



Concerted efforts can bring orphans into mainstream

Planning Minister MA Mannan has called on all private organisations to come forward with support alongside the government's social safety-net programmes – especially for income-generation by families of orphaned children.

He was speaking as the chief guest at a function organised by Islamic Relief Bangladesh at Lakeshore Hotel on 23 April to celebrate winning the Bond International Development Award 2019. Efforts to end the extreme poverty experienced by orphaned children and widowed women in Bangladesh through the Alternative Orphan Sponsorship through Livelihood (ALO) programme scooped the award in the innovation category.

Chairman of the Board of Governors, Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Munshi Faiz Ahmad, Additional Secretary for Institution and Disabilities of the

Ministry of Social Welfare Sushanta Kumar Pramanik, Director General of NGO Affairs Bureau of the Prime Minister's Office KM Abdus Salam and Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs Mohammad Aynul Kabir spoke as special guests. Islamic Relief Bangladesh's Country Director Akmal Shareef chaired the function.

The project helped the orphans and their families to attain sustainable livelihoods, through acquiring knowledge related to health and sanitation and skill development. The ALO project was implemented over four years in three northern districts: Rangpur, Kurigram and Lalmonirhat.

Bond, an umbrella group of international development organisations, announced the award at its annual conference in London on March 18.



Workshop held on 'Strengthening Families for Promoting Orphan Rights'

Government ministers attended an Islamic Relief Bangladesh national workshop on 'Strengthening Families for Promoting Orphan Rights' in March. Held at the CIRDAP auditorium on 20 March, the workshop examined how our Alternative Orphan Sponsorship through Livelihoods (ALO) model could improve support for some of the most vulnerable people in Bangladesh.

It was attended by chief guest Mr Sharif Ahmed MP, Honorable State Minister, Ministry of Social Welfare and special guests Mr Aynul Kabir, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, and Mr Sushanta Kumar Pramanik, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Social Welfare.

Praising Islamic Relief Bangladesh activities to ensure the welfare of orphaned children and their families, the State Minister for Social Welfare noted that government is

providing grants to 62,000 orphaned children from 3,500 non-government orphanages across the country. This will help them to develop valuable vocational skills.

The minister also urged the private sector to increase its efforts to develop orphans and their families. Commending Islamic Relief's initiative in celebrating the OIC-declared Orphan Day on 15 Ramadan, he said the social welfare ministry will also celebrate this milestone nationally.

Mr Aynul Kabir informed delegates that the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs is running around 7,000 child clubs dedicated to developing deprived children across the country.

Islamic Relief Bangladesh's country director, Mohammad Akmal Sharif, presided over the programme.



Working children influence government decision-makers

Child labourers have influenced government decision-makers in an event organised by Islamic Relief Bangladesh and Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum (BSAF).

The roundtable discussion was held on 20 May at the Daily Star Centre in Dhaka. It aimed to build a bridge between working children and people in charge of policies that affect them.

Chief guest was Mohammed Mujibul Haque MP, chairman of the Ministry of Labour and Employment's parliamentary standing committee. He was joined by special guests the additional secretary of the Ministry of Social Welfare Sushanta Kumar Pramanik, and Syed Ahmed, the additional secretary of Ministry of Labor and Employment. Islamic Relief's head of programme Golum Motasim Billah also participated.

About 40 working children took part. They spoke about their experience working as welders and domestic workers, and in places like restaurants and aluminum factories.

Having their say and outlining their expectations of the government, many described the intolerable and dangerous conditions in which they worked. One boy explained that he used to work 12 hours without a break at a sewing factory.

Sanjida described how she repeatedly sustained injuries while working in a flower factory, but her employer did not care. She was unable to stop working there, as her family badly needed the money. But then Islamic Relief helped her family boost their income so she could return to school.

Mohammed Mujibul Haque, who is also a former state minister for labour and employment, said: "I tried my best to stop child labour when I was in the cabinet, but I couldn't because many families depend on the children's income."

He noted that the number of working children had declined in recent years, and he expects further improvements following Government initiatives to improve lives of working children.



Over 4,300 families receive Ramadan food packs

Islamic Relief Bangladesh has distributed Ramadan food to 4,312 families in Bangladeshi 14 districts.

We distributed the foodpacks, crammed with hearty food staples, on 5-7 May in 14 districts with high rates of poverty and in those that are prone to natural disasters.

Working with the communities to identify the families most in need, we prioritised the poorest families, particularly those in which women are the main breadwinners, with orphaned children, and older people.

The parcels were distributed by Islamic Relief, and through local non-governmental organisations and community based organisations.

