

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CENTER

(A Project of Al-Falah Bangladesh)

Progress in 2008

Introduction:

Formed in 1980, Al-Falah Bangladesh, a Government registered NGO is now emerged as the only major advocate for the social, cultural and economic rehabilitation of the Urdu-speaking linguistic minority community in Bangladesh. Al-Falah played a key and significant role through its advocacy and lobbying programs for restoration of citizenship and voting rights of the community. The Government of Bangladesh finally recognized the Urdu-speaking camp dwellers as Bangladeshi citizens. With this great achievement, Al-Falah Bangladesh has now prioritized its programs, which are based on community needs assessment, research and study. The Community Development Center is one of the prioritized projects of Al-Falah Bangladesh.

A self-help education and skill development program:

At the end of 2006, some well-wishers of the community encouraged Al-Falah with their guidance and financial supports to establish a self-help education and skill development program. Accordingly, the organization formed the Community Development Center (CDC) in November 2006, which designed and started implementation of a self-help education and skill development program, which focuses on the following:

A) Foundation Schools:

The Foundation School aims to save the children under 5 years from being lost and becoming street children. With three young educated community volunteers (including one female), the CDC established its first Foundation School with 30 children in December 2006. This Foundation School was established in the premises of Al-Falah Model Clinic at the Geneva Camp, Mohammadpur in Dhaka, where 18,000 people reside. This is the largest camp of the Urdu speaking community. Now 4 foundation schools have been functioning in this camp with 120 children. Within one year the CDC has opened a total of 13 Foundation Schools in Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Mymensingh, Ishurdi and Syedpur. 13 high school and college going female students have been given sponsorship to continue their education. In lieu of the sponsorship these young girls are teaching younger children in their respective Foundation Schools.



Number and location of the Foundation Schools:

Dhaka- 5, Chittagong-1, Syedpur-2, Mymensingh-2, Khulna-2, and Ishurdi- 1

Most of these schools are makeshift & require upgrading in terms of furniture & teaching aids. The teachers themselves need training to enhance their performance.

B-Sponsorship Program:

This program was introduced in December 2006 to promote secondary, higher secondary, diploma and degree level education among the poorest camp based students. The other purpose was to create spirit of voluntarism among the sponsored students. As a result, most of the sponsored students are now belonged to CDC as its volunteers and supervise CDC program at field level. During the past 24 months, the following number of students in various camps received sponsorship from CDC:

- **13 SSC students were sponsored for attending Coaching Classes**
Male 8 & Female 5
- **11 HSC students were sponsored for 1st Year Admission**
Male 8 & Female 3
- **4 HSC students were sponsored for continuation of their study**
Male 2 & Female 2
- **5 Honors students were sponsored for continuation of their study in various subjects**
Male 4 & Female 1
- **4 Students were sponsored for pre-university coaching**
Male 3 & Female 1
- **4 HSC students were provided text books**
Male 3 & Female 1
- **54 SSC students were sponsored for SSC Final registration & fee payments**
Male 23 & Female 31

Total 95 students were given sponsorship during December 2006-November 2008. Among them 51 are male and 44 are female students.

The CDC has received over 100 applications for sponsorship for admission, upgrading and continuation of studies at school, college and university level. These applicants will be awarded sponsorship in December 2008.

C. Computer Training:

The CDC received 9 Computers from the well-wishers of the community to start the computer training classes in Geneva Camp. The computer class offers a 3-month (90 hrs) training course on MS Word, Excel and Power Point. The Computer Class was established with 9 PC donated by the well-wishers of the community. With 3 sponsored student-Instructors from the community, the computer training classes were started in April 2008. By the end of November 2008, 89 students completed their training course through this self-help skill development program.



D. Vocational Training:

According to an UNESCO report, presently, only 8 percent camp dwellers are in private jobs and 18.5 percent are employed as rickshaw pullers and daily laborers. 12 percent are doing small business within camps, 4 percent are mill workers, 2 percent mechanics, and 6 percent are barber. The study finds 18.5 percent camp people are jobless. This situation demands that a vocational training program be immediately initiated for the uneducated and half educated youths of the community. With that view in mind, 30 youths of the Geneva camp were sponsored to attend electrical training at roadside workshops run by their own community people. This is a program, which has been started on trial basis.

