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It is with great pleasure that I am presenting the Acid Survivors Foundation’s Annual report 2008.

The Acid Survivors Foundation set two priorities at the beginning of the year: Helping acid survivors rebuild their lives and stopping acid violence from Bangladesh by the year 2015.

We are committed to continue integrated approach to transform a person attacked with acid from the position of “victim” to the position of “Survivors”.

Violence against women places an enormous financial burden on a country and also exacts a serious human toll. Violence against women is linked to gender based inequalities. This means that ending gender based violence requires changing cultural concepts and deeply-rooted attitudes and practices that discriminate against women and girls.

ASF continue to work with partners in achieving its mission. Though the number of acid attack has dropped from 490 in 2002 to 179 in 2008, but still there is one attack in every two days which means we should take action not only through legislative and policy measuring but also by implementing comprehensive steps as well as wide spread awareness raising campaigns.

I would like to take the opportunity to express my sincere thanks to survivors who are working as special advocates, honourable Board members & ASF Staff for their commitment & dedication.

I express sincere gratitude to our development partners specially EKN & CIDA for core funding and MJF, UNICEF, GTZ and EC for project funding.

I also express my gratitude to implementing partners and stakeholders for working together to help acid survivors to live life with respect and dignity.

It would not have been possible for us to raise this level of social movement against acid violence without the help of Media. We sincerely acknowledge their contribution in this regard.

We also recognize political commitment of the Government in ending acid violence and helping acid survivors to get medical, legal and economic support, which is crucial for effective rehabilitation of acid survivors.

On 12th May 08, ASF has entered into its 10 years of journey. ASF is planning to arrange the 1st International Conference of the Acid Survivors on the occasion of its 10th Anniversary on 12th May 2009.

I also would like to express my sincere gratitude to ASTI and ASF Pakistan, ASF Cambodia and ASF Uganda for their commitment and dedication to eliminate acid violence from the Globe.

Ms. Parveen Mahmud
Chairperson
Acid Survivors Foundation
The declining trend of acid-violence shows the level of success that ASF has achieved over the period. Since the beginning of the journey on May 12, 1999, ASF has spent a decade to mobilize the society against this vicious kind of violence.

But the Foundation faces a long journey, as there is still one incident of acid-violence every two days in the country.

ASF has taken the challenge to transform the 'victim' of acid attack to 'survivor' so that they can stand on their own feet. ASF also developed number of acid survivors as 'social advocates'. A number of survivors have become members of local pressure group against violence against women.

This task demands a series of significant role by ASF.

The major tasks of ASF are: ensuring comprehensive services to aid the recovery of acid victims as near as possible to that of their before attack situation, to build their confidence so that they can cope with their changed situation, to facilitate their social and economic empowerment and ensure justice.

For this, ASF lobby with government to develop policy, system and services and works with concerned agencies to ensure that the survivors have better access to medical, legal, social and economic services. ASF also works with NGOs and Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives to mainstream acid survivors in their development programs.

In comparison to the preceding year, the number of victims dropped by 4.28 percent in 2008. To sustain the downtrend, ASF continues to work with Media, NGOs and government to make people aware about the consequences of acid violence. The Pour Water Campaign (PWC) by ASF has made many people aware of the first aid method that reduces the severity of acid burns. PWC reduces average hospital-stay for a chemical burnt patient to three weeks from one month.

Throughout the year, the Foundation recorded 137 acid assaults that left 179 injured.

Last year, the attacks on women and girls decreased to 60.89% from 68.75% while trends of assaults on male and boys rose to 39.11% (70) from that was 31.25% in 2007. Motives of attacks were same like the previous years, the highest number of attacks resulted from land and property-related disputes (48,605). However, the incidents related to family and marital disputes, refusal/rejection of love/marriage proposal and spurning of advances marked an increase last year from 8.33% to 12.29%.

In 2008, a total number of 733 patients received treatment at the Foundation’s 20-bed specialized hospital named Jibon Tara. Besides physical treatment survivors received basic counseling and psychotherapy. In 2008 a total number of 623 survivors received counseling and therapeutic services.

In 2008 ASF legal unit and local partner NGOs dealt with about 1,000 cases.

Last year, ASF provided rehabilitation services to 277 survivors including financial support to overcome immediate financial crisis, stipend for continuing education, skill development training, grant for establishing income generating schemes and job placement.

With experience gained over the past few years, ASF has expanded its partnership in 10 selected districts to implement lobby activities at district and bellow level. ASF is also piloting a 'community based psychosocial services' project in two districts. More over ASF is working with four partners in four selected districts and developing local level facilitator groups to enhance community capacity on peaceful conflict resolution and community based psychosocial support services for victims of gender based violence.

ASF played an active role in National Acid Control Council (NACC) to develop rules and regulations to make duty bearer accountable to provide medical, legal, social and economic services to the acid victims. NACC has also developed a uniformed medical certificate which is crucial to prove a case in the court.
Challenges and Future Strategies

Eliminating violence with acid from the society is the first challenge the Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF) faces. Combating the violence, the core part of the challenge, shapes the future strategy of ASF that has evolved over its decade-long journey.

To develop community capacity to resolve local conflicts in peaceful manner, ASF works with four partner NGOs in four selected districts. After conducting a situational analysis and training need assessment a training module has been developed. As this issue is new in Bangladesh and no module exists in this area, it took longer time to complete the development of the training module for training the trainers on conflict transformation.

