

Comprehensive Program for Blind Children in
Bangladesh (Phase 1)

Annual Report

Submitted to
**Academy for Educational Development
(AED)**

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Submitted by
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CPBCB PROJECT AT A GLANCE (01 November 2007 to 31 October 2008)

Project start date	: 01 November, 07
A. Comprehensive Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) program in Sirajganj	
Area Coverage	
Village (Sirajgonj Sadar)	: 35
Village (Shahjadpur)	: 43
Total	: 78
Union (Sirajgonj Sadar)	: 07
Union (Shahjadpur)	: 12
Total	: 19
Upazilla (Sub-district)	: 02 (Sirajgonj Sadar, Shahzadpur)
District	: 01 (Sirajgonj)
Children under Rehabilitation	
Male	: 54
Female	: 48
Total	: 102
Total Households	: 94
Self-help Group Federation	
Self-help Group	: 04
Upazilla Child Sight Society	: 02
Children Admitted in to Primary School	
Male	: 09
Female	: 06
Total	: 15
Training	
Teachers Trained (Head Teacher)	: 18
Volunteers	: 27
B. District Childhood Cataract Eradication Program in Moulvibazar	
Area Coverage	
Upazilla (Sub-district)	: 07
District	: 01 (Moulvibazar)
Training	
Key Informant Trained (Person)	: 325
SVI/Blind children found	
Male	: 215
Female	: 179
Total	: 394
Cataract children operated	
Male	: 29
Female	: 32
Total	: 61
Staffs & Budget	
Total Staffs	: 16
Total Budget (Nov, 07 – Oct, 08)	: 7,867,500 BDT

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Annual Report

Executive Summary

The Project Comprehensive Program for Blind Children in Bangladesh (Phase - 01) in short CPBCB is the comprehensive rehabilitation project for Blind Children in Bangladesh. The project implemented by Child Sight Foundation (CSF) with the financial support from Academy for Educational Development (AED) of USAID. CPBCB has been commenced in November with the Receipt of Letter of Authorization from Academy for Educational Development (AED) on 3rd November 2007. Experienced Staffs of CSF were transferred to the project in November and new staffs were recruited in mid-December. The project got government approval on 12th December and was launched on 13th December in Sirajganj. The project has two components, (A) Comprehensive Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) program for Blind Children of Shahjadpur and Sirajganj Sadar Upazila (Sub-district) under Sirajganj District and (B) District Childhood Cataract Eradication Program in Moulvibazar District. Due to Cyclone SIDR, the project work could not be started in the rehabilitation site at Sirajganj; Cataract case detection work in Maulvibazar has been intensified using the time of recruited/allocated staffs with additional number of officers of CSF. The Maulvibazar activities were completed on January 2008.

As a technical partner, International Centre for Eye Health (ICEH), London was involved in Recruitment and providing technical support to CSF for successful implementation of the project; through developing Implementation plan, conducting Monitoring and Evaluation, Training and Workshop etc.

Annual Report

Introduction

CSF received project selection news on 19th July 2007 and CSF started organizational preparation. The Letter of Authorization was received on 3rd November 2007, effective from 1st November 2007. CSF started this two-year comprehensive project focused on case detection, treatment, prevention, provision for surgery, home based rehabilitation, inclusive education, self-help group formation, and advocacy. The comprehensive CBR project will lead to the creation of a barrier free, inclusive and right-based society for children who are blind and to address their needs, establish the equalization of opportunities, integration in society of incurably blind children, intervention that they may take place at the individual level and establish the rights. Community members, administration, local government, NGOs and partner health care organizations were involved in the service delivery and advocacy. This annual report of Comprehensive Program for Blind Children in Bangladesh (Phase -01) CPBCB covered the entire year from 1st November 2007 to 31st October 2008. During this year, the project implemented most of the targeted parameters of case detection and rehabilitation activities.

Project Activities:

The following activities were conducted during this year of the project:

1. Project Approval
2. Project Offices Establishment
3. Staff Recruitment and Training
4. Project Inauguration Ceremony
5. Case Detection and Referral
6. Rehabilitation
7. Inclusive Education
8. Self-help Group and Advocacy
9. Manual Development

1. Project Approval

CSF submitted required papers (FD-2, FD-6) along with the Academy for Educational Development (AED) Letter of Authorization on 5th November to NGO Affairs Bureau for government permission. The permission was granted on 12th December 2007 (ABBU/Pro-2/CDF/246-4/07-337).

