



Skills Talk

Quarterly Newsletter by UCEP Bangladesh

INAUGURAL EDITION

JANUARY - JULY 2021



Message from
Parveen Mahmud FCA
Chairperson
UCEP Bangladesh

We are delighted to announce the journey of 'Skills Talk' - a quarterly newsletter by UCEP Bangladesh to disseminate our thoughts and share happenings in UCEP Bangladesh with all stakeholders especially the Associations members of UCEP Bangladesh. The stories behind the success and achievement and challenges of UCEP Bangladesh must come into wider visibility and "Skills Talk" is a milestone attempt to that drive.

Underprivileged Children's Educational Programs (UCEP) was founded in 1972 as an international NGO by Mr. Lindsay Allan Cheyne a New Zealander, with only 60 urban street children to enhance the livelihood of underprivileged and disadvantaged working children by providing them opportunities for education and job oriented technical and vocational training. Likewise, he established UCEP in Nepal in 1978, as an extension of UCEP- Bangladesh. Mr Cheyne was a Rotarian. He was member of the Rotary Club of Dhaka. Mr. Lindsay Allan Cheyne died in 1986 in Dhaka, and he is resting in eternal peace in Christian Cemetery, Wari, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

After Mr Cheyne's death, in 1988, UCEP Bangladesh transformed into a national NGO and Late Mr M R Siddiqui, first Commerce Minister of the Government of Bangladesh and Founder of Lionism in Bangladesh became the first Chairperson. UCEP Nepal, also transformed into an independent and autonomous organization in Nepal since 1992. For nearly five decades, UCEP Bangladesh has been a source of aspiration for the underprivileged community of Bangladesh. It has evolved as a formidable organization and is recognized as the pioneer in Technical and Vocational Education and Training to graduate about 35,000 students annually.

It is our profound pleasure, UCEP Board of Governors entrusted management leadership with Mr. Md. Abdul Karim as the Executive Director for discharging responsibilities of the two distinct units of UCEP Bangladesh - Social Development Programme and Social Enterprise Development. We believe, UCEP Senior Management Team and Regional Teams under his able leadership will do a great teamwork for the programme and institutional development and sustainability of the organization. Mr. Karim has long experience as the former Home Secretary, Commerce Secretary, Chairman of National Board of Revenue (NBR) and Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister. It is worth sharing that besides on-going programmes, numerous initiatives have already been taken to undertake new ventures in order to diversify funding sources of UCEP Bangladesh, strengthening network through communication with the government, development partners, CSR partnerships with corporate sectors and other relevant institutions and organizations.

On the context of COVID-19 upheaval, UCEP Bangladesh has geared radical mechanism in its operations so that despite lockdown, education of the students resumed. Alternative to online learning, UCEP Bangladesh introduced study groups ensuring that no one falls behind due to smart device or internet accessibility. We, appreciate the unabated efforts propelled by our teachers and staff in this regard. We are focused for a gender equitable, inclusive education dedicated to connecting all young people to education, training, employment and entrepreneurship.

Last but not the least, we want to congratulate everyone involved in this endeavor to make it happen, to publish first issue of "Skills Talk" despite ongoing lockdown. Looking forward to all of us to be safe and keep on trying our best to strengthening resilience, connect, reimagine to build brighter tomorrow for the underprivileged children and youth, hand in hand with the Government of Bangladesh.

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Md. Abdul Karim becomes the new Executive Director of UCEP Bangladesh

Mr. Md. Abdul Karim has been appointed as Executive Director, UCEP Bangladesh in 331st Board of Governors meeting with an immediate effect from July 19, 2021.



Mr. Md. Abdul Karim will be discharging responsibilities as Executive Director, UCEP Social Development Programme (SDP) in addition to his current responsibility as Managing Director, UCEP Social Enterprise Development (SED). Earlier, he had joined as the Managing Director of SED on January 03, 2021.

Mr. Abdul Karim served as Commerce Secretary, N.B.R. Chairman, Home Secretary etc. before becoming Principal Secretary to the Hon'ble Prime Minister. He has worked in the Field Administration, Defence department, Bangladesh Mission in Brussels, among others. He was Managing Director of PKSF and Senior Adviser of BRAC before joining UCEP Bangladesh.

