

Story of a Borderless Voice

USAID-supported Dhaka CALLING Project creates leader for promoting civic movement



Rupa is talking in front of Mayor, DNCC in a Round Table Discussion



Rupa is sharing her experience in a TV Talk Show

Hena Akhter Rupa is the daughter of community leader Hosneara Rafeza and Harun ur Rashid of Hazaribag. As she brought up at slum with her mother and father, she knows almost every person live in their community and problems exist in her surroundings. Though she used to work closely with her mother in her community besides her education, she was never a leader before. She is very energetic and talk closely with people, they also like her. But to talk for their right in front of city mayor or sitting in a TV set to raise voice for sharing the sufferings of slum dwellers was dream to her. This dream came true after joining with Dhaka CALLINGs' Youth Advocacy Group.

Initially BARCIK, a member of DSK consortium started to work at Hazaribag area and formed Youth Advocacy Group. That time she helped to find other youths like her. At the outset, she talked with shyness and nervousness but she always showed eagerness to learn from the community mobilizers about environmental rights of a general citizen, where to talk and how demand can be reach effectively to service providers as well as how community mobilization can bring community people in a same page to think and talk about their own rights. Afterward, she found a supporting environment to explore herself and work for community people, and she started her movement to improve the solid waste management system of her area.

While working with Youth Advocacy Group, she always try to stay in bond together so that they can discuss keeping focus on the issues and find probable solution. She keep engaging community people, so that they can gather knowledge about their own rights as well as their duties. In different community level activity under the Dhaka CALLING project, she remains always in active and participatory mode. She tries to make people understand what to do what not to make their community waste free. Along with different community demands on waste management, she continuously kept moving to 14 and 55 ward councilor offices of DSCC to submit letters with community people and submitted letter. After submitting letter with initiative, ward councilor of 14, DNCC committed to full file three demands among four.

She is much focused what to say and when not to miss the opportunity to raise the voice for voiceless people. Like before she never avoid to talk now. Though, sometimes she become afraid to talk but she has started to believe she can talk in front of service provider after taking part in different advocacy initiatives taken under Dhaka CALLING project. Hena Akhter Rupa spontaneously talked during a Round table discussion in front of Mayor of DNCC illustrating the present context of waste management in their slum and in a TV talk show, she shared about their demand for improving Solid waste management system for accessing their rights to live in pollution free environment as a general citizen. Dhaka CALLING was an opportunity, what she took and invented her newly. Initially it was not so easy for her to talk like these, now she understood for ensuring access in their own right voice need not to have a border to stick.