



Agami Newsletter

May 1, 2010

Editorial from the Agami Secretary ... We Are Here For the Future



Ever since we started our journey formally in 2003, we have been working as a US-based not-for-profit action group for the causes of education for the underprivileged children in Bangladesh. The reward is nothing but satisfaction as a global citizen group for global children although the focus is the poorest of one of the poorest countries on the earth. We have made many significant direct and indirect impacts through the Agami school projects in Bangladesh.

We have grown from US\$1500 annual budget to almost US\$100,000 annual budget in seven years. We are diversified our school projects from urban slums to rural Bangladesh, from Dhaka metropolis to the remote Chittagong Hill Tracts, grown from 3 volunteers to ~100 volunteers. Our slum students are participating in national events with their pride and colorful Agami-provided school dresses. Some of the students are empowered by Agami's solar light program Let There Be Light to be able to continue their home works at night in an off-grid no-light setting.

Our second generation volunteers are visiting Agami schools in Bangladesh with great prides and joys. We have established an Agami Internship program for those second generation Bangladeshis who are interested in such projects and life-long experiences.

None of these would happen without community support and financial support from individuals and US-based corporations through matching funds. We are pursuing funds from global foundations for larger and impactful education projects. Agami is looking forward for your continuous support in any ways and means you can offer.

None of these happened automatically and obviously Agami is going through its growing pains. Nevertheless, Agami is bound to strive as a global organization for the 'Future' – the meaning of the Bangla word 'Agami'.

Dr. Sabir Majumder
Secretary, Agami

From the Agami President ...

We need your Help and Participation



Dear Friends of Agami,

Thanks to your generous support, Agami has been able to initiate twelve successful school projects to date. These school projects are running in remote villages and urban slums where government initiatives are rarely received. Agami is supporting already established schools as well as primary/secondary education at new schools. You have helped us instill a sense of pride, hope and aspiration among the children, who are being benefited through these projects.

However, there are many more that we have not been able to reach. We need your help in providing education to these children so they can build their own future. Agami means 'future' in Bengali, which is the very essence of our organization. Our mission is to promote basic education to underprivileged children in Bangladesh so they can have a future. One of the many children whom we'd like to reach is Salim...

One of your Agami volunteers found Salim and his friend playing with a stethoscope in the slums of Dhaka. Salim told her that he wanted to become a doctor someday. Salim's father is a rickshaw puller and barely makes enough money to feed his family. So instead of going to school, Salim sells flowers at a busy traffic intersection. This is a harsh reality that many of our poor children face everyday.

According to the Daily Star, a leading daily newspaper in Bangladesh, more than 380,000 children are living on the streets of Bangladesh without the light of education. Together, we can get them off of the streets and into classroom. Together we can bring them a better future.

Agami has been privileged to receive generous contributions from you in the past few years. In 2010, Agami plans to fund a total of 15 school projects in Bangladesh that will affect the lives of more than 2500 underprivileged children. In the next few months, we need to raise \$75,000 USD for operating these schools with their current curricula. During this economically difficult time, we are counting on your participation in the upcoming fundraiser so that thousands of children who benefit from projects funded by Agami do not have to go back to the darkness of illiteracy again.

Please accept my personal invitation to attend our annual fundraiser, on May 22. I look forward to seeing you and your family there.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Babu S. Rahman". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dr. Babu S. Rahman
President, Agami

From the Project Coordinator ...

Project Perspective : the Risk of Growth



Agami project activities have been growing consistently since our inception in 2003. Last year was no exception. In 2009, we have continued funding all of our existing projects. These projects are three schools in Khulna (Patuakhali, Bedkashi and Amadi), Comilla Girls High School, Madaripur Girls High School, Agargaon Alok Shishu Bidyalay & Pearabagh Slum School in Dhaka, Doshgram High School in Sylhet, Lalitnagar High School in Rajshahi. We have also funded two new projects this year. These are Sajek School project in Chittagong Hill Tracts and BKKS School project in Mirpur, Dhaka. Sajek project is a brand new school supporting the indigenous kids of the tribal Zhoom cultivation community in Baghaichari upazila of Chittagong Hill Tracts.

BKKS primary school in Mirpur area of Dhaka supports the poor kids from the local slums. Altogether Agami has disbursed \$53,529 for various project activities supporting 2055 students in 11 schools across Bangladesh.



