Acid Survivors’ Foundation has crossed another year. Last year was very crucial for the ASF mission. One notable achievement of last year was about 16% decrease in the rate of acid violence. At the beginning of its journey in 1999, ASF started to carry out baseline activities to make acid violence an advocacy issue. It started national level campaign and issue-based advocacy networking with various sections of the civil society to bring this issue into the fore as a matter of serious concern as well as lobbying with government and concerned sector.

ASF is continuously building capacity and awareness to combat acid violence with a holistic approach for various sectors including local government and administration, policy-planners, and professionals (journalists, police, lawyers, judiciary, doctors, business persons etc.).

Primarily, ASF’s advocacy strategy focused on the review and study of relevant laws, policies, rules and regulations, system and structures and share and exchange the findings and building close connections with the relevant sectors.

In the same way, as part of a people-centric advocacy, initiatives were taken to build awareness of target group on their right to information and increase their capacity towards their entitlement.

ASF, as one of the members of the National Acid Control Council, has continued to work closely with the government in providing important recommendations to review and formulate relevant policies and monitor the implementation of laws.

The Jibonantar Hospital of ASF has played a very important role, as did last year, to save the lives of Shamsul Hoq and Shathi who both have survived near-death situation after being acid-attacked. The hospital has recently got registration, which is a milestone in the treatment of acid burns and in the near future it will also be able to provide other burn treatments.

We convey our best wishes to all working partners, development partners, well wishers of ASF for their all out support has been the driving force to continue the mission of ASF.
### Statistics of Acid Attack 1999 to December 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Number of Incidents</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Children (Under 18)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May-Dec: 1999</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>93</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>490</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>411</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>325</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>272</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2060</strong></td>
<td><strong>1314</strong></td>
<td><strong>636</strong></td>
<td><strong>677</strong></td>
<td><strong>2627</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:  
> Report is generated as per data available in the computerized database of ASF.  
> Information taken from newspapers, local NGOs, local journalists, individuals and survivors who come directly to the ASF.  
> The report may not claim 100% accuracy.  
> Please mention the name of Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF) as source.  
> Updated till: 31st December 2007

### Situation of acid attack: Top 5 districts: January to December 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>No. of Survivors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Bogra</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Dhaka</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Sirajganj</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Gaibandha</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Netrokona</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ASF's Support for Acid Survivors: January to December 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Medical Support</th>
<th>Legal Support</th>
<th>Rehabilitation Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>27</td>
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<td>June</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>40</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>385</strong></td>
<td><strong>319</strong></td>
<td><strong>210</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Note: The data of Medical Support without the support of outdoor patient
National Workshop organized by ASF
Acid cases do not undergo proper trial due to prolonged legal process and ineffective law

Monitoring Cell is formed as a government initiative to combat acid violence – following this speech given by Mojamel Hossain, AIG (Crime-3) of Police, the speakers at the inaugural session of the workshop said, this formation of the monitoring cell would bring an effective change to the cases for acid attack. In addition, service to the acid burn victims can be extended through an increased workforce of police, enhanced other facilities including training and rapid information. Side by side, coordination between public prosecutor and law enforcement agencies will have to be ensured. Speakers at the inaugural session of the National Workshop organized by Acid Survivors Foundation said these.

The speakers remarked that the scenario of cases in 18 most-affected districts of the country is simply frustrating. In these districts, among 622 cases of acid violence, sentence is given in only 42 cases, 195 accused are released, while 177 cases dismissed due to lack of proper evidence and another 208 cases are still uncertain. This information was shared during a national workshop titled Effective Implementation of Acid-violence Related Laws: Review Prospect of Formulating Monitoring System held on 30 November at BIAM auditorium.

The workshop reckons that at local level there are no improved medical facilities for acid burn victims. As the government hospitals do not have sufficient medical facilities, acid victims could directly send to ASF Hospital at Dhaka. Therefore, acid victims can get special treatment free of cost.

