

2020

# WBB Trust Annual Report

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Work for a Better Bangladesh Trust

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14/3/A Jafrabad, Rayerbazar, Dhaka-1207  
Email: [info@wbbtrust.org](mailto:info@wbbtrust.org); Website: [www.wbbtrust.org](http://www.wbbtrust.org)  
Tel: 02 55016409, 02 55016629, Mobile: 01552493518



Work for a  
Better  
Bangladesh  
Trust

A large teal graphic on the left side of the page, composed of several overlapping triangles and polygons of different shades of teal, creating a dynamic, abstract shape.

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## A Message from the Executive Director

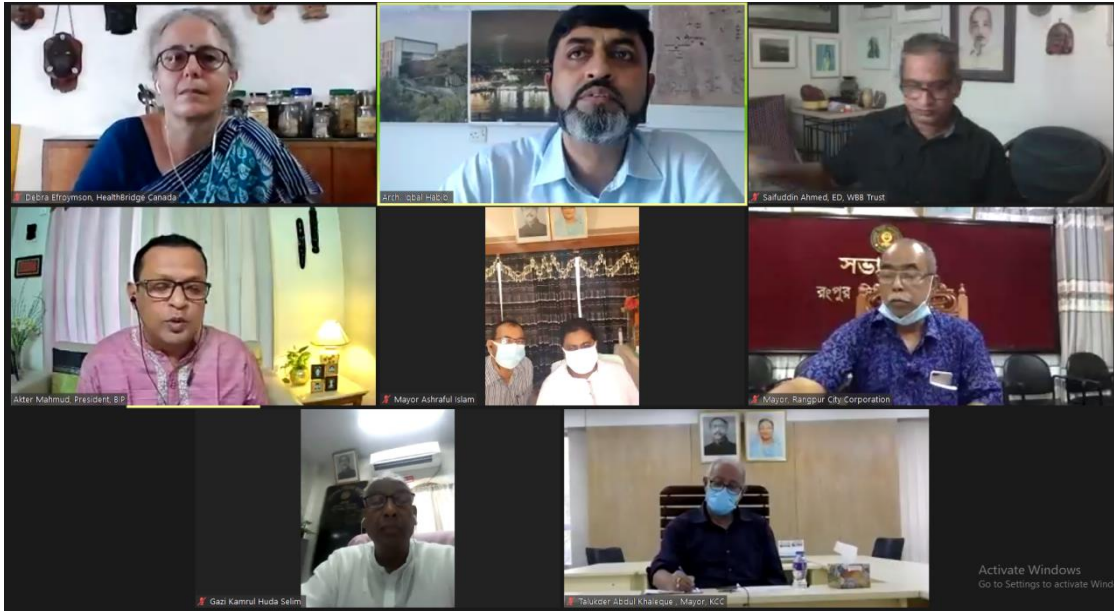


The year 2020 brought many surprising changes and extremely difficult challenges. The health and economic consequences of COVID-19 have been devastating. WBB Trust, as with most other organizations, faced a difficult challenge in adjusting our working style to the “new abnormal”.

But the virus also provided a window into a very different life, one in which people travel much less, work and study at least partly from home, and have more time for their families. It provided a window into a world where nature and other living creatures have a little breathing space from human encroachment and pollution, and where we could make some progress towards reaching our vital but too often neglected greenhouse gas reduction goals. These benefits are encapsulated in the slogan Build Back Better.

From its founding, WBB Trust has been concerned about public health and the environment. Worldwide in 2020, concern for both, particularly health, have vastly increased. That concern needs to continue beyond the pandemic. Economic wellbeing is useless if the population is not healthy. Since economic growth is destructive of the environment, our goal needs to shift from ever more production and consumption, even of harmful products, to a focus on restoring and preserving a healthy environment and a healthy population.

