acid survivors foundation
annual report 2006
Foreword

We would like to convey our deepest gratitude to all our partners and contributors while presenting the annual report 2006 of the Acid Survivors Foundation. Whatever the foundation has achieved is because of your enormous support.

With the mission towards the elimination of acid violence, and the protection and promotion of acid survivors’ rights, including access to medical, legal, social and economic services the foundation is working endlessly with government bodies, NGOs and media since its inception in 1999.

Throughout this 7 years long journey, we have gathered massive experience in addressing causes and mitigating effects of acid violence and how to mobilise all segment of the society to curb this heinous crime and how to help survivors to have a respectful, dignified life. This report is a tiny effort to portrait some of our experiences.

It is our challenge now to proceed further in work out the root causes of acid violence, to reduce the effects of acid attack on an individual and in community level. For that we have to make every corner of the society responsive against acid violence.

We hope and believe that the foundation will surely be able to reach its goal as we deem that the supports from our partners, contributors and dedicated staff will remain strong in future too.

Board of Trustees
Acid Survivors Foundation
"I believe I'll get justice and he will rot in jail" - Hasina

On March 9, 2007, Hasina had her best evening in three years. At first, she could not believe her ears that Amir, the man who threw acid on her face, had been nabbed in Chittagong and handed over to Narayanganj police.

It was the very next day the daily Prothom Alo carried out a news item on Hasina on the International Women’s Day.

"I was waiting for the moment and now it’s here after long, agonising months," she said as tears rolled down her cheeks.

"As soon as I heard the news at the ASF, I hired a CNG autorickshaw to take me to my home at Araihaazar," she continued.

"I was afraid to look at him when I went to the police station (in Narayanganj) to identify him. I shuddered as the horror came back to haunt me."

Hasina was a class ten student when Amir, a day labourer who had been working for their family for more than a decade, attacked her and fled away on January 22, 2004.

"I used to call him uncle," she said recollecting the day that rendered a healthy, sporty and jovial Hasina desolated. "We had an argument as he was irritating me over a trifle matter," she continued. "When he threw acid on my face late at night, my cousin and my younger brother too were injured."

The attack left her entire face burnt and she had to take treatment for months in a row. Receiving treatment, psychological counselling and job training, she spent the next two years at the ASF. Now she works there as an intern at the legal cell.

"I believe I'll get justice and he will rot in jail," she said adding that she can hardly wait to see the legal battle starts.
"Acid could not touch my soul and dreams" - Shamima

Shamima fell victim to acid violence in her adolescence. But the ghastly act could not resist her being self-reliant. Instead of losing heart, she showed exemplary courage and overcame all adversity. Now she encourages others to be like her.

She returned to school after treatment. Alongside study, she started taking sewing training and soon set up an organisation for the marginalised rural women.

Her "Oiikya Nari Kalyan Sangstha" started off with 43 members, mostly physically challenged. It has already become a source of inspiration for the other survivors as well as the destitute women.

Affiliated with the government’s Youth Development Department, it is currently training 25 women in needlework that include sewing, knitting and embroidery.

In 1996, Shamima was only 14 and a student of class eight when she was forced to marry a guy aged 35. She could not stay more than three nights at her in-laws’ house due to her husband who turned out to be a violent sex offender. Left high and dry, she returned to her family.

But within a few days the unthinkable happened. Her husband who had been seething with rage by her staying away threw acid on her face while she was sleeping beside a window at their house in Kotchandpur of Jhenidah.

Her father rushed her to Kotchandpur Hospital and from there she was transferred to Khulna. Meantime, the wounds turned extremely bad for not using water. After seven days she was brought back to home. But as her condition worsened, her family with everything it had at its disposal sent her to India for treatment. There she underwent surgery but it took a long time for her to recover.

For about a decade, she lived with her face veiled. This continued until she met photographer Shafiqul Alam Kiron who sent her to the ASF. Things improved a lot after she had three major operations there.

Shamima’s relations with the ASF grew stronger as she began to work in partnership with it. Apart from working for her organisation, she writes poetry. Despite all odds, she did not stop her education. She sat Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinations under Open University this year.

"Acid left me with a face having permanent scars but it could not touch my soul and dreams," said an ever confident Shamima.

Her husband was sentenced to 43 years’ rigorous imprisonment.
Overview

Aiming to eliminate acid violence, the Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF) set out on a long and uphill journey in 1999. Initially, it struggled to have a grip on the magnitude of the task. For the first four years, it had to deal with an alarmingly high rate of acid attacks. But things began to change for the better in 2003 as the rate of incidence started to come down.

Though acid crime has been decreasing over the last few years, the Foundation cannot afford to be complacent. Still, more than one incident is reported in every two days.

Generally, the ASF seeks to work as a coordinating agency. Key objectives of its campaign are to enhance capacity of the local NGOs, lobby the concerned government agencies and sensitise people to the cause.

In tandem with the partner organisations, the Foundation offers the victims necessary medical services, legal assistance and support for reintegration into the society.
In 2006, it undertook several programmes with a view to curbing acid violence. The men’s rally on the International Women’s Day, white ribbon campaign, Star against Acid Throwing (SAAT), Students against Acid Violence (SAAV)—all contributed to a heightened public awareness. Thanks to the pour water campaign, many people now know that washing off the affected body portion reduces the severity of burns.

Throughout the year, the ASF catalogued 180 attacks that left 221 individuals injured. The number is 18.14 % less than the preceding year’s. Of the victims, 150 (67.87 %) were female, 71 (32.13%) male. Of the minors attacked, 16 were girls (53.33%) and 14 (46.67%) boys.

The violence against children below 18 years has declined sharply from 20% in 2005 to 13.57% in 2006. The attacks on women & girls rose to 67.87 % from 66.42% in 2005. Where as the percentage of assaults on males observed a slight decrease comparing to the last two years.

