

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



Annual Report 2020


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About CRI

Centre for Research and Information (CRI) is a youth-focused policy think-tank which aims to create a platform for public discussion on important matters of national policy in Bangladesh. CRI explores through people-centered debate, political ideas and policy reforms that will define progressive politics and policies in a new, digital Bangladesh. With a focus on youth engagement and democratized debate, CRI aims to bring politics closer to the people.

CRI believes in the active participation of citizens in matters of national policy. By bridging the gap between people and politics, CRI strives to empower citizens and afford them a stake in their society. The organization generates quality research and data on opinions and views of people, especially young people in Bangladesh through creative, participatory methods. By doing so, the views of the people are given a platform which can influence policy decisions on both local and national level.

The bottom of the page features decorative wavy lines. A light teal wave starts from the left and curves upwards towards the right. Below it, a darker teal wave starts from the left, dips down, and then curves upwards towards the right. A thin white line follows the upper curve of the darker teal wave.

THE YEAR 2020 FOR CRI

CRI started the year 2020 on a high note. The year was earmarked as “Mujib Year”, the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. CRI was set to celebrate the special occasion in a befitting manner. Till mid-March, CRI followed its strategies and program-plans as set forth earlier. Then COVID-19 pandemic hit Bangladesh like most of the countries in the world. As soon as the pandemic hit Bangladesh, CRI adopted work-from-home strategy in order to keep its staff safe from getting infected by the Coronavirus. Initially, CRI faced some challenges to adapt with the never-seen-before scenario and the new work-from-home strategy to keep its day to day operation running.

CRI and its youth platform Young Bangla organized a number of virtual events on COVID-19 related issues faced by youth of Bangladesh. CRI-Young Bangla later hosted a series ‘Let’s Talk on COVID-19 Recovery:

Youth Development’ as part of its policy influence endeavor. In 2020, CRI launched a policy magazine ‘WhiteBoard’ which has created a lot of buzz in the policy-practitioner community. Alongside several development and policy-focused publications, CRI published a series on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as a tribute on his birth centenary. Towards the end of the year, CRI-Young Bangla hosted the 4th edition of ‘Joy Bangla Youth Award’ which recognizes youth changemakers of the society. Campaign launching on ‘Women’s Safety in Public Places’ in partnership with UNDP and National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) was an initiative that earned praise from different socio-cultural platforms as well as general masses.

The year 2020 was undoubtedly a year of constant adaptability with the changing circumstances. However, CRI’s achievements are worth a mention.

ENGAGEMENT IN 2020

THROUGH EVENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

Online
Let's Ta!k
The Floor is Yours
500,000+

Online
**Policy
Cafe**
100,000+


**Virtual
Discussion**
100,000+


**জয়
বাংলা
CONCERT**
8,00000+


জয় বাংলা
ঐশ্বর্য জ্যোতিষ
২০২০
100,000+


**Virtual Youth
Consultation**
500+

**Graphic
Novel**
মুজিব
15000+

**Studies &
Publications**
10,000+


**WhiteBoard
Magazine**
6,000+

HASINA
A DAUGHTER'S TALE
600,000+



YOUTH-FOCUSED PROGRAMS

CRI hosted a number of youth centric virtual consultations, discussion events and policy dialogues in the midst of COVID-19 pandemic. The virtual discussions and consultations created opportunities for youth groups/individuals to interact with policy makers, voice their opinions and provide inputs for future policymaking. Over a thousand youth were engaged in policy discussions all throughout in 2020, sharing views, suggestions and ideas at the virtual events organized by CRI.

Let's Talk Rohingya Response and COVID-19

Bangladesh hosts more than 1.1 million displaced Rohingyas from Myanmar residing in 34 camps located across Teknaf and Ukhia upazila in Cox's Bazar. As Bangladesh fights COVID-19 pandemic, many feared that the Rohingyas living in congested camps might be infected in large numbers; creating a deeper humanitarian crisis. CRI organized a virtual Let's Talk on 'Rohingya Response and COVID-19' on July 5, 2020. Bangladesh Foreign Secretary, UNHCR Representative in Bangladesh, Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner attended the discussion which focused on government's early

planning and joint efforts with humanitarian partners to limit the transmission of corona virus in the Rohingya settlements.



Policy Café on Job Creation in the Era of COVID-19

CRI organized its 1st virtual Policy Café on 'Job Creation in the Era of COVID-19' on June 24, 2020 to discuss how Bangladesh can tackle the corona induced job loss and provide suggestions to the policymakers. Prominent economist, entrepreneur, private sector practitioner and policy maker attended the event. The panelists stressed on immediate stimulus package disbursement. People leaving urban areas and returning to rural areas have only agriculture sector for employment.



Bangladesh 1975: Setting the Clock Back

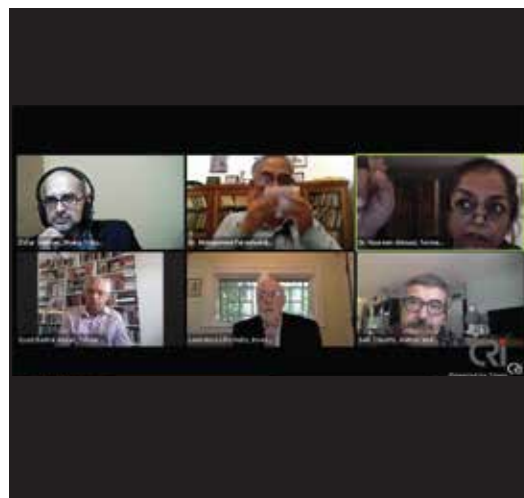
CRI hosted an evidence-based insightful discussion titled 'Bangladesh 1975: Setting the Clock Back' on August 20, 2020 on the ramifications of the killings of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman along with his family and colleagues during the early hours of August 15, 1975. Investigative journalist Lawrence Lifschultz, author Salil Tripathi, academician Nasreen Ahmed, economist Mohammed Farashuddin, journalist Syed Badrul Ahsan joined as discussant. Journalist Zafar Sobhan moderated the discussion.

