

Bangladesh needs to improve quality of education

Primary enrolment rises to 90pc, Olav Seim tells *The Daily Star*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has made significant progress in achieving some goals of Education for All (EFA) but it needs to focus on the quality of education and early childhood development, said Olav Seim, director of the EFA International Coordination Team, Unesco.

"The country has managed to increase enrolment rate at primary level to almost 90 percent which is a big achievement," he said in an interview with *The Daily Star* on Tuesday on the sidelines of an international meeting on education. "It also did well in ensuring gender parity, but it needs to focus on quality."

Organised by Unesco in collaboration with Campaign for Popular Education (Campe), the three-day conference titled 'Fifth Meeting of Unesco's Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education for All (CCNGO/EFA)' began at a city hotel on Monday.

Seim said though many countries have made significant progress in achieving some of the EFA goals, but they still need to go a long way.

Lack of funding is a major problem, he said calling on the governments and donors to invest more in education sector in order to achieve the goals of Education for All -- a global movement led by the Unesco aiming to meet the learning needs of all children, youths and adults by 2015.

"Many countries have invested substantial amount to get more children into schools. But we have many other countries, particularly African and Sub Saharan ones, where we see very little progress in enrolment," Seim said.

Out of the EFA goals it seems progress in enrolment and gender parity at the primary level, but unfortunately, on the other four goals, there has not



PHOTO: STAR
Olav Seim, Director of the EFA International Coordination Team, Unesco.

been the same progress, he said, adding, "Most countries are lagging behind in achieving the four goals."

The four other goals are expanding early childhood care and education, promoting learning and life skills for young people and adults, increasing adult literacy by 50 percent and improving the quality of education.

Mentioning that Norway is the third in terms of dropping out in the secondary schools, he said a lot of dropouts are happening in many countries, which is definitely a big problem.

The Unesco executive said the importance of education is clear as it contributes to economic growth and sustainable development of a country.

He said all education ministers are committed to giving their best to improve the sector, but the problem is that they are not in control of resources.

"The ministry of finance needs to provide necessary funding for the sector," he said adding, the donors also need to deliver on their earlier commitments.

Regarding the role of NGOs and civil society in achieving the goals, he said the civil society has the role of watchdog in holding the government accountable.

They are playing a vital role and some NGOs are also involved in running schools and providing education opportunities, Seim added.

Regarding Unesco's role in achieving the goals, he said that they are working for policy advocacy for governments to spend more money on education and also advocate for the donors to deliver on their earlier commitments, but it is the duty of the governments to develop the education sector.

"We are working closely with the Unicef and World Bank to mobilise more resources for education. But in general, it is the countries themselves which are mainly responsible for the education sector," he said.

Regarding improving quality of education, Seim said Unesco can provide some advice on curricula, teaching method and how to monitor the progress in this sector.



PHOTO: STAR
Transcom Limited Director Saifur Rahman and Group Finance Director Atiqur Rahman hand over a cheque for Tk one crore in donation for the construction of a new building of the Liberation War Museum to Prof Salauddin Ahmed at a ceremony on the museum premises in the city yesterday while Akku Chowdhury looks on.

War Museum receives Tk 2.23cr

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Liberation War Museum received over Tk 2.23 crore in donation yesterday for the construction of its new building at Agargaon in the city on 0.82 acres of land.

Prof Salauddin Ahmed, a member of authentication committee of Liberation War Museum, received the donations at a programme held on the museum premises.

Transcom Group donated Tk one crore. Transcom Limited Director Saifur Rahman and Group Finance Director Atiqur Rahman handed over a cheque for the amount.

MA Matin, managing director of Kmit Asia Limited, also handed over a cheque for Tk one crore.

Citi Bank NA has given Tk 3,45,750.

Nasser Rizvi, director of the Alliance Holdings, handed over a cheque for Tk 15 lakh and Jausan Ara Rahman gave Tk two lakh.

Sayed Jahurul Kabir, Rokaiya Hasina Nili and Kazi

Gokam Nasir of IAB gave Tk one lakh each.

Many others, including staff of the museum and students of YWCA Girls' High School, have given bricks as token donation to construct the museum.

Prof Salauddin said the museum, which was built under private initiative, has now become a national institute.

Akku Chowdhury, a trustee of the Liberation War Museum, said they are trying to build a museum of international standards, for which they invited designs from architects.

He also said the museum authorities have selected the design from some 70 entries and it will take around Tk 60 crore to build the museum.

Donations can be made in five categories -- Tk 50,000 as a patronising member, Tk 15 lakh as a structure member, Tk 3 lakh as an entrepreneur member, Tk one lakh as a lifetime member and Tk 10,000 for purchase of token bricks.

Appeal for help

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Md Imon Ahmed, a student of Mamudpur Haji Md Ali I d e a l School, has been suffering from kidney disease, says a press release.

Eight-year-old Imon has been suffering from the disease since his birth. His condition is deteriorating day by day as both of his kidneys have already been damaged.

He is now undergoing treatment at Dhaka Shishu Hospital. He needs further treatment, which involves Tk five lakh. But it is not possible for his father Md Omar Faruk, a low paid worker, to manage such a huge amount.

So, Faruk has appealed to generous people to extend a helping hand to save his son's life.

Contributions can be sent to the following bank account: Md Omar Faruk, Savings A/C No. 49730 (Online) Islamic Bank Bangladesh Limited. Local Office: Motijheel, Dhaka-1000.

Interested persons may contact his family at 01811823659.

Sangram played killer's role in 1971

Speakers tell discussion

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Dainik Sangram, a vernacular daily, had played the role of a 'killer' not a newspaper during the War of Liberation in 1971, said speakers at a discussion in the city yesterday.

Taking stance against the liberation war directly, Sangram had patronised killings, rapes and other heinous crimes by the Pakistani occupation forces and their local collaborators in the country.

Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique said, "As the Pakistani army and its local collaborators -- Al-Badr, Al-Shams and Razakars had killed thousands of innocent people, Sangram had also played the role of a killer by supporting the crimes."

Projonmer Chetona, a social organisation run by young people, organised the discussion titled "The anti-liberation role of Sangram during the War of Liberation" at the Central Public Library auditorium.

It demanded punitive action against the Bangla daily as it had played the role of war crimes' mouthpiece in 1971.

Freedom fighter Nazim Uddin Guerilla said the back numbers of Sangram should be made available so that young generation can know its notorious role during the war.

Former army chief Lt Gen (ret'd) M Harun-or-Rashid said Sangram was the mouthpiece of Jamaat-e-Islami, which had taken the anti-liberation war stance.

"Sangram had used the religious sentiment to give legality to the heinous crimes committed by Pakistani forces and their collaborators."

Chairing the programme, Justice Ghulam Rabbani called on the young generation to begin a second war to restore the constitution of 1972.

Chairman of Dhaka University economics department Prof Abul Barakat warned that anti-liberation forces might create violence ahead of the war crimes trial.

