

# ANNUAL REPORT

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# Introduction to NAGORIK UDDYOG

Nagorik Uddyog (NU) is human rights organization founded in 1995 by a small group of Dhaka-city community leaders who recognized an increasing need for grassroots level development work within the sphere of local governance, particularly in rural Bangladesh. From the start these leaders envisioned a 'people-driven' organization - one that operates in a bottom-up fashion, with the people whom the organization benefits playing a direct, participatory role in the organization's undertakings. At the time, such a premise was largely inconsistent with the prevailing trend of approaching development in Bangladesh from a top-down, donor-driven perspective, where the poor and marginalized were little more than passive recipients otherwise largely detached from the projects and programs designed to benefit them.

The name "Nagorik Uddyog" (*"The Citizen's Initiative"*) was chosen hence because it was believed to best capture the organization's emphasis on people-centered, bottom-up development processes. Specifically, since its inception, NU has worked not only to strengthen local government in Bangladesh via the raising of the general masses' awareness of people's basic human rights but, just as critically, building people's capacity to 'take initiative' - to pursue and realize these rights on their own. This entails engaging the people at the level at which they carry out their day-to-day lives; empowering them and helping to provide an enabling condition by which they can set up institutions and mobilize themselves. It also entails challenging those prevailing social customs which inhibit genuine human development. Toward this end, NU implements, carries out and/or undertakes action research workshops, human rights awareness and training programs, and legal aid to the poor, marginalized and disadvantaged in Bangladesh, in particular rural women. NU also provides logistical and technical support to various groups and movements, such as those involving Bangladesh's Dalit community and youths and students.

NU recognizes that democratic elections are by themselves insufficient in fulfilling democracy; that the poor and marginalized must be given the power to participate in and contribute to all those decision-making processes that affect their lives. Accordingly, NU holds special interest in democratizing "*Shalish*", Bangladesh's traditional rural dispute-resolution system. Bangladesh's formal court and judicial systems are just too far out of reach for most rural people. A fair and equitable *Shalish* thus entails unprecedented access to justice for rural Bangladeshis, especially women - the 'poorest of the poor' in this country.

## Vision

NU holds a vision of a Bangladesh without poverty where socially and environmentally conscious citizens have the ability to achieve their full potential as human beings irrespective of gender or social status.

## Goals and Objectives

- Establish accessible justice through mediation and legal aid support;
- Promote popular participation to ensure a fair, open, participatory and accountable electoral system;
- Raise human and women's rights consciousness at the grassroots level;
- Create an environment conducive to the exercising of democratic rights;
- Support the struggle of women at the grassroots level, ensuring their effective and broad participation in the electoral process;
- Conduct training programmes on human rights for community leaders, activists, and NGO workers;

- Establish and consolidate a network of national and international organizations in the field of human rights; and
- Conduct research on various aspects of Bangladeshi society and the global order relevant to local human rights situations.

## Governance of NU

At present NU is run by a ten-person General Committee consisting of a Chief Executive Officer and an Executive Committee of 5 men and 4 women. This General Committee oversees the organization's basic operation and makes decisions as to its strategic agenda.

Below the general Committee NU is broken into six distinct operational units that handle either the organization's administrative affairs or indeed carry out its projects and programs. These six units are known as:

- Programs
- Technical Support
- Partnership and Networking
- Advocacy, Research & Communication
- Monitoring & Evaluation
- Administration and Finance

NU's main office is located in Lalmatia, Dhaka, and the organization has nine field offices operating in five Bangladesh districts: Rangpur, Tangail, Barisal, Pirojpur and Munshiganj. NU holds a total staff of 145 people, 88 male and 57 female. A diagram of NU's organizational structure can be found in the Appendix.

## NU's Basic Strategy

At the most basic level, NU utilizes a general three-point strategy to meet its objectives. Each of NU's major projects and initiatives, fall under one or more of these three points.

- Awareness-Building
- Capacity-Building
- Networking and Campaigning

## MAJOR PROJECTS OF NU, 2007 - 2008

Since its inception, NU has worked to strengthen local government in Bangladesh via the dual imperatives of, on the one hand, raising awareness among the general masses of people's basic human rights and, on the other, building people's capacity to pursue and realize these rights. NU recognizes that democratic elections are by themselves insufficient in fulfilling democracy; that the poor, marginalized, and disadvantaged must be given the power to participate in and contribute to all those decision-making processes that affect their lives. Accordingly, NU strives to provide an enabling condition for the people to set up institutions and mobilize themselves.

NU's project areas are manifold, but largely concentrate on empowering people at the grassroots level and strengthening those institutions that form the pillars of good governance. NU holds special interest in democratizing the historically gender-imbalanced *"Shalish"*, Bangladesh's traditional rural dispute-resolution system. A fair and equitable *Shalish* especially entails unprecedented access to justice for rural women – the 'poorest of the poor' in this country – and in turn a new and exciting horizon in Bangladesh's development journey.

These are NU's major project areas and initiatives for 2007-2008, with descriptions of the directions each project took in the past year as well as, when applicable, an outline of progress made and challenges faced by each project.

**Project run by NU: 2007-2008**

sl.	Name of the project	Main feature of the project	funding organization	Duration	Budget (in BDT)
<b>Project operated by direct supervision</b>					
1.	Access to Justice through Human Rights Education & Community Mediation	The project aims to uphold human rights, especially to promote women's rights based on the principles of equality and justice.	Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (EED), Germany Bread for the World, Germany Christian Aid, UK	July 2007 to June 2010	28,665,000.00
2.	Improving Women's Access to Equality and Justice		Manusher Jonno Foundation	March 2005 to June 2008	2, 21, 77,835
3.	Rehabilitation Program for Sidr victim, Phase-III	The objectives of the projects are to provide sidr victims full or partly housing support, Repairing schools or club, provide fishing net and boat for affected fishermen, and provide milk giving cow.	Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe - Diakonie Emergency Aid, Germany Christian Aid, UK	June 2008 to April 2009	21,033,000
<b>Project operated through partnership and networking approach</b>					
4.	Strengthening Urban Poor Women's Organizations in Dhaka	Build a coalition of women's organizations working with informal sector women laborers and Dalits for joint campaigning and policy advocacy activities.	One world Action	January 2008 to December 2009	53,82,000
5.	Building National Campaign to protect and promote the Rights of Dalits in Bangladesh	A country free of caste based discrimination in which Dalits and all excluded groups can live with dignity, prosperity, and security.	One world Action	January 2008 to December 2009	38,44,856

# 1. HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISM AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE

NU believes access to justice is a fundamental means of establishing human rights. But there lies immense gap between formal entitlements and actual access and it makes justice within the formal state system beyond the means of poor people. Exorbitant costs, excessive delays and backlogs and above all procedural complexities are major causes in this regard. As a result, informal dispute resolution practices remains popular alongside formal judicial institutions in Bangladesh. Most poor people have no choice but to, settle their disputes using traditional or informal conflict resolution mechanism for its multiple benefit like quick hearing, flexibility, familiar language, environment and no cost.



But the structure of this alternative dispute resolution also reflects the unequal class and gender hierarchy that characterize social relations in rural Bangladesh. It is male dominated especially by the elite and powerful people, women are not only prevented from making their voices heard in a traditional shalish, their presence even on the margins of a public hearing is strongly discouraged. Consequently, in conflicting parties of unequal social or economic status, judgments invariably go in favor of the dominant group. Ruling on matters of custom or religion tend to be made on the basis of personal interpretations of texts and community norms rather than with reference to the legal framework. Nor are shalish rulings impervious to corruption, nepotism and the pressure of political patronage.

Recognizing the potential of Shalish to serve as a means for accessible justice for rural people, women in particular, NU strives to make *Shalish* more open, gender sensitive and democratic. NU believes without the development of alternative institutional structure-which will be equitable and sustainable in the long run-access to justice, will never be democratic. NU's method and strategy in this regard are manifold but essentially consists of following initiatives-

- 1.1. Building people's organization at community level
- 1.2. Empowering women
- 1.3. Strengthening capacity of Union Parishad

# 1.1. STRENGTHENING PEOPLE'S ORGANIZATION

NU emphasizes on building and strengthening people's organization with monitoring capacity for meaningful access to justice of marginalized people as well as development human rights activism. It has initiated Human Rights Monitoring Groups (HRMG) which observes and watches over the human rights situation at the community level, bring violations of human rights to the attention of *Shalish* and helping mediate subsequent *Shalish* hearings. It works using three wings at different layers in the community-



- a) Ward Shalish Committee
- b) Union level Human Rights Monitoring Group
- c) Upazila level Human Rights Monitoring Group

## a) Ward-level *Shalish* Committees

WSCs are formed to ensure appropriate practice of state law and to reduce the incidence of harassment and intimidation of individuals during mediation processes. The members are chosen after a thorough canvassing of local opinions. Individuals with high social acceptability and reputation for their integrity and neutrality are identified as potential members of the committees. The members are provided legal-aid training for enhancing their comprehensive understanding of existing state laws, thereby helping to ensure that *Shalish* verdicts conform to the State's legal framework.

