

## **Launch of Adolescent Debating Society - Bangladesh**

Since her inception in 2004, PHREB has strived to end all forms of violence against girls and women and promote gender equality, social justice and women's human rights in Bangladesh. PHREB envisions a society in which every person enjoys all of the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards.

PHREB is working on a five-pronged approach to turn oppression into empowerment for women and girls by:

1. Reducing incidences of violence against girls including domestic violence.
2. Reducing maternal and infant mortality rates.
3. Reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS among girls and women.
4. Promoting girls' right to education, including non-formal and vocational training.
5. Promoting and Improving the reproductive and sexual health and rights for all women and girls.

In conjunction with our other ongoing campaigns such as school based interventions, community based interventions, Imams Movement for Women's Rights Network and BKAF (Bangladesh Kishori Adhikar Forum) an Adolescent Girls Alliance, PHREB has recently developed an Adolescent Debating Society.

This society engages local girls and boys to discuss key issues that impact their lives, including climate change, poverty, violence against girls, food security, HIV/AIDS and human rights abuses.

PHREB facilitates debate forums amongst adolescents, with the aim of raising awareness, so that they will become change-makers for the future of Bangladesh. Having been involved in the forums, the girls and boys will then disseminate the issues shared throughout the debate within their own schools and communities. This creates an ongoing awareness campaign far greater than the debate itself.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> of October 2009 the Adolescent Debating Society organized its first daylong training workshop on parliamentary debate, for high school students and their teachers, at Shilpakola Academy Auditorium in Chittagong City. Mr Banaj Kumar Majumdar, Deputy Police Commissioner, Chittagong Metropolitan City, inaugurated the training workshop.

In his speech Mr Banaj emphasized the need for girls to speak out when they are abused. He said if all girls speak out against all forms of violence against women there will be no incidence of violence in Bangladesh. He followed by saying that violence against girls must be stopped for a prosperous Bangladesh. He said adolescent debaters would be the greatest assets for the nation.

