

Agami Newsletter [August 2011]

President's Message

Dear Donors,

2011 has been another vibrant year for Agami filled with growing project activities, expanded partner initiatives, a successful fundraiser, and efforts towards internal organizational efficiency. All in all, it has been a very active first half with a lot more lined up in the second half of the year.

On the project side, we have approved twelve projects, three of which are new undertakings. There are plans to launch a few more new projects in the second half of the year contingent upon the availability of funds.

The solar initiative or LTBL (Let There Be Light) has entered into the second phase of implementation. In this phase, Agami is providing 275 solar lanterns for the students in various Agami-funded schools. Most of these students have no electricity at home; these lanterns will enormously improve the study environment at home as well as the quality of life for the entire family.

On the organizational side, we have taken an active step in decoupling the Board and the Executive Committee of Agami. The new five member Board has been elected during the Annual Meeting in April followed by the selection of the Executive Committee. This decoupling process will enable the Board to focus on long-term visionary measures while the Executive Committee will focus on operational excellence.

We had a very successful fundraiser event in May. Enthusiastic Agami supporters and donors



helped us in collecting over \$40,000 from this event. While we are very happy with the outcome of the event, Agami is still \$15,000 short of its annual project funding budget. This year, our plan is to support 2,400 underprivileged children in twelve Agami-funded schools (slum, indigenous, and rural) with a total project budget of \$55,000. It is hard to believe that only twenty three dollars will fund the educational cost of a student for the entire year. In other words, skipping a Starbucks café latte once a month can change the life of a child in Bangladesh!

As you are reading this newsletter, please imagine the face of Sumita Chakma, a grade five student at Sajek School in an extremely remote indigenous community of Rangamati. With your twenty three dollar donation (skipping a two dollar coffee once a month), Sumita can continue her schooling and work towards her dream of a bright future. On the contrary, without help she can drown in the downward spiral of poverty, lack of education, early marriage, poverty Your small choice can make a huge difference for Sumita.

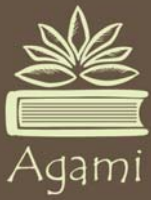
Agami is counting on you as always. I am confident that you will come through in the support of shaping the future of the underprivileged but promising children of Bangladesh.

Abu S Mahmudul Hassan
San Jose, CA



Why do you volunteer?
to help.

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Project Director's Word

In 2011, in addition to our USA based members, the Agami project team has welcomed several **volunteers from Bangladesh**. This group of young volunteers is beginning to make a real impact on the scope and operation of the Agami project team. They come from some of the top universities in Bangladesh and bring with them new ideas, a lot of energy and enthusiasm and a local perspective which is invaluable. And it has also provided us the necessary bandwidth to implement long standing goals such as starting a Monitoring & Evaluation Program, maintaining a Universal Agami Student Database, identifying and/or following up on project improvement ideas, and sharing of learning across different Agami projects.

We look forward to expanding our volunteer base in Bangladesh, and maximizing their contribution for the benefit of the **underprivileged children** of all Agami schools. At the same time, Agami intends to provide a platform and the necessary guidance to these young volunteers to



thrive and be prepared to become future leaders and make a positive difference in the community that they are so much a part of. As Agami continues its growth as an organization, we believe this can be a win-win model for all the stakeholders.

Dilruba (Sheila) Chowdhury

Why do you volunteer?

to learn.



Annual Report 2010

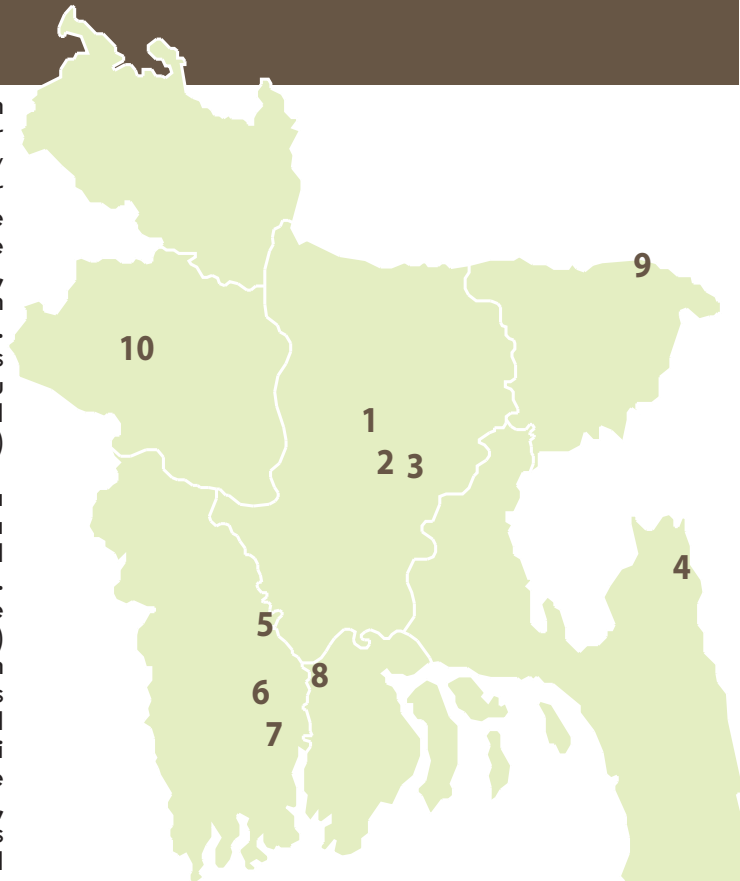
Agami had a very active year in 2010: Ten projects were funded this year across Bangladesh; two of these were new undertakings for Agami while the other eight projects were continuations from the previous year. Of the ten projects, three are located in urban slums of Dhaka city, six in various remote rural areas and one in a rural indigenous community in Rangamati.

