Reducing the impact of HIV on men who have sex with men and transgender populations in South Asia

HALF YEARLY REPORT

2015

JULY-DECEMBER
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<td>Behavior Change Communication</td>
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bandhu Social Welfare Society (Bandhu) was established in 1996 and has since then Bandhu is sincerely serving the sexually marginalized community to obtain social justice, and equality. Today Bandhu is a distinguished NGO in Bangladesh and is successfully implementing many projects including Global Fund Programs. Amongst many projects of Bandhu, MSA project is one of the significant projects that is contributing to Community System Strengthening (CSS). As a part of CSS, Bandhu disbursed advocacy seed fund grant to 10 local CBOs in two rounds developing advocacy related policy environment at local and national level. The first round ended in September 2015 and 2nd round is ongoing. Through these small scale interventions, the CBOs gathered practical knowledge of program implementation at local level. It assisted them to showcase their minimum capacity and leadership skills that they achieved under the MSA grant. In December 2015, a national level KP network is under formation that reflects the achievements of community mobilization. In addition, Hijra Pride 2015 was celebrated by Diner Alo Hijra Sangha on 27th November 2015 at Rajshahi with technical support of Bandhu.

However, the reporting period July-December 2015 ended with successful achievements. The 5th Media Fellowship was awarded to 10 journalists and electronic media that was another supplementary event for effective advocacy works. Mr. Matiur Rahman, Editor, The Daily Prothom Alo and His Excellency Mr. Johan Frisell, Ambassador, Embassy of Sweden attended the closing ceremony and praised for involving media journalist through Media Fellowship.

Ain Alap - the legal helpline corner has meaningfully contributed to the legal needs of the community and successfully settled a number of rights violation cases with service supports of NHRC.

Bandhu has introduced a new activity involving the City Mayors at Divisional Level City Corporations. This activity helps City Mayors to gather appropriate information about hijra community and they made commitment to ensure support and services to hijra in the future.

A total of 6 Resource Mobilization Strategies were developed with the support of APCOM and Barapani, India. These Strategies are helping different CBOs to move forward and generating resources for future Community System Strengthening. In addition, a number of Capacity Building trainings were provided to the targeted beneficiaries as a part of regular capacity building training.

Team effort of MSA project staffs along with timely and appropriate guideline, suggestions and feedbacks of UNDP is the secret to achieve the intended results.
MSA PROJECT

The Multi-Country South Asia Global Fund HIV Programme is a regional HIV programme operating in eight countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The overall goal of the programme is to reduce the impact of, and vulnerability to, HIV of men who have sex with men, hijras and transgender people through Community Systems Strengthening (CSS).

The programme supports building the capacity of in-country and regional community-based Sub-recipient organizations engaged in service provision (HIV prevention, care and support services), policy development and advocacy, partnership building with local governments and health departments, research related to MSM and transgender issues, and on creating stronger community systems to support and sustain this work. In order for the interventions carried out by the community-based organizations (CBOs) to be both effective and sustainable, it is necessary to build their capacity, create stronger linkages and networks between community organizations, community-led interventions and government, and provide longer-term support to these groups.

The program is currently completed its Phase 2 in December 2015. This is the extension phase, supported by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria that will continue till December 2016. For Phase 2, the United Nations Development Programme Asia-Pacific Regional Centre (UNDP APRC) has undertaken the role of interim Principal Recipient.

To reach this goal, there are three proposed objectives:

a. To improve the delivery of HIV prevention, care and treatment services for MSM and transgender populations in South Asia
b. To improve the policy environment with regards MSM, transgender, and HIV-related issues in South Asia
c. To improve strategic knowledge about the impact of HIV on MSM and transgender populations in South Asia.

KEY ACHIEVEMENT FROM JULY – DECEMBER 2015

• A total of 6 Resource Mobilization Strategies have been developed with the support of APCOM and Barapani, India.
• Conducted 02 trainings on different issues for emergent CBO’s.
• Total of 02 CBOs got registration from Social Service Department as part of Technical Assistance.
• A Technical Working Group formed with 17 potential members. Mrs. Selina Hossain, Honorable Member, NHRC is nominated as Chair of the Group.
• Implemented Seed Fund Grant program for small CBOs and a total of 05 CBOs received six months grant. 1250 CBO beneficiaries and their family are more aware about TG and MSM rights, HIV/AIDS, STI, 538 Civil society members, Local Elite, service providers and community leaders attended advocacy meetings/ dialogue sessions, 480 community people received training on different issues like training on leadership, life skills, 05 CBO have developed Linkage with 20 Service.
• An orientation program arranged in collaboration with Khulna City Corporation. The City Mayor along with 40 Ward Councilors attended in the session.
• Different Day Observation programs were organized in collaboration with Public and Private Universities.
• Strengthened the Gender and Sexuality Resource Centre and total 352 participants visited the Centre.
• During this period almost 329 calls received by the Ain-Alap number and provided necessary services during this reporting period.
• Three months Media Fellowship was organized and 10 potential media journalists attended from print, electronic, online and FM Radio.
IN VolvEMENT OF CITY CORPORATION WITH BANDHU

Bandhu Social Welfare Society organized an orientation program with City Mayor, Khulna on 5th December 2015 at Hotel Ambassador, Helatola, Khulna. A total number of 50 ward councilors were present in the meeting. As a part of policy advocacy initiative under the project ‘Multi-Country South Asia Global Fund HIV Program’, BSWS believes City Corporation can play a vital role to protect this vulnerable group from social exclusion. A clear and common understanding about this community is very essential to avail the support from City Corporation and ensure access to all public facilities.

The aim of this meeting was to orient and sensitize the city corporation authority to attain the following objectives to facilitate HIV/AIDS prevention intervention and other health care needs.

- To facilitate social services including access to health services to the MSM, TG/Hijra community
- To identify their health care needs, human rights and social inclusion issues so as to facilitate their scope for contributing in country’s growth
- To increase effectiveness of national response involving city corporation authority through sharing knowledge and experiences by the community representative

Recommendations of City Mayor:

- In Khulna, the KCC mayor provides different services for livelihood options. As most of the hijra in Khulna are not able to manage any jobs, so KCC will take immediate steps to ensure free Vehicles for hijra for food delivery as alternate earning source.
- Hijra in Khulna are not getting equal services in every aspect. Under the Khulna City Corporation, there are different hospitals in Khulna yet hijra are facing number of challenges to access health services from these hospitals. KCC will ensure equal health access for hijra community.
- A total of 300 Hijra live in Khulna Division. In most of the cases, they do not find any suitable house to rent. They are denied rented property due to their gender identity. As a result, they live in unhealthy environment despite being able to pay the rent for a good shelter. The City Mayor iterated that no hijra will be discriminated in Khulna city from now on.
- KCC will create suitable job opportunities for Hijra community as per their capacity.
* BSWS might take more initiatives to sensitize the people on Hijra issues. This will create another avenue to understand hijra tradition and culture. As a result, people may extend their support for better livelihood options in future. These initiatives will also create a space to bring them in mainstream society.

* In Khulna city, hijra are requested to hold people’s hand willingly to create new friendship with mass people. Though this is not an easy thing, but this scope may create new ways to think about hijra amongst us!

The Khulna City Corporation Mayor also assured that the corporation shall cooperate with the third gender in any regard they might need. The Commissioner also gave commitment to invite and include them in every event hosted by the KCC. Under the KCC, two government hospitals are there and KCC authority shall arrange meetings with the hospital governing body once in every three month so they provide better health services to the third gender population. Also, the KCC shall arrange sensitization session for doctors. Also, the process of appointing labor shall start soon, if the third gender community would like to get appointed, they can further proceed and the KCC shall take initiatives to appoint third gender individuals through quota system.

