

## **Profile of Sheva Nari O Shishu Kallyan Kendra**

Sheva Nari O Shishu Kallyan Kendra (Sheva) is a non-governmental organization created to provide Bangladeshi women and other marginalized people with the resources they need to become self-reliant, productive and empowered decision makers of the society.

### **Vision**

Sheva visualizes an equal opportunities society in Bangladesh, where women's rights and human rights are established.

### **Mission**

Sheva's mission is to advance the cause of women and other vulnerable groups.

### **Values**

Sheva believes that

- Women have equal rights to livelihood change
- Socially responsible business practices lead to socially harmonious communities
- All citizens are responsible for protecting and preserving our social and physical environment.

### **Sheva's Key Strategies**

Through our work in the last 25 years we have been able to position ourselves as an NGO standing at a crossroads of Bangladesh's two major drivers of economic movement, the micro finance sector and the RMG sector. We have worked with grass roots population in both these sectors that have made significant contributions in fighting poverty cycle and achieving economic and social mobility in Bangladesh.

### **Our key strategies focus on**

- Grassroots approach
- Building Partnership
- Developing innovative training tools
- Using theater mode for mass-communication

Founded in 1991, Sheva is a national NGO that started with a mission to support women in the economic margins of society for social and economic empowerment. Our efforts for the last twenty-five years have been devoted to secure and protect women's rights and equip them with skills to face their day-to-day challenges through microcredit, building self-help groups, adult education, healthcare and life skill training for improved access to basic services.

Currently the core components of our activities comprise of the following:

- Daycare program for children of working mothers
- Microfinance
- Community based programs for RMG workers
- Technical and life skills training
- Social Empowerment through self help groups
- CSR Activities

- Research and Advocacy on Labor rights
- Legal Aid
- Developing ICE material
- Staging popular theater

### **Micro Finance**

Launched in 1993, Sheva's **Urban Micro Credit Program** was originally designed following the Grameen Bank model. Gradually, it has been customized into Sheva's own model through a continuous review and updating process. Currently it operates through 15 branches located in Dhaka, Narayanganj and Gazipur. Our micro finance program currently serves 26,000 women and their households with micro loans, small loans for small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs), and seasonal credit. As our loans to women help their households increase income and build family assets, the position of women within their families improve. Their voices are heard, particularly with regard to their decisions about the education of their daughters and postponement of their marriages. During the fiscal year 2015-16, we have disbursed a total of 72,33,22000 taka (BDT) to our members. The members have a savings balance with us of above 16,30,00,000 BDT. Sheva became a partner of PKSF in March 2010.

### **Day Care Service**

Day care service has been one of Sheva's core programs since its inception in 1991. In 2006, Sheva started a day care center for the employees of Bangladesh Bank, the Central Bank of Bangladesh. The services provided are nutritious meals, age appropriate play time, care such as bathing and arranging napping time helping with school work etc.

Sheva's successful advocacy for childcare for working women with Bangladesh Bank facilitated the enactment of a Govt. circular for all banks to open day care centers in their head office and main branches as an essential component under CSR activities. Currently, we are running four day-care-centers for reputable banks and educational institutions.

### **Partnership with BNWLA**

Sheva, in partnership with Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association (BNWLA) provides legal aid to vulnerable women and children who become victims of violence at the family level or from people in society at large. A lawyer is appointed by this partnership to verify and support with the legal matters.

In addition to formally registering cases of conflict and complain, Sheva's legal aid program addresses issues in the following areas:

- Counseling at the individual level
- Trainings for raising awareness
- Mobilizing vigilance groups to conduct advocacy campaigns on how to resist violence against women at the community level
- Providing legal assistance and litigation

### **Sheva-Verité Partnership**

Sheva became a Verité partner in 1998, this partnership has enabled Sheva to broaden insights into the livelihood of garment factory workers, as a labour standard monitoring agency, research agency on protection of workers' rights in global business. Sheva-Verité has worked with a vision of the world where businesses, NGOs, governments, and other stakeholders interact in the global economy of Bangladesh to create sustainable labor practices.