**Activity of HRMG**

The WSC consists of 4 male and 2 female in each ward and a total of 4482 members (1494 female; 2988 male) are representing in 747 WSC in 83 unions of nine working areas. The WSC meets on monthly basis to outline their activities, describe *Shalish* participation and discuss the human rights situation in the community. The members follow up on the decisions taken in the

Event	Event done	participant		Total
		Female	Male	
Quarterly Union level meeting of HRMG	176	1232	2464	3696
Quarterly Upazila level meeting of HRMG	8	70	133	203
HRMG annual conference	4	226	87	313
Quarterly meeting of WSC	759	3795	8349	12144
Training on law and mediation for HRMG	50	387	802	1189

previous meetings, identify strategies for overcoming obstacles and devise future work plans. They also hold special meetings when the need arises, for instance when a *Shalish* session experiences complications.

## b) Human Rights Monitoring Groups (HRMG)

### *Union-level HRMGs*

A total of 83 HRMGs, each formed with selected members of the WSC who are especially interested in the community's human rights situation, are active and functioning at community level. Each HRMG consists of twenty-seven members from nine wards (2 male, 1 female from each ward) of a union. Acting as a human rights "watchdog", HRMGs play an effective role in local mediation processes. Members of HRMGs are given extensive training on human rights law as well as mediation techniques. 'Refresher courses' are given as required.

Each union-level HRMG holds quarterly meetings to review and discuss the human rights situation in their respective community as well as condition of *Shalish*. Members share experiences and describe interesting aspects of recent *Shalish* hearings. They also discuss relevant State laws, which enables members to keep each other updated and informed. These meetings are beneficial for monitoring *Shalish* procedures and to help uphold human rights activism at the community level. During the reporting period a total of 176 monitoring meetings have been held and attended by 3696 members, 36% of which were women. Moreover, 50 units of HRMGs received training on law and mediation in the reporting period.

### **Annual Conference of HRMGs**

*Each year all of the union-level HRMGs convene to hold an annual HRMG conference in their respective areas covered by NU. These conferences are aimed at reviewing and discussing the responsibilities, achievements and strategies utilized by each HRMG over the course of the year. It also serves as a forum for planning future HRMG events and strategies. A report of the human rights situation is presented at each conference. Conferences typically consist of district and upazilla-level administration, UP representatives, other development organizations, journalists, educationalists and members of civil society. This board-spectrum representation entails that the conferences often play the dual role of being a public hearing. This year 4 conferences of HRMGs held in four working areas participated by 226 male 87 female.*

### **Upazilla-level HRMGs**

NU operates nine HRMGs at the upazilla level. These HRMGs function as higher level 'networks', which provide a broader discussion and awareness platform than what could otherwise be achieved from the union-level HRMGs alone. Every union provides 3 of its members (2 men, 1 woman) to their respective upazilla-level HRMG. This year each upazilla-level HRMG met 8 times. In total, upazilla-level HRMG meetings were attended by 203 members (male 133, female 70).

NU observed all the community organizations want to see their forum independent and self-reliant organizations in the long-run. All the committees have democratic (elected) structures which are instrumental in developing better sense of ownership among the members. Most members trained and have had preliminary understanding of human and women rights.

The HRMGs are much more visible in the community as a collective strength in protecting rights of people especially women and eliminating all kinds of social abuses and prejudice from the community. Their collective or individual efforts in resisting hilla marriage, child marriage, domestic violence, establishing inheritance right of women, realizing rights of alimony and maintenance, has made them a great comfort to the destitute people in one hand and a pressure group to the influential people on the other hand.

The HRMG members increased participation in social activities and social organizations enhanced their acceptance in the community. Many members are representing in maximum social organization in the community. Their growing relation with UP bodies has made the UP more accountable and accessible for people. For instance, with the assistance of UP they helped a large number of vulnerable people in getting VGF cards, VGD cards, elderly allowance, widow allowance, and allowance for disable and other support from government and non government organizations. During natural calamities like flood and cyclone sidr, they responded to the affected people through distributing relief goods, giving shelter, repairing houses, educational institutions, mosque and roads with their own contribution.





HRMG, GWLN initiative to protect  
Human Rights

Issue	Number
Child marriage resistance	101
Dowry resistance	24
Polygamy	5
Hilla marriage and oral divorce	16
Marriage registration	21



### Impact of NU's shalish democratizing initiatives

Increasing number of disputes resolved peacefully through NU facilitated *Shalish* indicates the growing recognition, acceptance and influence in rural communities of the democratic and human rights values espoused by NU. It likewise demonstrates the effectiveness of NU's interventions in redefining *Shalish* in a way that reconciles the unique situation faced by rural Bangladeshi's with the need for traditional modes of dispute resolution to adhere to constitutionally recognized human rights. Systemic mediation procedure like proper recording of complaints, investigation, mediation

#### Status of shalish : 2007-2008

session within short-time, mediators equipped with legal knowledge, shalish verdicts based on law and human rights standard, follow-up of the decision and above all open participation of both parties in mediation has increased its recognition to the community. Thus, NU has able to create an unbiased, violence and

Types of Complaint	last years pending	Received this year	Settled	Dropped	Send to the court	pending
Family matters	100	529	359	141	3	124
Maintenance	66	202	114	62	3	84
Polygamy	18	33	12	16	0	21
Dowry related	34	141	84	37	1	53
Land related	41	134	66	40	5	64
Others**	61	308	218	74	0	77
Total	320	1347	853	370	12	423

muscle free environment that protects the interest of marginalized and vulnerable people's access to justice through peaceful resolution.

In the 2007-2008 reporting period, 1347 complaints were registered, of them 853 complaints settled peacefully. Around 2713 persons have been benefited from the shalish; of them about 56 % were women. One of the key successes of NU facilitated *Shalish* is that women are now receiving the property and/or money that was otherwise denied them as a consequence of male-dominated *Shalish* hearings, where traditional ideologies which subordinated women are being replaced by a more open and egalitarian perspective. In the reporting period, 68 women received 1,388,930 taka as alimony, maintenance for her and children and dowry related compensation etc. This money helps provide these women with important financial security and in some cases also allowed these women to buy cropland, build a house or invest in a small business. In some cases NU helped women to save their *Shalish*-earned money in a formal bank account.





### Monetary realization for the beneficiary

Category of Realization	Type of beneficiary (number and amount of realization in tk)				Total Beneficiaries	Total amount of realization
	Female	Realization	Male	Realization		
Alimony	35	1032500	0	0	35	1032500
Maintenance	16	282380	0	0	16	282380
Compensation for physical assault,	10	29200	27	47450	37	76650
Compensation for property damage	1	5000	11	37300	12	42300
loan payment	6	39850	24	223200	30	263050
	68	1,388,930	62	307,950	130	1,696,880

Besides formal registration with NU, the trained mediators settled a lot of complaints locally maintaining state law and the human rights standard. NU decided to record those shalish and in the last six month of project period and 424 shalish were recorded mediated by HRMG, WSC and GWLN. In the reporting period 16 cases lodged with the judicial court were peacefully settled through NU initiative with the consent of disputants.

One of the strength of shalish is women's increased participation shalish. This shows that women are becoming increasingly aware of their rights and are in turn increasingly confident to pursue these rights.

### Legal Support for Marginalized People

NU tries to settle most complaints of civil nature through *Shalish* hearings. In the rare instance where a dispute cannot be settled through *Shalish*, NU refers the case to the courts and provides legal aid to the complainants, who are often insolvent, distressed and unable to bear the expense of court proceedings on their own. However, with respect to complaints of criminal nature, NU follows the criminal justice system of state. NU has formed a panel of lawyers in five districts of its working areas.

### Status of legal support

Courts	filed	withdrawn /relected	judgment	pending
family court	32	1	3	28
women and child tribunal	29	6	7	16
other criminal	4	1	0	3
Land related	7	0	3	4
Total	72	8	13	51

Status of unregistered shalish	
Type of complaints	Number of complaints settled
Maintenance	12
Domestic Violence	76
Family dispute	77
Land related	97
Financial transaction	24
Violence among the disputants	45
Divorce	14
Alimony	1
Love affair related	4
Child marriage	1
Quarreling	8
Stealing	9
Compensation	37
Oral divorce	1
Polygamy	3
Dowry	9
Eve teasing	2
Property right	4
	424

## 1.2. EMPOWERING WOMEN

NU recognizes the importance of building women leaders at the grassroots level given the crisis in formal institutions. Bangladesh's rural women are widely known as the 'poorest of the poor' in this country, vulnerable to a long entrenched patriarchal social order and holding very little access to justice, basic social services, and community decision-making processes. One of NU's key concerns is hence to empower rural women, including elected women members of the UPs, to build their capacity to realize their human rights themselves and help to ensure their effective participation in the electoral process, in local development committees, and important decision-making activities like *Shalish*. To this end, NU works to form organizations of women like the Grassroots Women Leaders Network, providing them with training and workshops on key human rights and legal issues, and helping them consolidate their power to respond to the injustices they face as a group.