Apart from that, there were few more recommendations which came on board to improve their status in our society which follows- third gender population can get certificates from the Social Welfare Ministry and apply for ‘hijra quota’ in terms of jobs and ensure government allowance through the certificate. The third genders are supposed to receive monthly allowance from the government however the KCC does not have any update on this. Therefore the forum requested BSWS to follow up on it, the government has recognized the third gender, yet no such action plans to improve their social status has been adopted. Access to justice, health care, property rights are still in question. Government should take initiatives to ensure access to higher education for third gender people. Government as well as NGOs should initiate counseling particularly for third gender community people which would make behavioral changes in them.

**CONVENE NATIONAL TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING**

The First meeting of Technical Working Group (TWG) held at Gender and Sexuality Resource Center, Siddeshwari where Selina Hossain, Honorable Member of National Human Rights Commission of Bangladesh (JAMAKON) welcomed all the participants of the meeting.

In 2006, based on the recommendation of “The Delhi Declaration,” APCOM recommended developing national coalitions of MSM and transgender groups and organizations, involving government representatives, funding support agencies working in the country and technical experts. Finally Bandhu has taken the responsibility to form this coalition naming it as Technical Working Group (TWG). The present forum consists of 17 members representing all sectors including Member of Parliament, LEA, LEB, Faith Leaders, Judicial Magistrate, Civil Society, etc.
Issues Discussed During the Meeting

- The outline is required on how this TGW working group will work in future. The members of technical working group were eager to know more about the community and conscious to extend their support for the betterment of this community from their respective area of services.
- Recognition of Third Gender is not enough, the government should be pushed in all aspects to increase national budget and take proper policy implication initiatives by involving this community.
- Identifying Hijra through medical test is a great concern in Bangladesh. To address this issue, NHRC already issued a letter to the health ministry to make changes of identification of Hijra in such a way. The committee recommended that an investigation can be made on this issue and bring this on the front table of policy makers.
- Need to issue a letter to the parliamentarians who have been identified as champions by UNAIDS earlier. As they are already sensitized, so the TGW recommended identifying the existing parliamentarians first and communicating with them to fulfill the TWG quorum. For community quota, it has been decided that a letter will be reissued to the same CBOs for their 2nd nomination who can represent as a member of technical working group.
- TWG decided to come out from donor dependency and need to explore the ways to incorporate with government services due to shrinking of Foreign Aid.
- In MDG, the HIV issue was a separate single component but now in SDG, it is linked with a number of goals focusing on health issue. The committee members are aware about the Global changes and are ready to find out strategy to work on this effectively to accomplishment the Sustainable Development Goal successfully.
- The journalists should be involved in more advocacy programs and especially need to arrange meetings with media gatekeepers so that the issue around the rights of MSM and TG population is widely discussed.
- The committee recommended that in the secondary school curriculum, gender and sexuality issue can be incorporated. A formal letter can be placed to the relevant authority to consider this matter with optimum importance.

ACCOMPLISHMENT OF SEED FUND GRANT

Seed Fund Grant Intervention Phase I (March –September 2015):

As a part of CSS, the MSA project introduce advocacy seed fund grant to provide necessary support towards MSM & TG led organizations on community driven initiatives. However, Bandhu made an agreement with 5 CBOs in March 2015 and started its intervention from April 2015. Initially it was 6 months program from March to August 2015 but due to unavoidable circumstances the program was extended for another one month.

The following overview of seed fund programs of 5 CBOs is highlighted below:

**Bachar Asha, Rajshahi**

**Activities:**
- A total of four trainings (110 participants),
- Four awareness meetings (62 participants),
- Five dialogue sessions (131 participants) and
- Day Observation (20 participants) were arranged during this period.

**Chattala Jubo Songho, Chittagong**

**Activities:**
- A total of five trainings (134 participants),
- Fourteen awareness meetings (336 participants),
- Two dialogue sessions (60 participants) and
- Day Observation (52 participants) were arranged during this period.
Chinnomul Manob Kollan Society, Khulna Activities:
- A total of two training (35 participants),
- Twenty eight awareness sessions (332 participants),
- Five dialogue sessions (120 participants),
- Pot song as awareness program (220 participants) and
- Day Observation (48 participants) arranged during the period.

Rajshahi Sonali Din, Rajshahi Activities:
- A total of five training (100 participants),
- 22 awareness meetings (479 participants),
- Five dialogue sessions (140 participants) and
- Day Observation (20 participants) were arranged during the period.

Surjer Alo Hijra Songothon, Chittagong Activities:
- A total of five orientation meetings (101 participants),
- Four awareness meetings (41 participants),
- Four dialogue sessions (87 participants) and
- Day Observation (102 participants) were arranged during this period.

Seed Fund (Phase I) overall Achievement
- Community gathered practical experiences through implementing small scale interventions at local level.
- Throughout the period 480 community people received training on different issues like training on leadership, life skills. Financial management CBO members are capacitated how to lead the CBO, how to manage different stakeholder and beneficiaries.
- 1250 CBO beneficiaries and their family are more aware about TG and MSM rights, HIV/AIDS, STI.
- Highlighting the TG’s discrimination in family, society and state creates an emotional environment which has positive impact on elite society.
- 538 Civil society members, Local Elite, service providers and community leaders attended advocacy meetings/dialogue sessions and through these type of events the attitudes have changed toward TG and MSM and they have arranged job for 05 CBO at the local level.
- 05 CBO have developed Linkage with 20 Service providing organizations.
- Linkage developed with Social Welfare Department.
- Service providers are committed to deliver their services to the community people.
- Increased condom use among CBO beneficiaries.
LAUNCHING SEED FUND GRANT PROGRAM IN BANGLADESH (PHASE II)

Under this Advocacy Seed Grant, BSWS already completed Phase 1 in September 2015 and initiated the process of Phase II in October 2015. In Second Phase a total of 20 proposals were received from different organizations against RFP. After a thorough review of each proposal and capacity assessment by the ad hoc members, top scored five (5) CBOs were finally selected for seed fund grant.

Process:

BSWS circulated RFP of Seed Fund Grant Phase II in two national daily newspapers on 20th February ’15 and closing date of submission was on 12th March’15. A total of 20 proposals were received at the deadline.

The members of ad hoc committee remained the same which was formed during seed fund grant Phase I. The first ad hoc committee meeting was held at NASP on 25th March 2015 where panel members attended. BSWS handed over all the sealed proposals to the panel members and the panel members short listed the proposals according to their merit and following criteria:

- Meeting the deadline of proposal submission
- Follow all given guidelines as per RFP
- Category of Organization

Considering the criteria, it was observed that only fourteen (14) CBOs met the guidelines as per RFP. The committee reviewed those 14 shortlisted proposals and scored by the ad hoc committee members as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name of the CBOs</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Setu Bondhon Kallyan Sangha (SBKS)</td>
<td>78.83</td>
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<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Agragami ShamajikUrnayan Shongho</td>
<td>77.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>Protiva Manob Kallan Sanghstha (PMKS)</td>
<td>77.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>PabnaSobuj Sangha (PSS)</td>
<td>77.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>Arpon Manob Kallyan Sangtha (AMKS)</td>
<td>77.50</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
In the meeting it was also decided that BSWS assess the capacity of 5 CBOs as above and share the report with ad hoc members for their final comments. After analyzing capacity assessment reports of five CBOs submitted by BSWS, the ad hoc committee selected the above CBOs and recommended disbursement of the budget from the Seed Fund Grant. Selected 5 CBOs signed the agreement on 12 October’15.

