

CBO Planning Meeting 2024

26 June 2024

Dhaka, Bangladesh

Sex Workers and Allies South Asia



Participants: SWASA partners in Bangladesh

SL	Name	Organization	Designation
1	Zannat Husna	SWASA	Country Coordinator of Bangladesh
2	Md. Abdur Rahman	Ashar Alo Society (AAS)	Executive Director (Acting)
3	Md. Sanwar Hossain	Ashar Alo Society (AAS)	Program Manager
4	Md. Asraful Islam	Ashar Alo Society (AAS)	Associate Program Officer
5	Jahanara Khatun	Member	Naripokkho
6	Aleya Akter Lily	Sex Worker Networks (SWN)	President
7	Nilufa Akter	Sex Worker Networks (SWN)	Vice President
8	Masum Billah	Sex Worker Networks (SWN)	Finance Coordinator
9	Forida Akter	Sandhi Nari Sangha, Sylhet	President
10	Fatema Akter	Alokito Nari Unnayan Shamiti, Khulna	President
11	Suity Yeasmin	Alor Michil Nari Kallyan Sangstha, Rajshahi	President
12	Shrabonty Shrabon	Sacheton Hijra Odhikar Jubo Sangha, Dhaka	President
13	Rahima Begum	Durjoy Nari Sangha, Dhaka	President
14	Md. Saiful Islam	Badhan Hijra Sangha, Dhaka	Project Coordinator
15	Hena Akter	Ulka Nari Sangha, Dhaka	President
16	Rina Akter	Kallyanmoyee Nari Sangha, Dhaka	President
17	Kazol Akter	Akkhay Nari Sangha, Narayanganj	President
18	Nur Nahar Begum	Bonchita Mohila & Shishu Unnayan Sanstha, Jashore	President
19	Rahela Akter	Porosh Mohila Unnayan Sangstha, Rangpur	President
21	Farida Pervin	Obohelito Nari Sangha, Daulatdia	President
22	Razia Akter	Nari Jagoroni Sangha, Banishanta	President
23	Hashi Akter	Nari Mukti Sangha, Tangail	Member
24	Nazma Akter	Alor Prodeep Nari Unnayan Shamiti, Sayedpur	President

*SWASA CBO partner Shuktara Nari Kallyan Shongstha, Mymensingh, did not attend the meeting.

Objectives:

1. To orient the partners of SWASA Bangladesh to the goals and objectives of SWASA
2. To orient the partners with the SWASA Strategic Plan 2022
3. To discuss the changes in the CBO partnership structure in Bangladesh
4. Plan activities for 1 July 2024-31 December 2024 and beyond



Agenda:

- **Registration and Introduction**
- **Bangladesh Context: Reviewing and Revisiting the SWASA Strategic Plan 2022**

Facilitator: Zannat Husna

Discussions:

- The session facilitator, Zannat Husna, discussed SWASA's goals and objectives and broke down the SWASA structure in Bangladesh.
- She introduced the new structure where SWASA's partner Naripokkho will focus on reviving and strengthening Shonghoti, the largest platform for sex workers and allies in Bangladesh, and facilitating cross-movement dialogues.
- On the other hand, the Ashar Alo Society will function as SWASA's fund-raising partner for CBO activities.
- Zannat also discussed the strength of collectivising and the role and reach of NNSW and JMMS, the sex workers' networks in India and Nepal, respectively.

- Farida Parvin said that the CBOs need skilled staff. A skilled staff can help with proper documentation and reporting. She also pointed out the need for enough funds for programmes that will help sex workers.
- Jahanara Khatun said that our focus must be on strengthening the CBOs so the Network can be strengthened.
- Hashi Akter said that, earlier, the sex workers in Bangladesh used to be united. They regularly communicated with each other and thus could extend help and support wherever necessary. Now, they barely have any idea what happens with sex workers from other CBOs and across Bangladesh. She pointed out that this lack of communication is the reason why the sex workers' rights movement in Bangladesh is not going forward.
- In response to Hashi Akter's comment, Zannat Husna proposed weekly online addas among the sex workers. The addas will aim to establish regular communication and connection among the sex workers, which in return will help them extend help and support to each other when necessary. The addas will be coordinated and facilitated by the sex workers, and Zannat will supervise and provide technical support when required.



- **Overview of 2023-2024 CBO Activities**

Facilitator: Jahanara Khatun

Discussions:

- The session facilitator, Jahanara Khatun, asked the sex workers' leaders to share the activities they had done in the previous year as part of the SWASA Grant.

- Here are a few activities listed by the sex workers' leaders:
 1. CBO registration ad renewal
 2. Day celebration
 3. Continuation/revival of meetings with the community members
 4. EC Committee meeting
 5. Training: Financial reporting, documentation, narrative reporting, etc.
 6. Advocacy meeting and networking
 7. Young leadership development programme



- **Activity Plan Till December 2024**

Facilitator: Zannat Husna

Discussions:

- The session facilitator provided an estimation of the SWASA Grant till December 2024. The breakdown is mentioned below:
 - Around 20,000 USD, according to the 2023-2024 budget of Naripokkho
 - Around 8,000 USD, the remaining amount of AAS's 2023-2024 budget
 - Around 1300 USD, the remaining amount of SWN's 2022-2023 budget
- Zannat divided the sex workers into three groups to discuss and present what they would like to do with the grant money.
- Proposed activities by the sex workers:
 - Office rent
 - Skilled staff for each CBO
 - Volunteer to communicate with the sex workers at the field level
 - Honorarium for the CBO leaders
 - Advocacy meetings
 - With local police/thana
 - Hospitals
 - Local leaders
 - GOs and NGOs of the respective areas
 - EC Committee meeting
 - Cross-learning CBO visits
 - Young leadership initiative
 - Governance training; policy-making for the CBOs
 - General meeting with the community members
 - Health and legal training
 - Bank accounts for the CBOs
 - SRHR training for sex workers and their teenage children
 - Registration Renewal
 - Awareness program and training session on STI
 - Leadership training
 - Day Celebration

- **Roadmap for the Future**

Facilitator: Zannat Husna

Discussions:

- It was decided that the sex workers will sit for an online meeting in the afternoon of every Monday, starting from 1 July 2024.
- Rina Akter and Sharbonty Shrabon will coordinate the first two meetings.

- Shrabonty Shrabon collected the WhatsApp numbers of all sex workers present and created a WhatsApp group to facilitate the meetings.
- Zannat Husna clarified that the online meetings would not be part of the SWASA Grant activity; the sex workers agreed to participate and coordinate the weekly online meeting as part of their volunteer work.
- She informed the sex workers that she would report back to SWASA, and based on the sex workers' feedback, SWASA would design the activities for the remaining year.

The CBO Planning Meeting 2024 provided a platform for all SWASA partner organisations in Bangladesh to voice their needs and concerns. It was also a lively networking occasion for the CBO and CSO partners to connect with each other. By the end of the meeting, the sex workers and the allies expressed that they now felt better informed about SWASA's goals and objectives and hoped to participate in similar future convenings.