### Grassroots Women Leaders Network (GWLN)

GWLN represents NU's main women's leadership-building initiative, operating at both the union and upazilla level. Members of a GWLN are confident, creative and well equipped with the knowledge and skills required to be strong human rights advocates in their respective communities. They mobilize themselves to protest against violations against women's rights, and their growing strength has also seen the growth of a stronger, more fair and participatory *Shalish*.

Members of the GWLN aspire to see their networks eventually achieve a level of independence and self-reliance. Such autonomy would on the one hand evidence the goal of women's empowerment in rural Bangladesh being achieved, and it would also give the women greater sovereignty over their own interests and their own destinies as Bangladeshi citizens.

#### Formation of GWLN

Each of NU's 83 union-level GWLNs has 26 members. Two women from each of the nine wards that comprise a union are selected to a union-level GWLN based on the potential they demonstrate for being strong and active community women's leaders. The eight remaining members are selected by drawing three women from each union's UP as well five college-going girls or interested women likewise identified as potential community women leaders. These GWLN members are trained on a variety of issues ranging from legal rights to health care problems.

#### - Activities of GWLN

The GWLN meets quarterly at union and upazilla level where they share their experiences in working to establish women's rights, discuss the GWLN's activities in the past quarter and plan the GWLN's upcoming activities for the term ahead. Enlisted women leaders participate in such a meeting, and when possible women UP members and female college students also take part. The meetings build confidence among the women leaders to collectively work against violations of women's rights in their communities. They also play a significant role at the community level in educating people - women and men - about human rights and the intrinsic value of gender equality. GWLN has annual conference each year in all working areas.



In addition the GWLN, NU frequently organizes training sessions and workshops in collaboration with elected representatives, mediators, teachers, representatives of non-governmental organizations and other community members. These training sessions and workshops aim at exchanging experiences in traditional mediation and to deliberate the traditional community laws and the settlement of disputes in accordance with these laws, and as such extend and compliment the work done and achievements made in the GWLN meetings. The issues discussed in the training are as follows - Human rights, Fundamental Rights, Women's Rights, CEDAW, VAW, Gender, legal issues, Family Law (Muslim, Hindu), Good Governance, mediation, and leadership skill.

#### Activities with Community Women

Event	Event done	participants
Quarterly Union level GWLN	152	2736
Quarterly Upazila level GWLN	28	532
Training for GWLN	35	805
Women Group Discussion	293	11720
Vulnerable Women Group	245	6370
Vulnerable Women Group	19	513
Annual conference of GWLN	9	630

#### Annual Conference of GWLN

*Nine annual conferences of the GWLN were held this year in Barisal Sadar, Swarupkhathi, Banaripara, Sreenagar, Kalihati, Tangail Sadar, Rangpur Sadar, Badarganj and Gangachara Upazila. These conferences build upon the achievements made in the quarterly meetings, helping to consolidate women leaders' power and raising hope, confidence and enthusiasm to continue pushing for a more gender equal Bangladesh. The GWLN conference saw comprehensive discussion on issues and challenges facing rural women in their communities. The conference also saw the review of existing strategies and the planning of future strategies to prevent violence against women, campaign against child marriage, promote the government's initiative to register marriages, births and deaths, ensure women remain entitled to their property rights, and promote participation in Shalish.*

GWLN members are aware of basic human rights and existing legal provisions to mediate domestic violence and family disputes. Many of them are represented in school management committees, market development committees, and village development committees (etc.), and a few of them are active members of political parties at the local level. Leadership training and social capital building that arises from membership in the GWLN results in the development of individual women's sense of self and a feeling that they are in control of their lives as opposed to being at the mercy of a system that works to control them.

Members of the GWLN are increasingly engaged in the organizing of protests against violations of women's human rights. They are actively working in the community to raise voices against such practices as child marriage, dowry, hilla, and unofficial divorce. In turn they are also fighting for formal change to marriage registration legislation so as to ensure that women's right to divorce is included in the marriage registration form. Further evidence of their collective empowerment can be found in the example include the community demonstrations and protests they have undertaken and their dialogues with upazilla-level administrators on human rights issues.

The GWLN is becoming increasingly self-reliant and self-sustaining. Their democratic (elected) structures are instrumental in developing a better sense of ownership of the Network among its members. The GWLN's pro-active role has increased their recognition, acceptance and respect in the community, and opened doors for them in public spaces which were otherwise closed. Village women have become more enthusiastic and courageous in addressing human rights violation in the communities and have exerted pressure on making Shalish more fair and participatory.



## Women Group Discussion

Part of a GWLN's mandate is to have each GWLN member organize "Women Group Discussion" sessions in their community with their women neighbors. This has the positive effect of building participating women's social capital and building grassroots women's knowledge of their rights as Bangladeshi citizens.



Level of awareness among the village women regarding, women rights, inheritance rights, domestic violence, family and marital law increased remarkably through attending women group discussion or sharing the experience and information learned from it. Being aware from the discussion, village women gained to realize their rights in the family like inheritance right, right to alimony etc. The remarkable improvement is that they have been able to pursue the male members to look women with dignity and equally both in family and neighborhood. The women group discussion encouraged many women to register complaints with NU for domestic violence or other family matters.

## Establishing Rights of Vulnerable Women

Widows and divorced and destitute women remain among the most vulnerable sections of Bangladeshi society. Long entrenched socio-cultural customs as well as flaws in the legal system, particularly those related to the inheritance of property, perpetuate the problem. These women are significantly marginalized and deprived of their rights to income, property as well as decent livelihoods.

NU conducted action research to comprehensively understand the level perspective and views of widows and destitute and divorced women with respect to their denied rights. NU reveals that it is important to raise awareness among these women as to their rights and that specific interventions are needed to help ensure that these women's inheritance rights realized, that dispute resolutions involving these women are fair and equitable, that these women receive proper public services and support, and to enhance their dignity and status in society. The findings also revealed a serious need to provide training to these women so as to raise their level of awareness, build their confidence, and change their prevailing attitude and mindset towards their position in society - that it is changeable; that they deserve more. To this end NU has formed groups of vulnerable women in each union (83 groups; 27 members each group) of its working areas.

NU arranged quarterly meeting with this vulnerable women groups to make them aware about their rights, and claim their rights from government and non-government agencies. NU also have initiative to link them with service providing organization as well as changing people's mean attitude towards them through its other program with community. In the reporting period 19 groups of vulnerable women received training on right based approach across NU's working areas.



With regards to NU's efforts to establish the rights of vulnerable women, the women in NU's vulnerable women groups who received training now feel more empowered and dignified after being participants in such groups and activities. These women are also now more aware of



their rights including their rights to basic services provided by various government agencies. Specifically, 179 vulnerable women were provided "Vulnerable Group Feeding cards", 66 received "Vulnerable Group Development cards", 284 received elderly allowance, 30 received widow allowance, and 38 women received allowance for disability. In Gangchara, 23 women have found work in a road repairing project administered by ASOD with NU support. 9 women are rearing livestock and poultry, receiving the relevant training from BRAC in Gangachara. In almost all cases NU played a key role in establishing these services and benefits.



NU's Vulnerable Women Groups have succeeded in drawing the attention of local, upazila level administration and other organization to their impoverished position, and are now receiving positive responses and support from these organizations. Prevailing social attitudes towards these women are gradually being changed. As capable and knowledgeable women's groups, they are now recognized and respected by the community

Level of confidence among the vulnerable women increased to an extent that they do not like to live on mercy of others any more rather they have involved in various income generating activities. Once they were denied micro-credit from NGOs but now they are allowed not only credit but also other service provision like poultry and livestock rearing, work in road development work, food for work programme etc. They are also earning livelihood through small business like vegetable selling, tea-stall, grocery shop, sewing etc. Besides, they participated in some trainings relating to above mentioned services. They are also vocal in getting their basic right such as VGF card, VGD cards, khas land, elderly allowance, and widow allowance from the UP and other government department. During the project period 187 vulnerable women got VGF cards, 213 women got VGD cards, 29 women got widow wage, 65 women got work in road development project of NGOs, 21 women received loan from NGOs and started small scale business.