In Phase II, all short listed CBOs are MSM focused and there were no CBOs in the list who were working on Hijra issue. As a result, Ad hoc committee recommended working with Hijra CBOs in Phase II. There was no option left to include Hijra CBO right now, so ad hoc committee suggested BSWS to review the budget of 5 CBOs who are in pipe line for next grant.

According to ad hoc committee recommendations, BSWS assessed the capacity of another three hijra CBOs from 9-12 November 2015 and finally Padda Kuri Hijra Sangha (PKHS-A Hijra CBO) was selected for Seed Grant Program.

Introduction of CBOs:

Setu Bondhon Kallyan Sangha (SBKS) is a nonprofit, non-government, non-political and self-help Community Based Organization (CBO) which started its journey in 2001. They got their registration from District Social Services Office, Directorate of Social Services Mymensingh No-M01474 in the year 2006. SBKS endeavor a wider range of experience in the field of SRHR and HIV/AIDS by implementing various Projects funded by MKP ICDDR'B and HASAR.

They have established a strong cultural /dance group and are now well renowned at local level. Through this group, they are actively participating in different public forum and creating mass awareness on HIV/AIDS, harassment, etc through their performances. They have already developed good networking with local elected bodies and local elites.

Main activities:

- Capacity building training on different issues for their beneficiaries
- Conduct the counseling session with the family members of MSM
- Bi-weekly group education session
- Organize thematic cultural show on Human Rights
- Organize progress sharing meeting with relevant stakeholders
- Organize coordination meeting with health professionals (includes doctors, nurses) and institutions both government and NGOs
- Produce BCC Materials

Aragami Shamajik Unnayan Shongho is a Community Based Organization (CBO) which started in 2012. They got registration from Social Welfare Department in the year 2015. At present, they have 220 beneficiaries in their profile list and providing services through referral networks.

Main activities:

- Capacity building trainings for targeted beneficiaries
- Street drama
- Day Observation
- District Coordination Meeting with GOs and NGOs
- Meeting with local level influential persons that includes local elites, local administration, law enforcing agencies and other civil society organizations
- Meeting with local level health care service providing organizations
- Dialogue session with District HIV authority
- Bi-weekly group session
Protiva Manob Kallan Sanghstha (PMKS) established with the aim of reducing stigma and discrimination to the MSM, TG population in Natore. They have 300 beneficiaries in their adjacent area and have developed good networking with local elected bodies and local elites.

**Main activities:**
- Capacity building training on different issues for their beneficiaries
- Counseling session with the Self Help Group and their family
- Bi-weekly education session
- Orientation session with youth club member on transgender & MSM rights
- Networking meeting with local level rights defenders
- Documented the case on violence and harassment
- Produce BCC Materials
- District level Coordination Meeting
- Dialogue session with local stakeholder that includes govt. authorities’ local elites, local administration and elected bodies, teachers and faith leaders

Pabna Sobuj Sangha (PSS) is a CBO that has been working under the umbrella of ICDDR,B since they have started. PSS is disseminating knowledge and understanding on human rights to the beneficiaries and also developing their organizational capacity such as planning, decision making, leadership, exploring the resources and tapping those resources for the community.

**Main activities:**
- Capacity building training on relevant topics
- Arrange dialogue session with multiple stakeholders
- Dialogue with Pabna Medical College authority for HIV screening
- Bi-Weekly Group education sessions for raising the awareness among the MSM & TG
- Organize sensitization meeting with Civil Society, local elites and Local Government Institutions (LGI)
- Organize progress sharing meeting with community members
- Day Observation

Arpon Manob Kallyan Sangstha (AMKS) is a registered Community Based Organization (CBO). Initially AMKS took financial and technical support from Padakhep Manabik Unnayan Kendra & ICDDR,B and had great endeavor working for the MSM, MSW, TG and their family members.

**Main activities:**
- Arrange orientation session among target beneficiaries on HIV/AIDS and SRHR issues
- Organize discussion sessions with family members of target beneficiaries
- Produce information materials to create mass awareness amongst MSM community
- Arrange advocacy meeting with GOB officials, Civil Societies and Health Service Providers
- Documentation on stigma, rights violation and case management and linked with BSWS Ain Alap
- Day observation
- Organize open day with targeted population

Padda Kuri Hijra Sangha (PKHS) is a new Community Based Organization (CBO) which started its journey in 2013 with the aim to provide health services and HIV/AIDS awareness among the MSM and TG population. In the recent days apart from health services, they are focusing to bring human rights and social justice for Hijra/MSM community. PKHS has applied for their registration recently.

**Main activities:**
- Skill building training
- Advocacy meeting with GO/NGO representatives, health service providers, Human Rights Activists and City Corporation at local level
- Develop IEC BCC Material to create awareness
- Organize meeting with Hijra Guru
- Organize Member day for group cohesion
TRAINING PROGRAM FOR EMERGENT CBOS AND IN COUNTRY DOWNSTREAM PARTNERS

BSWS conducted two trainings for the emergent CBOS and in-country downstream partners during the period from 1st July to 31st December, 2015.

Training on Documentation and Report Writing
Bandhu Social Welfare Society (BSWS) completed four-day training on Documentation & Report Writing from 08-11 September 2015. A total of 38 participants from emergent CBOS and in-country downstream partners attended the training.

Objectives:
The objectives of this training were to provide comprehensive understanding of good documentation practices and the techniques for quality report writing.

Outcome:
After the training, the participants were able to explain the key concepts of documentation process, documentation methods, report writing, definition, types of reports, elements, scope, importance, steps in report writing, characteristics, planning a report, information collection process, organizing information, standard reporting template.

Test score: The pre-test average score was 41 and post test average score was 65.

Training on Organizational System and Management for CBOS
Bandhu Social Welfare Society (BSWS) completed four-day training on Organizational System and Management for CBOS from 18-21 October 2015. A total number of 29 participants attended the training.

Objectives:
The objectives of this training were to improve knowledge and skill about Organizational System and Management and increase existing skills on Good Governance and its practice.

Outcome:
On the last day of the training, the participants were able to explain the key concepts of Governance, Communication, Good Governance and its impact in CBO, Good Governance policy, Ownership of CBO, Difference between Governance and Management, Role of General Committee, General Representative Committee and Executive Committee, Election Process, voting system and increased their existing knowledge.

Test score: The pre-test average score was 41 and post test average score was 93.

CBO ON-SITE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND MONITORING VISIT/CBO VISIT
According to the plan, BSWS conducted a total of 13 field visits where technical assistance visits were 08 and regular monitoring visits were (05) under seed fund grant

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<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Name of CBOs</th>
<th>Purpose of Visit</th>
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<td>Chattala Jubo Songho, Chittagong</td>
<td>Technical Assistance and Monitoring visits under Seed Fund Grant</td>
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<td>Chonnomol Manob Kollan, Khulna</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Arpon Manab Kollan Sangtha, Jessore</td>
<td>Technical Assistance</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Surjer Alo Hijra Songhoton, Chittagong</td>
<td>Monitoring visits under Feed Fund Grant</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Agravami Samajik Unnayan Sangha, Sirajganj</td>
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<td>Protiva Manob Kollan Sangtha, Natore</td>
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<td>Setu Bandhan Kollan Sangtha, Mymensingh</td>
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Besides our regular monitoring visits under the seed fund program, BSWS internal Audit team visited Sonali Din and bachar Asha in Rajshahi and Chattala Jubo Songho & Surjer Alo Hijra Songhoton in Chittagong. However, the following issues were addressed and technical support provided during the reporting period:

- Follow up on CBO registration process
- Documentation process and up gradation as per need
- Referral network and services
- MOU
- Assistance to prepare Quarterly and Monthly reports
- Work plan and ongoing task Referral Directory
- Service mapping
- Area Demarcation
- Updated and developed Organogram and different policies
- In addition, during seed fund monitoring visits, the MSA team provided all necessary feedbacks and on spot assistance for better implementation.

