

## CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING

A two-day training session, mainly for the female relatives of Enforced Disappearance (ED) victims, was organised by Odhikar on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of April, 2017 at the Caritas Development Institute Dhaka, Bangladesh. 17 relatives of the victims of ED participated in the training programme and amongst them 12 were women and five were men. As she was not able to keep her child somewhere else, one wife of a victim of ED brought her seven-year-old son to the programme as well. The training sessions were participatory, informative and also sensitive as some family members of victims were highly traumatised. The training sessions were conducted with the psychological conditions of the family members of the victims in mind.

In the introductory session, Odhikar's President Dr. C.R. Abrar, Secretary Adilur Rahman Khan and Director ASM Nasiruddin Elan were present. Dr. C. R Abrar emphasised on documenting ED cases as those documents can be used as evidence for getting justice in the future. Adilur Rahman Khan talked about the historical background of ED in Bangladesh and said that as Bangladesh has ratified the Rome Statute, it is possible to bring the perpetrators to book. ASM Nasiruddin Elan told the participants to organise all records and papers and also maintain a diary, and in it, write what they are going through every day and the hardships that they are facing.



### **Objectives:**

The objectives were as follows:

- To facilitate the capacity-building of the female relatives of those who disappeared, in human rights documentation and fact-finding, together with training on gender-sensitivity and networking.

- To provide opportunities for women to apply their knowledge and skills via field documentations and interviews.
- To eventually create a good working and inter-personal relationship amongst the participants, thus creating a network of support amongst them.

The following topics were discussed in the training sessions:

**Concept of Enforced Disappearance:**

- What is enforced disappearance?
- What are the kinds of enforced disappearances?
- What are the rights violated by enforced disappearance?
- Why do State authorities resort to enforced disappearance?
- Why should enforced disappearance be considered a continuing crime?

**UN Convention on Enforced Disappearance:**

- Background of the Convention
- Salient features of the Convention
- Global context of disappearances
- Current updates of ED
- Strategies for fighting against enforced disappearances
- UN Working Group on ED
- How to send cases to the WGEID?

**Fact-Finding and Networking:**

- Process of fact-finding
- How to gather information on ED – interview
- Verification of data and sharing information
- How to form/strengthen a network of the families of the disappeared?

**Gender issues and victim/families**

- Relationship between gender identity and enforced disappearances
- Situation analysis: disappearance in different countries
- protest mechanism by victim families

**Challenges faced by the families of the enforced disappearance.**

- What type of steps they have taken? Is there any response from the State?
- What type of threats they have to face now a days?
- What type of challenges they have to face now a days: social, economic and legal?

### Overview of the documentation:

- Fundamentals and guiding principles of documentation regarding the cases of enforced disappearances
- Importance and necessity of documentation
- Methods and ways of gathering information
- Verification of truth and fact etc.

### Mobilisation and way forward:

- Mobilising movement of the network of the families of the disappeared
- Way forward for strengthening campaign against enforced disappearances and bringing back the disappeared persons to their families
- Identify strategies to spread the movement
- Future plans after the training
- Concluding remarks



Photo: Participants (Victim Family Members of Enforced Disappearance) / April 20, 2017 / Caritas Development Institute Dhaka

### Day One: 19 April 2017

The first day of the training programme was conducted by Sazzad Hussain, Programme Coordinator, Odhikar. Most of the participants expressed their intention of knowing how to document incidents of ED systematically and about the Convention. The facilitator showed a short video documentary on the current situation of ED in Bangladesh to participants before commencing the working sessions of the training.



In the first working session, the facilitator highlighted the concept of ED where he described the different kinds of ED and the rights that are violated by ED. The topics of ‘Why do State authorities resort to enforced disappearance’ and ‘Enforced disappearance as a continuing crime’ were also discussed in the session. Participants also shared their views.

