

Recap

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FROM THE CHAIRPERSON'S DESK

Acid violence plagued the 90s in Bangladesh. A significant number of cases were reported every year, initially spreading fear amongst the public, especially among women and children. Then gradually with the increasing prevalence of the heinous crime came the rising desensitization of the country's people. Cases soon became mere numbers, survivors—the result of a basic misfortune, and attackers but some passionate, ill-tempered individuals. It was the most depressing moment in Bangladesh's acid attack history predicting a bleak future.

1999, the founding members of ASF came together with the mission and vision to eradicate acid violence from the country and uplift survivors. Today, looking back, the success of the organization is undeniably evident. Compared to the hundreds of cases reported each year, two decades ago, to a handful number of cases now, is proof of ASF's success in enacting its goals.

Our work, however, is not yet over. Over 3,800 survivors live across the country today without proper access to health care. Besides the lifelong physical suffering survivors must endure, thousands are yet to mentally and emotionally recover from their pasts and are, therefore, unable to reintegrate with their societies and flourish. ASF is the country's only NGO serving survivors without charge. In other words, survivors only hope to get restored back to society and live dignified lives. It is thereby, incumbent upon us to overcome all odds and bring them the necessary services required to heal from the trauma, feel empowered and thrive again in their societies.

ASF ventured out with the dream to create an acid-violence-free Bangladesh and empower survivors. Curbing the endemic overtime necessitated lofty undertakings which were made possible through generous donations. We are forever grateful to our donors for being part of our journey thus far.

As we continue our mission, we wish to keep our donors, stakeholders and all our subscribers informed of our activities. With that, I am happy to announce Recap—the fourth issue of ASF's end-of-the-month e-newsletter. Recap offers a holistic overview of ASF's monthly programmatic interventions, news updates, service reports, and more. We are thrilled with what has come together over these last few months even with our limited resources. We look forward to scaling up our efforts in the coming months to raise awareness around acid violence at the grassroots level and change survivors' lives for the better.

ASF would be highly obliged for any support and suggestion that you may have for its continued endeavors in the days to come to promote the cause of acid survivors.

16-YEAR-OLD GIRL ATTACKED WITH ACID BY VENGEFUL COUSINS

| AUGUST 2021

“I do not want money. I want justice!” says 16-year-old survivor Hasina Rahman*, attacked with acid on 2nd August 2021 by her cousins out of vengeance over multiple issues.

On the night of the incident, Hasina and her little brother were alone in the house asleep. Cousin Sheikh* and Akbar* broke in past midnight and searched out the children with a flashlight and drenched them with acid.

Screaming in anguish, Hasina kicked Sheikh on the chest out of reflex, sprint past them, and hurtled to her neighbors as the men chased after her. The neighbors doused the children with water to wash the acid away and rushed them to the ER at the nearby Barisal Sher-e Bangla Medical College Hospital.

By the time they reached the ward, the acid had already caused a lot of damage. The corrosive claimed Hasina’s left eye, severely burnt 35% of her body including her face, chest, hands, and legs. Whilst burning 15% of her brother’s arms.

Hasina’s uncles threatened to slaughter her if she uttered Sheikh’s name to the police. She exposed him nevertheless knowing very well he would otherwise later kill her along with her family. Sheikh was successfully apprehended on August 4th and remanded in custody for a week during which he confessed to his crime. Later he revealed that he planned to blame the neighbors (they had land disputes with) for the crime and win the land.

ASF immediately sprung to action upon hearing Hasina’s incident. Since 20th August, ASF has been offering her health care services necessary to proper healing and legal aid to ensure perpetrators are brought to justice.

Today Hasina’s wounds are still fresh and searing with pain. The thought of Sheikh bailing out of prison like countless other past acid attack criminals haunts Hasina mercilessly. “Neither am I or my family is safe until justice is served!” says Hasina dreading both her and her family’s life.

*Names have been changed for confidentiality



A POWERFUL STORY OF PERSEVERANCE AND TRIUMPH

Hasanuzzaman Hasan |

Born in 1995, Hasanuzzaman Hasan was the youngest of a family of ten. He grew up in the village and received boundless love and care from his family. Hasan was very happy and playful as a child until one fateful night the act of one human being turned his life upside down.

1996, it was a typical day in the village. Hasan was only one year old at the time. After a whole day of playing around in the house, his mother put him to sleep. Curled up in his bed slumbering next to a window, baby Hasan woke up around 8 PM with a jolt screaming in pain. He was found with his face drenched in a strange liquid melting away his flesh—Hasan was attacked with acid from his bedside window by a mysterious person.

Even though he was thoroughly watered and later treated at a local hospital, the damage was already done. The attack

claimed his left eye, the left portion of his mouth, the lower half of his nose, and severely injured the fingers on his left hand. Being poor meant baby Hasan could not continue his treatment indefinitely. Soon he was released from the hospital and had no other way but to suffer through his pain as a child.