The chart here shows the growth in our funding from a meager \$1500 in 2003 to over \$50,000 in 2009. That is an impressive CAGR (compound annual growth rate) of 81.44%.

Needless to say that this growth has been possible due to the expansion in our donor base and increase in annual contribution from our key donors. Note that in order to maintain this CAGR (84.4%) Agami needs to raise and disburse \$97,000 in 2010. Here lies the risk of growth. We cannot say no to the 2000 odd children in the 11 schools who are counting on our fund to continue education for a better future. At the same time the lives thousands of other disadvantageous kids in hundreds of villages and slums in Bangladesh can be positively impacted through growth in new projects and initiatives. Thus, Agami needs to continue both funding of existing projects as well as endeavor into new initiatives. We are counting on you, the expanding donor base, to make that happen in 2010.

Dr. Abu S Mahmudul Hassan
Vice President, Agami

From the Fundraiser Coordinator ...

Agami Fundraiser and Donor Relationship



The highlight of our year-long activity is our Annual Fundraiser scheduled for May 2010 this year. We are about ready to launch our fundraising efforts for the entire year. This will be our 7th annual gala event featuring Anila, a sensational young singer from Bangladesh, along with our very talented local band. Dinner is included with the purchase of an affordable \$20 ticket as catered by Tandoor House, an authentic Desi cuisine located in Fremont, CA.

Date **Saturday May 22nd, 2010**
Time **6:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.**
Venue **TiE Center – Silicon Valley**
 2903 Bunker Hill Lane, Suite 108
 Santa Clara, CA 95054
Entertainment **Anila Chowdhury and supporting local band Tritone Paradox**

Agami contact Farzana Sultana, farzana2go@yahoo.com , (408) 396-7238

Our donors are the lifeblood to our existence. From an infant organization in 2003 with less than \$2000 operating cost, we have grown exponentially because of our donors who felt united with our vision of establishing schools that provide basic education for our future generation in hopes of permanently eradicating the darkness of poverty from their lives.

Over the years we have published our annual tax return documents on our official website (www.agami.org). This had helped you, as a donor, to understand the amount of funds we are utilizing for our schools. This year we have provided even greater clarity, by mailing an appeal letter with project snapshots to our key donors. As of 2009, we have funded 11 schools, and we plan to launch 2 new projects and construction of a brand new school in Bagerhat. We need to raise \$50,000 USD during our fundraiser event for operating these schools successfully. We are counting on your participation in the upcoming fundraiser so that the hundreds of children who benefit from projects funded by Agami will step out of the darkness of poverty and construct their lives basking in the light of education. It has been a positive journey for all of us. We hope you will be part of this special event!

Agami Project Snapshot

Project Name	Location	Contact Coordinator	Funds Disbursed 2009	Funds Needed 2010	Students Impacted
Alok Shishu Shikhalay	Agargaon Dhaka	Tanjeem Ahsan	\$5000	\$7000	150
Pearabag Slum	Maghbazar Dhaka	Tanjeem Ahsan	\$5000	\$7000	110
Gono	Laksham	Zahangir	\$2000	\$2000	350

Uddoyog Girls HS	Comilla	Kabir			
Shirin Jahan Girls HS	Madaripur	Salehin Monowar Reshad	\$1614	\$2000	315
Bedkashi Patharkhali Amadi	Koyra Upazila Khulna	Dilruba Chowdhury	\$22345	\$24000	245 265 215
Doshgram HS	Doshgram Sylhet	Matin Ahmed	\$4960	\$5000	43
Lalitnagar High School	Lalitnagar Rajshahi	Zakia Afrin	\$2250	\$2500	192
Sajek School	Rangamati Chittagong	Mahjabeen Ahmed	4850	\$5000	
BKKS			\$5000		
New project 1	Bagerhat			\$15000	
New project 2	Khulna			\$5000	
New project 3	Rangput			\$5000	
Total Projects 14			Total \$ 53,529	\$73,500	Total #

From the Agami Treasurer ...

