

Church of the Nazarene Bangladesh
Child Development Center (CDC)
Report for Mr. David Argabright/South Asia Partnership
Reporting Period: July to September 2014

Introduction:

Kalupara is one of the villages under Tanore police station in Rajshahi district, 264 kilometers North-West of the capital city Dhaka. People of this area are needy, suffering by chronic malnutrition. Most of the people live on agriculture and day labor, but half of the time in the year they do not have work. Around 20% of people are illiterate. Members of all faiths live in the village in harmony. There is a lack of proper health care centers nearby. The Church of the Nazarene started worked in this village in 2010 and established a church there. This Church has 35 members. They are active and most of them are tribal. Kalupara village is an example of how we are working in the country's rural areas and thousands of non-Christians are getting to know Jesus Christ and his message. They are transforming spiritually, economically and socially.

Aim and Objective of the CDCs:

BNM wants every child to become educated so that they are aware of their own rights; they can become leaders and can change their community and life. The CDC provides them with proper education, coaching, educational materials, cultural and spiritual lessons. It also helps children's parents with income generation for their employment. The CDC's major object is to preach the word of God through all its activities among those who don't know Him. Bangladesh has a huge scope to preach God's message.

Working areas:

Mr. David Argabright & the South Asia Partnership are supporting the following CDCs which are situated in remote areas where people are very needy: Arifpur (Jessore), Kumarkhali (Khulna), Boleya and Bachu Dighe (Dinajpur), Bishnowpur (Naogaon), Ramnogor (Sylhet/Moulavibazar), Hatbas (Satkhira), Kalupara (Rajshahi). Over 75 children are participating in each CDC.



Boleya CDC



Hatbas CDC

Educational Activities:

Education reduces darkness in the society. Education is a key tool for giving light to a nation. We are working heart and soul to educate the needy children. In this quarter, children wrote 2nd term examination and 90 percent of them passed. Those who couldn't pass are taking extra classes from our caregivers. Gradually drop-out rate is reducing in our working areas where CDCs are operating. The children are also

becoming active in the classroom. "Many children wouldn't be regular in the class, but now they come regularly and are very active," said a caregiver from Kalupara. A few months ago caregivers got teachers' training and they are applying what they learnt from the teachers' training. "I didn't encourage learners in the classroom, but after receiving training I encourage learners," said a caregiver from Arifpur CDC. Caregivers visited children's houses and met their parents. Children of the CDC are taking preparation for their annual examination which will be held in December.



Children study in the Boleya CDC



Health and Nutrition:

According to the country's renowned daily newspaper Daily Star, published dated October 06, 2014, in Bangladesh today, the under-nutrition situation is a persisting development challenge: 41%, or approximately seven million children under five, are underdeveloped. Among women, 24% are underweight which increases the likelihood that their children will also be underdeveloped. Thirty-three per cent of girls have begun child bearing when they are still children themselves (by age 17). Improving education and reducing child and maternal mortality and under-nutrition remains one major unfinished agenda in Bangladesh. However, we are working to overcome these challenges through the CDC project. Children eat nutritional food in our CDCs. We not only provide food to the children, but also provide awareness on health and nutrition so that we can overcome chronic malnutrition. We suggested children's mothers to feed nutritional food to their children. Health workers taught them that good nutrition in the first 1,000 days of a child's life -- from a mother's pregnancy until a child's second birthday -- is the key to a child's future. This time period is critical for proper brain development and physical growth and is a unique window of opportunity that can give all children the best possible start in life. Our caregivers also visited in the villages and taught about family farming. Many of them are farming at home to meet their nutritional demands. We also taught them about sanitation. "We established a latrine at our home after being advised by the caregivers," says a child's mother Feroja Begum from Bishnupur CDC.



Health check-up at Boleya CDC



Lunch-time at Boleya CDC

Social and Cultural Activities:

We also run some social activities through the CDC project. In Bangladesh early marriage is still a major problem. Poverty, lack of security and illiteracy are the main cause for early marriage. We counseled children's parents to discourage early marriage. We teach children discipline, honesty. They also learnt to respect senior persons. Our caregivers taught songs and dances. A football tournament was held in the Dinajpur area with CDC children on September 19. A total of 8 CDCs took part in the tournament. Local government leader Nazrul Ismal inaugurated the game as a chief guest. Rev. Manik Roy, District Superintendent of North District, was present there as special guest. Rev. Manik said: "Sport is a fresh recreation for children. I appreciate these kinds of initiatives. Sports help keep them far from bad things." Winner teams got prizes from the guests. The CDC north area program Officer Ms. Anne Sarkar was also present in the sports program.