## 1.3. STRENGTHENING CAPACITY OF UNION PARISHAD

Local government is acknowledged as highly viable mechanism through which democratic processes and practices can be established and participatory development ensured. Union Parishad is the lowest tier of local level government in Bangladesh and directly involved with community as its representatives are elected by the people. Thus it has imperative responsibility for the service of community. However, Union Parishad remains weak and inactive for lack of transparency, political interference, limited authority, lack of accountability and with limited orientation towards local communities. All the constraints with UP has made them less accountable to their electors or community people and it affected the relation between both parties. They rarely consulted the communities on the planning and implementation of development projects. The service provided to the community is of extremely poor quality. Additionally, widespread corruption was evident in the functioning of UP. This bad governance directly contributed to the pervasive nature of poverty and ensuring of legal and human rights of people. NU believes, without proper activation of Union Parishad, community development can not be possible. So it has taken enormous efforts to strengthen capacity of UP. NU's strategy and methods for the capacity of UP are as follows -

- Increasing female representative's role in UP
- Activating standing and other committees of UP
- Increasing interaction with community people



### - Increasing female representative's role in UP

Elected female representatives at the UP are still marginalized politically or socially. In order to strengthen local level democracy, elected women representatives must establish greater social legitimacy as human rights activists and advocates. NU's GWLN is formed with the participation of UP female members. They regularly participate in activities of GWLN - Union level and upazila level meeting, conferences. They were given leadership building training and other training on human rights, women rights and legal issues. In the reporting period 87 female UP members, participated in training on family law and mediation. After NU's intervention with UP, these women role in the UP increased remarkably. Their service to the community people is greater than other male members of UP. They played active role in leading GWLN to protect rights of community women. In most of the shalish hearing in the community, female UP members take part and that helps women's access to justice in large number.

### - Activating standing and other committees of UP

For increasing UP services to the community people, NU has taken initiative to activate some standing committees and other committees of UP - Law and Order committee and Committee for resisting violence against women (Nari Nirjaton





Protirodh Committee- NNPC). Another initiative of NU with UP is activating arbitration council. In the beginning, NU arranged a day long orientation program about function of UP in different union of its working areas. After the orientation, NU helped UP in re-organizing standing committees of law and order and NNPC. In some unions, these committees were formed for the first time in UP. The committees regularly meet on quarterly basis and follow up their activities and make future plan.

#### Activities with UP

NU's initiative of activation of arbitration council and standing committees observed significant progress in strengthening local level government. Standing committees are fully activated and operational in the selected 61 unions. The standing committees strictly monitored law and order situation or violence against women and children through follow-up

Event	Event done	Participants		
		Female	Male	Total
Orientation on basic function of Union Parishad	38	102	356	458
Quarterly meeting on Arbitration Council with UP	39	65	152	217
Quarterly meeting of standing and other committees of UP	78	312	836	1148
Half yearly coordination meeting with UP and HRMG	76	856	1869	2725

meeting and took action plan if there is any violation. For instance, during the flood in the working areas, law and order committees initiated watchdog committee consisted of community people to protect the areas from robbery or other irregularities. The committees also took stance against violation of rights like violence against women, hilla marriage or curbing drug business and eve teasing with assistance of the members of NU initiated groups.

The performance of standing committees enhanced Union Parishad's role and responsibility to the community people. The submission of activity report to the Upazila level administration created a scope to increase accountability of union parishad. The administration also monitored function of the committees. In Gangachara Upazila, Rangpur, the upazila level administration took initiative to activate standing committees and arbitration councils in all unions assessing the impact of NU's activities with UP.

### Increasing interaction with community people

For establishing good governance at local level NU tries to make the UP more accessible for community people. NU invites the members of UP in its entire programme especially in training workshop and mediation. This year NU initiated coordination meeting between HRMG and UP on half yearly basis. In the meeting, HRMG inform their activities to the UP and seek their suggestion and cooperation to come over constraint. UP also shared activities and consulted about their development planning. Thus HRMG played important role in communicating local community to the basic service of UP.



## 2.1. RAISING HUMAN RIGHTS AWARENESS/GOOD GOVERNANCE

NU understands that people need to be aware of their rights before they can take steps to pursue and realize these rights - i.e., in all cases awareness must precede fulfillment. NU thus strives to raise awareness among the masses on a variety of issues critical to the human rights and good governance situation in Bangladesh. Since many people in rural Bangladesh are illiterate however, 'unconventional' measures are thus often needed to cultivate a strong human rights and good governance consciousness. NU's Community Cultural Program (CCP) is one of the organization's key strategies aimed at educating rural Bangladeshis as to their rights as citizens.



### Community Cultural Program

In collaboration with local entertainers, NU's CCP delivers human rights education in rural areas by way of issue-focused popular cultural performances, including dramas, films and folk songs. These performances engage issues like domestic abuse while simultaneously providing a space for rural people's entertainment.

The cultural performances are arranged in local hat-bazar (market place) or other convenient places where people usually gather. Sometimes it is also arranged in the Uthan (Yard) of villagers in order to adequately reach the female audience.

#### Status of cultural performance

Event	Number of shows	Participants		
		Female	Male	Total
Theater Show	51	5148	6794	11942
Folk song presentation	203	6814	7737	14551
Workshop with cultural team	10	30	50	80

Both the Uddyog Theater Group and Uddyog Baul Team deliver shows that disseminate information regarding women's rights, inheritance, dowry, children's rights, child marriage, unlawful *Shalish* and the necessity of accountability and transparency in local government. Since community people typically lack such sources of live popular entertainment the theatre and cultural shows thus attracted a significant audience of rural people. This has provided an invaluable opportunity to help transform prevailing social attitudes.

#### Formation of the CCP

*The CCP is essentially comprised of two distinct units: the "Uddyog Theater Group" and other the "Uddyog Baul Team". Both of these units are formed with local popular performers who have long been in touch with local cultural heritage and liberal cultural sensitivities. The Uddyog Theater Team consists of nine performers while the Baul Team utilizes performers as per its required musical instruments at the time of the performance.*

*After having formed its Theater Group and Baul Team, NU then moves on to developing local demand-based folk songs and/or scripts for dramas. A 3-4 day workshop is organized to make the performers efficient and skilled to communicate to the audience the particular human rights issue in focus. Scripts and baul songs vary in different areas as they are performed based on the types of abuses known to be prevalent in a particular area.*

## 2.2. VOLUNTARY YOUTH ACTION FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

NU recognizes the significant place that youth and students can hold in Bangladesh's development story. A socially and environmentally conscious young generation entails a future of socially and environmentally conscious Bangladesh citizens and leaders. Accordingly, NU places particular emphasis on awareness and capacity-building campaigns aimed at young Bangladeshis, including Dalit youth.

### Jubo Nagorik Odhikar Jote (Youth Citizen's Rights Alliance)

Jubo Nagorik Odhikar Jote ('Youth Citizen's Rights Alliance') is a voluntary youth and student alliance founded in 2004 by group of students committed to bringing about progressive social change in Bangladesh. Since its inception, the Alliance has successfully attracted youths through various programs and activities carried out in different parts of the country. The goal of these programs is to create awareness among youth on issues that concern the young generation most, including labor, education, environment, and human rights. The programs also intend to develop youths and students as future leaders of society.



The Alliance strongly believes that in order to create a new generation of social leaders it is essential to make them aware about socio-political and economic issues that continuously shape and reshape our lives and livelihoods. It believes that social consciousness leads to authentic commitment, which is the key to making progress and advancing society.

The Alliance seeks to demystify the present globalization euphoria that has grasped the hearts and minds of so many young people by educating young people to both the positive *and* negative realities of globalization. To this end, the Alliance seeks solidarity with other youth groups around the world who share the Alliance's vision of an 'alternative' world order. By networking with other like-minded youth and student groups the Alliance hopes to gain new insight into global trends and empower young Bangladeshis to take the initiative to push for positive social change.

NU extends technical and logistical support to the Alliance's activities as they see huge potential in organizing and mobilizing youths and students for social progress. To attract youth to the Alliance, NU provides training sessions and workshops for youth in its working areas on relevant social issues like human rights awareness and law. After completing three days of preliminary training, the participating youth are invited to join the Alliance by creating own youth group units.

### Activity of alliance

The Alliance and its units respond to different issues the young generation find important via demonstration and rallies, seminar and roundtable discussions, general awareness programs, day observances, and charity drives. Some of the programs are organized by the Alliance or its units themselves, and in some cases the Alliance participates in civil society groups programs. The units actively participate in the programs organized by the members of their network.



In the reporting period the Alliance organized a number of signature and letter campaigns which has immense output in the respective issues. Along with the government's initiative to uproot corruption, the alliance has elaborate campaign in this regard. The alliance and Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) jointly organized a seminar titled 'invincible youth must resist corruption' on observation of International Youth Day 2008'.

The other activity done by the alliance is as follows -

- 16 Coordination meeting among the membes
- 7 Trainings on Human Rights and Legal Awareness
- 1 Human Rights and Leadership Building Training for Dalit youth fourm
- Reception to the SSC passed students in Rangpur area and Dalit students in Dhaka
- 5 signature campaign programs on different issues

#### Helping Disaster Affected People

During seasonal flood in Rangpur and Tangail areas, the members of alliance stood by the flood affected people with relief goods like food, medicine, child food, fuel, clothes and necessary daily commodities with their own contribution and from the local citizens. In Barisal, the alliance collected warm clothes from citizens and distribute them among the poor people. The members played important role during massive cyclone 'Sidr' that devastated the southern Bangladesh. The Alliance members collected money and goods from people and distributed among the affected people. Besides, they helped government and nongovernmental agencies in listing the affected people.