Achievements:

- Two CBOs (Arpon Manab Kallyan Society and Agragami SamajikUnnyan Shangho) have received final Registration from Social Welfare Department.
- M&E guidelines were developed and are being implemented.
- Good Governance has been ensured effectively in respective CBOs i.e monthly meeting conducted regularly; CBOs arranged regular election according to constitution, AGM organized as per constitution.
- Service providing organizations are sensitized and are providing services to the community. So far Light House, Surjer Hashi, Marrie Stopes Clinic, Family Planning Association of Bangladesh, IPSA, District Sadar Hospitals, DIC of BSWS.
- Financial guidelines are followed for all financial transactions.
- Monthly work plans developed and followed with minimum competence.
- Strengthen the referral mechanism with other health service providing organizations. A total of 29 beneficiaries for VCT and 101 were referred for STI in above mentioned health service providing organizations.
- Significant increase in the number of referral clients who received different services (HTC, counseling, GH) from health service providers.

CBO ORGANIZATIONAL ‘SUSTAINABILITY AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION STRATEGY’ DEVELOPMENT

Based on “Turning the Corner: Regional Workshop on Resource Mobilization & Sustainability” organized by APCOM from 25 -27 May 2015 in Bangkok, the Barapani from Bangalore, India visited Bandhu, Bangladesh and conducted two days workshop on ‘Resource Mobilization and Sustainability Strategy Development’ from 13-14 Sept ‘2015 at PMO office, Siddeshwarai. A total number of 31 participants from 21 CBOs attended the workshop.

The objectives of this workshop were to understand the concept of resource mobilization and sustainability plan through identifying potential donors at local level and resource mobilization strategy development.

At the end of the workshop participants improved their knowledge regarding resource mobilization, types of resource mobilization, ways of resource mobilization and finally got clear concept about sustainability, business development plan, income generating activities, generating organizational fund and donor management. Most of the participants had inadequate understanding on this topic which was reflected from their pre-test and post test scores. The average score of Pre Test and the Post test were 5.6 and 9.3 respectively.

After two days workshop, in addition, 05 resource mobilization strategies were developed in consultation with 05 different CBOs. Barapani also developed BSWS’s resource mobilization strategy.
Achievements of the Training

After the resources mobilizing training, three community based organization salready started their small scale activities which were more pertinent to them. Agni Bina Samaj Kallyaan Shongstha - Comilla, BacharAshan –Rajshahi and Shapla MSM/HijraUnnayunShangho- Sherpur developed business plans. The seedmoney is already arranged to run the business in limited scale.

MEDIA ENGAGEMENT THROUGH MEDIA FELLOWSHIP OF BANDHU

A total of 10 fellows have been honored with Bandhu Media Fellowship Award for their investigative report on sexual minority people in Bangladesh.

As a part of collective efforts and with a notion to work for establishing human rights of sexual minority population of Bangladesh, Bandhu Social Welfare Society (BSWS) in partnership with UNDP under the MSA grant of GFTAM (DIVA project), has rolled out the 5th media fellowships.

The media fellowship program was started with the welcome speech given by Mr. Anisul Islam Hero, Chairman, BSWS. He said that “we are not alone, media people around are with us to establish the rights of sexual minority”. He also added that media people and institutions will be with Bandhu and will help us to make our journey smooth.

While speaking as chief guest in the award ceremony program, Mr. Matiur Rahmam, Editor, The Daily Prothom Alo said that without involvement of government no initiative could be successful, so we must thank the government that they recognized Hijra as third gender and allocated stipend for them.

On the other hand Bandhu and media fellows are working for the wellbeing of sexual minority and producing valuable report in order to establish their rights in the society, so we must say they are doing a wonderful job.

His Excellency Johan Frisell, Ambassador, Embassy of Sweden said that there is no doubt that the reports made by the journalists will create an understanding among the mass people, policy makers and other stockholder. People are now more aware because media is taking responsibility to establish rights of sexual minority.

In this program, community people shared their voice and took part in dance and storytelling.

Media fellow’s reports were screened in the forum. Finally fellows were awarded crest, certificate for their successfully completion report.

The program was presided over by Mr. Shale Ahmed, Executive Director, Bandhu. He gave a wonder full presentation regarding the program. He had introduced the program, the process on background of media fellowship program and importance of program. He said that some changes is happening regarding the sexual minority issues, because media is with us.

MEDIA ENGAGEMENT TO PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS IN BANGLADESH

BSWS organizes several kinds of events with media representatives throughout the year. As a continuation of that Bandhu hosted a regular meeting with the BSWS Media Forum Members who has prior experience working with the ‘third gender’ community and other sexual minorities who live as an underprivileged shallow life on 12th of December at Bandhu Gender and Sexuality Resource Centre.

Representatives from RTV, NTV, ETV, thereport24.com, Daily Jugantor, Daily Ittefaq, Deepto TV, and other news organizations were there at the event. The sole purpose of the meeting was to make aware about the life style, social position, physical, emotional and sexual aspects of life of the third gender and other sexual minorities.
Also to take/share ideas from/with them what could be done to represent the said community in a positive way to the mass population of the country and how Bandhu and the news agencies can collaboratively work for community betterment? BSWS expects that the forum members shall play a supreme role in terms of producing news or documentaries on sexual minorities.

There were a few concerns that were shared by the Media Forum members which include, fundamentalist media representatives who do not believe in certain human rights concern but still would write up stories for the sake of fame and awards, most of the News Agency editors do not want to publish reports on LGBT community as they do not want to put priority considering religious fundamentalism and social stigma of the country and as well as mass population are not comfortable with terms like lesbian, gay and bisexual. Therefore, it is challenging for media personnel who want to work with the LGBT community. More importantly civil society representatives are not sensitized enough.

From the meeting few recommendations came on board to take necessary steps to enhance their legal rights by creating awareness among people at every level, arrange media sensitization events or workshops, come up with socially sensitive terms to address the sexual minorities, organize Media Partnership events so they get more Media coverage, sponsor events to get national/ international attention, produce quarterly reports which would focus on what media representatives/ media forum members/ media fellow members have contributed from their respective fieldwork, make an action plan and disseminate among the forum/fellow members and have proper monitoring protocols, produce booklet with basic terminologies to address the sexual minorities, for example, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Sexual Rights, Reproductive Rights, etc.

When a sensitive complaint comes to Bandhu which requires media attention, they should instantly notify the forum/ fellow members for prompt coverage. If any negative reports on the sexual minority population gets published Bandhu must write to the concerned media house and disapprove it.

**BANDHU AIN-ALAP ACTIVITIES**

**Consultation meeting on networking with legal aid providers and Human Rights based organizations**

Bandhu Social Welfare Society (Bandhu) has organized two networking meetings with legal aid providers and Human Rights based organizations on 20 October 2015 and 28 December 2015 respectively under the Multi-Country South Asia Global Fund HIV Programme. These meetings were a part of ongoing ‘Ain-Alap’ activities.

