



**FOOD FOR
THE HUNGRY**



BANGLADESH

CHAR BOROBILA AND UKHIA

**YEAR-END PROGRESS REPORT
FISCAL YEAR 2022**

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INTRODUCTION



Communities:
3



Total Households:
7,508



Total Population:
41,080



Program Participants:
3,026

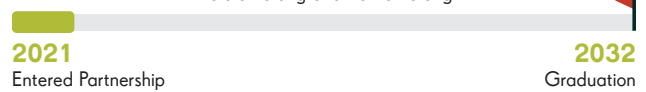


The FH Bangladesh team in Mymensingh

Walking with **Char Borobila**



Walking with **Ukhia**
Holdia Palong and Ratna Palong



Food for the Hungry (FH) Bangladesh works with communities in Char Borobila and Ukhia (Holdia Palong and Ratna Palong) to bring about sustainable change in the areas of livelihoods, education, health, and leadership development. To overcome all forms of poverty, including material, spiritual, relational, and personal poverty, FH focuses on empowering and equipping local leaders to identify strengths and vulnerabilities in their communities, and begin addressing those through awareness campaigns and practical activities.

FH has worked in Char Borobila for a number of years now and seen great progress—this year was no exception! After an upward journey with community members to persuade them of the benefits of including women in leadership and income generating roles, FH continues to see many women rise to lead and train other women in Savings and Loans Groups, Cascade Groups, and Community Development Committees.

As FH staff engage in this initial “seed phase” with Ukhia, they’re working to build trust and get to know members of the community. A resistance to investing time in trainings and workshops as well as a preference for exclusively religious education over general education have surfaced. In response, staff must be patient, creative, and persistent as they continue to show and explain the benefits of upgrading skills, investing in leadership development, and prioritizing childhood education. After facing similar challenges in Char Borobila and seeing positive change over the years, staff are confident they’ll see similar transformation in Ukhia.

In fact, some change is already happening and lives are improving! Awareness sessions on regular hand washing and preparation of hand soap have increased cleanliness and family health. By training on homestead gardening, poultry rearing, and tailoring, household income has increased, enabling parents to meet their families’ health, nutritional, and educational needs.

“ I used to feel shy to go in front of people, I could not speak properly, I was afraid to participate in everything. But now I am able to lead in my savings group and our Community-Based Organization after getting leadership training from FH. People in the community now respect me and now I participate as an invited guest in various events. — Mulima, Local Leader, Ukhia





LIVELIHOODS

GOAL

Increased household income and its proper utilization.

"I am very poor; my husband does not work regularly. I have three daughters. I work in other people's houses and it is very difficult for me to maintain the educational and household expenses. I benefitted from the opportunity of tailoring training from FH. Now I can work and support my daughter's education and I can help my husband to support my family."

— Rukshana, Tailor, *Ukhia*

Launching New Businesses

FH Bangladesh trained 20 people on starting and running profitable small businesses. Women participated in tailoring training and received sewing machines. Participants like Asma and Helena are now saving money by sewing clothes for their families and earning new income by making clothes for customers. Asma completed her sewing training and received a sewing machine to work at home and earn money. Helena received spools of cloth from FH to get her started making clothes for sale. With the money she made, she bought more cloth, increased the scope of her business, and now pays her children's school fees herself!

FH introduced a type of quick growing fish larvae to farmers who now feel confident that by selling and eating more fish, they can create a steady, reliable source of income and nutrition for their families.

Another low-cost, productive way for families to earn an income and feed their children is raising chickens. FH trained families on chicken raising and gave them chickens. Additionally, FH trained 20 community members to administer regular vaccinations to livestock, ensuring they understand and can explain the benefits and risks to animal owners.

Growing Gardens

Home vegetable gardening is one sure way to daily feed your family when access to food gets difficult.

It's also a great way to ensure your family gets the nutrients they need to be healthy, especially children. The 60 people who took home gardening training from FH and received seeds this year are already harvesting the rewards!



Husbands in Char Borobila are proud to see what their wives can do when given the opportunity to work.



LIVELIHOODS

Learning to Save Together

Savings and Loans Groups in Char Borobila upped their game with cashier training. Group cashiers can now calculate their groups' accounting activities and their own families' income and expenses as well as help other group members fill in their personal pass books. Members are now thinking more about the future, participating in income-generating activities, earning more, and saving more.

ACTIVITIES

20 people in Ukhia trained on commercial chicken raising; each participant received **16 chickens**



190 kg **fish larvae** distributed to 10 fish farming trainees in Char Borobila

20 community members trained on **cow and goat rearing** in Char Borobila



30 women in Ukhia and Char Borobila trained on **tailoring**



MORE IMPACT NUMBERS ON THE LAST PAGE



Women in Savings and Loans Groups gain accounting skills, literacy, and confidence as they track their weekly contributions.