2. Project Offices Establishment

Two office spaces were rented at Shahjadpur and Sirajganj. Those offices are decorated at costs of CSF for project use (Chairs, table, computer, printer and stationeries etc.).

3. Staff Recruitment and Training

CSF assigned its three current staffs to the positions of Project Coordinator, Advocacy Officer, and Finance & Admin Officer from November. They were transferred to this project for their experience, training and capacity to work. For Maulvibazar detection program, 7 Upazilla Coordination Officers were recruited temporarily for two months (December 2007 and January 2008).

For other positions, CSF advertised in national newspapers on 12th and 13th November (in daily newspaper Prothom Alo and Daily Star respectively). Earlier we also circulated the notice in relevant organizations for the technical positions (Inclusive Education, and Rehabilitation Officer). The interviews of short-listed candidates were held on 9th December, the selected candidates were offered the positions to join on 15th December 2007. The positions recruited are Project Manager (1), Rehabilitation Officer (1), Inclusive Education Officer (1), and Self Help Group Workers (2). Considering project needs and review of candidates, CSF transferred 4 more existing staffs as Assistant Rehabilitation Officer (CBR Workers).

The selected staffs started orientation training on 17th December 2007. The training sessions were held in Dhaka office and existing Naogaon project site on project orientation, service delivery and project management. On the reporting date, all designated Assistant Rehabilitation Officers (CBR Workers) and Officers are in Sirajganj attending practical sessions with the target blind children.

4. Project Inauguration Ceremony

The inauguration ceremony was held on 13th December at auditorium of North Bengal Medical College, Sirajganj in presence of 261 persons. Dr. M.A. Matin, President of Bangladesh National Council for Blind (BNCB) was the Chief Guest of the ceremony and Issa Mainuddin, General Secretary of CSF presided over the ceremony. Dr. Abdur Rauf (Civil Surgeon, Sirajganj), Mr. Makbul Hossain (Deputy Director, Social Welfare Ministry), Advocate Samsul Haque (General Secretary, BNSB Sirajganj), Jahangir Alam Ratan (General Secretary, DipShetu), Mr Khusi (Ex-Chairman, Sirajganj Municipality) and Faizan Ahmed Siddiqi (CEO, Kinds With Vision) were the Special Guests and spoke on the occasion. Government officials, Local government leaders, NGOs, teachers, Imams, honorable persons, and civil society members were in the audience. More than 30 persons from different Print and electronic media covered the program.

The program news was covered in the newspapers (Jamuna Probaha, Sirajgon Kontha, Korotoa, Borer Dak, and The Bangladesh Today) and in the TV channels (Islami TV, Channel-I and RTV).

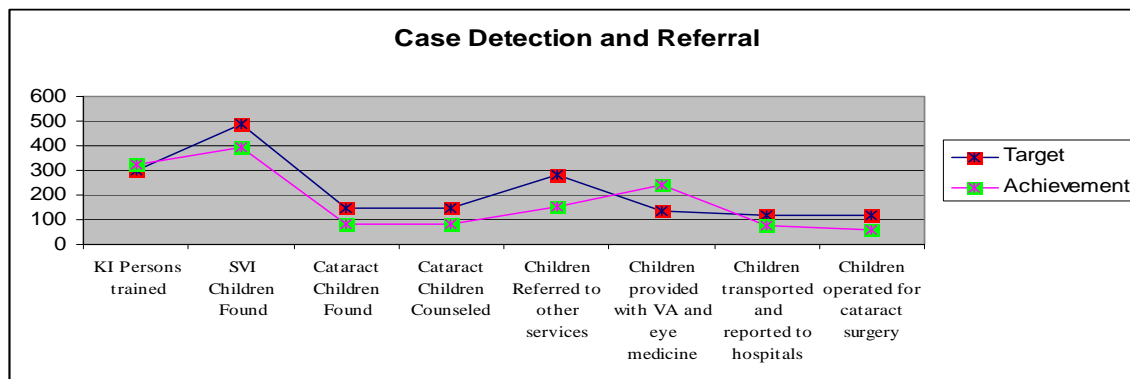
5. Case Detection and Referral

CSF rehabilitation work plan of Sirajganj was revised due to effected by Cyclone SIDR. However Maulvibazar district (blind case detection and cataract) referral site was not affected by the cyclone. Hence we completed all activities with in 1st quarter to gather an 11-member field team to Maulvibazar for case detection. It is also noted that one more Upazilla (sub-district) were added to Maulvibazar district after proposal submission; so 7 screening camps held during 5th to 11th January 2008 and the patients referred to hospital in phases.