Like the previous years, the highest number of attacks resulted from land and property-related disputes (51.13%).

In 2006, 578 patients received treatment at Jibon Tara, the 40-bed specialised hospital of the Foundation. Some 177 patients—79 old and 98 new—underwent plastic and reconstructive surgery while 220 patients received physiotherapy.

Within 48 hours of notification, the ASF completed investigation of almost all the cases.

Its legal unit helped to file 96 cases. The number of people convicted was 58 in 22 cases.

The ASF gave financial assistance to 50 families to tackle the immediate crisis arising out of the acid attack and stipends to 18 survivors to continue their education.

The total number of survivors receiving job training in and outside the Foundation totaled 25 and (6) six of them were successfully placed in job.

The ASF provided grants to 22 survivors to establish income-generating activities at their own community and 15 survivors continued in three income-generating projects at the ASF.

The organisation has already gained national and international acclaim for its work. In 2006, its executive director Monira Rahman received Silver Banner Award given by the Regional Assembly of Tuscany for her commitment to combat acid violence.

With experience of the past few years, the ASF now plans to gradually expand its services to support the patients with other burn injuries who have similar consequences.

However, a complete success is still a long way off. Still more than one attack is taking place in every two days, many of them encountering extremely unfavorable conditions on return to the community and living with perpetrator with fear of further violence.
Challenges and Future Strategies

Battling to eradicate one of the most heinous forms of violence for the seven long years, the ASF has become a model for many other countries grappling with similar problem.

Its success is manifest in the decreasing rate of acid violence in the country. Now the biggest test lies in sustaining the success while gaining more.

The organisation has a number of challenges to beat. Its focus still is on decreasing the number of incidents while supporting survivors to be a full member of the society.

Working out the root causes, ensuring effective implementation of laws, shaping a strong community response, expanding psychosocial and prevention programmes, teaching people how to reduce the effects of injuries, decentralizing the burn treatment facilities, specialising in reconstructive and plastic surgery, building capacity of the professionals and NGOs, and networking with the government and non-government organisations are among the issues that need to be addressed.

Studies show that the acid violence is rooted in patriarchy, a system that positions men over women and instills in the former a sense of supremacy. To further the campaign against acid violence, the Foundation must be relentless in its efforts to change the popular attitudes to masculinity and the way women are perceived in our society.

The unregulated access to acid makes it a vicious weapon. The ASF should continue lobbying the government and concerned trade bodies for measures to control its accessibility.

Immediate medical care to an acid victim at the community level and his/her referral to an appropriate place depend on the skills of the health professionals and capacity of the local health centres. The ASF has to work in agreement with the civil surgeons' offices to improve the medical facilities at the Thana health complex for immediate management of the burns. In addition, the secondary and tertiary treatment services will have to be strengthened to provide appropriate burns & plastic surgery treatment.

In conjunction with the local NGOs and the media, it also needs to bolster its campaign to make people aware that use of water immediately after an attack lessens the extent of burn injuries.

The prevention programmes should be issue-based and target-oriented. The ASF should work with NGOs to include campaign against acid violence within their violence against women campaign.

Working with Government for establishing a central monitoring cell to monitor effectiveness of the acid laws is one of the major challenges.

The psychosocial programs will have to be tailored to suit the needs of both the community and the survivors so the latter are reintegrated into the society and treated with respect.

Currently, the ASF programmes centre around the survivors of acid attacks. It has plans to expand services towards the victims of other burn violence while retaining the present focus.

Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) has a 50-bed burn unit but inadequate to meet the huge demands. And in this context, the ASF envisions developing a hospital that would be a centre of excellence in treating victims of burn violence.

For expansion of its service coverage, the Foundation needs to develop a diverse funding base. It will have to design its programmes in line with the assessment of the existing demand and supply situation. It should also conduct a risk and cost analysis to avert overreaching itself.
Trends and Numbers

The incidents recorded between 2000 and 2006 reveal that the number of acid attacks has been decreasing since 2003. According to the newspaper reports, police and the ASF records, 366 incidents left 489 people injured in 2002, whereas 221 people were injured in 180 attacks last year.

In comparison to the preceding year, the number of victims dropped by 15.95% in 2003, 20.92% in 2004, 16.92% in 2005, and 18.15% in 2006, and incidence decreased by 8.47% in 2003, 20.60% in 2004, 19.55% in 2005 and 15.89% in 2006.

The number of attacks on the adolescent girls was 38 in 2004, 19 in 2005 and 16 in 2006.

The majority of the women survivors are aged between 25 and 34 while that of the male victims are 35- to 44-years old.
Motivations for the Attacks

The data assembled over the years shows that land/property/money disputes and refusal/rejection of love/marriage/advances were the most prevalent motives for acid throwing.

Like the previous years, the highest number of attacks in 2006 took place for land and property-related disputes (51.13%). The reason behind 34 incidents (15.38 %) could not be identified. The other motives included refusal/rejection of proposal for love/marriage/sex (9.5%), marital disputes (8.14%), and family disputes (4.52%).

Conflicts over dowry demands accounted for only 2.26% of the total attacks. It was 5.22 % in the year before.

In comparison with the years 2004 and 2005, the land/property /money disputes as the reasons have increased not in number but in percentage. Attacks resulting from family and marital disputes, refusal/rejection of love/marriage and sexual advances have marked a decrease last year while those for other motives have increased sharply.

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 25-34 age group, and the major reason is land/property/money dispute. Dowry and marital dispute related attacks are targeted mainly at women aged between 19 and 44, girls in the bellow 18 age group are often attacked for refusal/rejection of love marriage/sex proposals.