Lifschultz, who was the South Asia correspondent for the Far Eastern Economic Review when the massacre of Bangabandhu's family took place on August 15, 1975, recounted the days during the online discussion. "The men who were behind, they wouldn't have moved without Ziaur Rahman's backing. Ziaur Rahman would move with America's backing. That needs further investigation," he added.

Mohammed Farahsduddin, a former Bangladesh Bank governor who had served as Bangabandhu's private secretary, said the Father of the Nation had been taking Bangladesh forward on the right path despite all odds. But the military rulers choked the people's voices.

Nasreen Ahmad, former pro-vice chancellor of Dhaka University, said the killing of Bangabandhu left the nation in a shock and hopelessness. "But we couldn't get organized to demand justice. On the other hand, we had to feed the next generation false history. The entire environment was full of betrayal and double-dealings," she said.

Salil Tripathi, a visiting scholar at the New York University who had interviewed Faruque Rahman, one of the self-proclaimed assassins of Bangabandhu, said he had seen no repentance in Faruque during the interview.



A full-page photograph of a concert stage. The scene is dominated by numerous bright blue spotlights that create a dense, starry effect against the dark background. A few yellow spotlights provide contrast. In the lower foreground, two musicians are visible. On the left, a man in a dark t-shirt is playing an electric guitar. On the right, a man in a red t-shirt is playing a bass guitar. They are positioned in front of large black Marshall amplifiers. The floor of the stage is visible at the bottom, showing some equipment and a small white box with the number 8.

CELEBRATION WITH THE YOUTH

Joy Bangla Concert 2020

CRI and its youth platform, Young Bangla, organized the Joy Bangla Concert for sixth consecutive year, with a mix of entertaining and patriotic music from 10 leading musical bands and singers of the country. Joy Bangla Concert 2020, held on March 7, commemorated the spirit and courage relayed to our countrymen nearly five decades ago by the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, through his historic speech on March 7, 1971.

Joy Bangla Concert 2020 lineup featured university-based promising bands - Introit, Arekta Rock Band, Adverb, Sin and Conclusion who performed in the first segment of the show. This was followed by the performance of band F Minor, an all-female band which is the first of its kind in Bangladesh. Solo artist Minar Rahman also performed for the first time, followed by

Avoid Rafa, Shunno, Vikings, Lalon, Arbovirus, Cryptic Fate, Nemesis, Fuad & Friends and Chirkutt. A surprise performance was done by popular musician Saidus Salehin Khaled Sumon. The energy of metal and rock bands, renditions of celebrated patriotic songs, and a holographic visual of Bangabandhu's 7th March speech, were some of the highlights of the concert.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her sister Sheikh Rehana graced the event with their presence. This year, Joy Bangla Concert 2020 was attended by over 55,000 people, while almost 750,000 viewers tuned in to watch the show live broadcast on television and via online streaming.



SPECIAL SCREENING OF 'HASINA: A DAUGHTER'S TALE'

Since its release in 2018, 'Hasina: A Daughter's Tale' has continued to inspire audiences around the world, receiving rave reviews in the national and international film circuits. The docudrama has been selected for screening at some prestigious international film festivals. Both national and international audience got the opportunity to watch it on television. Hasina: A Daughter's Tale was released on 16th November 2018 at the Star Cineplex in the capital's Bashundhara City mall. The film was also run by Blockbuster Movie of the Jamuna Future Park, Modhumita Cinema Hall at Motijheel in Dhaka, and Silver Screen in Chattogram.



'Hasina: A Daughter's Tale'
screened at the University of
Liberal Arts Bangladesh

University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh screened 'Hasina: A Daughter's Tale' as part of the birth centenary celebration of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The film was screened at the university campus on February 24, 2020. There was an interactive discussion followed by the screening. CRI Trustee Radwan Mujib Siddiq and the film's director Piplu Khan participated in the discussion. Reflecting on the docudrama, the co-producer, Radwan Mujib Siddiq said that his idea was to bring forth the vignettes and anecdotes of Sheikh Hasina as the daughter of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman that are often lost under the weight of her role as the premier of Bangladesh. The discussants emphasized on presenting history in a way that captures the imaginations of youth. Over 200 students of the university attended the screening.



'Hasina: A Daughter's Tale' screened at Mumbai International Film Festival 2020

'Hasina: A Daughter's Tale' was selected for screening at the prestigious Mumbai International Film Festival (MIFF), under International Competition Section. The Mumbai International Film Festival is India's oldest and largest showcase of non-fiction, short fiction and animation film. MIFF promotes documentary, short fiction and animation films. The festival is organized by the Films Division, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India. The heart-touching docu-drama received rave reviews from the local and international audience.

