

Project No. 48

LITERACY AND HEALTH CARE PROGRAM FOR THE CHILDREN OF SLUMS, DHAKA

Principle:

Those who live in slums by compulsion are no less human and in fact deserve greater attention.

Main Objectives:

- To build up school going habits among the destitute and slum children of Dhaka and to give them primary level education;
- To provide medical and preventive health-care services to the slum children and their families and to arrange education in health, nutrition and sanitation;
- To strengthen the supervision and guidance in studies/works of the Street Boys living with a superior and one assistant; and
- To make Night School classes available up to class VIII, especially for working girls, who can only attend classes at night.

Background:

The project began in 1972. The new phase started from January 2007 and will end in December 2009.

Staff Strength: Total-54 (Male-24, Female-30)
Volunteers-4 (Male-1, Female-3)

Donors:

Misereor, Germany;
Students of Notre Dame College, Motijheel, Dhaka;
Congregation of Holy Cross Priests Society, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Expenditure:

Foreign Partner's Contribution :Tk. 6,054,395
Local Partner's Contribution :Tk. 7,844,872
Total :Tk. 13,899,267

Beneficiaries:

Direct: Male 3,719 Female 3,848 Total 7,567
Indirect: Male 1,905 Female 2,459 Total 4,364

Target and Achievements:

Major achievements of the project are furnished below:

Sl.	Items / Activities	Achievements as on June 08	Performances in FY 2008-2009			Cumulative as on June 09
			Target	Achievement	% of Achievement	
1	No. of students enrolled	25,317	1,200	1,400	117	26,717
2	No. of patients provided medical services	72,517	10,000	9,594	96	82,111
3	No. of patients taken to hospitals	69,725	5,000	4,511	90	74,236

Sl.	Items / Activities	Achievements as on June 08	Performances in FY 2008-2009			Cumulative as on June 09
			Target	Achievement	% of Achievement	
4	No. of street boys who received shelter and education	709	60	60	100	769

The above Table shows that during the reporting period a total of 1,400 students was enrolled in this school. On the other hand, in all 9,594 patients were provided with medical services and 4,511 patients were taken to different hospitals. A total of 60 street boys received shelter and education here.

Impacts:

- The guardians of extremely poor children living in different slums have all along shown greater desire to get their children admitted into this school. Thus a good number of children become literate.
- The illiterate do not even get mental jobs. They understand that better paying jobs in the garment factories and elsewhere are available to those having at least lower secondary education (class VI – VIII). So this school arranges education to fulfill their needs.
- When slum dwelling people become ill, they come to the clinic to get treatment and get a scope to lead a less distressful life.

Conclusion:

For a long time this program has been serving the extremely poor people of different slums. The classes in literacy school are held regularly. The medical program takes care of many poor patients. Through this program numerous downtrodden families have been salvaged so far. Many of them have now dignified positions in society. They also extend help to other less fortunate people. Thus this program produces people with positive attitudes and qualities. It is therefore, necessary to carry on the endeavors to serve those vulnerable people and their children who live in inhuman condition.

Notre Dame Literacy School Has Made Swapna's Life Meaningful

Swapna Rani Dey (24), daughter of Ratneswar Dey and Puspa Rani Dey, hails from the village of Govindapur, *upzila* (sub-district) Matlab, district Chandpur. Currently she resides at 2 Railway Barak, South Kamalapur, Dhaka. There were five members in their family. Her father was a day laborer. It was really difficult for him to support his family with very scanty income. When he could not manage any work, he along with his family members would remain half-fed and even unfed. So it was not at all possible for this poor man to send his children to school. During this struggling period he came to know about Notre Dame Literacy School and Health Care (ND-LHC) Project. Without delay he and his wife had talks with the authority of this school, and they were told to bring their daughter over here.

In 1989 Swapna got admission in K. G. into this School. This school was up to grade eight. She duly completed class five in 1995 and was admitted in class six into the night shift. She said, "My family was unable to defray my educational expenses. So I came back to ND-LHC Work Program and carried out my duty regularly. In this way I was able to earn some money to meet my expenses."

After completing class eight she was admitted into Kamalapur Sher-E-Bangla High school in class nine. From there she appeared at the Secondary School Certificate (S.S.C) Examination in 2002 and came out successful. Unfortunately then her father died and she could not continue her studies any more. Again she came back to ND-LHC and received one-year long sewing training conducted by this project. After finishing the course she joined the ND-LHC where she continued her service for three years. At present she works in ND-LHC Credit Union as a money collector and information officer. She got married and has one daughter. Her husband Swapon Das who also completed a course at ND-LHC on vocational trade now has a job in a private company. She says, "I hope ND-LHC project will continue in future and benefit other children as it led me to development in all respects. ND-LHC project has placed me in a dignified position. I am ever grateful to this institution."