Ages of the males attacked for land/property/money disputes range from 35 to 44.

Although Bangladeshi women generally do not own property or have much say in the matters, all too often they end up being attacked in the fallout from land disputes. Pouring acid to women is with similar logic of poisoning fishpond or burning house of own or others.

Figures also show that the incidents of acid throwing are more frequent in summer.
Notification and Referral Service

The Notification and Referral Services (NRS) is tasked with taking note of every new acid attack as fast as possible. If necessary, it brings the victims to the ASF hospital.

A team comprising two acid survivors works round the clock at the cell to attend phone calls regarding news of acid attacks, if occurs any. On the other hand, if the partner NGOs learn about any incident they contact the NRS right away.

Last year, the NRS recorded 180 cases of acid violence across the country. Due to an extensive network of partner organisations, 43% of the cases were reported within 24 hours. However, certain areas might not be covered sufficiently by the existing network and some cases are likely to remain unnoticed.

If the cell finds any patient in critical condition, it acts to have her/him admitted to the ASF hospital with the help of local partners.

The Foundation readily bears the travel expenses. It alone dealt with 120 out of 221 people surviving acid attacks last year. Of them, 29 were male, 85 female and six children and they made up 55 percent of the total victims in 2006.

With support from 50 local NGOs especially BRAC, it investigated almost all the incidents within two days of notification. In each case, local media, individuals and organisations concerned came forward.

The partner NGOs might decide not to bring a survivor to Dhaka if it deems the injuries minor and of the kind that can be treated at the local health facilities.

Medical Services

Acid burns the skin and underlying tissue, exposes the bones and oftentimes, leads to permanent loss of eyesight, hearing or irrecoverable damage to hands and other joints of those subjected to acid violence.

Permanent physical disfigurement is unavoidable along with psychological trauma in the event of acid attacks.
In most of the cases, a series of reconstructive and plastic surgeries are required to minimise physical disfigurement and prevent permanent disabilities. A survivor's stay at hospital varies according to the extent of burns. It ranges from one month to three months. The survivors have to come back for check-ups and follow-up treatment for several years after release.

The acid victims are predominantly poor and therefore cannot afford expensive treatment. Besides, the government hospitals do not have facilities to provide adequate and neither could they afford free treatment.

But ASF is committed to ensuring free, prompt and high quality treatment including skin grafting and reconstructive surgical procedure by highly qualified plastic surgeons. One operation could take up several intricate procedures to be completed.

Besides supplying free medicines, pathological tests, bandages, blood transfusion, food and other essentials, the Foundation gives the survivors accessories like pressure garments and splint.

ASF also has specialized physiotherapists in burn who provide extensive services to prevent contraction.

Often a family member accompanies the survivor. The ASF encourages it for psychological support of the victims. Especially, the minor children are brought to be with their mothers under treatment so they could familiarise themselves with their mothers’ condition. The Foundation bears the cost for at least one relation of the survivor.

Jibon Tara can treat nearly 400 acid survivors a year. But the number of patients is growing every year, raising the necessity for more capacity.

In 2006, 578 victims received treatment there. Of them, around 21 percent were new patients and the rest were returning.

The number of victims who underwent plastic and reconstructive surgery at Jibon Tara was 177. Of them, 68 were female, 27 male and three were children. Again, 79 were returnee patients while 98 were new.

During the same period, 220 people received physiotherapy.
The ASF hospital functions as a one-stop service centre where the victims also receive support to have the offenders brought to book. Jibon Tara staff members have to visit different districts to testify as witness during the trial.

"The work is quite stressful. We often get upset while dealing with the patients in extremely critical condition," Dr. Rebecca Milton, manager of the medical unit, observed.

**Medical Advisory Group**

Prof. M Khalilur Rahman (Chairperson), Prof. S.H. Khundaker, Prof. A.J. M Salek, Dr. S.L. Sen.

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**Contribution of Local and International Surgeons**

Over the years, the ASF has managed to draw in a good number of local and international plastic surgeons. Prof. AJM Salek, Dr. Shahidul Bari and Prof. SH Khundkar aided by Dr. Md. Mozaffar Hossain, Dr. Md. Shah Alam, Dr. Hasina Begum, and Dr. Manash Basu the consultant anesthesiologists, and several assistant surgeons and assistant anesthesiologists offer the best plastic surgery available in Bangladesh. Sometimes they had to work up to eight hours at a stretch.

In addition, the contribution of Dr. Ron W. Hiles, a noted British plastic surgeon, is a longstanding friend of the ASF. Plays an outstanding role. Like every year, he did not miss his trip to Bangladesh in 2006.

Besides, famous British ophthalmologist Dr. Stuart D Cook worked with his Bangladeshi colleagues on 35 acid survivors including nine blind patients during his weeklong stay with the Foundation in 2006.
Durjoy, a Miracle Growing Up!

Durjoy was just 49 days old when his aunt poured acid into his mouth. The lips, tongue and throat of the minor boy melted in no time.

His parents took him to Bagharpura hospital, Jessore Sadar hospital, 250-bed Khulna hospital and then Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Dr. Ron W. Hiles came to know about Durjoy and referred him to Jibon Tara. Durjoy underwent a surgery that took around seven hours.

He became too weak due to postoperative complications. The ASF shifted him to Central Hospital where he spent two months at the ICU. He was returned to Jibon Tara with condition still critical.

Thanks to help from Kadoorie Charitable Foundation, Dragon Air, Acid Survivors Trust International, Amnesty International - German Section, Prime Minister’s Office of Bangladesh, the daily Prothom Alo and many other individuals from around the world, Durjoy was taken to the Prince of Wales Hospital in Hong Kong where British plastic surgeon Professor Andrew Burd took up his treatment.