Ain-Alap’ (legal Talk) is a legal support unit of Bandhu which primarily provides legal information and counsel to the sexual minority community over phone on legal issues. It also documents the harassment, violation complaints of the community person and refers complaints to the District Level Lawyers Group (DLLG) that work voluntarily in 19 districts to provide legal support to the community, National Human Rights Commission (JAMACON) and other legal aid service proving organizations to ensure justice.
In these meetings the participants were invited from the forum titled ‘Human rights forum of Bangladesh (HRFB)’ and ‘Human Rights Alliance of Bangladesh (HRAB)’ in order to spread the Ain-Alap service information for ensuring better service to the community.

The main objectives of these meetings were to build a strong network among human rights based organizations and to create a supportive environment providing legal support to the sexual minority community. This meeting provides an excellent opportunity to meet and exchange experience among the participants. A total of 40 participants from different organizations namely Bangladesh Minority Watch, Village Development Organization, Bangladesh Center for Human Rights and Development, Light House, Association for Land Reforms and Development, DHRUBA, Boys of Bangladesh, Kapaeeng Foundation, BLAST, Manusher Jonno Foundation, Acid Survivors Foundation, Bangladesh Mohila Parishad, Nari pokkho and Lawyers from supreme court and judge court attended in the meetings.

Mr. Shale Ahmed, Executive Director of Bandhu Social Welfare Society, welcomed everyone and shared the meeting objectives with the participants. He emphasized on the global trend and requested everyone to work together in order to combat any challenges on human rights issues.

During the meeting Mohammad Zahid Hossain, Consultant of Ain-Alap shared a power point presentation on Ain-Alap history, up-to-date status, challenges and successes with the participants and invited the participants for open discussion.

Advocate Mostaque Ahmed Sarker emphasized on sensitization of judges about gender and sexuality issues and applauded the lawyers’ fellowship initiative of Bandhu. In addition, Gyanada Prasad Das, Advocate of judge court of Dhaka said that involvement with Bandhu opened the door of an unknown world to him.

M M Kabir Mamun, Sr. officer of ASF shared a service hotline no (01713010461) for any kind of acid related incidents and also request BSWS to refer the cases of Rajbari, Subrotowo who was a victim of acid violence. Shahzadi Shamima, Sr. Training & Research of Bangladesh Mohila Parishad mentioned that they are interested to incorporate third gender issue in their study circle and also in their gender development course. Advocate Shahanaz Akter, Program Officer of Nari pokkho mentioned that “we are operating and maintaining good linkages with police station, hospital and government offices through Durbar Network and having supportive response”. She assured to extend support and linkage for the sexual minority community in this regard.

Advocate Mohammed Akram, staff lawyer of BLAST said that “BLAST is committed to support the marginalized community for ensuring social justice”. Mohuya Leya Falia, Senior Program Manager at Manusher Jonno Foundation, MJF shared the update of Anti-discrimination Law and the Law Minister’s promises to place it to the parliament by end of this year where sexual minority issues will be incorporated in the draft law. She also recommended organizing orientation meeting for the social welfare department where MJF could jointly organize this meeting with BSWS on conceptual clarity about sexual minority population.
Recommendation

- A general MOU can be developed among the organizations who work on human rights issues mentioning the common ground of working area.
- Lawyer fellowship can be offered throughout the country involving all the lawyers rather limited to only DLLG members.
- Need to focus more on counseling, especially family counseling to address the issues related to sexual minority and human rights.
- It has been experienced that most of the discussion were transgender/ Hijra focused, and overall LGBT issues remained untouched. Recommended to invite community representatives in the meeting and also issues around LGBT rights need to be focused with equal importance.
- Need to create a common platform where the success and challenges story can be shared to identify best practice and also outline an effective strategy.

This networking meeting helped to create a bridge among 30 different human rights based organizations and lawyers. Some specific recommendations also come from expert participants to provide further support to the sexual minority community on human rights issues.

This meeting came to an end with the experience shared by the district level lawyer’s group member in their respective field of work. All the participants showed their keen interest to work cohesively with Ain-Alap unit and committed to extend their support within their limit.

Meeting with Lawyers and Judges at Narayanganj

Bandhu Social Welfare Society aims to provide legal support to the sexual minority population and established district level lawyers group in 19 districts who are committed to provide legal support for free to the community. With a view to extend this support, Bandhu arranged meeting with the lawyers on 8 November 2015 where recommendations to include them in the district legal aid panel were made so that the community can also be exempted from court fee or other cost.

The objectives of this visit were to coordinate with the District level lawyers group, find out possible opportunities and information to include district level lawyers in the district legal aid committee.

So far, two meetings were conducted with lawyers and judges on the same day. The first meeting was held at Narayanganj district bar with the District Level Lawyers Group (DLLG) member. All the members were present during the meeting and the overall update till date of Ain-Alap has been shared with them. The importance of inclusion of the lawyers at district legal aid committee was also discussed. Two members from Narayanganj DLLG namely Advocate NurJahan and Advocate Amitav Sarkar were included in the district legal aid committee. The experience faced by the lawyers at Narayanganj in terms of dealing with the sexual minority populace was also been shared by the lawyers.
In the second meeting with Humayra Tasmin, Senior Assistant Judge, District Legal Aid Officer, Narayanganj discussed about the opportunities and facilities of District Legal Aid Committee. A brief about Bandhu Social Welfare Society, Ain-Alap service and DLLG forum was shared with her. She mentioned that the panel lawyers list of District Legal Aid Committee will be updated very soon. She highly appreciated Ain-Alap activities and assured to keep the DLLG members who are already enlisted in the legal aid committee will remain in the updated list.

It was a successful visit to Narayanganj court and the lawyers were highly motivated to work collectively. The judge who is assigned for district legal aid committee was very much interested and felt the need to work towards this community. She advised for better coordination to have effective implementation.

This seminar was organized as a part of last minute feedback on the draft law which is being submitted to the law ministry and also to advance the process to place the law before the parliament as early as possible. Anisul Haque, Honorable Minister of Law, Tarana Halim, Honorable State Minister of Telecommunication and Member of Parliament, Professor Dr. Mizanur Rahman, Chairman of National Human Rights Commission and Barrister Sara Hossain ornamented the event with their kind presence and authoritativespeech.

In the draft law, only hijra community is mentioned, other sexual minority community was missing. Recommendation was made to include all sexual minorities under this law along with clear definition of sexual minority so that this law can be used as an umbrella to protect all vulnerable sexual minorities.

Participation in National Seminar on Draft Anti-Discriminatory Law

National Human Rights Commission (JAMAKON) and Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) jointly organized a national seminar on Anti-Discriminatory law where Bandhu Social Welfare Society along with a range of civil society organizations, community based organizations, legal practitioners and human rights based organizations from different fields attended this important seminar.

In the draft law, only hijra community is mentioned, other sexual minority community was missing. Recommendation was made to include all sexual minorities under this law along with clear definition of sexual minority so that this law can be used as an umbrella to protect all vulnerable sexual minorities.
Provided legal information and counseling and support as per the nature of incident with immediate response

During this period almost 329 calls received by the Ain-Alap number. These calls are mostly related to information and to know about the Ain-Alap service. Some of the phone calls are related to discrimination, violence, harassment, property issues of sexual minority population. These phone calls come from different districts of the country. Over this phone, general information on legal issues and advice provided according to the nature of the calls and also guide them on how to file the cases to the police station or other appropriate authority.