Restructuring of UCEP Bangladesh

The organogram of UCEP Bangladesh has been restructured and bifurcated into two distinct units namely the UCEP Social Development Programme and the UCEP Social Enterprises Development from January 01, 2021.

UCEP Bangladesh's flagship programme is the UCEP Social Development Programme which includes General Education, Technical and Vocational Education & Training (TVET) and Skills Development, Decent Employment and Entrepreneurship Development and Social Inclusion.

UCEP Social Enterprises Development on the other hand aims at increasing the commercial viability of UCEP Bangladesh and contribute to its sustainability.



Message from the Executive Director

COVID-19 has caused Bangladesh poverty to rise from 20.5% in 2019 to around 40% now. During the closure of country-wide educational and technical training institutions, UCEP Bangladesh rapidly shifted to online teaching in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) through alternative modalities e.g. e-study group. This has proved to be an effective and innovative solution.

In the face of combined adverse effects of the pandemic and withdrawal of funding by the major development partners, UCEP Bangladesh is now adopting appropriate strategies to hold its values and principles in all its endeavours. Measures have been taken to ensure enhanced visibility and organizational sustainability of UCEP Bangladesh through resource mobilization and reform measures on the basis of performance of each unit/entity. We shall strive for contributing to national skill development efforts; promote ICT-based entrepreneurship embracing the 4th Industrial Revolution (4IR) and meaningfully interact with the Government and other stakeholders for resource mobilization.

I express sincere thanks and gratitude to the UCEP Association members, BoG Chairperson Ms. Parveen Mahmud, FCA and the members for their guidance and support. BoG's instructions to publish 'Skills Talk' is an important step towards knowledge and information dissemination. We are committed for transforming the current challenges into opportunities and improving the TVET and educational ecosystem in the New Normal environment.

UCEP Board of Governors meetings held during January-July 2021



Scheduled meetings of the UCEP Board of Governors took place at UCEP Bangladesh Head Office, as well as on online platforms considering COVID-19 situation, namely on January 24, March 11, April 11, April 29, June 19 and July 18.

Re-inauguration of UCEP Training Institute, Sylhet

UCEP Training Institute (UTI), Sylhet, a sister concern of the Social Enterprise Development (SED) wing of UCEP Bangladesh, is being re-opened from June 01, 2021.

UTI, Sylhet is a hospitality facility for business or leisure, ideally located within the lush landscape of Sylhet city. It provides accommodation, catering and meeting facilities, offering seminar room/venue for conference, training, meeting for corporate organizations and residential service for tourists.

Significant renovations and modifications were made in recent times with modern equipment and facilities to give a unique hospitality experience to each and every guest.

Besides, UTI, Sylhet dining serves high quality, tasty and healthy food items at affordable prices.

If you are planning for a family trip, official/corporate visit, or organizing a workshop or seminar, you'll find an exclusive welcoming experience in UTI, Sylhet.



Luxury Bedroom



Conference Hall

HALF YEARLY GRIND

- His Excellency Mr. Mustafa Osman Turan, Ambassador of Turkey visited A K Khan UCEP Private Polytechnic Institute (AKKUPPI) on 11th January 2021. Executive Director, UCEP Bangladesh, discussed about the vision of AKKUPI and sought support from the Turkish Government to introduce 4IR related courses.
- As per 326th BoG meeting, held on 24 January 2021, it has been decided to start the overseas migration program, UCEP Overseas Employment Services Limited (UOESL). To make this initiative a quick start, UCEP Executive Director steered some strategic meetings with the Secretary, Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare & Overseas Employment; Director General, Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET), Bangladesh High Commissioner to Singapore and Ambassador of Bangladesh in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.



