

GIVING VOICE TO THE VOICELESS

Learning Event on the Role of Faith-based Actors during Pandemic



On 21 March Islamic Relief organised a learning and sharing event in collaboration with World Vision Bangladesh, Cord Aid and Act Alliance. The learning event was organised to share, learn and highlight the contribution of faith Actors in achieving UNSDG specially during Covid-19 crisis. The broader objective of the initiative was to provide greater impetus and highly illustrate the voices of faith communities and effectively engage in national and regional discourses such as APFSD, MCDRR etc. Later the learning event was fed into the Asia Pacific Forum for Sustainable Development (APFSD) which was held on 22 March 2021.

Resident representative of United Nations Mia Seppo graced the event as the chief guest and there were 65 participants from different organisations. The event was launched with the opening remarks by Akmal Shareef, Country Director of Islamic Relief Bangladesh and convenor of Asia Pacific Faith Coalition of sustainable Development.

UN Resident Co-ordinator Mia Seppo appraised about the faith- based organisation as well as faith actors of their tremendous contribution building a resilient and inclusive society. Dr. Debopriya Bhattacharya, renowned macroeconomist and public policy specialist said, "it seems that faith-based organisations have big role to play in the recovery process from this pandemic impact".

There was a panel discussion which was moderated by Shaked Nabi, Country representative of Cord Aid and the panelists were Dr. Abdus Salam, director of Islamic Foundation, Chandan H.Gomes, senior director of World Vision Bangladesh and Juliate Keya Malakar, Executive Director of CCDB.

Food Support for FDMNS in Bhashan Char



To meet the food and nutritional needs of the FDMNs (Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals) in Bhashan Char, Islamic Relief Bangladesh provided essential food items to 2000 families in Bhashan Char. On 7 February 2021 the food distribution programme was inaugurated by Mohammad Wasiqul Islam, Camp in charge of Bhashan Char. The food items were Rice, Chickpea, Soyabean Oil, Salt, Sugar, Onion, Ginger, Garlic, Turmeric powder, Chili powder, Coriander powder, Cumin powder and Dry fish.

Inception Meeting of PEMB Project



With a view to enhancing rights of adolescents, particularly girls at risk of or affected by child marriage, Islamic Relief Bangladesh started “Preventing Early Marriage in Bangladesh” project at Mithapukur Upazila under Rangpur district. The 30-months-long (November 2020-April 2023) project, financed by Islamic Relief Canada, is working with 300 adolescent girls (age: 11-17 years), 1500 family members of those girls and 10000 community people.

The inception meeting of the project held on 24 February, 2021 in the meeting room of Mithapukur Upazila Parishad. The meeting was presided over by the Assistant Commissioner of Land Nur-E-Alam Siddiki. Among others the meeting was attended by Upazila Vice-chairman Nirajan Mahanto, Upazila Vice-chairman (Female) Most. Shamima Akhter, Upazila Women Affairs Officer Most. Mollika Parvin, Upazila Health & Family Planning Officer Dr. Abdul Hakim, Upazila Youth Development Officer Md. Abdur Rashid, Upazila Education Officer Md. Anwarul Islam & Upazila Cooperative Officer Mr. Md. Mahabubil Islam. A power point presentation of the project was delivered by the Project Coordinator Nicholas Murmu. Chowdhury Md. Tayub Tazammul, Programme Manager of Child Rights Programme shared project details.

Training on Child Rights



Child Rights Programme organised a 3-days long training on Child Rights for its staff at RTC, Rangpur from 07-09 February 2021. Participated by 26 staff, the residential training aimed at increasing participants' knowledge on child rights, bringing changes in their attitude towards children, and being able to capacitate communities & duty-bearers to deliver children's entitlements ensuring their best interest. The training was carried out by Shah Kamal, a child rights specialist, and eminent facilitator on Child Rights, Child Development and Life Skills for development sector.

Cash Support for Urban Slum Dwellers



In order to promote resilient livelihoods for urban slum-dwellers, Islamic Relief Bangladesh provided cash support to 255 beneficiaries under ReWard-II project. Each beneficiary received BDT 12,000 in cash through their individual mobile banking to start their IGA.

Flood Forecast based Early Action Triggered in Bangladesh



Islamic Relief Bangladesh organised few trainings and Workshops under ‘Supporting Flood Forecast -based Action and Learning in Bangladesh-SUFAL’ project which is being implemented at Jamalpur District. Multiple trainings and workshops had been conducted with participation of Govt. officials, DDM and other stake holders under Flood forecast based early action.