They contained 20 kilogrammes of rice, two kilogrammes of dal (pulses), three kilogrammes of chola (chickpeas), three kilogrammes of sugar and two litres of cooking oil.

The families that received the Ramadan food supplies were grateful to Islamic Relief and our donors for the support, and offered their prayers that Allah reward those that contributed.



National workshop shares lessons from Integrated Sustainable Livelihood Programme



Islamic Relief Bangladesh organised a national workshop to sharing findings from our Integrated Sustainable Livelihood Programme; Evaluation of Integrated Sustainable Livelihood Project; Study report of River Bank Erosion and Climate-adaptive Crops.

Chief guest at the workshop on 24 March was Mohammad Shah Kamal, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief. Special guest at the event in Dhaka's CIRDAP Auditorium was Mr K.M. Abdus Salam, Additional Secretary, Director General of NGO Affairs Bureau, Prime Minister's Office. Mr Akmal Shareef, Country Director of Islamic Relief Bangladesh presided over the workshop.

A team led by Professor Dr M Rezaul Islam of Dhaka University conducted a survey on vulnerability, social dignity and the livelihood choices of people affected in the last year by river bank erosion in Daulatkhan, Tajumuddin and Borhanuddin upazilas, in Bhola district.

Dr AM Rezaul Islam said 94.6 percent of people from Bhola district have been displaced many times due to river erosion. Another team led by Professor Dr Mohammad Abdul Quader of Bangladesh Agricultural University conducted a survey on action research for introducing/ promoting climate adaptive and resilient crops at Tazumuddin, Bhola in the last year.

Islamic Relief Bangladesh has been implementing the Integrated Sustainable Development Programme for Climate Vulnerable Ultra Poor Communities of Southern Bangladesh (ISD Climb UP) project to lift 3,000 ultra-poor climate vulnerable families out of poverty. The project ran from October 2014 to March 2019 in Tazumuddin, Bhola.



National consultation on child labour elimination action plan



Islamic Relief Bangladesh and Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum (BSAF), jointly organised a national consultation on 'Revision of National Plan of Action (NPA) of National Child Labour Elimination Policy (NCLEP): Challenges and Way Forward'.

It was held on 25 April at the Conference Room of National Human Rights Commission Bangladesh.

Chief guest was Kazi Reazul Hoque, Honorable Chairman, National Human Rights Commission Bangladesh. He was joined by special guests Syed Ahmed, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Mohammad Abu Taleb, Joint Secretary, Ministry Of Women and Children Affairs and Mohammad Akmal Shareef, Islamic Relief Bangladesh's Country Director.

Chair of Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum (BSAF) Dr Khawja Shamsul Huda presided over the discussion. BSAF Director Abdus Shahid Mahmud gave a warm welcome speech, with AKM Masud Ali, Executive Director for INCIDIN, delivering the keynote address.

Several recommendations arose from discussions at the event:

- Prawn and dry fish industries should be included in hazardous child labor list.
- The National Action Plan for children should be revised and its timeline extended to 2025.
- The Department of Inspection and Factories of Establishment (DAIFI) should expand their scope of work and should be more accountable and transparent in terms of eliminating child labour.
- Inter-ministry coordination should be strengthened.
- Children working in export-oriented industries should be taken into account.
- Mass media should be more active in publishing/broadcasting news, promotions and programmes in order to raise awareness about child labour.
- An area based database should be adopted for government officials and NGO workers and civil society organisations.

Resilient livelihoods session at Gobeshona International Conference

Islamic Relief Bangladesh has hosted a session on resilient livelihoods at this year's Gobeshona International Conference. The four-day annual conference was held from 8 to 11 January at the Independent University in Dhaka.

It included national and international experts, researchers, academics and students of climate change. Addressing delegates at the opening of the conference, special guest Dr Atiq Rahman, Executive Director of Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS) said: "Bangladesh is at the forefront of climate adaptation, but challenges remain in institutionalising climate change into governance structure".

Islamic Relief Bangladesh hosted a conference session on Resilience Livelihoods. It was chaired by Dr Mohammad Akram Hossain Chowdhury, Chairman of Barind Multipurpose Development Authority (BMDA), with Golam

Motasim Billah, Head of Humanitarian Programme of Islamic Relief Bangladesh moderating.

Dr Mohammad Mahbub Islam, a professor at Bangladesh Agricultural University, presented a paper on behalf of Islamic Relief, 'Effects of Rooftop Gardening in Urban Surrounding of Dhaka City with Changing Environment.'