Progress at a Glance:

Foundation School	13	Sponsored Students for HSC	19
Students	396	Sponsored Students for Honors	5
Sponsored Teachers *	13*	Sponsored Students for Degree Course	4
Sponsored Student Supervisor	1	Students Completed Computer Course	89
Paid Supervisor	3	Students on training	18
Sponsored Computer Instructors	4	Sponsored for Electrical Training	30
Sponsored Students for SSC	67	Total Beneficiaries	549

*1 female qualified teacher is disabled and two qualified girls are appointed for poverty reasons

Foreign visitors:



Occasionally, the well-wishers of the Self-Help Education & Skill Development program visit the CDC project. Now foreign visitors mostly research students from various foreign universities, researchers of NGOs and fellows of different international institutions are visiting the self-help education and skill development programs of Al-Falah Bangladesh. During the period from December 2007 -November 2008, those foreign visitors, who visited this Self-Help Project; prominent among them are Dr. Anu Jale, Researcher and Scholar of London School of Economics, Katherine Southwick, Bernstein Fellow and Dawn Clabia, Refugees International, USA, Bishop John C. Wester, Salt Lake City, Utah; Chair, Bishops' Committee on

Migration, Bishop James A. Tamayo, Laredo, Texas; Member, Bishops' Committee on Migration, USCC, Ambassador Johnny Young (ret.), Executive Director, Migration and Refugee Services, Anastasia Brown, Director for Refugee Programs, Migration and Refugee Services, , Kevin Appleby, Director for Policy, Migration and Refugee Services, Lacy Wright, former State Department Foreign Service Officer and Senior Adviser to Migration and Refugee Services, and Kevin Hartigan, Regional Director, CRS South Asia Region, Daniela and Barbara, Research Students from German University, Katherine from USA and Victoria Redclift, London School of Economics.

Social Service:



The Volunteers of CDC in Collaboration with Plan Bangladesh campaigned for birth registration in camps. Plan Bangladesh had told the European Parliament the vital importance of birth registration to developing countries and urged it to continue supporting Plan's global campaign. Volunteers of CDC have so far registered 1,500 Urdu-speaking children and adults in camps and the City Corporation has issued them birth certificates. The registration is still going on.

The Foundation School received about 450 packets of clothes from the students of Dhaka International School, which were distributed among all the students and teachers of the 13 schools.

Future Programs for 2008-2009

Education is the backbone of any community. The CDC project intends to further consolidate its Self-Help initiatives. The camp dwellers have a right to a better life and the development of their skill and education level is their only true hope. For the year 2008-2009, the CDC has set itself with the following targets:

- Increase the number of Foundation School to 40
- Upgrade the existing 10 schools with teaching aids & furniture
- 40 sponsored students will be developed as volunteer-teachers to teach students of Foundation School
- Support 300 children for admission in the Government Primary School
- 10 sponsored students will be trained to supervise the education and skill development programs at field level



Progress in 2008

- 549 community students will be sponsored to take admission, continue study and complete their study at school, college and university level
- 200 community students will be trained on fundamental computer course
- Establish one text book library in Geneva Camp.
- Establish IT Training Center in Chittagong, Khulna, Ishurdi, Mirpur, Mymensingh, Bogra and Syedpur.
- Provide Vocational Training to 200 youth and place them in jobs

The above program is far more ambitious than our existing one. Its success will depend on greater technical and financial support from the individual contributors and well wishers of the community. We gratefully acknowledge the guidance & financial assistance provided by our well-wishers in 2007 & 2008 and looking forward to their continued participation.

Donors Supports:

USA based an International donor agency agreed to provide US\$ 25,000 to implant the program. The amount is 58% of the total budget. Al-Falah will need to raise the remaining 42% of the budget (TK. 1,302,980) from its community donors and well-wishers. Al-Falah Bangladesh has sought permission from the NGO Affairs Bureau of Government of Bangladesh for approval of the project. It is expected that with the government's approval, Insha Allah the project will start from 1st January 2009.

2-Day Workshop on Community Development Issue



CDC organized a 2-Day Workshop on Community Development Issue in Dhaka from 30th November to 1st December 2008. The workshop was attended and participated by the CDC staff, teachers of Foundation School, Instructors of Computer Class and Supervisors from Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Mymensingh, Ishurdi and Syedpur. In the concluding session, President, Secretary and Treasurer of Al-Falah Bangladesh were present. The workshop in its two-day sessions reviewed the progress of CDC and its components, discussed the future plans

and developed criteria for various categories of beneficiaries and guidelines to implement the future plans. Executive Director of the organization facilitated the different sessions of the workshop.



For more and update information please visit www.alfalah.com.bd

Or

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