



FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY



CHAR BOROBILA AND UKHIA, BANGLADESH

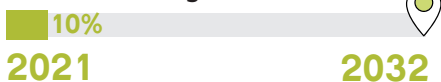
MID-YEAR COMMUNITY UPDATE 2023

Prepared for

Walking with Char Borobila



Walking with Ukhia



FH COMMUNITIES IN BANGLADESH

1 IN MYMENSINGH (CHAR BOROBILA)

4 IN UKHIA

POPULATION

75,472

HOUSEHOLDS

17,724

PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

3,686

After 11 years of walking together, FH Bangladesh and the people of Char Borobila have a strong relationship. Children and teens are developing their talents and values while growing in knowledge and creativity through Child and Adolescent Clubs. FH has helped establish a strong network of leaders who conduct their own meetings and trainings for local cascade and savings groups. Leaders from these groups come together to create overseeing bodies called Community Based Organizations (CBOs). These CBOs are fully able to identify problems in their community and design creative solutions. Char Borobila is fast approaching their goal of being a resilient, thriving, and transformational community and is almost ready to celebrate the completion of their partnership with FH!

In 2021, partnership in Ukhia started with two communities and has since doubled to four! In the newest community, Khunia Palong, FH Bangladesh just conducted an assessment to learn their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. FH is working to show community members the value of long-term development over “dazzling” short-term fixes. People are coming to understand the unique vision FH has for need-based, long-term and sustainable development. Parents, teachers, and leaders as well as local government are learning about the opportunities and goals associated with child sponsorship.

Written by Faruk Ahmed and Zillur Rahman,
FH Bangladesh
Prepared by FH Canada



One of the local water pumps installed by FH Bangladesh!

A Dream Coming True in Ukhia

Story collected by Mukta Rani

Ashrayan, a government-built housing for over 48 families, had no local water supply. Residents spent hours traversing a steep hill to collect unsafe water that made them sick. Ashrayan had no preschools and only one primary school a kilometre away. Parents couldn't access skills training or viable work, nor could they grow their own food as they had no land. Fighting among neighbours was common due to overcrowding—there was only one latrine for every 10 families!

Asma, a 22-year-old mother, shares: “Due to water problems, we could not bathe and wash clothes regularly. We had to go to the bottom of the hill to fetch water again and again because there was no big container to keep or preserve the water. Children were in danger of falling from the top of the hill. We could not even keep the children clean. I cried many times because of the water problem and sometimes thought of leaving the area but there was nowhere to go.”

When FH offered to work with Ashrayan, Asma was among the many women who attended their trainings. FH installed a submersible pump with an overhead water tank so families could pump clean water close to home. New community leaders like Asma rallied residents to build a preschool. She joined the school management committee and was made secretary of the water committee that oversaw the pump installation and is responsible for ongoing maintenance.

“Now, I and all my neighbours drink safe and pure water and keep ourselves and our children clean,” Asma shares. “We all take care of the submersible [pump] and pay the electricity bill and meet once a month. We support each other in times of danger and peril. ...FH has taught us to stick together!”

Asma adds, “I have also learned to cherish a dream about children and family. I want to change my family so there is no scarcity of resources so that my family won't face any poverty. I am working to embroider clothes... and I want to have my own shop in the future where more women like me will work.”



“I have learned to cherish a dream about children and family.”

—Asma

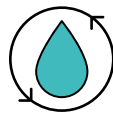
Health & Education



Learners To Leaders

When parents and caregivers give their infants and toddlers stimulating interaction, research shows long-lasting benefits to those children including better performance in school. So, FH Bangladesh trained Leader Mothers on early childhood stimulation. In turn, they trained nearly 2,000 other mothers with the lessons they received! Mothers now feel encouraged and inspired to spend more directed time with their kids.

To help kids prepare for success in the classroom, FH established four preschools in Ukhia and provided learning materials. These preschools are staffed by qualified Shebikas (teachers) committed to loving and engaging kids through play and practice. In Char Borobila, preschool students are learning through sport, art, and books.



Pumping Up Community Health

Access to water is critical for families to thrive. Some remote communities in Ukhia are facing a huge water crisis. To address this threat, FH Bangladesh installed submersible pumps (i.e. pumps that sit under the water in a well) with water tanks to provide ready access to clean water.

Women and girls in these communities don't have access to the knowledge or treatment they need to address gynecological health issues and manage their menstrual cycles. As a result, they often suffer stigma, shame, and sickness. FH provided empowering menstrual hygiene education and gynecological campaigns where women and teens received medical treatment and support. Women were encouraged and freed to prioritize their health and seek treatment sooner rather than later.



170 teen girls and 140 women trained on menstrual hygiene

286 students attend preschools



240 Leader Mothers trained 1,714 mothers on ways to help their children learn at home

“ Now, because of the establishment of the preschool in our village, children willingly participate in their classes and every day are learning something new. ”

- Fatema, Shebika of Shapla Preschool, Ratna Palong Community

Leadership & Ending Child Marriage



Creating Solutions

To increase servant leadership in Ukhia, FH formed Community Development Committees (CDCs) last year. This year, FH arranged regular meetings with CDC members to discuss social problems and develop action plans for the communities.

In Char Borobila, Savings and Loans Group leaders participated in savings group management training. Afterward, these leaders began identifying community “stucks” and contributing to solutions. They’re enabling their groups and actively working to develop new leaders for the future. In addition, they are playing a critical role in preventing child marriage.



Ending Child Marriage

In Bangladesh, child marriage is illegal but remains a common practice across the country for a variety of reasons, chief among them being poverty. To address this issue, FH Bangladesh initiated the Child Marriage No More project.

The project has just begun and has focused on gathering data from different segments of the population. After conducting a community survey, FH hosted six focus group discussions with younger and older mothers, younger and older fathers, religious leaders, and community leaders. In the second half of the year, FH Bangladesh will focus on analyzing survey data that will inform how they train staff to design intervention strategies that address the identified causes of child marriage in Char Borobila and end child marriage for good.



20 savings group leaders trained in Char Borobila

55 Community Development Committee leaders trained in Char Borobila

38 million child brides currently in Bangladesh

479 households surveyed in anti-child marriage project



Thank You!

The families in Char Borobila and Ukhia, together with FH Bangladesh and FH Canada, thank you for your generous support in their fight against poverty. With one community nearing the completion of their journey to sustainability and another four just beginning, it’s an exciting time to partner with families in Bangladesh!