Special screening on national television channels

'Hasina: A Daughter's Tale', previously met with sweeping popularity and critical acclamation through its screening in cinema halls, was aired on 11 national television channels on August 14, 2020. While the life of Sheikh Hasina as the premier, is mostly under spotlight, the trials and tribulations she had to encounter after the assassination

of her father Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and 16 family members, remains less explored. This docudrama piqued the countrymen's interest in that period and they requested its screening on television. The docudrama was again screened on 28th September by a large number of national TV on the occasion of her birth anniversary.

Special television screening in the UK

UK based TV Channel S arranged 3 special screening of Hasina: A Daughter's Tale on 11, 13 and 17 October, 2020. The audiences in UK and particularly young generation of Bangladeshis living in EU countries got the opportunity to watch the docudrama which brought to life all aspects of the life of Sheikh Hasina -- from her kitchen to her life as the country's premier to the time of struggle to her personal, familial, and political life. Later, on November 13, 2020, ATN Bangla UK screened 'Hasina: A Daughter's Tale'. The channel also broadcast a discussion session followed by the first screening. Saida Muna Tasneem, High Commissioner for Bangladesh to the United Kingdom, Sultan Mahmud Sharif, President, UK Awami League, filmmaker Piplu Khan and screenplay writer Gousul Alam Shaon joined as discussants.

'Hasina: A Daughter's Tale' screened at Bangladesh High Commission in Brunei

'Hasina: A Daughter's Tale', was screened at the Bangladesh High Commission in Brunei today, marking the PM's 74th birthday. Foreign diplomats, officials of the Brunei foreign ministry and members of the Bangladesh community there watched the documentary, said a press release issued by the Bangladesh High Commission in Brunei.



CREATIVE ENDEAVORS

Graphic novel 'Mujib'

Graphic novel series 'Mujib', the first of its kind, tells the remarkable story of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with the new generation of readers in Bangladesh and beyond. This 10-part graphic novel series depicts the political activism, ideology and political wisdom of Bangabandhu in a creative and youth friendly manner that also appeals to adults and comic enthusiasts alike. The first episode of the series was launched on March 17, 2015. The series has gained immense popularity with countless young readers, creating a lasting impression, shaping their values and making them politically informed.

The 7th episode of 'Mujib' launched by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

The 7th episode of the graphic novel series 'Mujib' titled 'Action Day', was unveiled on February 2, 2019, at the Amar Ekushey Book Fair 2020. Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was present during the launching ceremony. The premier along with CRI Trustee Radwan Mujib Siddiq, unveiled the 7th episode of the graphic novel. The episode encapsulates how Bangabandhu faced the communal riot between Hindus and Muslims in 1946 Bengal. The episode also covers various elements of his personal life, including the early relationship with his wife Renu.



CRI participated at the Amar Ekushey Book Fair 2020

CRI participated at the Amar Ekushey Book Fair 2020, a month long book fair hosted by Bangla Academy. The book fair takes place in the month of February to commemorate the spirit of language movement of 1952. The 'Mujib' stall featured several displays, cut out and decorative walls that contained scenes from different parts of the graphic novel series.

CRI at the Gulshan Society Book Fair

Gulshan Society hosted their first book fair in Gulshan Lake Park, throughout the last weekend of February. Along with many other reputed publishers and other organizations, CRI participated in the event. Enthusiastic youth and children collected their copies of graphic novel 'Mujib' from the CRI stall. CRI stall was crowded with the fan of graphic novel 'Mujib' series.

Exhibition Lighting the Fire of Freedom: Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

Dhaka Art Summit 2020, initiated by Samdani Art Foundation, featured an exhibition 'Lighting the Fire of Freedom: Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman'. The exhibition was a tribute to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, marking his birth centenary. It was a CRI initiative in partnership with Samdani Art Foundation and ICT Division. The exhibition treasures historic moments dating back to the Bengal Presidency under the British Raj to the East Pakistan regime and the formation of Bangladesh in 1971.

RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

From the outset of the pandemic, CRI got engaged in corona related information dissemination and public awareness building through its online platforms. CRI followed government's policy directives, guidelines and measures towards public health, fiscal, social safety net and other sectors which are hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic.

CRI has prepared a number of infographic-based communication materials on corona response such as, testing and treatment facilities, safety guidelines, incentives and insurances for health service providers, government's fiscal packages for different sectors and emergency relief program. CRI also prepared audio-visuals communication materials on PM Sheikh Hasina's different directives, measures to boost food security and the government's emergency relief program.

CRI published special bulletins in an effort to communicate Bangladesh's story in dealing COVID-19 outbreak with farsighted policy measures and actions. The issues highlighted some of the new policy actions, special directives and a series of multi-sectoral fiscal measures to tackle the healthcare and

the economic challenges. The bulletins were published on CRI website and disseminated through email reaching to over 200,000 people.

Roundtable Discussion India-Bangladesh Partnership in Post Pandemic Economic Recovery

COVID-19 pandemic had enormous impact on the lives and livelihoods of people across the globe. Both Bangladesh and India have been affected and have faced many similar challenges. The shared culture and heritage of the people of Bangladesh and India could be beneficial in terms post-pandemic fast economic recovery. In this backdrop, the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) and CRI co-hosted a virtual roundtable discussion titled 'India-Bangladesh Partnership in Post-Pandemic Economic Recovery' on July 25, 2020. The virtual roundtable brought in key stakeholders from India and Bangladesh which focused on new initiatives in foreign and economic policy, employment generation, private-sector partnership.