As a result the planned TOT (Training of Trainers) on conflict transformation could not take place in the year 2008 and deferred to 2009.

Similarly a situational analysis also took place on psychosocial aspect of acid violence and a training module developed after thorough need assessment. This is also a new area in Bangladesh and took longer time to complete the development of the training module. As a result the TOT on enhancing psychosocial capacity could not take place during the reporting period and also deferred to 2009.

ASF also faced difficulties in selecting partner NGOs to implement awareness raising and advocacy and lobby activities in 10 selected districts. As a result implementation of planned activities at district and bellow level has been hampered.

To ensure survivors access to best medical treatment at local level the Foundation lobby with the National Acid Control Council and the Health Ministry to allocate 5 dedicated beds in all district hospitals for treating burn patients only.

To enhance burn management capacity of the health service providers, ASF in partnership with Interburns, a UK based charity organisation has developed Essential Burn Care Course for local level doctors, nurses and therapists. The International Society for Burn Injuries (ISBI) certifies this course. Due to delay in developing the new course module and delay in obtaining government approval for implementing these courses at district and bellow level the course could not take place during the reporting period.

Psychological support is essential to help survivors to cope with their changed situation. The survivors feel comfortable at ASF Hospital as they receive emotional support from peers and counselling services from experts. But they start facing negative response when they return to family and community, which seriously undermine their personal and professional future.

In 2008 ASF planned to pilot a project on strengthening psychosocial services at community level. With Unicef Support, ASF has initiated this pilot project in Bogura and Shirajganj districts. Four survivors have been selected to develop as peer counsellor and two project staffs have been recruited. They will visit door to door to identify survivors’ psychological status and provide basic counselling to survivors and their family. They will also refer cases to community clinic for psychotherapy services.

Failures in the enforcement of related laws, etc. are an area of major concern for ASF. This reality is a factor behind concentration of ASF efforts for a stricter enforcement of laws, etc. by the concerned government agencies. The Foundation also plans to continue lobbying / advocacy with the government and the concerned trade bodies so that access to acid could be narrowed down.

ASF will continue to work with NACC and make government responsive to meet the needs of the survivors. In 2009 ASF will have to start its networking with the newly elected government to ensure that all previous decisions of the NACC’s are followed and strengthened.

Now ASF is an internationally known name and looking forward to arrange an international conference of the survivors in next year to share experience with other international organisations grappling with same problems.
Trends and Numbers

The number of acid assaults and of the victims of assault in 2008 has declined which commensurate with the trend since 2003.

Information collected from police, ASF records and through scanning of newspapers show that there were 490 victims from 367 incidents of acid assault in 2002. The numbers declined to 179 victims and 137 incidents in last year.

In comparison to the preceding year, the number of victims and incidents dropped by 4.28 and 11.4 percent respectively in 2008. The number of victims dropped by 15.40% in 2003, 21.11% in 2004, 17.54% in 2005, and 18.14% in 2006, 13.12% in 2007 and number of incidences decreased by 8.46% in 2003, 20.59% in 2004 and 20.30% in 2005 and 15.88% in 2006 and 13.89% in 2007 than previous years respectively.

In the last year, the male victims including boys were 39.11 percent while the female victims including girls were 60.89 percent.

Last year, the attacks on women and girls decreased to 60.89% (109) from 68.75% while trends of assaults on male and boys rose to 39.11% (70) from 31.25 % in 2007.

The majority of the women survivors are aged between 13 and 34 while it is 26 – 35 years in case of the male victims.

Of the minor victims 20 were girls (57.14%) and 15 were boys (42.86%) in 2008.
Most of the causes behind the acid assaults over the years remained the same: disputes over land/property/money and refusal/rejection of proposal for love/marriage and advances.

Like the previous years, the highest number of acid assaults (48.60%) was related to disputes over land and property. But comparing with the previous years, the incidents relate to property/money related disputes came down to 48.60% from 50.52% that was in 2007.

However the incidents related to family and marital disputes, refusal/rejection of love/marriage proposal and spurning of advances marked an increase last year from 8.33% to 12.29%. Motives behind 9.50% could not be gathered.

Beside among the other causes the marital disputes 6.70%, family related disputes 6.70%, dowry related 6.15% and other causes were 10.06% instigated the incidents. In 2007 conflicts over dowry demands accounted for only 1.35% of the total attacks but it rose to 6.15% in last year while it was 5.22% in 2006.

Analysis with respect to the age and sex of the victims yielded that acid attacks on women/girls is most likely to occur when they are in the 26-35 age group and the major reason is land/property/money dispute.

Although Bangladeshi women generally do not own property or do not have much scope for taking decision on these matters, they end up as victims to acid assaults over land dispute often because they are a weaker and easier target. Dowry and marital dispute related assaults are targeted mainly at women aged between 19 and 44, girls below 18 years age often fall victim for refusal/rejection of love marriage/sex proposals.

Ages of the male victims of acid assaults related to land/property/money disputes range from 35 to 44.
Hundreds of men gathered at the International Women’s Day, 2008 programme and raised their hands promising to act against violence towards women and specially to eradicate acid attacks.
A team comprising a group of acid assault survivors works round the clock to take note of every acid assault incident as fast as possible. Considering the severity of the injuries, the team brings the victims to the ASF hospital within 48 hours of notification.

