture of 40 mounds of dung, vegetable leftovers, and banana pieces, along with 10 kg of earthworms. After covering the basin with burlap sacks for a month, Karim produces 5 to 8 tons of fertilizer from 12 tanks monthly. The retail price is TK 15 per kg, and the wholesale price is TK 10, resulting in an income of a maximum of 50 thousand per month after expenses.

The vermicompost fertilizer has gained popularity among local farmers, attracting buyers from different regions. The Agriculture Officer of the Department of Agriculture Extension in Mirsarai upazila highly appreciates the YPSA-RMTP project, suggesting its expansion to other sub-districts. Hamim Mallick, a farmer using vermicomposting fertilizer, praises its impact on land fertility and increased yields. He emphasizes the affordability and plant-friendly nature of organic vermicompost, reducing farming costs. Karim, once leading a poor and hand-to-mouth life, has transformed into a self-reliant individual with the project's support. He has taken a loan of three lakh taka from YPSA microcredit and uses the Bkash app for payments. Apart from selling vermicompost, he now sells earthworms at 1000 taka per kg, expanding sales beyond Chattogram to areas like Feni and Nowakhali.

Despite limitations in meeting local farmers' needs due to a small farm, Karim envisions scaling up production to about 50 tons per month, introducing a well-marketed package level, increasing prices based on market demand, and distributing products throughout the country.



Innovative Biofloc Fish Farming Initiative Revolutionizes Sustainable Aquaculture

In the village of Bhagwabatipur, located in Zorarganj Union, Mirsarai Upazila, Chittagong District, a young dreamer named Mr. Md. Ahidunnabi found his passion in a less discovered area of fishing. In early 2021, having just completed his Kamil (Master's degree) from the Madrasa Board of Education, Ahidunnabi found himself at a crossroads, searching for a job and contemplating his next steps in life.

One day, while browsing YouTube, Ahidunnabi stumbled upon a video that would alter the course of his life. The video introduced him to the concept of Biofloc, a revolutionary method for fish farming that promised increased production at a relatively low cost, even in limited spaces. This idea resonated deeply with Ahidunnabi, the second son of a farmer, who had always harbored dreams of making a mark in his way.

Driven by this newfound passion, Ahidunnabi delved into getting a detailed idea of Biofloc through extensive research on YouTube and Google. As a member of an online fish farming community, he connected with several fish farming experts, laying the foundation for his journey into Biofloc.

Before venturing into actual farming, Ahidunnabi sought further knowledge and practical skills. He traveled to Chittogram city, where he underwent a comprehensive one-day training session conducted by Kamrul Islam, gaining valuable insights into the nuances of pond-based Biofloc systems. Initially facing setbacks, Ahidunnabi sought guidance from the technical officer of the YPSA-SEP project, leading him to help start a fish hatchery. Following the expert's advice and adhering to the recommended guidelines, Ahidunnabi turned the tide and achieved success.

Regular health checks every seven days, 24-hour operation of aerators, continuous operation of all nano-tubes, application of FCO (Fish Culture Organic) every 15 days, and adding flakes in water at 40ml/liter became routine for Ahidunnabi. Understanding the sensitivity of the Biofloc method, he prioritized biosecurity management and environmental improvement of his farm.

Ahidunnabi also established clean water and toilet facilities for workers beside the pond, providing first aid boxes and personal protective equipment (PPE) such as hand gloves, masks, and gum boots. Disinfection materials like hand sanitizers, safety nets around the pond, and bird nets on top were part of his commitment to maintaining a secure and sustainable farming environment.

Ahidunnabi's success story became a beacon of inspiration for others in his community. Many, inspired by his journey, embraced fish farming using the Biofloc method. As a responsible farmer, Ahidunnabi implemented meticulous management practices to ensure the success and sustainability of his Biofloc venture.



Bio floc fish farmers are measuring the amount of floc through the Inhofe Cone

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