



THROWBACK 2020

The year 2020 was a time like no other! For the first time in several decades, people across the world were experiencing something together - the coronavirus pandemic. In January no one had heard of COVID-19 - because the virus was emerging and did not yet have an official name. During March 2020, we began hearing murmurs about a novel coronavirus spreading rapidly around the world and the virus outbreak quickly surged worldwide. Countries around the world adopted non-therapeutic preventive measures, which include travel bans, remote office activities, country lockdown, and most importantly, social distancing. We started to live a “new normal” life which we could not have imagined.

This pandemic revealed how uncertain the future can be as this health crisis became a global humanitarian crisis. Besides losing many lives, we have seen millions of people losing their livelihood due to pandemic, unaware of what future holds for them. For the children, the world turned into a total disorder as they were unable to go to school, learn and play with their friends.

In Bangladesh, the lockdown started from 23 March 2020 and the stress and adversity of this pandemic decelerated the pace of Save the Children in Bangladesh as the activities on ground had to be limited. Nevertheless, we were determined to face this new challenge to make the world a better place for children. We made sure that we ourselves keep safe by taking all the possible measures including maintaining social distancing while our responses go on.

» Ensuring Staff Wellbeing

Following the government instruction and advisory, we shut down our office completely and adopted alternative working modality to continue our supports to the people we care. We took extra care to keep the staff safe and psychologically healthy. We circulated health advisories for staff, established health focal for immediate support, arranged online psycho-social sessions by professional psychologists regularly.

Before reopening the office at later stage, we ensured all the safety measures- established hand washing stations, disinfected the whole office and made necessary code of conduct for keeping everyone safe and sound.

» Continuing the Business



Business Continuity Plan (BCP) was a major intervention in the new normal context to keep the organization full-fledged into the operations. We were keeping an eye on the international warnings and taking preparation since February and the draft of the plan got finalized in mid of March. The signed-off guideline was in place even before our country went for the lock-down. It went through a continuous improvement process in assistance of BCP coordination team, business continuity team and crisis management team with support of the regional team.

After the lockdown, we kept moving and working in 11 districts taking a blanket approval from the ministry. The staff worked as an army to serve the human-kind which turned into a great achievement because of a successful plan.

» Digitalizing the Workplace

As we adopted work from home modality since last week of March, IT department started digitalizing the office system. We accepted technologies like Zoom and Microsoft Teams and provided special training to over one thousand employees within couple of weeks. IT also helped Finance, Procurement, Awards, HR, and other departments with digitalization and provided staff with necessary support like software development, laptop connectivity issue and maintenance.

» Brand-new Financial System

The Finance Department digitalized the whole payment system after the office went to work from home mode. The payments and procurements went online, and the vendors and staff were paid in due time. Within 10 days, the whole system was digitalized, the Power payment system was modified and went paperless. The responses continued smoothly without any interruption.

» Mobilizing the Fund

Save the Children in Bangladesh raised \$16 Million for COVID-19 interventions during 2020. In addition, it has secured around \$30 million new funding for non-COVID programs. In total we had worth \$46 Million new awards in 2020. The team had its hands full with over 100 Million USD worth proposals submitted during the year. Additionally, the team was able to sign up with new large donors like BHA (OFDA) & CDC with whom SCI did not work recently.

» Humanitarian Assistance for Community

Year 2020 was the ‘Disaster within Disaster’ for Bangladesh. Many of them such as Cyclone Amphan and Flood happened just when we thought things could not get any worse. Immediately after the lockdown, the Humanitarian team started the “Community Accountability COVID-19 Response” and distributed PPE, hygiene kits, soaps, sanitizers, and masks to the communities and the front liners.

We started our responses in 19 schools of Dhaka, Savar and Narayanganj even before the lockdown was imposed and reached almost 26 thousand students and teachers. Establishing hand washing stations, we raised awareness before the schools got closed. We taught the slum dwellers in Dhaka, Savar and Narayanganj to make ‘Soapy Water’ using detergent and water so they can wash their hands with minimum cost.

Humanitarian team also got deployed in the fields to response to Cyclone Amphan amidst the lockdown. Covering 15 thousand households, we had to run a complex and complicated response mechanism maintaining social distance.

We reached the Bandarban District in April-May and repurpose our on- going projects for COVID-19 response in Naikhongchhari, Alikodom and Lama where we established 100 hand washing stations, distributed awareness materials and let the people know that we were there just beside them. We followed the government advisory, ensured safety for our staff, and ensured speculated support to the communities.

Despite the COVID-19 situation, we also finalized the ‘Urban National Volunteer Database’ in collaboration with the government which was a big feat for Bangladesh programme in 2020.



