

Giving Voice to the Voiceless

Cash Grant Helped 300 Families in Sylhet



Islamic Relief Bangladesh arranged cash distribution programme among selected livelihood beneficiaries at sylhet City Corporation on 18 January 2020.

City Mayor said that, "There are several INGOs and NGOs working in collaboration with the City Corporation, however, in terms of accountability, transparency, community participation and project designing- Islamic Relief Bangladesh is unique among all. The process of involving community and relevant stakeholder during project implementation followed by Islamic Relief Bangladesh should be exemplary to others.

Islamic Relief supported total 300 Household with a cash grant of 12000 BDT for their income generating activities. It's a remarkable initiative as the Ward Counselor arranged a "Spot Purchase Programme" based on the business plan of the beneficiaries.

Under this initiative all the vendors assembled at his office with their products and the beneficiaries got the opportunity to purchase their required products instantly. This saved both their time and hassle.

Training on Child Protection Held in Rangpur



With the aim to sensitize stakeholders on child protection issues, ALO-IR UK Project (Phase II) organized a training on child protection (CP) on 5 March 2020 at Islamic Relief's Regional Training Centre, Rangpur. Child Protection policy mandates the situation are dealt with promptly and thoroughly and are brought to the attention of seniors. Since Child protection is necessarily a holistic approach, hence participation of stakeholders from different professions was confirmed in the event. Total 28 participants from Balapara union and Kawnia union participated in the training. The training was facilitated by Shoaiba Rahman, Child Protection & Inclusion Specialist of Islamic Relief Bangladesh office.

The training was interactive and the participants shared their own ideas and views on child rights and child protection. Participants from diverse groups including religious leaders, UP Chairman & male Members, teachers & health professionals and UP Secretary, female members, social workers & entrepreneurs attended the training. Participants were segregated into four groups and they were asked to identify their roles & responsibilities to ensure Child Protection issues and to stop child abuse in the Union. Each group recognised their roles and were committed to support communities to ensure CP issues in the coming days.

The participants highly appreciated the training as it helped to equip them with the knowledge and skills of child protection. The training has made CP issues clear to them which was not familiar earlier and to perform their roles. Now they are committed to make Balapara Union free from all types of child abuses and to create a child friendly environment there. The training helped them to increase their understanding and awareness on child abuse and neglect, the impact on children and how they can help. All participants vowed to remain vigilant and aware about child protection issues in their respective localities.

The participants urged Islamic Relief to arrange such trainings in other Unions of Rangpur district. They pledged to work for child rights, stop child abuse and ensure child protection in Balapara Union.

Islamic Relief Lifted 2100 Families out of Poverty

Economic Empowerment & Governance programme (EEGP) of Islamic Relief successfully implemented two projects in northern part of Bangladesh which lifted 2100 families out of poverty. The projects are POWERED & CLAP respectively funded by Forum Syd Sweden & Islamic Relief Malaysia.

Both projects were implemented aiming to reduce extreme poverty, gender discrimination, marginalization and socio-economic exclusion of 2,100 targeted households at Haripur and Pirgachha Upazila under Thakurgaon and Rangpur district. Duration of both projects were 3 years which phased out in March,2020.

Both projects have significantly achieved its targeted outcomes and became successful. The targeted beneficiaries under POWERED & CLAP project have made significant changes in their lives & livelihoods. It has accelerated their economic growth, increased social dignity, skill & capacity development, improved their health hygiene practice and women emowering process.

These projects were much accepted and appreciated by the stakeholders in government & non-government level. Presently many of them are keen to replicate the models. The activities of the Self-Help Groups formed under both projects are functional. Stakeholders are pleased to see the activities as women are more empowered than before and they raise their voices. They acknowledge Islamic Relief for their initiatives to help women to get empowered. Women have become more aware of their rights and protection issues.

The journalists and reporters from different media channels appreciated PoWERED project and they were delighted observing the achievements of the project. They also recommend that “the EEP & SHG model can be a good example to others organizations for replication and to eliminate the poverty and to increase women empowerment process”.



Sumi is Enough Confident to Recover her Family



Sumi is one of the active beneficiaries of the Enhancing Economic Opportunities of Young girls in Stranded Communities in Bangladesh project (EYS) which implemented at Mirpur, Dhaka. Sumi lives with her mother at Irani camp. She is the youngest among her four (4) siblings. Her father passed away who was the only earning person of the family. Since her father's demise, Sumi's family started struggling to meet their basic needs. Things turned even worst when all her brothers got married and started their family independently leaving Sumi and her mother alone.

Meanwhile Sumi's dream to pursue Secondary School Certificate got stuck due to lack of money. She was desperate to contribute something to her family which would be a great help to her mother. So, she started earning through hand embroidery called Karchupi. Karchupi was a seasonal work and her little earnings was not enough to bear family expenses all-round the year.

