



RECAP

MARCH 2023

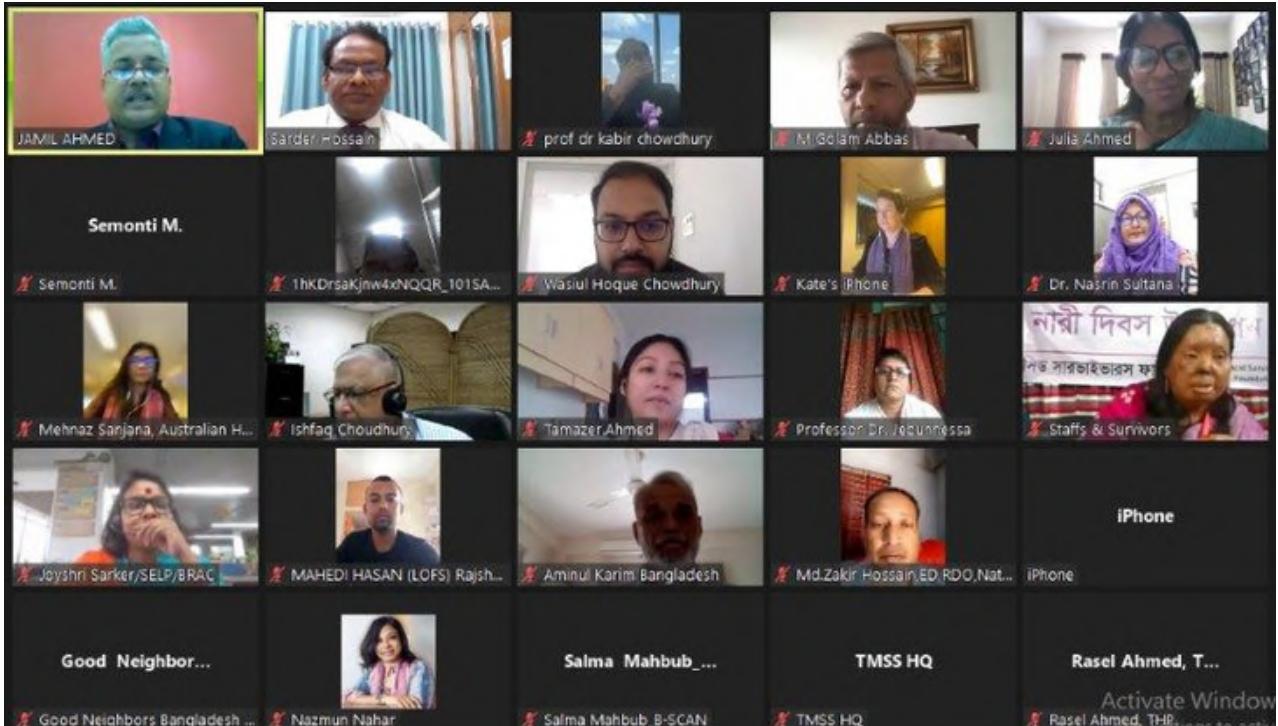
ISSUE NO. 23

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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

