

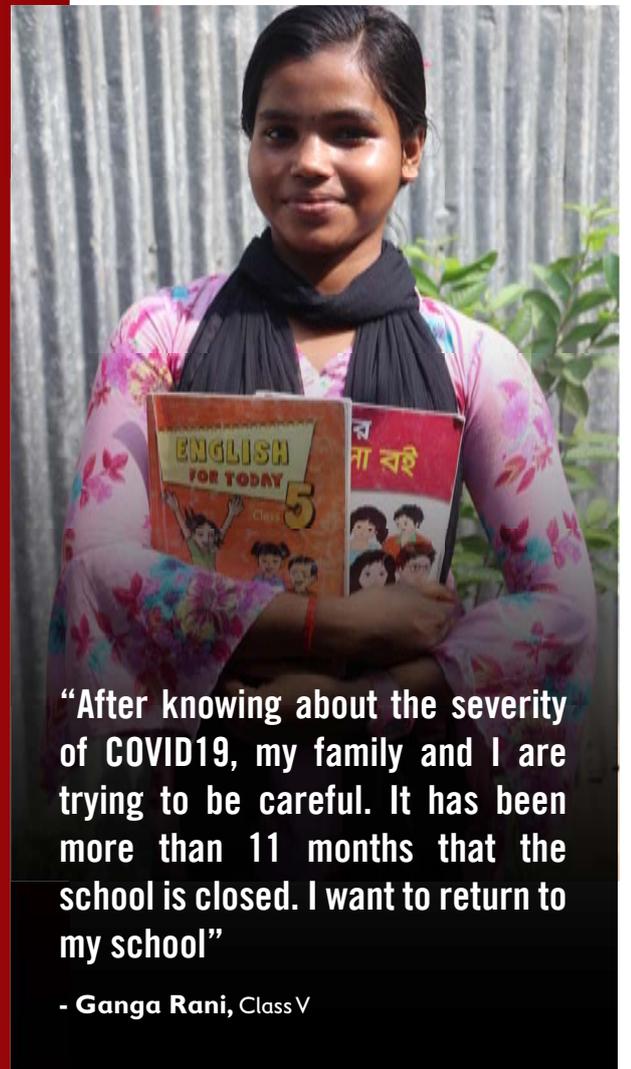
ISSUE: FEBRUARY 2021



Save the Children

# CHILDREN NEED TO GET BACK TO SCHOOL

The closure of educational institutions started from March 17, 2020 as a measure to contain the spread of COVID-19. The long-term closure of schools has undoubtedly left some scratches on education despite the schools, private and public, have continued the learning process through electronic means, such as broadcasting of classes through television, radio and online mediums. Many children could remain in the learning process through different channels during the lockdown and school closure. However, this may not have been the case for children from more vulnerable families and communities. COVID-19 has put children's education in crisis. We need to stand beside the children more than ever. Our children need to get back to school. It is our duty to take them back to their happy place ensuring the highest health safety.



**“After knowing about the severity of COVID19, my family and I are trying to be careful. It has been more than 11 months that the school is closed. I want to return to my school”**

**- Ganga Rani, Class V**



# LAUNCH OF **SAFE BACK TO SCHOOL** (নিরাপদ ইশকুলে ফিরি)' CAMPAIGN

'Safe Back to School (SB2S)-নিরাপদ ইশকুলে ফিরি' Campaign launched in Bangladesh on 10 February with 15 leading national and international NGOs including Save the Children in Bangladesh, BRAC, Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE), Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM), Educo Bangladesh, FIVDB, Friendship, Humanity Inclusion (HI), Jagorany Chakra Foundation (JCF), Plan International Bangladesh, Room to Read, Sesame Workshop Bangladesh, Stromme Foundation, World Vision International and Young Power in Social Action (YPSA). SCiBD is the leading organization which has brought all the 15 organizations together under single campaign banner forming the alliance.



