

Annual General Meeting (AGM) of NEARS 2019



With support from **Plan International Bangladesh** and **Marie Stopes Bangladesh**, NEARS organized its **4th Annual General Meeting** on 15th June 2019 at Marie Stopes Training Center, Dhaka. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Ikhtiar Uddin Khandaker, President-NEARS. Total participants were 81 (Male-53; Female-28). Following the agenda, the meeting approved the previous year's activities and shared the coming years planning.



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Inclusion of NEARS as a CSO in coordination committee for National Adolescent Health Strategy implementation at local level

As part of contributing the implementation of National Strategy for Adolescent Health 2017-2030, the second divisional workshop was held at Rangpur on 28th May 2019 where total participants were 56. The participants were from NEARS member organizations including Executive Director, Team Leader, Program Officer, Coordinator, convener and representatives. Besides, GoB officials from Family Planning and Health Departments, journalists, youth leaders and other NGO staff were present.



Divisional Workshop of NEARS at Local Level

Open discussions were held to find the key issues for the implementation of the strategy and recommendations collected and compiled. The participants had a strong background on adolescents' reproductive health rights issues, and they had their roles and responsibilities to improve the adolescents' vulnerable situation in Bangladesh.

Past months activities of NEARS

- ◆ Three Executive Committee meetings
- ◆ Annual General Meeting of NEARS
- ◆ A divisional workshop
- ◆ A consultation meeting with donors and development partners
- ◆ NEARS Advocacy Strategy, in connection of NEARS Advocacy Strategy development, a ToR is generated and based on ToR, respective CVs are collected and through a review process by the Executive Committee Members of NEARS, Dr. Nazneen Akhter, MBBS, MPH, DLSH&TM, MSc in Health Policy Planning Financing (LSE, UK), was approached to kindly accept the assignment of developing the Advocacy Strategy.
- ◆ Second issue of NEARS Quarterly E-Newsletter published.

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ডায়াল করুন





Increasing knowledge and skills of SRHR through Youth Organizers



Orient headmasters and SMC about the importance of CSE/NCTB-SRHR education in schools

PSTC - a member organization of NEARS celebrates it 41 years of journey

Population Services and Training Center (PSTC) is the inheriting organization of Family Planning Services and Training Center (FPSTC) which was created by a government order in **1978**. It is a non-government, not for profit voluntary Organization registered with the Directorate of Social Welfare in 1995 and with NGO Affairs Bureau in 1996 affiliated with Directorate of Family Planning in 1997 and declared as the inheriting organization of FPSTC by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in 1997. PSTC has been working for the improvement and uphold the standard of livelihoods of poor and socially disadvantaged people by undertaking various programs and projects particularly, health service focused projects around the country.

Recently, **PSTC's 41st anniversary** was celebrated on 4th July, 2019 in Krishibid Institution of Bangladesh to mark its long journey of serving and looking after social disadvantaged people. The program started with a welcoming speech of the Executive Director of PSTC, Dr Noor Mohammad. The chief guests were **Mr. Md. Aynul Kabir, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Women & Children Affairs, Dr. Mohammad Sharif, Director (MCH Services) & Line Director (MCRAH), DGFP Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Ms. Laura Criado, Deputy Country Director, Plan International, Bangladesh.** The 25th volume of Projanmo Kotha was released, a monthly bilingual newsletter of PSTC, followed by a special webpage launching named as uCON an initiative taken by HIA project of PSTC, which was developed for the young people as an interactive webpage. The end of session 1



Honorable guests at the occasion

was marked by a vote of thanks by Dr. Mahbulul Alam, Head of Programs of PSTC. The second sessions consisted of discussions regarding **Projanmo Kotha** by various representatives from different development partners, country directors of international NGOs and executive directors of national NGOs. The third and fourth session comprised of an exclusive session for PSTC members where they shared their thoughts regarding PSTC and cultural program consisting of both PSTC staff members and outside artists respectively.