CRI PUBLICATIONS

CRI has been generating quality research publication on development, youth preferences, public policies and international issues. In 2020, CRI generated publications capturing development updates on health, education, economy, social security, woman, ICT, agriculture, energy sector. Web versions of the publications by CRI are available on the website. CRI also disseminates its research findings through interesting and engaging audio-visual materials.

The readers

CRI disseminates its publications to the foreign embassies in Bangladesh, different government offices, national, international and global events. Every year, CRI prepares a set of publications to represent Bangladesh in United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), World Economic Forum (WEF) and other international events. A large pool of youth, partner organizations, government organizations and international community have accessed those publications.

Youth demography

Policymakers

Lawmakers

Researchers

Practitioners



Mujib Series

CRI published a publication series called 'Mujib', with a view to pay tribute to Bangabandhu Shiekh Mujibur Rahman in celebration of 'Mujib Borsho' (100 Years of Mujib) in Bangladesh and beyond. The publications bring research-based narration on various aspects of Mujib's personal development along his contribution to Bangali nationhood and Bangladeshi statehood. Mujib was an iconic post-colonial leader with a political career full of ups-and-downs. He led the challenging struggle for a democratic alternative to colonial and military rule imposed by the then West Pakistan. In addition to spearheading the movement for independence, he also laid the foundations of the new country Bangladesh. These publications lay forth a refreshing look into how Mujib, a firebrand student politician, became a seasoned statesman – in charge of building a state from the scratch.

Mujib: Father of A Nation

'Mujib: Father of A Nation' is the first one of the series of publications on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. It illustrates his larger than life persona, who was able to inspire a nation to make a fresh mark on the

world map. He led the challenging struggle for a democratic alternative to colonial and military rule imposed by the then West Pakistan, and subsequently for the independence of Bangladesh.

Mujib: The Language of Resistance

Mujib as a student leader played a major role in the movement for the recognition of Bangla as one of the state languages of Pakistan. Later, as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, he initiated a number of bold steps to introduce Bangla at every spheres of life and took the language to global platforms. This publication highlights Mujib's contribution to the historic language movement which remains unknown to a number of generations in Bangladesh.

Mujib: The Voice of Freedom

Mujib was the leader who inspired and united a nation to pursue a dream. The dream was of a free and independent Bangladesh. In 1971, the Bangalis rose to his call and joined the war of independence against the Pakistan Army. He led the war from thousand miles away as he was put in jail in West Pakistan. He is the creator and architect of Bangladesh.

Mujib: A Nation Rises

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman not only spearheaded the emancipation-movement, but he also laid the foundations of a new country 'Bangladesh.' Mujib's journey as a statesman began with the independence of Bangladesh. In a short period that he served, his administration did the herculean job of building basic institutions and infrastructure, formulating long-term development plans and attaining sovereign recognition from the international community during the Cold War era. The first order of Mujib administration's reform agenda was to deliver a constitution without any delay. This publication provides a glimpse of Mujib's journey towards rebuilding a new nation. The publication is a tribute to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, marking his birth centenary which was celebrated as Mujib Borsho (100 Years of Mujib) in Bangladesh and beyond.

Resilient Bangladesh: Towards Recovery and Progress

On the back of successive years of high growth turnout, Bangladesh started the year 2020 on a high note. The unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic struck Bangladesh and the rest of the world from the first quarter of 2020. Swift measures were taken by the government to contain infection as well as damages in the economic front. Due to the efforts led by the Bangladesh premier Sheikh Hasina, the country has been successful in tackling the pandemic. The country set an example of successful recovery amid the global fallout courtesy to a range of policy and programs which kept the economy up and running. This publication looks at some of the key sectors and how they fared in 2020 amid the COVID-19 pandemic.





CRI STUDIES

CRI launched its new venture: CRI Studies. This initiative will provide in-depth policy analysis to the decision-makers, researchers and the development partners of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh at Work: Job Creation and Inclusive Growth in the Era of COVID-19

This analytical report looks at the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of job loss. It provides a deep dive analysis into vital factors that influence job creation, captures current initiatives by the Government relevant to employment, and offers some key points to consider for policymakers in terms of job creation, as they work on the economic recovery plan and the 2020-2021 fiscal budget. Low income and/or labor-intensive jobs, which represent most of the informal sector and a significant share of SMEs, have been most affected by the pandemic. Many of these jobs are temporary and will come back as the economy opens. However, some of the job losses will be more permanent. According to CRI estimates,

the “permanent” impact job loss is estimated to be around 6 million, which would nearly double the unemployment rate. It would affect approximately 24 million people.

India-Bangladesh Partnership in Post-Pandemic Economic Recovery

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an enormous impact on the lives and livelihoods of people across the globe. Developing economies, such as India and Bangladesh, are among the most significantly affected. With the economic and geopolitical terrain transforming and several challenges facing the South Asian and Southeast Asian regions, the shared culture and heritage of the people of India and Bangladesh, coupled with the rapport between the countries' highest leadership, could be beneficial in the post-pandemic scenario. This report outlines both countries' progress on various global development parameters over the years. It also discusses how leveraging bilateral partnerships, multilateral forums and potent domestic policies could help India and Bangladesh mitigate the economic fallout of COVID-19.



POLICY MAGAZINE WHITEBOARD

'WhiteBoard' is a quarterly policy magazine launched by CRI in 2020. It is a go-to resource for original, commentary on Bangladesh. 'WhiteBoard' is one of the flagship publications of CRI. The editorial team comprises economists, analysts, anthropologists, researchers and designers. The Editorial Advisory Board comprises experts in their respective fields. The magazine features contributions from acclaimed social thinkers, political economists, business leaders and young innovators. WhiteBoard promotes evidence-based, incisive discussion, as well as constructive debate. It covers a range of topics including economy, governance, market-insights, gender, development and technology.

