



# ASA

# New Vision

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## ASA to Disburse Loan Worth Tk. 19,500 Crore (USD 2.5 billion) During 2015-16

ASA, the leading MFI of the country has fixed a target for disbursing credit amounting to Tk. 19,500 crore (USD 2.5 billion) among 6.3 million clients during the 2015-16. The decision was made at the 36th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the organization that was held on 17 June 2015 at ASA Tower Conference Hall, Shyamoli, Dhaka.

ASA has undertaken the plan of disbursing the aforesaid loan to strengthen the economy of the grass-roots for creating work and employment for people living in the bottom level of socio-economic pyramid. It is worthy to mention here that microcredit is the core driving force of the rural economy. Disadvantaged people undertake various income generating activities using microcredit. The rural entrepreneurship developed is expected to result in a big push in overall national growth.

In addition, ASA is to spend Tk. 50 crore from its program surplus for the purpose of operating social welfare activities and programs during 2015-16. The outreaches of the nonfinancial social welfare programs that include Health Service, Primary Education Strengthening, Sanitation, Hygiene, Physiotherapy, support services for agriculture and senior citizens etc. are to be expanded during this year.

Mrs. Taherunessa Abdullah, Chairperson of ASA Governing Body presided over the AGM while ASA President Md. Shafiqul Haque Choudhury presented report on the outgoing year. Mohammed Azim Hossain, Director of ASA International moderated the AGM. Members of ASA General Body and governing Body were present in the meeting.

# Coordination Meeting



## ASA to Expand its Agri-business and Social Welfare Programs in 2015

ASA has emphasized expansion of its Agri-business and Social Welfare Programs in 2015 and beyond. Besides, the organization has fixed a target to increase its loan disbursement by 30% this year. These decisions were made in the coordination meeting of the organization held on 18 April 2015 at ASA Tower in Shyamoli, Dhaka. In his opening speech ASA President Md. Shafiqul Haque Choudhury said that ASA would play more supportive role for the development of agriculture of the country.

He urged upon officials to be proactive to expand the non-financial activities of the organization in every

nook and corner of Bangladesh so that more people could get benefit out of them.

ASA has been operating a number of non-financial programs on Primary Education Strengthening, Primary Health Services, Health Awareness, Physiotherapy, Vermicompost, Health Grant, Sanitation etc, out of its own resources. Currently, more than five million people are deriving benefit from these services.

Senior Deputy President of ASA M Abdul Aziz also spoke on the occasion. 120 District and Zonal Managers and Central Officials participated in the Coordination meeting.

# Observing World Elder Abuse Awareness Day 2015



## Social Outlook Towards Elderly Needs to Change

A Seminar was held on 15 June 2015 at National Press Club to mark “World Elder Abuse Awareness Day” adopted by the United Nations for creating awareness about the rights of senior citizens hosted jointly by ASA and FRI. Mr. Md. Shafiqul Haque Choudhury, President of ASA and Mr. Tariqul Islam, Secretary to the Ministry of Social Welfare of Bangladesh Government were present at the seminar as Guests of Honour. Mr. Abdul Quaium, Associate Editor of the Daily Prothom Alo was present at the function as Special Guest.

In his speech, ASA President mentioned that this was a time-befitting initiative for making aware the people about their duties and responsibilities to the senior citizens. Because, incidents of humiliations to elderly are increasing in our country. At present, young people are extremely engaged in themselves pursuing their ambitions only. As a result they are reluctant to pay due attention on the duties and obligation towards the elder members of the family.

In order to improve this situation we should make our youngsters aware of being respectful to elder members as a part of the family values and morals.

Md. Shafiqul Haque Choudhury appealed to the government for giving priority to the elderly in delivering services on health and transports etc. He proposed in the seminar for 20% discount in travel tickets for the senior citizens by train, bus, launch, plane etc. He urged to the wealthy people of the society for reducing services charge for them at private hospitals, clinics and to provide medicines at discounted prices. He informed the audience about some initiatives of ASA undertaken recently for the welfare of the senior citizens.

Discussants of the seminar opined that marked rise in the number of elderly people was due to the increase of average life expectancy in recent years. Under the changed circumstances Govt. as well as the society should pay more attention and care for the welfare of the old people. The prosperity and comfort that we are enjoying today originate as a result of devotion and hard work of our elders. So the outlook of the society deserves to be changed for ensuring peace and happiness for our elders.



