



SKS Celebrated 37th Founding Anniversary



A staff member is reflecting on the organization's development journey.

SKS Foundation celebrated its 37th Founding Anniversary on 1 December 2024 at its Head Office in Gaibandha with virtual participation from all its branch & program offices nationwide. Centering the organization's tagline 'Striving for a Sustainable Change', the SKS Board Members and employees discussed and reflected on the organization's development journey.

Murshed Alam Sarker, Chairperson, SKS Foundation, praised the dedication and efforts driving SKS' success. He said, "The dedication and unwavering efforts of the workforce have been the cornerstone of SKS Foundation's development success. As we look to the future, let us continue this momentum, embracing challenges as opportunities to drive meaningful change and create a lasting impact in the communities we serve." (See page 3)

Family Planning Delegation Visited SKS' Health Project

A Directorate of Family Planning delegation visited SKS Foundation's MAMOTA Project on 6 November 2024 at the Ghagoa Union Health and Family Welfare Center, Gaibandha. SKS Foundation with technical assistance from Save the Children Bangladesh has been implementing the Project across 13 Union Health and Family Welfare Centers in 4 upazilas of Gaibandha.

The delegation, led by Dr. Md. Sultan Ahmed, Director (MCH Services), included senior officials such as Dewan Morshed Kamal (Divisional Director of Family Planning) and Dr. Md. Rafiqul Islam Talukder (Line Director, CCSDP Unit). Representatives from Save the Children and SKS Foundation accompanied the delegation.



Director of the Family Planning Department is inspecting the project.

The visit featured an inspection of key facilities, including the ANC room, delivery room, and post-operative care room. Delegates interacted with pregnant women to assess service quality. Later, the delegation attended a progress-sharing meeting, revealing that the project facilitated 24,827 ANC visits, 10,589 PNC visits, and 2,546 normal deliveries.

Consultation on Strengthening Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems

A day-long Consultation was held on 27 November 2024 at SKS Inn, Gaibandha to identify and address gaps in the district's Multi-Hazard Early Warning System. Organized under SKS Foundation's *Child-Centered Anticipatory Action for Better Preparedness of Communities and Local Institutions in Northern and Coastal Areas of Bangladesh Project*, the Consultation focused on enhancing disaster forecast dissemination to vulnerable communities.



The Chief Guest is addressing the Consultation.

With Muhammad Shafiqul Islam, Relief and Rehabilitation Officer, Gaibandha in the chair, Md. Shariful Islam, DD-LGED, Gaibandha graced the Consultation as the Chief Guest. Representatives from government agencies, UN bodies, local administration, academia, NGOs, and community leaders attended the Consultation. Key stakeholders included the Department of Disaster Management, Flood Forecasting and Warning Center (FFWC), and the Bangladesh Water Development Board. (See page 2)

Volunteers Learning Sharing Meeting Held

A Volunteers Learning Sharing Meeting was held on 18 December 2024 at the SKS Resource Center in Bharatkhal, Saghata, Gaibandha. Presided over by Md. Jamal Uddin, Project Coordinator, S.M. Arshad, Assistant District Primary Education Officer was present as the Chief Guest. In the meeting, the volunteers expressed that play-based learning fosters children's mental and physical growth. They emphasized that children learn best through play. The event, organized by SKS Foundation and Save the Children under the *Shisuder Jonno* initiative, brought together 248 volunteers from as many education centers. (See page 3)



The Chief Guest is addressing the volunteers.

SKS Program Participants Honored with *Joyeeta* Award



Most. Nargis Aktar is receiving the crest from UNO.

Three Program Participants of SKS Foundation received the prestigious *Joyeeta* Award-2024 at the Upazila level for their outstanding achievements in different fields by overcoming difficulties & challenges. The award was presented on Begum Rokeya Day, 9 December 2024, at the Upazila Conference Hall in Fulchari, Gaibandha.

The Awardees are Most. Nargis Aktar (Economic Category) has improved her livelihood through tailoring alongside domestic works; Most. Aktara Banu (Education & Employment Category) works as a Volunteer under SKS' *Community-based Resilience, Women Empowerment, and Action (CREA) Project*; and Most. Salina Aktar (Social Development) contributed to SKS' SHOUHARDO III Project as a change-maker.

Jagat Bondhu Mondal, UNO of Fulchari Upazila, presented the awards to 5 women across different categories. Each honoree received a crest, sash (*Uttoriyo*), and a certificate recognizing their achievements

Consultation on Strengthening

(From page 1) Participants pinpointed the key challenges including that marginalized communities often disregard warning messages due to a lack of trust or understanding. Limited mobile phone access in some areas makes it difficult to disseminate warnings effectively. Additionally, the widespread use of social media poses risks of misinformation, which can undermine the reliability of early warning systems.

The participants proposed several solutions. A centralized communication platform should be established to ensure the dissemination of accurate and timely information. Community gatherings and religious venues can be utilized to share forecasts through trusted local leaders. Volunteer networks should be deployed to ensure that critical information reaches all individuals, even during network disruptions. Furthermore, maintaining an updated list of families at risk is essential for providing targeted assistance during disasters.