Dr Saleemul Huq, Director of International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD), gave an overview of progress against pledges made in last year's conference: "Considering the knowledge gained in the previous four events, the Gobeshona this year becomes an international conference with the theme 'Climate Knowledge' serving its purpose to report back the knowledge and initiatives that have been conducted in the field level both nationally and internationally in this designated platform".



Orphaned children receive educational materials

Some 700 orphaned children taking part in the ALO project, funded by Islamic Relief UK, were given educational materials by Islamic Relief Bangladesh. Two distributions took place on 27-28 March, and reached children at educational institutes in Ulipur Upazila, Kurigram district. Each student received an English to Bangla dictionary published by Bangla Academy, a pencil case, a clipboard, a document holder and a calculator.

Distribution events were held in Dharanibari and Buraburi Union Parishads, and inaugurated by Prof. M.A. Matin MP (Kurigram-3). Other local dignitaries were present, including Mohammad Golum Hossain Montu and the newly elected Chairman of Ulipur Upazila. Prof. M.A. Matin MP applauded the “noble work” of Islamic Relief Bangladesh in serving humanity. He appreciated the activities delivered to help orphaned children and their families, and made special mention of the process of selecting beneficiaries by conducting door to door visits.



The students were very happy to receive the educational materials. They promised to continue their education so that they can build brighter futures. Their guardians and local people who attended the events also expressed their gratitude and hopes that such assistance would continue into the future.

Faith leaders brought together to tackle child welfare issues



Our project to eliminate hazardous child labour, now in its second phase, has brought together faith leaders in an event enhancing awareness of child rights and child protection. Eighteen faith leaders participated in the sharing meeting, which was held at Kamrangir Char, Dhaka, on 10 April.

Top of the agenda were concepts relating to child rights, child abuse, child protection, education and the role of the respective stakeholders in these issues. Participants recommended holding regular awareness meetings on these issues, targeting parents and members of the community, and emphasising the importance of providing long-term support for disadvantaged children.



Event focuses on freeing Dhaka from pollution

The Urban INGO Forum of which Islamic Relief is a founding member, together with Dhaka North City Corporation and Dhaka University, have held an event to help rid Bangladesh's capital city of pollution.

The sixth urban dialogue, called 'Livable City for All', began on 29 June. Held at Dhaka University, the two-day event featured the state minister for disaster management and relief, Dr Enamur Rahman, as chief guest.

Humanity International Bangladesh's national director of habitat, John Armstrong, presided over the inaugural ceremony.

The dean of the university's earth and environmental sciences department, Professor Dr ASM Maksud Kamal, delivered the keynote speech. Other speakers included: Mohammed Shah Kamal, senior secretary of the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, Akmal Shareef, country director of Islamic Relief Bangladesh, AKM Musa, country director of Concern Worldwide, Shakeb Nabi, country director of Christian Aid, AM Nasir Uddin from Action Aid Bangladesh.

In his speech, state minister Dr Enamur Rahman urged the people to play an effective role in freeing Dhaka from all forms of pollution.

The event aimed to make the city livable for all, especially in terms of inclusiveness, safety, resilience and sustainability in line with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11.

It created an interface for interaction among urban actors, and brought together a range of stakeholders to complement government initiatives. It also sought to mainstream urban issues that require urgent attention.

Netule Rani: an inspiring woman

Netule Rani, 25, a beneficiary of Community Led Interest Free Financial Solution for the Extreme Poor (CLSP) project, has become a source of inspiration for women in the community. She is a member of the East Ramchandro para self-help group in Koikuri Union under Peergachha Upazila of Rangpur district.

She and her husband have two sons. The family relied on the little her husband earned as a day labourer and were struggling to make ends meet. They had only five decimal of land, and lived in very poor quality housing. With her eldest son in school and Netule determined that he will enter into higher education, she was eager to take part in the project.

Having had a keen interest in tailoring since childhood, she chose tailoring as her main income generating activity. She received cash support of BDT 12000.00 which she used to buy a sewing machine and few yards of materials. She worked hard, delivering good quality garments on time. Her reputation quickly grew, and she started receiving more orders from the community.



She was soon able to repay the loan to the self-help group, and took a second round interest-free loan of BDT 14000.00 as Qard-al-Hasana. She opened a small grocery shop. The money she earns she has used to lease 22 decimal of cultivable land, giving her family year-round food security. The family income is now BDT 10,000 per month.

Entrepreneurial Netule says that their financial self-reliance would never have been possible without

Islamic Relief Bangladesh's support. She has received leadership and financial management training from Islamic Relief, and is very active in her self-help group. She dreams that one day their group will be a big organisation and support other poor people in the community, and she aims to open a tailoring shop teaching other women to earn a dignified living.