Documentation of Human Rights Violation complaints

During this period we have received 38 Human Rights Violation cases. These cases come from Sylhet, Rajbari, Khulna, Comilla, Noakhali, Sirajganj, Zhalokathi and Chittagong districts. Most of the cases are related property rights, domestic violence and harassment related issues.
Mid-Term Assessment Workshop of Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Commitments Organized by Human Rights Forum of Bangladesh

The secretariat of Human Rights Forum of Bangladesh (HHRFB) organized a day long workshop on UPR commitment where the member organizations and their respective personnel attended. This workshop held at YWCA conference room, Asad Gate, Dhaka. The objectives of the workshop were to promote and signify the Mid Term Assessment Campaign (sharing at different level) and share with government officials. Different thematic issues were discussed among the group and a set of recommendations came out based on the discussion. The discussion part of sexual minority is outlined as follows:

Concerning Issue: Inclusion the rights of sexual minorities in UPR report

Homosexuality and bisexuality is as much a part of Bangladeshi society, as it is in any other society of the world. Gender and sexuality issues, including same sex behaviors are in general regarded as a taboo in Bangladesh with almost no discussion or support. Sexual minority communities in Bangladesh face numerous difficulties in accessing citizen services. Often they are discriminated, stigmatized and harassed by the dominant society or individual on the basis their sexual orientation, gender identity, behaviors and sexual practices. Even today, minority population occupy a devalued position in society. There has been grave human rights violations, such as faced by victims of religious intolerance, discrimination based on physical or cultural characteristic, sexual violence and gender discrimination at the workplace, etc., to name a few due to lack of legal protection and social marginalization.

Recommendations:

- Acknowledge existence of sexual and gender minorities and incorporate the issue in relevant Policies/Plans.
- De-criminalize consensual adult same-sex activities by abolishing section 377 of the Bangladesh Penal Code, 1860.
- Incorporate sex education in the national curriculum, and sensitize relevant agencies on sexuality & Gender.
- Include sexual minority population in Draft Anti-Discriminatory law.

The process of identification of Hijra (Transgender) through medical test should be changed and need specific policy/law in terms of distributing inheritance property.

Participation in the 2nd Five Year Strategic Plan (2016-2020), National Human Rights Commission (Jamakon), Bangladesh

Bandhu Social Welfare Society is continuously and effectively working with the National Human Rights Commission of Bangladesh. As part of this effort, on 16 August, 2015, at CIRDAP International Conference Centre, Bandhu attended on next five-year strategic plan of NHRC. The workshop was designed in such a way where every organization and individual can provide their valuable suggestions which they feel important to insert in the strategic plan of NHRC. A list of pressing human rights issues was identified where the need for protection and promotion of sexual minority rights is recommended for inclusion. This event also helped to share experience and knowledge among different communities.
During the event the present status, opportunities and challenges of NHRC was shared and recommendations taken from civil society organizations and government officials to functionalize the NHRC more effectively in coming days.

**Participation in 2nd Cycle UPR Recommendations: Status of Implementation**

National Human Rights Commission (JAMAKON) organized a two day long consultation titled “2nd Cycle UPR Recommendations: Status of Implementation” on 6-7 December, 2015 at CIRDAP International Conference Centre, Dhaka. The objective of this consultation was stock-taking of the implementation of 2nd Cycle UPR recommendation and also to collect input and a critical analysis from the stakeholders for assessing the implementation status. This consultation meeting comprised number of working sessions on specific topics to ensure wide stakeholders input into the stakeholders report and also brought all stakeholders together and widely spread the significance of UPR throughout the country.

In the working session-8 the rights of vulnerable groups including Rights of persons with disabilities, Refugees, Dalits, Transgender and other Excluded Minorities was discussed. This session was chaired and moderated by Ms. Selina Hossain, Honorary Member, National Human Rights Commission, Bangladesh. A group of esteemed panelist, Mr. Monsur Ahmed Chowdhury, Member, Executive Board, Disability Council International, Mr. Khandaker Jahurul Alam, Executive Director, Centre for Services and Information on Disability, Mr. Zakir Hossain, Chief Executive, Nagorik Uddyog, Shale Ahmed, Executive Director, Bandhu Social Welfare Society (BSWS), Annanya Banik, Transgender Liaison Officer, Bandhu Social Welfare Society, Moni Rani Das, President, Bangladesh Dalit and Women Federation and Mr. Mika Kanervavuori, Human Rights Advisor, Office of the UN Resident Coordinator delivered their remarkable speech on their respective field of expertise and experience.

Shale Ahmed, ED of BSWS emphasized on the protection of rights of sexual minorities in his speech. He applauded government initiative on Third Gender and also described the significant role of UPR in terms of protecting the rights of vulnerable and marginalized community. He mentioned that BSWS is closely involved and working with UPR report in collaboration with Human Rights Forum of Bangladesh (HRFB) and also National Human Rights Commission. He believed that one of the major stepping stone to uphold the rights of sexual minority people in Bangladesh is showcasing the situation of the sexual minority community in the UPR report along with challenging laws and policies in order to ensure dignity, equity and social justice for all. He made a couple of specific recommendations, mentionable reformation/revision of the BPC 377, controversy on medical testing system to identify Hijra/Third Gender, inclusion of sexual minority in anti-discriminatory law, a national census on socio-economic status of sexual minorities, etc.

Annanya Banik, self-identified Transgender, shared her personal life experience related to stigma and discrimination on transgender/third gender people. She appealed on public employment opportunity, inclusion of sex and gender issues in national curriculum and also to initiate quota system to engage this community in all sectors so that they can take part in the growth of national economy and progress.
JAMAKON maintained its priority on UPR and continued to play its role to follow-up on implementation of UPR. The working session also spotlighted on the pending work and remaining challenges on the full implementation of the UPR.

The 6th ILGA Asia Conference and BSWS Involvement

The 6th ILGA Conference with the theme “Independent Souls and Bodies” was held from 28 to 30 October at Taipei, Taiwan. A total of 4 participants attended from Bandhu Social Welfare Society, Bangladesh. Shale Ahmed, the Executive Director of Bandhumade an Oral Paper presentation and attended Panel discussion throughout the conference. The conference was hosted by an ILGA Asia member, Taiwan Tongzhi Hot line Association, which has immensely contributed to the improvement of the situation for LGBTI population in Taiwan.

The 6th ILGA Asia Conference was a place to raise the voice of the Asian LGBTI people with a recurring presence, especially in the UN’s project “Being LGBT in Asia”! The conference began with two preconference Women and Trans issues on 26th and 27th October, including a training on UN and advocacy and Finding the Rainbow in ASEAN.

During the conference the participants got opportunity to participate in the plenary and workshops, share their work, address the challenges they face and also how to overcome the barriers. The diversity of this region brings a wealth of experience, information and expertise.

Bandhu team also participated in the session on “Strengthens & Challenges of LGBTI organizing in Muslim Societies” and then session on Mental Health. Shale Ahmed spoke on “Strengthens & Challenges of LGBTI organizing in Muslim Societies”, a papal discussion that was organized by CSBR.