According to ASF, only 10 percent of the accused persons are sentenced. Most of the victims do not get justice. Now it is crucial to effectively enforce Monitoring Cell that is set up by the government recently. Professor Dr. Sumaiya Khair presented a draft of research report including recommendation to develop an effective monitoring system. The report was prepared through an initiative of ASF and with financial support of Department of Justice Legal Reform Project Part-A, Canada. The other speakers were M. Sujato Ullah, Deputy Secretary of Home Affairs, Monowarul Islam, Deputy Secretary; Md. Iqbal, Deputy Secretary (Institution), Social Welfare Ministry; Mozammel Hossain, AIG (Crime-3) of Bangladesh Police, M. Ajamad Hossain Khan, Director (Operation), Department of Social Welfare; Dr. M. Feroj Mia, Deputy Director, Department of Health; Helaluddin Mollah, Former Deputy Attorney General; Dr. Shahdin Malik, Lawyer of the Supreme Court; Advocate Shah Ilias Ratan, Special Public Prosecutor (Prevention of Acid Crime) of Dhaka; PP Advocate Mohsin Mia and others.
Recommendations of the Workshop

> In order to ensure proper implementation of Acid Act, coordination among law enforcement agency, judiciary and health department should be strengthened and the gap in interflow of information should be minimized.

> Police have to play a pivotal role against all cases of harassment.

> The security of the victim should be kept in mind and more initiatives should be taken at government and non-government level; because existing shelter homes are not sufficient for them.

> Victim protection law should be enacted.

> Rather than just arresting, proper punishment of the accused should be ensured.

> Media should regularly engage in the movement for protection of acid attack and proper implementation of law.

> Proper training should be provided to the members of the law enforcement agencies, doctors and health workers.

> To combat acid violence, government should ensure the set up of monitoring cell at the police headquarters.

> District Acid Control Committee should be made effective in each district. One lawyer could be involved in each of the committees.

> The State can take initiative to compensate the victim to avoid legal complications.

> Investigation officer can take opinion of the PP regarding acid cases before submitting chargesheet or final report.

> Government need to provide more staff and necessary accessories to the PP office.

> The number of acid burn specialist doctors should be increased.

> Government hospitals do not have sufficient medical facilities. Therefore, acid attacks can be directly sent to ASF Hospital at Dhaka from the local hospitals.

> Doctors should be timely present at the court as witness. Many cases are prolonged due to doctors’ delay in attending the court.

> Acid trials should be completed within 90 days through fixing quick deadlines.

Pulash Chowdhury
We are travelers of the same boat:
Acid burnts can get back new life with timely quality treatment

As a consequence of dispute over land, one and half year old baby Shathi from Netrokona district was attacked with acid and admitted to Acid Survivors Foundation with 45% burn of her body on 21 May 2007. As her condition deteriorated, Shathi was sent to the Burn I.C.U of Dhaka City Hospital. Severly injured Shathi had nowhere left on the body for tissue transplantation. Still, the doctors did not give up; she was treated at the I.C.U. for 53 days. She had to undergo dressing everyday in a senseless condition, transfuse blood time to time, receive plasma to keep up a standard protein level in the body and lastly she was transplanted tissue at the wounded spots in a special process and thus she survived. So far ASF has spent about five lakh taka for Shathi’s treatment, which is the best for burnt patients in Bangladesh. Although Shathi already went home with her mother and sister after a successful treatment, she still needs more operations.

When Thakurgaon’s Shamsul Hoq was admitted to the ASF, more than half of his body was burnt; the whole body was swelling and badly burnt to take a dark hue. His eyes were also burnt to coal. That was 10th of July 2007. Immediately after her admission to ASF, he was taken to the City Hospital Burn I.C.U where he had stayed for the next two and a half months. His eyes could not be saved. Shamsul Hoq still lives today, though with immense pain and suffering. This has been possible with the doctors’ tireless efforts and dedication. Nearly 10 lakh taka has been spent for his treatment.

But Sabina of Kishorganj district and Gaibandha’s Topi had a different story. They did not survive due to untimely treatment. Everybody was touched at their death while under treatment at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Acid is such an awesome liquid substance that can burn the skin, flesh and may even destroy the bones.
Acid Survivors Foundation started its journey considering the physical treatment to be the most crucial aspect in helping out the victims of acid attack. In the past there was no such treatment available in Bangladesh and patients had to be taken abroad for better treatment. But today better treatment can be provided in our country too.

Plastic and reconstructive surgery is very important to acid victims, while it is at the same time expensive and time-consuming. With support from a number of eminent plastic surgeons, ASF has been giving support to about 25-30 acid victims each month. Expert surgeons from outside the country also come with similar mission voluntarily. Usually it takes about five hours to complete an operation and in most cases patients require more than one operation, which ASF has been dealing with successfully.