Financial summary for 2009 and challenges for 2010



Despite the financial meltdown in Wall Street and the subsequent economic downturn that we experienced in 2009, Agami did not see any drop in its donations. Au contraire, Agami saw a significant increase in donations compared to the previous years, thanks largely to generous support from its dedicated donors and a very successful fundraising campaign. Last year, Agami was also successful in cutting down its overhead expenses and secure additional sources for overhead revenue from corporate sponsorship, member fees and event ticket sales.

Fund balance at the year end

Agami maintains three separate funds for managing its operations: donation, overhead and disaster relief fund. The following table shows the balance of our fund at the end of 2009. Key points to note here is that despite supporting more projects than its previous years, Agami managed to end the year with more money in its account.

Accounting by funds category 2009	Beginning Balance 2009	Credits	Debits	Ending Balance 2009
Donation funds	\$ 38,095.34	\$ 57,479.08	\$ 43,904.00	\$ 51,670.42

Overhead funds	\$ (703.10)	\$ 8,287.51	\$ 7,310.07	\$ 274.34
Disaster relief fund	\$ 12,901.88	\$ -	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 4,901.88
Total balance	\$ 50,294.12	\$ 65,766.59	\$ 59,214.07	\$ 56,846.64

While donations from individuals, corporations and foundation kept all our projects alive, new sponsorship from Salesforce.com, helped Agami overhead fund to move into a positive territory and maintain its pledge to use 100% of donors' contributions for development projects.

Revenue sources

Individual donors have always been Agami's largest donation source and 2009 was no exception. For corporate matching donations, Agami saw an almost 40% decline from 2008. This was mostly due to budget cuts in corporate matching programs across various companies. On the bright side, 2009 also marked as the first year Agami was able to receive a \$5000 grant from a private foundation.

Donation source	2009	2008
Individual	\$45,481.08	\$33,766.85
Foundation	\$5,000.00	\$0.00
Corporate matching	\$5,458.40	\$9,715.87
Total	\$55,939.48	\$43,482.72

Disbursement of donation fund

With the introduction of 2 new projects, Agami disbursed \$51,279 to support 11 different schools across Bangladesh. The table below shows the details of fund distribution for different projects.

Projects	Funds disbursed 2009	2008
Alok Shishu Shikkhaloy (Slum school)	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
Comilla Girl's school	\$2,000.00	
Madaripur School (Scholarship program)	\$1,614.00	\$2,250.00
Doshgam, Sylhet (Girls school)	\$4,960.00	\$2,475.00
Khulna (reconstruction after cyclone Aila)	\$8,000.00	
Khulna primary schools	\$14,345.00	\$22,500.00
Pearabagh slum school	\$5,000.00	\$2,600.00
Sajek school (Chittagong Hill Tracks)*	\$4,850.00	
BKKS Girls School*	\$5,000.00	
Bijoy Dibosh outing	\$510.00	
Proyash (vocational school)		\$790.00
Lalitnagar (Scholarship program)	\$2250.00	\$1,425.00
Total project expenses	\$51,279.00	\$37,040.00

* New Projects in 2009

Fundraising challenges 2010

In 2010, Agami needs to raise \$75,000 to support its projects. The increased funding requirement is attributed to a boost in student enrolment in Agami slum schools in Dhaka and Agami's plan to support two new projects in Bagerhat, Khulna and Mirpur, Dhaka. We feel that raising \$75,000 from Agami's traditional donation sources – individual donors and corporate matching programs – poses a significant challenge. While the economic outlook has improved this year, the unemployment rate still remains high in Bay Area where most of Agami donors are from. Poor confidence in economy typically results in conservative charitable contributions. Unless Agami manages to reach out to a wider and diverse donor base or secure funding from foundations, 2010 can prove to be a tough year.

Imtiaz Chowdhury

Treasurer, Agami

Let There Be Light ... It is a Worthwhile Project



Carrying the gracious gift of 15 solar lamps from Sabir Bhai, I reached Gazipur village in West Bengal to check on the progress of the 9 village schools I support. I distributed the solar lamps to the girls graduating from school and going to start college. The excitement in their faces was exhilarating. Even the habitually shy Medina held up her lamp like the excaliber and said - Uncle, now I can study at night and will do even better in my college. Suppressing my tears of joy I hugged her close.

Three months later I have enquired and glad to know that all but one lamp continues to function well. One lamp needed the solar battery pack replaced at a cost of about 6 US dollars equivalent.