In the afternoon session, the oral presentation session was held on increasing access to Justice for LGBT. The following topics were discussed in the session;

- District Level Lawyers Group (DLLG): A place to create an enabling environment for LGBT population in Bangladesh, Shale Ahmed (Bandhu Social Welfare Society, Bangladesh)
- Local, regional and international efforts and strategies in strengthening and increasing access to justice for LGBT persons, Grace Poore (International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, USA)
- The challenges in accessing justice for LGBTIQ persons in Indonesia, Widya Anggraeni (Kemitraan Partnership, Indonesia)
- Increasing Access to Justice for LGBT in Indonesia, Lini Zurlia (ARUS PELANGI, INDONESIA)

SKILL BUILDING THROUGH REGIONAL INITIATIVES:

Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) workshop

A three-day workshop was conducted by APCOM from October 18-20, 2015 to improve South Asian community advocates’ organizational skills on monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in Bangkok. Daisy Akter, Manager, M&E and Mr. Mohammad Phakrul Islam, Coordinator Knowledge Management participated on behalf of BSWS.

A total of thirty potential M&E staffs from nine organizations including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Pakistan and Nepal attended the workshop under Multi-Country South Asia Global Fund HIV Program (MSA). The objectives of the workshop were to:
• Increase the participants’ knowledge and understanding on the Global Fund’s Progress Update/Disbursement Request (PUDR) and its supporting processes

• Increase the participants’ understanding of theory of change and monitoring and evaluation planning

• Provide the participants with the competencies to apply concepts of monitoring and evaluation, including frameworks and components of M&E, selecting indicators and collection, how to measure advocacy, communications and social mobilization, and use information for M&E for learning and decision-making.

At the end of 3-day workshop, the participants increased their knowledge on PUDR and its supporting processes, understood the theory of change and obtained skills to apply concepts of organizational monitoring and evaluation.

ADVOCACY INITIATIVES

World AIDS Day Celebration

On 1st December 2015 Bandhu Social Welfare Society (Bandhu) celebrated World AIDS Day. The Government of Bangladesh has been observing the World AIDS Day Nationally since 1988. This year National AIDA/ STD Program (NASP) in collaboration with GO/NGOs and different stakeholders observed the day at Osmani Conference Center with colorful events.

On WAD, a colorful rally was organized by NASP with collaboration of GO/NGOs, civil society, beneficiaries, SHGs to create mass awareness among people on a specific issue. As a pioneer organization BSWS led this national event with a minimum of 300 participants from Dhaka central and DIC level.

Later a Seminar was held where Mohammad Nasim, MP, Honorable State Minister for Health and Family Welfare was present as chief guest.

The Country representative of UNAIDS, Line Director of NASP, Additional Secretary of MoHFW, Chairperson of STI/AIDS Network of Bangladesh, President of PLHIV Network were present as guests.

In this seminar the State Minister formally announced the updated status of HIV/AIDS in 2015.

Colorful decoration with informative stalls was another attraction of WAD-15 event. Around 20 organizations including Bandhu disseminated colorful massage through their stalls. Every participant willingly visited different stalls and came to know different program related messages and collected brochure, leaflet, stickers and reports. Through the booth condom and lubricant, BCC/IEC materials were distributed to the project participants and mass people.

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Human Rights Day Observation of National Human Rights Commission (JAMACON)

With the lead of National Human Rights Commission (JAMAKON), various human rights organizations of Bangladesh marched in a rally to mark the celebration of International Human Rights Day on 10th December 2015. The leading of JAMAKON showed it will go in front to ensure human rights of all of the citizens of Bangladesh whether they are from different religion, caste, race, profession, and ethnicity or have different sexual orientation and gender identity.

Professor Dr. Mizanur Rahman, Chairman of JAMAKON inaugurated the rally and walked a mile with hundreds of people gathered at TSC Chhattor of Dhaka University, a place of pride, glory of Bangladesh from where country moved to achieve its right to speak in its own mother language and the liberation war. Bandhu Social Welfare Society (Bandhu) along with around 100 sexual minority community participated in the rally with festoons in hands, JAMAKON emblem in head and hope in heart that rights will be ensured.

Beside the rally in Dhaka, people of SOGI community organized rallies across the country in 6 divisional cities. People from Barisal, Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi, Rangpur and Sylhet walked in the rally upholding the slogan “Our Rights, Our Freedom, Always”.

All this happened, because of the financial support of USAID Bangladesh through a Fixed Amount Award for “Human Rights in Development Project”.

Cultural Program

On the evening of the International Human Rights Day, hundreds of people gathered at Abdul Karim Shahitto bisharod Auditorium, Bangla Academy Dhaka to start the cultural show “Srishti, Shomota o Shomoohikar-Shetu bondhoney Songskrit” performed by Essence of Soul.

Establishing the corrective dispersion and understanding of the human rights among Bangladeshi citizens are a challenge itself. It becomes doubly harder when we are dealing with the sexual minority groups as they remain stunted in the conundrum of stigma and discrimination.
In order to relate them the mainstream audience needs to be sensitized about the livelihood, struggles, desires aspirations of this neglected community. One effective platform to address this issue is bringing everyone together in the stage of art and culture.

New Dimension of Gender and Sexuality Resource Center

A. Gender and Sexuality Resource Center (GSRC) of Bandhu introduced an online database of its resources including books, journals, and reports. This online database has created opportunity to preserve resources according to the classification. Following tasks have been initiated to extend its services:

- Re-arranging the resource center
- Cataloging/assigning classification number to books
- Assigning accession number to books
- Arranging the books using Library Standard Classification number
- Pasting book pockets, book cards
- Pasting bar code and call number on book spines
- Developing the Library Automation System KOHA
- Adding the bibliographical data on KOHA of the books
- Shelving the books and provide orientation to resource center staffs

At present, Gender and Sexuality Resource Center has 873 (Main copy 678) resources including books, journals, reports and other materials in the KOHA system and BSWS staffs have been oriented about the system.

During the reporting period Jul-Dec 2015 a total of 352 visitors including adolescents, students, teachers, like-minded organizations as well as CBO’s visited the resource center for different purposes.

However, to spread the information to others, BSWS arranged a re-launching program of Resource Center on 14 December 2015 where representatives of UN body, INGO, NGOs and GO’s, ICDDR’B, CBO and community people were invited.

In this program Leo Kenny, Country Director, UNAIDS said, “this resource center is really a wonderful and unique initiative of BSWS and I hope this resource Coventry will be helpful for all GO, NGOs, who are working with HIV/AIDS, SRHR, and sexual minority. He also added that you are not alone, UNAIDS is always with you.”

Ms. Habiba Akter, Executive Director, AsharAl Society (AAS), said, “Once upon a time there was no resource center related to HIV/AIDS resources but it is really time oriented initiative from BSWS”.

All CBO’s, NGOs and community people welcomed this resource center and some of them committed they will provide their resources to the GSRC.

B. Learning circle session as a part knowledge generation as a part of regular activity of resource center GSRC organized two learning sessions:

On October 14, 2015 a learning circle session on Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) was arranged to widen the BSWS organizational learning regarding PrEP. The session was conducted by Md. Rafiquil Islam Royal Assistant Manager, Training, BSWS at Gender and Sexuality Resource Center, BSWS. Twenty participants from different stakeholders, BSWS employees, HIM members, Journalists, MSM and Hijra Community representatives attended the session. The objectives of the session were to:
• Increase the participants' knowledge and understanding on the PrEP
• Increase the participants' understanding of uses, working mechanisms and side effects of PrEP
• Provide relevant information regarding the PrEP

On November 15, a learning circle session on MI approach was conducted by Md. Muzib Ullah, Senior Officer, Training, BSWS at Gender and Sexuality Resource Center, BSWS. Twenty five participants from different stakeholders including BSWS employee, community based organizations attended the Session. The objectives of the session were to:

• Increase the participants' knowledge and understanding on the MI Approaches
• Increase the participants' understanding on principles of MI Approaches and uses of approaches
• Provide the participants with the competencies to be able to apply concepts of MI approaches in their individual lives, including organizational settings and, how to use in counseling, communications and social mobilization, and use information at the community level.

