

2009 Year-End Status of Computer Literacy Program

In late 2004, the Volunteers Association for Bangladesh, New Jersey (VAB-NJ) launched the Computer Literacy Program (CLP) to empower the underprivileged youths of rural Bangladesh by providing hands-on computer training. VAB-NJ's parent organization, Volunteers Association for Bangladesh (VAB), www.vabonline.org, provides educational services (high school scholarships, tutoring, teachers training, Preschools. and college scholarships) to the rural high schools and the needy students in Bangladesh.

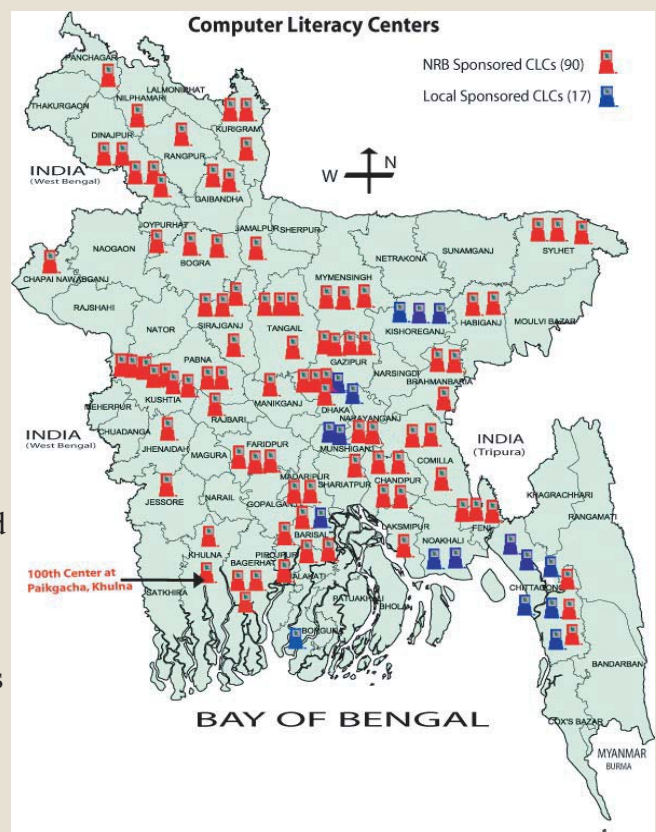
With generous help and continuing support from friends of Bangladesh like you, we have attained considerable success in our Computer Literacy Program.

CLP Status as of December, 2009

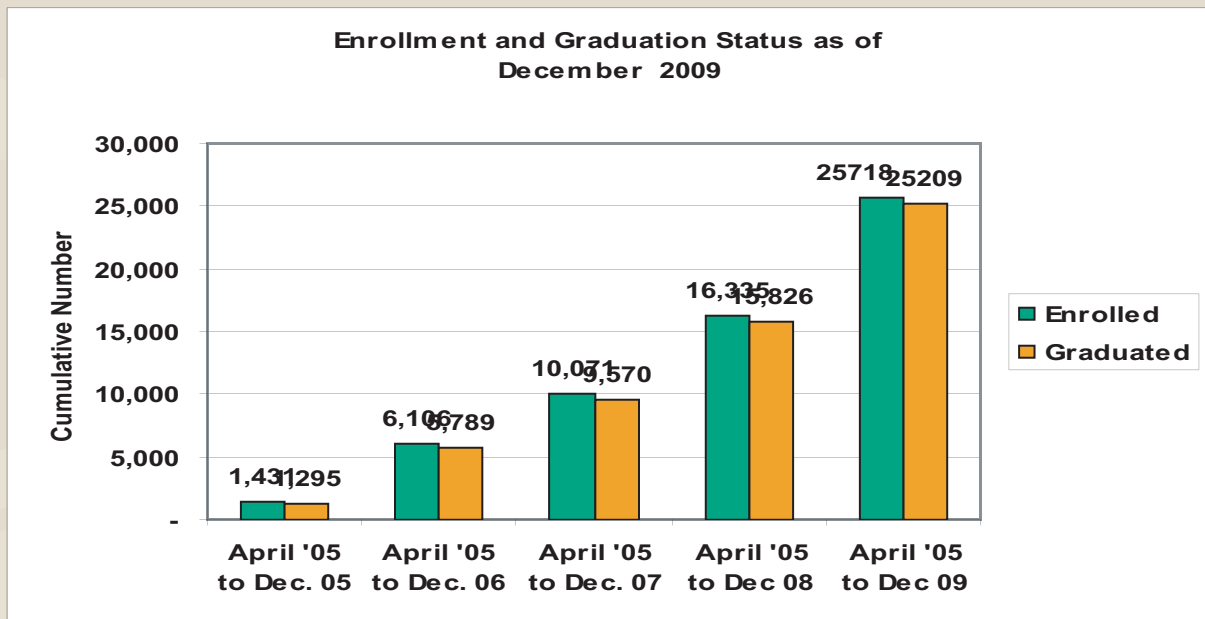
- CLP crossed a major milestone by establishing its 100th center in May 2009. As of November 2009 the total number of Computer Literacy Centers (CLCs) established under CLP is 107 (covers 39 out of 64 districts).
- 70% of the CLCs in underprivileged rural areas.
- Total number of teachers trained: 252 (16% female).
- Total number of students enrolled: 25718 (male-female ratio 52:48).
- Total number of students received certificate of completion: 25209 (97.78%).
- Key external collaboration partners (Bank Asia, Microsoft, Relief International, Hossain Trust, Khan Foundation, IK Foundation and Standard Chartered Bank, Bangladesh) secured.