Solar lamps have been a boon and blessing to the academic progress of bright and energetic students who were handicapped by lack of electricity hampering their studies at night. It is a worthwhile project that I whole heartedly endorse.

Dr. Sakti Das

Lafayette, California

Reflection from a New Volunteer ... Agami Has Inspired Me to Strive to Make an Impact

My name is Faisal Ahmad and I'm a new volunteer at Agami. I recently moved to the Bay Area and thought it would be a great opportunity to join this organization and contribute to help young people in Bangladesh obtain a better education. I realize that I have been very fortunate in my own life in the opportunities I have had and there are billions of young people in developing countries who are just as talented, if not more

talented, than I am but struggle in their daily lives and can't reach their true potential due to factors beyond their control, such as the place they were born, the socioeconomic position of their parents, and sheer luck. I think it's very important to contribute back to society and help others who haven't been as fortunate and Agami has been a great way for me to get more involved and make a contribution.



My parents grew up in a town in the northwest part of Bangladesh in Dinajpur and they were one of the lucky ones. They came from a very modest background and got a big break when my dad came to the US to get a Masters in Engineering. Since then, my dad has become a successful entrepreneur. This move has profoundly impacted my life as I got an excellent education in primary and secondary schools in Southern California, and then moved on to get a degree in Economics at Harvard College. I sometimes wonder what would have happened if my parents had stayed in Dinajpur and not left Bangladesh. I wonder what my life would be like now, where I would live, what I would be doing. I know one thing for sure, I am very thankful and appreciative for all the opportunities I have had and hope through my involvement in Agami that I can help open doors for others which may have never been possible.

I would like to conclude by thanking Babu Rahman and the board of Agami; this group of people is very passionate about making a difference and has inspired me to strive to make an impact and help young Bangladeshis dream big and create opportunities to better their lives.

Faisal Ahmad

San Francisco, California

Bangladesh Trip by a New Volunteer ... Truly One of a Kind and Simply Unforgettable



Last winter break, my family and I visited the slum schools of Bangladesh, a country which has been ranked by United Nations as one of the world's poorest and most densely populated countries. Although Bangladesh is plagued with poverty, there are many organizations, like Agami, which are trying to cure the country of its illness. Agami has given hundreds of poor children the opportunity for an education, and this winter break I was blessed to be a part of their association on my trip.

Months before my trip, I came up with an idea of making quilts for the homeless in the Bay Area. But when my Bangladesh trip came knocking on the door, I thought it would be a great idea to have hand-made quilts for the poor children of Bangladesh. With the help of family and friends, I was able to make twenty quilts and collect an assortment of toys and other donations. But how would I make sure that these charitable items would go to those who really need them? This question was quickly solved by the wonderful

foundation of Agami. The leaders of Agami helped organize which schools I would visit and what I could do to help. In addition to organizing my trip, Agami leaders also gave me a few solar lights that I would donate to the schools along with my blankets and toys. Also Agami leaders gave me an opportunity to teach a few computer basics to the children of Alok Shishu Shikhalay. With my taped up boxes full of donations, my family and I headed off to the airport to begin my life-altering experience.

The first school I visited was Pearabagh school located in the Maghbazar district in Dhaka. My family and I distributed a few lights and blankets among the children. We also got to converse with the teachers and the children. Unfortunately our chats were cut short due to final exams. One thing I really admired was the liveliness and spirit these children had. And this liveliness seemed to be present at the second school I visited, Alok Shishu Shikhalay.

At Alok I was able to donate the blankets, lights, and toys, and I was able to interact with the children. During my visit, I showed the children all the possibilities with the computer that had been brought to them by a previous Agami intern. After showing the kids a PowerPoint, I was able to show a few kids how to use the paint program on the computer, which they all seemed to really enjoy. I ended my day by the children teaching me a few things. The children took me to their playground where we played tag and jump rope. It was nice to know that some games are universal no matter where you are, and kids will always love to play.

During my experience I met wonderful and bubbly children, but I also met inspirational teachers and principals, who truly want the best for every child attending the school. Although some of the teachers are not paid, they continue to come to school to help the children and still go to work afterwards. It amazed me that even after a hard day at school; they still manage to find the energy to go to work in order to provide for themselves. These teachers and principals are heroes in my eyes, and I feel they should definitely be credited for their dedication and altruism.