Employees of the partner NGOs especially BRAC staffs across the country remain alert and instantly inform the NRS of any new incident related to acid violence.

Last year, the NRS recorded 137 of acid violence across the country. Due to an extensive network with the partner organisations, 50% of the total cases were reported within 24 hours of attack. The Foundation readily bears the travel expenses of victim and one of the family members along with partner NGO’s staff.

However, there are a few areas that could not be covered adequately with the existing network and there is a possibility that a few cases of acid violence go unnoticed.

Medical Services:

Chemical burns fall under the category of major burns. All victims of acid attack need long-term, complicated and expensive treatment. Nowhere except ASF Hospital these survivors can get free treatment as long as they need and as far as they required.

In most of the cases, the survivors need a number of reconstructive and plastic surgeries in lessening the disfigurement and retrieving the functionality and original shape/appearance.

Notification and Referral Services (NRS)

A victim’s length of stay in hospital depends upon degree of the damage. In most cases it is between one to three months. They have to regularly visit hospital for checkup and for follow up treatment for several years after release from hospital.

ASF concentrates its services on the poor survivors for their proper and timely treatment as the public hospitals lack the essential medical facilities and most of the victims can not afford burn treatment which is quite expensive.

Besides supplying free medicines and other accessories like bandages, pressure garments and splints, the Foundation is committed to ensuring plastic and reconstructive surgery that may take several sessions by highly qualified surgeons.

About 400 patients a year can be treated in JT. But the number of burnt patients is increasing every year as public hospitals lack facilities for burnt treatment other than the 50-bed burn unit in the DMCH.

Last year, 733 patients were treated in JT. Of them, 350 got admitted in the hospital while the rest were extended outdoor facility. Of the 350, about 110 were new patients, victims in 2008, and the others came for follow-ups.

In 2008, 142 patients underwent operations in JT; of them, 47 were male and boys, and 95 women and children. Eminent surgeons from home and abroad performed 314 surgical procedures in 142 surgical sessions in 2008. Umme Ayesha Siddiqua Neela

All dreams of Umme Ayesha Siddiqua Neela shattered the night her husband poured acid on her face, hands and other parts of her body on February 19, 2008.

Neela was brought to ASF on 20 February 2008 with severe chemical burn injury on her whole face involving front head, eyes, nose and mouth, left ear, neck and upper part of her left chest and back and both hands. She had mostly deep burns with 20% of her total body surface area.

Neela was admitted in the DMCH. “I received the first treatment in the hospital 20 hours later of the acid assault,” Neela informed. By that time her face and eyes were damaged badly. She came to ASF hospital within 35 hours of her attack.
But Neela started to recover quickly because of the prompt surgical intervention performed by Dr Ron Hiles, the British Plastic surgeon along with Bangladeshi Plastic Surgeon Dr Shahidul Bari.

On 23 February she received thick skin graft on her face, front head, neck and upper part of her left chest and back. She got reconstructive surgery for widening her mouth on 2 April. She went back to her parent’s home in Sirajgang after a five-month treatment in the hospital.

Now Neela wants to be a lawyer. She is taking preparation for her Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination after completion of her treatment.

“I want to be a lawyer,” Neela said. ‘Why?, ‘I find many girl victims do not get proper legal help and they have to suffer a lot to bring the perpetrators into justice,” she said. “So I want to be a lawyer to serve the helpless women in the society”.

Leelima Akter

Sitting at the ASF’s specialized hospital Jibon Tara, Leelima did not know how to start the narration. “Yes. It was in 1986,” she said when asked, “did it happen 22 years ago?”

Leelima Akter from Manirampur, Jessore was married with Rustam Ali from a neighbouring village. She was then a minor girl of eight. “I was a student of class two when my parents set the marriage”, she said. Her face does not tell her age. The face is totally disfigured now.

Even she cannot properly recollect the reason behind her husband’s barbaric act. Leelima was admitted to the Jessore Sadar hospital by her father. The treatment was not good enough. “They just wait for natural healing of my wounds. My father was poor. He could not spend more money for a better treatment,” she said. ‘There was no Acid Survivors Foundation at that time’ she added.

Her life was miserable with severe contracture for 16 years before she came to ASF in July 2004. She received first reconstructive surgery on 28 July 2004 for releasing her neck and both arm contracture. Then on 2 September her both lower eyelids were reconstructed. On 15 December again her upper eyelids were reconstructed. On 18 January 2005 her neck and both eyelids were reconstructed again. On 29 May 2008 she had cornea transplant on her left eye. However it did not work out. She lost eyesight in her left eye.

Still she needs reconstructive surgery for enlarging both nostrils and releasing post burn contracture of her neck. She also needs orthodontics treatment. Now Leelima works as a caregiver at the Jibon Tara hospital. Her condition is so complicated that she still needs more treatment.

As she did not receive proper treatment at first place, it is taking long time to reconstruct her to give her full functional ability.

Leelima’s father lodged case and Rustam had to serve a nine-year imprisonment and walked out to a free life again.

“It was long ago and none knew the first aid,” she said.

Analyzing medical history of Leelima Akter and Neela it is found that if the victims get prompt and appropriate treatment, the post burn contracture would be less and it is possible to prevent victim’s disability as well.

