

OXFAM

IN BANGLADESH

NEWSLETTER

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OXFAM

MESSAGE FROM THE COUNTRY DIRECTOR
ASHISH DAMLE
Oxfam in Bangladesh

“I extend my heartfelt congratulations to our Influencing, Communications, Advocacy, and Media (ICAM) team for the successful revival of the Oxfam Newsletter, marking an auspicious beginning to 2024.

Assuming the responsibility of conveying our progress in Bangladesh, I would like to address the transformative journey Oxfam has undertaken in the last quarter. One of the foremost challenges we encountered was the significant number of vacancies, particularly in leadership roles, hindering the implementation of our reformed strategy. However, I am pleased to announce that, we have successfully filled over 20 crucial positions in the past three months. Kudos to the dedicated efforts of our P&C colleagues. The establishment of the Project Management Unit (PMU) is now fully operational, with several projects transitioning to this new structure. We anticipate completing this transition by March 2024.

Another noteworthy development in the last quarter of 2023 was the visit from our trustees. This visit played a pivotal role, providing valuable insights into the challenges faced, particularly concerning the Rohingya crisis. Efforts to draw attention to the dire situation of the Rohingya population were intensified, with global outreach initiatives, including my representation at the Global Gathering in Nairobi in October 2023.

Our strides in thought leadership were evident in our participation at COP 28, where our discussions on climate justice resonated well in both the Government (Party) pavilion and the Civil Society Organization (CSO) space.

On a celebratory note, we launched our Podcast series on Victory Day—a novel initiative from Oxfam in Bangladesh. I am optimistic that this platform will foster new connections and garner support.

As we step into 2024, I extend my warm wishes to you, your friends, and your family. I am looking forward to collaborating with you throughout the year. Together, let us continue making a positive impact on the lives of people we work with.

”

HIGHLIGHTS

- CJNRR**
 - Just Energy Transition
 - Climate Action Forum 2023
 - Pre-COP 28 Workshop
 - COP 28 Side Event
- GSJI**
 - Securing Rights Project
 - Leadership Training for Domestic Workers' Leaders
 - Preparatory Meeting for the Formation of Domestic Workers National Forum
- EIJ**
 - Driving Change
 - Oxfam's Private Sector Engagement Strategy
 - CCK Project Kick-off With 60-N60-CSO
- HADR**
 - Market Symposium 2023
 - Act Before Disaster Strikes
- IMPACT STORIES**
 - Challenging Journey of a Single Mother
 - Means to Lead Project
- SOCIAL MEDIA GLIMPSE**
- OUR NEWS**

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER | OXFAMBD.ORG

EVENT HIGHLIGHT

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM
CHITRANGADA PERFORMANCE & DISCUSSION
TO DRAW PARALLELS WITH CONTEMPORARY WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES AND SPARK CONVERSATIONS ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Oxfam in Bangladesh's participation in the 16 Days of Activism campaign culminated in a unique and captivating event on December 19, 2023. The event, held at the Shahid Suhash Auditorium in Cox's Bazar Public Library, featured a dance-drama performance of Rabindranath Tagore's "Chitrangada" followed by an interactive "Talk to the Character" session.

Over 260 people attended the event, almost filling the auditorium to capacity. The stunning performance of "Chitrangada" explored themes of breaking social stigma and women's empowerment. Following the performance, the audience engaged in a 30-minute "Talk to the Character" session with the protagonist, Chitrangada. This innovative format allowed participants to delve into Chitrangada's thoughts, motivations, and strengths, ultimately drawing parallels with contemporary women's experiences.

The event was a resounding success, exceeding expectations and generating positive feedback from audience members. The "Talk to the Character" session was particularly praised for its ability to spark thought-provoking conversations about gender-based violence, women's agency, cultural identity, and women's empowerment.

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CLIMATE JUSTICE & NATURAL RESOURCE RIGHTS

Oxfam in Bangladesh project successfully organized the Climate Action Forum 2023 (CAF) to facilitate a participatory, inclusive JET in the apparel ecosystem, where Oxfam in Bangladesh became a part of the first-ever national-level CAF in collaboration with Bangladesh Apparel Exchange (BAE). More than 250 industries and 50 fashion brands participated in the first-ever national-level event. In the forum, Oxfam in Bangladesh led a session titled, "Climate Justice, Resilience, Equity, and Just Transition" which strongly emphasized decarbonization, climate challenges, and safeguarding workers' rights and interests, recognizing their increasing vulnerabilities during this transition.