The alliance is active in five districts of NU's working areas (viz. Rangpur, Tangail, Munshiganj, Barisal and Pirojpur) including Dhaka City. The regional youth coordinators oversee the activity of alliance in those areas.

#### Dalit Youth Movement

Dalits are the most disadvantaged group in Bangladesh. A Dalit youth group has been organized by the insistence of the Alliance. They organize meeting and seminar in collaboration with other youth organizations for establishing their dignity and rights.

#### Signature Campaign

Area	Issue of campaign	Impact
Barisal	To protect the honor of Shaid Minar	Citizens responded instantly and all the illegal temporary establishment removed
	To practice spirit and true history of liberation war for resist corruption	Civil society, newspaper and political parties expressed support in favor of the issues
Rangpur	To elope Bank draft, pay order system for job application and create internship opportunity for students	The campaign gained popularity among the students and they decided to continue all over the country
	To establish university in the greater Rangpur	The campaign strengthen the movement to set up university in greater Rangpur and Government decided to set up a University in Rangpur soon
Tangail	To protect the Lauhojong river from pollution and illegal encroachment	The issue sensitized civil society, journalists and other citizens.
Dhaka	Rally to save the Burigana river from pollution and illigal encroachment (jointly organized with BAPA)	





## Youth Social Forum-Bangladesh

Youth group with other organization (political youth organization, development organization and local clubs) forms Youth Social Forum-Bangladesh. This is one of the key campaign organizations against globalization, imperialism and privatization. Each month they organized study circle on different issue related with Imperialist Globalization.

JNAJ is a member of YSF and NU works as a secretariat of YSF- Bangladesh. 25<sup>th</sup> January YSF Bangladesh observed 'Global day of action and mobilization with the slogan 'Rise youth and make new world'. A rally and discussion meeting held on observing the day participated by hundreds youths and eminent citizens. Alliance youth are actively involved in the activities of the WSFB. They participate in rallies, seminars, and workshops initiated by the WSFB, typically centered on globalization and neo-liberalism issues.



Young people active in the community

## GLOBAL XCHANGE PROGRAMME:

Another endeavor Nagorik Uddyog participates in involving youth in Bangladesh is Global Xchange (GX), an international volunteer exchange programme giving qualified youth aged 18-25 the unique opportunity to be a part of and international team of like-minded young people living and working for three months, first, in Hounslow, England, and another three months in one of three different communities in Bangladesh: Rangpur Shadar, Badarganj and Gonachara Upazila. The team of volunteers shared skills and experiences, and made valuable contributions to local communities in such diverse areas as environment, youth leadership, elderly support, and advocacy for people with disabilities.



As a partnership programme, GX is co-managed and delivered internationally by the British Council and Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), with Nagorik Uddyog and Young power in Social Action (YPSA) helping implement Bangladesh - level p\operations. The principles guiding GX's goal of 'developing and inspiring active Global Citizens' find their form in the GX partners' shared belief that young people have the power to make positive change in the world; building mutual understanding and respect between countries and peoples. Volunteers involved in GX learn from each other, become aware of issues facing different countries and different peoples around the globe, and put their learning into action. The theme of the UK- Bangladesh GX this year, the first year GX has operated in Bangladesh, was 'Building Youth Capacity as Leaders in the Community'. Nagorik Uddyog was a line manager in the first phase of this exchange, and looks forward to continued involvement in this valuable community development - youth development imitative.



### 3. NETWORKING AND CAMPAIGNS

NU believes in promoting and protecting human rights at local, national and international level, collective effort can play significant role and so NU affiliated itself with a number of human rights based organization at national and international level, of them few are formed with its initiative.

#### 3.1. NU- INITIATED CAMPAIGNS

##### Partnership of Women in Action (PaWA)

NU has formed a network Partnership of Women in Action (PaWA), a coalition of organizations working with the informal sector of women laborers, providing these women training in order to build their capacity of economic development as well as to realize their rights. The aim of the network is to set in motion an autonomous movement of migrant and Dalit women laborers who are able to lobby Bangladesh policy-makers to bring about substantive changes in their life and livelihoods. PaWA is currently in the process of networking with other organizations, institutions and influential individuals working in the field of women workers rights. Member organizations of the Network are as follows-



- Banchte Sikho Nari
- Bhsoman Nari Sramik Unnyon Kendra
- Mukta Shishu o Nari Sramik Forum
- PaWA Uddyog
- Dalit Nari Forum

##### Training for core members

Issue	participants
Training on Cooperative policy and formation	25
Training on Mediation	25
Training on Rights based approach	22

PaWA arranges various advocacy programs to draw the attention of people about women labor of informal sector and capacity building training to enhance their financial ability as well as building their confidence. For organizational development, a core team is formed with 5 members from each member organizations of the network.

The training enhanced confidence and skill of women to engage in income generating activities collectively. The trainees were given materials and capital (revolving fund). They are now fully involved in business activities and their product like candle, embroidered dresses, sharies, spice powder has earned reputation in the market.

##### Skill building training

Organization	Training issue	participants
Banchte Sikho Nari	Candle making	22
	Karchupi (fine sewing work)	
Bhasoman Nari Sromik Unnyon Kendra	Candle Making	25
	Embroidery	23
PaWA Uddyog	Candle Making	21
	Sewing	17
Mukta Nari o Shishu Sramik Forum	Karchupi (fine sewing work)	25
	Candle Making	24
Dalit Nari Forum	Sewing/cutting	20



## Advocacy activities

PaWA organized a good number of meeting and seminar to draw the attention of citizens' and policy makers towards the inferior status of women labor in informal sector. The network regularly publishes a newsletter called 'Sramajibi Nari Khanta- (Women worker's voice)' of used to inform people about PaWA activities as well as problems faced by Bangladesh's women workers.

Meeting and Seminar		
Organizer	Issue	Output
PaWA and National Domestic Women Labour Union	'Domestic labour: Modern Slavery,	The participants were sensitized about the recognition of informal sector women labour and vowed to pursue government to include them in labour policy or form new policy
PaWA and Nagorik Uddyog	Women labor of informal sector: In the perspective of development	
PaWA	Commodity price and food security for urban poor	The citizens were concerned about food security of urban poor and pursued to find out possible way out of this problem.

### Ensuring rights of women

Along with capacitate women labor in informal sector for economic development; the network has a remarkable stride in ensuring rights of women through traditional mediation. In June 2006- July 2007, member organizations PaWA received 13 complaints regarding alimony, domestic violence, maintenance and due payment of salary from employer. Of them 5 complaints were settled and 8 cases are waiting for resolution. PaWA helped 2 women complainants to receive 1, 06,500 taka as alimony. Mukta Shishu o Nari Sramik Forum, one of the members of PaWA, helped a garment worker to get her due salary (28,000 taka) from the employer. Besides, it helped 13 members to get elderly allowance and 25 members for VGD cards from Department of Social Welfare of Government.

### Campaign on Citizen's Right to Information (CCRTI)

People's right to information is one of the key focuses of NU's advocacy efforts. With the equal input of five other organizations, NU initiated CCRTI as a means toward helping to ensure that legislation established to protect people's right to information is enacted and enforced. At present, NU is operating as Secretariat of CCRTI.

The CCRTI's strategy is to decentralize the movement into grassroots level and with this view it has formed its 1<sup>st</sup> divisional wing in Khulna with participation of professionals and citizens. This year the network has taken elaborate campaign to enact law on right to information. It has arranged a three day long round table meeting in observance of International Right to Information Day. The meeting has significant impact in the right to information movement. Facing strong pressure, the government passed Right to Information Act - 2008. CCRTI hailed the government for inviting citizens' comments on the draft act. CCRTI critically observed the draft act and send its comments.

#### Meeting/seminar arranged by CCRTI

- International Investment Organization: Development And Contract, 15 September, 2007; Dhaka
- Right To Information In Combating Corruption, 22 September, 2007, Khulna
- Journalism, Right To Information And Security Of Journalists, 3 May, 2008, Dhaka
- Right to Information in Establishing Democracy And Law and Order, 27 September, 2007, Dhaka
- Development and Investment Contract: People's Right to Information, 28 September, 2007, Dhaka
- Right to Information in Ensuring Transparency And Accountability and Resisting Corruption, 29 September 2007, Dhaka

### - Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Rights Movement (BDERM)

The Dalit community is one of the most economically marginalized and socially excluded groups in Bangladesh. Unfavorable policies of the Government, bureaucratic hassles and non-cooperation among concerned authorities, have meant that Dalits have started losing jobs, which aggravates their current sufferings.



Basic provisions like health care, education, shelter, food and water are not adequately provided for Dalits in Bangladesh. Most Dalits have no access to the facilities that are required for a dignified standard of living because they cannot afford them. The living conditions in Dalit colonies and slums are unhygienic. As a result, malnutrition and other diseases like diarrhea, cholera, TB, and pneumonia are common among Dalits, and many die every year due to lack of medical treatment. In terms of access to education, there are no schools available for Dalits and therefore no opportunities for Dalit children to be taught in their own mother language. The illiteracy rate among Dalits is striking; it is estimated that only 5% of Dalits can read and write.

