



ANSHAH ANJU KHAN CHOWDHURY

Giving street children a way out

BY MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

When Anshah was studying in high school, she used to notice that children like her were begging for food in the street. Some of them sold flowers and some of them washed cars for a square meal. At first Anshah and her younger brother started to share their lunch with some of the children. After a few weeks when Anshah told her friends about sharing their meal with street children, many of them gave her the cold shoulder but a few of

them were quite impressed with the idea. They too wanted to help out. This was how Durnibar Foundation was founded.

"We started with some small charitable initiative such as feeding poor children, donating warm clothes to the poor, giving Eid gifts to the rickshaw pullers, etc" explains the young social worker. "Then we thought of doing something sustainable for the least privileged children which would change their

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lentils every month. Anshah says, "Everybody wants to educate their children. But these poor parents are forced to send their children to work. What we are doing is nothing but a drop compared to the intensity of our problem. But if all well off people like us bear the expense of even a single child's education, our society will be changed. That's what we are trying to do through Durnibar Foundation. Now we are focusing more on education and food security which is the ultimate challenge for our social development."

Being a second year student of Dhaka University, running an organisation has always been challenging for this young woman. Planning of projects, collecting funds from interested donors, acquiring



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Anshah Anju Khan Chowdhury

lives. From that day we started to work for our project-- Feeding Bangladesh."

In exchange the families ensure Durnibar Foundation that they will send their children to school. In fact, volunteers of Durnibar Foundation frequently supervise these children's educational progress and provide them with necessary academic support.

Under this project the children of 20 families are now going to school instead of working in the streets. Their families are also getting a supply of rice and

resources, management and ensuring transparency are the watchwords for Anshah and her 200 activist-friends.

The task taken up by Anshah is huge. If we follow Anshah's example and come forward with our own initiative, no matter daunting the task is, it won't be long that not even a single child will drop out of school.

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