## ASA: Pioneer of Self-financed Development Strategy

Habibur Rahman

ASA was founded in the seventies of the past century with some special missions, including, improving the standard of living of the underprivileged and poverty alleviation as well as reaching the light of literacy and education to the neglected communities so that they can be aware to be organized to change their lot. To achieve these objectives ASA initially ran various programs like, mass education, healthcare, relief and rehabilitation during natural disasters, organizing villages, etc. With the evolution of time newer dimensions added to its activities.

At the beginning of the nineties ASA's development strategy and programs took a quantum change. It initiated a special type of microcredit program with a view to providing financial aid to the poor, especially women, so that they can find an opportunity of self-employment and play an active role in economic development of the family. Because of its innovative, cost-effective and incremental approach ASA model of microcredit received unexpected success and popularity and carved its niche among a few first ranking MFIs of the world, in a decade. Various NGOs and MFIs from different countries of the world

expressed interest in the ASA model and sought its technical support. Now in about 20 countries of the world microcredit programs are successfully running following the ASA model. In 2007 the famous Forbes magazine of USA ranked ASA as top efficient MFI. In 2008 the Financial Times, London and International Finance Corporation (IFC) jointly selected ASA as the best institution for "Banking at the Bottom of the Pyramid" award.

With the GDP hovering over 6 percent and policy makers envisaging Bangladesh to be a middle income country, the donors are confidently moving to more craving pastures, such as sub-Saharan Africa. Time has come for Bangladesh to pursue development with own resource, of course, confidently. And why not, when the index of population under poverty line has come down from over 50 percent to less than 25 percent in two decades? NGO participation in development works in Bangladesh has been obvious since the first decade of independence; seldom any social change has taken place sans active NGO involvement.

How NGOs run and work? Any venture, income generating or condition enhancing, requires investment. NGOs provided that investment finance and workforce to accomplish the job undertaken. Where from this investment comes? Generally the NGOs, international or national, procure this from donors and utilize. Now, with the donors opting for investment in regions poorer than Bangladesh, the NGOs are left with the option of self-financing.

Any operation incurs expenditure, NGOs also had to meet the cost of operation of their projects and programs from the fund they engaged. Projects accomplishing under constraints have provided some NGOs the capacity to face the situation, or call it challenge, optimally. For instance, ASA shunned taking foreign aid long before and has been operating its vast microfinance program successfully. And not only microfinance, ASA has been operating quite a number of nonfinancial social welfare programs with the surplus fund of microfinance. These include education, healthcare, assistance to agriculture, sanitation and hygiene and provision of safe water and saving environment etc.

Development based on own resources is the core of ASA's policy and approach. Upholding self sustainability, self respect, patriotic zeal accomplishing development objectives by own strength without depending on donors are its motto. Donors leaving and shifting from Bangladesh make little difference to ASA, as the organization is successfully running both its microfinance and non-financial social development programs without any donor assistance since long by rolling own

fund and mobilizing local resources. Like and unlike other years in the past decades, a peep into its activities in the just past year may give a convincing idea. The year 2014 was somehow remarkable for ASA as it remained occupied with activities like initiating new programs and extending outreach of existing ones through all twelve months. While its financial programs got special impetus its non-financial program got extended significantly. Microfinance has

been counted in all indexes of financial service: loan disbursement, borrowers and beneficiaries, insurance coverage, savings and expansion of remittance coverage. As a specialized microfinance institution (MFI), ASA's objective is to assist the poor and lower income people by offering suitable financial services towards enhancing their capability to overcome poverty and vulnerability.

Microfinance now has become the lifeline of the rural economy.

The national economy at the bottom of the pyramid remained vibrant and active round the year by dint of microfinance thus leading to gradual poverty reduction, expansion of trade and commerce and creation of jobs. Considering all these features and facts of microfinance ASA puts top priority to keeping its financial programs time-befitting and, of course, responsive to the needs of the poor.

ASA finds more success of its objective while operating programs with own resources. You remain more curious to utilize that to the optimum to derive up to optimum, for there remains no condition attached to pull part of your attention from performance to concern for repayment procedure.

***How NGOs run and work? Any venture, income generating or condition enhancing, requires investment. NGOs provided that investment finance and workforce to accomplish the job undertaken. Where from this investment comes? Generally the NGOs, international or national, procure this from donors and utilize. Now, with the donors opting for investment in regions poorer than Bangladesh, the NGOs are left with the option of self-financing.***



[A health worker of ASA is measuring weight of a kid at the yard of homestead of the underprivileged](#)

With the surplus fund generated from its vast financial services ASA has been operating quite a number of non-financial but socially essential programs comparatively more in needy areas of the country. Most of these services got expanded in coverage during 2014. The Primary Education Strengthening Program, Integrated Health and Education Program, Vermicompost Program, Sanitation Program attained considerable success by extending outreach to cover about five million people. Among those introduced in 2014, the Integrated Health and Education Program has been able to reach health services to about 200,000 people in the debuting year. A significant number of Vermicompost farms opened in various locality of the country in the year, under Agribusiness Project, are helping to improve soil quality and conserve environment by producing nature-friendly compost manure. Soft loans are being provided to the sanitary entrepreneurs, traders and users and training being imparted to the sanitary entrepreneurs under the program.