The Early Action Protocol is a formal plan that helps to provide timely flood warnings with an adequate lead time for the public to minimise flood damages. This has been developed with the aim to assist the people who are likely to be impacted according to weather forecast. The simple trigger method provides information that a pre-defined flood warning threshold will be reached if the current rate of rise is maintained. It serves as a guideline to delineate the roles and responsibilities for each actor involved in the early action, when it reaches threshold. The trigger for forecast based financing is determined through an analysis of risks, forecasts and potential hazard impact which allows decision-makers to identify when and where the early actions should be implemented. Such trainings and workshops, reflecting the scaling of early actions in Bangladesh, are expected to bring an impactful change to the existing method to manage floods and the process which government and humanitarian actors’ follow.

Training on Human Rights and Gender-based Violence held

Identifying the needs of the staff on the content of women and child rights and Gender Based Violence-GBV; EEG Programme (supported by Forum-Civ. funded SCORE project) organised a 4 days long training session at Regional Training Center (RTC), Rangpur where IRB staff had participated. The training was facilitated and conducted by external consultant Sanaiya Faheem Ansari); who is a freelance consultant of Human rights and Gender issues. A law enforcement officer (Sub-Inspector of bit policing from Mithapukur Thana) and a lawyer from Rangpur Court (criminal case) also conducted a session. The training covered GBV issues, women and child abuse and the legal aspects against GBV.



Celebrated the International Women's Day in Dhaka



On 8 March Country office of Islamic Relief Bangladesh organised an event to celebrate International Women's day. Other offices of Islamic Relief in Rangpur, Thakurgoan, Dinajpur, Kurigram, Rajbari, Patuakhali, Barguna also celebrated the occasion.

Celebrated the International Women's Day in Rangpur

On 8 March 2021, to mark International Women's Day the EEP project in collaboration with Pargachha Upazila Government relevant departments organised Street rally and discussion sessions maintaining health guidelines and social distance Recognizing the theme of 2021, 'Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a Covid-19 world' the guests and speakers stress on women participation in the decision making process of family and society, fighting against VAW, preventing child marriage, increasing women rights and reducing domestic violence. Chief guest Jannat ara Ferdouse appreciated Islamic Relief Bangladesh for creating grassroots level women's leadership by different women Self Help Group (SHG) activities against early marriage, violence against women and positive role of women empowerment. Special guest Mohila vice chairman- Tanzila Afroz also encouraged to create women's leadership & Women's empowerment in grassroots level.



Exit Meeting of ALO-II Project held



The Exit Meeting of ALO-II Project (Alternative Orphan Sponsorship Programme through Sustainable Interventions - Phase II) was held on June 10, 2021 in the Hall Room of Kaunia Upazila Parishad, Rangpur. Chaired by the Chairman of Kaunia Upazila Parishad, the meeting was participated by Upazila Nirbahi Officer, Upazila Vice-Chairman, Chairman of Union Parishads, Upazila level Govt. officials, NGO representatives and the project staff. While delivering his speech, Kaunia Upazila Chairman Anowarul Islam said, "I appreciate Islamic Relief because of their work for the orphan children & widows. I have come across many orphan families who are now self-reliant after receiving financial assistance and training from Islamic Relief." Tahmina Tarin, the UNO of Kaunia Upazila expressed her gratitude to Islamic Relief for inclusion of the vulnerable orphan family within the mainstream as well as creating a common platform for the widows to raise their voice.

It needs to mention that the 4-years-long ALO-II project started on 1st July 2017 and has ended up on June 30, 2021 with the financial support of Islamic Relief UK. The project ensured sustainable livelihood, education, child protection, wellbeing, etc. of 500 orphan households of Kaunia Upazila under Rangpur district.

Mock Drill on Earthquake in Sylhet



On 7 June 2021, IRB along with its youth beneficiaries participated in a mock drill on earthquake. The event was organized jointly by DC office, Fire Service & Civil Defense department, Urban Volunteer group and Islamic Relief Bangladesh. Inaugurated by the honorable District Commissioner of Sylhet, Fire Service & Civil Defense (FSCD) and Urban Volunteers of Sylhet led to organize it. The program was supported by DC office Sylhet and Islamic Relief Bangladesh. The main purpose of this mock drill was to evaluate the capacity of FSCD in response of any such disaster. Due to the recent series of earthquakes, the district administration asked FSCD and Islamic Relief Bangladesh to arrange a mock drill. Honorable DC along with other government officials including ADC (General), DRRO etc. were present and observed the whole event.

Launch of ALO Plus project

Islamic Relief Bangladesh started a new project titled ALO Plus (Alternative Orphan Sponsorship Programme through Sustainable Livelihoods) from January 01, 2021 at Gangachara Upazila under Rangpur district. The four years long project is funded by Islamic Relief USA. With an aim to contributing in balanced and sustainable growth of Bangladesh by reducing poverty, the project is working with 800 orphan households to improve their socio-economic condition and enhance their wellbeing.

