



ACEF Newsletter

July, 2022

Thank you for your continuous support for the ACEF mail news. We are happy to update you about our activities in Japan and Bangladesh. Today, we hope to share with you 8 articles on our most recent activities/projects and upcoming events, along with updates on what is currently happening in Bangladesh.

✨ What's New! ✨

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- ⑧ We now have an English webpage!

※The Japanese PDF version of this newsletter can be downloaded from our homepage.

URL→ https://acef.or.jp/mail_mag_2022july/

Foreword: "Meaning of 'togetherness'" (Board Member: Noriko Inoue)

"In ACEF's vision and mission, "togetherness" is implied in these three phrases: "share in the joy of living together", "to work in partnership", "experience mutual growth". I believe that this shows how important togetherness is to us. ACEF was founded in 1990, when the Japan UNESCO organization started the terakoya projects. Various NGOs began their support projects in developing countries, and many study seminars were organized as well. I remember learning with my colleagues from Paulo Freire's book about the literacy development process in developing countries. I realized then, that those in developed countries often fall into the mistake of looking down at the developing countries, thinking we must teach them or do something to help them.

The ACEF study tour to Bangladesh has been hosted 43 times now, and many participants have said that "We hoped to do something for them, but could not do anything for them. Rather, we were the one that was given so much." This shows that ACEF's activities are not one way. Those in Bangladesh and those in Japan, we are both supported by each other, and we hope to continue learning together. When we learn to see from

the same perspective, we will be able to create a relationship where hearts are moved. Let us work together and build a society where we can share our joys.” (Noriko Inoue)

Crowdfunding: Let's build libraries for the children in Bangladesh!

The Crowdfunding project “Let's build libraries in BDP schools!” started on July 15.

BDP currently runs 42 schools, **which only 2 have a library, and most schools don't**. In March, 2022, two libraries were installed, but students in the other 40 schools do not have access to reading books/ children's books. We were able to interview a few teachers from a school in Dhaka, and were told that children enjoy and love reading books. However, at this school there are only 7 books available. Thus, teachers sometimes bring their own books from school to read aloud, or they repeatedly read the same picture books and share it with the whole school

This crowdfunding project **will allow us to install 4 more libraries in BDP schools**. We want to provide an educational environment where children have access to books and are able to receive a rich education. It costs 100,000 yen to install one library. To install 4 libraries requires 400,000 yen. One school has approximately 100 students, thus **installing 4 libraries means that 400 students will be able to access books** other than their textbooks. Let's build libraries in Bangladesh together. **We need your support!**

You are invited to join the online event, where you will be able to join the Study Tour program and see the BDP schools and the classroom scenes! We hope to share what the schools built from your donations for this crowdfunding campaign will look like, by taking you on a virtual tour through the libraries built in March, 2022.

- Dates: ①8/6, Sat. 12:30~13:00 Instagram LIVE from Jamalpur
- ②8/9, Tue.12:30~13:00 Instagram LIVE from Dhaka
- ③8/9, Tue. 14:00~15:00 Zoom meeting from Dhaka

•How to sign up:

- ①Please follow our official Instagram account to view the LIVE (follow→ <https://www.instagram.com/acef.ngo/>)
- ②Please join the crowdfunding LINE open chat, where we will share the URL for the Zoom event. (Join→https://line.me/ti/g2/GukrQHgo04SuXEnci3b8r7xeMJ7S6mNgfhOalQ?utm_source=invitation&utm_medium=link_copy&utm_campaign=default)

“Let's build libraries for the children in Bangladesh!” (7/15-8/15)

Crowdfunding Website : <https://rescuex.jp/project/12730> QR→



Messages from university students operating this crowdfunding campaign:

Maaya Takehana, Internaitonal Christian University, Year 1

Currently an intern at ACEF



“I was living in Hawaii during high school, and that is when I faced the issue of poverty. The poverty rate in Hawaii is 9% and is a state with the 6th highest rate in the United States. I was volunteering at a homeless shelter there, where not only adults but children also lived together. I realized through that experience that handing out material supplies and casually talking to the people there, while it is a direct approach, it is not a long lasting solution to this problem. I am now in Japan, and I hope to support the children in Bangladesh, even if indirectly, through this Crowdfunding program.”

Suyeon Han, International Christian University, Year 1

Currently an intern at ACEF, joined the Spring Term Service Learning Program



“I went on a mission trip to Indonesia with my mother when I was in elementary school. As I watched the missionaries there, I had a question of why they are building a school instead of a hospital in that impoverished area. This question led me to pursue Education as a topic of interest, which has led me to ACEF. Also, I have a passion to become a journalist and a missionary in the future. This experience at ACEF is very meaningful to me. I have joined the spring term service learning program, and have continued to work with ACEF as an intern this summer.”