2009 Highlights

- Established twenty-five new CLCs bringing the total number to 107.
 - All CLCs were kept fully operational under the close and effective supervision of our Bangladesh partner D.Net.
- Over 25,000 students graduated through December, 2009.
- CLP received prestigious Manthan Award South Asia -2009 as the best E-learning Program in South East Asia. Mr. Ajoy Kumar Bose of D.Net received the award at a ceremony in Delhi, India on December 18-19, 2009.
- Bank Asia continues to show active interest in the program. With the success of 13 CLCs sponsored by the Bank in 2006 to 2009.



- Made Internet connections available to 52 centers with Relief International Schools Online collaboration, VAB patrons and Imdad Sitara Khan Foundation. The students of these schools are communicating and working on joint projects with students from India, Tajiki stan and USA.



- Standard Chartered Bank (SCB), an International Commercial Bank in Bangladesh has come forward in helping to establish CLCs in rural Bangladesh under the CLP initiative. SCB agreed to donate a large number of used computers and peripherals from its warehouse at Dhaka which will be used to replace obsolete computers in existing centers. SCB will also provide financial support for establishment of new ICT-based Computer Learning Centers with refurbished computers as a gesture of corporate philanthropy or community involvement under the corporate social responsibility (CSR) in different educational institutions in Bangladesh.

- Realizing that it is very important for the schools to be able to sustain their CLP, VAB NJ and D.Net have developed various income generating models. 11 schools have been selected to implement these models on an experimental basis which include: digital photography, word processing, and providing community training at nominal fees, etc.

- A lively Annual CLP Fund Raising event was hosted on July 18, 2009 at Rutgers University campus. Unfortunately our 2009 collection was below the sustenance level, understandably due to the present economic downturn. To alleviate the financial situation, we appeal to all our patrons for generous contributions for the cause.

- A CLP teacher, Mr. Mustofa Kamal, visited the USA on a scholarship from the State Department. In 2007 VAB-NJ and D.Net set up a computer learning center (CLC) under Computer Literacy Program (CLP) sponsored by Mr. Salahudin Shahriar, PA 17050, USA, in memory of his mother Begum Shamsun Nahar. Mr. Mustofa Kamal was selected as a trainer of CLP.

In 2008 D.Net provided internet connection to the school in collaboration with Relief International. The World Wide Web opened the world to Mustofa Kamal and he used the web to tap into the vast treasure of educational material to enhance his own knowledge. Siting in his CLP lab, he searched and found information for the 'Teacher Exchange Program' and found links, web sites, addresses, contact information for a course entitled: TEA" (Teaching Excellence and Achievement Program) under the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (www.unl.edu), USA sponsored by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the United States. His application was accepted and attends the course



Manthan Award and Certificate

at the University of Nebraska September 22 to November 08, 2009. All the expenditures were borne by the State Department of USA. Mustofa Kamal is a living example of how the CLP has opened up personal development opportunities for both teachers and students.

VAB NJ launched a new initiative--Computer Teaches Everyday English (CTEE) taking advantage of the existing computer facilities in the CLCs. Under this initiative, a CD has been developed to provide fully structured English instructions. The objective is to help the students become conversant with everyday English simply by seeing; listening and repeating the "words" and "sentences" displayed on and recited from the computer monitor. The pictures and animations have been made consistent with the rural culture. The contents conform to Bangladesh Government's English program. To achieve the above mentioned objectives, a CD was developed and presented to five schools. These five pilot projects will provide input for further improvement of the CTEE CD.



The instructional benefits of the multimedia CTEE CD were demonstrated in a controlled test. Two groups of students, one control and another experimental, were selected (with 100 students in each group) with similar mix of students based on their results in the immediately past final examinations. For both groups an English test was arranged. The answer scripts were evaluated and graded like "Strong (S)"; "Medium (M)" and "Weak (W)"; with the help of the teachers. In the control group, 61% were in the weak group, 25% were in the medium group, and the rest 14% were in the strong group. On the other hand, the result of the pre-test for the experimental group was: weak: 65%, medium: 22%, strong: 13%. After the pretest the lesson was offered to the control group by the English teacher and to the experimental group using the multimedia CD. All the students of both the groups were evaluated after the lesson. The post-test results showed that the impact of the multimedia-based learning was significantly superior:

CTEE Multimedia CD Impact Evaluation Results									
	Pre-Test Results, %			Post-Test Results, %			Post-Test % change		
	Weak	Medium	Strong	Weak	Medium	Strong	Weak	Medium	Strong
Control group	61	25	14	46	31	13	-27	26	-8
Experimental	65	22	13	32	45	23	-56	115	85

2010 Activities and Plans

- Continue to provide necessary funding to run the CLCs established through 2009
- Submitted a three years project on Public Private Partnership (PPP) model to Bangladesh Government on September 2009 to establish 100 Computer Literacy Centers and 'Smart Class Rooms' in 100 schools.
- Find sponsors to provide Internet connection to all CLCs as a supplementary educational tool where Internet service is available.
- Gradually transit to open source Operating System for CLP training

VAB-NJ sincerely appreciates your support for the program to maintain the current level of activities. Your continued support and generous contributions are crucial to the overall success of the program. Please visit (www.vabonline.org/vabnj) for more detailed information on our programs. We are inviting you to our 2010 fundraising event, tentatively scheduled for **July 17, 2010, at Rutgers University, New Jersey**. Please mark your calendar now; we will contact you with details of that program as we get close to that date. We look forward to your participation at the event. Thank you.