During this grave situation, Sumi came to know about Islamic Relief and became a beneficiary of its EYS project funded by Islamic Relief Netherlands. She was selected as the secretary of Youth Group. She started attending SHG meeting regularly and depositing some savings in the group. She had the opportunity to participate in different life skill trainings on health hygiene, leadership, protection, coping capacity, gender etc.

Like other beneficiaries Sumi received vocational training offered by the project. She prepared a business plan and intended to pursue tailoring course as she had some knowledge on sewing. Subsequently she got admitted to UCEP training institute. After receiving 3 months long technical development training, she acquired basic skills on tailoring. She received cash grant of BDT 5,000 in January 2020 and using the fund she bought a sewing machine along with some start up materials.

She started her work with her new sewing machine from home. Sumi says, "Initially I didn't get much response when I started this business. So, I made a cotton dress for myself ,displayed it to the neighbouring people and they liked it. Since then people have been placing orders to me for their attires."

Sumi is more confident now and very grateful to IRB and donor- IR Netherland for supporting her. Now she earns BDT 1000-1200 monthly. She spends that for buying her mother's medicine, paying their house rent etc. Sumi thanks Almighty for her thriving business. She aspires to expand her business in future and hope for better days.

Workshop to Update and Validate Existing Water Threshold Level

The people living in flood prone areas of Bangladesh are now well adapted to seasonal monsoon flood. Every year the people of Islampur witness monsoon flood. On 22nd January, 2020 Islamic Relief Bangladesh organized an upazila level workshop at Islampur Upazila conference room to update and validate the danger level of existing water level monitoring gauge point.

Total 30 participants attended the Workshop including the Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) of Islampur Upazila, Upazila level government officials, journalists, NGO representatives and other relevant key stakeholders. Country Program Lead of RIMES, Executive Engineer of Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) were also present in the workshop.

Bangladesh uses gauge points for real time flood monitoring and forecast purposes. Flood forecasting and warning system disseminates flood warnings during monsoon based on the data related to measured and forecasted water levels and danger levels of the gauge points.

It was discussed in the workshop that the Jamuna River is losing its navigability due to siltation, and hence, the danger level of Bahadurabad Gauge point is no longer valid. The danger level of Bahadurabad Gauge point was set a long time ago. Presently the water flow has been changed and compare to past the water level is totally different. Considering the changes, it is high time to update the danger level of this gauge point. Executive Engineer, FFWC explained the root causes of losing the navigability of Jamuna River. He also explained that updating the danger level is not an easy task as it requires lot of paper works. However, in association with Islamic Relief Bangladesh, FFWC will take necessary steps to update the danger level of Bahadurabad Gauge.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer, Islampur Upazila said, "We have never experienced any flood unless it crosses danger level. But the common perception of the locality is that flood occurs before water crosses danger level. So, updating the danger level of existing gauge station would be an outstanding achievement for flood management of this area. Thanks to Islamic Relief Bangladesh for taking such initiative."



Saline Tolerant Fruit Sapling and Seed Distribution

Islamic Relief, Bangladesh has been implementing climate change adaption and disaster risk reduction projects in the coastal area for many years. These projects focus on the vulnerability of the people occurred due to adverse impact of climate change which causes frequent natural disasters, like, cyclone, storm surges and rapid changes in monsoon. Here salinity intrusion makes crops hard to grow, especially in the dry months of March and April when the problems are more acute. Drought, flooding, waterlogging, cyclones and storm surges also wreak havoc on the local economy, food security and livelihoods.

Considering the severity and experience from past projects and researches, Islamic Relief Bangladesh introduces different adaptive and community-based mechanism and techniques to restore the adaptive capacity of the community through alternative use of lands and available technologies.

In line with that, all 700 project beneficiaries have received 5 types of saline tolerant vegetable seed and 3 types of saline tolerant fruit sapling. After Cyclone Bulbul and Amphan, till now 100% beneficiaries are utilizing those seeds for seasonal vegetable cultivation which is equally important from nutritional and income generating perspective.

This has ensured food security and boosted the vulnerability of the poor and marginalised. Additionally, saline tolerant fruit saplings have increased robust yield in the saline prone areas like Koyra and Shyamnagar. The goal of this intervention is to enhance resilience of the climate and disaster affected household through climate adaptive livelihood and mitigation options.

Some other objectives are-

- to decrease nutritional deficiency of the HH members
- to ensure that the HH can have vegetables in their regular meal throughout the year
- to arrange additional income generation through vegetable selling
- to reduce purchasing burden on income
- to improve the soil quality by growing assorted vegetables following the crop calendar
- to create market access and demand for long term sustainability of vegetable cultivation practices
- to improve local ecosystem and peoples' resilience



Early Warning Message Dissemination in Shyamnagar

Due to its geographical position, Bangladesh is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world. Natural hazards, i.e. cyclones, storm surges and floods extract heavy tolls on human lives and animals.