On the contrary inappropriate treatment of burns causes serious post burn contracture and damage vital functional organs. The cost of treatment is much higher for these cases than those who receive prompt and proper burn management. Not only treatment cost is high but also loss of personal and professional life costs a huge.
Contribution of Local and International Surgeons to Treat Acid Burns in ASF Hospital

Noted British plastic surgeon Dr. Ron W. Hiles, longstanding friend of ASF visited Bangladesh like previous years and performed surgery on complicated cases. Beside the best line-up of local surgeons helped ASF to offer the victims best possible plastic surgery available in the country.

Professor AJM Salek, Dr. Shahidul Bari and Professor SH Khondokar largely volunteered in ASF Hospital. Sometimes they had to carry on the surgery throughout the whole night at a stretch.

The services of Dr. Mohammed Quamruzzaman, Dr. Sazzad Hossain Khondokar, Dr. Sharif Hasan, Dr. Raghib Manzur, Dr. Faridul Hasan and Dr. Syed A Hasan are also to be mentioned.

Capacity Building of Health Professionals

ASF organized a day-long workshop on Essential Burn Care on January 15, 2008 at the ASF. Thirty doctors from the DMCH, Salimullah Medical College Hospital, BSMR Medical University and the hospital for the disabled participated in the workshop with the expectation of forming a core team. The trainees are expected to train local physicians, nurses and other relevant stakeholders with the view to ensure immediate burn treatment at the grassroots level as immediate burn treatment can lessen harm to the acid victims and other burnt patients.

Tom Potokor from UK, Shova Chamania from India and Sharik Ali from Pakistan were the resource persons of the workshop. The resource person participated at the workshop on behalf of the International Network for Training Education and Research in Burn (Inter Burns).

Eminent British Plastic Surgeon Dr Ron Hiles worked in ASF Hospital from January 20 to March 31, 2008 and trained local plastic surgeons while performed plastic and reconstructive surgery to 51 acid survivors.
Psychological Support Service (PSS), a wing of ASF helps the survivors overcome trauma and sustain the after-effects of the barbaric acts. Acid assault victims’ psychological shock is severe as the victim’s world flips over in a flash. So, the unit arranges counselling and therapeutic services for the survivors.

ASF developed survivors as peer counsellors. ASF also appointed Clinical Psychologist to provide psychotherapy. Psychiatric care is also provided to severe cases but they had to admit in specialised hospital as ASF hospital does not have facility to treat severe psychiatric problem. The psychosocial support wing last year provided basic counselling to 63 survivors, group counselling to 279 and family counselling to 11 survivors. It also provided psychiatric treatment to 4 survivors.

Helping the survivors to ease the post-traumatic stresses is one of the major challenges. Until survivors recuperate their psychological health, they cannot do much to have their life back on track. And to be psychologically fit, they need security and justice and economic independence. Along with psychotherapy, music and art therapy sessions are of great help for the survivors to surmount the traumas. During the reporting period a total number of 344 survivors attended music therapy and art therapy sessions.

Psychological Support Services

Psychological services for violence victims still remain a relatively new area in Bangladesh. The case managers and peer counsellors have to receive technical supervision to maintain the counselling standard and prevent their burnouts.

Facially disfigured people face low self-esteem and have social interaction problem even with family members. They face difficulties in developing intimate relationship and face adverse societal reaction in their every day life. General people have a taboo associated with disfigurement that hinders survivors’ inclusion in mainstream society. Survivors of acid violence face discrimination in school and employment.

Acid Survivors Foundation has started a “face equality campaign” to encounter societal attitude towards facial disfigurement.

James Patridge, a burn survivor and founder of ‘Changing Face’ an organisation from England conducted a day-long workshop in 2008. Representatives from different organisations and 15 staff including acid survivors from ASF attended the workshop arranged on the eve of launching a community based psycho-social services to support acid survivors to help them to live a life with dignity.
Getting back to normal life for a survivor of acid assault is not easy at all. The acid violence turns a victim’s life upside down not only physically, but psychologically, socially and financially also.

Victim of acid violence often face acute financial crisis as they are unable to earn during their treatment. Often they are too weak to go back to their profession immediately after treatment. Often they need long term follow up treatment, which also hinder smooth income flow for the family.

Even if they are not the earning members of the family their family income is affected as in all cases the whole family is affected. In many cases the earning member of the family has to accompany victim in Dhaka for attending the patient which is often need a month or more affects their income as well.

The survivors of acid violence face difficulties to work in certain environment. They cannot work in the field or in hot environment as it cause more itching and make scars. Often disability caused by acid attack prohibiting them to go back to their original profession.

The survivors’ physical limitation weakens self-confidence and discourages them to take initiative for a meaningful living. Traumatised, they struggle to redesign their life and livelihood.

Student victims drop out from school or college as the period for treatment is comparatively longer. Even who wants to go back to study after completing treatment face difficulties due to disfigurement.

All too often, hindrances their personal and professional future and many of them becomes too devastated to go back to a normal life.

The presence of perpetrators around upon getting bail or completion of punishment heightens the spectre of further attacks and makes the victims’ reintegration in to society even tougher.

The main challenge of the Social Reintegration Unit of ASF is to address the complex dynamics of acid attacks and empower the victims to deal with all adversities.

Economic empowerment helps acid survivors to regain confidence and respect from family, peers and community. The Social Reintegration Unit works with government, NGOs and CSR programs of business organisations to create employment opportunities for the survivors.