We are pleased that despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, we have continued to make progress in these areas. We organized our first virtual conference and a number of virtual seminars and press conferences, continuing to reach policymakers and the public with our messages while doing our best to avoid in-person gatherings. The resilience of Bangladeshis in the face of this new crisis points the way to a brighter future where health and the environment will be our focus, and urban planning will focus on people moving by foot, bicycle, and public transport, not on motorcycles and cars. Working together and dreaming big, together we can accomplish great things.



## Livable Cities

### What We Do

WBB Trust improves the livability of cities by ensuring access for the most vulnerable to healthy transportation, healthy foods, parks and other public spaces.

### How We Work

WBB Trust relies on a number of approaches to gain the support of the public and of policymakers for stronger laws and policies to protect public health and improve the physical environment.

## 2020 ACHIEVEMENTS: Livable Cities

2020 was a challenging year as we faced COVID-19. Initially we closed the office and struggled to work from home. Our movements were limited due to government declaration and safety concerns. With time, we adjusted to the “new abnormal” and transitioned to Zoom meetings, then gradually reopened our office while trying to maintain physical distancing and use masks. Despite all the difficulties, we achieved a few of our goals:

- The Ward Commissioner of Ward no. 1 of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) has committed to organize a car free street event in three streets of Khilgaon area (one street each week).
- The Honorable Mayor of DNCC committed to create a cycling-friendly environment and is taking initiative in this regard including rolling out new bicycle lanes.







## Health Rights

### *What We Do*

WBB Trust supports government officials in drafting, passage, and implementation of laws and policies to improve public health, particularly in the field of tobacco control and non-communicable diseases in general (physical activity and healthy diet).

### *How We Work*

WBB Trust works in close coordination with other NGOs and with government officials and media. WBB studies issues, prepares publications, engages its network and the media, and involves policymakers in policy work for a healthier Bangladesh.

## 2020 ACHIEVEMENTS: Tobacco Control & NCD Prevention

The Director-General of the Film and Publication Board has agreed to make an anti-tobacco documentary to show at cinemas before movies.

The National Board of Revenue has agreed to work on increasing the tax on tobacco products.

The Health Economics Unit of Dhaka University has decided to conduct research on tobacco control issues, particularly taxation.

WBB Trust was a leader in the movement to declare October 9 as Tobacco Free Day from 2011. Although the day has not yet been officially recognized at the national level, this year it was officially observed in Sunamganj and Satkhira.







## Economic and Social Justice

### *What We Do*

WBB Trust addresses gender issues and supports the rights of people with disabilities to live full, rewarding lives.

### *How We Work*

WBB Trust gains media attention and policymaker support for our issues in order to advance positive laws and policies.



## 2020 Achievements: Economic and Social Justice

- Dhaka North City Corporation and Dhaka South City Corporation have begun to highlight the need for accessible footpaths and are rebuilding many footpaths to accommodate blind people and wheelchair users.
- The Human Rights Commission has agreed to form a committee and create guidelines for the assignment of scribes to assist people with visual disabilities in taking exams for education and employment.
- A study conducted by WBB Trust, *Diverse Employment*, *Diverse Society*, generated significant discussion among civil society leaders about the need to increase job opportunities for people with disabilities and transgender people.



## ECOCITY CONFERENCE 2020

### BUILD BACK BETTERBD: MAKING OUR CITIES HEALTHIER FOR PEOPLE AND PLANET

How can we build our cities back after Coronavirus in a way that is better for our health and the environment? In order to engage discussion on the topic, Work for a Better Bangladesh (WBB) Trust, Ecocity Builders, HealthBridge Foundation of Canada, the World Bicycle Forum, and several local institutions and universities jointly organized a conference from 9-10 September 2020 on the topic of #BuildBackBetterBD: Making our Cities Healthier for People and Planet.

The conference was fully remote. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of September, Ecocity Builders organized an international day on the same theme using a virtual reality platform and avatars, hosted by VirBELA. On 9-10 September there were two full days of discussion via Zoom about Bangladeshi cities and the environment, with a mix of local and foreign speakers.



The conference covered four main topics: food security, air and noise pollution, wetlands and waterbodies, and the climate crisis. Sub-themes included urban agriculture, school gardens, programs to support non-motorized transport, ecological ways to provide safe drinking water, activism on the climate crisis, and accessibility in cities for people with disabilities.