Inaugurating the campaign as the chief guest Dr. Dipu Moni, MP, Hon'ble Minister, Ministry of Education, Government of The People's Republic of Bangladesh said, "The government is sincere enough to send the children back to school. However, students will be returned after considering all the risks and ensuring health protection". "The COVID-19 situation has created an opportunity for us to re-evaluate and reform the current education system," she added. *"We want the government departments, institutions, development and donor agencies to work together to bring children back to school safely."*

Director General of the Department of Secondary and Higher Education, Professor Dr. Syed Md. Golam Farooq, Additional Director General of the Department of Primary Education Sohel Ahmed, UNICEF Deputy Country Representative in Bangladesh Veera Mendonca and Head of AID, Development Assistance to the Canadian High Commission in Bangladesh Phedra Moon Morris were present as the special guests at the event. Reefat Bin Sattar, Director-Program Development and Quality of Save the Children in Bangladesh, shed light on the background of the campaign and scope of joining hands with the government through this. The children of the National Children's Task Force (NCTF) shared their experiences of not being able to go to school for the last 11 months. They said that there is no alternative to reopening schools to ensure a better future and better mental health. In the concluding remarks, Onno Van Manen, Country Director of Save the Children in Bangladesh said that the organizations joined in this campaign are ready to collaborate in the government's plan. He also hoped that more development agencies will join the campaign in the upcoming days. Around 150 participants from development agencies, donor and media joined the event.



The impact of the global Covid-19 pandemic has closed educational institutions in Bangladesh for more than eleven months. The government is on the verge of reopening schools, which is also our aim for a better future of our children. This process of reopening schools requires collaborative initiatives, extensive preparation, and awareness. Giving the utmost importance to the issue, 15 national and international development organizations working in Bangladesh have joined hands together under the campaign 'Safe Back to School (SB2S)- নিরাপদ ইশকুলে ফিরি'. The SB2S campaign aims to support the government to prepare children, families, parents, and educational institutions to restart the educational activities so that students can get back to the safest school set-up.



## Program Highlights:

- Country Director Onno van Manen visited char area in Chowhali Upazila in Sirajganj along with Daniela D'urso, the Bangladesh Head of Mission of ECHO. They attended a FGD with a group of mothers and later, joined winter cloth distribution event under the project "BGD Emergency Cold Wave Response 2020."



- Deputy Country Director Bandana Risal, and Hosneara Khondker, Program Director-Shishuder Jonno of Save the Children Bangladesh visited Barishal program areas during 5-7 January 2021.

- A national Training of Trainers (TOT) for COVID-19 vaccination in Bangladesh has taken place from January 19-20, 2021 in Dhaka. This was led by Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) of Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS). USAID is one of the key players to roll out this initiative, supporting the Government of Bangladesh through MaMoni Maternal and Newborn Care Strengthening Project: Emergency Response to COVID-19 Pandemic, implemented by Save the Children in Bangladesh.



» The ‘Rural Community Support Team (CST) Interventions to Combat COVID-19 Pandemic’ has been officially launched on 14 January in Faridpur district. The event was organized by the Directorate General of Health Services and Directorate General of Family Planning with the support of MaMoni project. The CST model aims to reduce the burden of the COVID-19 pandemic and increase the resilience of the local health system to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 in Bangladesh in terms of increasing the case detection in the rural community, establishing an appropriate case management approach with effective referral mechanism, and increasing awareness among the rural community about prevention and control of COVID- 19.

» “Corporate Partnership for ECD’ - PVH Corp Project” conducted an orientation on children’s safe back to school at Gazipur. A total of 88 participants attended these school-level events where local Education Officer, Head Teachers, Assistant Teachers of 15 government primary schools, Ward Councilor of Gazipur City Corporation, ECCD facilitators, School Management Committees, RMG factory-staff, parents and children were present. The major objectives of the orientation session were to aware the participants about government’s school reopening guideline to make a safe environment for children during the reopening.