For enabling Positive Workplace Environment Sheva is currently leading a team of consultants and trainers in building rights-based human resource management systems into the operations of several of the largest apparel suppliers in Bangladesh. The team has been consulting with senior management on policies that will move the companies toward a sustainable workforce through the shared benefits of worker engagement. Workshops are being held for mid-level management on effective HR management, for supervisors on positive management techniques, and for workers on rights and responsibilities.

As a CSR advocate, Sheva has gained indepth knowledge and experience of capacity building and training of different levels of factory management on issues of social compliance and pioneered unique models of in-factory worker education programs since 2005. Our successful management of projects includes:

- Conducting over 250 social audits in garment factories in Bangladesh & Pakistan on behalf of brands such as TH, PVH, LEVIS Foundation, and JFS Shirts, Comic Relief, Pent land, New Balance Japan, Timberland, Lesenza and financial institutions such as FMO since 1998. Such auditing required conducting on site and off site interviews of approximately over 25,000 garments worker on working conditions inside factories.
- Monitoring three to six month long corrective action programs in RMG factories for multinational companies such as TH, PVH, Nike, GAP, the LEVIS Foundation and Winston & Strawn.
- Implementing training programs workshops and seminars in Bangladesh, on issues of positive management techniques, sexual harassment, and improvement to vendor guide books.
- So far we have conducted In-factory Worker Education and Awareness training program with approximately 80,000 workers trained on Healthcare, Rights & Responsibilities and Life Skills Enhancement topics.

### **Sheva- Care-Bangladesh Partnership**

Sheva has been implementing different community based programs and in-factory training programs for female garment workers in collaboration with CARE Bangladesh since 2009 with programs such as The OIKKO, WiFi, SEEMA and WHEEL.

**OIKKO** or Unity is a Women & Girls' Empowerment project launched in 2015 will continued till December 2017. The project is funded by the European Union. The project's objective is to provide access to services that contribute toward the empowerment of female workforce in the RMG industry, aiming to reach out to 18,000 participants. This will include workforce representatives, members from the local community, Unions and labor rights organizations.

The project envisages to strengthen the capacity of labor rights actors and increase the voice and influence of female garment workers. Recognizing the limited influence and knowledge the civil

society posess on social compliance, corporate accountability, respect for workers' rights, the OIKKO project aims to bridge the gap between workers and their representatives.

**Women in Factories initiative (WiFi)** has been a successful project of Sheva in collaboration with CARE-Bangladesh that delivered a package of trainings and cultural programs starting in 2012 and ending in June 2016. Funded by the Walmart Foundation the WiFi project delivered a package of in factory workers training and supporting programs for empowerment of garment women they are leadership building for upward mobility through a customized training program.

**Solidarity and Empowerment through Education, Motivation and Awareness (SEEMA, 2011 to 2014)**, funded by European Union, has been one of Sheva's milestone projects for empowerment of garment industry women at community level. Activities undertaken under this project included promoting and protecting the rights of female garment workers by improving their human conditions and social position, through self-help groups (EKATA).

### **Sheva's Independent Programs**

#### **Support to Victims of Rana Plaza Collapse and Rehabilitation**

Sheva's volunteer team worked in the emergency assistance in the immediate aftermath of the garment industry disaster of Rana Plaza collapse in Savar 2013. Our volunteers provided emergency support to survivors and injured victims through needs based assistance, including –

- Financial, medical, emotional support (immediate and short term)
- Collecting information, conducting surveys and documenting the number of injuries, survivals and deceased by visiting hospitals, clinics and neighboring communities
- Continued support (financial, medical and emotional) and long term rehabilitation.

Initial rehabilitation began with private fund raising for provisioning financial support, which was later picked up and followed by Sheva's corporate partner, Primark. In the course of distributing emergency supplies such as, non-perishable food and water to the Rana Plaza victims, the volunteers collected data on 2,300 workers. Additionally, our team located victims who had returned to their village homes after primary medical treatment, in order to include them into the final survey for rehabilitation programmes. Working from this data, Sheva embarked on rehabilitation programmes aimed at long-term improvement of labour relations, worker rights, and safety in partnership with Primark.