Since 2002, Bangladesh Dalit's Human Rights (BDHR) has been working to ensure the rights and basic human needs of the Dalits in Bangladesh are recognized. Nagorik Uddyog provide this community technical and organizational support at national and international level in terms of campaign, seminar, meeting, research and publication. This year NU helped BDHR to initiate a project 'Building National Campaign to protect and promote the Rights of Dalits in Bangladesh' with the funding of One World Action. A National platform named BDERM (Bangladesh Dalit and Excluded Rights Movement) has been formed through a National consultation meeting participated by Dalit and excluded people from all over the country. BDERM has a national working committee with the representative of different Dalit and Excluded community. The network formally begins its activities with a press briefing at Dhaka Reporters Unity. BDERM Publishes a newsletter named 'Dalit o Banchito Samachar' and a research on the status of Dalit and excluded community in Bangladesh is on process.

## 3.2. NATIONAL LEVEL ALLIANCES

### - Access to Justice and Right to Information Network (AJIN)

NU has played a pioneering role in the establishment of the AJIN, which currently has 12 member Organizations in 11 districts. AJIN provides the opportunity to share ideas and experiences and to find common ways of promoting human rights and good governance through diverse approaches in the different regions of Bangladesh.

### - SHUJAN - Shushashoner Janney Nagarik

SHUJAN - Shushashoner Janney Nagarik is a pioneering network working for promoting good governance and democracy in Bangladesh. NU believes that without good governance and justice, democracy cannot be ensured. One of the guiding tools of democracy is free and fair elections at all levels. With this in mind, a group of civil society members started a movement called Shujan ("Citizens for Good Governance"). As a forum for advocating social reform, Shujan functions at both



the national and district level. At the national level Shujan is comprised of well-known civil society members of Bangladesh. Activities of Shujan include:

- Campaigning for good governance
- Campaigning for electoral reforms
- Public hearing (serving as 'social audits') of candidates in public elections

The Chief Executive of NU is the Assistant Secretary of Shujan, and NU is one of the key members of this forum.



#### - Bangladesh Environment Movement (BAPA)

BAPA is a united national platform of individuals, organizations and institutions interested in the protection of Bangladesh's environment and the conservation of its natural resources. It is also committed to extensive policy advocacy and legal fights for environmental protection, suggesting law reforms and pointing out implementation flaws and representing the people in various committees formed by the government. NU is a key member in BAPA. NU's Chief Executive is Joint Secretary of BAPA, and NU is also a secretariat of BAPA's climate change group. NU participated in site demonstrations, sit-in protests, hunger strikes, rallies, seminars, workshops, and roundtable discussions by BAPA in protection of environment. In the reporting period NU and BAPA jointly organized two seminars titled 'Resurrection of SIDR devastated Sundarbans' and 'Water Management of Bangladesh; Problem and Possibility' in observing the world water day 2008.

#### - Social Action Committee

Protesting against violations of human rights, particularly women's rights, is one of the major objectives of the Social Action Committee, comprised of a network of 41 organizations and eminent personalities of Bangladesh, working in the field of women's empowerment, the Social Action Committee advocates for implementation the National Women Development Policy - 2008 without any alteration suggested by the religious fundamental group. With this view SAC arranged several demonstration, seminar, rally; human chain participated by thousands of human rights individuals and organizations. Nagorik is a member of SAC and have active role in all its agenda and program.

#### - Citizen's Voice against Domestic Violence

To campaign against domestic violence and to pursue the government to formulate appropriate law in order to combat domestic violence, an alliance is active with 14 organizations devoted to promote Human Rights and Women Rights in Bangladesh. Nagorik Uddyog is one of the members of the campaign 'Citizen's Voice against Domestic Violence'.



#### - Strengthening Local Governance (Governance Coalition)

NU is a member of Governance Coalition, a forum of 21 organizations and Network that work for strengthening local level government in order to ensure good governance. The Coalition organized a national convention this year and NU conducted one of the five task forces formed during the convention and the issue was 'Law and Order situation in the local level, justice system and Relevant Issues'. The suggestions raised from the task force were sent to the Committee for reorganizing Local Governance of the Government.

## - Human Rights Forum on UPR

Human Rights Forum on UPR, Bangladesh, a coalition of 17 human rights and development organizations formed to review the human rights situation in Bangladesh in the light of Universal Declaration of Human Rights especially to compare the status of Bangladesh when the Declaration reaches to its sixty years. Nagorik Uddyog is one of the active members of the forum. The forum has planned to prepare a joint stakeholders' report under the UPR and submit to UN after series of national consultations with forum members and Bangladesh Government. This report will follow the guidelines adopted by the United Nations' Human Rights Council.



## People's Health Movement (PHM)

PHM focuses primarily on people's right to health and health services, initiating advocacy campaigns for health issues at national and international levels. In Bangladesh PHM comprises a national level network of more than 300 NGOs and individuals working in the health sector in connection with PHM International. NU is a long-standing member of PHM.

## 3.3. INTERNATIONAL LEVEL ALLIANCES

### World Social Forum-Bangladesh (WSFB)

The WSF was conceived as an international forum against neo-liberal policies and capitalist-led globalization. It believes in advancing the notion of "Another World Is Possible" by providing a space for sharing experiences and discussing alternatives to mainstream consumerism. WSF also works to strengthen alliances between social movements, unions of working people, civil society groups and NGOs. After the 2003 Asian Social Forum in Hyderabad, India, WSFB was formed to express solidarity with the international response to globalization and its effects. NU is one of the key initiators of WSF efforts in Bangladesh. At present, NU is operating as Secretariat of WSFB.

### National and International level Network

<u>National Level</u>	<u>International Level</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Citizen's Voice against Domestic Violence</li> <li>▪ Climate Change Development Forum (CCDF)</li> <li>▪ CA disaster group</li> <li>▪ Human Rights Information and Documentation System (HURIDOCs)</li> <li>▪ HIV/AIDS Program-AITAM</li> <li>▪ Voluntary Service Overseas VSO</li> <li>▪ Government Alliances, World Social Forum (WSF),</li> <li>▪ Global Exchange (GX)</li> <li>▪ Forum on Universal Periodical Review(UPR)</li> <li>▪ Local Justice and Human Rights Network,</li> <li>▪ Aid Accountability and IFI work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ World Social Forum (WSF)</li> <li>▪ South Asians for Human Rights (SAHR)</li> <li>▪ Association of Women's Rights in Development (AWID)</li> <li>▪ Peace in South Asia (PISA)</li> <li>▪ Peoples Forum Against-ADB Women</li> <li>▪ International Center for Research on (ICRW)</li> <li>▪ People's Decade of Human Rights Education (PDHRE-International)</li> <li>▪ South Asian for Composite Heritage (SACH)</li> <li>▪ Asia Dalit Rights Movement (ADRM)</li> <li>▪ International Dalit Solidarity Network (IDSN)</li> </ul>



## 4. ADVOCACY, RESEARCH, AND COMMUNICATION

Human Rights activism requires strong advocacy in terms of sensitizing citizens, policy makers and above all to press and pursue government for taking appropriate measure - so advocacy becomes an integral part of NU's work. NU is currently involved in advocating the issues related to our focus areas both local and national levels.

### At the local level:

Locally, NU focuses on ensuring the implementation of existing laws and policies aimed at protecting women and improving their rights. Focus is also placed on helping ensure the provision of poor peoples access to basic services, the greater use of government legal aid support, the effective participation of women elected representatives at the union council, the activation of the arbitration council of local government, and the strengthening of the local government's standing committees. NU campaigns on the above issues through its regular program like court yard meeting; folk song; theater performance and awareness building activities by CBO members. While facing constraints in implementing its program, NU arranges advocacy meeting on specific issues with participation of community people, government administration, journalists, and civil society groups.



### At the national level:

NU is actively working in conjunction with other civil society groups to promote human rights, women rights, legal development, good governance and establishing democracy. This year NU undertook several advocacy programme on implementation of Women Development Policy -2008, Strengthening Local Government issues, Formulation of policy for informal sector's women labor, establishing rights of Dalit and Excluded people and Citizen's Right to Information.

NU's advocacy efforts generally consisted of the organizing of seminars and roundtables discussions targeting relevant stakeholders.



#### **Women Development Policy**

*NU is actively working for formulation of Women Development Policy since its intervention. When the government imposed new women development policy in 2004 denying the policy made in 1997, NU with its partner organizations and network members had series of program to revive the pervious policy. Facing continuous pressure the government enacted new Women Development Policy-2008 in consultation with civil society groups. But the government again set back from implementation of the policy as per the objection of religious fundamental group. NU undertook strong campaign to unite the citizens against alteration of the policy suggested by the extremists. NU held a national seminar titled 'Women's constitutional Right, Women Development Policy and Recent Debate' participated by the eminent citizens, intellectual and human rights worker. The aim of the seminar was to create consensus among the citizens for implementation of National Women Development Policy-2008 without change. NU also published a book containing writings in favor of the policy by eminent writers.*



For the advocacy purpose, NU conducts research and brings out a good number of working papers regularly. Publication also play important role for advocacy, research output and information dissemination.

