

Project No. 35

RURAL EYE CARE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION (RECAP) PROJECT

Principle:

Elimination of blindness of underprivileged people by providing modern treatment at their doorstep.

Objectives:

- To create awareness among parents, teachers, students and community people in order to prevent blindness;
- To train the staff members of partner NGOs in order to enhance their knowledge and awareness about the causes of blindness, eye care services and blindness prevention;
- To ensure better eye sights of the poor and underprivileged people through providing eye treatment enabling them to lead normal productive life; and
- To provide treatment for primary school children for detecting early childhood blindness.

Background:

The three-year second phase of the project started in July 2008 and will end in June 2010. Caritas Bangladesh has been implementing this project with the close partnership with BNSB Dinajpur, BNSB Mymensingh and seven partner NGOs of the Northern part of Bangladesh.

Staff Strength:

Donor:

Andheri Hilfe e. V., Germany.

Expenditure: Foreign Partner's Contribution: Tk.7,504,618

Beneficiaries:

Direct: 27,950

Indirect: 99,750

Achievements:

The target and achievement of the project under the reporting period are shown in the Table below:

SL	Activities	Cumulative as on june-2008	Target and Achievement from July 2008 to June 2009			Cumulative as on June-2009
			Target	Achievement	%	
1.	Projects Review and Orientation Workshop	2	1	1	100	3
1.1	Participants	36	20	21	105	57
2.	Conduct Eye Camps	38	22	22	100	50
2.1	No of Patient Treated	32,384	17,354	17,354	100	49,738
2.2	No of Cataract Operations	1,787	1100	1175	106	2962
2.3	No of Other Operations	388	138	138	100	526
3.	No. of Demonstration to School Teachers Program Conducted	16	8	8	100	24
3.1	No of Teachers Attended	1,606	800	802	101	2,408

SL	Activities	Cumulative as on june-2008	Target and Achievement from July 2008 to June 2009			Cumulative as on June-2009
			Target	Achievement	%	
4.	No. of School Sight Testing Program (SSTPs) Conducted	60	30	30	100	90
4.1	No of Students	15,588	9,000	9,794	108	25,382
5.	Round Table Conference	00	1	00	0	0
6.	Newsletter Publication	00	1	00	00	00

The above Table shows that most of the planned activities except Round Table Conference and Newsletter publication were implemented. A total of 17,354 poor eye patients treated in the eye camps under this project got rid of blindness. A total of 1175 cataract and 138 other operations were conducted.

Immediate Results of the Project:

The RECAP is still in a primary stage as it has passed only three years including one-year pilot project. But many inspiring results are already visible among the project partners. Through implementing the activities of this project following positive changes have been made in the life of the primary stakeholders as well as the community people:

- The poorest project participants have got back their eyesight. They have been rehabilitated in society with dignity.
- The cataract blind patients after undergoing successful operation have become productive again instead of being dependent on the family as well as society.
- Through Demonstration to School Teachers Program (DSTP) 400 educational institutes were involved in eye care program. The teacher's instructed the students how to take care of eyes, what type of foods need to be eaten and how to avoid eye diseases. They can also identify whether the students have low vision and where the patients have to go for treatment. All the teachers have become good motivators for schools and society.
- It has already been proven that the School Sight Testing Program (SSTP) is one of the most effective ways to create awareness about primary eye care. Through conducting SSTPs under the RECAP it is possible to detect eye diseases of poor school children in rural areas and send them to the eye hospital for necessary treatment.

Conclusion:

Through the RECAP project Caritas Bangladesh is going to the doorsteps of the rural poor people of the greater northern part of Bangladesh with a view to eradicating blindness. Caritas Bangladesh offers its sincere thanks and appreciation to BNSB Dinajpur, BNSB Mymensingh, Caritas Dinajpur Region and the partner NGOs of Andheri Hilfe for their sincere cooperation and support in the effective implementation of this important project.

Rustoma Has Got Her Eye-sight Back

Rustoma Begum (30) is a poor woman. Her husband Md. Lutfor Rahman is a day labourer. She has a family consisting of eight members. She lives in a remote village named Kusholpur under Phulbari *upazila* (sub-district) in Dinajpur district. She is landless and has a little dwelling place in the vested land. Her husband works as a day labourer in the households of the neighboring people and rears cows, goats, etc. His income is insufficient to support the family. When Rustoma delivered a child six years ago, she had a problem in her eyes. She was treated by a village doctor several times but there was no improvement. Her condition went from bad to worse and she completely lost her eyesight. She could not take better treatment for want of money. She had no energy to look after her family. In fact, she became a burden upon the family.



Before Operation



After Operation

Under the joint collaboration of Caritas and Gausul Azam BNSB Eye hospital, Dinajpur an eye camp was arranged in Sujapur High School, Dinajpur. Many patients rushed there to receive treatment free of cost. Rustoma came to the eye camp with the same intention. She was sure that she would be treated properly. The attending physicians conducted some tests and found her eyes affected with cataract. On 18/02/2009 an operation was done, Intra Ocular Lens (IOL) was installed into her eye. She became able to see again. She can do all household work without facing any problem. Her husband, father, mother and neighbors are very pleased. Rustoma said, "It was impossible for me to spend money to get rid of blindness and get my eye-sight back. The doctors of the BNSB Eye Camp treated me and other patients to cure acute diseases. I do not know how to use words for expressing gratitude to this project run by Caritas."