You are entering puberty?
Don't hesitate!!! Break the Silence
Ask your questions here!!!
<https://ucon.pstc-bgd.org/home/>



Count Me In: Inclusion of Third Gender in National Census

Bandhu Social Welfare Society is consistently working for advocating the rights of third gender community in Bangladesh with different key stakeholders. As a part of its policy advocacy initiatives, Bandhu Social Welfare Society and **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)** jointly organized a consultation titled “**Count Me In: Inclusion of Third Gender in National Census**” on 13 December, 2018. A total of 70 participants including representatives of NHRC, law Enforcement Agencies, Journalists, professors of public & private universities, community members, research institutes, lawyer fellows, GO and NGO personnel.

The meeting was ornamented with the presence of **Kazi Reazul Hoque**, Hon’ble Chairman, NHRC, Bangladesh as Chief Guest, **Dr. Krishna Gayen**, Director General, Bureau of Statistics Department, Bangladesh, **Habibur Rahman**, BPM(BAR) PPM, Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG), Bangladesh Police and **Gokul Krishna Ghosh**, Director, NGO affairs Bureau as Special Guest, **Slavica Radosevic**, Political Processes Team Lead, DRG Office, USAID Bangladesh, **Kevin Goh**, First Secretary, Australian High Commission, Dhaka attended the meeting as guest of honor. **Anisul Islam Hero**, Chairperson, Bandhu Social Welfare Society presided the meeting as Chair. **Mr. Robaet Ferdous**, Professor, Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, University of Dhaka presented the key note of this consultation.

An open discussion was moderated by Anisul Islam Hero, Chairperson, Bandhu Social Welfare Society where the need and importance of third gender inclusion in national census were discussed.

The major recommendations were:

- ◇ Bangladesh Bureau of Statics can conduct a survey for Hijra before national household census in 2021



- ◇ Bangladesh NGO Affairs Bureau is more committed to give immediate approval towards third gender related fund
- ◇ A research can be conducted on transgender terminology in line with Health and Family Welfare Ministry
- ◇ DG, BBS assigned Md. Alamgir Hossain, Deputy Director, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics for coordination with Bandhu and NHRC for further work on third gender issues
- ◇ BBS will develop a special questionnaire for third gender community along with main question paper under National Census. An orientation session will be organized for data collectors based on the special question paper and checklist for third gender community.
- ◇ Chairman, NHRC assigned Mr. Robaet Ferdous, Professor, Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, University of Dhaka to develop a concept note and checklist on third gender issues for national census.
- ◇ National Human Rights Commission will work with Bandhu to file writ petition on third gender issue.

FPAB TararMela

FPAB (Family Planning Association of Bangladesh) started working for the young people in 1980, first ever in Bangladesh, aiming to promote responsible parenthood among young people with population education and community development activities. Gradually it shifted to **Family Life Education (FLE)** then to reproductive health. Subsequent to the **ICPD conference**, with the technical support of **International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)**, FPAB has been providing both education and services for sexual and reproductive health education through its adolescent program.

Considering young people’s view and suggestion and for being provide Youth Friendly services FPAB specified a place in the clinic and named as **TararMela (gathering of stars)** with the facilities of library, computer training, internet browsing, English speaking course, talent competition like drawing, essay/story/rhyme writing, debate, indoor games, news paper and also singing and dancing events. All these efforts and facilities result increasing number of young visitors to TararMela!



Government's Affiliation with Nirapod-2 in free Distribution of Sanitary Napkins at Different Schools and Madrasahs of Barguna District

Nirapod-2, a project for empowering Women on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and Choice of Safe Menstrual Regulation (MR) and Family Planning (FP), funded by the Embassy of **the Kingdom of the Netherlands**. The project is implemented by Marie Stopes Bangladesh as Lead and by Shushilan & BAPSA as partners.

From the very beginning, the project has been working relentlessly in its project area to improve the life of the women from the perspective of safe MR/MRM and choice of family planning, Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM), economic and social empowerment, reduce the ratio of violence against women etc. Though MHM is a significant issue specially in the rural area which can create severe health problem, so Nirapod has a special focus on MHM and there is a big range of visible improvement in the project area due to Nirapod-2's different fruitful activities. Subsequently, staffs of Patuakhali and Barguna field office, Nirapod- 2 project area of MSB, have been working diligently along with other project activities to improve overall menstrual hygiene maintain and management of the targeted beneficiaries.