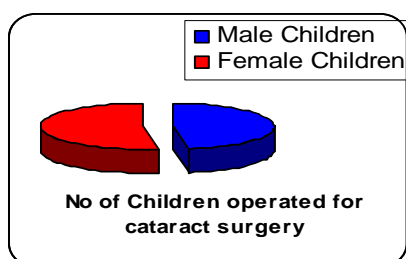
As part of detection activities, Key Informant (KI) Trainings were held in 7 Upazillas of

Maulvibazar in 13 sessions. These sessions were conducted by CSF Trainer, Project Coordinator and Regional Coordination Officer. 325 persons from the

Particulars	Estimated Target	Achievement			
		Male	Female	Total	%
Number of KI Persons trained	300	-		325	108.33
Number of SVI Children Found	490	215	179	394	80.41
Number of Cataract Children Found	147	38	47	85	57.82
Number of Cataract Children Counseled	147	38	47	85	57.82
number of Children Referred to other services	280	103	48	151	53.93
number of Children provided with VA and eye medicine	135	156	87	243	180.00
Number of children transported and reported to hospitals	118	33	41	74	62.71
Number of children operated for cataract surgery	118	29	32	61	51.69



local community, NGOs, health workers, and nutrition program workers got the training and volunteered to detect the blind children in their respective community/locality.



In Maulvibazar, we find 394 SVI children and 85 cataract children; out of 85 cataract children 74 transported & reported to hospitals and 61 children operated for cataract surgery.

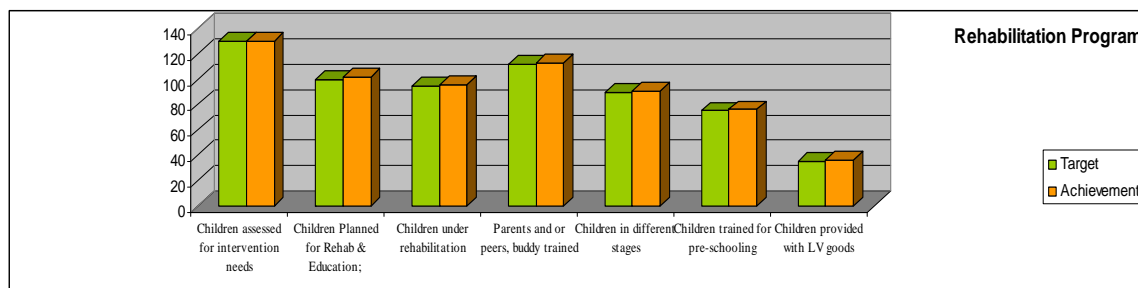
We find less number of cataract children out of our estimated number, because cataract surgery for the children done by another NOG named VARD, before inception of CSF in the said area.

6. Rehabilitation

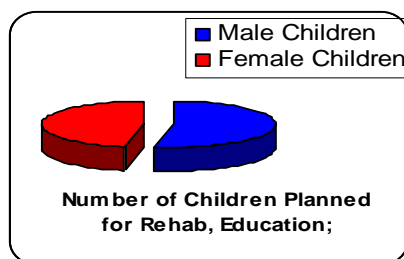
The program addresses the areas of daily living activities, orientation and mobility, language and communication, cognition, social interaction, fine and gross motor development/movement and inclusion in household. Activities were regularly reviewed and modified to meet the changing need of the blind child. Counseling, education and training of caregivers was enabling them to assist the development of their children. There was intensive training in pre-schooling requirements of orientation, mobility, Braille training if totally blind or use of adaptive devices and social behavior.

Table - 02: Rehabilitation Program					
Particulars	Target	Achievement			
		Male	Female	Total	%
Number of Children assessed for intervention needs	130	72	58	130	100.00
Number of Children Planned for Rehab, Education; Treatment & Development Plan for individual children	100	54	48	102	102.00
Number of children under rehabilitation	95	52	44	96	101.05
Number of parents and or peers, buddy trained	112	42	71	113	100.89
Number of children in different stages in Development Plan	90	48	43	91	101.11
Number of children trained for pre-schooling	75	42	34	76	101.33
Number of children provided with LV goods, services (/therapies)	35	23	13	36	102.86

The Initial assessment for rehabilitation of blind children started from mid-January. Rehab Officer, Education Officer, Project Coordinator and Project



Manager have initiated to contact with the blind children listed in the existing database of CSF and properly monitored by the CSF Officials. During this year CSF assessed 128 children, 100 of them under rehabilitation program and 96 of them are getting home-based rehabilitation services. As per implementation plan CSF provide training to 113 parents and peer of the blind children under rehabilitation program and start to train those children who are capable for pre-schooling. 36 children received Low vision goods, services in this year.