The launching of the inaugural issue of WhiteBoard

CRI virtually launched its flagship quarterly policy magazine WhiteBoard on September 20, 2020. CRI Trustee and WhiteBoard editor-in-chief Radwan Mujib Siddiq; Dr. Samia Huq, WhiteBoard editorial advisory board member and Associate Professor at BRAC University and WhiteBoard co-editor Syed Mafiz Kamal attended the launch.

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WhiteBoard Issue 1

The inaugural issue of the policy magazine WhiteBoard frames-out the thematic policy actions and the progressive outlook of Bangladesh's first government on independent soil: Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's administration. Little is known about the post-independence period, especially around Mujib government's efforts in nation-building, post-war reconstruction and governance. This issue delves into the various and little-discussed challenges that Mujib faced in building Bangladesh from scratch.

WhiteBoard Issue 2

The second issue of the policy magazine WhiteBoard explores the policy framework that Bangladesh has adopted since the onset of the generation defining setback: the COVID-19 pandemic. A comprehensive insight into the pandemic era challenges and the analysis of the policy responses are crucial to both short-term recovery and long-term reforms. As Bangladesh reopens it must also reimagine. This issue delves into the gambit of "reimagining" in areas such as education, governance, cultural-identity and the economy.

ABOUT YOUNG BANGLA

Young Bangla started its journey with the goal to support the youth involved in community work throughout Bangladesh. From challenging the abhorrent norms of child marriage, to fighting the battle against illiteracy, gender inequality and drug abuse, thousands of young adults are striving to make positive impacts in their communities. Young Bangla launched itself as a youth forum back in 2014, which has now become one of the largest youth platforms in Bangladesh.

Young Bangla shares Bangladesh's national vision of becoming a middle-income country by 2021 and a developed country by 2041. The enormous 47.6 million youth population will have to play the leading role in achieving those goals. Young Bangla, as an organization, envisions itself as an inclusive platform that harnesses and enables the youth to be strongly in the run to that comprehensive transformation.

Young Bangla strives to empower youth to build future leaders who can contribute to local and national development. The long-term mission is to ensure sustainability for youth-led initiatives and dispersal of winning ideas and endeavors.

Young Bangla aims to unlock the potential of youth, give them opportunities to shine, recognize their talents and achievements and help them shape the future of the nation. The journey of Young Bangla began with 1500 members in 2014 and now in 2020, it has more than 300,000 members.