COVID-19 has caused enormous changes in lifestyles here in Bangladesh and in much of the world. Rather than try to return to “business as usual”, the pandemic gives us the opportunity to rethink life in cities, and particularly how to rebuild our economies and lifestyles without returning to high rates of pollution. Given the extremely high levels of air pollution in Dhaka, the current respite provides hope for a cleaner, greener future. The conference brought together urban planners, transport policy experts, environmentalists, government officials including the Minister of Planning and Members of Parliament, academics, and other stakeholders to discuss a brighter, greener future for Bangladeshi cities.

### Why a satellite conference

Even before COVID-19, international conferences have been largely inaccessible. Many people who would benefit from attending conferences are unable to attend due to lack of money, time, and/or visa issues. In addition, traveling to conferences increases greenhouse gas emissions. Further, the ability to participate fully in many conferences requires a strong grasp of English. As a result, participants are limited and important information is generally not shared more widely in different countries.

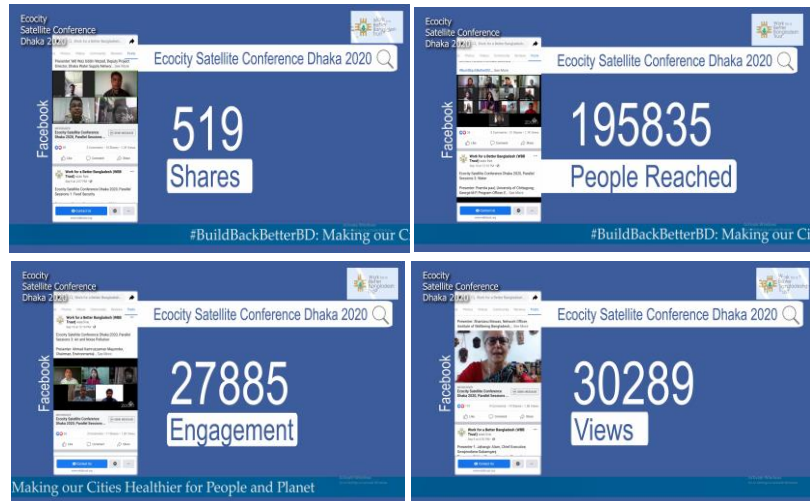
As a result of these concerns, a representative of the Bangladeshi co-organizers submitted a proposal to Ecocity Builders in the United States about hosting a satellite conference, to be connected to the planned Ecocity World Summit in Lahti, Finland, on 9-11 September. Due to COVID-19, the Lahti conference was postponed, but WBB Trust and co-organizers decided to go ahead with the local conference in any case.

About 300 people registered for the conference. Since there was no registration fee and the goal was to maximize impact, the entire conference was shared live on Facebook. As a result, over 30,000 people viewed at least part of the conference and it reached 195,835 people on Facebook, as well as gaining significant news coverage. Most of the sessions were in Bengali, allowing for wide and full participation among Bangladeshis regardless of their comfort with English.







## Highlights of the Ecocity Conference

The main achievement of the conference was bringing the issue of ecocities—cities that allow residents to live in harmony with the natural environment—to a wide audience of Bangladeshis including policymakers, planners, academics, and activists.







During the conference, there were presentations and lively discussions on issues including the potential of an Active and Safe Routes to School program to lower congestion and air pollution; the ability of Cycle Days to encourage locals to be more physically active and regain the joy of cycling; ways to increase access to clean water through ecologically sound methods; the possibility of growing more food in cities through school and rooftop gardening; and the importance of climate activism to demand strong actions towards a safer future, including ending the global trillions of dollars of annual subsidies to fossil fuels.

