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**BU201 Community Engagement and Activities**

**FINAL-TERM FALL 24**

**Residential Semester**

**Faculty: Miss. Fahmida Rahman**

**Name: Yaseen Ahmed**

**ID: 23341103 Section: 50**

**Date: 07 - 01 - 2025**

**Describe your experiences of engaging with a community in Bangladesh.**

It was a learning experience for me to reach out a community in Bangladesh. Being a producer of the documentary, I had the major responsibility of making the final product informative and interesting such issues as **Child Rights and Child Marriages**, **Juvenile Delinquency**, and **Youth Empowerment & SRHR**. Indeed, I became aware how real life problems influence people, and especially children and teenagers while working with the community.

Significantly, what made a very experience-able teaching is when teaching under Class 6,7 **Child Rights and Child Marriages** we taught on the issues of sexual harassment such as good and bad touch. As, delivered the stories those incident happened with the child. By providing the lecture to make it as realistic as possible and to provide examples from real life situations, my teammate used real life cases. Moreover, some of them specific to gender had to do with how the participants comprehended and reacted emotionally to the lessons. In the area of **Youth Empowerment and SRH**, it was my understanding of the aspects of encourage the youths and assist them in making correct decisions.

Particularly, in my capacity as a mentor I supervised other facilitators of classes including **Drug Addiction** class. Here I observed how they were teaching their public on the consequences of taking drugs on ones health and the country economy. I could hypothesize a good deal about how it is possible to effectively attend to relevant issues in a casual and warm fashion.

Nevertheless, this problem such as language barrier, as I am not fluent in Bengali so I could not engage more, as I had hope to get great experience, the participatory approach characterized by team work and the use of media tools such as posters, short video clips and role play facilitated effective communication with the participants and facilitators. In conclusion, I would like to say that these were great experiences that I gained, I think they will help me engage the community wherever I will be in the future.

**What challenges do you believe the beneficiaries may have encountered?**

The beneficiaries had the following challenges during the sessions. First of all, some of them did not seem to have any prior knowledge due to their age or even concrete knowledge on some of those issues such as sexual harassment, SRHR, drug and substance abuse. For example, during the class on **Child Rights and Child Marriages**, some of the participants were shy to provide information in regard to topics such as harassment or child marriage. As, this may be due to social norms or simple fear of what people will say or think.

Indeed, the third challenge was one which also affected me as an international learner, this was to do with language limits. Though, we endeavored to present the sessions as engaging and uncomplicated as possible, it is possible some of the participants may not have grasped some of the contents in English at first. As, the tutors also had to clarify something or use the Bengali versions that were more basic than what was being delivered.

Moreover, culture and bias sometimes proved to act as barriers in the course of implementing the recommendations. For example, in the **Youth Empowerment and SRHR** discussion session, some of the youths were shy or unwilling to express their opinions during the session since issues of reproductive health and rights are unheard of in their societies. Likewise, in the **Drug Addiction** class, some beneficiaries may have suffered severe stigma that makes it hard for them to open up about some personal or family issues that relate to drug dependence.

**How effectively was the lesson designed by the community partner?**

The lesson plans were well developed, well planned and did a good job of getting across the messages that were planned. Like, teams in each class employed the use of Power point, group work, videos and posters in teaching, which made the lessons colourful. Due to an approachable manner of teaching, the participants felt relaxed, especially when answering questions like **Menstruation** or Sexual Harassment.

For instance, in the **Child Rights and Child Marriages** session designing the session in such a way that students exchange their real life personal experiences made the topic realistic and influential. Moreover, this approach made the participants be more involve emotionally thus achieving the objectives. Likewise, the session on the **Youth Empowerment and SRHR** there was a lot of emphasis on motivation and being empowered which was embraced by the participants the youth in particular.

At the same time, it was found that there were some points which needed some enhancements. As an international student learning the culture of the Bangladesh, I also realized that it was often detailed or recorded at a very fast pace making it complicated to comprehend by new participants especially those without background knowledge. For example, in the **Drug Addiction** class, the facilitators gave much information on the negative use of drugs to the participants but having an additional hour or so for opening discussions could have enabled the beneficiaries to express themselves.

Nevertheless, based on those drawbacks, the community partner paid much attention to making every session interesting and educative. Thus, it was evidenced that their aim on integrating all the learners and the use of participatory and fun approaches in handling the lesson made the impact do more good for any learner in the session.