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PRE-COP 28 WORKSHOP
JUST ENERGY TRANSITION (JET)

Pre-COP28 Multi-stakeholder Preparatory Workshop organized under the Oxfam leadership with 120 participants including Government Officials, Political Leaders, Academies, Think Tanks, Civil Society Organizations, Development Partners, Climate activists, and Media. This workshop aimed to find national challenges of Bangladesh NDC goals and recommend reducing import duty on renewable technologies as this is counterproductive to the national pledges. Prime Minister's special envoy on Environment and Climate Change Affairs Mr. Sabir Hossain Chowdhury was chief guest and, in his speech, he called for fossil-fuel phase-out by 2025 to keep the global temperature below 1.5. There were four separate parallel sessions conducted in the workshop including Climate Finance; Country Accessibility, Proficiency, Anticipation and Operational Strategies; Decentralization of Efforts-Overlooked is the vital equilibrium between funding for adaptation; Global Stocktaking and Loss and Damage Financing; and Just Energy Transition (JET) and Fossil Fuel Phase-out.

COP28 SIDE EVENT
ON EQUITY AND JUST TRANSITION:
BANGLADESH'S INSIGHTS
JUST ENERGY TRANSITION (JET)

On the 2023 International Human Rights Day, Oxfam organized a side event on Equity and Just Transition: Bangladesh Insights at COP28 at Bangladesh Pavilion with a vision to shed light on Bangladesh's resilience journey, highlighting the gaps in equity and justice being part of the global south. The side event showcased the apparel industry's scale and explored the key gaps within the UN Fashion Charter and placed a set of recommendations to make the charter more inclusive for ensuring a just transition in front of fashion brands and UNFCCC representatives. Oxfam International Interim Executive Director of Amitabh Bhatti facilitated the event, where Prime Minister's special envoy on Environment and Climate Change Affairs Mr. Sabir Hossain Chowdhury joined as chief guest.

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PAROLI

Paroli, the "Paroli" platform is introduced to facilitate group engagements via phone calls, especially for remote communities with limited or no internet access, and to connect the hard-to-reach communities. It allows participants to join discussions on their feature phone, with the call host being the only person requiring internet access to manage the call. It is useful for remote learning, community consultation, research, town halls, community radio, and so many other activities.

GENDER JUSTICE & SOCIAL INCLUSION

LEADERSHIP TRAINING FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS LEADERS

SECURING RIGHTS PROJECT
December, 2023

In December 2023, a three-day residential leadership training for domestic workers leaders was conducted under the Securing Rights Project. The training, attended by 45 participants, including 26 domestic workers and 19 mentors, aimed at to enhance their leadership skills and ability to advocate for their rights. The participants, executive members of the Domestic Workers Zonal Forum, benefited from one-on-one mentorship, gaining confidence and a renewed sense of dignity in their roles.

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PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE FORMATION OF DOMESTIC WORKERS NATIONAL FORUM
September, 2023

The Securing Rights Project launched a movement in Dhaka to form a Domestic Workers National Forum. With over 200 leaders and 267 attendees, including Oxfam Canada, domestic workers united to voice their rights, marking a significant step towards national solidarity.

“I was unable to complete my education since I got married at 12. I had hoped that after my marriage, my husband would assist me with my studies, but one day he threw away my books. I thought that all my studies and dreams were over, but this training gave me the belief that many things can be done from now.”

ECONOMIC INCLUSION & JUSTICE

DRIVING CHANGE
OXFAM'S PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Oxfam in Bangladesh responded to socio-economic challenges by conducting a three-day workshop from September 12th to 14th, 2023, to formulate a Private Sector Engagement Strategy. Recognizing Bangladesh's expanding economy as an opportunity for collaboration, the initiative brought together experts, stakeholders, and Oxfam representatives. The strategy, a strategic shift for Oxfam, aims to foster sustainable partnerships and inclusive business practices, encouraging businesses to contribute to economic growth while addressing inequality, poverty, and environmental sustainability. This marks a precedent in the non-profit sector for engaging with the private sector, emphasizing cross-sector collaboration and advancing social justice and sustainable development goals.