Last month's Quiz **Winner**



CONGRATULATIONS!
Fahmida Rahman
 - Officer – HR,
 Suchana

Answer : C) 8 GOALS

» New Approach towards Health Service

We continued direct health service delivery through our health centers with committed front line health staffs even during the lockdown. We also started working with government health system to establish a triage system so that transmission of infection can be minimized. We worked in the technical team of Ministry of Health to develop COVID-19 specific messages for different clinical and communication guidelines. The health sector also reallocated the funds for COVID-19 sensitive responses.

The HIV/AIDS project designed and guided implementation of alternative service delivery options (telehealth, over phone consultations, referrals) for STI management, follow-ups, HIV testing, and other clinical services during the pandemic. It also provided guidance on dispensing methadone and ART take-home and its monitoring.



Within three months of lockdown, we constructed and started operating our 60-bed Severe Acute Respiratory Infection Isolation and Treatment Centre (SARI ITC) in Ukhia, Cox’s Bazar serving both the Rohingya and host communities. We recruited almost 100 staff only for SARI ITC which was extremely critical as all the positions were technical and the health security of the staff was the biggest concern. We planned and executed their movement with utmost priority. For awareness and facilitating the communities, community health workers also started visiting door to door to identify patients for treatment.

» Protecting Child Rights

As the pandemic began and lockdown started, the issues of child protection and child rights were the major concerns for us. Safeguarding of children from violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect have always been the priority for us. As children have more susceptibility to having long term consequences, we made sure we work not only on ground but also forward their issues to the policy making levels.

Despite the pandemic situation, child members of NCTF participated in the Voluntary National Review (VNR) process of 2020 that assessed SDG progress at the High-Level Political forum (HLPF). They have also discussed with the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the UN about the national progress on different SDG targets related to children. The impact of the pandemic on the children and the mitigation measures were brought in light throughout the discussion while the other issues like child marriage, drug addiction, physical and humiliating punishment, education of most marginalized children, online sexual harassment etc. were also on the table.

» Child Poverty: Addressing the Social Crisis

COVID-19 pandemic pushed millions more children deeper into poverty. Our 'Child Poverty' sector came forward to address the issue.

Suchana project targeted 74,106 program beneficiaries for cash transfer in Sylhet and Moulvibazar and conducted a social behavioral change campaign there. The key messages have been disseminated through multiple channels since August.

The programme also did a multisectoral planning in Moulvibazar district in December. This was one of the pilot initiatives undertaken by Bangladesh National Nutrition Council (BNNC) to operationalize multisectoral program in Bangladesh.

» Redefining Education

As we have passed almost a year with this crisis, we realized that education has been hit particularly hard by this pandemic as children saw suspension of face-to-face classes at all levels for the longest period. The pandemic worsened education inequality between rich and the most vulnerable children who live in poor and hard to reach areas. To address this issue, our Education sector came forward with a remarkable project, Empowering Girls through Education (EGE) to reduce learning gaps of the target girls caused by COVID-19.

Before COVID-19, learning sessions were conducted in a learning space of the targeted government primary schools. However, from July, the project started to conduct home-based learning sessions in small group (2-5 children per group) of students maintaining safety measures.

EGE project provided educational support to 4045 girls of grade IV and V through tablets with e-contents and learning videos and customized Learning Management System (LMS). LMS has quizzes and assessment linked with an e-MIS system for monitoring the learning progress.



» Protecting the Rohingyas

Our remarkable achievement in 2020 was to provide Rohingya refugees the essential services every day even in this pandemic situation which was only possible because of our dedicated staff.

We initiated 100 Para Social Caseworkers who continued visiting home to home for Psychosocial Support, Psychosocial First Aid and Child Safeguarding. We have also supported the April boat survivors' children to ensure their protection.

Following the government instructions, education facilities were closed in the camps since March. Nevertheless, we continued educating around 15,000 learners regularly through peer education, home-based small-scale learning activities, career-led education, and Interactive Radio Instruction.

Maintaining distance and sanitization in the e-voucher shops and distribution centers, we have provided food assistance to 300,000 Rohingya refugee beneficiaries uninterrupted with reduced staff which is mentionable indeed. At the same time, we have provided cash support to 200 Bangladeshi nationals of Cox's Bazar district to support the low-income families during COVID-19 situation.



» MEAL during COVID-19

As part of our relentless research, study and knowledge management, the MEAL team conducted a study to get a clear picture on the COVID-19 situation in Bangladesh. A team of 112 enumerators from different implementing and technical partners interviewed 4,473 beneficiaries and their family members over mobile phones and captured their responses in electronic format using Android tabs. After cleaning and verification, 3,665 datasets had been found valid and analyzed following a cross-sectional research design.