In cooperation with the local partners, the SRU assesses the needs of individual survivors and identifies appropriate Income Generating Schemes (IGAs) for them on a case by case basis. While a few of the survivors are provided with livestock others with a piece of land or a shop to make a living. Irrespective of the schemes, the

Activities Targeting Social Reintegration of Acid Survivors

Foundation and the partners try to involve the local government representatives, UP chairmen or members, and the Department of Social Services staff at thana level and Thana Nirbahi Officer, for implementation of sustainable IGAs.

In 2008, Square Toiletries Limited, Dutch Bangla Bank, the Daily Prothom Alo provided financial support for rehabilitation of the acid survivors. Besides, many individuals also provide financial support to ASF for rehabilitation of the acid survivors.

Zaheera Nur is one of them who provide ten lacs taka every year to this cause.

Last year, the ASF gave 82 units of educational support to 20 survivors while six families got financial assistance to run the expenditure of the family for at least three months to tackle the immediate crisis.

During the same period, six survivors took part in vocational training in and outside of the Foundation. Besides, 9 survivors received skill building training and 65 got supports in setting up income-generating activities. One survivor was placed in job.
Activities Targeting Justice of Acid Violence Cases

One of the key areas of work of the ASF legal unit is to encourage the victims and their families to avail legal resources/support.

Besides, the unit builds up network with legal aid NGOs to assist survivors to proceed with their cases. These help them to resort to legal steps against the violence and have the shelter of law as in many cases the affluent and the socially influential committing violence try to escape the hold of law and this in turn increases the insecurity of the poor victims.

Furthermore, the legal unit of ASF works directly with the police and Public Prosecutors for successful completion of cases. In some cases ASF provides emergency financial support to the survivors so that they can continue with the case.

In 2008 the unit provided legal aid to 200 cases and the legal units and local partners had to deal with about 1,000 cases. Total 74 new cases were adopted involving 94 accused, and 67 of the cases were referred to local partners. The number of acid assaults was 137.

ASF lawyers also collected information of 699 cases from 14 district courts. The information collected by ASF revealed that the perpetrators were convicted in 89 cases, acquitted in 261 cases and discharged in 182 cases while 152 cases are still pending. Details of 15 other cases remained unknown. Of those cases resolved in 2008, only 16% percent perpetrators were convicted while it was 15% in 2007.

Capacity building of police officials

Lapses in investigation by police are a major reason behind the perpetrators’ getting off scot-free. An ASF investigation found: only 10 percent of the accused persons are brought to books. The Foundation arranged a two-day long workshop for the police officials from 10 districts headquarters. Participants identified loopholes in investigation of acid violence cases and learn importance of gender sensitive interview skills and collection of circumstantial evidence to prove the case. Participants also understood the role of police to protect acid victims from re-victimization. All the participants agreed that perpetrators should be brought to book to eliminate acid violence.
Men Against Acid Assaults

“Its night, not stop now....”

Thousands of men gathered in Dhanmondi Robinda Shorobor in Dhaka the capital city of Bangladesh to voice their condemnation of repression on women, especially acid violence. It was on the eve of the International Women’s Day, 2008.

“Our women have shown courage during our Liberation War. But our women are being repressed now-a-days. They are subject to violence by men. We have to work together to stop this injustice. We will be able to bring an end to this awful act,” said national professor Kabir Chowdhury expressing his solidarity with the assembly of men.

Prothom Alo, ASF and Campaign to Work with Men and Boys jointly organized a open stage program at Rabindra Sarobar, in Dhaka on March 7 for raising awareness among male members of the society. Ekushey Television telecast the program live.

The program was arranged to make men aware of acid violence and its devastating effect on life as none other but men are involved in the acid violence. With the appeal to every male member of a family not to be involved in such a heinous act like acid violence the program mainly conveyed the message “Conscious men will prevent acid violence and violence against women.”

A cross section of people including eminent citizens, artists, intellectuals, rights activists, business leaders, media personnel, sportsmen and representatives from different organizations, associations and campaign networks attended the program. The place was filled up with men and men took oath on that day to resist acid violence.

Men’s rallies were also organized in Comilla, Sirajganj, Bogra, Satkhira and Barisal on the International Women’s Day in which hundreds of men participated and expressed solidarity to fight against gender based violence.

ASF also participated with the Daily Prothom Alo to arrange men Rally in 10 districts.
Fozilatun Nessa, a survivor and Trustee board member of ASF Bangladesh participated at the ninth International Women’s Day programme organized by UNIFEM Australia in 2008. In the photo Fozilatun Nessa is seen with UNIFEM Australia officials.

Fozila was only 17 years old when she was attacked with acid on 6th April 1999 because she refused a marriage proposal of one of her neighbours. After two months treatment in DMCH she survived the severe burns caused by this attack. Later she received five reconstructive surgeries in ASF Hospital. She not only survived physically but also regains her confidence and gain skills by working at ASF. After working at ASF, she joined the Handicap International and now she is working in Grameen Phone the largest telecommunication company in Bangladesh. She received best employee award for three times in Grameen Phone.

Fozila being a young woman fought hard for bringing her perpetrator to justice beyond all the pressure to compromise with him. The perpetrator got seven years imprisonment. However her fight still continues to ensure that the criminal suffers the punishment as he is now on bail and left the country.