In the second working session, the facilitator talked about the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance with its historical background and salient features. During this session, he focused on why we need to ratify the Convention, discussed about the global context on enforced disappearance, current updates of disappearance; strategies for fighting against enforced disappearances. ‘What is the significance of a mandatory universal jurisdiction’ and ‘How to send cases to the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance (UN WGEID)’ were also discussed in the session. A group work on identifying the best strategies to fight against enforced disappearances was conducted by participants.



During the third working session, the facilitator discussed about the process of fact-finding and networking. The facilitator also highlighted how to conduct an interview and gather information on ED and verification of data and sharing information with different

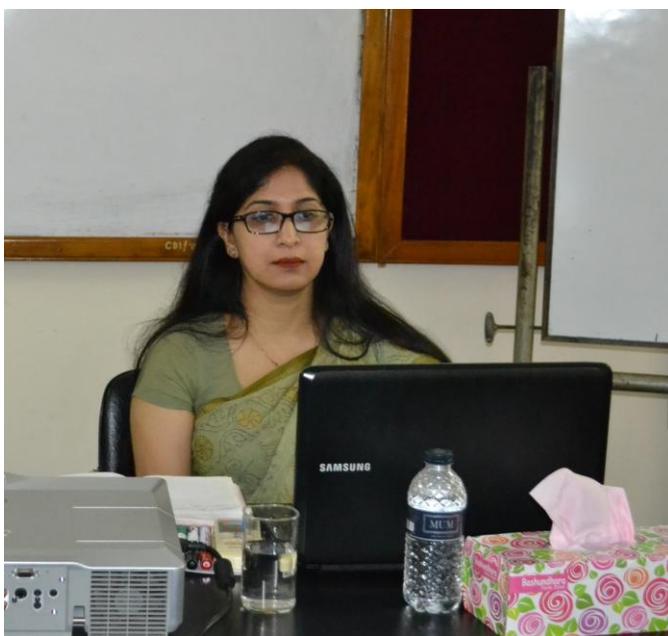
stakeholders. Issues relating to networking and media campaigns were focused on by the facilitator in this session as well, where different advocacy tools and mechanisms; how media can play an active role to establish justice; and how to form and/or strengthen a network of the families of the disappeared and lobby at the UN Working Group were all discussed. A group exercise on how to form and/or strengthen a network of the families of the disappeared was given to the participants and they



had to come up with their ideas and present them to the others in the session.

### **Day Two: 20 April 2017**

Taskin Fahmina, Gender Expert of Odhikar and local Documentation Coordinator of AFAD's WWDP project, conducted a session on the gender issues and the situation of the victim families. It had two parts- in the first part she discussed about the relationship between gender and ED. In this session she pointed out that in Bangladesh, males are the major victims of ED. Due to the patriarchal societal system, less women are engaged in active politics and work as opposed to the men. Therefore, those who have dissenting views, or are political opponents, the oppressive government considers them as threats to the government and try to eliminate them through ED or extrajudicial killings. The female members of the victim's family suffers a lot as well, not only mentally but also financially as the males are usually the bread winners.



She further said that women also face ED in other countries. When a woman is disappeared, there is the risk of her being tortured, killed or sexually harassed. When mothers are disappeared their child or children suffer a lot as children are more attached with their mothers. She added that a woman may be stigmatised by the society after she returns home from the ordeal.

Taskin previewed a few slides on the historical background of ED and talked about the struggle of Argentinian mothers and grandmothers, the situation in Chile and Kashmir, and about advocacy procedures. After that there was an open discussion with the participants.

In the second working session, Taskin Fahmina helped the participants to openly discuss about their problems and struggles, and also discussed about finding out ideas on how to overcome some challenges collectively.