GOAL

Improved holistic development of children through early childhood intervention during the first nine years of life.

"I have learned about developing children's interest in education by participating in education Leader Mother training. I am cascading education lessons to my neighbour circle members and helping them increase their children's interest in studies. I am grateful [for] this beautiful opportunity. I feel very proud to be involved in social service."

— Mousumi, Leader Mother, Char Borobila

Prepping for Success

Through FH-organized Cascade Health Groups, mothers in the community learned and shared how to recognize and address mental stress in children ages 0-6, as well as practical play activities to do with their kids at home. FH launched Early Childhood Development Centres, or "preschools", in Char Borobila to help children start Grade 1 with confidence and have a higher chance of success. Last year, a total of 48 children "graduated" from preschool and started Grade 1! Being well prepared for primary school has helped them get good grades and stay in school.

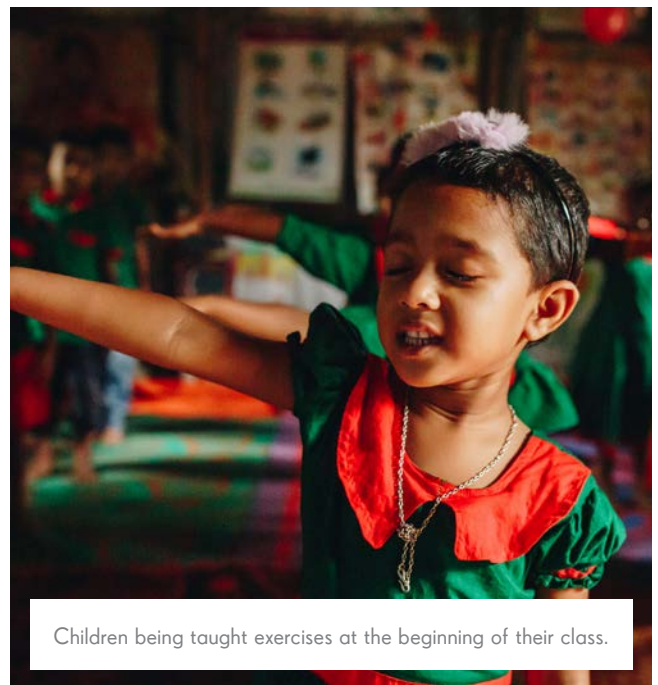
FH also organized drawing, reading, and essay writing competitions (with prizes for the winners!) to encourage participation and skills development. As communities recover from school closures due to COVID-19, this was particularly helpful for rebuilding comradery between all grades.

Shaping Young Character

Child Clubs for kids ages 7-12 are instilling strong, positive values like honesty, having a relationship with God, personal safety and security, personal vision and mission, problem solving, facing difficult situations, and general ethics. As a result, community children are making better choices and living healthier lives.

Ending Child Marriage

When girls become brides, they almost always drop out of school. FH Bangladesh is taking measures to address the destructive issue of child marriage in Char Borobila. Sponsor children, parents, and local leaders participated in an awareness campaign to learn the definition of child marriage, its negative impacts, and the applicable Bangladeshi laws. After the campaign, a child marriage reduction committee formed to help their community work toward decreasing the rate of child marriage. FH has recently launched a special pilot project with the goal of "total elimination" of child marriage in FH partner communities.



Children being taught exercises at the beginning of their class.

ACTIVITIES

240

Leader Mothers trained to reduce mental stress in children 0-6 years in Char Borobila. They, in turn, shared these lessons with **1,714 neighbours**

25

adolescents, 20 parents, and 20 leaders participated in a campaign on the **ill effects of child marriage**

238

Child Club members (7 - 12 years) received values lessons

73

students participated in **drawing competitions**



MORE IMPACT NUMBERS ON THE LAST PAGE



Mothers in Char Borobila meet together in Education Cascade Groups to learn how to transform their children's education.



GOAL

Improved health and nutrition status of mothers and children.

“My tube well platform was not constructed so it always got muddy. We felt uncomfortable as there was always fear of facing accidents. Although I was aware, I could not build the tube well platform due to financial inability. Recently, FH constructed the platform of my tube well so my family is very happy. Now we can safely use and drink water from this tube well.”