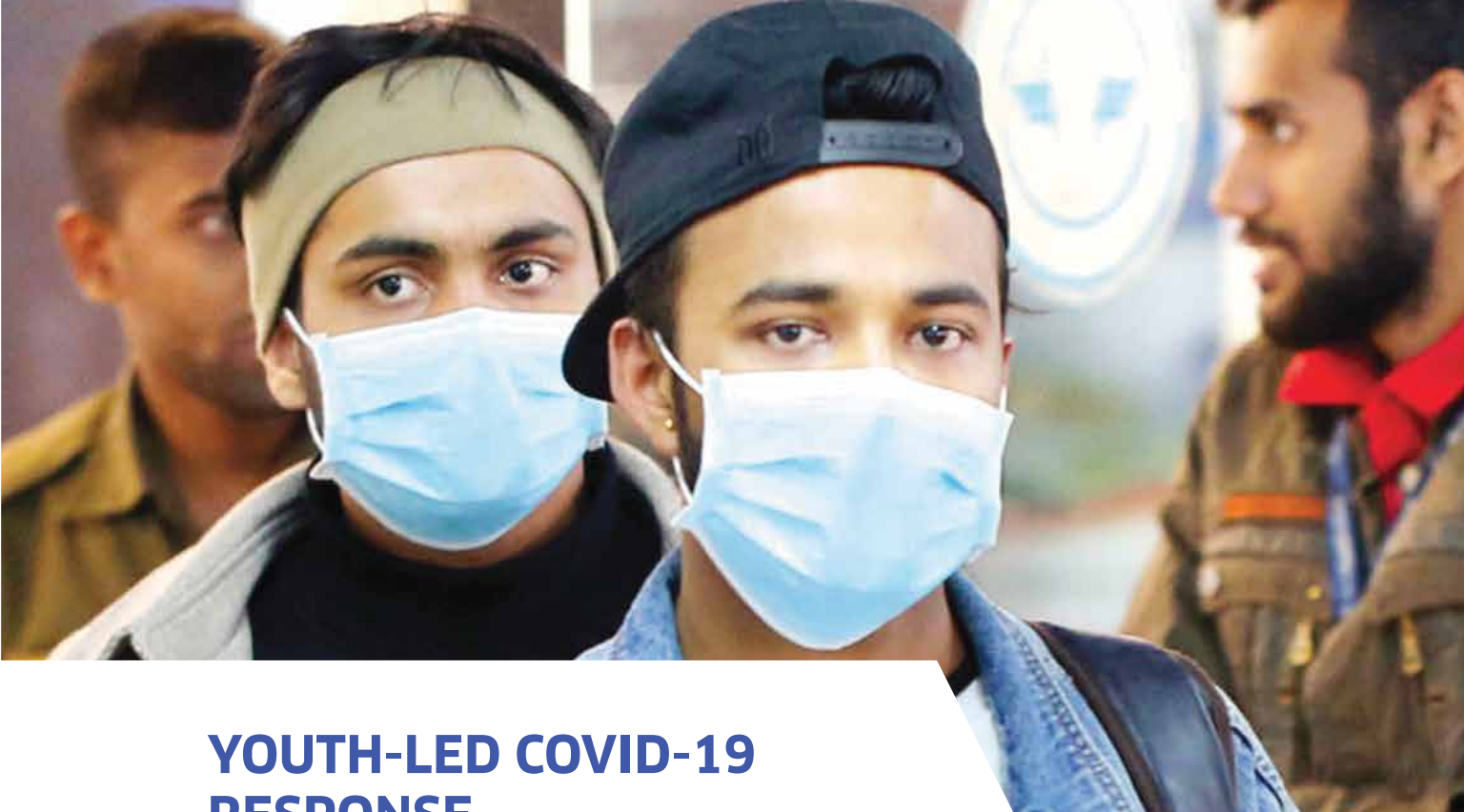
THE YEAR 2020 FOR YOUNG BANGLA

As the year 2020 was earmarked as 'Mujib Year', birth centenary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Young Bangla set its program plan to commemorate the occasion with the youth. Young Bangla was set to implement the plan.

First, Young Bangla organized its signature youth engagement event, the Joy Bangla Concert, for the sixth consecutive year, on March 7, commemorating the historic 7th March speech by the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Then COVID-19 pandemic hit the country like the rest of the world. Young Bangla adopted a work-from-home strategy to stay safe from

the coronavirus infection. Against all odds, Young Bangla successfully conducted a number of events and initiatives throughout the year on virtual platforms.

Motivating youth to volunteer during pandemic, encouraging them to follow health safety protocols while volunteering, recognizing their contributions to the community through Joy Bangla Youth Award, policy advocacy on post-COVID-19 youth development and launching of 'Women Safety in Public Place' campaign are some of the significant initiatives by Young Bangla in 2020.



YOUTH-LED COVID-19 RESPONSE

Raising awareness among the volunteers

While everyone promoted 'Stay home, stay safe' to control the spread of deadly Coronavirus, young volunteers stayed outside to help the people who were suffering. Young Bangla took an initiative to create awareness among the youth members of the country-wide network involved in volunteering activities for the humanitarian cause. It has organized 3 webinars, during March to April, with 200 youth leaders and health practitioners to discuss on the COVID-19 and the risks involving voluntary activity. Renowned healthcare experts joined those webinars as experts. They shared their opinion and also listened to the challenges that volunteers are facing during the field activities.

Volunteer placement at DGHS to work as 'Community Support Team'

Young Bangla collaborated with Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) to place seventy interns having specialized education and training in disciplines like Statistics, Biomedicine, Applied Chemistry, ICT, Computer Engineering, and other relevant disciplines. These interns will be working as a support team to prepare a mass database on health and to provide support to technology-based health care. On 20th July 2020, Planning Monitoring and Research unit of DGHS arranged a coordination workshop "Planning and implementation of Community Volunteers to Fight against COVID-19 Pandemic" with the prospected candidates. Another ready to serve volunteer database have been shared with DGHS under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to place 'Community Support Team' at Upazila level (sub-district) for awareness-raising, rehabilitation of survivors, and surveillance of quarantined people at the community level. Young Bangla placed 7 youth to work as volunteer at BRAC COVID-19 Sample Collection Kiosk.

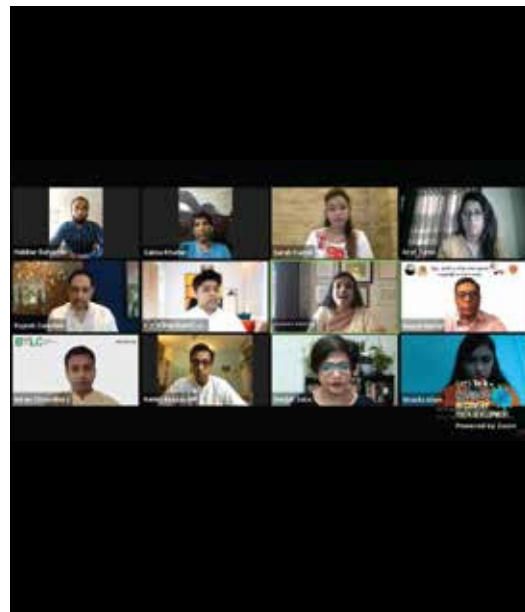


Series Let's Talk on Post-COVID-19 Youth Development

COVID19 induced shutdown has resulted in education disruption and job loss for the young population. The pandemic has decimated the job sector landscape and has devastated the education system. Psychological stress among young people has heightened due to distancing from sports, socialization and entertainment. Now, the youth have to adjust to new sets of employability skills, a slow-paced economy, extensive health measures, and new learning modes.

Young Bangla hosted 12 Online Let's Talk sessions related to Post-COVID-19 Youth Development throughout the year. This policy talk series offered an inclusive platform for a broad range of stakeholders to emphasize on policy actions that would collectively advance the post-COVID-19 youth development agendas. The insights and analysis presented in this policy talk series had provided a critical cornerstone for the post-COVID19 deliberations and would reinforce the promise of post-COVID-19 youth development and transform the lives of youth across the country.