Besides running development programs, ASA has a number of associated establishments to name. These Include:

[Hope for the Poorest \(HP\)](#) is working for sanitation

hygiene and potable water supply in climate change affected areas, presently benefiting at least 200,000 people.

[ASA Medical Assistance Training School \(ASA MATS\)](#) at Chunarughat, Habiganj, started its academic program in January 2014 with a considerable number of trainees from poor families who would believably play an important role in public healthcare.

[ASA University Bangladesh](#) has paved the way to higher education for students from low income families at lesser cost. Presently 5000 students are in enrolment while the university has provided stipend and tuition fee waiver worth Taka 150,000,000/- by now.

[ASA International](#), registered in Mauritius and the Netherlands, is running microcredit programs in India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, the Philippines, Cambodia, Nigeria, Ghana, Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania.

Creating own resource and its optimum utilization in making development sustainable and consolidating the process of poverty alleviation are the basis of ASA's philosophy. And ASA has set a unique instance in that which has already encouraged many others at home and abroad.

# Sanitation Program



Mr. Md. Mahmud Hossain, Deputy Commissioner of Meherpur district is seen in the above picture speaking as chief guest

## ASA Organizes a Workshop on Sustainable Sanitation Technology and Business Development at Meherpur District

The Sanitation Program of ASA is being implemented for sanitation for all and assisting the poor and low income people to set up sanitary latrines in their households. Under the program a workshop on durable sanitation technology and business development was arranged on 15 March 2015 at Meherpur district where twenty five sanitary entrepreneurs and traders and branch managers of ASA participated. Besides, a training program was held on 9-11 March on the theme.

Mr. Md. Mahmud Hossain, Deputy Commissioner of Meherpur district was present in the function as Chief Guest while Mr. Basir Ahmed, Executive Engineer of the Public Health Engineering Department was present as special guest. The Chief Guest in his speech praised the contribution of ASA for arranging workshop and training on developed technology of sanitation and its

market development. The special guest expressed optimism that by the effort of sanitation entrepreneurs hundred percent sanitation coverage could be achieved in the district soon.

Md. Abu Hasnat Choudhury, Deputy Director, Sanitation of ASA told the seminar that ASA had been operating sanitation program by its own resource without getting foreign or local aid. This program has been providing soft loan to the poor users, traders, entrepreneurs. After imparting training to the traders and entrepreneurs and thereby assisting the target groups in developing sanitary markets to improve overall sanitation of our country.

Under the program, during 2014-15, 720 entrepreneurs and traders of 24 districts were trained and an amount of Tk. 16.33 crore was disbursed as soft loan.

# Health Grants Program



Sayed Begum, Loan Officer of ASA Kotiadi Branch of Habigani district was suffering from throat diseases. She was provided health assistance amounting to Tk. 36,000 from the organization for her thyroid operation. In a simple occasion on 6 April, 2015 Joint Deputy Director of ASA Khondokar Md. Shahidul Alam handed over the cheque of health grant to Sayeda Begum in the presence of local officials of ASA.



Md. Gias Uddin, Assistant Director, Program of ASA handed over a cheque amounting to Tk. 2,000 to Mrs. Sahida Begum a client as health assistance for bearing the cost of her uterus operation in a simple ceremony held on 26 May 2015 at ASA-Kaliganj Branch under Satkhira district.



On 28th May, 2015, ASA-Halishahor Branch-1 under Chittagong arranged a program to disburse health grants for its ailing clients. Zonal Manager of Chittagong Mr. Abdul Jalil is seen in the picture handing over a cheque amounting to Tk. 3,000 to Mrs. Rawsan Ara, a client of the branch in the presence of concerned officials.

# Agribusiness Activities

ASA initiated a program to assist orange growers with an aim to increase orange production. Under the program a two-day training session was arranged for the orange cultivators on 26-27 May 2015 at Chunarughat, Habiganj district. Fifty orange cultivators were imparted training through this program. Mr. Nazim Uddin, Mayor of Chunarughat Municipality was present as chief guest while Mr. M A Salam, Director (Agriculture) of ASA was present as special guest. Concerned officials and local journalists were also present on the occasion.



