

# Sundarban Area Development Programme

## Bangladesh



### Geographical Location

The city of Boyra, Khulna, is located at the extreme south west of Bangladesh, about 345 kilometres from the capital city of Dhaka.

### Brief Information

**Target Direct Beneficiaries:** 55,594 persons

**Indirect Beneficiaries:** 77,021 persons

**Project Lifespan:** 1997-2016 (19 years)

**Project Budget:** SGD \$2,250,000

**Number of Children in programme:** 600 children

### Project Goals

The overall goal of Sundarban Area Development Programme (ADP) is to reduce poverty at the household level through various integrated development interventions, focusing mainly on children, women and adolescent girls.

With the support and care of child sponsors from Singapore, World Vision aims to help the children and families of Sundarban ADP attain self-reliance by September 2016.



<http://www.topnews.in/files/bangladesh-map.gif>

★ **Area of Project Implementation**

## Background

Khulna is the third largest metropolitan city of Bangladesh. Many people migrate from various parts of the country to this city for employment opportunities. These migrants from different villages become slum dwellers whose main livelihoods include being rickshaw pullers, day labourers and small business owners. 62% of the population lives in poverty and they suffer from a lack of education, poor healthcare and little economic opportunities.

Khulna is plagued with various challenges that exacerbate many areas of the people's lives. The city, for instance, has a poor drainage system resulting in water-logging in the slums. This puts the lives of the poor in peril. Industrial waste water also pollutes the city air and water pollution by arsenic is identified as a big environmental hazard.

Child labour is also a major concern for the people. Increasingly, many are employing children because it is cheap to do so. These children are frequently being abused, traumatised and tortured by their employers. Out of 71 child workers interviewed, 16 of them admitted to having been sexually abused, and another 10% were believed to have been raped by their employers. Though there are laws regulating child labour exits, implementation remains inadequate.

Additionally, the number of young sex workers is increasing as trafficking, raping and sexual abuse becomes more commonplace. Children in the area were also found to lack basic amenities and opportunities. One in every seven children born in Bangladesh dies before their fifth birthday.

Due to the various problems that plague children here, World Vision implemented a Child Survival Project in 1993 to reduce child and maternal mortality rate in the area. At the end of the project, an evaluation was conducted to see the overall achievement and impact of the project in the area. It was concluded that the area still has various needs, hence a more sustainable development programme was introduced, and World Vision started Sundarban Area Development Programme.

## Key Challenges



## Key Challenges

1. Poverty
2. Lack of access to education for children
3. Poor economic conditions and low family incomes below the poverty line
4. Poor healthcare and sanitation in the community
5. Lack of community-based organisations to provide support
6. Lack of good quality food sources for children and families
7. Limited employment opportunities
8. High child mortality
9. Shortage of housing for the poor
10. Inadequate opportunities for women to receive education



## Key Interventions

### Health

Children and families in the target area need help in healthcare, including polio eradication, pre-natal care, prevention of acute respiratory tract infection, expanded health programmes on immunisations, diarrhoea, HIV/AIDS and reproductive health for adolescent girls. An assessment showed that adolescent girls are unaware of reproductive health, and 50% of the pregnant women do not get proper health service. Hence, children are born with a low birth weight, making them susceptible to ill health. Many children also suffer from malnutrition.

Its geographical location near Mongla port and neighbouring countries India and Nepal also encourages an active sex trade that has brought the prevalence of HIV/AIDS to alarming levels in Khulna City.

The area also faces challenges such as arsenic pollution and a lack of drinking water.

World Vision aims to improve the community's health status by giving them better access to healthcare and raising their awareness on proper healthcare through the following activities:

- Ensuring that children aged between 12 months and 23 months are immunised against common diseases, and that children under 2 years old are protected with Tetanus Toxoid against any tetanus infection;
- Providing families with access to safe drinking water and hygienic sanitation facilities through the installation of at least one tube well for every five families in the programme area;
- Organising arsenic tests for all tube wells in the impact area;
- Ensuring anti-natal and postnatal check-ups for pregnant women;
- Starting community-based nutrition feeding centres;
- Arranging for annual health check-ups for all sponsored children;
- Conducting health education sessions in the clinic for the community;
- Providing supplies and medicine for the clinic;
- Helping 90% of children under five years old receive treatment for pneumonia, diarrhoea, malnutrition, and other minor ailments;
- Arranging training for new vaccinators;
- Ensuring that all sponsored children are given access to treatment facilities;
- Constructing small drains, garbage collection centres and efficient sewage system in the community;
- Purchasing garbage carriers; and
- Giving training on solid waste management.



Nine year old Runa Dey is both confident and hopeful that as a World Vision sponsored child, she will be able to complete higher education.