When acid attacked, one has to pour as much water as possible with no delay on the wounded areas and provide treatment. An acid victim can hardly live without proper treatment. With a view to create awareness on these, ASF has started training for doctors and nurses from 2002 in the worst affected districts. Up to date, training programs have been carried out at 13 districts. As a result of ASF's regular media campaign on the importance of putting water in the wounded areas, many of the victims even at the remote areas are getting the benefit.

At first, an acid victim needs physical well-being to survive in the society. Side by side, he or she needs emotional and counseling support with psychotherapy to recover from severe mental trauma; regular exercise and pressure garments to protect the dried up wounds. ASF is giving all steps of treatment for the acid victims. Along with this, ASF is moving forward with collective effort so that the victims may come over physical barrier and find a new way to get along in the society with firm mentality.

Khaieda Yasmin Eti
ASF marches ahead collectively with acid survivors

"Some awful people wanted to put an end to our life. But they could not and will not stop us. We do not want anybody's pity. All we want is to stand on our own and with our own capacity." These are expectations of the survivors for which ASF has been working on with support from different relevant ministries and other agencies including the NGOs, networks of partner organizations and the media.

If not unprotected, acid violence will remain a big shame for Bangladesh Acid Survivors Conference

As many as 200 acid survivors from all over the country joined the conference held at the BIAM Auditorium on 5 November. The conference was initiated by ActionAid and organized by ASF, Prothom Alo, Channel-I and Persona. Ms. Geetiya Safiya Chowdhury, former adviser to the caretaker government for the ministries of Women and Children Affairs and Social Welfare, assured the participants that the recommendations that came from the conference will be considered in the National Acid Control Council Meeting. She was the chief guest at the closing ceremony of the conference. Editor of Daily Prothom Alo Matir Rahaman said that acid violence will be considered as a dark chapter in Bangladesh if it cannot be prevented at the earliest. Since men are mostly the perpetrators he requested all men to come forward against this grisly crime. Ms. Monira Rahman, the Executive Director of ASF said that acid attack rate is decreasing and now there is a need to control the availability of acid. Only 10% of the incidents of acid attack are brought under trial. To increase the rate, the Acid Control Council and District Acid Control Committees have to play an active role. Ms. Farah Kabir of ActionAid commented that each survivor has a right to live a life with equal dignity and respect. Among others, Dr. Shamontorial Sen, chief specialist doctor of Dhaka Medical College Burn Unit; Shailik Shirjait, Director of Channel-I; DIG of police Mr. Mazharul Islam, Additional Deputy Secretary of the Health Department Mr. M. Osman; Rina Roy of Naparkha; Executive Director of Swadhes; Mr. Madhob Chandra Dutt; Persona's Executive Director Kaniz Almas Khan and Entrepreneur Acid Survivors representative Nurun Nahar, Hasina Akter and Asma Akter joined the discussion.
ধুমায় চাই, বাঁধা নয়; করব আমি বিপুল জয়
জাতীয় কন্঱িলিটিদি বিচার
আজকের শিশু আমার নিজের ভবিষ্যৎ। তার শিখন, চিন্তা, পৃথিবী, নিরাপতা সার্বিকভাবে একজন পরিপূর্ণ মানুষ হয়ে এগুঁতে সকল অধিকার

I want opportunity and no barrier;
I will win the world
National Girl Child Day observed

Today's children are tomorrow's future citizens. It is responsibility of the family, society and the state to guarantee education, health, medical treatment, nutrition and other necessities to help them become complete human beings. In most instances, our society chooses to consider whether the child is a male or female. Consequently, girls become subject to discrimination. ASF has observed the Girl Child Day 2007 as a selected member of the National Girl Child Advocacy Forum. The issues of wage and labor discrimination, sexual harassment, rape, violence, eve teasing, sex trade, and acid attack that largely impede girls' lives are frequent in Bangladesh. It needs not to be mentioned that all these issues seriously hamper the growth of both the victim and the witness.