The project staff met MP of the constituency and Chief Whip of the opposition Md. Mashiur Rahman Ranga (Rangpur -1), UNO of Gangachara Upazila Taslima Begum, Chairman of Gangachara Upazila Md. Ruhul Amin, Chairman of Union Parishads, NGO & CSO representatives, faith-leaders, teachers and local elites. Thus briefed them about the project, its interventions and sought their support. All of them thanked Islamic Relief Bangladesh for selecting Gangachara Upazila as the project area and assured of all-out cooperation.



Observed the World Environment Day



Like every year World Environment Day is observed on 5 June 2021. This year the theme was “Ecosystem Restoration” and it means preventing, halting, and reversing this environmental damage – to go from exploiting nature to curing it. To address this day, IRB highlighted the resilient and resourceful farmers by helping them to heal their local ecosystems. Therefore, IRB organised community level discussion on Wards to mark World Environment Day where IRB facilitators facilitated the sessions at community level for knowledge sharing and skill development.

Distributed Assistive Device to the Person with Disability

Islamic Relief Bangladesh specially focuses and underpins to PWD beneficiaries under EEP project and develops a collaboration with Handicap International which is funded by UKAID. Under this action a number of assistive devices (wheel chair, blind stick, black glass, hearing aid etc.) were distributed among the project's PWDs (person with disability) beneficiaries /. Total 38 PWDs and/ their family members received these devices. Upazila Nirbahi Officer of Pargachha Upazilla, UP Chairmen, journalist, apex body members, community leaders and community people were present at this distribution event. The chief guest says that it is a noble work to support to the PWDs members providing assistive device and this humanitarian support should continue and extend to more vulnerable people.



Skill Development of WASH Approach

One of the core strategies of the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) project of IRB's Humanitarian programme in Bangladesh is to put special emphasis on involving rural community in decision-making processes, alongside efforts to improve menstrual hygiene and access to water and sanitation. Members of the wash committee have been helping to mobilise facilities and entitlements for communities in rural Bangladesh, especially for the poor and ultra-poor.

The wash committee along with local government and other stakeholders works to build capacity of communities to ensure sustainability, proper usage of facilities and long-term behavioral change. The committees use participatory methods to map villages marking households, water points and latrines. Thus they keep track of WASH implementation in each household, monitor safe water sources and sanitary latrines and identify locations in need of repairs or new installations.





Ramadan Programme 2021

Across the Country
Family Covered: 7480

FDMN and Host in Cox's Bazar
Family Covered: 6784

FDMN Bhasanchar
Family Covered: 4612



MoU was signed between Islamic Relief and Sylhet City Corporation



On 16 March 2021, A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Islamic Relief Bangladesh and Sylhet City Corporation. Ariful Haque Choudhury, Honourable Mayor of Sylhet City Corporation and Akmal Shareef, Country Director of Islamic Relief Bangladesh signed the MoU for their respective organisation.

Celebrated National Disaster Preparedness Day 2021

To mark National Disaster Preparedness Day, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief and Department of Disaster Management jointly organised a daylong event regarding public awareness. Volunteers, stake holders and a large number of people participated in this event. IRB Youth group of 20 ward played a pivotal role for arranging this event. A fire preparedness mock drill was conducted by Bangladesh Fire Service and Civil Defense.



Orientation on Climate Justice to Youths



To accelerate youth empowerment, a day long orientation programme was organised for the youth volunteers and youth representatives of Youth Net for Climate Justice at Sylhet. A large number of youth gathering was ensured for sharing knowledge on climate change. This event also helped to develop collaboration among them. The workshop was organised jointly by Islamic Relief Bangladesh and Youth Net for Climate Justice. Various issues like climate change, vulnerabilities that create due to climate change, role of youth against those vulnerabilities, leadership development, etc. were discussed in the workshop. The event also helped to develop collaboration among the partners.

As a way forward to tackle the climate change issues, all the parties plan to jointly organise different awareness session, discussion, rally, and advocacy events and also connect the relevant stakeholders. In addition, local youth agreed to actively involve in different community-based activities like organising community-based awareness events, facilitating group meetings, follow up community-based preventive and adaptive initiatives etc.

Training of Trainers on Urban Resilient Livelihoods

A climate and disaster-resilient sustainable future for people in vulnerable countries starts with resilient livelihoods. Utilisation of knowledge against livelihood threats, shocks, trajectories and opportunities help us reaching out sensible solutions. In this regard, Islamic Relief Bangladesh under Resilient Poor Living in Bangladesh-(REWARD-II) project, organized a 5 days long ToT and Urban Resilient livelihoods module workshop at Sylhet. Representatives of INGO forum, Islamic Relief Bangladesh, Actionaid, Save the Children, BRAC, Care, Dhaka North City Corporation, Sylhet City Corporation, stake holders, community leaders etc. participated in this event and shared their insights and feedback. DRR specialist consultant Rezual Karim facilitated and chaired this event.