## Research

Research occupies one of the vital components of NU's work, helping to provide NU with an informed platform upon which it can build useful and efficient human rights and good governance strategies. Research helps build awareness of the organization and its mandate as well. The research projects NU conducts are managed by individuals with valuable experience in the field.

### Research conducted in 2007-2008

- Pervasive dowry practice in Sreenagor Upazila: causes and consequence
- Barriers and opportunities for grassroots women leaders for effective participation in social and developmental activities at the community level
- Social resistance and movement at the community level
- Hilla Marriage: Problem and Possible way out
- Women development in the perspective of PRSP

## Publications

NU regularly publishes quarterly thematic newsletters with a view to raising people's awareness on important human rights issues. In the reporting period NU publishes 4 issues of Nagorik Uddyog Barta and Narir Swopna Pata ('Women's Dream Pages') respectively. In addition to these newsletters, NU supports the publication of Union Barta - a thematic newsletter by AJIN, Unmochon by CCRTI, Shramojibi Nari Kontha ('Women Worker's Voice') by PaWA and Jubo Uddyog ('Youth Initiative') by Youth Citizens' Rights Alliance.

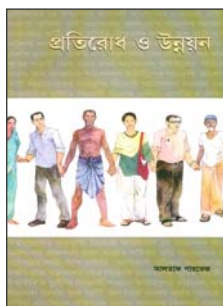
Each of the newsletters engages issues central to NU's mission and mandate. The unit also publishes a good number of posters, leaflet, and booklet for the purpose of its program.

### Local level Advocacy activity

Organized by	Issues
Nagorik Uddyog, Gangachara Unit	Role of Marriage Registrar and Match Maker in combating dowry and child marriage
Christian Aid, Bangladesh and Nagorik Uddyog, Tangail and Barisal Unit	Advocacy Issues on Disaster Risk Reduction

### National Level Advocacy Activity

Organized by	Issues
Nagorik Uddyog	Social Movement: In the perspective of good governance and development
Nagorik Uddyog and BAPa	Resurrection of SIDR devastated Sundarbans
Nagorik Uddyog and BAPA	Water Management: Problem and possibility
Nagorik Uddyog	Women's constitutional Right, Women Development Policy and Recent Debate



"Pratirodh O Unnyan" (Mobilization and Development), Author: Altaf Parvez

Synopsis: This book represents a compilation of profiles of the recent social movements, initiatives and mobilization efforts of the community people from all

over Bangladesh to establish their rights and development.



"Tathyer Odhikar" (Rights to Information)

Synopsis: Campaign on Citizen's Right to Information (CCRI) published this book in collaboration with Nagorik Uddyog. A total of 17 articles on the issues of Right to Information (RTI) have been compiled. The articles focus on successful campaigns on

RTI in India, the Official Secrecy Act in Bangladesh, RTI and democracy, enacting RTI law in Bangladesh, etc.



## 5. Disaster Aid

NU is a people oriented organization, so it always tries to stand by the people, whether in ensuring their rights or when they are endangered to the natural disaster like flood, cyclone or cold wave during winter. In 2007-2008 reporting period, Bangladesh observed frequent seasonal flood and cyclone, of them 'Sidr' was one of the monstrous cyclone of all ages. In June - August 2007, some of NU's working areas (Tangail sadar, Kalihati, Gangachara, Badarganj and Rangpur Sadar Upazila) affected by the two times seasonal flood within short time. NU's scheduled program with the community hampered much by the flood. NU initiated community groups came forward for the distressed people with relief, providing shelter in their own houses, repairing roads/culverts, etc. NU stood by the affected people with emergency relief goods like rice, fuel, pulse, potatoes, salt, oral saline, baby milk and other important medicine. These relief goods were distributed among 1427 families of 18 unions of Kalihati and Tangail Sadar Upazila and 9 unions of Gangachara Upazila, Rangpur. Emergency Cooperation Network (Ec Net) and Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) provided financial aid for relief operation. Member organizations of PaWA also distributed relief goods among 225 families in Keraniganj, Beguntala and Dhalpur and 35 Dalit families in Gabtoli, Dhaka.



The most terrible natural disaster of recent times, cyclone 'Sidr', hit on 15 November 2007 in south-eastern part of Bangladesh. People in three of NU working areas were affected badly by the Sidr. NU undertook immediate relief operation in the most affected areas including its working areas. Community groups in the working areas took immediate aid through providing clothing, shelter and food as well as identifying most affected people and infrastructure. NU distributed emergency relief



among 304 families in the nine unions of Barisal Sadar with the finance of Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF). With the help of Christian Aid, NU distributed relief among 1046 families in four unions of Mathbaria Upazila. NU selected the unions in consultation with Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) and through direct observation. NU maintained overall transparency in enlisting and distribution of relief goods that acclaimed by the UNO, UP members, local people, journalists and also by donors. NU has Initiated rehabilitation program for the Sidr affected people in Shawrupkhathi and Mathbarial upazila of Pirojpur with the funding of EcNet and Christian Aid. The aid included full and partial support for house, school/social club, providing milking cow, fishing boat and net for the Sidr victim to involve income generating activities.

## 6. MONITORING & EVALUATION



NU practices a comprehensive M&E and reporting system that attempts to ensure equal participation and input from both NU staff and the beneficiaries of NU's projects and programs. Regular meetings are held by NU and the community groups, it serves in order to evaluate NU's activities and formulate future plans. Specific tools like monitoring and reporting format, FGD, Case study are conducted for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

Coordination meeting and progress reports are the two basic components of NU's M&E process. In the program level - achievements and constraints against the periodic target are discussed on the basis of reports submitted by the union level staff in the meeting of Upazila unit. Area officers submit the reports in the project level meeting in central office. This report is verified by the program staff, presented and discussed in the Central coordination meeting. Other units (technical support unit) also present their activity reports in the Central Coordination Meeting. All the reports are thoroughly discussed by the concerned staff in the meeting. MERD Unit validates all the reports through vilification and finalizes. This unit also conducted participatory monitoring in the field level for verification and validation of the output achieved as well as determining strategy for redressing challenges. NU maintains frequent consultation and feed backing process in every reporting stage from top to bottom. MERD unit prepares quarterly and annual reports for internal and external purpose.

### Resource and Documentation Center

The resource and documentation center of NU consists of a full fledged Documentation Unit and a reference library. NU produces quite a good number of documents relating to human rights, essential laws, training and workshop materials, case studies, activity report etc. Reference library possesses a comprehensive collection of books, journals, magazines, reports, newspaper clippings, audiovisual material on various issues. It catalogues books and periodicals and keeps newspaper clippings on relevant topics, including wider social and economic issues related to the real-life needs and concerns of poor people as well human rights and law issues. The documentation centre has created database of books articles indexing audiovisual material, and newspaper clippings. The resource and documentation center is useful not only to NU's own staff but also to the wider public. It also serves NU's growing research unit. The library is constantly expanding its catalogue every year.



## 7. STAFF CAPACITY BUILDING

Training and Capacity Building unit plays vital role in NU's work. The unit works in the grassroots level to increase the capacity of stakeholders and building the capacity of staff for better implementation of the program. At the core of NU's activities is building awareness on HR, gender, women rights and legal issues among wider target groups, stakeholders and its staff. NU's Training & Capacity Building is responsible for meeting training needs through arranging training, workshop, and seminar as well as developing training materials, modules, hand out and other instruments. NU's training strategy starts with determining of training needs and ends with analysis of trainings' impact on groups or individuals. Specific objectives of the unit are as follows -

- *Strengthening capacity of CBOs on human rights, legal issues, gender and leadership skill*
- *Enhance staff capacity on various issues based on training need analysis*
- *Produce training manuals and other materials for organizational purpose*



**In-house training**

NU regularly arranges training for staff development through internal capacity or externally on a variety of topics and contents relating to program or organizational strategy. The staffs frequently attend in meeting and seminar organized by partner, network organizations and donors in home and abroad. The learning from the meeting/seminar/training and workshop is duly shared among the other staffs and documents are rightly preserved. The skilled staffs of NU also help partner or network members' organizations in facilitating or developing trainings materials.