| 09 March

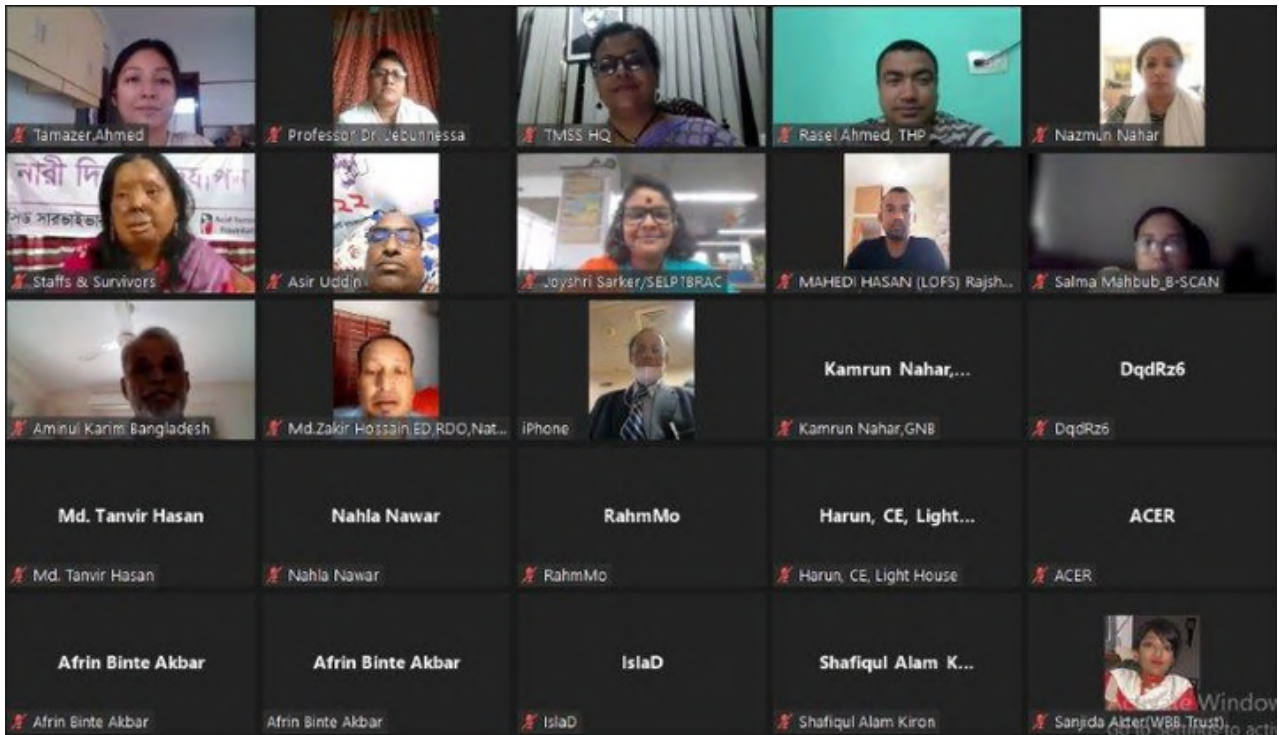


On the occasion of International Women's Day 2023, ASF organized an online seminar. Eminent people from Bangladesh and abroad participated as guest speakers. The theme was: "I didn't break, I didn't stop, I turned around" – the story of a survivor who braved through every obstacle.

ASF Acting Chairperson Dr. Julia Ahmed chaired the event and media personality and TV presenter Mr. Jamil Ahmed moderated it. Executive Director of ASF, Mr. Sarder Jahangir Hossain delivered the welcome speech.

The objective of the event was to inspire survivors by sharing success stories of acid survivors and inform participants how ASF was operating in the face of various adversities, especially financial, and discuss solutions.

Survivor Neela's success story was highlighted through a short video. Survivor Lulu Mansura and Khadija Akhtar Khushi shared their success stories and ASF's contribution to their journey.



Ms. Tahmina Islam, ASF Coordinator-Program, briefed the audience on ASF's work, challenges and future plans. Dr Tabassum Chowdhury and Sabrin Mahamuda talked about how ASF faced financial challenges since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic and how donor agencies could support ASF.

Guest speakers included Ms. Kate Sangster, First Secretary of the Australian High Commission in Bangladesh; Ms. Rokeya Haider, Senior Broadcaster and former Head, Bengali Service, Voice of America (VOA); Barrister Wasiul Haque Chowdhury, eminent lawyer; Professor Dr. Zeb-un Nessa, Professor, Department of Public Administration, Jahangirnagar University, Dhaka; Prof. Dr. Kabir Chowdhury, eminent physician who received the Freedom

Award; Ms. Tamajer Ahmed, Manager-Women's Rights and Gender Equity, ActionAid Bangladesh; Lieutenant General (Retd) Aminul Karim, Former Military Secretary to the President, Former Professor Independent University Bangladesh; Air Commodore (Retd) Ishfaq Elahi Chowdhury, Treasurer, East West University; Professor Dr. Geas U Ahsan, Former Pro-Vice Chancellor, North South University.

Various academics, researchers, NGO representatives, donor agency representatives, and media representatives were also present at the event. Honorable members of the ASF Board of Trustees namely Mr. M. Golam Abbas; Ms Nasimun Ara Haque and Mr Shafiqul Alam Kiran also spoke at the event.

AISD STUDENTS VISIT ASF

| 12 March



Students from the American International School Dhaka (AISD) visited ASF to collect information on the organization's work, goals and values, and survivor stories to make a documentary on ASF's work.

Their aim is to inform people about ASF and promote a donation channel to raise funds. Donation week will be hosted from March 12 through March 17.

It is very praiseworthy for students to engage in community services from an early age. We appreciate this AISD's initiative to foster empathy and inculcate a sense of responsibility among its students to better society.

