

2023-2024

ANNUAL REPORT

Nice Foundation

Every story shared is a life touched. This year, your support made all the difference.





CONTENTS

About Nice Foundation BACKGROUND	01
Core Philosophy VISION, MISSION, VALUES	02
Greetings From THE SECRETARY	03
2023-2024 AT A GLANCE	04
Thematic Impact AREA OF FOCUS	05 - 09
Southern Women Feminist Network (SoWFeN)	10
Our Target Group	11
Legal Status	11
Spotlight Projects & Results TOP 12 PROJECTS	12 - 62

CONTENTS

Stories of Change REAL LIFE IMPACT	63 - 68
Governance & Leadership CORE TEAM	69
Financial Summary FINANCIAL STATEMENT AS PER AUDIT REPORT 2023-2024	70 - 74
Organisational Capacity & Learning NICE FOUNDATION CAPACITY	75
Looking Forward 2024-25 THE FUTURE AHEAD	76
Acknowledgements	77

About Nice Foundation

The Nice Foundation is a rights-based feminist Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) founded in 2005 in Bangladesh. We work on human rights, refugee and forcibly displaced communities, environmental, and educational issues, aiming to reduce inequalities and social disadvantages. Our primary focus is on women, children, youth, adolescents, people with disabilities, gender-diverse communities, religious & ethnic minority groups, and the refugee community.

A batch of young women from the Dalit community as well as NGO women workers founded the Nice Foundation in 2005, following the completion of a research project by 'Research Initiatives Bangladesh. M Mujibur Rahman (who remains an honorary Secretary), Ms Dorieke Goodijk (Wageningen University, Holland), a Volunteer and a batch of young women of the Dalit Hindu Kawra (pig farmer) community who are one of the neglected

“Nice Foundation aims to empower underprivileged communities by providing opportunities for social growth, skills development, and access to resources. This includes initiatives like education, vocational training, job placement services, or entrepreneurial support that enable Dalits, ethnic, Transgender to improve their economic status and achieve their fundamental rights.”

Communities in the World because of their profession has initiated this organisation to promote feminism, ensure social justice, fight for inequalities and reduce the disharmony within the religious minorities to co-exist with peace. **Mr. Colin Wilby, a VSO volunteer**, the UK was the first individual donor who helped the community apply to NGO Affairs Bureau for registration. After four years of working voluntarily with a network of NGOs, we achieved NGO Affairs Bureau (to receive foreign grants) registration in 2009 from the Government of Bangladesh. We also received our first major international funding – a two-year grant from the Global Fund for Women (USA) to develop our work with Kawra women. Since then, the Foundation has been delivering integrated services to a large number of people in the most marginalised communities in Bangladesh.

Since 2017 after Rohingya influx in August, we have been working with national NGOs to immediate support to the Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals besides the UN agencies and the Bangladesh Government. Our interventions are in the areas of food, shelter, site management, Livelihood and skill development, research on social cohesion, baseline study of different national and Local NGOs and capacity-building support to local NGOs as part of the localization process. Our organisation is a member of Core Humanitarian Standard – a PSEA alliance and NGO Platform in Cox'sbazar. Our Honorary Secretary is a Steering Committee member for the last 3 years in NGO Platform Cox'sbazar.

Vision Mission and Values

Vision

To foster an inclusive society where underprivileged communities thrive economically, socially, and environmentally.

Mission

To empower marginalized communities—especially Dalit women, children, and the excluded—through initiatives in sustainable agriculture, climate resilience, nutrition, governance, and human rights. We provide resources, education, and advocacy to ensure equitable access to opportunities and support sustainable development

Values

1. Learns from the people
2. Believes in equality irrespective of race, religion, caste, creed, gender and age
3. Nice Foundation believes in equal participation
4. Quality services for all
5. Promote, protect and respect the environment
6. Maintain democratic practice at all levels

GREETINGS FROM SECRETARY

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

It is my honor to share the Nice Foundation's Annual Report for 2023-2024. Together, we reached one in three people across Khulna, Bagerhat, Satkhira, Jashore and Cox's Bazar—over 130,000 individuals, including 6,000 people with disabilities and members of Dalit, minority and transgender communities. Our efforts spanned grassroots legal support and civic education, women's leadership and protection systems, climate-smart livelihoods from coastal aquaculture to organic farming, research that shaped policy on disability and displacement, and our new Village Centers in Khulna offering digital access and skills training to youth.



We faced tight budgets and emergency responses in remote areas, but those challenges only strengthened our resolve. I extend my deepest gratitude to our dedicated staff and volunteers, to our board for their wisdom, to our partners for their steadfast support, and above all to the communities who inspire us daily with their resilience and hope.

Looking ahead to 2024-2025, we remain committed to building a just, inclusive and equitable society where no one is left behind. Thank you for standing with us on this journey.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Mujibur Rahman'.