The Girl Child Day was observed on 30 September 2007 with an aspiration to bring an end to these issues. There is a coherent link between the overall well-being of girl children and national development, which was highlighted to attract hundreds of girl children on that day. National Girl Child Advocacy Forum, Bangladesh Shishu Academy, Manusher Jonno Foundation, The ASF, and many other organizations organized the Day Observance. Acid Survivors also joined in a rally and discussion commemorating the Day.
Men vow to stop violence against women and children including acid attack
Fortnight-long VAW protest day observed

Men's rally against all forms of VAW including acid throwing was organized at 8 upazillas including Natore, Pabna, Sirajgonj districts on 10 December to observe the fortnight-long (25 November-10 December) VAW protest day. This program was organized by Chalanbil Network. Apart from ASF, Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association, and Campaign for Working with Men and Boys – that is a national network in Bangladesh provided support. At the grassroots level, the program was organized by Bilchalan Development Service Centre (BDSC) of Gurudaspur of Natore; Paribartan of Tarash. Sirajganj; Rural Poverty Alleviation (RUPA) of Bhangara, Pabna; Ganojagoron Social Welfare Organization of Barigram, Natore; and Chalanbil Udyog of Chatmohor, Pabna, Shacheton Karma Shahayok Sangsth of Chakrampur, Natore and Shacheton Mohila Samaj of Pabna, Chatmohor.

We Can
National Conference against domestic violence: Declaration of ASF Star Forum

We can build a domestic violence free society - everybody in the National Changemaker Conference expressed their expectation this way. Honorable Chief Advisor of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed inaugurated the Conference on 12 November. Here domestic violence was identified as the main cause of acid violence. The changemakers opined that acid violence would be reduced if domestic violence could be stopped. From all over the country, two thousand changemakers took part at the Conference. Singers Shuvro Dev, Fakir Alamgir, Mita Hog expressed solidarity with the Changemakers Conference and urged to stand against domestic violence including acid violence as members of the Star Forum titled Star Against Acid Thrower.
Flash Back
Men's Commitment on International Women's Day 2007

Let us men vow to stop acid violence.
Shawkat Mahmud
President, National Press Club

Mostly such brutality had been committed by men on this Women's Day let us, men promise not to commit such cruelty anymore.
Aminul Islam Bulbul, Cricketer

As men, we must take our stand against the acid perpetrators.
Lutfur Rahman Matin
Vice President, BGMEA

Violence against women in our society bears the sign of our backwardness. A deep look insight reveals the darkered hard of male bigotry behind this. Men and youths should work to eradicate such evil.
Abdul Quayem Mukul
Joint Editor, Prothom Alo

Men have to bear the responsibilities for acid brutality. Therefore, as men, we must eradicate such crimes from the society for good.
Dewan Sultan Ahmed
Vice President, FBCCI

We dream of a world where men and women enjoy equal rights; of a world free of hostility against women; of a world free of acid violence and full of creativity.
Nasir Uddin Yusuf
President, Sommilito Sangskritik Jote

Acid is easily accessible since measure factories that produce and sale acid are not following regulations. There should be very strict control measure on acid.
Abul Kalam Azad
Chairman, Hazaraghat Tannery Workers Union

I feel embarrassed to identify myself as a Bangladeshi since acid violence is rampant here. I would plead the youths to bring about change in this world and the future and that they should never resort to such evil.
Ramanindra Majumder
Theatre person

Let us, the men, make a significant contribution against acid violence.
Dr. Wajedul Islam Khan
General Secretary, Trade Union Center

We all, women and men, will work hand in hand to stop such violence.
M. Hamid
President, Group Theatre Federation

On this day of solidarity I, on behalf of the lawyer community of Bangladesh, express my honor about the perpetrators of acid violence.
ABM Oskar Rahman Khan
Deputy Attorney General

We are here beside our survivor sisters. We want none of the men to support such viciousness.
Adil Hossain Nobel
Model
Voice: a quarterly newsletter

Will I throw acid? No. Will I spare those who do so? No. As a man this is our promise.

Anisul Haque
Writer

Today men pledge to stop acid throwing.

Fakir Alamgir, Singer

No cruelty is for ever. Man lives because good sense prevails. Let their the good sense prevail inside us.

Mahmuduzzaman Babu
Singer

How would you feel if your daughter or sister becomes victim to acid attack? Those who throw acid are some scrupulous people of our society. We are ready to protest them.

Illias Kanchan
Film actor

Illegal acid sellers and acid throwers, both are criminals.

Azam Khan
Band Singer

We want to denounced those who throw acid and scar beautiful faces. We want to stop acid throwing. We also want you to stand beside us to combat this.

Shuvo Dev
Singer

ASF Media Award Ceremony in 2007

Acid violence is a consequence of social disorder; media and public welfare organizations have to play a strong role.