Enhancing Economic Opportunities through Vocational Training

Islamic Relief Bangladesh successfully completed the project “Enhancing Economic Opportunities of Young girls in Stranded Communities in Bangladesh”, which was funded by Islamic Relief Netherlands. The project aimed to support 300 vulnerable and marginalised girls and young women of impoverished families from among the Urdu speaking community in Dhaka city. The project targeted five Bihari camps in Mirpur, Dhaka and created livelihood opportunities through vocational trainings to those involved with the project, as well as provided business start -up funds for tailoring, mobile servicing, and beautician businesses. With the project support the targeted beneficiaries of the project have made significant changes in their lives & livelihoods by improving their economic growth, social dignity, skill & capacity development, health hygiene practice and women empowering process. Few cases out of 300 young girls participants are as follows:

SUMAIYA: AN EMERGING YOUNG BEAUTICIAN

Sumaiya Farzana, a 20 years old girl lives in Kurmitola camp with her parents and 8 family members. She is currently contributing her family by working in the Bandhan cooperative parlor (initiated by the project) and hoping to improve much better economic and social conditions for herself and her family. Sumaiya’s father is a poor Barber. The family had no other source of income. Sumaiya got vocational training on beautician course from the EYS project and received some seed money and utilized the money buying some essential beauty products & started working. Now Sumaiya is happy and satisfied as she supports her family. She has also saved some money. Her goal is to do hard work and to succeed in her profession and to continue supporting her family.



SHAHNAZ: STORY OF A VERSATILE JOB-HOLDER

Shahnaz was born in 1994 in an ultra-poor family at Kurmitola Camp, Mirpur Dhaka city. Because of the poverty and vulnerability of her parents, they married her off to a double-aged man, named Monu Mia. They often had to spend their day having only one meal. After getting member of EYS project; she obtained three months training on graphics design and subsequently received financial support and bought a computer monitor and started helping her husband by editing pictures and videos. Now Shahnaz’s husband works on different advertisements, wedding videography and photography. Shahnaz helps him editing those videos and pictures sitting at home. Besides editing, she is doing tailoring and ‘Karchupi’ work. Shahnaz and her husband both are now earning sufficient money. They are also planning to start their own videography production business.



JOBA DEFEATED POVERTY

Joba Akhter, a 20 years old young girl is supporting her family by pursuing tailoring for livelihood. Her father died when she was only 14 years old. Under the pressure of the crippling poverty, Joba could not continue study any further and got engaged in the seasonal work. Joba got opportunity to be one of the beneficiary of EYS project and she got enrolled for tailoring course at the reputed vocational institute facilitated by the project. After successful completion of her three months training, she received seed money and immediately bought a preowned advanced sewing machine. Now she not only earns for her family, she also saves money for future. Usually, her income increases during festival, Joba dreams to set up a tailoring shop in future and also hire some female labours to make them productive and sustainable.



Social Awareness Raising Campaigns

Islamic Relief Bangladesh conducted multiple campaigns with participation of local community, community volunteers, IRB formed Youths, Ward Disaster Management Committee.



Dengue Prevention Campaign:
In June, Islamic Relief Bangladesh arranged a number of events to raise awareness on dengue prevention. As a part of the campaign, Dhaka North City Corporation dengue prevention team and IRB formed Youth volunteers organised this event.

Cleaning campaign:

At ward 17 of Sylhet City Corporation, a cleaning campaign was organised by IRB formed Youth group. With the target to demonstrate healthy practices towards the slum dwellers, youth volunteers along with the community people identified few collection points and household garbage disposal techniques. They also set up some bins for garbage storage and handed over some brooms to clean the surroundings. They also distributed leaflets among the community people containing information about different kinds of pollution, health and hygiene practice etc.



COVID-19 awareness Campaign:

COVID-19, the global pandemic, has disrupted lives and livelihoods of the communities in Bangladesh, a densely populated developing country where 1,961 people are living per square kilometer with limited knowledge and health care services. To fight the surge of Covid-19, Government of Bangladesh imposed countrywide national lockdown to handle the situation. To ensure mass awareness about social distancing and hygiene issues, Youth group of ward-02 at Mirpur of Dhaka North City Corporation launched a week long awareness campaign to prevent the spread of corona virus. Distribution of masks, hand sanitizers, social distancing marks in front of the market places were ensured whereas law enforcers urged people to follow health rules in Mirpur and various crowded areas.



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