Fozila is the role model for other survivors. Fozila wants to see herself beyond the label of ‘survivor’. She is a human rights defender. She continues her struggle to make a society where women and children will live a life free from fear of violence!
Stars Against Acid Throwers (SAAT)

Following the tradition over the years in the past, celebrities in 2008 joined in support of the campaign against acid violence under the banner “Stars against Acid Throwers (SAAT),” a forum of celebrities founded in 2006.

The SAAT participated in a national conference of the change makers organized by WE can campaign against domestic violence identifying domestic violence as the main cause of acid violence. Chief adviser Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed inaugurated the conference while Singers Shuvro Dev, Fakir Alamgir, Mitu Haq expressed solidarity in the conference urging all to stand against domestic violence including acid violence on November 12, 2008.

Stars also attended other programs against acid violence last year. On different occasions artists including actors, actresses, dramatist and singers participated in programs arranged to support acid victims. Actress Bobita, actor Mahfuz Ahmed, model Nobel, dance artist Moonmoon Ahmed, singers Kumar Biswajit, Shuvro Dev, Samina Chowdhury, Fakir Alamgir and dramatist Ramendu Majumder attended the event arranged in the residence of former British High Commissioner HE Mr Anwar Chowdhury for providing assistance to SIDR affected acid victims in the coastal region.

Media Advocacy

Campaign against acid violence has widened significantly in the media during the last two years.

Electronic and print media are playing vital role in building up public opinion against acid violence while the number of incidents have decreased gradually.

ASF arranged a workshop specially for the media on 'Role of government for prevention and remedy of acid violence'. Thirty journalists from Dhaka, Bogra, Sirajganj, Comilla, Natore, Barisal, Rangpur and Satkhira took part in the workshop. Loopholes in the laws against acid violence and problems in bringing perpetrators to justice were widely discussed in the workshop so that journalists could identify those.

The Foundation arranged a national workshop on "Effective implementation of acid violence related laws: review prospect of formulating monitoring system" revealing that only 10 percent of the accused persons are sentenced to different terms in connection with acid violence.

Underlining the necessity for improved medical facilities for the acid victims the workshop felt that it is crucial to effectively enforce "Monitoring Cell," set up by the government. Speakers at the workshop observed that the service to the acid burn victims can be extended through an increased workforce of police, enhanced other facilities including training and rapid information.

They also called for ensuring coordination between public prosecutor and law enforcement agency. Acting chairman of ASF SAM Showket Hossain, executive director of ASF Monira Rahman, public prosecutors from nine districts, police officials from ten districts, representatives from local NGOs, four UP chairmen along with government policymakers, donor agency and acid survivors participated in the workshop.

Media Awards

The Foundation awarded six journalists in 2008 for their work on acid violence in 2007. The categories include two best newspaper reports including one from regional newspapers outside Dhaka, best feature, best photograph, best television report and best magazine/documentary/talk show. The awardees were given Tk 30,000 each, a certificate and a crest. Moniruzzaman Uzzal from Jugantor was honoured with the award for best newspaper report, Rita Bhounik from Shamakal for best feature, Manjurul Karim for best television report, Kishwar Lalla from Bangla Vision for best television program, Syed Zakir Hossain from The Daily Star for best photograph, and Md Aminul Islam from Jamuna Probaho in Sirajganj for best report in a regional newspaper.

The Daily Star was given special award for creating public opinion against acid violence and Shafiqul Alam Kiron was given special award for special contribution in photography. Women and Children Affairs Adviser Rasheda K Chowdhury was present at the prize giving ceremony as chief guest at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre while Inspector General of Police (IGP) Nur Mohammad was present as special guest.
Acid Survivors’ National Conference 2008

“We demand justice, equal opportunities and rights to live”

Tears rolled down of most of the people present at the audience as Shamsul started his melancholic song in the Survivors’ Conference. Shamsul composed the song while undergoing treatment at the ASF hospital in 2007.

‘My dear mother, you would not recognize me any more—’

He presented the song on the last day of Survivors’ Conference, 2008 inaugurated on August 25.

Hundreds of survivors, like Shamsul came across the country to join national conference held at the Ganashstaya Kendra, Savar, near Dhaka. The survivors discussed healthcare, justice, economic, self-reliance, familial and social relationship and combating acid violence issues in three days long residential conference of 150 survivors and their family. They discussed the problems, interacted among themselves and tried to find out the solutions.

Peyara Begum along with number of acid burnt children declared the inauguration of the conference.

They have dialogue with Department of Social Services and representative from the Director General’s Office of Health. In these sessions, the government officials listened to the sufferings and demands of acid survivors and clarified the policy and procedure of different government schemes.

The opening and closing sessions of the Conference was also attended by Ms Shaheen Anam, Executive Director of Manusher Jonno Foundation and principle Advisor of GTZ, Ms Promita Sengupta. Number of honorable members of Board of trustees of ASF also participated in this conference.

At the end of the discussions, Panchamshur, a cultural group of acid survivors, performed a candle-lighting with the song ‘Mongol Dweep jele’ dedicated to memories of those lost their lives in acid attacks.

Demanding equal opportunities in the mainstream of life and with a pledge of standing beside the acid attacked children, women and men—the conference concluded.

