



ANNUAL REPORT 2012-2013

The Volunteers Association for Bangladesh Canada (VABC) was set up on May 9, 2012 in Toronto, Canada by a group of like-minded individuals concerned with basic education in Bangladesh. VABC is the Canadian Chapter of Volunteers Association for Bangladesh (VAB) which focusses particularly on five central aspects of education:

1. teacher training which requires dramatic improvement, including training in gender issues;
2. curriculum design including math and literacy teaching starting in preschool, technology training and attention to addressing patriarchal attitudes and customs;
3. language of instruction must include a focus on both English and Bangla;
4. education accessibility for rural and poor sectors; and
5. gender-sensitivity in both policymaking and curriculum design.

In collaboration with VAB, the Volunteers Association for Bangladesh Canada (VABC) aims to support charitable and socioeconomic development activities for the disadvantaged in Bangladesh as well as the growing Bangladeshi community in Canada. These activities will also enable Bangladesh to develop into a stronger civil society and thriving democracy.

In line with the above five broad aspects of VAB, the specific aim of VABC is to support primary and secondary education of the poor and disadvantaged students in Bangladesh.

Since its launch, VABC has accomplished two major fundraising events, i.e. Fund Raising Concert on 22nd September 2013 and Letter Campaign 2013 for the Zakat fund.

2013 was a year of consolidation for VABC with a whole year of various preparations and plans for future expansion:

1. Computer Laboratory Establishment Plan

December 9th, 2012 was an auspicious day for Volunteers Association for Bangladesh Canada. During the computer sponsorship celebration event, Bangladeshi professionals of Toronto joined forces with members of VABC on a *digital education* mission to improve skills for the disadvantaged high school students of rural Bangladesh.

2. List of Computer Lab sponsor's names and schools

- a. Mr. Kaisar Sarwar, Burischar Junior High School, Hathazari, Chittagong (construction is completed)
- b. Mr. Monir Islam, Atakara Hamidia Madrassa, Atakara, Laksham, Comilla (in progress)
- c. Mrs. Amelia Ahmed, Maharani Hemanta Kumari Pilot High School, Nandina, Jamalpur (in progress)

- d. Mr. Pronobesh Poddar, Katnar Centre Junior Girls, Bogora (committed for 2014)
- e. Mr. Mamnoon Rahman, Comilla School, Comilla (construction is completed)
- f. Mr. Saiful Alam Zakir has taken an ambitious to sponsor total 5 schools in the area of Barisal district, Bangladesh (construction of one computer lab is completed)
- g. Mrs. Pamela Khaled, Nandina Nekjahan Girl's High School (committed for 2014)

3. Zakat: humanitarian fund collection

All VAB schools are in rural Bangladesh where the schools, the community and the students are poor and deserve help. In fact, we have a large allocation for scholarships for needy students. In 2012, we awarded 1,387 high school scholarships to 57 schools. The estimated need for scholarship in 2013 is 30 lakh taka. We take utmost care in selecting genuinely poor students. We take the recommendations of the school and we have staff members and volunteers who visit the locality and meet the parents and the students and in some cases visit their homes. Thus, VABC raised funds through Zakat to provide scholarships for the talented but disadvantaged children.

4. Winter clothes: humanitarian fund collection

In 2013, the Bangladeshi poor suffered a few weeks of extreme winter spell. Members of VABC distributed winter goods to unreachable areas and also initiated distribution of winter clothes for the cold-stricken children in Bangladesh. We are pleased that we got a very good response from our members. The following members contributed for this good cause:

Dr. A.T.R Rahman
Mrs. Pamela Khaled
Mr. Mohammad Nasiruddin
Mr. Mahabubur Rahman
Mr. Shahriar Khaled
Mr Kashem and Mr. Noman and Mr. Mamnoon provided their support in Bangladesh

5. Supporting Ratna's high school education

Mr. Mamnoon Rahman committed to support Ratna's entire High School expenses.

6. Teacher Development

In 2013, VABC organized teacher training programs and financially supported these programs

7. Publications: Seven (7) articles were published in Daily Sun and Financial Express on VAB and secondary education in Bangladesh

8. Rana plaza tragedy: humanitarian fund collection

The apparel sector in Bangladesh has been experiencing a sustained boom since the late 1990s. By 2007/08, the sector was earning more than \$10 billion in the form of proceeds from sales. It earned \$19 billion in 2012 and thus emerged as the impoverished nation's biggest export-oriented sector. Bangladesh is now the world's largest exporter of clothing

after China. But the saddest part of the story is Bangladesh's garment sector and its workers continue to be neglected as ever.

The latest case is the Rana Plaza tragedy, in which the building housing several garment units collapsed at Savar in Dhaka and killed over 1000 workers and left hundreds injured. The worst-ever tragedy in the apparel sector shocked people in the country as well as those abroad. So, once again VABC stepped in to collect funds for the victims.

9. Fundraising plans for 2014

In 2013, VABC planned and created a strong team of volunteers and targets to raise \$25,000 -50,000 net in 2014. Fundraising events for 2014 include a Gala Dinner and also other interesting events. The President and the Volunteer Team will focus on realistic implementation steps and monitor them closely. Meetings will be held fortnightly initially and later weekly to ensure that the Team achieves its target of having at least 200 members, including new potential donors.

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