In those Let's Talks, panelists have recommended integrated youth-friendly development policies and actions to be taken in the post-COVID19 recovery phase. Finally, a policy brief on post-COVID19 youth development were prepared and shared with a number of ministers, policymakers, academics, researchers, social workers, professionals, student representatives and young achievers from Young Bangla secretariat.





NEW INITIATIVES

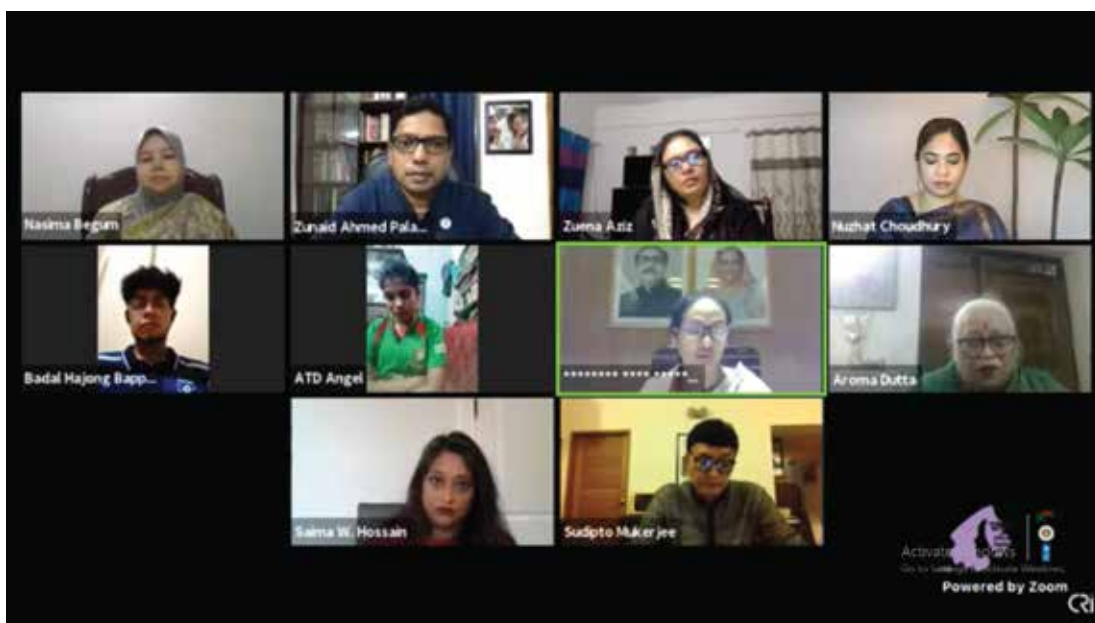
Online career development training S2EP 'Skills to Employment'

COVID-19 outbreak severely affected education and training as movement was restricted for a longer period. Young Bangla came up with a solution to the problem through its online career development training S2EP 'Skills to Employment'. The program created the opportunity to get advice from renowned career development instructor, human resource strategists, and soft skill development trainers. As this program went live, it created a scope of direct interaction with the panel of experts.

Celebration of 49th Victory Day of Bangladesh

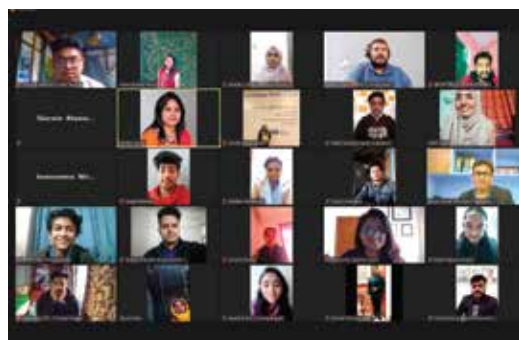
Young Bangla in association with around fifty (50) Joy Bangla Youth Network organizations celebrated 49th Victory Day through planting tree and pledging to stop violence against women and to promote tolerance and solidarity.





Women Safety in Public Places (WSPP) campaign

Young Bangla, youth platform of Centre for Research and Information (CRI), in association with Human Rights Programme (HRP)-UNDP and the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has launched the 'Women's Safety in Public Places' Campaign through a webinar with “নারীর চলার পথ নিরাপদ করতে আমি সচেষ্ট, আপনি?” slogan on October 14, 2020. The 'Women's Safety in Public Places' Campaign aims to create positive perception, attitude and behaviour change for equal rights of women and girls through massive awareness raising activities among youth & other relevant actors, particularly on women safety concerns. Also, it aims to facilitate necessary policy reform to comprehensively address gender-based violence and harassment in public places. Earlier, in March, Young Bangla and Human Rights Programme of UNDP signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to promote 'Women's Safety in Public Places' campaign.