7. Inclusive Education

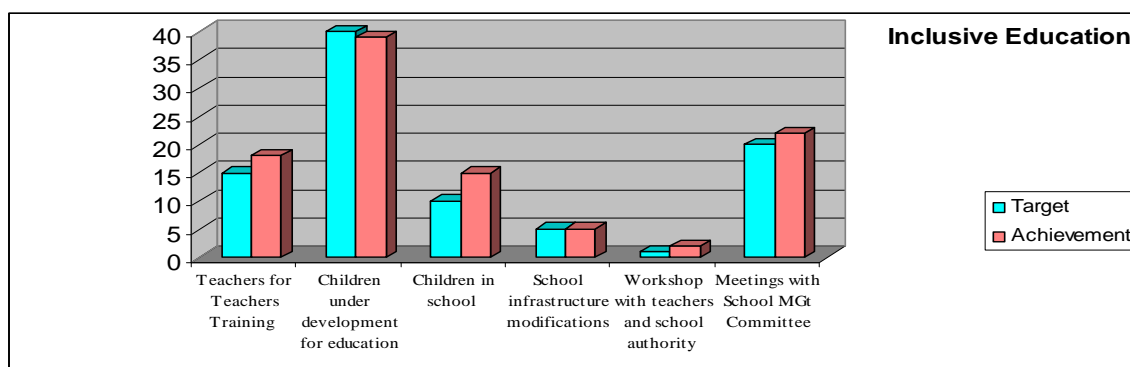
The project is building capacity of the family members, school teachers, and school authority as well as the community to teach the blind children in an inclusive environment. Teachers and family members are directly involved in education thus enabling them to develop the children education.

Children under Rehabilitation are further assessed for education need, readiness and suitability for admission; Local school authority, Upazilla and District Education Offices are

playing a vital role for admission of the children. CSF sensitized the Local School MGt. Committee, government education officer through several meetings; and organized workshop on Inclusive Education and rehabilitation of blind children and teachers training course on Inclusive Education for visually impaired students. 18 schools have been selected for

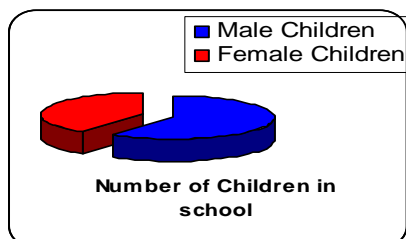
Table - 03: Inclusive Education					
Particulars	Target	Achievement			
		Male	Female	Total	%
Number of Teachers for Teachers Training	15	15	03	18	120.00
Children under development for education in school	40	21	18	39	97.50
Children in school	10	09	06	15	150.00
Number of School infrastructure modifications	05	-		05	100.00
Workshop with teachers and school authority	01	-		02	200.00
Meetings with School MGt Committee	20	-		22	110.00

admission. 39 children are under development for education to admit in these



schools in the next year and we already admitted 15 children in these schools in this year.

CSF organized two workshop with teachers and school authority on “Inclusive Education and Rehabilitation for Blind Children in Sirajganj” 66 people from Sirajgonj and Shahjadpur Upazilla (Sub-district) including 07 Assistant Upazilla (Sub-district) Education Officer, 13 School Management Committee Member, 04 Local Elected Authority (Union Parishad Chairman), 05 Journalist and 37 Teacher were present. A district level workshop with same titled also organized by CSF at Sirajganj. Dr. MA Muhit, ICEH made the key note presentation on the project.



The workshop was attended by government officials, teachers, development activists, and prominent community members.

CSF conducted a two days teachers training course on inclusive education for visually impaired students at Sirajgonj Project Office Training Room, Sirajgonj. 18 teachers from 18 schools (Govt. and Register Non-Govt.) were present.

