



Volunteers Association for Bangladesh (VAB)

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Annual Report-2014

2014 was a memorable year for VAB – it completed 15 years of its work in Bangladesh; for the first time ever, it started implementing its programs in a well-defined and systematic framework called the “VAB Model”; its exclusive reliance on individual philanthropists was complemented for the first time by a substantial institutional grant, and it moved to a permanent home of its own.

15 years of work

VAB is arguably the only NGO in Bangladesh solely devoted to spreading secondary education in rural Bangladesh, improving its quality and ensuring sustainability of the improvement efforts. Starting in 2000 with the award of scholarships to needy rural boys and girls to enter into high school education and continue, over the past fifteen years VAB partnered with rural high schools, helped rural youths with scholarships for high school education, trained rural high school teachers, inspired rural headmasters to strive for high quality education in their schools and for sustaining it for years to come, helped VIth graders to improve their capabilities to deal with high school education right from Day One, tutored candidates for better performance in the secondary school certificate (SSC) exam, with the introduction of the junior secondary certificate (JSC) exam, helped rural candidates to cope with the newly instituted exam in a competent manner, and finally, improved the teaching-learning environment in disadvantaged rural schools by giving library books, science lab instruments, and computers and accessories.

Table 1: Accomplishments of VAB in 15 Years of Its Work

Scholarships awarded	VIth graders tutored	JSC candidates helped	SSC candidates helped	Teachers trained	Teachers Seminar and Workshop	Facilities improved in schools
10,494	10,798	3,000	8,308	835	260	71

Celebratory event for 15th Anniversary

To commemorate its 15th Anniversary VAB organized a meeting in Dhaka on January 17 this year. It was attended by eminent persons in academics, professions, business, industry, finance and other fields. A section of VAB students and teachers were also present. As the Chief Guest, the Finance Minister lauded that unlike typical NGOs in the country, VAB is appealing to the generosity of people and volunteers. He appreciated highly that VAB is promoting volunteerism and staying away from making profits. As a Special Guest, the Bangladesh Bank Governor lauded the work of VAB for quality education in high schools and urged the financial sector to lend their help. He announced a contribution of 10 lac taka from the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) fund of Bangladesh Bank and promised further support and patronage.

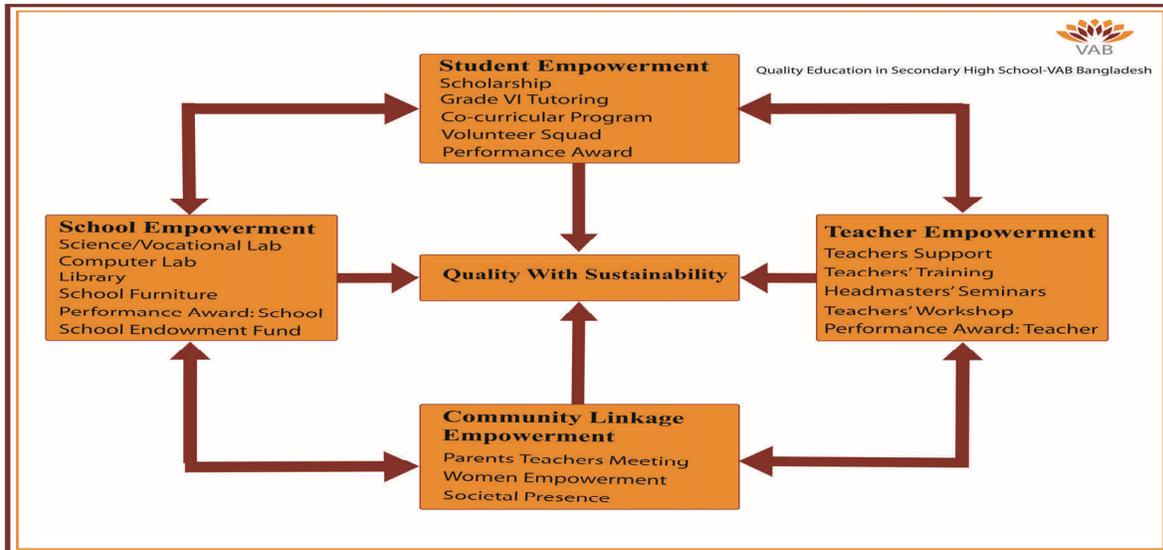


From left Prof. Dr. Jasimuz Zaman, Country Director, VAB, Dr. Atiur Rahman, Honorable Governor, Bangladesh Bank, Prof. Dr. Jamilur Reza Choudhury, Chairman, VAB Advisory Board, Mr. Abul Maal A. Muhith, MP, Honorable Minister of Finance, Dr. A.T. Rafiqur Rahman, Founder & President, VAB and Principal Hamida Ali, Member, VAB Advisory Board.

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VAB Model

Fifteen years of fieldwork with students, teachers, schools and communities in rural Bangladesh gave VAB unique insights that were then used to develop a model for sustainable quality education in rural high schools. The key insight was the idea of empowerment – each of the groups needed to be empowered so that they acquire the requisite capabilities for sustainable quality education. The VAB Model is composed of four sets of empowerment measures (see below):



2014 was the first year when the VAB Model was applied in 25 rural schools. Following on from there 2015 will witness the full-fledged application of the model in all 51 VAB schools. It is to be noted that, subject to resource constraints, the VAB Model can be applied in a flexible manner. Within the basic empowerment approach, VAB's intervention may vary from a few measures in one area alone to certain measures spread over more than one area among the four, to the full range of empowerment measures in all four areas. In fact, resource availability dictated that in 2015, 26 out of the 51 VAB schools will be the beneficiary of the full range of measures in all of the four areas while others will receive selected number of measures. VAB is confident that with continued support for some period of time, the following can be achieved: excellent academic results by students; a vibrant student community with competence in science, math, language and ICT; trained and motivated teachers; ongoing addition to school educational resources; strong community linkage that will ensure sustainability in quality with initiative from the schools.

Work under institutional grant

For the first time, in January 2014, VAB initiated its work under a substantial institutional grant. VAB was awarded the task of executing the Chevron education program in thirteen secondary education institutions in the Moulavibazar area of Sylhet district, including a madrasa and a college. This opened up a new vista of opportunity for VAB to execute the full range of measures under the VAB Model for sustainable quality education, as described above. Notably, eleven high schools also participated in the endowment fund scheme encouraged by Chevron Bangladesh. The benefits of the VAB Model, funded by the Chevron program, are now highly appreciated by all the stakeholders for rural education – students, teachers, schools and their management, community members including parents and community leaders, as well as local government officials and public representatives.

“Permanent home” of VAB

VAB opened a new era in May 2014 with its move into its permanent home, a 2,700 sq ft office in a multi-story building in the Adabor area of Dhaka. The formal inauguration ceremony was held on Jan 9, 2015, and was attended by a number of patrons, donors and well-wishers. A plaque containing the names of the donors whose support made it possible for VAB to acquire the home was placed as an expression of gratitude.

In memory of those whom we lost

In 2014, VAB lost two lifelong friends and patrons – Dr. John N Pike, and Dr. Jean Ellickson, who served as Directors. All of us associated with VAB will always remember their generosity and caring for the needy in Bangladesh and will redouble our services to VAB in their memory.

For query or comment, please contact Dr. A T Rafiqur Rahman, President, arahman10@aol.com, 914-591-8635 in the U.S.A; Dr. Jasimuz Zaman, Country Director, zamanjasimuz@gmail.com, 88-01829-333-311 in Bangladesh.

For contribution, mail your generous check to VAB, P.O. Box 234, Irvington, NY 10533.