- In a meeting on 13th June 2021 with the CEO of Bangladesh Tourism Board Mr. Javed Ahmed, the Executive Director, Mr. Md. Abdul Karim requested for mutual cooperation regarding the proposed Sonadanga Project. Mr. Javed agreed to promote UTI, Sylhet through publicity in their own website.
- For some strategic drives, the Executive Director has steered meetings with Hon'ble Planning Minister; Hon'ble State Minister for Social Welfare; Secretary, Ministry of Planning; Secretary, Ministry of Labor; Secretary, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs; Planning Commission Member Mrs. Nasima Begum and Director General of Social Welfare Mr. Sheikh Rafiq.
- UCEP Bangladesh and PKSF agreed to work together as partners through Human Capacity Development Fund of PKSF in a meeting held on 31st May 2021.
- The Executive Director of UCEP met Mr. Abdur Rouf Talukdar, Senior Finance Secretary on 13th June 2021 to explore future funding and partnership opportunity with the Government for introducing 4IR related courses in UCEP Polytechnics and other projects/programmes.
- The A K Khan UCEP Private Polytechnic Institute (AKKUPPI) has started Robotics club from January 2021



- With the aim of exploring possible partnership for the upcoming Khulna Project, Executive Director, UCEP Bangladesh, accompanied by SMT members met Ms. Sultana Afroz, Secretary to Govt. and CEO of the Public Private Partnership Authority (PPPA) on 30th May 2021. Ms. Afroz assured to extend PPPA support to UCEP Bangladesh for implementing Sonadanga and other possible future projects



COVID-19 hits hard on entrepreneurs

UCEP Research & Development Division

In March 2021, UCEP Bangladesh conducted a survey to assess the impact of UCEP entrepreneurship training and business performance on sustainable development of the youth and their families under TVET program. The study findings reveal that due to the informal nature of micro and small enterprises, they tend to fall outside the radar of policy support despite their significant contribution to job creation and the economy. Sales in their business have not recovered to pre-COVID levels, despite businesses reopening. 38% entrepreneurs reported that they face loss in their business due to sudden advent of COVID-19 pandemic. The study findings also identified that the entrepreneur mobilized financial resources from various sources, and it is found that most of the entrepreneurs need support for linkage with financial organizations. Based on the study findings, UCEP Bangladesh initiated to identify the entrepreneurs who need support to start up business for their recovery.

JANUARY - JULY 2021: UCEP CORE PROGRAMMES AT A GLANCE

GENERAL EDUCATION

- Designed and developed a new modality of the UCEP e-Study Group considering COVID-19 situation.
- 2,362 UCEP e-Study Groups formed with the participation of 14,874 students.
- Five subject-based Professional e-Teachers' groups instituted for developing digital content, assignment, assessment and in-house capacity building training.
- Child labour, child marriage and family migration are the major barriers for students to resume their studies.

DECENT EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT (DEED)

- 83.75% graduates (out of 6,389) were placed in decent employment in formal & informal industries (34% female and 5% person with disability).
- 3,938 graduates received career counselling through online and offline platform.
- 127 trainees received Entrepreneurship Development Training conducted by DEED.
- Re-employment support provided to 41 former UCEP graduates who lost job due to COVID-19 pandemic.

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION & TRAINING (TVET)

- 218 Digital contents developed.
- Conducted 1,460 Online Classes.
- As of June 2021, 2562-trainees are already assessed by BTEB, and 2,375 trainees found competent.
- UCEP Hafiz Mazumdar Sylhet Technical School and UCEP Rajshahi Technical School has got approval for Extension of 04 new Trades for SSC Vocational.
- 76% (out of 5,507) TVET and skills development programme is struggling to achieve learning competencies as the learning modality is heavily dependent on learning-by-doing.

SOCIAL INCLUSION

- A total of 42 Gender and Child protection focal persons orientated on protection and safeguarding, prevention of child marriage and child labour during COVID-19.
- 46 teachers received capacity building training on Psychosocial Wellbeing for conducting classes.
- Provided training to 63 UCEP Staff (Head Teacher, Head of Technical School, Senior Teacher, SSC-VoC and TVET Facilitator) on Disability Inclusion.
- Organized various events such as International Women's Day, Ishara Bhasha Dibosh, Global Action Week for Education, World Day Against Child Labour, etc.