Anjan Chowdhury
Managing Director, Square Toiletries LTD

The brutal scenario we have seen in the ASF-documentary makes me feel that my perseverance as an artist, attraction for the Beauty – all are in vain.

Oeyyum Chowdhury
Artist

When I look at the inhumanity of what is being done, to principally some women in Bangladesh... I find it difficult... I am not a man who is usually short of words... but I do find it very difficult to find the words to express the horror of what is going on.

Anwar Chowdhury
British High Commissioner

Contributions to ASF by different organization (July to Dec, 2007)

- American international School
- Amicus Properties & Development Ltd.
- Amnesty International German Section
- BRAC BOMAIL Network Ltd.
- City Hospital Ltd.
- D. Youth
- Ericsson
- Etc.
- IDLC of Bangladesh
- IFC
- International Finance Corporation-BICF
- Kapp Ahl Far East Ltd.
- Maple International
- MDM Group
- Nokia
- Project Bangladesh.
- Reliance Insurance Ltd.
- S A Telecom System Ltd.
- Simed International
- Standard Chartered Bank.
- Square Toiletries Ltd.
- Taxes Group
- Tullow Bangladesh Ltd.
- Uniliver Bangladesh
- Windmill Advertising
Organization News
We want to stand beside them
ASF Charity Ball
organized to support acid survivors

An acid survivor is someone who strives to mainstream in the society ignoring all pains and hazards and the so called curious eyes of the society. He/she considers him/herself as a survivor, not victim. And they do these with thier own attributes, to get along with other people with equal pace. The survivors are inclined to believe that there are still hopes. They want to redecorate their life. We want to stand beside them with support from all of you.

These were the committments behind the organizing of ASF Charity Ball 2007, which is the second of its kind after 2008. The main objectives were to increase awareness against acid crime, generate support for the acid survivors, and provide leagal support and social rehabilitation and protection initiatives, which are a must to make Bangladesh a country full of acid violence.

Present in the Charity Ball were Mr. Mahfuz Anam, editor of the Daily Star, Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, British High Commissioner Mr. Anwar Choudhury, Canadian and Australian High Commissioners and others. ASF Charity Ball included a fashion show performed by Bibi Rasel, who is a UNESCO envoy, music by DJ prince, live concert by Pentagon, colorful rafel draw and other interesting events. Those who provided support to organize the event are Standard Chartered Bank, Square Toiletries Ltd. Texas Group, Radisson Water Garder Hotel and project Bangladesh.

A press conference was organized the next day to make public the fundraising event of ASF. Some on behalf of the organizers and partners spoke at the occasion. They informed that a total fund worth Tk. 18 lakh was raised. Some of this money has been spent for 49 acid survivors of Sirajgonj, one of the most devastated areas of this year’s flood. The survivors received Tk. 2000 each.
Grameen Phone supports for rehabilitation of acid survivors

Lulu Mansura is an ordinary girl from the Pirojpur district. She had no meaning of life since she had been acid-attacked in 2001. She never thought she could return to normal life. Mansura is now finding a new meaning of life, as she got a job at Grameen Phone, with the help of ASF. She expressed her feelings at the event arranged by ASF and Grameen Phone jointly on 24 September 2007. Grameen Phone has provided such opportunity to six other acid survivors like Mansura. They are Rezaul Karim, Sirajul Karim, Sirajul Hoq, Mansura Khatun, Aforja Akter and Fazilatunnessa.

ASF Head of Finance Ms. Niharika Mamta delivered the welcome speech. The chief guest Ms. Barbara Richardson, the High Commissioner of Canada said, acid throwing has become a usual phenomenon in Bangladesh. Exemplary punishment along with social awareness can fight this trend. Grameen Phone's Managing Director Eric Au said that his organization is conscious about the need to stand by those marginalized or deprived parts of the society. He said, the reason for such an initiative by the Grameen Phone is to publicize that these people also have right to employment. Mr. Shawkat Mahmud, the president of National Press Club; Mr. Arne Hug, the first secretary of the Narayangan Embassy and Mr. Kafi H. S. Muyeed, director of new business branch of Grameen Phone also spoke on the occasion.