Moeko Ishii, Aoyama Gakuin University, Year 2

Joined the Spring Term Service Learning Program, joining the Summer Study Tour 2022



“Through the Aoyama Gakuin Uni. Service Learning course, I learned about the situation in Bangladesh from ACEF and BDP staff. With that knowledge, I was able to host a special lesson at the Aoyama Gakuin Elementary School, and share about “living together” as implied in the ACEF vision and mission. We focused on the point that, although schools in Bangladesh have little books, both children in Japan and Bangladesh share their joy and love for reading books. We had the elementary students in Japan write a letter to the students in Bangladesh under the topic of “Why I like to read books”. It was a memorable experience for me to see these students’ liveliness as they wrote letters to friends they have never met before. This

summer, I am going to take these precious letters to Bangladesh myself. I truly believe that these children will be so happy if they were able to read in their own libraries someday.”

Message from participants in the Service Learning Program: 2022 Spring

ACEF welcomes several students every year for the Service Learning program, where students study about service through hands-on experience in cooperating organizations. Each of the students worked diligently and learned about Bangladesh, about ACEF and our cooperation with BDP, and spent a rich time with us. In June, we shared stories from the 2 students from Aoyama Gakuin Uni.. Today, we will share stories from the 4 students from International Christian University!

(International Christian University, Year 1: S. Han)

“I have experienced a mission trip to an orphanage in Indonesia when I was younger, and naturally I was interested in doing the service learning program at ACEF. ACEF, however turned out to be operating more of the financial side of the educational programs, thus the actual work was not what I had expected in the first place. While I was unable to directly work with the local people in Bangladesh, I was given many opportunities to learn about myself and the operative side of solving social problems.

Through this service learning experience, I learned practical skills such as how to first detect and approach certain social issues, and learned how to cooperate with team members and NGO members. One thing that was especially memorable is that *service* is not necessarily only needed in poverty and bad environments, but can be practiced in our everyday lives if there is any kind of need. I am personally very interested in the social issues found in politics, international relations and mission work. I want to use my experience and what I have learned here at ACEF as I continue in this path.”

(International Christian University, Year 2: R. Hirabayashi)

“The 18 hour service learning program went by so quickly, but I think I was able to recognize my own bias that I had, through this program.

Before I started the service learning program, I believed that being connected to ACEF- an international educational NGO- I would be able to solve social issues and contribute in some way. Realistically speaking, however, it is impossible to solve social issues within a mere 18 hours. I was let down by my own expectations many times.

I understood that I must gain countless experiences and knowledge in order to even contribute. However, this experience taught me that although I might not completely solve the issues, I can be a part of this long term progress.

The time at ACEF and service learning program taught me that rather than focusing on the final goal of solving social issues, I can focus on how I may prepare myself to become more resourceful, and to notice where I stand in relation to such social issues.”



(↑students at Boishaki Mera Festival 2022)



(↑students learning how to make Bangladeshi curry)

(International Christian University, Year 1: S.Akiyoshi)

“I decided to work at ACEF in this service learning program because I have never had the opportunity to learn about Bangladesh or education until now and I wanted to learn more about it. I am also considering taking the Teacher’s program, thus it was natural for me to be interested in education. In the beginning of this program, I struggled with understanding how to put myself in an equal position with ACEF and BDP, despite not being able to visit the field in person. So, I raised big questions such as “How can I position myself?” “What allows me to say that I am building an equal positionality?” throughout this whole program.

Through the activities at ACEF, I learned that *service* is accomplished through simple actions: such as kindness towards others, or merciful attitudes. I was motivated to be kind to someone before me, or to try to communicate with Bangladeshis in Japan. Through these activities, I believe that this kindness will travel with those who return or visit Bangladesh. I realized that I am often caught up on the financial and materialistic aspects of life, and forget the kindness that is all around. I realized that where we are is less important than the fact that we are working together as a partner despite our differences. Through partnerships like this, I believe that “equal positionality” is possible.