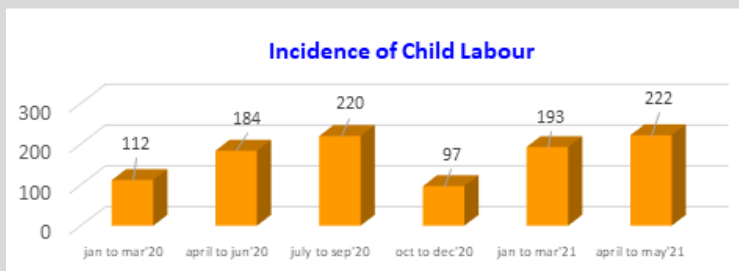
COVID-19 Impact: **School gates shut, child labour soars**

Sarmin Akter, Deputy Manager, Research & Development

A recent study conducted by UCEP Bangladesh titled "Child labour situation among students of UCEP General School during COVID-19 pandemic" found that 21% students of UCEP General School are involved in child labour due to the pandemic.

The findings of the survey were revealed in June 2021 through the 'Virtual Discussion round Study findings sharing session'.

A total of 938 children aged between 8 to 17 years (77 % boys and 23 % girls) were identified as child labour during the pandemic (April 2020 to May 2021). Data was also collected from January to March 2020. Comparing to that, 38% of the surveyed students are involved in hazardous forms of child labour during the pandemic. The number of children at work is set to dramatically worsen because of the ongoing pandemic. Hard core poverty (livelihood, commodity price), easy scope of child labour, save the student from being abused & spoiled are the main contributing factors for child labour in the pandemic. Study findings also revealed that prolong closer of formal schooling increased the rate of child labour for the most marginalized group (see below figure).



29% of the child labor stated that it is difficult for them to get back to school when schools reopen as COVID-19 wreaked havoc on their family incomes and many parents put their children to work.

Based on the survey findings, UCEP Bangladesh has identified how to move forward to address the crisis: to develop positive force (at community level), reduce and prevent new entry in child labour which will contribute to the national strategy for the abolishment of all child labour.

MAKING A MARK

Story of a change maker at UCEP Bangladesh



Golonnahar Tamanna comes from a poor family in Bhola District whose father's business was shut down during COVID-19 pandemic. With six children to feed Tamanna's parents passed days in hardship, let alone their education.

However, due to her extreme willpower, Tamanna bore the expenses of her studies giving students home tuition. As she grew older, she could not continue due to the increased expenses. At that moment she was informed about UCEP Bangladesh Skills Training programme by her class mate. Eventually, she took admission at the Electronics Assembling Technician (EAT) trade in UCEP Bangladesh, under the CITI Foundation Project on October 2019. Due to the COVID-19 lockdown, she graduated on October 2020.

After graduating, Tamanna got employment at Edison Group, Savar with the help of UCEP Decent Employment and Entrepreneurship Development team as an Assistant Technician with a starting salary of BDT 7,500. With this income she can now support her family better. She is very much grateful to UCEP Bangladesh as well as CITI Foundation Project for the person she became.

"PARTNERSHIP CELEBRATION" BETWEEN UCEP BANGLADESH & FCDO

UCEP Bangladesh thanked the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) on the completion of the YES4Growth Project (2016-2020) and to celebrate the long-term support of the people of the UK and its government.

The project contributed greatly to address the skills shortage of the country and develop the much-needed skilled human resources to strengthen the economy. The project was implemented in Dhaka, Jatrabari, Chattogram, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, Rajshahi, Rangpur, and Gazipur.





UCEP Bangladesh arranged a Virtual Eid Reunion event with the participation all UCEP staff after Eid ul Fitr, on May 2021. Ms. Parveen Mahmud, FCA, Chairperson, UCEP Board of Governors was present during the session.



Mr. Abdul Karim attended UCEP Institute of Science & Technology (UIST)'s 5th year anniversary as the Chief Guest, on February 2021. He delivered speech on the occasion and joined in the Pitha Utsab, Cultural Program & award-giving program.



A Certificate Awarding ceremony was arranged on February 2021, to mark the graduation of 25 trainees of Refrigeration and Air-conditioning trade, under UCEP-SIBL Skills Training Project, at the Jatrabari Technical School, UCEP Dhaka South Region.



On January 2021, Bata Bangladesh distributed food items among the poor students of UCEP Bangladesh, under the 'One Pair=One Meal' campaign that ran for a month last year.