— Sakila, Community Member, Char Borobila

Equipping for Improved Hygiene

Women are learning to sew their own sanitary pads, giving them dignity, better hygiene, and increased mobility during their monthly menstruation. As a result of improved hygiene and sanitation, including new latrines, training on how to make handwashing liquid, and increased handwashing, community members report a decrease in waterborne diseases. FH installed 10 brand new tube wells for the community and provided 20 new “platforms” for existing tube wells in Char Borobila, thereby increasing access to clean water for over 80 households

FH distributed hygiene kits to 219 preschool children, equipping them to wash their hands and clothes regularly and reduce the spread of diseases like COVID-19. Face masks were also distributed to 585 community members. As a result of these measures, there have been no recently reported cases of the virus among children in the community.

Improving Nutrition and Empowering Women's Health

Mothers in Char Borobila attended a nutrition campaign after which they participated in cooking demonstrations to learn new recipes and techniques for getting maximum nutrition to their children. As a result, malnutrition is on the decline! Women also learned about the negative impacts of early marriage and the health hazards of early pregnancy. The community is making a strong effort to reduce this harmful practice. In addition, women are being empowered with critical, life-altering gynecological health information—a taboo subject that leaves many women in the dark as to how to properly care for their bodies and avoid disease.



Women are learning new uses of easily accessible ingredients, like learning how to make soap at an FH health workshops.



HEALTH

ACTIVITIES

250 sponsor children received regular **medical support**, 2 children received major medical support

20 household **latrines** installed in Char Borobila

10 women trained to **sew sanitary pads**

12,262 community members received **deworming tablets**

MORE IMPACT NUMBERS ON THE LAST PAGE



A FH Bangladesh staff member leads a training on preparing soapy water in Ukhia as a cost-effective way to keep clean.



Investing time in workshops and trust-building helps FH staff lay a strong foundation with the women and men in Char Borobila.



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

GOAL

Increased servant leadership, women's participation, and community engagement.

“By forming a Community Development Committee (CDC) in our community, FH has tried to identify the problems, opportunities, and resources of the community and distributed the responsibilities among CDC and its leaders for taking initiative by themselves with the help of its own resources. There are many development agencies working in our community and no organizations have started working in this way.”

— Anwar, CDC Member, Ukhia

Building a Foundation for Sustainability

FH Bangladesh conducted a planning workshop in Char Borobila with local leaders. This helped FH staff identify “stucks” in the community and coach Community-Based Organization (CBO) leaders on how to go about solving unique problems. After participating in the training, Savings and Loans Group leaders in Char Borobila are stepping up to lead—helping identify problems and contribute to solutions. They’re also getting more comfortable with making their own group plans and are playing a critical role in preventing child marriage. These signs of growth in leadership point to increasing sustainability of the community’s development efforts.

The flourishing of servant leadership in Char Borobila is another signpost of the growing sustainability of their development. Savings group members created a “welfare fund” to help struggling members in the community with health emergencies, children’s school fees, and other urgent needs. This outward focus and generosity is the heart of servant leadership that will carry Char Borobila far beyond any support FH could give.

Establishing Trust in Ukhia

In Ukhia, FH helped establish new Community Development Committees and train leaders. True to our participatory approach, FH engaged over 100 people in meetings, including farmers, parents, and political leaders. They conducted a holistic community assessment to highlight the assets and strengths in the community as well as identify growth areas. Through these measures, FH is laying a strong foundation of trust with Ukhia.

This trust is critical as FH works with leaders to execute interventions focused on disaster risk reduction (DRR). Being a coastal area, Ukhia is very sensitive to disasters—the people suffer from cyclones, landslides, salinity, and even drought. Together with leaders, FH helped form a DRR committee and train community volunteers. Mass disaster warnings are being implemented through the use of public billboards. Char Borobila is using tree planting to reduce the impact of natural disasters in their community.



A new Community Development Committee presenting a holistic community assessment in Ukhia.



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

ACTIVITIES



116

leaders from **48 Savings and Loans Groups** trained in Char Borobila

12

new **Community Development Committees (CDC)** established in Ukhia

100

community members engaged with **participatory development** in Ukhia

976

households received **tree saplings** in Char Borobila



MORE IMPACT NUMBERS ON THE LAST PAGE



New leaders participating in a leader development training in Ukhia.

IMPACT STORY

FROM SUPERSTITION TO HEALTH

Char Borobila, Bangladesh

For the past decade, Laily has been on a journey from scarcity, ill health, and loneliness to abundance, health, and belonging.

Before FH Bangladesh began a relationship with Char Borobila, families like Laily's didn't have access to basic hygiene—they didn't have clean water, handwashing stations, home toilets, or training on how to stop the spread of communicable diseases. They were often sick, especially the children, which meant they missed a lot of school. With the only medical care too far away to be practical, Laily's community turned to Kabiraji treatment, a practice rooted in superstition and expensive to implement. For vulnerable families struggling economically, these additional expenses were devastating.