## Key Interventions

### Education

World Vision found the overall education situation in the programme domain poor. There was a lack of opportunities to receive primary and secondary education. While most parents desire to send their children to school, a good number of children tend to drop out of school in Grades Three and Four to help their parents at fieldwork or to help support the family by finding other sources of income.

The present primary school drop-out rate is estimated at 40%. World Vision hopes to help the community by enrolling all eligible children into schools when possible. World Vision also aims to improve the knowledge of the community and underline the benefits and importance of education through the following activities:

- Encouraging the community to enrol their children in school;
- Providing children with school assistance support and basic items like school stationeries;
- Building the capacity of the existing educational institutions such as providing trainings to teachers;
- Supplying teaching and learning materials;
- Supporting schools with necessary things such as furniture;
- Providing vocational skills training to adolescent boys and girls who are ineligible for school;
- Improving the environment and infrastructures of 15 primary and secondary schools;
- Providing scholarships and subsidies for school fees for children in need;
- Equipping children who have dropped out of school previously with necessary educational foundations and support;
- Ensuring hygienic sanitation systems in schools;
- Ensuring safe drinking water for the children in schools;
- Enrolling all six-year-olds to 10-year-olds in school; and
- Partnering the local government to implement a literacy movement programme as and when possible and necessary in the community.

### Economic Development

About 62% of the population live below the poverty line. Most have been identified to have low income or lack income sources, resulting in poverty. 32% of families live in their own houses, while the rest of the 68% of families live in rented homes. When families are asked to provide some suggestions on how they feel they can increase their family income, the majority of them asked for access to capital, employment opportunities and other businesses. At present, 45.76% of families are involved in savings groups, which are run by different NGOs and government organisations. Hence, World Vision seeks to help the community by creating available income sources and improving the livelihoods of some 30% of the households through activities such as:

- Changing the mindsets of beneficiaries to dispel traditional myths and attitudes;
- Increasing their skills and knowledge;
- Empowering beneficiaries create businesses for themselves;
- Providing skills-training to beneficiaries, such as poultry and cows rearing, fish-farming, and starting up small businesses such as tailoring and entrepreneurship development;
- Helping beneficiaries obtain micro credit loans as start-up capital; and
- Providing one-time financial support to the joint ventures of beneficiaries under the economic development programme.



Women are given training on how to do sewing and embroidery so that will have the skill to earn more income for their families.



## Key Interventions

### Advocacy

The community is largely unaware of gender sensitivity. Bangladesh is dominated by men. As a result, women have no rights and cannot participate in the family decision-making process. The women in the community recognised that the lack of education caused them to not have any rights, nor be respected. They also have no access to income, as they have no means or skills to earning money. Generally, the women are unaware of their rights and allow themselves to be mistreated by the society at large.

Only 8.6% of the women in the group are employed, as opposed to 68% of the male population. There are also an increasing number of young sex workers, and sexual crimes like trafficking, raping and sexual abuse are becoming a growing concern in the area. These types of abuse go against every tenet of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

World Vision seeks to help the community to become more aware of and to practice human rights, placing emphasis on children, women and adolescent girls through the following activities:

- Organising seminars, workshops and trainings on child rights issues;
- Observing international child day;
- Producing regular publications about child rights;
- Raising the issue of child rights in the media;
- Organising seminars on gender issues;
- Conducting regular family visits and discussions with families to inculcate more equality;
- Conducting awareness workshops on women leadership in the community;
- Arranging cultural programmes to raise awareness of the oppression of women in the society;
- Encouraging women to participate in community meetings; and
- Promoting awareness on the rights of women and girls to reduce negligence, injustices and oppressions of females.

### Community Organisation

For the programme to be sustainable, the community requires an organised group of leaders who can help the community become a self-managed group. Hence, World Vision puts special emphasis on community organisation.

World Vision seeks to facilitate a process for the formation of local community organisations in the target area, with the participation of both men and women. The group presently consists of 60% female and 40% males. To ensure greater unity and programme sustainability, World Vision will help them by enhancing the capacity of their leadership and management skills of the community leaders through activities such as:

- Arranging several trainings in group management, accounting and budgeting, and general leadership skills;
- Facilitating and motivating small scale group initiatives for financial solvency; and
- Arranging seminars or workshops to strengthen leadership capacity.

### Conclusion

Through these community interventions, World Vision strives to strengthen the leadership in the community by increasing their self-esteem and developing their potential to manage their own development process, moving them towards making sustainable change, development and building a better future for their children.

With the support and care of child sponsors in Singapore, World Vision aims to help children and families attain self-reliance by September 2016. The children and families in Sundarban ADP can only do this together with your help!

Thank you for walking this journey of faith and transformation with the children, families and World Vision!