

OASIS FOR POSTERITY - PROGRAM REPORT – JANUARY 2022

PRIMARY AND PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Significant impact from COVID 19 pandemic

The Covid-19 Pandemic caused serious loss to all our education programs as we describe for each program below. The Government of Bangladesh required all schools to be closed in mid-2020 and they re-opened only in September of this year.



There have been huge learning losses among children of our primary and pre-primary schools. Children at OfP Primary School were at the highest risk of dropout because they do not have infrastructure for online education at home and their families suffer from illiteracy, unawareness of educational benefits and poverty.

Our teachers started visiting students door-to-door 2-3 days each week to help continuous learning while maintaining the required health protocols. Of course, in-person learning at school could not be replaced but we reduced drop-out, losing only one student from our primary school. We were able to continue payment of staff salaries with support from our friends in Canada and other countries.



With changed regulations of the government, our schools are now open and teaching in-person. So far, we have had no infections among our pupils.

OFP's two pre-primary schools are also now offering in-person classes



Bluebell 2 Class in person after reopening



Bluebell 3 Class in person after reopening

Ongoing support for Bluebell graduates

We are continuously tracking and helping graduates of our OfP primary schools to succeed. Several graduates have now completed secondary school certificate (SSC) examination and others wrote the SSC exam recently. We have provided partial financial support in the form of bursary for their continued education; otherwise, they would drop out.



A few of this year's SSC graduates will apply for admission at OfP Institute of Science and Technology (OIST) for a technical education. They will need financial support to continue their education at OIST. Once they complete their diploma at OIST, we will support them with job placement. These would be the first-generation diploma holders in their families. The bursary for one student at OIST will be around Tk. 126,500 or US\$1,500 over four years i.e. US\$375/year. We need to offer bursaries to around 20% of our students to enable first-generation diploma education. A full-board bursary for a student including food and educational materials will be around Tk. 250,000 or US\$2,950 over four years i.e. Tk. 62,500 or US\$735 a year.

Layla Aktar finished her primary education at Bluebell School, enrolled in high school and passed the Junior School Certificate (JSC) examination with GPA 3.66. This year (2021) she has appeared in Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination and is expecting to pass. Her father has a poorly paid restaurant job in Dhaka; her mother works at home caring for Layla and her younger sister. Starting from her time at Bluebell, OfP provided bursaries for Layla's education. If she passes the SSC examination, we will admit her to a diploma program at OIST and arrange bursaries for her.

Sakib Islam is a Bluebell graduate. After Bluebell, he studied JSC and passed with GPA 3.07. He has appeared in the SSC examination this year (2021). His father is a day laborer and his mother works at home; they have no farmland. Like other students, Sakib was offered free education and educational materials during his education at Bluebell. If he passes the SSC examination and we can arrange bursaries, we plan to admit Sakib to a diploma program at OIST.



OFP INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (OIST)



With over US\$250,000 support from international friends we have completed first phase construction and purchased furniture and laboratory equipment. OIST has been approved by the Government of Bangladesh and Bangladesh Technical Education Board to offer diplomas in automobile, civil and computer technologies with 50 seats each. Due to COVID19 we could not begin offering training, but have announced admission from January 2022. We are expecting around 1,000 applications. We have recruited several teachers for first semester courses in math, physics, and English. We have also recruited a director, accountant

and laboratory assistants. We are regularly paying staff salaries and will continue recruiting teachers and procuring laboratory equipment as students advance to higher semesters.

Rebeka Sultana has been recruited as a math teacher. She graduated from high school with distinction and completed BSc in Mathematics from Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur, Bangladesh.



Iftekhar Rahman has joined OIST as the Director after completing Business Administration degrees from Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur. Before joining OIST, Iftekhar worked at an international

NGO in Dhaka and served in the Quality Assurance Cell of IUBAT, Dhaka..

Training at OIST will be meaningful for our graduates' future

The huge demand for job-training means that OIST will continue to grow, which means developing laboratories and adding new floors. Beyond physical expansion, however, we need to ensure that students with weak secondary education can succeed and that all our graduates succeed in the transition to their first jobs. Therefore, we are planning supports such as (1) faculty development programs (2) cooperation arrangements with Bangladesh-based industries (3) cooperation with overseas institutions and industries (3) start-up support for entrepreneurs (4) support for access to higher studies, and (5) a database for engaging employers. None of these tasks is easy, but we feel they will increase chances of success for OIST graduates.

EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



The pandemic made life very difficult for day laborers and other vulnerable people who cannot afford to stay at home but had to because there was no work: some days they had no food. OfP launched an Emergency Food Assistance Program for cluster village residents to provide basic food supplies. With donations over US\$15,000 from Mid Main Community Health Centre Canada, Rotary Club of Gouda Netherlands, Rotary Club of Solingen Germany, Rotary Club of Gouda Bloemendaal Netherlands, COOMMEET Fellowship Netherlands, and individuals in Canada, Netherlands and elsewhere, the program supported several hundred families for several months.



BURSARIES FOR GIRLS IN SCHOOL AND FOR HEALTHCARE SUPPORT

In addition to our emergency food assistance, we provided around US\$200 to ten school-aged girls last year. We also provided around US\$500 to over 30 seniors for healthcare procedures as well as medication and treatment support to two women and one man suffering incurable diseases.

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

We have formed one pilot cooperative of 82 women and plan to form more cooperatives, primarily for household organic farming. This project arose from our Emergency Food Assistance Program. It follows a participatory approach: the OfP team met with the women of the cluster village to identify needs and possible solutions. We learned that their greatest problem is food insufficiency because, they don't have farmland to grow food. However, each family has a few square feet of homestead to utilize. Therefore, the program will provide apprenticeship training, seeds and small financial assistance to enable the women of cluster village and local landless families to enable them to produce food for their families.





OfP team visiting door to door for feedback on the Women's Empowerment Cooperative.

Our Needs

1. **Top priority:** US\$ 18,000 a year for operating the primary and pre-primary schools.
2. **One-time equipment and building costs:** OIST is expected to be self-reliant for operating costs; however, we will need more laboratory and workshop equipment as students advance. We would like to improve accessibility by creating hostel accommodation for students and teachers of OIST (about US\$ 80,000).
3. **Individual supports as funds are available:** Bursaries for secondary-school girls and OIST students; support to mostly elderly individuals for health care costs; business start-up support for OIST graduates.
4. **Long-term goal:** US\$ 250,000 for a Community Paramedic Institute to deliver community healthcare services and train paramedics.

To donate, please visit <https://www.midmain.net/donate> or contact aberland@telus.net



PS [Our website](https://www.midmain.net) was hacked last year but is now available again.