#### **Shurjokona**

Sheva started a feeding programme in 2013 for 35 school going children who had lost their family support system in the Rana Plaza disaster with its own emergency disaster management funds. With added support from our partners (PKSF, Verite and Primark) and individual donors the initial project later became a programme "Shurjokona" (Rays of Sunshine). Shurjokona is now expanded to giving psycho social support to the 35 children including: after-school mentoring, sports and recreation, and tutoring. Our goal is to carry on the Shurjokona programme's support for these 35 children's education and emotional wellbeing until they are 18 years old.

#### **Rehabilitation of Child Workers in the Garment Industry through Community based Learning Centres (Re-work)**

Sheva runs two learning centers, at Tongi and Uttara, for the rehabilitation of 15 under-age garments workers sponsored by Li&Fung since January 2013. These children were found to work in out sourced printing factories handling toxic chemicals without proper protective gears.

The goal of this project is to rehabilitate the identified under age workers through a comprehensive educational training program that will facilitate their easy entry to a dignified world of work at the end of the project period. The project is designed to fulfill their income loss by compensating them with a monthly payment equivalent to national minimum wage of garment industry workers.

### **Alliance For Bangladesh Worker's Safety: A Fire Safety training program**

Sheva has been accredited as a service provider for the Alliance For Bangladesh Worker's Safety in order to train factory ambassadors (selected workers and management representatives). These ambassadors then integrate fire and building safety training into the factory orientation / training programs and train the rest of the factory workforce. Sheva has been implementing the Master Training courses with a team of five trainers since March 2014.

### **Northern Areas Reduction of Poverty Initiatives (NARI)**

Sheva developed training curriculum for poor and vulnerable women in rural areas of Bangladesh who are seeking to work in the garment sector by migrating to city centers from the lagging areas of Bangladesh. This project is one of the prestigious projects undertaken by Bangladesh Export Process Zone Authority (BEPZA) that has been sponsored by the World Bank. As these women lack the essential social, economic information, skill and knowledge the training module was required to provide life skills along with technical skills curriculum in order to address their special learning needs and prepare them for a challenging transition.

### **Sheva Crative Solutions**

Sheva's cultural team addresses social problems through cultural programs like popular theater, folk art and music to raise public awareness on a range of important issues both in the community and in the factory. For example, Sheva has used popular theater as a tool to raise awareness on fire safety, issues on violence against women, factory disasters for workers in the garments industry. The process concentrates on awakening the latent potential of people to take part in theater as a vehicle for social change, using their local language and vernacular to organize them toward a common goal. Sheva's theater group participated in an education fair called *Khusbi Mela* organized by Primark to raise awareness Rana Plaza victims on financial literacy and decision making for 16 consecutive days. A video documentary with interviews of severely injured victims was presented following the drama to reinforce the messages shown in the drama.

### **Sheva's Technical Education Program (STEP)**

Sheva has been awarded a grant by the United Way Worldwide (UWW) donor, Avery Dennison Foundation to provide life skills training and functional/behavioral skill development to adolescents and young adults (children and family members of the garment workers) in Savar; and to support parental involvement in the children's lives to enhance family cohesion for one year, the grant may be renewed with successful achievement of grant objective. The aim of the program is to provide computer skills and English proficiency training along with life skills to school drop-outs. A total of 270 young adults were covered during the year 2015. A renewed grant has been awarded from Avery Dennison Foundation to carry out the second phase of this program.

**Developing communication materials/posters:**

Sheva has developed Posters on Code of Conduct of Primark, Primark Stores Limited in Bangla customized to Bangladeshi culture and working environment. These posters were created with participation of workers from Primarks supplier factories form Dhaka. A team of communications personnel's and creative designers were engaged to develop the posters in a participatory approach.

**Sheva's Management**

Sheva's operations are governed by a seven member Executive Committee that is accountable to a fourteen member General Committee. The senior management team under the leadership of Sayeeda Khan manages the regular business operations of the organization.

**Accountability**

Sheva is accountable to the government agencies mentioned below through registration.

1. NGO Affairs Bureau, Reg. No. 970 dated September 25, 1995
2. Registrar of Joint Stock Company, under Societies Act XXI of 1860, Reg.No. S-6448(692)/07, dated February 25, 2007
3. Micro Credit Regulatory Authority (MRA), Reg. No. 01101-02096-00063, dated November 9, 2007