Teachers and principals can see that there are flaws in society, but they have some ideas that could definitely benefit the program. For example, the principal of Pearabagh has suggested that schools should add supplementary lessons into their schedules. Supplementary classes would be like sewing or auto repair lessons, so if the children do find themselves taken away from school, they can find a way to support themselves in desperate times. Another idea was establishing a seasonal medical clinic and also providing more outside school activities for the children. Both schools feel deeply grateful for all the donations from Agami, and hope with the support of Agami they will continue to build more schools.

My trip to Bangladesh was truly one of a kind and simply unforgettable. If I had a chance I would definitely do it over again. The smiles of the children and the motivation of teachers is something that everyone should see. This trip has just solidified my support for Agami, and pushed me to make a quilting club at my school, so I can send more quilts to those heroic children, whom I have met. After traveling almost across the globe, I finally understand why mother loves Mother Teresa's quote that "It's not how much we give, but how much love we put into it".

Monisha Malek
Fremont, California

Agami Internship Program ... **Invitation to the 2nd Generation Volunteers**



Agami is happy to announce the recent launch of its student internship program. This program aims to connect local high school and college students with different Agami projects in Bangladesh. While projects may vary in scope and duration, usually each project will include a visit to an Agami school in Bangladesh and working with the students, teaching staff and the community there. Agami will coordinate the visits and provide guidance to design and implement the projects. The interns are expected to bring their own ideas and skills, and work with Agami to develop and execute a project that will meet a particular need at the participating schools in Bangladesh, as well as give the interns an opportunity to further develop their skills and interests. Following the successful completion of two internships over the summer and winter of 2009, Agami is now accepting applications for three internship positions available for summer 2010. For further details please check out our website at <http://www.agami.org/internship.htm> .

Dilruba Chowdhury Sheila
Coordinator, Agami Internship Program

From Agami-Bangladesh ... **Agami-Bangladesh as an Up and Running Organization**



From inception, the Agami-USA team had envisioned an Agami arm in Bangladesh that would be the ears and eyes of the organization on the ground. This dream was finally realized when Agami Bangladesh (Agami-BD) was formalized and officially launched early this year. We are pleased to report that we have adopted a Constitution and like our counterpart in the USA, we will be operating on a zero overhead basis. Although still in its nascent stage, Agami-BD will play a critical role in identifying, implementing and monitoring Agami projects. The Agami-BD board is made up of a variety of individuals who will provide invaluable experience and expertise to the organization. In the coming months, the organization plans to actively recruit volunteers to assist with upcoming activities of the organization.

On a personal note, it is very rewarding for me to see the formation of Agami-BD. Having been involved with Agami-USA from the beginning; my board colleagues and I had very early on discussed the importance of forming Agami-BD as a means to provide support to the good work of Agami-USA. Now that I am living in Bangladesh for the first time since my childhood, Sabir bhai's invitation to join the Agami-BD board came at the right time! Being given this wonderful opportunity to continue engaging with a fantastic organization like Agami, and that too as a board member of Agami-BD, provided a

perfect segway to continue pursuing my interest and support of Agami's honorable mission to promote basic education for underprivileged children in Bangladesh.

Being in Bangladesh and seeing the abject poverty and the plight of the underprivileged everywhere I go, Agami's mission resonates deeply with me. Although there has been some progress in educating children, a huge gap remains and thus it is critical that action groups like Agami take on leadership roles in educating as many underprivileged children as possible.








On behalf of my board colleagues of Agami-BD, we invite you to visit one of our projects the next time you are in Bangladesh and see for yourself the good work of this entirely volunteer led organization!

Tania Ashraf

Vice President, Agami-Bangladesh

**EC of the Agami-Bangladesh ...
Executive Committee (EC) is Announced**

Agami, Inc (Agami-USA) has recently announced the formation of the seven-member executive committee for the Agami-Bangladesh (Agami-BD). This committee will serve for a three-year term. The officers of the Agami-BD EC are listed below:

			
President Mohammad Shahid	Vice President Tania Ashraf	Executive Director Dr. M. Mosihuzzaman	Director Finance Dr. Yousuf Ali Mollah
			
Director Admin Rasheda Ahsan	Director Program Sabhanaz Rashid Diya	Director Operations Shibnath Sarker	Volunteers? (needed)