

SHIKHON

Non Formal Basic Education for Hard to Reach Children

Background:

Through the generous support of CHEVRON and other donors, Save the Children has successfully implemented SHIKHON Project, an innovative non-formal primary education program for 155,000 out of school vulnerable children across Bangladesh since 2007. With CHEVRON's support, SHIKHON Project, including the Shobar Jonno Shikkha Project, the Project has continued to expand its reach in the Nabigonj Upazila of Sylhet division.

The Project successfully demonstrated a cost-effective model for reaching out-of-school children and children who had never been enrolled in school with quality educational services from 2007 to 2011 and started the second phase with additional activities. EU evaluators for the first phase noted that the program's responsive, high-quality, affordable educational opportunities enabled the hardest to reach children to achieve educational outcomes that meet or exceed formal primary school competencies. Although these schools do not have the same physical facilities as formal schools, their deliberate focus on educational "software" such as teacher training, teaching learning provisions, a "very strong teacher supervision and support system, "child-friendly environments with "numerous features for effective classroom management," teacher attendance and parental participation -- all lead to better outcomes in student attendance, retention, and survival to Grade 5. Additionally, SHIKHON featured an "integral, structured, parenting program, supported by high quality resource material."

In October 2012, Chevron provided generous support for the next phase of the Project, supporting 60 Early Primary Centers in Chevron-selected communities, near its gas field areas. 1800 poor and vulnerable children are enrolled in these centers in pre-primary grades, where they will continue up to grade 3; then will be mainstreamed or, if additional funds are mobilized, they will complete their primary education cycle at these schools. The Project will also provide after school remedial support for formal primary schools through Community Children Clubs.

Project Objectives:

The overall objective of the project is **to promote access and increase basic educational outcomes for marginalized children** while catalyzing lessons-learning from SHIKHON and other positive change in Bangladesh's national education system.

Estimated Results:

Three results stated below will contribute to achieve the overall objective by a set of activities;

Result 1: Increased access to cost-effective non-formal basic education for hardest to reach children in targeted communities.

Result 2: Increased efficiency and quality of non-formal basic education services using holistic approaches for children to succeed in school.

Result 3: Increase collaboration between the formal and non-formal primary sectors to promote sharing and adoption of best practices.

Geographical coverage: 1 divisions and 3 districts and 4 Upazilas of Bangladesh. Sylhet Sadar, Moulvibazar, and Habiganj district.

Implementing Partners: RDRS Bangladesh

Duration: 1st January 2015 – 31st March 2018

Donors: Chevron

- 1800 out of school children from the vulnerable family/communities through 60 Early Primary Education (EPE)
- 1960 children of formal primary schools through Community Children Club (CCC)
- 1800 parents of the participating children
- 60 community teachers
- 60 community support teachers
- 660 community members in Center Management Committee (CMC)
- 60 formal school teachers and
- 3000 students of those school
- 98 Community Children Club facilitators
- In addition to that, 6000 siblings, care givers and parents, will be indirectly benefitted from the project.

Target Groups

SHIKHON targets Marginalized Children 5-14 years old including their families and communities. SHIKHON so far reached :

Major Achievements:

- 1,782 children (919 girls and 863 boys) including 60 (31 girls and 29 boys) indigenous community children continuing their education in grade 3 through 60 Early Primary Education (EPE) centers
- In total, 60 Center Management Committees (CMCs) are now at work in 60 centers, engaging 660 members (444 female and 216 males)
- CMCs regularly monitored the centers and helped to further improve each center by developing School Improvement Plans (SIPs), which outline goals for the future of the school including latrine installations, school bag distribution among children, etc.
- December 2016, the students were given final exams, and 100 percent of children passed, whereas the 81.7% children were earned grade A and above
- SHIKHON arranged different capacity-building trainings for school staff and teachers (including basic training for 48 SHIKHON club facilitators and 7 learning facilitators, web-based management information system training, basic pedagogy training for EPE teachers, monthly teacher trainings, etc)
- The program also developed and distributed nine types of learning materials for both EPE and CCC students and teachers, including workbooks in Bangla, Math and English; and the Teachers Guide Book (TGB) Math and English.
- Regular monitoring and performance tracking has played a vital role in this project, enhancing and ensuring quality service delivery. On average, learning facilitators visited each EPE center 3.5 times per month
- 960 children from Government Primary Schools received remedial support through 48 CCCs in the Chevron plant areas of Bibiyana, Jalalabad and Moulvibazar
- An end-line survey was conducted to measure improvement of SHIKHON Club intervention. This survey found that children engaged in the SHIKHON CCC improved their math problem solving skills to 92.2 percent, compared to a baseline of 0.6 percent. Bangla reading competency also went up to 96.1 percent, compared to a baseline of 5.5 percent. This number can also be compared to 58.5 percent of children in the comparison group (children from the Government Primary Schools not involved in our intervention) were found competent in Bangla reading
- 14 government officers and 85 Government Primary School teachers visited EPE centers. During their visits, these officers and teachers shared best practices with the learning facilitators to improve the quality of the program and offer support and audience

Major Challenges:

- Achieve competency of the students in Community Children Club (CCC)
- Qualified teacher for upper grade in the tea garden area
- Ensure regular attendance of students.

Future Direction:

This year, the program will reach another 1,000 children enrolled in Government Primary Schools by establishing 50 CCCs. The budget realignment helped us expand our programming to these children, helping low-performing students of government schools access the additional support they need.

“ Despite coming from a deprived area, I have completed my primary education. Now, I am going to enroll myself into high school and it will help me fulfilling my dream of becoming a teacher ”



For more information: <http://bd-education.net/shikhon>