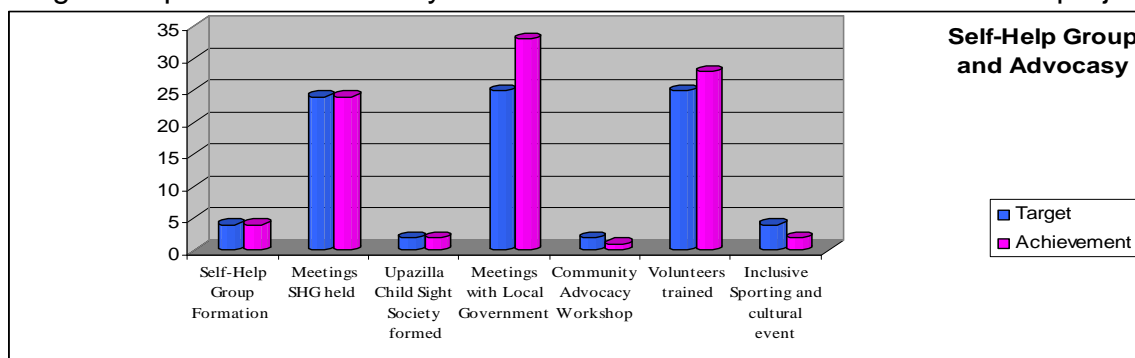
8. Self Help Group and Advocacy

The component Self Help Groups (SHG) seeks to provide parents of blind children and blind children with a network of other parents and an opportunity for education, experience sharing, group problem solving and to develop their strength in advocating for the rights of their children.

During this year CSF organized and formed 04 Self Help Group and 02 Upazilla Child Sight Society at Shahajadpur and Sirajganj Sadar Upazilla (sub-district) respectively for establishing the rights of the blind children. Now parents increased their involvement in advocating for the rights of their children

Awareness and advocacy were conducted during the period from inception to end of this year in Sirajganj and Maulvibazar. CSF Project team members regularly met community leaders, opinion leaders, local elected bodies and NGOs of Sirajganj and Maulvibazar for advocacy and briefed them on this AED (Academy for Educational Development) funded project and sought cooperation. Advocacy was also done at national level for the project

Particulars	Target	Achievement	%
Self-Help Group Formation	04	04	100.00
Number of meetings SHG held	24	24	100.00
Number of Upazilla Child Sight Society formed	02	02	100.00
Number of Meetings with Local Government	25	33	132.00
Community Advocacy Workshop	02	01	50.00
Volunteers trained	25	28	112.00
Number of Inclusive Sporting and cultural event	04	02	50.00



approval. Team members attended government coordination meetings for detection support at Maulvibazar and attended different government coordination meetings to inform about the progress of the project of Sirajgonj and seek the support as required on regular basis. CSF used 10,200 posters to raise awareness on childhood blindness in the nine Upazillas (sub-district) of Maulvibazar (7) and Sirajganj (2) district.

Two media briefing sessions were held in Sirajganj with the journalists of local and national media. Project Manager, Project Coordinator and member of CSF Executive Committee were present in the sessions.

In Maulvibazar, team members met journalists of local publications in all Upazillas and sought their support for publicity of the information to serve the treatable cataract blind children.

9. Manual development

CSF developed rehabilitation manuals in English and teachers training manual for inclusive education, education manuals such as Braille and Abacus and a manual/Guideline for formation and operation of Self- Help Group as well as Upazilla (Sub-district) and Zilla (District) Child Sight Society in Bangla (own language).

Technical Partnership of ICEH

ICEH (International Centre for Eye Health) was involved during proposal development and cooperation building with AED. ICEH participated vigorously during this inauguration phase of the project. Dr. M.A. Muhit, Clinical Research Fellow of ICEH, directed and actively worked with CSF team to start the activities; as planned, he was present in Bangladesh several times during this financial year and was involved in the following areas:

- Organizational preparedness for project
- Inception planning
- Recruitment of project staffs
- Orientation and Training of project staffs
- Meeting with community, administration and local project partners in Sirajganj
- Workshop in Sirajganj
- Manual development
- Monitoring and Evaluation etc.

Challenges faced

During this year CSF faced many challenges, followings were the challenges they faced and the way they were over coming the challenges;

There are common scenarios in Bangladesh, specially the rural people that the extents of stigma present towards people with all disabilities, particularly those who are blind. Therefore, CSF main challenges are to overcome this situation and providing special training to their field staffs and community volunteers. After that they have started awareness campaign through meeting with the community people on regular basis. They also disseminated poster, leaflet etc to the community for reducing the stigma. CSF has developed a strong community network, oriented local authority, elite people, Local Elected Bodies (LEB) and established strong relationship with the local Administration and opinion leaders.

