



FIRST PERSON DOTS Treatment Provides New Life

Mr. Ahmed inspires Smiling Sun clinics working to identify TB and cure patients



Photo by: Laura Harrington

“Smiling Sun Clinic gave me a new life.”

—Mr. Kawser Ahmed

In a country where 300,000 new cases of Tuberculosis (TB) arise each year and where eight people die every hour because of TB, Mr. Kawser Ahmed thought he would be an additional statistic of the disease.

In 2005, Mr. Ahmed, a 28 year old student, fell ill with a persistent cough, fever, and weakness. The local doctor diagnosed him with TB and provided treatment. In early 2008 he fell ill again and sought the advice of local pharmacists. His condition continued to deteriorate. He began to detach from his family and friends and assumed he would soon die from his illness.

Not long after, he asked Ashiqur Rahman to “help and keep me alive.” TB Supervisor of a Smiling Sun Clinic in Gandaria, Mr. Rahman accompanied Mr. Ahmed to the Smiling Sun Clinic where the doctor requested a sputum test. The clinic lab returned a TB positive category-2 result. While category-2 is more difficult to treat it is curable, though requires close counseling, compliance to treatment and regular follow-up.

Filled with hope Mr. Ahmed immediately began the eight months of directly observed treatment, short course (DOTS) at the Smiling Sun Clinic. At first his health did not improve and had to give up his job. But with treatment and rest he slowly began to regain weight and strength. In October 2008 Mr. Ahmed completed his DOTS treatment and tested negative three times with a sputum test and is cured of TB.

Now in a new job as a kindergarten teaching assistant, Mr. Ahmed comments “Smiling Sun Clinic gave me a new life. I will act as Ambassador for Smiling Sun Clinics”. He has since brought his three sisters to the Gandaria Smiling Sun Clinic for TB DOTS treatment. Two have completed the DOTS course and one is currently under DOTS treatment.

The Smiling Sun network has 56 clinics in four city corporations that provide DOTS treatment to TB patients in coordination with the Government of Bangladesh’s National Tuberculosis Program. The other 263 clinics in the network refer potential patients to NTP partner clinics in the surrounding area.