Participants emphasized using modern technology and awareness-raising initiatives to improve forecast effectiveness. Supported by SKS Foundation, Save the Children, RIMES, and local partners, the Consultation concluded with a consensus to implement these strategies, enhancing resilience and preparedness among vulnerable populations.

WASH Systems for Health' Project Launched

(From page 4) Md. Kawsar Alam, Executive Engineer of LGED and a key member of the Municipal Performance Support Committee chaired the event. Distinguished guests included Jannat Ara Ferdous, UNO of Lalmonirhat Sadar Upazila; Jason Thomas, Regional Representative of WaterAid; Partha Hefaz Sheikh, Director of Programs and Policy Advocacy at WaterAid Bangladesh; Prashanta Ranjan Sharma Roy, Governance and Advocacy Advisor at SNV; and Khondaker Zahid Shorwar, Deputy Director-Development Programs, SKS Foundation. A.K.M. Abdul Matin, Project Manager outlined the key goals upholding that the Project will strengthen municipal WASH systems, train staff, update policies, and support fecal sludge management (FSM) system improvements.

World Toilet Day Observed

(From page 4) Md. Shariful Islam, DD-LGED and Administrator of Gaibandha Municipality graced the discussion forum as the Chief Guest, held at the Gaibandha Municipality Auditorium. He stressed disconnecting household and institutional sewage from drains and water bodies. He announced plans to issue disconnection notices to violators and warned of legal action against non-compliance. The Chief Guest also called for collaboration between NGOs and community organizations to compile a comprehensive public and community toilets list.

As part of the day observance, an inclusive public toilet on Bridge Road was inaugurated by the Chief Guest. Renovated through collaboration between Gaibandha Municipality and SKS Foundation, the facility ensures accessibility for all, including individuals with disabilities, promoting equitable sanitation. A practical demonstration of the Vacu-tag service highlighted the importance of hygienic fecal sludge management. Participants were encouraged to adopt safe sanitation practices to prevent environmental contamination and improve public health.

Multipurpose Flood Shelter Launched

(From page 4) Chowdhury Moazzem Ahmed, Deputy Commissioner (DC), inaugurated the shelter as the Chief Guest with AKM Hedayetul Islam, ADC- General in the chair. Md. Nabez Uddin Sarkar, District Primary Education Officer; and Mahamud Al Hasan, UNO, Gaibandha Sadar were the distinguished guests. The Chief Guest highlighted its dual role in education & disaster response urging collective responsibility for maintenance.

The Chief Guest also distributed prizes to the winners of sports competitions and provided winter blankets to students.

FANSA Regional Workshop Held in Nepal

(From page 4) Each Country Chapter presented the key achievements under FANSA country chapters & the project and focused on ongoing activities, challenges, opportunities, financial status, and the key focus of Year III.

The Workshop came up with a plan for Year III which focused on orienting the LGIs & allies on CWIS Action Plans, and CWIS Implementation Guideline; making the LGIs' initiatives visible for CWIS promotion; strengthening community engagement with the changed country context; advocating for innovation of climate-resilient WASH technologies; and finalizing the country-wise FANSA Advocacy Strategy.

Community Leaders from FANSA-Nepal and FANSA-Bangladesh shared their roles & experiences in mobilizing the community people on the ground. Mst. Sayeeda Parvin, Vice-President of Nari Forum (Women Forum), Gaibandha Municipality shared Nari Forum's roles & experiences.

International Day of Rural Women Celebrated

SKS Foundation celebrated the International Day of Rural Women on 27 October 2024 at Char Fulchari Government Primary School grounds, Fulchari Upazila, Gaibandha. The event, supported by *Manusher Jonno Foundation's (MJF) the Community based Resilience, Women Empowerment and Action (CREA) Project*, highlighted this year's theme: 'Rural Women Sustaining Nature for Our Collective Future: Building Climate Resilience, Conserving Biodiversity, and Caring for Land Towards Gender Equality and Empowerment'.

Participants from the char area, including women, men, youth, and children, attended enthusiastically. The event featured stalls showcasing improved poultry and livestock farming techniques, food and seed banks, and flood-resistant agricultural tools. Sports competitions for women and men added to the lively atmosphere, promoting family bonding.



The discussants are in discussion, and participants are in the event (Inset).

Md. Shafiqul Islam, Upazila Women Affairs Officer; Dr. Zahidul Islam, Upazila Livestock Officer and Umme Qulsum Ila, Coordinator-Gender, Child Protection & Safe Guarding of SKS Foundation addressed these issues shedding light on the undervaluation of women's contributions and its impact on gender discrimination. Young girls shared challenges related to education and safety, emphasizing the risks of early marriage while 'Joyeeta' women shared the stories of their struggle and success. The celebration concluded by distributing prizes among the winners.