A board of doctors had performed a 12-hour long surgery following couple of other major surgeries on him and successfully rebuilds his chin, lips and throat. Fortunately, now he can move his neck, breath better and make some sound.

Doctors termed his survival a miracle.

Durjoy’s mother believes her sister-in-law who had only two daughters committed the horrific act with intent to kill the little boy as the Hindu customs allow only the males to inherit the family property.
Psychological Support Service

Acid attack leaves a victim reeling from a severe psychological shock. His/her world flips over in a flash.

In a society where values of physical beauty are given immense importance, it is no wonder that survivors suffer a loss of identity that adds up to a crisis of confidence. They don’t want to meet new people. They prefer seclusion to socialising with others.

Besides, the community and sometimes even the family tend to ostracise the victims. And it all causes the survivors’ self-esteem to plummet.

The Psychological Support Service (PSS) wing helps the victims overcome the traumas and sustain the aftermath of the barbaric acts. It arranges counselling services for them. It also trained them in basic counselling and then appointed from them counsellors.

The wing last year provided basic counselling to 217 survivors, psychotherapy to 74 and psychiatric treatment to six survivors.

An assessment report on the anxiety and depression level of those admitted to the ASF hospital between January and March 2006 revealed that more than 60% had anxieties warranting clinical management while over 40% were clinically depressed.

Alongside psychotherapy, music and art therapy sessions are of great help for the survivors to surmount the traumas.

The PSS helps the injured recuperate their psychological health and have life back on track.

"Being financially independent and psychologically fit is interrelated. To be in a sound state of mind a victim will have to be engaged in some income-generating activities. And for that, he/she needs help from the community," says Runa, a survivor working at the cell.

The victims could acquire employment skills and a positive attitude through training, and social and recreational activities. Self-confidence and a sense of empowerment could make it easier for them to become assimilated into the community.

This way they could also overcome adverse psychological effects of a long stay in hospital.

Throughout the year, the Foundation organised a number of indoor cultural programmes for the survivors at its hospital. In December, it took 50 of them on a day out in Nandan Park while in January 50 more and their family members were sent on a sightseeing tour in Old Dhaka.

Giving psychological support to the victims is indeed a hard job. The case managers and peer counsellors had to receive technical supervision by a clinical psychologist to maintain the counselling standard and prevent their burnouts. Stress management sessions were organised in every second week for the staff working with traumatised patients.

Psychosocial counselling still remains a relatively new subject in Bangladesh. There should be further initiatives to build the capacity of those working in that area and in the course of time, it would translate into quality services for the survivors, especially the children.

Also to be noted, the survivors at the National Acid Survivors Conference in December 2006 spoke of the necessity for having community care services in their villages.

Against this backdrop, the ASF needs to design programmes to meet the requirements of psychosocial services and support system in and preferably by the community.
Legal Interventions

Despite enactment of two laws against acid violence, the victims remain reluctant to bring or continue legal proceedings against the perpetrators.

Perhaps it is because they, mostly from poorer segments of the society, are assailed by insecurity as the offenders usually come from the influential quarters and are suitably positioned to withstand lengthy legal procedures.

The ASF legal unit works to create for the victims an environment conducive to fighting the legal battle. In addition, it gives the survivors emergency financial support to attend the court.

In 2006, according to ASF record, 60 people were convicted in 23 cases. Of them, 1.7 percent was sentenced to death according to the existing law, 31.03 percent to life in prison and the rest were awarded rigorous imprisonment of various terms.

The same year, the Foundation helped file 96 cases out of 180 acid attacks across the country.

So far data gathered by the Legal Unit the courts have meted out punishments to 443 people in 253 acid-related cases. Of those convicted, 50 were sentenced to death. However, no one has yet been executed.

Generally, the ASF lawyers prepare case dockets for every survivor admitted to Jibon Tara. They also work to raise legal awareness among the victims and their families at the monthly meetings.

Once the relevant documents are ready, the Foundation hands over the cases to its legal partners who include Ain-O-Shalish Kendra, Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association (BNWLA), Bangladesh Society for Enforcement of Legal Rights (BSELR), BRAC, Jatiya Mahila Sangstha, Naripakkha, and Bangladesh Legal Aid Service Trust (BLAST).

The legal wing connects its local partners, public prosecutors (PP) and complainants to each other. Its role in fact is of a coordinator’s.

After handover of cases, the ASF lawyers go on follow-up visits. They keep regular correspondence with local police and administration to facilitate effective investigations and speedy trials.

Legislation

Enacted in 2002, the Acid Control Act regulates the import, export, use and waste management of corroding substance while the Acid Crime Control Act considers acid violence a non-bailable and non-compoundable offence. It also gives the victims the right to obtain a medical certificate from any government-recognised hospital.

Because of the legislation, the investigation period has come down to a mandatory 60 days at the maximum. Besides, the ones accused of acid violence are now tried by the Acid Tribunal Court that should complete a case within 90 days.

One downside in the last year’s efforts is that the National Acid Control Council (NACC) mandated to develop policies and mechanisms to monitor the production and trade of acid did not meet even for once in 2006.
Social Reintegration Intervention

The acid violence turns a victim's life upside down not only physically but also psychologically, socially and financially.

Many of them become too devastated to continue their previous profession; some drop out of schools and colleges due to lengthy treatment period.

Usually, no one wants to marry an acid victim and in a country where social acceptance comes only with marriage and parenthood, it deals him/her yet another body blow.

All too often, the perpetrators are not arrested or they return to the community on getting bail or acquitted by the court. It heightens the spectre of further attacks and makes the reintegration even tougher.

The survivors' physical limitation results in waning self-confidence and discourages them to do something for their living. They struggle to redesign their life and livelihood.

