

YOUR ANNUAL UPDATE

Thanks to your sponsorship, children and families are making positive changes in Bhola. Learn more about the valuable ways your support has benefitted.

This year, Plan International focused our efforts on helping families in Bhola recover from the impact of the COVID-19 impact, from financial struggles to disrupted educations.

2,325 students received tutoring and school supplies, and women caregivers in 6,795 families earned responsibility and respect by handling Plan's cash donations of 5,000 taka. 2,085 children between 3 and 5 years old were cared for via 139 early childhood development centres.

Your sponsorship will ensure even more success for children in Bhola.



4650

Packages of education supplies sent to children in need



1809

Girls educated about sexual reproductive health



6795

Families received financial aid



COVID-19'S IMPACT IN BANGLADESH

Hear from Alonti about how COVID-19 has impacted her community.

"When COVID-19 came to Bangladesh, my family panicked. It affected us a lot. My parents could not afford private tuition. At that moment, Plan International extended its financial support to us. This made us smile during the hardship. I purchased textbooks and gave the tuition fees with that money."

CASE STORY: I WANT TO BE A TEACHER



NAME: SUMAIYA

AGE: 14 YEARS OLD

HOBBY: READING

"I know that there should not be any discrimination between a boy and a girl, and I learned about this by participating in different events conducted by Plan International Bangladesh in my community."

Meet Sumaiya

Like your sponsored child, Sumaiya has been empowered by Plan International to change her life. The daughter of two waste management operators, Sumaiya lives with her family in a slum in Dhaka City. Learning about girls' rights and the downsides of child marriage through Plan encouraged Sumaiya to speak her mind and follow her dreams.

Prevention of Child Marriage

Though marriage is technically illegal in Bangladesh for girls under 18, the policy is rarely enforced, and parents often marry off their young daughters illegally. One explanation for this practise is that, in Sumaiya's neighbourhood, girls are often seen as financial burdens.

When Sumaiya's mother informed her that she had been proposed to, it seemed that the scholar's destiny was set. But Sumaiya had learned about gender and empowerment through Plan, and she had other ambitions.

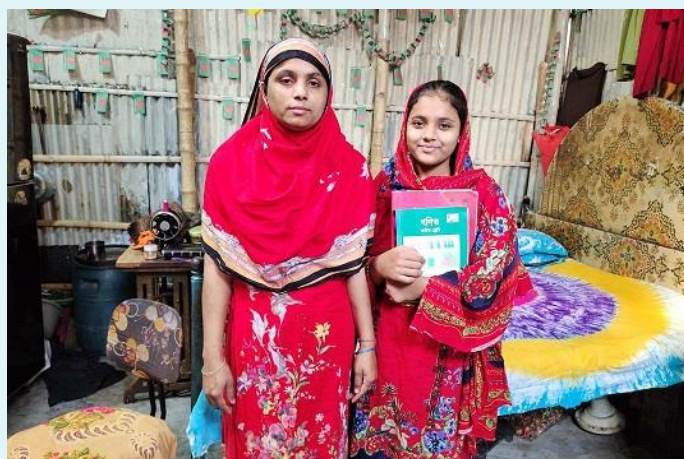
In a series of co-curricular activities hosted by Plan, Sumaiya became aware of the dangers of child marriage, which usually entails dropping out of school. For her, that was not an option.

"It Is Time For Me to Study"

With fierce determination, young Sumaiya successfully persuaded her parents that a marriage at her age would ruin her life. Instead, Sumaiya dreams of becoming a teacher. But in order to do that, she says, it is critical that she continue her studies.

"I am only 14," says Sumaiya. "Marriage is not the top of my priority list. Now, it is time for me to study hard and be a successful person in the future."

Sumaiya plans to bring this lesson to families around her community, who may not be aware of the dangers of child marriage.



Sumaiya studies with her mother.

WE CURRENTLY WORK WITH 6,795 CHILDREN IN BHOLA

OUR PROJECTS IN BHOLA ARE HELPING CHILDREN THRIVE



As schools in Bhola stayed closed for almost two years, thousands of families came together to keep their children learning.

IMPROVING FAMILIES' LIVELIHOODS



6,795 families received essential financial support. In Bhola, many families were hard-hit economically by the pandemic. Increased rates of poverty has been linked to higher rates of school dropouts, as well as to child marriage and child labour.

This year, 6,795 families received 5,000 taka (around \$53 USD), which they used to buy school supplies, uniforms, food and livestock. In order to combat social norms, women were given responsibility for the cash, and 70 women successfully opened savings accounts using this funding.

Plan International stayed in touch with each family virtually to make sure that the funds were received, and to keep tabs on each family's situation. "This brought a big smile on our faces," says Mim, age 10. "My whole family and I are grateful to Plan International Bangladesh for standing with us."

KEEPING STUDENTS IN SCHOOL



With schools in Bhola closed for nearly two years, thousands of students were in danger of dropping out. 2,325 of Plan's sponsored children in Bhola come from poor and extremely poor families, meaning that they do not have access to technology that enables remote learning.

This year, Plan International implemented alternative learning centres that reached 2,325 students as part of our "School Under Tree" programme. 345 educators received training to tutor students grades 4 through 8.

We distributed 4,650 packages containing school supplies and COVID-19 prevention materials. More than 4,000 caregivers learned about COVID-19 prevention and safety.



"During COVID-19, my school was closed and I really struggled. After resuming school, I was shy. Then I got enrolled in the School Under Tree project. I love to learn here. Lessons are interesting and joyful. I am thankful to Plan for bringing us back to the path we lost."

- Hafsa, 9 from Bhola

YOUR SUPPORT MEANS BETTER FUTURES



FUTURE CHALLENGES TO ADDRESS



41%

Of people in Bangladesh ages 15 to 29 are not in school or employed



7%

Of children in Bangladesh are victims of child labour



22%

Of girls under 15 in Bangladesh are married



Your support helps children to stand up for their futures.

- School closures due to COVID-19 are likely to increase dropout and child marriage rates. We will introduce alternative learning centres to encourage children to stay in school.
- Girls are systemically excluded from having their voices heard. We will create a girls-led children's forum that will address social issues in their community.
- Many sponsored children in Bhola are now 10 or older. We will increase our adolescent health training for educators and students alike.
- Poverty is a significant driver of child marriage. We will combat poverty by providing vocational training to the families of sponsored children.

We know the best is yet to come, and together we will continue to work for a brighter future for the children in Bhola.



"We will develop a comprehensive project plan for sponsored children of Bhola to overcome the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Thank you for being with the children's development."

Neelima Yasmeen
Programme Area Manager, Bhola

YOUR GENEROSITY WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT CHILDREN IN STANDING UP FOR THEIR FUTURE AND RIGHTS