The CDC children observed some national and religious days or events. They observed national Mourning Day on August 15, Teacher's Day on September 5 and World Literacy Day on September 8. Our CDC children paid respect on National Mourning Day to the nation's father Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. On that day in 1975, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was assassinated by a group of disgruntled army officers.



Children play in Boleya



Children play in Hatbas

Spiritual Activities:

Religion affects any human life. In the last three months, children of each CDC attended Sunday School. They pray and thank the Almighty God for their blessings. They also pray for their donor David Argabright. Most of the children memorized verses from the Holy Bible. Caregivers told them stories from the Bible. Many children now can retell Bible stories. They learnt to pray before eating. Non-Christian children also

pray to God before they eat. Around 80% of the children can say the Lord's Prayer. "My child wouldn't want to pray in the house, but now he willingly tells us to do prayer," said a child's father Pintu Roy from Kalupara CDC. Caregivers are planning to do conduct a Sunday School camp and pre-Christmas program in December.



Children pray in Bishnowpur



Children pray in Hatbas

Income Generating Activities:

Sumitra Roy, a member of a Self-Help Group (SHG) in Boleya village, said: "I used to spend unemployed time at home. Then I got involved with the SHG and took a loan of BDT 1000 (equal 13 USD). I started a small business. I rear chickens and it's successful. Now I am earning money. I also got involved in family farming at my homestead." Like Sumitra, hundreds of members of SHGs are earning money. In the Dinajpur area, an income generating training was held on August 12 where 52 women were present. They got training on making Chanachor (local food). Many of them are producing chanachor and selling it in the local market.



SHG meeting in Bishnowpur



SHG member's cow project in the Boleya CDC area

Outcomes:

According to children's parents, their income has been increasing through SHGs and women are gradually being empowered. Many children used to drop out from school and wouldn't continue school, but after starting the CDC project in the village drop-out stopped. Non-Christian children learn about Jesus Christ and many families accepted Christ as their savior. Gradually children are becoming more interested to come to Sunday School. Many children used to use bad language, but now they changed themselves. They also lead a disciplined life. Future plans include a pre-Christmas program and a Sunday School camp, forming new SHGs, and leading prayer for David Argabright.

Conclusion:

We see the dream that Bangladesh will be a developed country and many people will know Jesus. All our efforts go towards making a peaceful society where people will live with peace, justice and pleasure. There will be no more hunger, child abuse, violence and people will praise the Almighty. We are humbly thankful to Mr. David Argabright and the South Asia Partnership for their kind love and support for needy children.

Success Story: Tale of a neglected girl

Keya is from Boleya village of Dinajpur district, around 330 kilometers away from the capital city Dhaka. She was born into a family of another faith. Her father is a day laborer and mother is a maidservant. Keya is second among three siblings. Her family doesn't have any farm land, so if the parents cannot sell their labor, they don't have food.

When Keya's elder sister was born, her father was hoping their second child would be a son. But he was disappointed to get his daughter Keya. At that time, he had a business in the local market. After his second daughter's birth, he faced loss in the business and thought it happened because his daughter is 'ill-omened'. As a result, her parents did not take care of her properly. When they sat down to eat, they didn't take care of Keya, her father wouldn't even agree to send her to school. Above all, he didn't love his second daughter.

Finally, her mother brought Keya to the CDC and enrolled her there. Keya couldn't write and didn't get support from her family for her education. But the CDC provided a healthy environment in which Keya is now growing up. She takes part in the morning devotion where she learnt about the Almighty through stories from the Holy Bible and also through prayer. The caregivers counseled her, thus enabling her to focus and exploit her potential. She can draw nice pictures. Gradually she has improved herself. She was under special care by our caregivers. She improved rapidly and her mother's face was full of smiles.

Our caregiver came to know about Keya's sad story. She visited her house and met the father. She said that one day Keya will be educated and she will remove their family's poverty. She addressed gender discrimination. This kind of mentality, where uneducated people think a boy is a blessing and a girl is a burden, is what the caregivers at the CDCs have been working against.

Keya is now 11 and studying in class five. She wants to become a teacher. She requested prayer for her father so that he can change his mentality. One day she will be able to convince him that he was wrong.