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(From page 1) Moderating the event, Rasel Ahmed Liton, Founder and Chief Executive of SKS Foundation reaffirmed the organization's commitment to serving underprivileged communities, highlighting integrity and determination as the foundation of SKS' cherished journey for the development of the deserving people. He urged the SKS family to focus on building skilled human resources to meet future challenges.

Other speakers, including Dr. Anamika Shaha, Treasurer of the Executive Committee, and journalist KM Rezaul Haque, reflected on SKS' milestones and emphasized its vital role in uplifting marginalized communities through social, economic, and environmental development initiatives.

Some of the employees from the Head Office, Dhaka Office and different branch & program offices highlighted SKS' development mission and dedication to reaching the organization's vision.

Environment-Friendly Technologies in Agriculture



The chair is addressing the meeting.

Kurigram district in Bangladesh faces severe challenges from floods and river erosion, exacerbated by climate change. Expanding the cultivation of oilseeds and pulses in this region can mitigate these challenges while boosting farmers' financial stability, according to Rajarhat Upazila Agriculture officials.

This was emphasized at a Coordination and Technology Expansion Meeting held on 24 December 2024 under the RMT-PS-Seeds Sub-project implemented by SKS Foundation. The meeting, hosted at the Rajarhat Upazila Agriculture Office, was presided over by Ms. Saifun Nahar Sathi, Upazila Agriculture Officer. Md. Shahin Al Sardar, Upazila Agriculture Extension Officer, and Md. Mostafizur Rahman, Crop Protection Sub-Assistant Agriculture Officer were present as resource persons alongside other agricultural officials.

Speakers stressed the need to promote environment-friendly inputs like high-quality seeds, organic fertilizers, compost, and bio-pesticides. They highlighted sustainable practices such as Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA), and Disaster-Resilient Sustainable Agriculture (CRSA) to address climate challenges.

The RMT-PS-Seeds Value Chain Sub-project activities were also presented, showcasing efforts to improve farmers' skills and enhance the production of oilseeds and pulses. Funded by the *Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF)* and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the project aims to foster entrepreneurship and improve livelihoods in the region. The meeting called for collaboration between government and NGOs to provide farmers with technical support and training, enhancing agricultural productivity and resilience.

Volunteers Learning Sharing Meeting

(From page 1) Volunteers shared experiences, highlighting how play-based teaching boosts children's enthusiasm for learning. However, they noted challenges like using similar sorts of materials for children of different ages and suggested introducing age-appropriate resources. The event featured different games & exhibitions. The guests and participants praised the volunteers for their vital role in children's development, positively impacting their communities.

'WASH Systems for Health' Project Launched



The chair of the event is addressing the project issues.

The 'WASH Systems for Health' Project, aimed at reducing preventable deaths caused by WASH-related diseases among mothers, children, and newborns, was launched in Lalmonirhat Municipality. An inception meeting was held on 29 October 2024 at the Municipality Auditorium to introduce the initiative. The project, funded by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office and supported by WaterAid, is implemented by SKS Foundation. Running from March 2024 to December 2027, it seeks to strengthen sustainable and inclusive WASH systems. (See page 2)

Multipurpose Flood Shelter Launched



The Multipurpose Flood Shelter plate is unveiled, and the Shelter is seen (Inset).

West Chithulia Government Primary School in Mollarchar Union, Gaibandha Sadar Upazila, has been upgraded into a multipurpose flood shelter under the *Promoting Resilience through Disaster Preparedness (PRODRIPTI) Project*. The initiative, implemented by SKS Foundation with technical support from CARE Bangladesh was inaugurated on 28 December 2024.

The school-cum-shelter will accommodate around 250 families during floods while providing a safe learning environment for students. Key features include separate sheds for livestock, emergency medical facilities, children's centers, and gender-segregated WASH blocks, ensuring safety, dignity, and other essential services. (See page 2)

World Toilet Day Observed Focusing Inclusive Sanitation

Gaibandha Municipality marked World Toilet Day 2024 on November 19 with an impactful program under the theme "Toilets: A Place for Peace". Under the banner of FANSA-Bangladesh's Rising for the Rights Project, the Day was observed by Gaibandha Municipality, SKS Foundation, and Eco-Social Development Organization (ESDO). The observance included a discussion forum, the launching of an inclusive public toilet, and a demonstration of Vacu-tug services for safe fecal sludge management. (See page 2)



The Chief Guest is addressing the gathering, and the Inclusive Public Toilet is Inaugurated (Inset).

FANSA Regional Workshop Held in Nepal

Freshwater Action Network South Asia (FANSA) Regional Secretariat, Nepal organized the Annual Pause-Reflect-Advance Workshop on 4-6 December 2024. The yearly planning for the 'Rising for Rights: Strengthening Civil Society Network in South Asia to Achieve SDG 6' project was also merged with the PRA Workshop. The Workshop took place in Kathmandu, Nepal including a Field Visit on 3 December 2024. FANSA Country Chapter Conveners from the 7 respective South Asian countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka), Athena Infonomics, and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation representatives attended the Workshop while some community leaders participated virtually. (See page 2)



Participants of the Workshop are in a group photo.