Recommendations by the National Survivor’s Conference

# Ensure skill development training and create skill-based employment opportunities, arrange interest-free loan, provide khas land and introduce quota system job placements for the acid survivors.

# Include acid violence issue in the school textbook, awareness building training for acid sellers and users, ensure sale of acid through the dealers and strict enforcement of the laws.

# Document correct and proper information, ensure corruption-free role of officials and take appropriate steps for rapid trial of the cases as well as implement the verdicts.

# Take appropriate measure to educate people at grassroots level about pour water as first aid of acid violence. Ensure appropriate first aid of burns at the upazilla level and appropriate burn management at district level. Ensure psychological treatment facility at district level by appointing clinical psychologists and provide necessary training to the doctors and nurses on burn management.

# Raise awareness at family and social levels and ensure survivors’ participation in social programs and festivals as well as provide opportunities to attend seminars, meetings and conferences.
Dr. Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) handing over a crest to a group of survivors following their cultural performances at the 'TIB Concert against Corruption'.
VOICE, the popular ASF newsletter, documents its activities and stories of survivors and those fighting against the violence. Upholding the past success issues of the newsletter were regularly distributed among the target groups in the last year.

To help acid survivors rebuild their lives and to stop further acid attacks, it is important to reach grassroots people. ASF developed awareness raising materials appropriate for illiterate and semiliterate people at grassroots level. ASF distributed these grassroots materials to different NGOs who are willing to include acid violence issues in their programs. These materials were highly appreciated by the users.

Women and Gender department of Dhaka University (DU) organized a three-day book fair titled “Gender Book Fair” on July 18, displaying different materials published by ASF.
The ASF CHARITY BALL 2008 was arranged as a part of ASF’s series of fund raising efforts.
The grand gala program was organized for the third time since 2006 to raise money as well as awareness against acid violence. A spectacular fashion show jointly presented by Emdad Hoq, the designer of Banglar Mela and eminent beautician Kaniz Almas Khan was one the main attractions.
Musical performance by Pentagon and DJ Prince, auction of souvenirs and raffle draws brightened up the gala evening held at the Radison Water Garden. Different organisations and individuals sponsored the prizes.

Huge response from the participants was noted, as ASF appealed, even a small contribution by a person can make a huge difference to an acid survivor’s life. The ASF Ball 2008 was arranged to raise funds so that the organisation could continue its free medical services for the acid victims, and social rehabilitation programs.

ABN Group was the major sponsor and Standard Chartered Bank, Janata Jute Mills, Sadat Jute Industries were the co-sponsors while the Radison Water Garden Hotel was a partner of the programme.
Beside the Cyclone Affected Victims

Cyclone Sidr was a double blow for the acid victims living in the coastal region, already living on the margins of society, as the sudden disaster pitched them into an even deeper crisis, leaving them homeless and jobless.

On November 15 last year Cyclone Sidr like a leveler made people of all classes and ranks seem equal. About four thousands people died while countless others were maimed. Tens of thousands of people lost their homes and means of livelihood while around two million people were rendered jobless.

To assess the situation of acid victims in the coastal region an ASF team along with its board members visited Sidr affected villages. The ASF identified that at least 42 acid survivors were affected badly in Barisal, Jhalakathi, Bhola, Barguna, Bagerhat and Patuakhali districts in the Cyclone and there was hardly anything left for the acid survivors to sustain the aftermath.

In face of the sudden challenge the acid survivors had to borrow money from NGOs for food, medicine and reconstruction of households. Soon the acid survivors found themselves in another struggle in repaying the loans, which was spent shortly.

SIDR affected acid victims, however, were braving such circumstances and expecting help to regain their livelihood. ASF immediately allocated Tk 6 lakh from its general fund to provide immediate support to the most vulnerable SIDR affected acid survivors.

Following another initiative of ASF British High Commissioner Anwar Chowdhury offered a fund raising event at his residence to raise more funds for the SIDR affected acid victims. The event was aimed at raising fund to help SIDR victims rebuild their houses and to manage a livelihood. The outgoing High Commissioner invited eminent persons from different quarters in the society to help the acid survivors hit by the deadly storm in the coastal region.

With this fund ASF helped 33 numbers of acid survivors to rebuild their house and or starting an Income generating Schemes.

Comilla Acid Tragedy

The father was not told that his son had passed away and the mother did not know that her son and husband had died. This is the real “story” of the three members of a family who died from acid burns following an accident on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway near Comilla on November 6, 2008.

The two-month-old Ahnaf Imtiaz, son of Ashraf Ali and Shirin Akhter, died on November 16 from acid burns after sustaining acid injuries with his parents when the bus carrying the family collided with an acid-laden truck on the fateful day.

The parents of two-month-old Ahnaf Imtiaz, who died on November 16 from his acid burns, succumbed to their burns on November 22 night and in the afternoon of November 23 at DMCH. Shirin and Ashraf got married on November 18, 2007 and were heading for Chittagong to start a fresh life.

The death toll in the accident rose to 19 with others suffering acid injuries from the accident. Ten passengers died on the spot while others were brought to DMCH burn unit with severe injuries.