Dr. Md. Mofizur Rahman, Managing Director of SME Foundation agreed to constitute a working group consisting of representatives from UCEP and the SME Foundation to work out on MoU for future cooperation, on June 2021.



UCEP Dhaka North Region had organized a Tree Plantation Campaign on June 2021. Executive Director, UCEP Bangladesh inaugurated the program planting saplings at the premises of Mirpur Technical School.



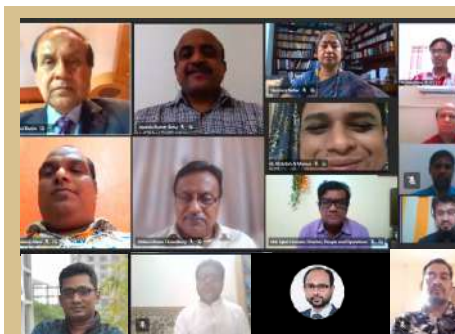
Mr. Md. Abdul Karim, Executive Director, UCEP Bangladesh held a meeting on June 2021 with the Divisional Commissioner of Chattogram during his visit to UCEP Chattogram Region.



UTI-Dhaka provides venue facilities with catering service having customized food menu. It has a complete conference facility with four different sized venues available for various institutions to organize workshop or training.



UCEP Senior Management Team (SMT) along with the newly appointed Executive Director during a management meeting at the Head Office on July 19, 2021.



UCEP Bangladesh organizes Virtual Eid Reunion on the occasion of Eid-ul-Adha

On the occasion of Eid-ul-Adha, a virtual Eid Reunion event was held on Saturday July 31, 2021 where all UCEP Bangladesh staff joined through online platform considering the ongoing pandemic. The SMT members shared their greetings and messages with everyone. Later, Instructors and Teachers of UCEP Bangladesh enriched the cultural event by their attractive performances and talents.

In the vote of thanks, Mr. Md. Abdul Karim, Executive Director, UCEP Bangladesh paid tribute to the Father of the Nation, UCEP Founder, deceased Chairpersons of UCEP Association. He thanked the Chairperson and the Members of Board of Governors and UCEP Association. He also emphasized putting up more efforts for fundraising. He opined, "Since donor fund is drying up, UCEP Bangladesh will focus more on in-country funding sources from Government, public and private Banks and Corporates." At the end of the event, Mr. Karim thanked all the performers, organizers and the participants for attending the ceremony.



UCEP Bangladesh collaborates with Department of Psychology, University of Dhaka

UCEP Bangladesh signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Department of Psychology at the University of Dhaka, at the "Workshop on Sustainability Planning for Workplace Well-being Management (WWM) Training" held on June 8, 2021.

UCEP Bangladesh has designed & started an innovation curriculum training course since 2018 titled "Workplace Wellbeing Management" under its NUFFIC-NICHE SRHR Project.

'Virtual Doa Mehfil 2021' held for the remembrance of late Association Members

UCEP Bangladesh observed a very special 'Virtual Doa Mehfil 2021' on June 06, 2021, for the Eternal Peace of the departed souls of its esteemed Association members. The programme was attended by the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Board of Governors of UCEP Bangladesh, the Executive Director and Senior Management Team of UCEP, as well as the families of the late Association Members.



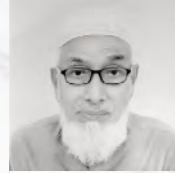
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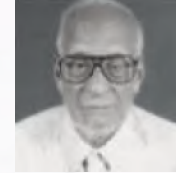
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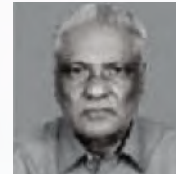
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A Note of Appreciation for the Support Teams at UCEP Bangladesh

To address the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic situation, Finance and Compliance, Human Resource Development & Management, Administration, ICT & Business Solutions, Corporate Affairs, Internal Audit, Governance & Legal Affairs and Programme teams have ensured that staff are working smoothly through 'Work From Home' modality as and when required, especially in the lockdown period declared by the government. **Thank you for your sincere effort!**



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help to **learn**
skills to **earn!**