<i>Training Issues</i>	<i>Participants</i>
<i>Orientaiton on Monitoring &amp; evaluaition, manual</i>	<i>all seniorI, mid and supervisory level staff</i>
<i>Basic training on Project Implementation strategy</i>	<i>26 community mobilizers</i>
<i>Goal oriented project planning (GOPP)- Part II</i>	<i>all seniorI and mid level staff</i>
<i>Training of Trainers on Facilitation Skill</i>	<i>25 staff of mid level and supervisory level</i>

**Training received from External sources**

<b>Training Issues</b>	<b>Participant</b>	<b>Organized by</b>
Training on Right based approach	2 Assistant Program Officers	PaWA
ToT on Fact finding	1 Program Officer	HURIDOCs
Training on Effecgive Managerial Skills and Participatory Management Style	1 Program Officer	MDC Bangladesh
National Development of Human Rights based Strategy to Prevent Torture	1 Program Officer (Field Operation)	(CRTS)
Training on Tax Practice	1 Deputy Manager	Bdjobs.com
Training on Documentation	1 Assistant Program Officer	HURIDOCs
Training on Basic Accounting for NGOs	1 Accounts Officer	SAPTA Associate
Training on Human Rights and Governance	1 Assistant Program Officers (Field Operaiton), 1 Assistant Program Officers (Training)	MJF
Training on Land survey	Two Panel Lawyers	ALRD
Training Climate Change	1 Senior Program Officer, 1 Monitoring Officer, 2 Area Officers	Oxfam GB

### Attending seminar/meeting /Training in abroad

Issues	Participants	Organized by
Training on Feminist Capacity Building on Gender, Sustainable Livelihood and Gender	1 Program Officer (Training)	South Asian Network for Gender Activist and Trainer (SANGAT), Katmandu, Nepal
Seminar on Regional Research on Caste based Discrimination in South Asia	1 Senior Program Officer	Indian Institute of Dalit Studies in Association with International Dalit Solidarity Network, Katmandu, Nepal
Gender Responding Community based Policing	1 Program Officer (Field Operation)	Gtz, Katmandu, Nepal
Training on Community Driven Sustainable Development	1 Assistant Program Officer, 1 Area Officer	Bala Bikash Kendra, Hyderabad, India
First Strategical meeting of Dalit Women Group	1 Area Officer (Urban), 1 PaWA member	Katmandu, Nepal
Consultation from the excluded group meeting	1 Area Officer (Urban), 1 PaWA member)	Actiona Aid, Asia, Bangkok, Thailand

## 8. ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

### GOVERNANCE

A board of executive representing eminent human rights activists, educationalists, and researchers looks after the board of governance of NU. This committee oversees the organization's basic operation and makes decision as to its strategic agenda. The executive committee sits quarterly and reviews the undertaken program and activities as well as other aspects of the organization.

### MANAGEMENT

A Senior Management Team (SMT), headed by the Chief Executive, looks after the overall management of the program. The Chief executive looks after the day to day management and while SMT deals with the following areas:

- Fund raising and resource mobilization
- Programs,
- Information and communication
- Partnership and Networking
- Administration and finance

The SMT also oversees the procurement process of the organization, staff recruitment and development based on requirement.

### ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

#### - Administration

The unit provides necessary administrative and logistic supports for the implementation of project and organizational needs. The unit is also responsible for necessary staff recruitment as well as maintaining staff development issues, remuneration through assessment of performances. It supports coordination within the organization through monthly staff meeting, quarterly coordination meeting, and senior management meeting. It also maintains administrative function with NGO Bureau, Government departments and Donors.

NU has a full-fledged computer system based on local area network and with internet facility. NU has its own domain name at [http://: www.nuhr.org](http://www.nuhr.org). This website details the structure of the organization and all of NU activities.

#### - Finance and Accounts

The Finance and Accounts maintain the day to day financial activities. It prepares program and organizational budget, financial reports and submits periodical financial reports to the donors and NGO bureau and concerned persons.

### LEGAL STATUS

NU is registered (Reg. No -1240, dated 23/2/98) as a public organizations in NGO Affairs Bureau. It is also registered with Joint Stock Company (Reg. No.360 (17)/95).

### Staff of NU

Designation	female	male	total
<b>Central Office</b>			
Chief Executive Officer	-	1	1
Project Manager	1	0	1
Deputy Manager (Finance and Admin)	-	1	1
Senior Program Officer	-	2	2
Program Officer	2	5	7
Accounts Officer	-	1	1
Program Coordinator	1	2	3
Monitoring Officer	1	2	3
Assistant Accounts Officer	-	2	2
Assistant Program Officer	2	2	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Area Office</b>			
Area Officer	1	8	9
Assistant Area Officer	-	4	4
Field Organizer	1	2	3
Community Mobilizer	35	48	83
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>Total</b>			
Central and Area office	44	80	24

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Sl.	Name	Position in the Executive Committee	Status
1.	Dr. Khan Sarwar Murshid	Chairperson	Prominent Educationalist
2.	Dr. Hameeda Hossain	Vice Chairperson	Imminent Human Rights Activist
3.	Mr. Safi Rahman Khan	Treasurer	Executive Director, Bangladesh Freedom Foundation
4.	Ms. Khushi Kabir	Member	Coordinator, Nijera Kori
5.	Dr. Meghna Guha Thakurta	Member	Executive Director, Research Initiative Bangladesh (RIB)
6.	Mr. Fazlul Huq	Member	Secretary, Madaripur Legal Aid Association
7.	Dr. Farzana Islam	Member	Professor, Department of Anthropology, Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka
8.	Dr. Mirza M. Hassan	Member	Independent Researcher
9.	Mr. Shah-I-Mobin Jinnah	Member	Director, CDA-Dinajpur
10.	Zakir Hossain	Ex-Officio, Member	Chief Executive, Nagorik Uddyog



# ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

## Executive Committee

F-4, M-5

## Chief Executive

Zakir Hossain (m)

### PROGRAM UNIT

### TECHNICAL SUPPORT UNIT

### ADMINISTRATION

**Project-A  
AJTHRECM**  
Donors: CA,  
EED, BftW

Line  
Manager-  
Mazharul  
Islam

**Project-B  
IWAEJ**  
Donor: MJF

Line  
Manager-  
Britwa Roy

**Project-C  
Rehabilitation  
Program**  
Donr: CA, BftW

Line Manager-  
Zakir Hossain

**Project-D  
BNCPPRDB**  
Funded by  
OWA  
Line  
Manager-  
Zakir  
Hossain

**TRAINING**  
Line  
Manager-  
Mahabuba  
Sultana

**THEATER &  
CULTURAL**  
Line  
Manager-  
Amit Ranjan  
Dey

**LEGAL AID &  
INVESTI-  
GATION**  
Line Manager-  
Britwa Roy

**PARTNERSHIP  
&  
NETWORKING**  
Line Manager-  
Mazharul Islam

**Advocacy  
&  
Research**  
Line  
Manager-  
Amit Ranjan

**Monitoring  
&  
Evaluation**  
Line  
Manager-  
Amit Ranjan

**Finance & Admin**  
Line Manager-  
Sarder Zahidul Islam

**DM**  
Sarder Zahidul  
Islam (m)

**SPO**  
Mazharul  
Islam (m)  
**PO (FO)**  
Tajul Islam  
(m)  
**APO (FO)**  
Marjina  
Khatun (f)

**Project  
Manager**  
Britwa Roy  
(f)  
**PO (FO)**  
Hafij Al  
Mamun (m)

**Project  
Coordinator**  
ABM  
Anisuzzaman  
(m)  
Wahidur Sirkar  
(m)  
**Accounts  
Officer**  
Sanjoy Roy  
**Monitoring  
Officer**  
Shah Alam (m)  
Mehedi  
Hasan(m)  
Imrana Jahan  
(f)  
**FO: 3m**  
**OA: 3m**

**Project  
Coordinator**  
Kaisar Jahan  
(f)  
**Campaigner**  
Miltan Sardar  
(m)  
**Community  
Organizer**  
Tatpuri James  
Biswas (m)  
B Solomon  
(m)  
**OA**  
B David Raj

**PO**  
Mahabuba  
Sultana  
**APO-**  
Mahmudul  
Haq (m)

**PO**  
Abu Bakar  
Bakul (m)  
**APO-**  
Rahsed  
Mamunur  
Rahman (m)

**PO**  
Ahmed  
Shahriar (m)

**SPO**  
Mazharul  
Islam(m)  
**PO**  
Feroz  
Ahmed(m)  
Nasrin  
Mahmud(f)  
**AO**  
Mallica Sarkar  
(f)

**SPO**  
Amit Ranjan Dey  
(m)

**PO (pub)**  
Soma Dutta  
(f)

**APO**  
Monjurul  
Islam (M)  
Farhana  
Islam (f)

### Finance

**Senior  
Accounts  
Officer**  
Manirul Haq  
(m)  
**Accounts  
Officer**  
BK. Banik  
(m)  
Ashim  
Chattergy  
(m)

### Office mgmnt

**Office  
Manager**  
Mijanur  
Rahman  
**OS**  
Layla  
Arjuman (f)  
**Supporting  
Staff**  
Babul Mia  
(m)  
Namimur  
Rahman (m)  
Mina Begum  
(f)  
Rina Begum  
(f)

AO-5(4m,1f)  
CM – 39  
(m22, f 17)

AO - 4 (m)  
AAO - 4 (m)  
FO-2(1m,1f)  
CM – 45 ( f-  
22, f-23)  
OA- 4 (m)