Negative beliefs about disabilities extend to the community and lead to school authorities and parents of sighted children being unwilling to allow disabled children specially blind children to attend school for fear that they may contaminate or pass on the curse to their non disabled peers. For overcoming this believe CSF Project team members attended different government coordination meetings and school management committee meeting on regular basis for advocacy in favor of blind children's rights and development. CSF arranged a day long workshop on Inclusive Education and Comprehensive Rehabilitation Program for Blind Children where all concern local authority including Upazilla Education Officer, Assistant Upazilla Education Officer, Upazilla Social Welfare Officer, Community leaders, LEB, elites, School Teachers and member of School Managing Committee were present. CSF also organized an inclusive sports and cultural program where both sighted and non-sighted children were participated. The programs provide feelings to the visual impaired children that they can compete with the sighted children and have the capacity to own the prizes. These types of competition has create confidence to the visually impaired children, their families and as well as the community.

Methods of teaching for the blind children under Inclusive Education Program are quite different from the traditional education system of Bangladesh. Without specialized training it is difficult for the school teacher to teach blind children properly. Therefore before introducing the inclusive education at any primary school (Government or Non-Government) it is necessary to identify appropriate schools and teachers for basic training. Before organizing training for the teachers especially for the GOB schools it is needed to get permission from the higher authority. Under this circumstances CSF applied several times and made physical contact to the government primary education department at Dhaka (the capital city of Bangladesh) for getting permission from the authority to provide teachers training on inclusive education for blind children. Till now CSF did not get any permission from government primary education department and it was a big obstructle for CSF to admit the blind children in primary school.

To overcome this challenge, CSF staffs communicate regularly to the local government primary school authority; school Management committee; head teachers of primary school within their working areas and attended different government coordination meetings and school management committee meeting on regular basis for advocacy in favor of blind children's rights and development. CSF also arranged two workshop (a day long) on Inclusive Education and Comprehensive Rehabilitation Program for Blind Children where all concern local authority including Upazilla Education Officer, Assistant Upazilla Education Officer, Upazilla Social Welfare Officer, Community leaders, LEB, elites, School Teachers and member of School Managing Committee were present. Now CSF can convince all of them by establishing good relationship and conducted a teachers training in their working areas.

Due to recent flood a vast portion of the Sirajgonj district has flooded, So, most of the families of the blind children who are under rehabilitation program take shelter in different places and the rural communication was disrupt therefore it was very difficult for CSF to find them and to providing home based rehabilitation and other supports. But with the help of community people, local authority and the volunteer of this project CSF field level staffs has find out those families and provided support.

Impact of the Project:

This comprehensive project focuses on case detection of blind children & referred for surgery and Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) approach in its broadest sense to include Home Based Rehabilitation, Inclusive Education, Self Help Group and Advocacy. Local community of Moulvibazar and Sirajgonj district was actively involved in this project as stakeholder and as well as beneficiary.

Cataract detection and eye treatment provided to the 61 cataract blind children is the first visible benefit to their family as well as the whole community. The community has now realized that even blind-at-birth can get back vision if they acquire proper treatment.

The project engaged the community members to detection the blind children in their community; the project helps them to gain skill and knowledge on primary eye care, symbols and cause of severe visual impairments.

Home Based Rehabilitation provides individual rehabilitation services to blind/SVI children and trained the parents and or peers for supporting the blind children. The project is building and increasing the capacity of the parents and or peers at the same time as family members for enhance the quality of life of the blind children and their family as well as the whole community.

Family members and teachers are directly involved to develop the children education. The project is building the capacity of the family members, teachers, and school authority to teach blind children in an inclusive environment. The project is developing resources for the community because the trained teachers are from the same community.

Self Help Groups (SHG) seeks to provide parents of blind children and blind children with a network of other parents which develop their strength in advocating for the rights of their children.

Awareness has been build up on rights of the blind children and legal provisions. The project is introducing the belief that blind children can grow-up for independent living and can become contributing in the society.

Sports and Cultural activities organized for focused on the inclusion of sighted and non- sighted children. The project is focusing the community that if the blind children have the equal chance and opportunities they have the strength to do something for him as well as for the society.

Finally this project has proven to the local community that CSF with community partnership can give up benefits for all and visible positive results for them.