BOGURA INCEPTION PROGRAM

14 March | Bogura

The inception program of the project *Strengthening Acid Survivors Network to Eliminate Acid and Other Forms of Gender-Based Violence* was held in Light House. The project is funded by Australian Government and supported by ASF.

Prominent guests attended the program including Additional District Magistrate Ms Afsana Yasmin, Mr. Harun-Or-Rashid-Executive Director of Light House, Dr. Shahnaz Parvin-Deputy Civil Surgeon, Md Abdul Motin-PP and Md Ashekur Rahman Sujon-Special PP of Judges Court Bogura, Mr. Hazrat Ali- District Education Officer, Mr. Abu Saleh Md Nuh- District Social Services Officer, Md Abdus salam Babu- Vice-president of Bogura Press Club.

Staff reporters of Prothom Alo and The Daily Ittefaq also attended the program. Representatives of Light House, BRAC, TMSS, acid survivors of Bogura, and other respected people were also present at the program.

ASF's Tahmina Islam (Coordinator-Program), Md Saiful Islam (Coordinator- Finance), Dr. Tabassum Chowdhury (Medical Officer), and Sabrin Mahamuda (Legal Officer) joined the event.



BOGURA SCHOOL CAMPAIGN

15 March | Bogura

In coordination with ASF, Light House organized a school campaign under the project *Strengthening Acid Survivors Network to Eliminate Acid and Other Forms of Gender-Based Violence* at Shekhahar Di-Mukhi High School in Bogura. The campaign was funded by the Australian Government.

Over 100 students attended the campaign along with the school's headmaster and representatives from ASF and Light House.

Discussion involved creating awareness about acid attack, its legal repercussions, and other forms of gender-based violence such as dowry, blackmailing, and child marriage.



JESMIN

Cumilla

Jesmin's father worked in a launch boat and her mother died when she was very young. After her mother's passing, she started living with her older sister. Around age 13 she was removed from school and married to her 20-year-old boyfriend who worked as a dice mechanic. They lived in Konapara, Dhaka, and had 3 children together.

One day Jesmin's husband borrowed a large sum of money from a powerful person. He could not repay the money and went missing one day never to return leaving Jesmin and the children to fend for themselves. Jesmin started to work as a maid in different households to feed her kids and repay the money her husband borrowed. Her son started work in a shop that paid only 100 Tk a day. Time passed and after almost two years, Jesmin cleared the loan.

Suddenly in 2016, her husband came back. He physically abused her and the children, and even broke their house. Jesmin's brother-in-law stepped forward and told him to stop otherwise he would call the cops. After a few days, her husband apologized and they lived like family again.



Jesmin before surgery

But one day her husband suddenly started packing his things. He bid the kids goodbye and left the house. Before Jesmin could even process what had happened, he came back, sent the kids out of the house, beat Jesmin and brought a bottle of acid and splashed it on her, and left the house locking the door behind him.

The acid burnt her eyes, face, neck, back, chest, hands, and feet. Jesmin screamed in pain. There was not a single drop of water in the tap as a result of load-shedding. Neighbors came forward with all their drinking water but alas it was not enough to relieve the pain.

Jesmin was brought to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. She stayed there for a month. After being discharged from DMCH she went home and later came to ASF. ASF has been by her side ever since.

She has had 4 operations since but still feels a strong burning sensation in her chest and can't lay on her side due to pain and discomfort.

Jesmin's brother filed a case against the perpetrator but did not receive justice. She currently lives with her brother, a cook, and his family.

On January 2023 ASF came forward and arranged a reconstructive surgery for Jesmin at Shaheed Sohorawardy Medical College & Hospital. Her surgery is complete and is now recovering. Her well-wisher ASF will always be by her side.



Jesmin after surgery

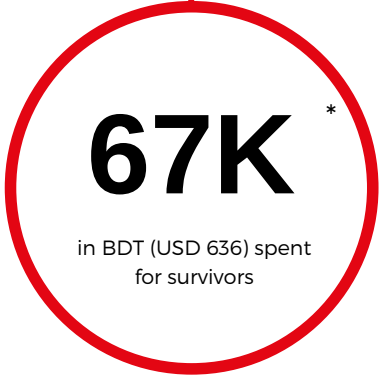
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- 01 Eye Glass*
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* for a survivor with eye issues due to acid attack

* includes survivor food and transportation to and from ASF Health Center and referral hospitals, pre & post-operative expense, and medicine costs.



To donate please contact:
asf@acidsurvivors.org

acidsurvivors.org

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