ASA, Asian Vegetable Research & Development Center (AVRDC) and Asia-pacific Rural & Agricultural Credit Association (APRACA) signed a tripartite agreement for cultivating summer tomato in Bangladesh. In pursuance of the agreement ASA arranged a training on business development for the nursery entrepreneurs on 21-23 April 2015 at Jessore. Mr. M A Salam Director (Agriculture) of ASA and Mr. Marlowe from APRACA were present the training program as resource persons. AVRDC provided technical assistance for arranging the training. Other officials associated with the program were also present on the occasion.



Mr. Hashem Mollah, a mushroom cultivator of Singair, Manikganj shows mushroom that were produced in his farm. ASA undertook a program on mushroom cultivation this year with a view to increase production of mushroom. Financial and technical assistance are being offered to the interested farmers under the program.



# Physiotherapy Program



A three-day Physiotherapy camp was conducted at ASA-Kalika Prasad Branch under Kishoregonj (Bhairab) district on 6-8 April, 2015. Golam Rabbani Khan, Assistant Director of ASA inaugurated the camp as Chief Guest, while Md. Fazlul Kabir, Chairman of Kalika Prasad UP was present as Special Guest. District Manager of ASA-Kishoregonj district Md. Saidul Islam Chowdhury presided over the opening session of the physiotherapy camp.



A three-day Physiotherapy camp was organized at ASA-Kalkini Sadar Branch on 21-23, June 2015. Md. Hemaet Uddin, Upazila Nirbahi Officer of Kalkini Upazila inaugurated the camp as chief guest while Head Master of Kalkini Syed Abul Hossain Academy was present as special guest. A large number of patients were provided treatment in the camp.



Bausibazar Branch of ASA under Netrokona district arranged a three-day Physiotherapy camp on 14-16 March 2015. Mr. Salumuzzaman, Officer-in-Charge of Barhatta Police Station attended as Chief Guest in the opening ceremony of the camp. District Manager of ASA-Kishoregonj district Shah Alam Khan and other concerned officials were present on the occasion.

# Activities of Primary Education Strengthening Program



A two-day training session was arranged on 26-27 May, 2015 for the newly appointed education officers of Primary Education Strengthening Program at ASA Tower. The newly recruited personnel were imparted necessary training by the senior officials. Mr. Susil Roy, Executive Vice President, HR and Dr. Zamal Mustafa, Director, Education, Training and Evaluation Program of ASA are seen with the new officers in the concluding session of the training program.

Assistant Director of the Department of Youth Development of Mymensingh visited a learning center of Primary Education Strengthening Program on 30 March 2015 (seen in the picture).



A workshop was arranged on 12 January 2015 at ASA-Kakina Branch under Lamonirhat district for the Sikkha Sebikas (mentors) of the Primary Education Strengthening Program. District Manager of ASA-Lalmonirhat district was present in the workshop along with other concerned officials.

# Miscellaneous Activities



Officials of Credit and Development Forum (CDF) are seen in the left picture handing over a bouquet to ASA President at his office. The CDF officials visited ASA on 7th May 2015 to meet ASA President. Md. Taufiqul Islam Chowdhury, Director, Accounts, Finance, MIS, FRS of ASA was present on the occasion.

ASA was conferred with award by the National Bank and Western Union Money Transfer Company for the outstanding contribution in rendering remittance service to the remote areas of the country. For handing over the award a ceremony was arranged on 6 May 2015 in Westin Hotel in the capital. Mr. Shamsul Huda Khan, Managing Director and CEO of National Bank handed over the award to ASA President Mr. Md. Shafiqul Choudhury in presence of distinguished guests and citizens.



Senior Deputy President of ASA M Abdul Aziz along with other senior officers of ASA and high officials from National Bank and Western Union Money Transfer Company were present.

National Vitamin A+ Campaign was observed by ASA Health Program with due emphasis. On that occasion a camp was organized to feed Vitamin A+ Capsule to the kids at ASA Tower on 25 April 2015. Senior Deputy President of ASA M Abdul Aziz inaugurated the camp through feeding vitamin A+ capsule to a kid.



## ASA Arranged a Two-day Workshop on Tackling Post-earthquake Situation

A two-day workshop organized by ASA on tackling the post-quake situation and rescuing the victims of earthquakes was held on 30-31 May, at ASA Tower. Thirty five ASA staff participated in the workshop under the guidance of the officials of Rescue Team of Bangladesh Fire Service and Civil Defense authority. As our country is located in the earthquake prone zone ASA arranged this workshop with a view to build up trained manpower to rescue people from the affected site and to fight the aftermath of earthquake. Moreover, ASA took initiatives to organize more training workshops to create trained volunteers for the above mentioned cause in future.