» Advocacy and Campaign for the Children

Our advocacy and campaign efforts ran full-fledged throughout the year. We launched the Red alert campaign on climate crisis in July to strengthen the voice of children and youth, who are among the primary victims of climate change. Through this campaign, they could take active part in planning and decision-making process to respond to climatic catastrophe in Bangladesh and the globe.

We observed 'Global Day of Climate Action' in September through a day long engagement of children, youth, climate activists and policymakers through two webinars on "Climate Justice and Intergenerational Equity" and "Green City for Children: Expectations and Reality".

During the mid of the year, we started to design our new campaign 'Safe Back to School' with the aim to ensure safe and risk-free school environment for children, return of all learners to school as well as to minimize child labor and child marriage in the post-COVID-19 situation. We facilitated national level discussions and paved the way to launch the campaign by forming an alliance.

» Strengthening the Partnership

During all these studies, advocacy and ground level works, our strength embedded in our partners. No work was possible without the continuous endeavor of our partners working tirelessly to ensure a better world for the children.

We did the partnership survey which gave us the viewpoint of partners' scope of regular sharing on learning with SCI. This was a semi-structured survey which was conducted on 41 national organizations in Bangladesh.

Overall, the study showed that along the indexes of partnership design and communications, partners appreciate that SCI and partners have mutual understanding of organization's history, strengths, and priorities. Partnership also shows a contribution towards achieving breakthroughs in different sectors.



» Communications in Action

Despite the pandemic, our media and social media presence were significantly elevated. The new normal created a 'Digital New Society' where most of the people were largely dependent on the online platforms to be connected with each other and to make the works done. So, we put focus on promoting the COVID-19 prevention awareness messages through social media and ran the HBCC campaign. Through a very holistic approach we reached the wider communities where social distancing did not stop us from sharing the information and messages as well as upholding the voice of the communities. We profiled our works and best practices in media and social media; and strengthen our credibility as the advocate of child rights even during the pandemic; which is evident in our media and social media reach.

Total Media Hits: 256

National: 221, International: 35

Op-Ed: 18

Guest Pitching in Online Talk Shows: 14

Facebook:

Total Views in Facebook: **2.28k**

Total Page Followers: **158,582**

Total Page Likes: **155,772**

Twitter:

Tweet impressions: **597,300** in 2020

Total Followers: **5,817**

New Followers: **1154**

Instagram:

Total Followers: **955**

YouTube:

Total subscribers: **3.66K**

LinkedIn:

Total Followers: **9492**

QUIZ TIME!



SCI BRANDING

» Currently, in how many districts of Bangladesh are we operating?

- A 45
- B 34
- C 64
- D 35

By 2nd week of this month

SEND ANSWER

nahin.rahman@savethechildren.org

PHOTO CONTEST



Send your photos

with appropriate captions by 2nd week of every month. We will recognize you as a winner!

SEND NOW!

nahin.rahman@savethechildren.org

Send your content for **newsletter**

By second week of every month

Contact

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ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2020

» Our Footprints in Global Platforms



BBC 100 Inspiring Women:

One of our beneficiaries of HIV/AIDS Programme Rina Akter has been recognized by BBC as one of the 100 inspiring and influential women who are leading change and making a difference during these turbulent times from around the world.

Rina has received this recognition for the support she extended to the sex workers during the Covid-19 pandemic. Rina and her team have served around 400 meals a week to the workless sex-workers.

She has been associated with HIV/AIDS program of Save the Children since the intervention for female sex worker started in 2009. She also facilitates the sex workers to take health services, GBV support from nearest DIC or GoB facilities. She counsels them for alternative livelihoods and encourages them to start small business.

» International Children’s Peace Prize:



Our youth volunteer Sadat Rahman won the International Children’s Peace Prize in 2020. From a remarkable number of 142 applicants, the KidsRights’ Expert Committee announced Sadat from Bangladesh as the winner.

Sadat is the General Secretary of National Children’s Task Force (NCTF) Narail district’s Executive Committee. He participates and facilitates regular activities of NCTF including monthly meetings, monitoring child rights situations, and reporting. He actively participates in the local and national level advocacy with duty bearers and policymakers. Salute to this remarkable youth volunteer on scaling new heights and setting new standards!

» Moving Forward

The year 2020 showed us both our vulnerability and strengths as the Covid-19 pandemic affected the world hard. We have learnt how not to lose, to become more permissive, humane, strategic, efficient, organized and work as a team above all obstacles to serve humankind. Although the path forward from 2020 may feel uncertain, one thing has never been more clear- to change the trajectory for the better, we must come together, work together, and support each other in building a safer and just future for all, especially for the children.