

## **UNIFORMS, PERSONAL SUPPORT AND EDUCATION ENVIRONMENT ARE THE DEAL BREAKER REDUCE POOR FAMILIES CHILDREN DROP OUT**

The best investment for any country in the world is to invest on children education. The return is unlimited, generations after generations, a quick way to get out of poverty. The purpose of this story is to share SOHAY's work experience though it works in small scale.

Those of us working in this sector are fully aware retention of children in the school is the single most challenge. The enrolment is high, the completion rate is pitiable. The poor result is not for our lazyness or our less interest, unfortunately, some how our efforts do not fulfilling all the needs of children so the dropped out.



There are many socio-economic factors we blame. SOHAY's experience is a bit different. If we extend our support to the children to some other areas, e.g. uniforms, personal support and create education environment at home dropout rate reduce largely.

The below statistics give example. We have tried many ways we can think of but the retention rate is not to the encouraging level we expect.

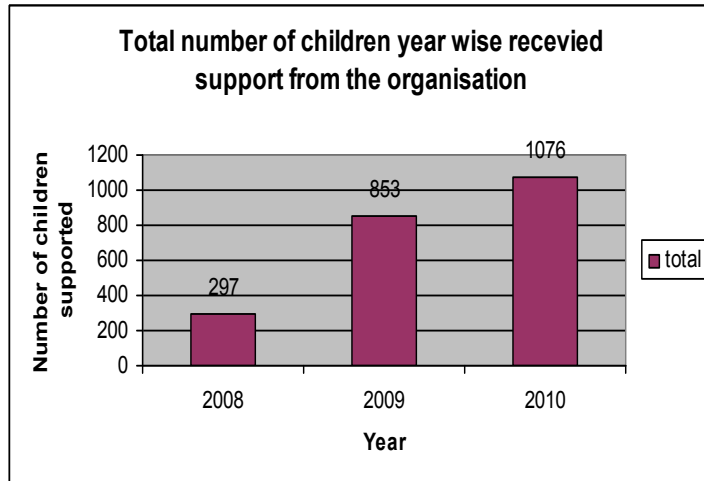
SOHAY works with slum children, the result it gets are encouraging the dropout rate is minimum. Appears its strategy is working, children enrolled in the school continue education unless their parents migrates to other areas. SOHAY provide basic education support to the children, all school age children in its working slums are enrolled and going to the Government Primary Schools and continue their education.

The money we spent for own children's quality education, and donors expenditure per children, unfortunately, not comparable, still cry for quality - justified? The level of quality education we expect are costly, unless we factor those cost to our programme, time has come to think, how far it is justified to cry for quality education.

SOHAY's working strategy is simple but very effective. SOHAY works closely with the children family enhance and encourage both the parents and children to ensure parents are careful about children education ensure children go to the school regularly, assist children to complete homework, provides school uniforms, encourage children continue education, tell the future waiting for

them if they make them education or job waiting outside if they keep them illiterate, ask which one is their preference.

A soft and smooth future or a hard future, all depends on what action they are taking now, what work they are doing now, etc. etc. it depends how they are preparing themselves

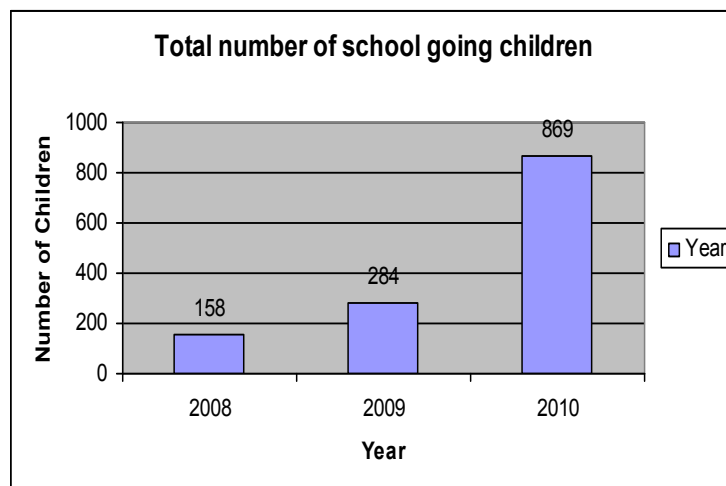


Thinking bright future is not enough; those who have done good had to work hard all the time in their life, dedicated, passionate, hard work and all very important and keys to switch the road change the direction of life. Make it bright or dull depend on what they are doing now. This is the foundation.

The education environment is important and essential, children spend couple of hours in school, rest of the time they spend at home, it is parents responsibility to take right decisions at the right time.

Those ruling and making decision somehow fail to keep this in their mind when take any decision. This is the only investment has always incomparable rate of return, thousand time.

Unfortunately, very few of us realise it for our short sight ness and narrow thinking. on any Investment to capitalise the human resources of Bangladesh was not enough, the capital investment was poor, this resource is under utilised. Like other resources big investment is required harnessing the benefit of it, unfortunately very few of us think on it.



The poor families children live in urban slums face multiple problems, e.g. appropriate home environment – more than 4 people live in a 10’x10’ room, corrugated iron room – generate unbearable head during summer time, more than half of the year the above condition prevails, not support at home – parents are illiterate, neighbours have different agenda – all households

demands are not same, the neighbours turned their record player on in large volume at study time, disturbed the whole slum children, no one bother about it, no space at home to keep the book – as the house is so small for at least four members family creating space for education is a luxury. Having all the problems,

The chart on right shows the progressing of SOHAY programme to the slum children. All school age children in SOHAY working areas are going to the Government Primary School. The investment of human resources does not provide benefit to an individual or a business group; therefore it does not fall under any remit of any big business group. We are talking about corporate social responsibility but that alone does not enough. It was 297 in 2008, 863 in 2009 and 1076 in 2010. These are the outcome of 15 SOHAY working slums. SOHAY would like to argue, its working strategy is the driving force behind of its success. We are aware there many factors work behind drop out. The most important one is the absence of the personal support to complete home work. We can call it private tuition or something else, for slum children this is essential, the home environment is not education friendly.

