

Project No. 63

CARITAS EMPLOYEES SOLIDARITY FUND/POOR FUND

Principle:

I am my sister's and brother's keeper.

Objectives of the Project:

- To express concern for the poor and impoverished and to assist our less auspicious brethren with our own voluntary monthly contributions; and
- To help the insolvent and helpless people of society immediately.

Donors: All staff members of Caritas National and seven Regional offices of their monthly sacrificial contribution.

Collection and Expenditure:

Total Amount Collected :Tk. 120,921
Total Expenditure :Tk. 99,776

Achievements:

The fund was collected from the voluntary contributions made by each employee of Caritas National and Regional offices, but they themselves do not draw any benefit from it. Absolutely on humanitarian ground each employee of National and Regional offices contributes a part of his/her monthly salary to support the poor and most distressed around us. Foreign visitors sometimes give donations to this Solidarity Fund. During the reporting period (2008-2009) the total collection for this fund was Tk 120,921 while the cumulative sum stood at Tk. 3,578,018 The total expenses since inception rose to Tk. 2,854,887 for 4,939 cases of assistance to many individuals. An elected committee operates the funds, for two-year term in each Region and in National Office. They follow certain guidelines in approving the applications. The types of assistance extended out of the fund during reporting period were as follows:

Nature of Projects	Central	Barisal	Chittagong	Dhaka	Dinajpur	Khulna	Mymensingh	Rajshahi	Total
Educational Support	17	2	-	25	2	12	2	3	63
Medical Treatment	23	7	-	18	25	38	14	20	145
Marriages	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
House Repair	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
Others	1	-	-	2	-	1	3	1	8
Total:	42	10	-	45	27	51	19	25	219

Note: Chittagong Region did not provide any financial support from the Solidarity Fund during the reporting period as they did not get any application as per guidelines of the Solidarity Fund.

Impacts:

These small endeavors of support have great benefits on the beneficiaries. This fund is very essential for the immediate and quick responses towards the urgent need of poor and distressed families, especially for medical and educational purposes. When a petition is submitted seeking financial support, it is investigated minutely by a committee. Only a deserving candidate becomes recipient of money from this fund. Though the amount is usually small, it meets a person or a family's acute need instantly. A problem is more or less solved ensuring complacency of the concerned persons who can express a sigh of relief.

Conclusion:

Each staff member working in Caritas National and Regional offices serves the needy and poor people voluntarily by giving his/her own generous contribution to this project. Psychologically the initiative instills a lesson of sacrifice into their hearts and they become motivated to demonstrate sympathy for the affected. Thus it gives the staff members an opportunity to serve poor people and do something for them. The members of the fund are very happy to participate in such a meaningful and charitable project.

“Now Elias Leads a Stable Life”

Elias Rozario (50) lives with his family members at Taltotli slum of Agargaon, under Dhaka Metropolitan City. His family consists of five members including one son and two school going daughters. His elder daughter Sonia (11) reads in class five and other daughter Tania (8) is in class four. He was a vehicle driver of reputed voluntary organization. His wife also earns monthly Tk.300 -500 through stitching work. Though their income was insufficient to bear all expenses of the family, they could take at least three meals a day and defray educational outlays of their children. They had also some savings for the future of their children.

In 2006, one day while driving the office car he met with an accident and was injured seriously. He was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the attending doctors tried to cure him it was possible there. Then for better treatment he was transferred to Dhaka *Rehabilitation Institute and Hospital for the Disabled (RIHD)*. After few days, Elias was informed that to save his life his right leg below the knee would be mutilated. As Elias became physically disabled, he lost his job. On the other hand, in course of carrying on his treatment expenses, he exhausted all savings. Slowly Elias' family members started to face economic difficulty. Sometimes they had to remain starved.

In the meantime Elias came to know about Caritas Staff Solidarity Fund (CSSF) through one of his relatives. After having information about CSSF he applied for financial assistance to start a tea stall. Caritas personnel scrutinized all points he mentioned in the application. Finding the whole description valid the committee of CSSF sanctioned Tk 500/- on 9/7/2006 for Elias to purchase essential commodities/materials needed to run for a tea stall. Having received the support he started a tea stall adjacent to his house. Now he earns on an average Tk. 70/- per day. His elder daughter Sonia helps him to sell tea after she comes back from school.

They live in a house which was in a bad shape. In the rainy season torrential rain made their life miserable. During the monsoon Elias and his family members somewhat fearfully spent their days. With his meager income from the tea stall it was not possible for him to repair his house. Furthermore, Elias was unable to keep his family members in a safer place. To safe his family members from rainfall Elias again applied for financial support to repair the roof of his house with plastic sheet. Considering his deplorable condition the CSSF Committee again granted him amounting to Tk 1,000 during this reporting period. He duly got the roof of his house repaired. Now he is happy that his family members can protect themselves from rain water.

Elias said, “Recently, my wife has got a job as a cleaner at a Private University and her monthly wage is Tk. 1,500/-. Now we can somehow manage three meals a day and also bear educational expenses of our children. My family and I will never forget the generous assistance we received from Caritas. I hope Caritas will continue this activity to develop livelihoods of helpless urban poor people.”