Bangladesh has experienced several catastrophic Tropical Cyclones during the last few decades. Early warning system for better community preparedness and awareness campaigns about cyclone warning signals launched new ways to disseminate information, including public discussions, posters, leaflets, film screenings and in-person performances.

These innovative efforts educated millions of people and over the years saved many lives. From the very beginning till today, early warning system is an integral part of all project related interventions. Early warning system play a pivotal role in the reduction of risks. For example, while conducting training on bag gardening, staff put emphasis on the early warning system as a cross cutting issue. Even on a casual visit in the beneficiaries' households staff never forget to discuss this issue.

Early Warning System ensures safety of human lives and reduce the losses. The absence of early warning system brings more casualties in any community A recent survey after cyclone Amphan shows the significance of early preparedness programme as this has reduced the death toll remarkably. As such, all programmes has started adopting early warning preparedness to reduce losses.

People were able to move to the nearby cyclone shelters with their families and valuable assets which have also lessen the livestock & property damages. Islamic Relief staff disseminated early warning signals and helped vulnerable community people especially aged and children to reach nearby cyclone shelters.

Immediate after the cyclone, Islamic Relief Bangladesh has provided emergency WASH kits, Shelter kits, Non-food items to 2200 directly cyclone affected persons staying in 44 cyclone shelters in project and surrounding areas.



National Disaster Preparedness Day Observation-2020

Inauguration Ceremony and Fair

Disaster Management and Relief ministry held a discussion on disaster management marking National Disaster preparedness day at Osmania Memorial Auditorium in Dhaka on 10th March 2020 where Islamic Relief Resilience program team participated. The aim of this year is to make Bangladesh able to play an important role in reducing disaster risks and disaster-related casualties with united efforts from government, private and voluntary organisations.

This year National Disaster Preparedness Day adopted the theme “Preventive measures to reduce disaster’s severity; Will expedite sustainable development” which is similar to the attaining Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) announced by the United Nations Organization.

Marking the day, a discussion was held at Osmania Memorial Auditorium in Dhaka. State Minister of Disaster management and relief, Dr. Md. Enamur Rahman addressed the discussion as the chief guest in presence of senior secretary of the ministry Md. Shah Kamal. An exhibition was also arranged for Government and NGOs to showcase their disaster preparedness measures and interventions to adopt for future preparedness plan, where Islamic Relief Bangladesh resilience program participated as a partner of NAARI consortium.



Art competition at National Level

About 400 students participated in the Art Competition which was held in collaboration with Ministry of disaster management and relief, Islamic relief Bangladesh, CPD and Save the Children on 28/02/20 at Bangladesh Shishu Academy.



The Disaster management and relief state minister Dr. Md. Enamur Rahman was the chief guest in this art competition event.

Prize-giving ceremony of this competition was held at Osmani Memorial Auditorium, Dhaka on 10th March 2020.



Art competition at district level in DNCC

Another Art competition of school children were held at the meeting room of the DC office on 7 March 2020. The aim of the competition was to promote National disaster preparedness and to encourage children to know about disasters and its preparedness. Total 77 students from different institutions participated in this event.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO COVID 19



Islamic Relief Bangladesh has Distributed 5233 Ramadan Food Packs



COVID-19 Awareness in January 2020

Islamic Relief Bangladesh arranged an awareness campaign on COVID-19 on 29 January 2020 at Police station, Sattala, Mohakhali, Dhaka immediate before it's outbreak.

The purpose of this campaign was to aware Project participants of Project REWARD-ii Dhaka along with the slum dwellers of project areas about the deadly virus and its severity. This campaign was organized in cooperation with the Ward Disaster Management Committee (WDMC) of Ward-19 and 20 along with the representatives of ward councilor.

Urban mobilisers of project REWARD-ii discussed important features of COVID-19 in their opening speech and shared the symptoms. They also stressed on the self-protection safety measures so that one can keep themselves safe from an infected person around them.

Mobilisers also explained the concept of self-quarantine. It was also discussed that being a densely populated country Bangladesh is more vulnerable to COVID 19. WDMC members asked participants of the meeting to maintain a safe distance of 6 meters between each other, wash hands in every 2 hours with soap for 20 seconds and also to wear a face mask, hand gloves to avoid contamination.

At the end there was an open discussion session where the attendees had the opportunities to ask anything about COVID-19. Some of the slum dwellers among this awareness campaign participated in this session. In the concluding part the representative of Islamic Relief appreciated all the participants for their inter-active participation and also requested them to practice social distancing and to disseminate the information they learned here among their families and relatives.





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