

## **Interview with Yasna, a young activist from Bangladesh**

By Freddie Singleton, communication assistant at Mellempfolkeligt Samvirke

### **Tell me about your activism work. What campaigns have you been a part of?**

- I have been involved with campaigning activities and volunteerism, especially the prevention of child marriages in rural Bangladesh and the "safe cities for women" campaign in metropolitan areas.

*[Safe Cities for Women is a campaign that highlights how urban spaces can be especially unsafe for women, for example through lack of lighting which means they are more vulnerable to attacks and sexual assault]*



### **What is your relationship to the English language? What other language(s) do you speak? Which is your mother tongue?**

- English is widely spoken and understood in Bangladesh. It is taught as the second language here. Apart from English I speak Hindi, Spanish and German. My mother language is Bangla/Bengali.

### **When and with whom do you use your mother tongue? When do you use other languages?**

- My mother tongue Bengali is officially and domestically used all over the country. But English is also used for both purposes as much as Bengali.

### **Is it ever useful/necessary to use English in your life; with your friends; at work? What are the benefits of using English?**

- In English it's easier to communicate with friends over social networking sites. English works better in the office for a global form of understanding and communication method. Often Bengali can be misinterpreted or misinformed or lost in translation. Also to promote the global challenges and keep pace with the latest updates, English has become a very necessary part of the entire communication system for me.

### **Have you ever used English to promote a human rights message to a national/international audience?**

- Yes, #MyLifeAt15 is a global campaign calling on governments to implement the new global target to end child marriage by 2030.

**Have you ever used another language to promote a human rights message to a national/international audience? Please describe the campaign.**

- It is local campaigns that uses Bengali for reaching rural and wider audiences. Not national or international. I'm using both languages at the same time in many cases.

**Why did you choose to spread your message in one language instead of another? When is it appropriate to use English/another language? Why?**

- To reach out to more people who understand both English and Bengali or only Bengali, both the languages are used in banners or publications. Use of English would be when the reader is not able to read Bengali.

**Is English a global communication language?**

- Yes it is. If I need to explain and express myself with words that has a straight and simple meaning, understood by anyone, I'd prefer to use English. I think that it is becoming a language that two third of the global population speaks.