C. Film Screening:
The objective of the film show was to create an open space for sharing experience and views with each other through an informal interaction. The following films were shown during reporting period where a total of 80 viewers enjoyed those film shows.

• Common Gender - a Bangla film
• Tin Kanna - a Bangla film
• Ashu Break the Silence
• Confusion

D. Discussion with Bangladesh University as strategic partner:
Gender and Sexuality Resource Center, BSWS organized a Discourse lecture with Architecture Faculty, Bangladesh University on 2nd September 2015. In the session, major focus was on how to create more space for TG population through better understanding of sensitive issues. More than 100 students enjoyed the participatory discussions.

E. Initiatives of LGBT population under fellowship program of National Seoul University (SNU), Korea and NHRC Bangladesh:
A training on Human Rights and LGBT population was organized on 04 September 2015 at Gender and Sexuality Resource Center under SNU fellowship initiatives where a total of 20 sexual minority including Gay, Lesbian, TG and Hijra people attended. Ms. Farhana Zarif Kanta, PM and Mr. Zahid Hossain, Consultant, Ain Alap facilitated the session along with external facilitators of NHRC.

F. New initiatives to mobilize young generation through competition:
An initiative was taken to generate knowledge amongst adolescent on “Who am I” in collaboration with Resource Center. The objective of this program was to generate knowledge and flourish the capacity of youth creating innovative idea through competition. A total of 36 young adolescents participated in the program and finally 04 were nominated by the experienced jury board.

In Annual Review Meeting Bangkok
As a part of organizational commitment to efficiently operate and manage its intervention programs, BSWS routinely reviews its operational plan (OP) of the previous year and designs annual OP for the following year. The annual review and planning workshop 2015 was held in Bangkok, Thailand from 17-19 December 2015. A total of 32 participants including staff members and executive committee members actively participated in the workshop with their highest commitment and significant level of contribution.

Mr. Shale Ahmed, Executive Director of BSWS inaugurates the workshop and welcome participants in Bangkok.
Ms. Anna Chernyshova, Programme Manager of UNDP regional multi-country HIV program praised Bandhu team for their excellent work in Bangladesh and also mentioned that Bandhu over the years has shown a great commitment not only for reducing the impact of HIV among sexual minority populations but also to ensure human rights of those population groups as well. She highlighted that Bandhu in recent years has taken some important advocacy initiatives, which has significantly contributed for recognition of the third gender identity in Bangladesh. She also reminded that Bandhu should work further to sustain the result.

- The workshop was designed in the following three major segments:
- Inauguration and welcome speeches from the honorable guest speakers
- Review progress of 2015 and design the action plan for 2016
- Discussion on progress, challenges and future direction of Bandhu with emerging priorities

**Bandhu Involvement in National Size Estimation Survey by the NASP**

Bandhu closely involved with the National Size Estimation Survey under NASP-Bangladesh and UNAIDS Bangladesh. The objective of the survey / research was to figure out the total size of KAP population across the country and to design proper programs for upcoming HIV preventions in Bangladesh. The major role of Bandhu was to facilitate the overall process and data of field survey.

Expected outcomes of the survey/research:
- Research teams gathered knowledge on “survey/research and data validation process”.
- Key Affected Population (KAP) will be identified with their stigma and discrimination.
- National HIV/AIDS program will be enhanced about KAP size and their needs and demands.
- GO/NGO will be more oriented about KAP size and their necessity and will be able to provide necessary support as the population demands.

**Involvement with Client Counseling by “MAYA” (maya.com.bd)**

From November 2015 BSWS in collaboration with “Maya” is providing anonymous information and counseling on psychosocial issues to its users through maya.com.bd.

With the growing popularity of the service, we are now handling a wide range of issues from reproductive health to cyber crimes to sexuality. The objective of the counseling is to understand ‘client situation”, explain proper information on sexuality, sexual and gender diversity, and provide counseling on stress management, coping management, same sex relationship related, decision making capacity, etc. Mr. Masbah U Ahmed, Training Officer was responsible to deal the issue from Bandhu.

**The Community Consultation of Ending AIDS by 2013**

The community consultation through a day long workshop of the KP groups (MSM, TG, SW, PWID, PLHIV, Youth and Migrants) in collaboration with NASP, STI/AIDS Network, UNAIDS and WHO was held at Spectra Convention Centre on 2nd December 2015 and brought together around 100 key population from across the country. The workshop was organized with the aim of facilitating the process of evaluating community led comprehensive package of HIV intervention for key populations and its current nature as well as future scope of engagement of the community on ending AIDS by 2030. The content and direction of the consultation was designed by Habiba Akhter and Shale
CASE STUDY

TRAINING UNDER SEED FUND CHANGED KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOR OF A COMMUNITY PEOPLE

My name is Shezan. When I was about 8/9 years old, I felt more comfort playing with girls. I used to play in front of mirror wearing clothes of my mom and sister. Life was going well. While I was growing up, boys started treating me in a very discomforting manner. They used to touch me in different parts of my body, rubbed their sex organ against mine, forced me to touch their sex organs, etc. When I was in sixth grade, senior brothers would touch me sexually and I began to feel good. One day four or five elder brothers of my school took me to the toilet and they pull off my pants, I got scared and I cried. That time a cleaning lady from the school noticed it and rescued me.

One day, I met a madrasha student and I fell in love with him. That was my first love. I loved him so much that it cannot be explained with words. We met behind the madrasa or at my house and used to get intimate. Sometimes it seemed he loved me more than I loved him. It was magical. We remained lovers and days were passing by beautifully. When he finished his studies, he went back and we never got in touch. I could not forget him. I felt sad and blue. I used to go to the riverside and usually sat alone thinking of the memories. One day I met some kothis in the riverside. They took me to the BacharAsha office where I shared my inner feelings and stories with them. They gave me the mental support I needed back in then. I started going to BacharAsha office regularly and from there I got introduced to other men who were like me. I got polygamous and started having sex. I was unaware and did not practice safe sex. Later, one day BacarAsha invite me for training under seed grant project where I came to know about HIV/AIDS and STI diseases, importance of condom use, how to use condom, etc. This training changed my life. I started using condom and encouraged my sex partners to do the same for our protection.

I still go to the BacharAsha office regularly where I get to meet and share stories of my life with other like-minded people. I came to know a lot of other good looking men, yet deep down inside, I keep looking for my first love.

“INCREASED NEGOTIATION SKILLS FOR HOUSE RENT”

“Jhorna”, 22 years old TG people lived in Chittagong since 2002. She suffered lot from house owner about house rent related embarrassing situation due to her gender identity. She tried to convince them by her own logic but failed to take house opportunity for stay purpose only. Jhorna had no option to stay, talk, or make alternative logic and she became frustrated. After receiving the orientation session, counseling tips and SRHR training form SAHS she understood her situation and tried to make her own strategy to negotiate with house owner people. The counselor of SAHS suggested that negotiation skills as well as behavior or positive attitudes be given to improve overall situation as well. SAHS counselor has also made option for provide cabinet declaration paper to house owner, as well the use of humaratan issues /examples. SAHS provided necessary information on how to advocate for themselves with their negotiation skills development and use it for positive change in the society. After a long searching Jhorna got a beautiful and clean house for her accommodation and she now believes that she can make a logical negotiation effectively. She is happy with her gender identity as well as new house.
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