



international needs
transformed lives, changed communities



CELEBRATING GROUP EMPOWERMENT

BANGLADESH | Summer 2022

Dear friends,

I'm pleased to bring you this semi-annual report on the International Needs Group Empowerment Program, which has been progressing in Bangladesh.

First, there's no doubt that without the hard work and selflessness of the teachers, we wouldn't have made the transformative strides that we have. Second, another positive takeaway has been the growing interest from parents as they dedicate more time to their children's education and development. And finally, none of this would have been possible without you, our generous donors. Thank you so much for your ongoing support!



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DEVELOPING POTENTIAL, INCREASING ATTENDANCE

It is important for children to have the proper tools to learn both inside and outside of the classroom. Thanks to your support, **150 students received in-class materials** such as pens, pencils, and notebooks, while also being gifted with cricket equipment, balls, skipping ropes, and other fun games for physical education. This has led to a more active, enriching experience for the children; in addition to traditional classroom learning, they are participating in various sports, exercises, and dances which directly contribute to their mental development and wellbeing.



These resources, however, can only be experienced when the students attend school – and we have good news about the attendance! **98% of the children in the Group Program are regularly attending classes.** This number is not 100% yet, but we are grateful for the team of dedicated teachers who are playing an active role in ensuring the wellbeing of their students. In cases where children miss classes, teachers have made the extra effort to inquire as to the reason for this, going as far as to contacting parents individually and asking them to encourage their children to attend. Teachers have also visited families at home to ensure the environment is safe and healthy and have reported that parents have been welcoming ideas on how to improve home and school life for their children.

MAKING SURE THE CHILDREN ARE HEALTHY

Despite the daily struggle to put food on the table for many families in Bangladesh, children in the program receive nutritious meals, plus snacks and plenty of clean water. Weight and height measurements are being taken regularly by local doctors, and they have noted seeing **reduced signs of malnutrition in the children.** We have also learned that parents of the students are seeing first-hand the importance of nutrition to the development and growth of their children.



In addition to the nutritional aspect of the program, **your donations were also used toward medical support**, which is having positive impacts on the children.

Students can receive proper evaluation and medicine for their medical problems, something families could not afford before this program. Many of the physical issues that the children have experienced are decreasing thanks to balanced meals; however, in the cases where additional care was needed, children were prescribed zinc tablets to fight diarrhea and weight loss, food saline to address physical weakness, and vitamins A and C to treat skin conditions and improve immunity. Other medicines prescribed during this period were to fight cold and flu, worms, and general aches and pains.



One student who has benefited greatly from the medical care provided by the program is Tousif. Before joining the program, Tousif suffered from scabies and his family could not afford to pay for the treatment he needed. Now, as a participant of the program, **Tousif is on the path to recovery with the help of doctors and routine medical treatment.** He is attending school regularly and making great progress in his studies!

HANDS-ON SKILLS AND TRAINING

The program has provided opportunities for the children and their families to get acquainted with **hands-on learning tools** such as computers and sewing machines. It has been a great success so far as these tools are things that the children and their families cannot afford to have at home. We are seeing the benefits of exposing students to new information, technology, and opportunities, which has added an inspiring element to the program.



IMPROVING GENDER EQUALITY

Inequality between men and women is a visible issue in most homes in Bangladesh. The common belief is that girls are weak and less intelligent than boys, who almost always take leadership of the family. But we are using this program to change this outdated narrative by **empowering young girls with proper education**. The program provides counselling for parents about gender inequality, to ensure that children are treated properly not just at school but at home as well.

An encouraging example of this shift is Maryam. Her older sister unfortunately was forced into becoming a child bride, but **the program has been able to provide Maryam with a different future**. She now has the chance to go to school, experience the joys of childhood, and dream about the possibilities that her future may hold. Since joining the program, Maryam has displayed a love for learning and playing with her friends at school. And when she grows up, Maryam says that she wants to be a police officer, a profession occupied almost entirely by men in Bangladesh.



[Click here to support the children in Bangladesh](#)



ENCOURAGING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

In Bangladesh, disabled people are sadly mistreated, but teachers have made an effort to address this issue by teaching the children that everyone deserves to be treated with respect and kindness, no matter their abilities. This is illustrated through the program embracing children with physical and mental disabilities, like Shabib.

Shabib is six years old and non-verbal, which led to him being rejected by many schools. But since attending the school in Jessore, he has been embraced by International Needs Bangladesh and given the chance to attend school regularly alongside other children. We're happy to report that he has immensely enjoyed the daily interactions with his teachers and other students, who have also learned a lot from having him in the school.



[Click here to view the video of Chadni's story](#)

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Tousif, Maryam, and Shabib are shining examples of the success and potential of this program. The Group Empowerment Program makes sure that no child gets left behind, that all children are welcome to receive quality education, nourishment, and love, regardless of their backgrounds or situations. We feel very encouraged by the developments we're seeing in this program, and it is all made possible by your support and generosity. Thank you.

PRAYER CORNER

Please pray for encouragement and safety for the teachers in Bangladesh, who work hard every day and take risks to their health by conducting home visits during the spread of COVID-19.

Sincerely,

Festus Addei

Director of Programs and Projects