Besides, as evidenced, they usually are not educated and have limitations to compete the job market.

The Social Reintegration Services (SRS) unit helps the victims to lead a life with dignity, braving the social stigma and insecurities.

It works to create employment opportunities for them.

Square Toiletries Ltd, Prothom Alo, and Dutch-Bangla Bank sponsor different employment programmes for the victims. In cooperation with the local partners, the SRS assesses the needs of the individual survivor and accordingly, identify a scheme for him/her.

While some might be given livestock others might get lands or a shop to make a living. Irrespective of the schemes, the Foundation and the partners try to have the local government representatives like TNO, UP chairmen or members involved in scheme implementation.
Currently, three survivors are working at its pressure garments project that is supplying pressure garment and eight at the catering project that supplies meals to the patients at the hospital.

Some survivors have been working with the Young Women Christian Association (YWCA), Persona, Save the Children (Sweden and Denmark), Berger Paint and ASF partner NGO PESD.

This year, the ASF gave financial assistance to 50 families to tackle the immediate crisis stemming from the acid attacks and 45 survivors were provided stipends to continue their education.

During the same period, 8 survivors took job training in and outside the Foundation. Besides, 17 survivors received skill and capacity building training, 22 got supports in income-generating activities and six were successfully placed in job.

The unit assessed socio-economic condition of 25 victims admitted to the ASF hospital and developed support plans for them. It also took stock of the condition of 51 readmitted or visiting survivors and in some cases, readjusted their support plans.

The Foundation has also developed an effective linkage with BRAC hostels to provide accommodation for the survivor trainees working in different ASF projects. Besides, the BRAC gave one acid survivor a cleaner’s job.

In total, 34 female survivors and attendants were provided accommodation support last year. Of them, nine are involved in vocational training in the ASF and others stayed for a short term for job placement training, and receiving donation from Dutch Bangla Bank.
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Prevention Programmes

In 2002, the Prevention, Advocacy and Research unit launched a campaign to raise public concern over acid violence in the country.

Since then, it has been working for immediate attention of every stakeholder—from government and non-government organisations to media outlets to donors.

The ASF works hand in glove with 7 local NGOs in five districts to implement and design its campaign programmes. It has already reached in almost all upazilas of these districts.

The prevention unit focuses mainly on three areas—gathering information on matters relating to acid crime, supplying information to the media and research organisations, developing campaign messages, materials and dissemination of these through mass media and NGOs for raising mass awareness on acid violence and building capacity of the NGOs and civil society groups towards a strong prevention network.

Despite political unrest, if not all, a good number of its programmes saw successful completion.

Men Raising Their Voices against Acid Attacks

On the eve of the International Women's Day (IWD) 2006, thousands of men gathered at the Central Shaheed Minar to register a strong condemnation of women repression especially acid violence.

A cross section of people including eminent citizens, artistes, intellectuals and rights activists attended the programme organised by ASF in association with concerned government agencies, BRAC, CARE Bangladesh, UCEP, Concern Worldwide, Konna Shisu Advocacy Forum, Save the Children, Sweden and Denmark, MRDI, and Hazaribagh Tannery Workers Union.

Girls Guides, Bangladesh National Cadet Core, Scouts and other groups volunteered to maintain order and discipline during the event.

Singer Shuvro Dev sang a song titled 'Real men never throw acid'.

Udichi Shilpi Gosthi brought down the curtain by rendering a Tagore song as the participants stood side by side holding lighted candles in remembrance of the women who had fallen victims to violence.

On International Women's Day on March 8, 2006, men's rallies were organised in five districts—Comilla, Sirajganj, Bogra, Satkhira and Barisal. Hundreds of men and boys took part in the rallies to express solidarity with the fight against gender-based violence. They carried posters, banners and festoons that read 'We Want Love, Not Oppression in the Family,' 'Stop Violence against Women' and so on.

White Ribbon Campaign is an ongoing programme. Like the previous year, hundreds of males from different organisations put on white badges that read 'we vow: No more violence against women and girls'.
Media Awards

The role of media is considered crucial to the success of the campaign against acid violence. Last year, the ASF introduced awards to encourage the journalists to play a robust role in creating public opinion as well as drawing attentions of policy makers about acid violence. Four journalists were awarded for their work in 2004-05. The categories include best newspaper report, feature, best photograph and best television report.

Munni Shaha from ATN Bangla was honoured with the award for best television report, Moniruzzaman Uzzal of the daily Jugantor for best newspaper report, Afroza Nazneen of Ajker Kagoj for best feature and Abir Abdullah for best photograph.

Mr Kees Bemsterboer, Dutch ambassador in Dhaka, presented the prizes while many other distinguished guests were present.

Media Campaigns and Material Development

The ASF develops different promotional materials seeking to discourage people from throwing acid on others and also to stop violence against women. Last year, BRAC arranged 20 screenings across Manikganj, Narayanganj, Gazipur, Narsingdi and Tangail districts.

The Foundation’s prevention wing printed posters, leaflets, T-shirts, caps, mugs, stickers, festoons, placards, and banners, and distributed and displayed those at the Women’s Day programmes.

Besides, it published advertisements in different national dailies.
Survivors’ Conference

In 2006, the ASF arranged a three-day National Survivors Conference that opened on December 8.

Around 120 survivors and NGO partners shared their experience, dreams, hopes and aspirations for the future at this unique event held at Proshika Training Centre in Manikganj.

The Steps towards Development, a partner NGO, helped the Foundation pull off the programme that included a cultural function supported by some organisations. It featured among others performances from the survivors.

The conference provided a scope for the acid violence victims to break away from isolation and join those who are going through similar ordeals.

Payera Begum from Kapashia in Gazipur said the time she spent in the conference has boosted her confidence.