M. MUJIBUR RAHMAN

Secretary, NICE Foundation

2023-2024 At a glance



1 in every 3 individual

in Khulna, Bagerhat, Satkhira, Jashore and Cox's Bazar received support or services from Nice Foundation

130,000 People

benefited from a range of programs and interventions.

6,000 Persons

with disabilities and individuals from diverse marginalized communities were supported.



25,000 Women

were empowered through skills training, entrepreneurship, and livelihood support programs.



6000 Children

Were provided quality education from Dalit, refugee, ethnic minority, and underprivileged communities.

Four Empirical Studies

Were Conducted on women's decision-making, social cohesion, WATSAN (water and sanitation), and NGO capacity building.



20,000 People

Were engaged in climate awareness and provided emergency relief during disasters.

3,000 Rohingya

Rohingya refugees and vulnerable children were provided aid during emergencies.



15,000 Individuals

including mothers, children, pregnant and lactating women, transgender persons, and persons with disabilities were supported with health education and nutrition services.



Strengthening Networks

Strengthened partnerships with key national and international platforms, including:

APRRN (Bangkok)

AWID (USA)

CREA (USA)

WaterAid Bangladesh

NGO Platform

Southern Women Feminist Network (SoWFeN)



Thematic Impact

Human Rights & Good Governance

Campaigns and Advocacy: We actively campaign for the rights of minorities, women, and children, addressing issues such as trafficking, early marriage, and gender-based violence. Our advocacy efforts aim to influence policy and bring about systemic change. **Community Support:** We provide support to Women Human Rights Defenders and work on strengthening the Southern Women Feminist Network (SoWFen), ensuring that grassroots activists have the resources and support they need. **Health Initiatives:** Efforts include managing health crises like swine flu and dengue fever, and promoting

tobacco control to improve public health outcomes. **Local Governance:** We work to strengthen local government structures to ensure they are more responsive and accountable to the needs of their communities.



Education & Skills Development



Our Education & Skills Development arm guides learners of all ages—from toddlers in our Kajoli preschools to adults in vocational workshops—through a cohesive, lifelong-learning path. We reduce dropout rates and boost academic success by running play-based literacy and numeracy sessions for pre-primary and primary pupils, targeted tutoring and exam prep for secondary students, and scholarships plus school-supply support for

Dalit and refugee children. For adults and older teens, we offer hands-on training in computing, sewing, masonry, plumbing, carpentry and handicrafts, followed by certification, internship placements and job-readiness coaching. This integrated model not only equips participants with market-relevant technical and soft skills, but also connects graduates to mentorship and employment opportunities—driving measurable income gains and community resilience



Thematic Impact

Humanitarian Response (Rohingya & IDPs)

Our Humanitarian Response arm delivers rapid, lifesaving aid—distributing emergency food, water, blankets and tarpaulins within hours of a flood, cyclone or fire and linking survivors to medical, protection and psychosocial services for holistic care. In refugee and IDP settings, we establish and manage safe sites, register families, provide core relief items, organizing communal kitchens, child-friendly spaces and temporary learning centers. To help communities break the cycle of crisis, we then invest in resilience—training local volunteers in first response, stockpiling essential supplies, strengthening community-led early-warning

systems and supporting sustainable livelihood practices—so that people are better prepared and recover more quickly when emergencies strike.



Environment, Climate Action & Disaster Response



Our Environment & Resilience programs help communities withstand climate shocks and safeguard public health through three interconnected pillars: first, we introduce salt-tolerant seed varieties alongside floating garden platforms and organic agroecological methods—so that families can sustain year-round harvests despite rising salinity, prolonged flooding or erratic rainfall; second,

we work with local leaders to form and train village disaster-risk teams, fortify community cyclone shelters, pre-position essential relief stocks and operate simple but reliable early-warning networks—ensuring that everyone, from elders to students, receives timely alerts and knows precisely how to evacuate or protect their livelihoods; and third, we install and maintain secure hand-pump wells and gravity-fed spring systems, construct gender-segregated, all-abilities latrine blocks fitted with hand-washing stations and motion-lit pathways, then back these assets with school-based health clubs to reinforce safe water use, sanitation and handwashing behaviors. Together, these measures bolster agricultural productivity, reduce disaster losses and break the cycle of water-borne disease—creating healthier, more resilient communities across the most vulnerable regions.

Thematic Impact

Economic Empowerment & Well-being

We support the livelihoods of minority communities, particularly women, through various income generating activities. **Small and Medium Business Support:** We provide training and resources to help community members start and grow small and medium enterprises (SMEs). This includes business planning, marketing, and financial management training. **In-Kind Support:** We offer in-kind support such as tools, equipment, and materials needed for various trades and businesses, enabling recipients to start or expand their ventures. **Cash Support:** We provide cash grants and microloans to help individuals and small groups invest in their businesses, ensuring they have the

necessary capital to succeed. **Financial Inclusion:** We enhance financial inclusion by helping communities access banking services and financial products, which are crucial for business growth and sustainability.



