

Working for Better Life (WBL) helps young students in Bangla medium schools to divert their energy into problem solving abilities. It facilitates teen age students of various urban, suburban and rural schools in Bangladesh to become organized under a debate club and sensitize each other on various social problems and issues. Its not easy for children to sensitize each other, adults often create barriers in their 'learning venture' including those like their teachers, parents and local social leaders. Yet the students win and make their way forward in this conservative society. As a result of which we now see over 6000 students from 65 schools have become proud members of their school based debate clubs. They deal with issues like drugs, child rights, women rights, environment issues, garbage problem, street terrorism, domestic violence, acid throwing, child marriage, child labour, child repression and many more. During each debate, Young debaters turn their class room into a mini parliament session, 8 debaters from both treasury and opposition benches put forward strong, lively, logical argument and the entire audience with often few hundred students, listen, react and become compassionately engaged. Posters, leaflets are developed and exhibited in their schools by the students; reports, articles, stories and poems are written for the school bulletin, which is brought out for the students by WBL. It may be also added that in October' 2001, 12000 copies each at Taka 2 were sold in the schools. This was the 18th issue. Young children from these Bangla medium schools are proving again and again how much they can do and change, only if they are inspired a little along with some facilitation.

Debaters from 50 out of 65 schools became graduate in 2001, as they are taking up the organizers' role. They are taking up the responsibilities to organize debate by themselves, engage their friends in writing articles for the bulletin and later sell this bulletin in classes to promote the issues raised by students at different schools.

From 2000, Children started nominating their representatives known as Young Change Agents (YCAs). This is a new generation young leaders, charged with each others spirit and committed to work for continuous changes through out their life. Supported by The British Council for two consecutive years, YCA is brand name now in these 65 schools, many students know about it and aspire to become a YCA too. YCAs participate in regular theme based workshops held at WBL's small training center to share opinion with students from various schools. They arrange participatory workshops to design and plan various programs such as street debate festival, study tour, inter school debate competition and computer education. They give ideas and inspirations to the workers of WBL to raise resource for their activities. And as a result of this, WBL comes to its various prospective partners to build partnership for children led activities.

The Royal Norwegian Embassy, Dhaka been the principal partner since 97 in WBL's school debate program. Till 2001, it expanded its activities in more than 65 schools in Dhaka and Gazipur District.

From year 2002, under NORAD's four year long commitment, WBL has planned to expand its activities to nearly 2000 schools in all corners of the country.

Also with funding from The British Council and The Canadian High Commission, WBL has engaged school children in various Human rights related activities as well as in computer education.

Some of the activities children have developed and started in 2000 and 2001 are:

1. Build alliance between school children and those out side schools and organize street debate events.
2. Raise the sale of the current fortnightly bulletin 'Chhotoder Rajjo' to 50,000 copies.
3. Expand debate clubs in all corners of the country with the help of the bulletin.
4. Organize children's parliament and bring adult parliamentarians to face them.
5. Conduct study tour with children to different areas and explore various issues such as Human rights, environment etc.
6. Engage graduate debaters and young students in various social works.
7. Conduct street campaign and sensitize citizens in major issues.
8. Help introduce IT education at high schools.
9. Introduce events on Disability among the children of these schools in order to encourage inclusive education.
10. Introduce health/ hygiene related activities with the debate club members in these schools and through our bulletin.