"In my village we don't seem to have the right to laugh and sing freely. Here we did what we longed to do. We talked to each other about our problems and worked out solutions to many of those. It would have been even more effective had representatives from the police, lawyers and the judiciary been there. They could take something from us also," she said.

Speaking of his experience, Abdul Kalam, a male survivor from Bhola, said, "I'm very happy to be here. I had always been afraid to talk in front of a gathering, but I've overcome the fear and now I really feel different."

The conference findings and recommendations would be analysed and used in designing future programmes.
The ASF last year reformed a forum styled Stars against Acid Throwers (SAAT). A glittering array of singers, television fiction artists, cricket players, models, and fashion designers gathered at a press conference on August 30 to announce the launch.

On the occasion, they vowed to campaign on the slogan 'Let no more face burn with acid'.

**Students Against Acid Violence (SAAV)**

The prevention wing built a students' network at schools across the capital last year. It used prescribed forms for those wishing to join the network and contribute to ridding the country of acid crimes. The Foundation wants to expand the network so the younger generations throughout the nation learn to abhor violence.

**Working with the Acid Users**

With the help of its partners, the ASF had a number of meetings with those having to do with acid in their jobs. The objective was motivating them to use low-concentration acid, and pursue proper handling and waste management. The Acid Users Association and Jewellery Association were among the professional groups who were encouraged to find a way out to stop illegal dealing of acids.

**Prevention Advisory Group**

Mr. SAM Showket Hussain (Chairperson), Mr. Masood Ahmed, Dr. Mahmuda Islam, Ms. Salma Khan, Mr. Shah Alamgir, Mr. Sayed Lutful Haque, Ms. Promita Sengupta, Ms. Tapati Das.

---

**Stars Against Acid Throwers (SAAT)**

The celebrities could be role models for the youth in a society. They could leave a profound impact on beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour patterns of the young populace.

So, their social responsibilities are perceived to be much higher than those of general people.
Capacity Building, Lobbying and Advocacy

Building the capacity of partners, local medical staff and also its own staff has been one of the major challenges confronting the ASF.

It undertook advocacy work in areas where acid violence is more prevalent. Another crucially important task was educating the government officials and people’s representatives including UP members and chairmen about acid violence and its consequences.

Capacity Building of the ASF Staff

The Foundation sought to strengthen the knowledge, abilities, and skills of its staff through 18 training programmes. Besides, case managers and peer counsellors received technical supervision from a clinical psychologist to maintain the counselling standard and avert potential burnouts.

Capacity Building of Health Professionals

During the reporting period, the ASF organised trainings in three districts—Mymensingh, Netrakona and Narsingdi—for doctors and nurses working at government health facilities. The civil surgeons and the deputy commissioners helped arrange the training programmes.

A total number of 511 health professionals took part in the training in Mymensingh, Netrakona and Narsingdi. Total 11 sessions held in three districts where five non-medical professionals also participated in the programmes.

The sessions included lessons in Immediate Burn Management. Apart from the theoretical aspects, a number of case studies were discussed. Eminent plastic surgeons Prof. AJM Salek, Prof. S.H. Khundkar, Dr. Md. Shahidul Bari, Dr. Shareef Hasan, Dr. Md. Sazzad Khondoker were kind enough to facilitate the sessions.

Besides, overseas surgeons continued hands on training their local counterparts in plastic and reconstructive surgery.

Capacity Building of Local NGOs

In 2006, the ASF continued its work to build capacity of the partner organisations to ensure that the survivors receive proper service at the community level. It provided the associate NGOs with conceptual, technical and material support to develop a mass movement against acid violence at the grassroots level.

The NGOs, in turn, held meetings in different districts to sensitise the District Acid Control Committees (DACC) to the danger of acid violence. The participants discussed ASF strategies and the responsibilities of DACC comprising government agencies, legal professionals and other civil society members.
The legal and the prevention wings jointly organised meetings with the DACCs round the year.

Besides, the ASF officials sat in a dialogue with judges and state law officers to alert the judiciary to the fact that too many acid cases wait to be disposed of at the High Court division. Following the meet, one of the deputy attorney generals joined the Foundation’s Legal Advisory Group.

The legal wing staff visited 10 district courts and police stations to liaise with the public prosecutors and court officials and collect information about the ongoing trials.

With the assistance of its partners, the ASF held five meetings in Sirajganj, Bogra and Satkhira, three districts where acid violence is more frequent than others. The meetings attended by UP members, TNOs and different professionals discussed ways to combat acid violence.

The ASF publishes a quarterly newsletter that tells stories of the survivors and those who have been at the forefront of the fight against acid violence. Named VOICE, it details the activities of the Foundation.

The newsletters are distributed among the target group having potential for making a difference to the efforts to rein in acid crimes.

In 2006, the Australia and New Zealand Burn Association published an article by ASF Executive Director Monira Rahman and Dr Hasan Sarwar in its publication marking the Annual Scientific Meeting. The write-up sought to depict the face of the battle against acid brutality in Bangladesh and successes of the ASF.

Also worth mentioning is the contribution to Trauma: Narrative responses to traumatic experience, a practice-based book that explains how to use narrative ideas to respond to those who have endured traumatic experience. It includes stories of inspiring work from Australia, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Palestine, Israel and South Africa. Figuring prominently in the book, the chapter nine was co-authored by Shona Russell, Monira Rahman, Margaret Ryan and the workers of the Foundation. It gives the readers an insight into the supporting workers’ experience at the ASF.
ASF Ball 2006: Be a Part of the Event and Help Them Smile Again

In 2006, the Acid Survivors Foundation organised the ASF Ball 2006, a charity event that is intended to be a permanent, annual fixture for ASF.