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ENHANCING WOMEN'S ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP AND RESILIENCE IN THE MUNDA COMMUNITY

HUMANITARIAN ACTION & DISASTER RESILIENCE

MARKET SYMPOSIUM 2023
on Local Leadership in Disaster Management

The WAVE Foundation's Market Symposium 2023, held on October 4, 2023, as part of Oxfam's ACT project in Bangladesh, was a crucial gathering focused on enhancing local disaster management. The event united government officials, community leaders, NGOs, and youth, emphasizing local leadership's vital role and youth engagement in disaster resilience, in line with SDGs 13 and 17. The symposium's outcomes aim to bolster practical, sustainable, and collaborative approaches to climate change and disaster resilience.

ACT BEFORE DISASTER STRIKES

In August and September 2023, Oxfam's anticipatory action in Gaibandha, Bangladesh, delivered digital cash grants to 2,016 people under the Emergency Response Fund, enhancing resilience during the monsoon season. The initiative, led by the SKS Foundation with local collaboration, was instrumental in protecting livelihoods, as confirmed by the Post-Distribution Monitoring report.

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Building on this initiative's success, Oxfam is expanding its anticipatory action plans for broader disaster scenarios. In partnership with the UN, NGOs, and regional bodies, Oxfam, leading the Cash Working Group in Bangladesh, has developed the "Anticipatory Cash Package" to ensure prompt and effective responses in future humanitarian challenges.

Photo Credit: Beauty SKS

IMPACT STORIES

A CHALLENGING JOURNEY OF A SINGLE MOTHER

Salma Akter Rani, a 36-year-old from Kalshi, Mirpur, has transformed from facing early life challenges and an abusive marriage to becoming a community leader. Working as a domestic worker to support her family, Salma's life changed after joining the 'Securing Rights of Domestic Workers in Bangladesh' project and an enlightening trip to the Philippines.

2023 Struggled with modern appliance skills, leading to longer hours for less pay, and as a single mother and sole provider, faced significant hardships.

2024 Actively participates in the community, using her improved skills and confidence to address public issues and assist in emergencies.

Her journey from a domestic worker to a community influencer highlights the impact of empowerment and skill development. She now plays a crucial role in her community, driving positive change and inspiring others.

MEANS TO LEAD PROJECT: IMPACT OF LIVELIHOOD INTERVENTION IN THE LIFE OF TARGETED PROJECT

Since February 2020, the Means to Lead project, funded by UN Women in Cox's Bazar, has empowered 2050 participants from the Rohingya refugee and host communities. Participants received start-up support and skill training for small businesses, with their progress and economic status monitored quarterly. The project has seen success, with participants earning an average monthly income of BDT 4,032, contributing to rising household incomes, supporting their children's education, and meeting other household needs.

SOCIAL MEDIA GLIMPSE

Oxfam in Bangladesh (OxfamBD) responded to socio-economic challenges by conducting a three-day workshop from September 12th to 14th, 2023, to formulate a Private Sector Engagement Strategy. Recognizing Bangladesh's expanding economy as an opportunity for collaboration, the initiative brought together experts, stakeholders, and Oxfam representatives. The strategy, a strategic shift for Oxfam, aims to foster sustainable partnerships and inclusive business practices, encouraging businesses to contribute to economic growth while addressing inequality, poverty, and environmental sustainability. This marks a precedent in the non-profit sector for engaging with the private sector, emphasizing cross-sector collaboration and advancing social justice and sustainable development goals.

OXFAM PODCAST
With the launch of the Podcast in December 2023, Oxfam in Bangladesh will continue to offer deeper dive into development issues with its premiere episode highlighting the Perspective of Freedom, with Julian Francis.

EDITORIAL TEAM
ARMANUL KARIM ABIR
Volunteer, Communications
KHONDAKER MOHAMMAD SHAMERUL HUDA
Development Trainee, ICAM
SHAMEUL ISLAM SHOVOH
Campaign Officer
COORDINATOR
MUTASIM BILLAH
Communications and Media Coordinator

OUR NEWS

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#16DAYSOFACTIVISM

Oxfam in Bangladesh stood united with activists during the #16DaysOfActivism, raising awareness and driving change against the rising tide of gender-based violence in climate emergencies. Together, we sparked crucial conversations and called for action to prevent violence against women and girls.

#SmashPatriarchyNotPlanet

OXFAM IN BANGLADESH

House 23, Road 28, Block K, Banani, Dhaka 1213, Bangladesh

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