Prior to the attack, Hasan was a frisky, curious little baby. But following the ordeal, Hasan's life has changed for the worse. His face had taken a new form and so did the people around him. Growing up, Hasan found it difficult to make friends at school. The village people would spew hurtful remarks and call him names, affecting his self-esteem. Despite all, Hasan would walk 6km to school every day with the dreams of becoming a doctor or an engineer in the future.

2005, Hasan's father dies and so does everyone's reason to continue Hasan's education. Soon he joins his brothers on their farm to help with the cultivar. Working hours under the blazing sun would sizzle his poorly treated wounds. But no amount of hate or physical torture was able to dismantle his drive to make a name for himself.

2011, Hasan comes across ASF offering to sponsor his education and provide quality health care. He graduates high school with flying colors and is set on a fast track to achieving his academic goals. But his journey is interrupted when ASF faces a funding crisis that halts the sponsorship. Hasan, initially heartbroken, quickly rebounds and devises a plan B.

He changes track from science to arts and graduates with a Master's in English in 2017 and lands a job as an English school teacher.

But even as an educated young man he is mistreated by the school authorities during his tenure.

"The mal conduct of people is a reflection of them, not me", says Hasan, now 25 years old. "At first encounter, people may take me for a miserable person seeing my wounds and scars. However, they do not realize that these are battle scars. I am a perfectly capable young man who has risen beyond the ashes of his past. I have overcome all odds and I am where I am today solely due to my efforts and determination."

Hasan's success story is an example of perseverance and willpower. A story to draw inspiration from when faced with difficulties. "There's always a plan B. Always another way to re-invent yourself. Take charge and soar my friend. The sky is the limit."

"There's always a plan B. Always another way to re-invent yourself. Take charge and soar my friend. The sky is the limit."

Hasanuzzaman Hasan





EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

Md. Saiful Islam

Assistant Manager - Finance
(Coordinator in-charge)

Md. Saiful Islam has been with ASF for over 15 years. Stationed in Dhaka, Saiful has been commuting to and fro from ASF even in lockdown, a challenging traverse given the number of times he has been stopped by the police.

Despite the hurdles, he has worked for ASF with unbeatable sincerity and dedication throughout the Pandemic. We take this opportunity to thank Mr. Saiful for his commendable work ethic and for inspiring us to work hard and sincerely every day.



VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH

Aanushka Mehjabin

Asian University for Women
Bsc Bioinformatics

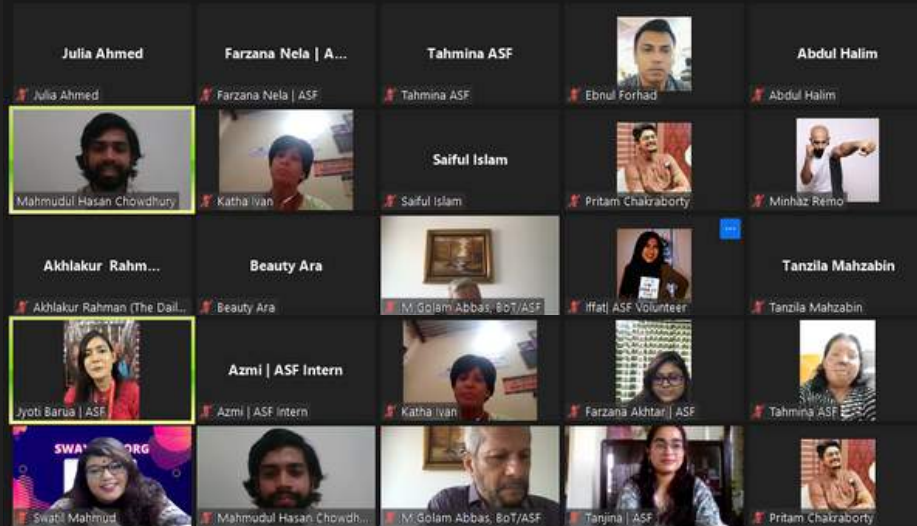
"Being a part of ASF's first volunteer batch was a learning experience. I got to look into the lives and stories of our survivors in depth. Before this, acid attacks were cases and numbers to me but now they are names and stories. Learning about their struggles, dreams, ambitions, and perseverance has inspired me as a person as well to be strong and resilient.

It is also to be mentioned, how ASF has so efficiently used the youth and their passionate advocacy and opinions to work towards this noble cause. I'd encourage our donors and potential donors to support this absolutely amazing organization that provides opportunities for both survivors and young aspiring volunteers."

Thank you Aanushka for all of your efforts and hard work in volunteering at our organization. We wish you a very bright future ahead.