Arranged at the Dhaka Sheraton Winter Garden Hotel on the 31st of August, this event was to raise funds for the acid survivors of Bangladesh, and to create mass public awareness about the heinous crime and violation of fundamental human rights that is acid violence.

The target crowd for the ASF Ball 2006 included the Dhaka elite and expatriates, and aside from dinner and dancing, the Ball also featured a spectacular, much-anticipated fashion show from internationally renowned designer Bibi Russel, her first in Bangladesh in over two years. The auction, a very popular feature of the Ball, included various cricket memorabilia and paintings by distinguished artists like Mr. Shakur and Mr. Jamal. The silent bid and raffle draw also proved to be general crowd pleasers. The second half of the Ball kicked off with a live performance from legendary Bangladeshi band Miles, and a brilliantly inspirational speech from the Daily Star Editor Mr. Mahfuz Anam.

The Title sponsor for the ASF Ball 2006 was Grameen Phone, with the Dhaka Sheraton Hotel as the Premium Partner, Riz Events as the Event Partner, and the North South University Social Services Club as a partner. Various companies were also approached, to sponsor the silent bid, the raffle draw and the auction, and to advertise in a brochure that was distributed to every attendee at the Ball.

Over BDT 20 Lacs was actually raised through this fabulously successful charity event, a magnificent effort on the part of all involved to make the survivors smile again.
Auditors' Report on Financial Statements of Acid Survivors Foundation for the Year Ended 31 December 2006

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of Acid Survivors Foundation ("the Foundation"), namely, Balance Sheet at 31 December 2006, Income and Expenditures Statement, Receipts and Payments Statement and notes thereto for the year then ended. Preparation of these financial statements and notes thereto is the responsibility of the Foundation's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

We conducted our audit in due conformance with International Standards on Auditing as applicable in Bangladesh. Those standards required that we plan and perform the audit to obtain a reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatements. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of financial statements. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

We, accordingly, report that:

(a) we have obtained all the information and explanations, which to the best of our knowledge and belief were necessary for the purposes of our audit, and made due verification thereof;
(b) in our opinion, proper books of account were kept by the Foundation so far as it appeared from our examination of those books; and
(c) the Balance Sheet, Income and Expenditures Statement and Receipts and Payments Statement dealt with by this report are in agreement with the said books of account.

House 25, Road 13/A, Block D
Banani, Dhaka 1213, Bangladesh
Dated, 26 May 2007

S.F. Afifmed & Co
Chartered Accountants
Balance Sheet at 31 December 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property and Assets</th>
<th>At 31 Dec 2006</th>
<th>At 31 Dec 2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fixed assets</td>
<td>5,948,734</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Current assets</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Inventory</td>
<td>602,184</td>
<td>459,847</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investments</td>
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<td>Advances and deposits</td>
<td>2,686,222</td>
<td>3,066,302</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cash and cash equivalents</td>
<td>18,042,791</td>
<td>14,416,936</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Less: Current liabilities</strong></td>
<td>42,419,141</td>
<td>33,039,004</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provision for expenses</td>
<td>3,478,886</td>
<td>660,706</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donations received in advance</td>
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<td>4,082,663</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accounts payable</td>
<td></td>
<td>237,559</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Net current assets</strong></td>
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<td>4,980,928</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Financed by</strong></td>
<td><strong>38,926,095</strong></td>
<td><strong>36,161,975</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Endowment fund</td>
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<td>10,466,432</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency fund</td>
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<td>General purpose fund</td>
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<td>Fixed assets replacement fund</td>
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<td>Land purchase fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canteen project fund</td>
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<td>879,421</td>
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<td>Pressure garments fund</td>
<td>355,358</td>
<td>266,323</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fund account</td>
<td>7,796,692</td>
<td>11,728,398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>38,926,095</strong></td>
<td><strong>36,161,975</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See annexed notes

Signed in terms of our report of even date annexed

S.F. AFIMED & CO
Chartered Accountants

Head of Finance and Fund Raising

Executive Director

House 25, Road 13/A, Block D
Banani, Dhaka 1213, Bangladesh
Dated, 26 May 2007
# Income and Expenditures Statement for the Year Ended 31 December 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year ended 31 Dec 2006</th>
<th>Year ended 31 Dec 2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project donations</td>
<td>46,964,637</td>
<td>44,098,350</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donations from organisations</td>
<td>4,735,375</td>
<td>3,565,911</td>
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<td>Donations from individuals</td>
<td>2,051,924</td>
<td>1,034,375</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other income</td>
<td>53,751,936</td>
<td>48,698,636</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASF overhead cost - from donors' funds</td>
<td>2,176,697</td>
<td>1,262,146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>393,934</td>
<td>380,272</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Expenditure</strong></td>
<td><strong>56,322,567</strong></td>
<td><strong>50,341,054</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Administrative and general</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel expenses</td>
<td>5,782,092</td>
<td>5,148,415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative expenses</td>
<td>2,395,110</td>
<td>2,168,649</td>
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<tr>
<td>Repairs and maintenance</td>
<td>312,398</td>
<td>172,284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>197,132</td>
<td>372,975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>382,467</td>
<td>359,471</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9,069,199</td>
<td>8,221,794</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Program</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Medical support program</td>
<td>18,636,390</td>
<td>13,855,557</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prevention and research unit</td>
<td>12,493,297</td>
<td>8,606,479</td>
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<td>Social reintegration unit</td>
<td>2,871,298</td>
<td>1,874,139</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legal unit</td>
<td>2,393,755</td>
<td>1,667,195</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medical training program</td>
<td>515,426</td>
<td>1,003,859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral and notification unit</td>
<td>1,096,861</td>
<td>841,319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASF overhead cost</td>
<td>393,934</td>
<td>380,271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repairs and maintenance</td>
<td>393,741</td>
<td>243,484</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partnership networking advocacy lobby</td>
<td>709,410</td>
<td>240,078</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>109,831</td>
<td>106,316</td>
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<td>Audit fees</td>
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<td></td>
<td>39,645,293</td>
<td>28,897,072</td>
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<td>Depreciation</td>
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<td>3,805,818</td>
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<tr>
<td>Human resource development</td>
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<td>762,146</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increased organisational capacity</td>
<td>355,061</td>
<td>573,450</td>
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<td>Financial charges</td>
<td>8,721</td>
<td>9,496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fund raising unit</td>
<td>1,247,482</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>54,064,975</td>
<td>42,269,776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Excess of income over expenditures</strong></td>
<td><strong>22,575,592</strong></td>
<td><strong>8,071,279</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transferred to fund account</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See annexed notes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Signed in terms of our report of even date annexed