The three urban slum schools are all primary schools. Two (Alok Shishu Shikhalay in Agargaon, Dhaka and Pearabagh School in Moghbazar, Dhaka) teach students from Kindergarten to Grade 5, while BKKS (Bibi Khadija Kalyan Sangsthya) school in Mirpur, Dhaka goes from Kindergarten to Grade 4. All three are non-government primary schools.

The two newly funded schools are BKKS in Mirpur, Dhaka (mentioned above) and NandaRam Agami'R Pathshala in Sajek, Rangamati. The school with grades from Kindergarten to Grade 5. This school is in a very remote region of Rangamati (see Project Map) where inhabitants are poor indigenous Chakmas. Here electricity, phones and automobiles are only pictures in books! This school is an inspiration and path to modern life for the people of this region.

This is the first publication of Annual Report for Agami. The publication, edited by Farinaz Simika Kabir and Mushida Chowdhury, contains organizational activities information for 2010. The key segments include President's Message, Project activities, Partner Initiatives, Fundraising activities, and 2010 Financial report. Agami's Annual Report 2010 is now available online at : http://www.agami.org/pdf_documents/AnnualReport2010.pdf

Murshida Chowdhury



1. Alok Shishu Shikhalay, Agargaon, Dhaka
2. Pearabagh School, Moghbazar, Dhaka
3. Bibi Khadija Kalyan Sangsthya School, Mirpur, Dhaka
4. NandaRam Agami'R Pathshala, Sajek, Rangamati
5. Agami-JMTF school, Pathakhali, Khulna
6. Agami-JMTF school, Bedkashi, Khulna
7. Agami-JMTF school, Koyra, Khulna
8. Boitpur Village High School, Bemorta, Bagerhat
9. Doshgram High School, Sylhet
10. Lalitnagar High School, Godagari, Rajshahi

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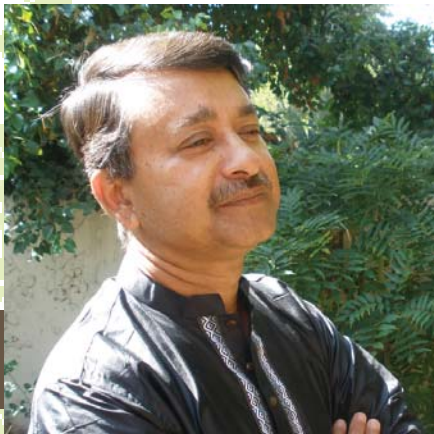
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Decoupled Administration

Agami is a strong, dynamic, growing, impactful organization, changing the lives of thousands of underprivileged children. For a number of years, Agami's Board of Director (BoD) and Executive Committee (EC) were one and the same, with members sharing double duty of vision-setting and operations. Agami Board and EC are decoupled now through a formal election of BoD followed by the nomination of the new EC. This is a **great historic moment** for Agami because Agami felt the need of decoupling its policy branch from the executive branch.

The BoD, as known as Board, is composed of 5 directors. Two of the 5 Board members, Nisar Ahmed and Mustafiz Choudhury, were elected in April 2011 through a general election participated by the Agami members. Two Board members, Imtiaz Chowdhury and Farzana Sultana, were appointed in early 2010. The 5th board member Babu Rahman was re-appointed by the newly formed Board in May 2011. Each of the board members is entitled to serve for a limited 3-year term. It can be noted here that the recent general election of the Board was the first ever of its kind guided by the Agami By-Laws.

Note that we still are looking for **more people** to fill out various EC roles. Mahmudul Hassan, the current Agami president, will be driving that effort. If you are interested in helping drive Agami to the next level, please send him a note (Hassan@agami.org).