WaSH intervention 2019: Humanitarian Programme

With a population over 170 million living in 147,570 square kilometres, Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries in the world.

Its water supply is predominantly based on ground water sources. In the context of the very high prevalence of diarrhoeal diseases in Bangladesh, bacteriological quality was a priority as criterion for drinking water supplies.

A ten-month scheme in three unions in Muktagacha Upazila under Mymensingh district encompasses water facilities and hygiene promotion for poor families and households exposed to natural hazards.

A separate nine-month long project covers two unions in Modhupur Upazila under Jamalpur district.

The schemes also target the union sanitation task force committee, which is responsible for facilitating water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services. They will also raise the awareness of faith and community leaders, teachers and other influential figures, equipping them to play a part in improving WASH practices in their communities.

The projects are also expected to reduce health vulnerabilities among vulnerable families by installing appropriate water technology in 250 tube wells and training 500 caretakers, who will also benefit from a hygiene promotion session.

The projects will be implemented through the Islamic Relief Bangladesh, which will deliver the project activities and monitor progress

Project Area- Modhupur Upazila
Beneficiaries- 9000 Households
Funded by- Islamic Relief Netherland

Project Area- Muktagacha Upazila
Beneficiaries- 6000 Households
Funded by- Islamic Relief USA



Project outcomes

- Increased safe water among the targeted communities.
- Increased awareness and practice on hygiene promotion.

Project outputs

- Safe water access for 3,000 target families.
- Water facility maintenance and repair skills skills of 500 caretakers improved.
- 15,000 people are able to demonstrate basic hygiene practices.
- Union sanitation task forces are aware of their roles and responsibilities.
- Increased mass awareness on World Water day and World Environment Day.

The story of Rabeya Khatun



Rabeya Khatun, 29, lives in Vetkhali with her family. Her father-in-law lives with them and her two daughters are at school – so it is tough to get by on the little her husband, 35-year old Mohammad Abul Hossain earns as a day labourer.

The rising cost of everyday bills and essentials meant the family were in danger of being unable to afford to send their children to school. Rabeya had ideas to earn extra income, but it was hard to get them off the ground alongside taking care of her father-in-law and the children.

Then, last year, Islamic Relief offered Rabeya the opportunity to join our Scaling Up Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Resilience (SCCADR) project. She received training and a grant of BDT 12,000 so she could set up a small grocery shop. Rabeya also benefited from regular guidance and support through home visits and group meetings.

Now, she's earning a steady income of 100 to 150 BDT a day, selling food staples and non-perishable items. The business is just behind her home, making it easier for her to balance working with looking after her family. The extra income has meant the household are better able to meet school and household expenses. A member of a self-help group made up of 25 other women, ambitious Rabeya is already diversifying her income. She is rearing ducks and has set up her first vegetable garden using the techniques she learned from Islamic Relief training.

"Islamic Relief Bangladesh not only supports us with some financial assistance but also continuous guidance and innovative techniques and ideas," says Rabeya. "I learned many things from attending the training and groups discussion sessions. Some of them I have put into practice, and some I plan to do in future."

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The mother-of-two has also found that her confidence and self-esteem has grown – and even her neighbours and customers have noticed the difference, as one points out:

"Earning money while maintaining dignity is very difficult for women in our village. Rabeya Khatun is a perfect example of a hardworking and optimistic woman who not only works hard the whole day and night for her family, but also makes some money with dignity".



Now Rabeya has some stable and sustainable income sources to support her family, she is able to look to the future.

Learners' Gathering & Picnic-2019

Islamic Relief held a day-long event to give under-privileged children some recreational time, and to support their physical and mental development. Organised by the Kamrangirchar field office, the learners' gathering and picnic took place on 21 March. It was held at Sheikh Jamal Government High School in Kamrangirchar, Dhaka. Taking part were 306 members of the children's clubs formed through Islamic Relief projects to end hazardous child labour and to build a protective environment and livelihood for street children. With 344 participants in total, teachers, parents, self-help group leaders, as well as GO and NGO representatives also enjoyed the day.

On offer were games, essay writing, drawing and a cultural event. Local ward councilor Mohammad Sydul Islam Madbor, Councilor inaugurated the programme while ward councilor Mohammad Hosen distributed prizes to children who won various events. Ms Farida Yeasmin, Head Teacher of Sheikh Jamal Government High School chaired the

programme. In addition, 25 students who passed JSC and PSC exams received their awards.



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