Head of Finance and Fund Raising

Executive Director

S.F. AFIMED & CO
Chartered Accountants

House 25, Road 13/A, Block D
Banani, Dhaka 1213, Bangladesh
Dated, 26 May 2007
Receipts and Payments Statement for the Year Ended 31 December 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Receipts</th>
<th>Year ended</th>
<th>Year ended</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31 Dec 2006</td>
<td>31 Dec 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opening balance</td>
<td>151,321</td>
<td>40,020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash in hand</td>
<td>14,265,615</td>
<td>18,048,994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash at bank</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14,416,936</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project donations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donations from organisations</td>
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<td>3,733,602</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donations from individuals</td>
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<td>1,034,375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure garments</td>
<td>818,400</td>
<td>378,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canteen project</td>
<td>1,989,310</td>
<td>1,365,609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASF overhead cost</td>
<td>393,934</td>
<td>380,271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realisation of staff advance for expenses</td>
<td>11,469</td>
<td>20,104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other income</td>
<td>2,176,697</td>
<td>1,262,146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Receipts</strong></td>
<td><strong>74,683,484</strong></td>
<td><strong>64,979,929</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Payments

| Administrative and general     | Year ended | Year ended |
|                                | 31 Dec 2006| 31 Dec 2005|
| Personnel expenses             | 5,947,878  | 5,148,415  |
| Administrative expenses        | 1,627,713  | 1,623,188  |
| Repairs and maintenance        | 312,398    | 170,281    |
| Communication                  | 197,132    | 372,975    |
| Utilities                      | 404,301    | 359,471    |
| Professional and consultancy fees | 20,900    | 160,315    |
| **Total Payments**             | **8,510,322** | **7,834,645** |

Program

| Medical support program        | 17,929,784 | 13,512,368 |
| Prevention and research unit   | 8,933,208  | 6,077,605  |
| Social reintegration unit      | 2,656,393  | 1,874,139  |
| Legal unit                     | 2,138,017  | 1,667,195  |
| Medical training program       | 515,426    | 1,003,859  |
| Referral and notification unit | 1,094,725  | 841,319    |
| ASF overhead cost              | 393,934    | 380,271    |
| Repairs and maintenance        | 393,741    | 243,484    |
| Partnership networking advocacy lobby | 717,886 | 240,078 |
| Communication                  | 262,615    | 106,316    |
| Audit fees                     | 78,150     | 86,600     |
| Canteen project                | 1,569,590  | 1,229,326  |
| Pressure garments              | 129,114    | 571,623    |
| **Total Program**              | **36,812,583** | **27,834,183** |

----- carried over
Receipts and Payments Statement for the Year Ended 31 December 2006 ....../2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Amounts in Taka</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purchase of fixed assets</td>
<td>1,124,874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment</td>
<td>5,992,024</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advances and deposits</td>
<td>2,198,594</td>
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<tr>
<td>Human resource development</td>
<td>459,181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased organisational capacity</td>
<td>49,353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fund refunded to donors</td>
<td>237,559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fund raising unit</td>
<td>1,247,482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial charges</td>
<td>8,721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Payments</strong></td>
<td><strong>11,317,788</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year ended</th>
<th>Year ended</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31 Dec 2006</td>
<td>31 Dec 2005</td>
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<td>1,124,874</td>
<td>3,623,824</td>
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<tr>
<td>5,992,024</td>
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<td>49,353</td>
<td>413,135</td>
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<td>237,559</td>
<td>102,760</td>
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<tr>
<td>1,247,482</td>
<td>9,496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>56,640,693</strong></td>
<td><strong>50,562,993</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Closing balance</th>
<th>Amounts in Taka</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash in hand</td>
<td>140,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash at bank</td>
<td>17,902,591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18,042,791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>74,683,484</strong></td>
<td><strong>64,979,929</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Signed in terms of our report of even date annexed

---

Head of Finance and Fund Raising

Signed by:

Shamsu M. Rahman
Executive Director

House 25, Road 13/A, Block D
Banani, Dhaka 1213, Bangladesh
Dated, 26 May 2007

S.E.A.HMED & Co
Chartered Accountants
Note of Thanks

The work of the Acid Survivors Foundation is made possible in large part due to the support of our major donors. Through a variety of funding opportunities, major donors have the chance to become more closely involved and aligned with our programs. We salute you!

Donor Agencies:
CIDA, GTZ, Manusher Jonno, The Royal Netherlands Embassy, Unicef, USC Canada Bangladesh.

Organisations:

Individuals:

A very special thanks to you 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 our attention so we can correct our records.
District wise acid attack, 221 persons were attacked with acid in 2006.

All the statistical information is generated as per available data in the computerized database of ASF. Some statistical information may vary from earlier publications of ASF because information is received long after the occurrence.

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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: 01713010461