# International Affairs



A delegate comprising 12 members from South Sewanee University, USA paid a visit to ASA on 31 May 2015. At the end of field visit the team made a courtesy call with ASA President Mr. Md. Shafiqul Haque Choudhury at his office.



A team from China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA) visited ASA on 1st June 2015. The team met ASA President at his office.



ASHA Microfinance Bank Limited, Nigeria was awarded with Corporate Citizen Award by the Nigerian Government for its remarkable contribution in the development of microfinance in Nigeria. Md. Aminul Haque Bhuyan, MD, ASHA Microfinance Bank Limited, Nigeria is seen in the above picture standing with the award in presence of other award recipients.

# ASA University Bangladesh

Students, Teachers and Officials of ASA University Bangladesh (ASAUB) attended a discussion program on 31 May 2015 at National Museum Auditorium on the World No Tobacco Day-2015 organized by 'Association for the Prevention of Drug Abuse (MANAS)'. The propounded objective of this day is-'Stop Illicit Trade of Tobacco Products.' Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, Honorable Speaker, Bangladesh National Parliament and Chairperson, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) was present as the Chief Guest while Prof. Emeritus Dr. Anisuzzaman was present as the Special Guest in the discussion session. Honorable Vice Chancellor of ASA University Bangladesh (ASAUB) Prof. Dr. Dalem Ch. Barman was present as the Guest of Honor. Prof. Dr. Arup Ratan Choudhury, Founder President of MANAS was the keynote speaker and also presided over the program.

The speakers said that percentage of smoking cigarette and taking other kinds of tobacco was decreasing in the developed countries, but this proportion was alarmingly increasing in the third world countries like Bangladesh. Cigarette and other tobacco products from more than fifty countries are

now a days available in Bangladeshi market which come through illegal trade. They also added that local tobacco businessmen gave extra benefit to our farmers on the production of tobacco. Our land has been losing its fertility by the production of tobacco. The discussants urged to initiate more tax on the tobacco business which can certainly help reduce a huge amount of national health cost. They also urged to take necessary steps for stopping illegal trade of foreign tobacco products.

Mr. Matiur Rahman Talukdar, General Secretary of MANAS delivered the welcome speech and Md. Jayed, a student of ASA University Bangladesh (ASAUB) spoke as student representative in the program. ■



## Fresher Reception

ASA University Bangladesh (ASAUB) organized a Fresher's Reception for its newly enrolled students in Summer-2015 semester followed by a cultural program on 17 June, 2015. Mr. Md. Shafiqul Haque Choudhury, Chairman, Board of Trustees, ASAUB was present as the chief guest while Prof. Dr. Dalem Ch. Barman, Vice Chancellor of ASA University Bangladesh presided over the program.



Teachers, new students and their guardians participated in the orientation program.

## ASA - at a glance

(up to June 2015)

1	Total number of Branch Offices			2,932
2	Total number of Villages			63,859
3	Total number of Upazila / Thana			511
4	Total number of Districts (All Districts in Bangladesh)			64
5	Total number of active groups			247,247
6	Total number of active members	: Primary	97.48%	6,154,087
		: Special	2.51%	158,229
		: Sanitation	0.02%	1,043
		<b>Total</b>		<b>6,313,359</b>
7	Number of Longterm Savers A/C ( 92.59 % on active borrowers)			4,965,806
8	Total number of Capital Buildup Savings A/C			6,247,392
9	Savings (end balance)	: Primary	41.87%	15,590,145,013
		: Special	5.95%	2,214,202,472
		: Sanitation	0.01%	2,267,269
		: LTS	38.65%	14,394,490,280
		: CBS	13.53%	5,037,565,599
		<b>Total</b>		<b>37,238,670,633</b>
10	Total number of active borrowers	: Primary	97.35%	5,220,998
	(end of the month)	: Special	2.60%	139,700
		: Sanitation	0.04%	2,155
		: Solar	0.00%	113
		<b>Total</b>		<b>5,362,966</b>
11	Loan Outstanding (with service charge) :	Taka		96,626,497,473
	Disbursed (cumulative)	Taka		1,021,593,453,070
	Realized (cumulative)	Taka		924,966,955,597
12	Loan Outstanding (Principal) :			87,721,386,127
13	Rate of Recovery (cumulative)			99.67%
14	Rate of Recovery (on going loan)			96.89%
15	PAR (%) - 1 day			2.66%
16	Total Number of Staff			22,927