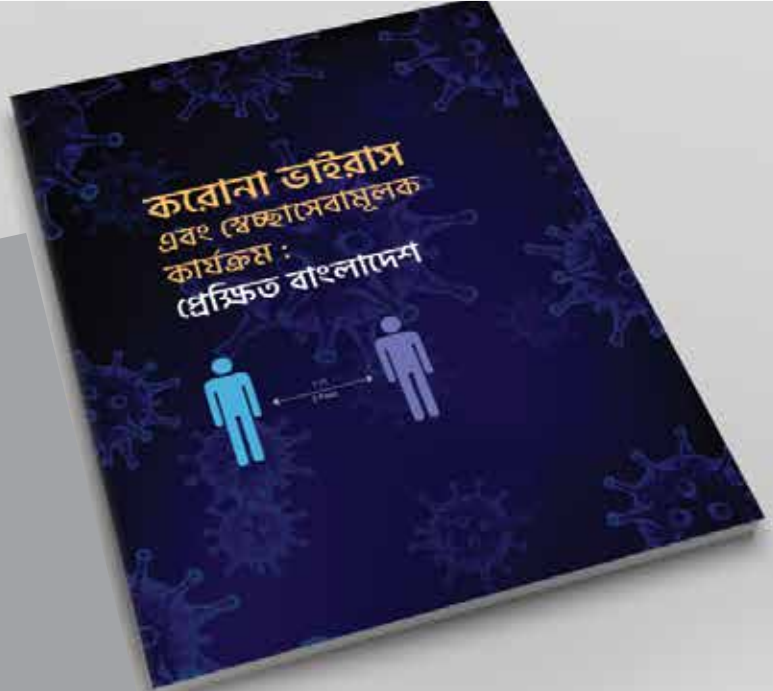


JOY BANGLA YOUTH AWARD 2020

Since the inception of the Young Bangla platform, Joy Bangla Youth Award (JBYA) is one of the flagship programs with a vision to recognize and connect young changemakers. There were three seasons so far held in 2015, 2017 and 2018. In 2020, Young Bangla hosted the 4th Joy Bangla Youth Award to recognize young changemaker contributions in the society. The virtual award giving ceremony of the Joy Bangla Youth Award 2020 was held on November 17, 2020. The top 30 youth-led organizations' names were declared on November 17, 2020, by Sajeeb Wazed, ICT Adviser to the Prime Minister of Bangladesh. Online registration of the Joy Bangla Youth Award 2020 began on September 25, 2020 which continued till October 15, 2020. Over 600 youth organizations committed to bring positive change in society have applied for the award under two broad areas - Social Inclusion and Integrated Community Development. Later, Young Bangla team primarily shortlisted 103 applications and conducted another round of evaluation to finalize the top 50 organizations through various levels of scrutiny and interviews.

Young Bangla also formed a jury board to conduct the final evaluations, who recommend the top 30 organizations out of 50 for the Joy Bangla Youth Award 2020.

Sajeeb Wazed, the prime minister's ICT adviser and CRI chairperson announced the winners at a virtual program on November 17, 2020. The winners include 16 under social inclusion category and 14 under social development. Earlier, 47 organizations were nominated for the final from over 600 applicants. This was the fourth edition of the award given by CRI's youth platform Young Bangla. Describing their work as outstanding, Sajeeb Wazed said they are serving the common people in an inspiring manner. He mentioned that the winners were trying to resolve the problems they found while some other people always prefer to complain. "They are not big organizations, may be a single youth working in a village. But they are helping the people with their own ideas instead of complaining. That's what we all should do," he added.



STUDIES & PUBLICATIONS

Guidelines on Volunteerism and Safety in Corona Days

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, the youth-led organizations under Young Bangla network have been working on the frontline. As volunteers work in the frontline, the risk of getting infected by the deadly virus is very high. Their activities included distribution of hand sanitizer, masks, gloves, basic daily groceries among impoverished. Some of them played important roles in the digital medium too. As the rumors and misinformation went around, the volunteers also checked into it and shared positive and important information using social media and other online platforms. Young Bangla arranged three webinars to consult with the volunteers and the experts. In this context, Young Bangla developed a 'Safety Guideline' for voluntary activity during an outbreak situation. This guideline provides a basic understanding of safety measures, social distancing and some do's and don'ts while staying out of the home. It also shows the steps to follow during the distribution of relief and how to disinfect personal belongings after coming from outside.

Study on the Impact of COVID-19 on Youth

Young Bangla conducted a study on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on youth, with a focus on personal and social life, employment, education and skill development, entrepreneurship, health and mental wellbeing and voluntary activities. The purpose of this study was to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Bangladeshi youth. The study allowed young people across the country to share their own ideas on how to protect the rights of young people during and after the crisis.

Policy Recommendation Report on "Let's Talk on Post-COVID-19 Recovery: Youth Partnerships"

Young Bangla hosted a virtual series 'Let's Talk' on 'COVID-19 Recovery: Youth Development' on September 04-06, 2020. Young Bangla prepared a report based on the policy suggestions provided by the participants and discussants during the three-day virtual event.



YOUNG BANGLA'S COLLABORATIVE ENDEAVORS

MoU with UNDP for 'Women's Safety in Public Places' campaign

Young Bangla and Human Rights Programme of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to promote 'Women's Safety in Public Places' campaign. The MoU signing ceremony was held in presence of Sudipto Mukerjee, Resident Representative, UNDP Bangladesh, Radwan Mujib Siddiq, Trustee Centre for Research and Information (CRI), Sabbir Bin Shams, Executive Director, Centre for Research and Information (CRI) and other UNDP and CRI officials. The specific objective of the campaign is to raise awareness on the rising trends of violence against women, particularly sexual violence and harassment in public places.

MoU with Golden Harvest InfoTech

Golden Harvest InfoTech (GHIT), a leading BPO Service Provider of the country, and Young Bangla agreed to work together to train 20,000 youth, among whom 5,000 will be employed as BPO freelancers by GHIT. This initiative will open up the possibility for Bangladeshi workforce to participate in the global BPO freelancing work and add 20,000 skilled BPO freelancers to Bangladesh's workforce. GHIT has created a learning platform - WeLearn where anyone can receive training from anywhere at any time.



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