ASF raised the issue with the honorable Secretary to the Home Ministry and asked to take this case under the speedy tribunal. The investigation committee, formed after the accident by Ministry of Home Affairs, concluded that the truck was carrying acid without taking proper safety measures.
Acid Survivors Foundation
Chartered Accountants

Balance Sheet
As at December 31, 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property and Assets</th>
<th>Amount in Taka</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At December 31, 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixed Assets</td>
<td>3,242,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Assets</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Inventory</td>
<td>482,433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investments</td>
<td>43,000,529</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advances and deposits</td>
<td>5,342,579</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cash and cash equivalents</td>
<td>15,721,432</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accounts receivable</td>
<td>399,532</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>64,843,995</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Less: Current Liabilities

| Provision for Expenses | 732,190 | 1,266,393 |
| Donations received in advanced | 8,156,434 | 2,476,127 |
| Accounts Payable | 8,888,744 | 3,742,520 |

Net Current assets

| 55,960,251 | 45,921,779 |
| 59,203,257 | 50,088,888 |

Financed by

| Endowment fund | 16,041,459 | 13,550,332 |
| Emergency fund | 7,317,316 | 7,034,222 |
| General purpose fund | 3,058,074 | 10,762,003 |
| Fixed assets replacement fund | 1,878,536 | 1,596,042 |
| Land purchase fund | 3,474,678 | 3,192,085 |
| Rehabilitation fund | 2,540,382 | 1,692,600 |
| Canteen project fund | 2,759,992 | 1,994,031 |
| Pressure garments fund | 1,905,280 | 1,169,866 |
| Fund Account | 14,547,434 | 9,097,207 |
| Secured Loan | 3,800,000 | 3,323,095 |
|                      | 59,203,257 | 50,088,888 |

Footnotes:
1. Auditors’ Report- Page 1
2. The annexed notes form part of the financial statements

Income and Expenditure Statement
For the year ended December 31, 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Norte</th>
<th>Amount in Taka</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grants for project fund</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>35,898,211</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donation from Individuals</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1,880,896</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donation from Organizations</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6,565,644</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6,655,790</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Income</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4,011,670</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASF Overhead Cost recovery from Donor’s Fund</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>215,518</td>
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<td></td>
<td>48,679,399</td>
<td>65,120,686</td>
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Expenditure

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<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Amount in Taka</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support to Survivors</td>
<td>54,044,411</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medical support program</td>
<td>1,185,187</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research advocacy and prevention unit</td>
<td>7,973,100</td>
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<tr>
<td>legal unit</td>
<td>2,026,791</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social reintegration unit</td>
<td>97,472</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2,476,127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase Organizational Capacity Building</td>
<td>3,742,520</td>
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<tr>
<td>Human resources development</td>
<td>17,973,779</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase Organizational Capacity</td>
<td>5,815,933</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional &amp; Audit fees</td>
<td>10,849,677</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5,815,933</td>
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<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>11,021,523</td>
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<tr>
<td>Depreciation Charges</td>
<td>3,684,512</td>
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<td>Financial charges</td>
<td>577,331</td>
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<td>Fund raising unit</td>
<td>1,015,875</td>
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<td>Relief purpose</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9,508,344</td>
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<td>Total Expenditure</td>
<td>3,323,095</td>
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<td></td>
<td>55,612,524</td>
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</table>

Footnotes:
1. Auditors’ Report - Page 1
2. The annexed notes from part of the financial statements.
### Receipts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount in Taka</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening Balance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cash in Hand</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cash in Bank</td>
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<td>Project Donation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donation from Organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donation from Individuals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self Financing project</td>
<td>50,025,060</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pressure garments &amp; tailoring</td>
<td>1,092,350</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canteen Project</td>
<td>2,548,340</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Income</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recovery from Overhead</td>
<td>223,518</td>
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<tr>
<td>Realization of Advances and deposits</td>
<td>6,218</td>
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<tr>
<td>Others received</td>
<td>4,011,670</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Receipts</td>
<td>72,484,513</td>
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### Payments

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount in Taka</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support to Survivors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medical support</td>
<td>17,920,631</td>
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<td>SRU</td>
<td>2,716,440</td>
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<td>Legal support</td>
<td>3,643,666</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advocacy, Research &amp; Prevention</td>
<td>5,594,415</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self financing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pressure garments &amp; tailoring</td>
<td>490,412</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canteen Project</td>
<td>1,977,501</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Payments</td>
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</table>

### Closing Balance

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount in Taka</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash in hand</td>
<td>119,234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash in Bank</td>
<td>15,603,699</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Footnotes:

1. Auditors' Reports - Page 1.
2. The annexed notes fro part of the financial statements.
Contributions to the ASF : 2008

Core Donor
Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands (EKN) & The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

Project Based Donor
European Commission (EC), German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), Manusher Janno Foundation (MJF), Unicef

Organizations

Individuals

A very special thanks you to the people who donate their time to ASF, we have made every effort to ensure accuracy in our donor list. We apologize for any errors or omissions, please bring them to attention so we can rectify our records.

Worldwide Acid Survivors Foundation
(Other than Bangladesh)

Bangladesh
District wise acid attack, 179 persons were attacked with acid in 2008
Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF)
House - 12,13, Road – 22, Block – K, Banani Model Town, Dhaka – 1213.
Telephone: (02) 9880142, 9886383, 9891314, 9862774
Mobile: 01711620923, Fax: +88 (02) 9888439
URL: www.acidsurvivors.org, E-mail: asf@acidsurvivors.org
Hotline for acid violence information: 01713 010461