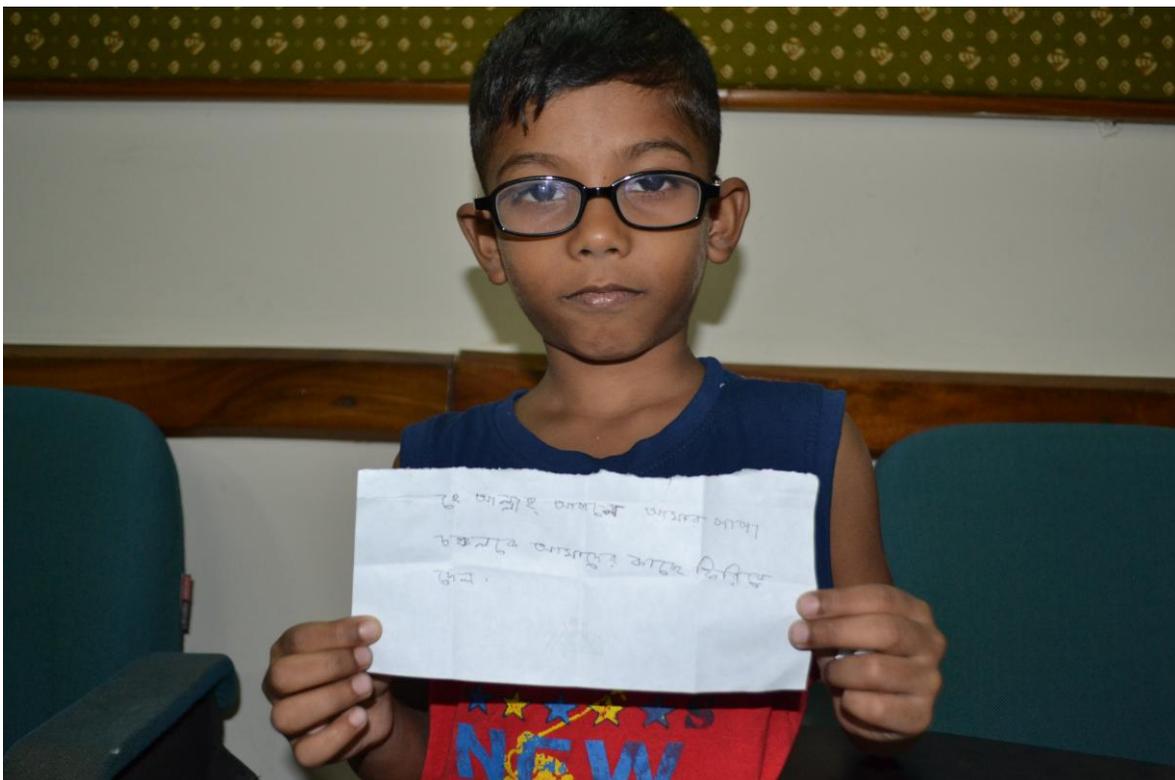


In the third working session, Samia Islam, Research and Documentation Officer of Odhikar gave an overview on documentation to the participants, particularly in the cases of ED. She highlighted the issues relating to the fundamentals and guiding principles of documentation of ED cases, the importance and necessity of documentation, methods and ways of gathering information and verification of truth and fact, and ways and procedures of recording the collected information through documentation. The trainer asked questions to the participants for brainstorming before presenting the methodology of information gathering. She cited examples of documentation on ED cases to give a clear idea of the documentation to the participants from the victim families. She emphasised that they must keep all their documents as soft copies and store their hard copies properly so that they do not misplace them. Participants also shared their experiences and thoughts regarding documentation and report writing. The session ended with a questions and answer session with the participants.



The final session was about mobilisation and the way forward. In this session a Facebook group was formed to engage the victim families and activists and have them connected on daily basis. The name of the group is গুম হওয়া ব্যক্তির স্বজনদের ডাক/ Call from the family members of the disappeared person <https://www.facebook.com/groups/265856227207914/?ref=bookmarks>

During the concluding session of the two-day training programme, comments and feedbacks were taken from the participants and they also evaluated the training sessions.



Ahad, a seven year old boy with a paper written “Allah, please give us back my father Chanchal”

-The End-