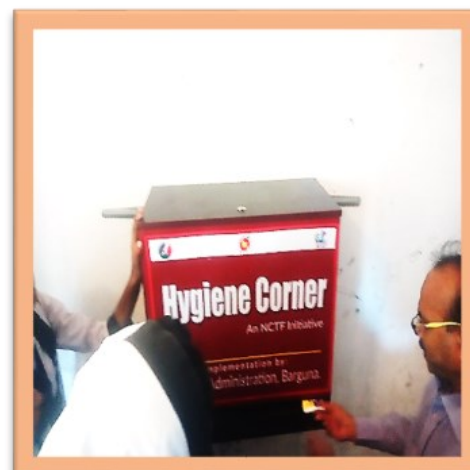
regular activities of DC office. In the meeting of month June, Mohammad Kabir Mahmud, Honorable DC, Barguna, came to know that, Marie Stopes Bangladesh, Barguna is going to distribute 15 packet sanitary napkins for each at free of cost to the particular School, College and Madrasahs of the teachers (Belongs to Nirapod-2's

Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Barguna District had called a general meeting for all the NGOs whereas arrange meeting once in a month is a

“Teacher Group”) with the condition of refilling this equivalent numbers whenever it finishes. These numbers will be in school's stock and be used in case of emergency. He was

amazed and splendidly appraised of this initiative of Nirapod-2 and wanted to replicate it in other schools/ colleges/Madrasahs. In this purpose, He called a discussion meeting with all the NGOs and teacher representatives and came into a decision of piloting this initiative at 4 selective schools. In that schools, a committee will be formed to maintain the sanitary napkins and the preservation box, where one female student will be the team leader and she will operate all the activities with the support of one assigned teacher. The napkin preservation box will be provided by DC office and the Napkin packets will be from Nirapod-2, MSB. Student will take the napkin as a loan according to their need and later she will refill it. If the student unable to do so then the school committee or other NGOs, working in the MHM field will help to refilling the Napkin preservation box. As a result, sufficient number of napkins will present always for emergency. To implement this decision, in 20/06/2019, all the student of different schools received an orientation on menstrual hygiene management with the presence of Committee members and teacher representatives from selected four schools, Government Education officials, Shishu Academy Officer, Civil Surgeon, AC-Land and other government officials. From the starting to till now, this unique initiative is running successfully which indicates a greater positive impact for the future.

Besides, Barguna field office of Nirapod-2 is continuing the distribution of rest of the sanitary napkins to the other schools, colleges and Madrasahs.



Menstruation matters to everyone, everywhere



ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS SHOULD BE ABLE TO MANAGE THEIR MENSTRUATION HYGIENICALLY, SAFELY, IN PRIVACY AND WITH DIGNITY.



Good menstrual hygiene management (MHM) requires the following:



Education



Toilets, Water, Soap



Menstrual Products



Disposal



Informed Professionals



Positive Social Norms



Policies



Health Services

Additional systemic factors that impact good menstrual hygiene management (MHM):

MENSTRUATION MATTERS TO ACHIEVE THE SDGS

While there is no specific goal or indicator for MHM, menstruation matters to the following goals:

Goal 3

3



Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

Goal 4

4



Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all.

Goal 5

5



Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Goal 6

6



Ensure availability and sustainability of water and sanitation by all.

Goal 8

8



Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

Goal 12

12



Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

Globally more than half of women are of reproductive age, yet many lack access to hygiene products and adequate sanitation facilities. As defined by the World Health Organization and UNICEF, MHM means that women and adolescent girls are using a clean material to collect blood, they have privacy to change their materials, they have soap and water for washing the body, and they have access to safe and convenient facilities for disposing of menstrual waste. In this regard, **May 28** is observed as Menstrual Hygiene Day (MH Day), which aims to break persisting taboos around menstruation, raise awareness about the importance of menstrual hygiene management (MHM) for women and adolescent girls, and engage decision-makers in raising the political priority of MHM.

Source: Global Communities Partners for Good, SIMAVI, PATH and WASH United.

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