Sabir Majumder

New Board Members

Babu Rahman
Mustafiz Choudhury
Nisar Ahmed
Imtiaz Chowdhury
Farzana Sultana

New Executive Committee

President:

Abu Hassan

Director of Projects:

Dilruba (Sheila) Chowdhury

Director of Fundraising:

Murshida (Irene) Chowdhury

Director of Operations:

Sabir Majumder

Director of Outreach:

Farinaz (Simika) Kabir

Asst Director of Outreach:

Faryha Majumder

Director of Finance:

Imtiaz Chowdhury

Asst Director of Finance:

Tina Jabeen

Asst Director of Finance:

Sarah Rahman

Khan Academy Project

The project for translating Khan Academy educational videos into Bangla is progressing at a sustained pace. As of July 25, 2011 more than **400 videos** have been completed and posted on Agami learning channel at <http://learning.agami.org>. These videos cover a wide range of elementary and higher math topics such as Developmental Math, Pre-Algebra, Algebra, Arithmetic, Geometry, Trigonometry, Probability, Statistics, Differential Equations, Pre-Calculus, Calculus, and Linear Algebra. Despite no publicity, views of Bangla translations have been growing consistently. Project target is to complete **800 translations** soon.

Kudos to Agami volunteer team in Dhaka managed by our partner organization, One

Degree Initiative. They continue to produce very high quality products and remains motivated to successfully complete the work at hand.

Once the translation work is complete Agami plans to promote the videos and start distributing them throughout Bangladesh. Distribution goal will be to ensure that students from all walks of economic levels and privileges in the country are able to use these videos. These videos will provide a much needed self-help tutorials as a complementary **learning resource**. Agami is looking for funds for promotion and distribution. Donations for the project is appreciated.

Nisar Ahmed

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to share.



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May Results

Agami had its **Annual Fundraiser Banquet Dinner** on May 21st 2011 at David's Restaurant in Santa Clara. It was an evening comprised of 'what's new' with Agami, good food , a painting auction and a fabulous performance from Chandan with his band.

With great hopes for this year and a \$50,000 goal ahead of us, we had reserved a nicer venue and amenities for our guests and donors. We wanted our guests to know that we appreciate their generosity and thank them for supporting us year after year. Our loyal emcee of many years Razab Chowdhury opened the evening with a few housekeeping rules and invited former Board Member Sabir Majumder, who was unable to join us in person, to introduce the newly elected **Board of Directors** over web telecast. Two new Board members Nisar Ahmed and Mustafiz Choudhury were introduced to the audience along with the current members Imtiaz Chowdhury and reelected former President of Agami Babu Rahman. After the introduction, Babu Rahman went onto introduce the newly selected **Executive Committee members** comprised of Mahmudul Hasan, Sabir Majumder, Dilruba Chowdhury, Murshida Chowdhury, Farinaz Simika Kabir and Imtiaz Chowdhury.

One of our focuses for the evening were videos of Agami school children who directly benefited from your donations. One of our many interns, **Ohona Chowdhury** created a video during her visit to Bangladesh along with a touching video created by four enthusiastic interns from Dhaka that were shared with the audience. There were also presentations introducing couple of our new initiatives. Ahmed A Badruzzaman went on presenting the Chevron-Agami Triple E initiative while Nisar Ahmed who is heading the Khan Academy Project had a lively presentation with youtube videos translated in Bangla by our Agami volunteers in Dhaka. Agami's new President Mahmudul Hassan gave an objective overview of all the projects supported by Agami and Farzana Sultana went on to make an appeal to the audience with our fundraising needs.

As the audience eagerly awaited the fun to begin, **Chandan** had a drumroll introduction by the most eloquent Razab, yet another time, as he took to the stage. Chandan Zaman Ali, the lead singer of "Winning" performing with local live band was the main attraction of the evening. It is noteworthy mentioning the local band comprised of Zubair, Jishan, Raiyan and Mark who practiced for weeks by themselves to perform with Chandan, and not once did they skip



a beat as their skipper began singing. The dance floor was filled with enthusiasts swaying with the music as Chandan sang all the popular songs he could conjure up for an audience that craved for dance music. One observation from Diane Malloy, a two time guest to Agami Fundraiser, thrilled to see the enthusiasm of the audience, made a comment, **"I can't believe they are having so much fun and they're not even drinking!"** From someone who didn't understand the language of most of the songs Connie Cassinerio, a first time guest, stayed till midnight to listen to the music and people dancing and craved to come back again next year to another Agami Event.

David's Restaurant stayed open an extra hour to fulfill everyone's wishes. From time to time we made appeals for help in fulfilling our dreams of funding all of our projects that Agami has undertaken. As the evening was winding down around midnight, we were happy to announce that our total donations with pledges amounted to **\$40,000**. We fell short of our original goal to raise \$50,000 with this event, but nevertheless, it was a successful event with around 200 attendees. Most importantly, our guests went back home with a happy smile knowing that they had contributed in building futures for many children in poverty stricken Bangladesh and at the same time savoring an eclectic evening of good music at an immaculate venue. We, at Agami would like to thank all our supporters for helping make our Annual Fundraiser this year an aberrant success. Keep a look out on updates for our October focused event shortly.

Farzana Sultana



Why do you volunteer?

to build.

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