Project: Comprehensive Program for Blind Children in Bangladesh

Location: Sirajganj, Bangladesh

Evaluator: Amy Shelly

Position: Australian Youth Ambassador for Development

Field Visit Date: 5th & 6th May, 2008

The Comprehensive Program for Blind Children in Bangladesh is a wide-ranging project addressing several objectives including detection of blind children, treatment of blind children including cataract surgery, comprehensive community based rehabilitation, inclusive education, primary eye care, self-help, training and advocacy. Whilst the Child Sight Foundation (CSF) is committed to addressing treatable causes of blindness they are also committed to assisting incurably blind children. This project aims to improve the outlook of children with incurable blindness through a multifaceted community based project. Importantly, this project involves the inclusion of community based rehabilitation which is a proven strategy to address health related issues in a social and environmental context.

A particular strength of CSF is its development of the Key Informant Method in partnership with the International Centre for Eye Health, London. This method is a novel way of identifying blind children in Bangladesh through the recruitment of local volunteers who are provided with training to detect children with visual impairments. The Key Informant Method was adopted for this project and as a result at the time of my field visit 325 volunteers has been trained to detect blind and visually impaired children throughout 7 Upzillas of Maulvibazar. Furthermore, CSF had identified that at least 580 blind children live in the Sirajganj district. In a country such as Bangladesh, where so many people live in regional and remote areas the Key Informant Method is an ideal way to identify blind and visually impaired children. I believe the use of this method as part of the Comprehensive Program for Blind Children in Bangladesh has ensured success during the case detection phase of this project.

During the field visit I was privileged to visit 10 local villages to meet with both children and their families who participate in this project. This gave me the opportunity to see first hand how the project is impacting on the lives of those involved. Feedback from the children and their families was extremely positive with reports of improved social behavior, increased independence with activities of daily living and mobility as well as improved social inclusion in family and social activities as a direct result of the community based rehabilitation. Serious behavioral problems were reportedly common amongst many of these children. Staff and family members reported a marked improvement in the behavior of many children initially assessed as having severe behavioral issues.

At the time of my visit no children has been enrolled in inclusive education as the project was in its beginning phase however many children were receiving pre-school training to ready them for enrollment in mainstream schools. The children and their families responded positively to the prospect of accessing education as most blind children in the area had never attended school due to their condition.

The program strategy is fundamental in ensuring that children are equipped with the necessary skills to attend and prosper within mainstream schools through training in areas required for school attendance such as the use of Braille and abacus. These basic skills are essential for blind children and will ensure that they are capable of succeeding in mainstream classes. During my field visit staff and children clearly illustrated that the pre-school training is successful with many children demonstrating for me how they can now read and write using Braille.

I was pleased to see that whilst the project is having a positive impact on blind children it is also impacting positively on families and the community. CSF staff and the project place a strong emphasis on the need for advocacy at a community level. During my field visit I saw evidence that the advocacy strategy of this project is improving knowledge and attitudes and reducing stigma towards blindness. Many children and families reported feeling isolated and socially shunned before taking part in the project. Since the involvement of CSF staff with families and the local communities many participants indicated that they no longer feel as isolated and are now more involved in family and local community activities.

I spent considerable time with the staff involved on this project including staff members from the National CSF office and staff from the local Sirajganj office who are directly involved in this project. From my experience I would describe the staff as competent and well trained with extensive knowledge in relation to childhood blindness in Bangladesh. They were both passionate about the project and determined to ensure its effective implementation. It was obvious to me during the village visits that staff members have built a rapport with project participants. I observed first hand that the children and families participating in this study trust the CSF staff and feel positively about their participation in the project.

As a public health professional external to this project I was left with a positive opinion of the project and it's current and potential impact on the participants at the conclusion of my field visit. The project was both well run and comprehensive in nature ensuring that CSF and the Comprehensive Program for Blind Children in Bangladesh are capable of meeting the complex needs of the many blind children living within the project area.



Amy Shelly

Australian Youth Ambassador for Development

Photos of different events:



Dr. M.A. Muhit at Project Inauguration Ceremony



Chocolate Race, an inclusive sporting event



A blind child named Aftab singing a song on cultural program



Amy Shelly with Payal (a blind child) and her Family



Teachers Training Opening ceremony



World Sight Day 2008 Observed at Shahjapur



Workshop opening ceremony



Project Manager with a SVI child in her house