"Monira Rahman, Executive Director of Acid Survivors Foundation and Hasina Akter, Representative of Acid Survivors Participated in 16th Anniversary of the Child Rights Convention in Germany at November 2007. They also met the German parliamentarians."
Case History
Chour Sreya an acid survivor of Cambodia: She proves that acid survivors are not helpless

In February 1999, Chour Sreya was blinded by acid thrown in her face by an unknown assailant, and was facing an uncertain future. Chour Sreya, aged 29, seven years later, she can speak English, use a computer, has earned a Shiatsu massage degree, is now married and is expecting her first child.

Sreya was a young hospitality worker in 1999 when a perpetrator threw acid at her in a busy market place. Sreya was taken to Lok Song Hospital, then Russian hospital and then Sihanouk Hospital (all in Phnom Penh, Cambodia), and shortly afterwards she was transferred to a hospital in Vietnam where she spent one month in critical care. When she returned to Cambodia, she had to rebuild her life. With the help of her supportive family, she had to learn how to take care of herself as a vision impaired person and can cook and clean and do everything else like other people.

In 2002, Sreya came to the Association of the Blind of Cambodia (ABC) a grassroots, non-government organization for vision impaired people and started learning English, Orientation and Mobility and Braille (English and Khmer). She was also became involved in activism by raising issues concerning vision impaired people at the ABC’s General Assembly and was involved in the Cambodian Blind and Visually Impaired Women’s Friendship Group (Friendship Group) project. The Friendship Group project brought together acid attack survivors and vision impaired women for support sessions (such as group counseling and medication), social outings, guest speakers, beauty and hair training and income generating projects.

Sreya underwent nose reconstruction in late 2003, and upon completion, she began studies in Indonesian massage therapy. In 2004, Sreya was then selected for a one-year massage training course at the Cambodian National Rehabilitation Centre for the Blind. Here she continued to learn English and Braille, but most notably she trained in Shiatsu massage, so that she could have the chance to earn money in the future. On completion of her studies, she then was employed with the ABC’s Seeing Hands Shiatsu massage clinic.

Last year, was a very busy and exciting time for Sreya. She was involved in a film entitled ‘About Face’ a film that looks at acid violence in Cambodia and documents her story. Sreya’s leadership and massage skills were recognized, and she was chosen train a group of four acid survivors in massage. She also traveled to Thailand where she was a Key Note Speaker at the Tomorrow People International Women’s Leadership conference in Bangkok. At this conference, Sreya spoke on acid violence issues in Cambodia and of her work as a massage trainer with the ABC. Sreya, is living proof that acid survivors are not helpless and hopeless. Although they must confront many obstacles, they can achieve as much as any other person.

Jane Welsh
Researcher & Freelance Writer, Australia
এসিড আক্রান্ত ব্যক্তির সামাজিক বাধা দূর

এসিড সারভাইভারস ফাউন্ডেশন (এএসএফ)

বাড়িঃ ১২, রোডঃ ২২, রুক্ত কে, নন্দাই মেডেল টাউন, সকারা-১২১৩
ফোনঃ ৯৮১৫২৫৮৪, ৯৮৬২৫৭২৪, ০১৭১১-২০১২২৩ ফ্যাক্সঃ ৮৮৬৪৪৩৯
২৪ ঘণ্টার টেলিফনঃ ০১৭১১-০১৪৬২, ইমেইলঃ asf@acidsurvivors.org

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Cyclone Sidr has left behind a trail of devastation affecting the lives of people and leaving a path of damaged houses, uprooted trees and tube wells, destroyed schools, flattened crops, dead livestock, contaminated streams and ponds and disrupted road links.

Of the total lives lost to Sidr, 40 percent are believed to be children. Many of the children that have survived are now orphans. Children under five, pregnant women, new mothers and the elderly are the people most seriously affected.

Overall situation of acid survivors assessed in 6 districts:

ASF assessed situation of SIDR affected 42 acid survivors in Barisal, Bagerhat, Bhola, Borgona, Jhalokathi & Potouakkali in December 07. Almost all acid survivors assessed lost their houses, crops, fishes and trees. They lost important documents related to land, loan etc. They even lost cooking pots, school-books, clothing, bed and household accessories; almost everything.

Most of the acid survivors are still living in the open or under polystyrene-roof shelter or traveling from one place to another to finding a shelter. Some of than reconstructed their houses by taking loan. They are living with the food-support from their less-vulnerable neighbors/relatives, they are suffering due to lack of clothing, hardship to collect drinking water and no medicine. The survivors those who have taken loan from locally based NGOs for food, medicine and reconstruction purposes; the pressure to repay the loan is on their shoulder.