In January 2021, Humanitarian sector operated the child friendly Cold Wave Response where 4000 families received winter kits in three different districts- Kurigram, Gaibandha and Sirajganj. The kit comprised of blankets, shawls for both male and female, and sweaters for children.

» The SURP-II project under Humanitarian sector arranged several trainings on ‘Dead Body Management’ and ‘Psychosocial & Mental Health Wellbeing’ for Dhaka North City Corporation and Narayanganj City Corporation Officials.

» Suchana project organized the ‘GoB Collaboration to Replication’ workshop which was held on January 14, 2021. Reefat Bin Sattar (Director-PDQ), Tania Sharmin (Director – Food Security & Livelihood/Child Poverty), Samia Ahmed (Senior Manager – Advocacy & Campaign) and Senior Management of technical partners and implementing partners of Suchana joined the workshop.

» Unconditional Cash transfer was completed for 24,947 very poor beneficiaries by Suchana in January 2021. The program has the plan to reach 74,106 beneficiaries by March 30, 2021.

» The Basic Education project of Shishuder Jonno programme has distributed Bangla and Mathematics workbook to 2326 students of 130 schools in Barishal district.

**STORY OF CHANGE**



# Raisa Dares to Live Her Dream

Raisa’s father passed away when she was only 8-month-old and she was raised by her mother alone. Financial crisis, social pressure, deprivation in every step were the regular deals of her life. When Raisa is in class seven a match maker brought a proposal for her marriage in 2020. She did not agree. She knew, this would be the end of her life, her dream if she gets married at this early age. She wanted to escape but not getting the way.

When Raisa was in complete despair, the issue came to attention of Save the Children's Community based Child Protection Committee. They stopped the marriage. *“She is too young to be married. We opposed the groom's party and they left”*, told Arafatullah, the president of the committee. Now Raisa is happy and hopes to continue her studies. Raisa expressed her gratitude towards Save the Children for supporting her dreams.

Raisa is attending Save the Children’s adolescent club in the host community of Ukhiya sub-district, Cox’s Bazar.



Save the Children is running eight Adolescents Clubs and one Adolescents Friendly Space in 9 wards of Jaliapalong union in Ukhiya, Cox’s Bazar with support from SIDA.

# Recognition



Save the Children has been awarded by Naikhongchhari Upazila Parishad of Bandarba for establishing child-friendly school cum cyclone shelters. Bir Bahadur Ushwe Sing, Minister of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs, handed over the award to Save the Children on 30 January 2021. The UNO, Upazila Chairman, government officials, and other dignitaries were also present at the event.

Md. Faruque Hossain, Project Officer-DRR & EiE received the award on behalf of Save the Children.



# Representation



The online international Climate Adaptation Summit (CAS) 2021 hosted by the Netherlands was held on 25 and 26 January. From Bangladesh, Red Alert Campaign activist and spokesperson Sohanur Rahman participated as a Youth Newsroom team member. The summit newsroom website published Sohan's blog and an article penned by him on climate change. Read Shohan's blog [here](#)



“ Our carbon footprint is reduced due to less travel as a result of COVID-19. There are many other ways that we can have a **greener office** and we welcome any ideas and suggestions. ”



**Onno van Manen**

Country Director  
Save the Children in Bangladesh

Send your content for **newsletter**

by first week of every month to [nahin.rahman@savethechildren.org](mailto:nahin.rahman@savethechildren.org)

## Contact

### Nusrat Amin

Sr. Manager  
Media & Communications  
Save the Children

[nusrat.amin@savethechildren.org](mailto:nusrat.amin@savethechildren.org)

## Bangladesh Country Office

House No. CWN (A) 35, Road No. 43  
Gulshan – 2, Dhaka -1212, Bangladesh.

T +88-02-9848081, 9861690

F +88-02-58812523

E [info.bangladesh@savethechildren.org](mailto:info.bangladesh@savethechildren.org)

<https://bangladesh.savethechildren.net>

 [savethechildreninbangladesh](https://www.facebook.com/savethechildreninbangladesh)

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