(International Christian University, Year 2: A.Inoue)

“I was interested in educational support, thus I hoped to participate in service learning at ACEF. When I look back, I remember how I was so worried about how I could provide support. However, through learning about ACEF’s vision and mission, and hearing stories from ACEF and BDP, I learned that we are partners both living in ASIA. I realized that what is most important is to consider issues in Bangladesh as our own in Japan, and to work on solving them together. This opportunity has become a very important experience for me as it influenced my values. Although it was a short period of time, I am very thankful for the many learning experiences and realizations. I am deeply grateful to the ACEF community for giving me such a rich experience.”

Call for 2022 summer donations

The 42 schools and approximately 4,000 students in Bangladesh are supported by your donations. Due to the drastic devaluation of yen and global increase of living costs, ACEF is in a very financially difficult situation. **Please continue to support us**, even after the devastating spread COVID. The summer

donations are open until September, through credit card payments, Amazon Pay, and bank transfers. The URL below will direct you to the donation page. Thank you for your continued support!

<https://syncable.biz/associate/ACEF1990/donate>

Study Tour after 3 years! Please join the debrief session (8/20)

This year, the study tour took place from 8/1 for ten days. The members will share about their experiences and what they learned. There will also be a report about the current situation of the schools and Bangladesh after the long time of COVID. You are very welcome to join!

- When : August 20, Saturday, 20:00~21:00
- How : ZOOM Online or watch the recording
- Sign up : <https://forms.gle/x7zBEhX7jWf8DAA47>
- Sign up deadline : August 19th, Friday
- Contact : public@acef.or.jp

Information on ACEF Summer Dignity Cafe (9/3)

What is “Dignity” that ACEF focuses greatly on? Dignity Cafe is an opportunity for us to learn to see the world through the perspective of dignity. Here, we share about our dignity experiences and learn its values together. We have been hosting this event via online with mainly high school and college students. We are very happy to announce to host an in-person event, finally, at SCF. Anyone is welcome! You may also join via online as well. Please join this event if you're interested in “Dignity”!

- When : September 3, Saturday, 10:30~15:00 (we will update you the finalized dates again in August)
- Where/sign up : In-person (@SCF), or via Zoom
- Sign up here : <https://forms.gle/JxAK6BStBTM6iZ467>
- Sign up deadline : August 31, Wednesday
- Contact : dignity-wg@acef.or.jp

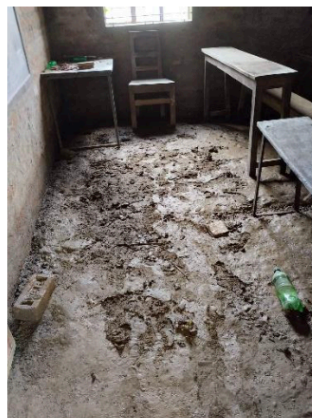
Updates on national flood disaster in Bangladesh

The flooding which has caused severe damage in North-Eastern India and Bangladesh are **said to be the worst in twenty years**. According to the June 27 report by UN Bangladesh, 7,200,000 people in 9 districts have suffered from this flooding, 1,680,000 families are experiencing flooding in their homes, and 480,000 people are currently evacuating. 1,520,000 people from 5 districts are said to need support in the upcoming days, and the Netrokona district which BDP operates is also included in those areas.

According to the BDP report, 2 BDP schools are out of use due to the flooding, and **170 students are affected by this disaster. BDP is asking for your help.** BDP is asking for your help, especially after the

rainy season where there will need to be many repairs done on the school building. Donations can be made through credit card payments, Amazon Pay, and bank transfers. The URL below will direct you to the donation page. (Please leave a message as “flood relief donations”) Thank you for your support.

<https://syncable.biz/associate/ACEF1990/donate>



We now have an English webpage!

Our English webpage is now open! We hope to share about our activities and to cooperate together with people from all over the world. **We are now able to accept donations from overseas**, so please check out our english webpage! Website→ <https://acef.or.jp/learn-more-support-now/>

Introducing our SNS platforms

We want to let you know of our newest activities, so we have various SNS pages!
【Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, LINE】

We cover a wide range of contents, starting with emergency announcements, prayer requests, daily scenes from Bangladesh and ACEF’s projects in Japan. Follow us from our home page!

ACEF Homepage↓
<https://acef.or.jp/>

We are also sending out information about crowdfunding via SNS and LINE OPEN CHAT. Please join the LINE OPEN CHAT for the most recent updates on the crowdfunding project, and **join our community!**

LINE OPEN CHAT link:
https://line.me/ti/g2/GukrQHgo04SuXEnci3b8r7xeMJ7S6mNgfhOalQ?utm_source=invitation&utm_medium=link_copy&utm_campaign=default

QR code →



Thank you for your continuous support.
We look forward to keeping connected with you!

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