"When these problems occurred, I felt socially inferior and became mentally ill," Laily explained. "I didn't like to talk with others so my relationship with my neighbours was poor and I didn't collaborate with others in the society. Lack of money caused turmoil in the family."

Today, life couldn't be more different. Laily is not only a member of the all-female Borsha Savings and Loans Group, she's the president! She's also a member of a neighbourhood health group and has received specific training on women's health. Laily plays a significant leadership role on their local Community Development Committee. Her family's vegetable gardening and poultry keeping has raised their nutrition and income.

"After receiving leadership training from FH, now I am leading the savings group. I learned about health awareness messages by



Women in the community now look to Laily for leadership.



Laily uses her new knowledge, flip charts, and personal experience to teach groups of women health practices that will help them and their families thrive.

participating in group health education session and gynecological campaign such as using hygienic latrine, drinking safe water, taking care of a pregnant woman, vaccination, frequent hand washing, soapy water making, how to get rid of various gynecological problems through cleanliness, etc. I am trying to obtain a government benefits card for pregnant women to help them.”

Laily is working hard so that everyone in her community can be healthy. “No one in the neighbourhood should die without treatment,”

Laily states emphatically. “Women should not suffer from gynecological problems.”

“A lot has changed in my life as a result of being involved with the FH program. I keep myself clean and advise others to keep themselves neat and clean. Similarly, if people fall sick, they reach a nearby Community Clinic and in case of severe illness they go to hospitals. Child malnutrition has decreased. All this has been possible only due to the support of FH.”

Thank You

FH Canada, FH Bangladesh, and the families of Char Borobila and Ukhia thank you for your outstanding support! Partners like you are making it possible to prepare kids for school, increase community health, and empower women’s leadership for the good of all families. Thank you for walking with these communities on their journey from stuck to thriving.

APPENDIX MEASURING SUCCESS!

The report above is a summarized snapshot of what community leaders and families in Char Borobila and Ukhia, with the support of FH Bangladesh, have accomplished this year. Below are more numbers that paint a fuller picture of what has been happening on the road to sustainability.

LIVELIHOODS

Successes from 2022

- 10 individuals received fish farm training
- 30 women received sewing machines and training on tailoring
- 12 individuals received grocery items for small business
- 60 individuals received training and seeds for kitchen gardens
- 48 Savings and Loans Groups contributed savings monthly, conducted, and attended meetings regularly
- 20 Savings and Loans Group members trained on savings group accounting
- 20 families received 320 chickens and training on poultry rearing
- 20 animal health volunteers received training on livestock vaccination
- 20 community members received training on cow and goat rearing
- 20 farmers received training on high value crops and business plans
- 20 individuals received training on entrepreneurship for small business

EDUCATION

Successes from 2022

- 240 caregivers of children 0-18 months participated in education lessons
- 219 children attended preschool classes and received home-based activities and coloured pencils
- 73 children attended a drawing competition
- 40 children participated in reading and essay writing competitions
- 495 sponsor children received education materials and participated in a Child Development Day
- 502 sponsor children participated in a Christmas day celebration
- 238 youth received values lessons
- 65 adolescent children, parents, and leaders participated in awareness campaign on the negative effects of child marriage
- 1 early marriage eradication committee formed in the community

HEALTH

Successes from 2022

- 10 new tube wells dug and 20 “platforms” installed on existing tube wells
- 20 sanitary latrines installed for household
- 219 preschool children received handwashing and hygiene materials
- 200 individuals received handwashing training
- 10 women and girls received training, a sewing machine, and materials for menstrual pad production
- 12,262 individuals received deworming medication
- 40 community members participated in a health and nutrition campaign
- 80 women trained on the importance of gynecological health
- 20 women and girls trained on health hazards of early marriage and early pregnancy
- 60 individuals attended an awareness event on mental health
- 250 sponsor children received regular health check-up and 2 sponsor children received major medical support

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Successes from 2022

- 405 Savings and Loans Group members received lessons on values, ethics, and legal issues related to savings groups
- 961 leaders attended the Community Based Organization (CBO) annual general meeting
- 27 Community Development Committee (CDC) group leaders arranged meetings
- 5 coordination meetings conducted with the community members
- 2 holistic community assessment conducted
- 200 parents, teachers, and community leaders learned about the goal of the sponsorship program
- 20 community leaders trained on DRR tools, methods, and best practices
- 2 disaster information warning boards installed
- 976 families received trees
- 116 leaders trained to independently develop and implement community development plan