**Co-Organizers**

**International Partners**




**ECOCITY SATELLITE  
CONFERENCE DHAKA 2020**

**#BuildBackBetterBD**

**Making our Cities Healthier for People and Planet**

**September 9-10, 2020**

Published by  
Work for a Better Bangladesh Trust  
Institute of Wellbeing



## WBB Trust: Main Activities of 2020

**In 2020, WBB Trust  
organized/conducted**



**WBB Trust organized programs on the topics of:**

**Air pollution**

**Safe travels and  
passenger rights**

**Inclusive, open  
public space**

**People-focused  
transport: car  
control; promotion  
of walking, cycling  
and public  
transport**

**Tobacco  
taxation**

**Health  
Promotion  
Foundations**

**Unhealthy  
food**

**Reducing  
car  
parking**

**Diverse  
workplaces**

**Implementation of tobacco  
control law & the FCTC  
particularly Article 5.3 on  
industry interference; bans  
on advertising & smoking  
bans**



## Livable Cities

**বিশ্ব বাইসাইকেল দিবস ২০২০**  
**সামাজিক দূরত্ব মেনে চলতে সাইকেলে যাতায়াত**  
 ৩ জুন ২০২০, সন্ধ্যা ৭.৩০ মিনিট

সম্মানিত অতিথি ও আলোচকবৃন্দ

সঞ্চালক

			
মোঃ আতিকুর ইসলাম মাননীয় মেয়র ঢাকা উত্তর সিটি কর্পোরেশন	শ্রুপতি ইকবাল হাবিব নগরবিদ ও যুগ্ম সম্পাদক বাংলাদেশ পরিবেশ আন্দোলন (বাপা)	সাইফুদ্দিন আহমেদ নিবাহী পরিচালক ওয়ার্ক ফর এ বেটার বাংলাদেশ ট্রাস্ট	মারুফ হোসেন যুগ্ম সম্পাদক বাংলাদেশ পরিবেশ আন্দোলন (বাপা)



## Livable Cities





## Health Rights



**Bangladesh Anti Tobacco Alliance** **f LIVE Facebook/WBBTrust** **Work for a Better Bangladesh Trust**

### তামাকজাত দ্রব্যে সুনির্দিষ্ট কর আরোপ: স্বাস্থ্য খাতে অর্থ যোগানের অন্যতম উপায়

১৪ জুন, ২০২০। রবিবার। রাত ৮:০০টায়

**সম্মানিত অতিথি ও আলোচকবৃন্দ:**

**মোজাফ্ফর হোসেন পল্টু**  
সভাপতি, জাতীয় স্বাস্থ্য নিরোধ সমিতি-সিটিসি

**ব্যারিটার শামীম হায়দার পাটোয়ারি**  
সভেন সদস্য ও সভাপতি, টোব্যাকো কন্ট্রোল এন্ড রিসার্চ সেল

**অধ্যাপক ড. কুমারী হক**  
মেডিকাল পাবলিশ, সভাপতি, টোব্যাকো কন্ট্রোল এন্ড রিসার্চ সেল

**সাইফুদ্দিন আহমেদ**  
সমন্বয়কারী, বাংলাদেশ তামাক বিরোধী জোট

**মো. আরিফুর রহমান**  
প্রধান নির্বাহী, ইফসি পাওয়ার ইন সোসাল এ্যাকশন-ইপসি

**এড. সৈয়দ মাহবুবুল আলম**  
কনিষ্ঠ পরিচালক, সি ইউনিয়ন

**সম্মানিত: শারমিন আক্তার**  
প্রকল্প কর্মকর্তা  
ওয়ার্ক ফর এ বের বাংলাদেশ ট্রাস্ট



## Health Rights







## Number of programs, coverage and people reached:

**11** Exchange Meetings

**86** online/print newspapers

**Reach:**  
**3,059,091**  
**people**

**22** Webinars

**11** online/print  
newspapers

**Reach:**  
**1,215,862**  
**people**

**14** Campaigns

**31** online/print  
newspapers

**Reach:**  
**2,800,000**  
**people**

**5** Research Studies

**26** online/print  
newspapers

**Reach:**  
**650,000**  
**people**



**Reach at a glance**

154

**Total news**

600

**Total  
participants**

7,724,953

**Total reach**