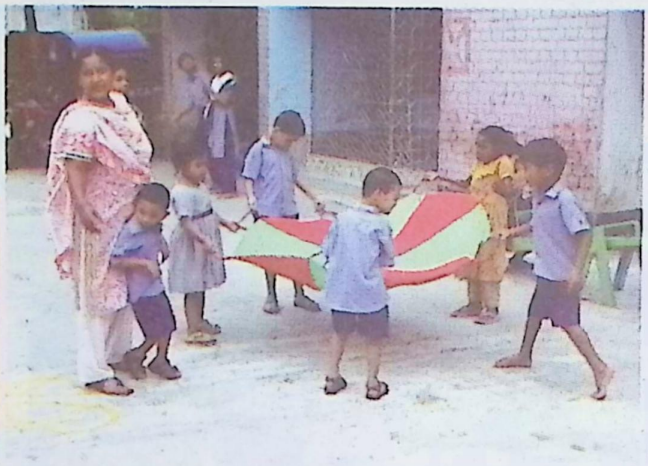






Playing like normal kids.

considered novel and exemplary. It has designed a multipurpose service centre near the Helenabad Girls' High School in Rajpara thana areas with equipment for special education and training for the disabled children. It also provides psychological support to the children and their parents as well as a package of services including special education, sports, recreational facilities, physiotherapy, medicare, vocational training, outings, home visits, case management, and parents counselling.

Beginning in late 2004, with a target for providing support for only two disabled children, FWCA is now serving some 70 children at its service centre through nine psychosocial workers (teachers) and two physiotherapists in two shifts -- morning and afternoon. It has now turned into one of the very few prestigious NGOs in Rajshahi publishing annual reports regularly and maintaining transparency to its funds through independent audits.

Officially registered in August 2005, it ran development programmes from its general fund and was self-financed till July 2007 when it availed its first and still last foreign donation from a Norwegian organisation -- Kristiasund Rajshahi Friendship Committee for only 30 children. It has expanded its work now to young adolescent girls and women's rights programme despite the challenge of fund constraints. It is now running two agencies (self-help organisations) for women and adolescent girls.

Prayash's target group includes the marginalised and vulnerable children with disabilities such as mental retardation, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, autistism and physical disability.



Ditto, playing with a walking frame.

Gulbanu of Guripara Goljarbagh area in the city had a horrifying story to tell regarding her grandson Tinku who became disabled suffering cerebral palsy. Tinku's father is a day labourer and has three sons. Of the three, two normal children live with their parents. But Tinku could not walk, sleep properly, and catch anything as well as his mental condition was not normal. In this condition, his father decided to reject him and pressurised his mother to throw him anywhere. Tinku was considered a burden on the poor family. And one day when his father attempted leaving him in a truck, Tinku's grandmother rescued him from the street. The grandmother Gulbanu, who supports her family by washing clothes for a city laundry, decided to take care of Tinku herself.

Tinku is now being provided with special education, walking on frames, physiotherapy and other necessary services. He can now walk and talk a little. His parents have changed their attitudes to him a bit through counselling, but he continues to live with his grandmother.

"What else I have to do with the child? If he were a domestic cow or goat, I could have planned on selling him out for his illness. But he is a human being. How can I leave him?" his grandmother cries out bitterly. "When he sees someone in good clothes, Tinku stares at him longingly. But I cannot afford to give him new clothes. At Prayash they are doing more from him than his own parents ever did. The teachers are helping him learn, which is more important than a new set of clothes".

Nine-year-old autistic Rimi is also another child discarded by her family. She was seldom included at family functions or to watch television together. Her parents were reluctant about her education as they were busy with the education of their normal son. Prayash's social workers convinced her parents that she too, could benefit from the school. Rimi is now able to read and write and her parents are a lot more enthusiastic about taking care of her than before.