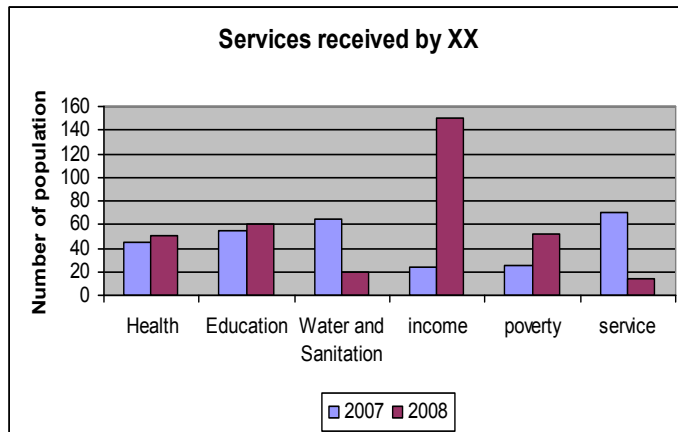
Some of us always say there is lack of interest from service providers to provide appropriate service to the people. In reality they are ready with their facilities available, but we are frustrated with them, it is us to formulate strategies how best we can utilise those facilities available. This is not the responsibility of the service providers

SOHAY supported these 10 children since beginning, now they are at class VI, their parents came to SOHAY appraised the organisation a lot, but had requested school uniforms from SOHAY. The Executive Director's of SOHAY had to manage money from her personal source to finance these uniforms. The issue here is if these families manage more than thousand taka for children why the same parents reluctant to invest on uniforms. This is difficult to explain but we can it will take long time for them to understand the value on children uniform. As an advocacy and right based organisation, SOHAY strongly believes we should have to wait till the next generation emerge but not less than one an half decade. The key board is under my control and can easily write half a year that will be wrong totally.



Quality of education is a qualitative word. We have to have a bench mark with whom we are tallying it. Otherwise, there will be no matter, our investment and worries will not disappear.

Total number of children has access to the service providing organisation. They present rules of business is when people come to their door they



provide service, completely from the reaction perspective than pro-active perspective. Very few children ensure services from Government institutions entering into the system. We always blame the

We would like to highlight another issue, the way we are supporting the primary

education and the secondary education is very dangerous. We are allowing wounded tiger move in the community. Through the primary and secondary education we allow them to read and write, enhance their expectations, but did not create adequate opportunity to utilise them, as a result social anarchy increased.

What we should do about it, this is very important, the sociologist have to think and guide us otherwise we all will fall in deep trouble, without knowing it was us who made the mistake, make society half hearted.

The evolution has a pace, cooperated response is important, developing human resource is better can easily ensure good future but half hearted human is much dangerous than wounded lion.

The gains on investment on human resources provide return to individual and collectively to the country, so better if Government think investing heavily in this sector. The quality of education is a cry from all over the world especially in the development community and developed world, the investment the development world made for quality children education our investment compare to it is peanuts, the contribution from the development community compare to their cry is totally imbalance, it is impossible to ensure quality education by such tiny investments.

Those of us reading this, if we carefully think the investment we made for our children education e.g. personal time, energy, private tutor, school fees, education environment, we are thinking of ensuring similar type of quality education for community children when the infrastructure and investment ratio is 100:001. This expectation is illogical and irrational on dream too.

The human resource if cultivated and nurtured properly the harvest is full with different variety of taste, but if not it would be full with bitter taste fruits whether you like it or not it will appear.

The other point is if you would like good harvest you have to prepare the land, ensure proper ploughing, supervision including supporting environment. We

all know the harvest if we don't do the above, the outcome we can predict. This is what happening to the poor economic country.

As a resource the human is complete different nature. It is not like others have it or none, here you have to have something either you like it or not, it will give your comfort or pain.

The education statistics and dropout rates are, who on earth will accept it when are country is pressing hard to join the race of a middle income country. Either you invest on it or stop saying we would like to move to the direction.

There is no prescription on SOHAY's hand for children have completed their primary education, The prescription for children have completed primary level education is

We are all interested to hear positive story, very few ready to accept the hard part of it, it better to hear glass half full but the reality is glass half empty, aspiration creation without giving a road map how to full the glass could be dangerous.

The country remittance is the second largest

The teacher students' ratio Bangladesh with other countries

You are too many people, you need too many schools and this is costly, you will have to live with the present condition but have to deliver good quality education and produce quality people, this is not compatible, you could dream for it but ground reality is totally different.

I am sorry to say you can not build a bridge by bamboo ask certification from the builder that it will withstand when a 5 tons truck pass on it. The bridge will collapse even if the architecture is designed by the best engineer in the world. Because it does did not meet the basic minimum requirement.

Class size is the important factor for quality education. The present teacher student ration in USA 15, UK 25, Bangladesh, the think tanks in UK are not happy of the class size. The cry for quality education has no value unless we provide real look on this and solve the problem. We can enrol children to school, ensure they attend class regularly, children and parents of poor families will not understand but we definitely understand they will learn something with poor quality.