International Youth Day: Role of Youth in Preventing Violence

| Aug 28th • Facebook Live



On International Youth Day, August 31st, ASF organized a webinar on the *Role of Youth Workers in Preventing Violence*. Multiple accomplished youth changemakers came together to share their stories and insights to better eliminate violence in Bangladesh.

Panelists included Amina Khatun Neela–Senior Officer, Gender Responsive Education, and Skill Project, Gender Justice and Diversity, BRAC, Minhaz Remo–Founding Performance & Nutrition Coach of Functional Performance, Ivan Ahmed Katha–Founder of Kotha Kala Kendra, Mahmudul Hasan Chowdhury–Psychosocial Support Officer, Save the Children, Swatil Binte Mahmud–Founder of Swayong, Rajani Raoja, Author–Artist & Journalist, Fazrun Sultana Khan–Program Associate, Child Protection, Relief International. Mehzabin Nemo–Safeguarding Officer, Save the Children, Pritom Chakraborty–Associate, Fellow recruitment and selection, Teach for Bangladesh, and Sajeda Akter–GBV deputy coordinator, RTMI.

From teaching self-defense to reporting full case stories to give voice to the voiceless, guest speakers detailed their unique work combating different forms of violence.

To conclude the session BoT M. Golam Abbas and Dr. Julia Ahmed expressed their hopes to build a youth network to support survivors and reach out to government sectors like the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs to seek law and advocacy support.

[Watch webinar on Facebook \(in Bangla\)](#)

United Nations Day:

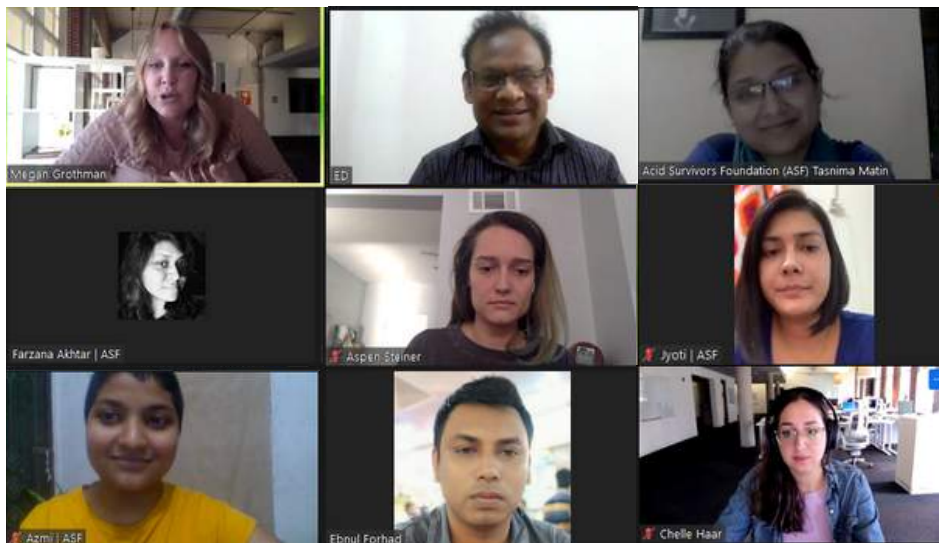
Reaffirming our collaborative efforts to strengthen the voice and agency building of acid survivors towards leading a life with dignity in an equitable and just society

| Oct 24th • In-house Event

What roles did Bangladesh and the international community play in mitigating Acid Violence? What are some of the evolving needs of survivors to reintegrate with modern society? On October 24th, survivors and ASF staff including the BoT and the ED will come together in an in-house event to address these questions.

PARTNERSHIP ANNOUNCEMENT

We are thrilled to announce our partnership with Timmermann Group—an award-winning US-based digital marketing agency. The aim of our partnership is to raise organizational awareness across social media platforms and generate recurring donations.



AUGUST | 2021

SERVICE REPORT

AT A GLANCE



51

SURVIVORS

MEDICAL

Medical Advice (Physical & Hotline)
Physio Advice
Psychotherapy Counselling
Referral

- Survivors given health consultation regarding recurring complications caused due to chemical burns such as contracture, ophthalmological issues, hearing difficulties, infection, etc.
- 02 patients offered remote medical consultation and medicine by courier
- Over 70% of the 51 survivors are women

17

SURVIVORS

LEGAL

Legal Assistance
Legal Counseling
Hotline Service

- 02 survivors given legal support
- 15 offered hotline service

**“I WILL SURVIVE
IF ASF SURVIVES.”**

Monjil Mia

ASF is the only organization catering for acid survivors. From medical care to legal aid, a holistic survivor care package including rehabilitation and reintegration is offered to beneficiaries. Donate to us today and help survivors in Bangladesh.

DONATE



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