

## Education continuity during COVID-19 pandemic: Experience of SHIKHON NFPE Project

As a part of global pandemic of COVID 19, Bangladesh is the third most affected country in South Asia. The first three confirmed cases were reported on 8 March 2020 by the country's epidemiology institute, IEDCR. As of 25 August 2020, there have been a total of 299,628 confirmed cases and the infection rate is 20.38%. The death toll now stands at 4028 and the death rate at 1.34 percent. In 17<sup>th</sup> March, Government of Bangladesh decided closing all of its educational institutions in order to control the spread of COVID-19, the closure later extended to 31st August'20. However, the educational institutions in the country might remain closed until the situation do not improve as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina stated.

Following GoB declaration, SHIKHON school operations are closed since 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020. However, the project has initiated different strategies; implementing alternative approaches to minimize the learning gaps of SHIKHON learners maintaining health-hygiene guidelines.

### A. Preparations:

According to SCiBD country office guideline, SHIKHON has developed project implementation adjustment plan, mitigation strategy, risk register, possible response interventions and also regularly provided updates to SC global office focusing on COVID 19 pandemic. Project is always kept continues communication with partner NGO, field team, teachers, Center Management Committee members and parents of learners.

### B. Survey to find out the feasibility of distance learning:

SHIKHON planned to provide distance learning and thus conducted a survey to know the feasibility of this plan. However, it found that 69% learner's family do not have smart phone even 10% family do not have any kind of phone/gadget to receive learning instruction. There is no literate person in 5% learner's family who can support learners at home. The learners are living with poverty and in remote area where uninterrupted connectivity of internet is also a luxury. Only 35% learner's family have television to watch the education program telecasted by GoB. SCI regularly shared the lesson plans/routine of those program primarily. Finally, the plan of distance learning abandoned considering the facts.



*Before Pandemic SHIKHON School*

### C. Customized lessons plan and Home Based Learning Support:

Considering the uncertainty in education and learning gap, SHIKHON has developed weekly education support plan and implementing in filed to continue SHIKHON learners study at home. Following safety, health and hygiene guideline, teachers have started providing home based learning support to the learners in a small group or individually as context basis. After support, lessons have been shared with guardian's too to guide learners at home. The project is completing one round of follow up of 100% learners within a week with a formal check list to know the last months learning progress and support accordingly.



*Home Based individual learning support during pandemic*



*Small group learning support during Pandemic*

#### **D. Parent and community awareness:**

Before closing the schools, a special meeting conducted with parents and Center Management Committee (CMC) members on awareness COVID 19, school closure, security issues and responsibility of parents and community during the pandemic to be safe and control the spread of the illness. The project developed a common Safety Guideline for all (staff, teacher, learner, parents, community). Additionally, a separate guideline on Child Safety at Home was also shared with parents to keep children safe at home.

#### **Future Plan:**

##### **1. Accelerated Curriculum and extended hour of class:**

The project will extend the class duration after school reopen and continue the implementation of accelerated curriculum in order to minimize the learning gap.

##### **2. Safe Back to School:**

SHIKHON will work to ensure that learners will be able to return to school in a safe and supportive environment. School operation will continue maintaining social distance and regular hygiene practices. SHIKHON will also aware parents, caregivers and teachers though messages, awareness sessions, rally in making the return to school smooth, healthy and safe.

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<sup>1</sup> IEDCR- Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research