Health, Nutrition, WASH



We improve water and sanitation by installing and fixing pumps and toilets in ethnic and minority villages so everyone can draw safe water and use clean, private latrines. We teach families simple hygiene habits—like washing hands before meals and after using the toilet, keeping food areas tidy, and storing water in covered containers—to help prevent sickness. Our health teams visit these remote communities regularly to offer check-ups, vaccinations, nutrition advice and treatment for common ailments. By combining better water systems, hygiene education and outreach medical care, we make it easier for people to stay healthy and well fed.

Thematic Impact

Research & Development (Empirical Studies & Insights)

We conduct research on the empowerment and social capital of refugee women, collaborating with national and international universities. Social Cohesion Studies: Our studies focus on social cohesion within refugee camps and host communities, providing insights for better integration and support. Participatory Based Research: We engage communities directly in the research process, ensuring their perspectives and experiences shape the outcomes and solutions we develop. Innovative Solutions: We explore innovative solutions to social and

economic challenges faced by marginalized communities, leveraging data and research to inform our programs.



Networking and Advocacy Capacity Building



We train and mentor local NGOs, community groups and grassroots organisations in areas like governance, financial planning, risk assessment and program monitoring so they can run projects on their own. We then host policy dialogues that bring together community representatives, service providers and government officials, sharing data and personal stories to shape laws, budgets and regulations

that truly reflect the needs of marginalized groups. Finally, we support feminist networks with small grants, media coaching and logistical help so women's rights activists can organise community events, public campaigns and online drives that build mass awareness and drive action for gender equality.



Southern Women Feminist Network (SoWFeN)

SoWFeN, the Southern Women Feminist Network, is a coalition of Civil Society Organizations managed by Nice Foundation working to advance human rights and social justice, with a strong focus on women in southern Bangladesh. It has grown into a leading rights-based network promoting empowerment, gender equality, and social change. Formed in 2017 with support from the Global Fund for Women, SoWFeN began by

uniting activists to secure paternal property rights for Hindu minority women. Since then, its work has expanded—both in geography and scope—to include Rohingya response, gender-based violence, protection, and women's empowerment. At its core, the network is built on the belief that lasting change comes from collective strength and solidarity, bringing diverse voices together to challenge deep-rooted inequalities.

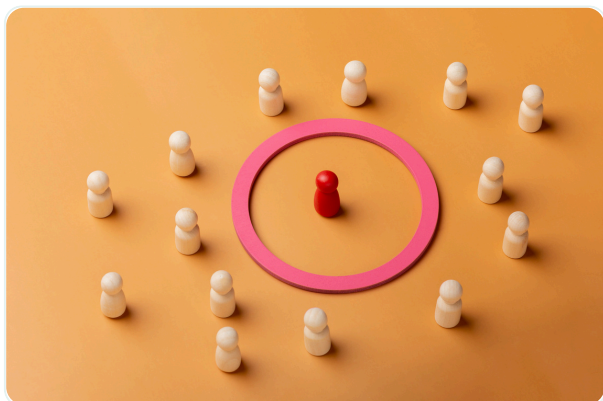


The objectives of SoWFeN reflect both urgent needs and long-term goals for inclusive development and peace-building. Its core aims are:

1. Strengthening feminist leaders and rights defenders to build collective movements and drive lasting change.
2. Promoting SRHR and gender equality while preventing all forms of violence against women and minorities.
3. Amplifying marginalized voices—women, girls, persons with disabilities, LGBT individuals, and ethnic minorities—so their concerns are heard in public agendas.
4. Advocating legal reform to challenge discriminatory laws, particularly on GBV, paternal property rights, and other inequalities.
5. Improving safety and protection for all community members, ensuring freedom from violence and discrimination.

Currently, SoWFeN unites 11 member organizations across 9 districts, bringing together strengths from grassroots mobilization to national advocacy. While continuing its original mission of securing property rights for Hindu women, the network now stands as a united feminist front, fighting gender-based violence, tackling social injustices, and working toward a just and equitable society in southern Bangladesh and beyond.

Our Target Group



Nice Foundation works with communities who are often excluded from mainstream development and denied their basic rights. Our programs are designed to uplift and empower the following groups:

- **Racial, ethnic, and indigenous minorities** – including Hindu Dalit, Barua, Munda, Mahota, and other marginalized communities.
- **Women in vulnerable situations** – such as single mothers, divorced or widowed women, and those facing economic or social disadvantage.
- **Persons with disabilities** – ensuring inclusion and equal access to opportunities.
- **Youth and adolescents** – with a special focus on adolescent girls and young women.
- **People of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities** – promoting dignity, rights, and social acceptance.
- **People living with HIV/AIDS** – addressing stigma and improving access to care and support.
- **Displaced and migrant populations** – including refugees, Rohingya, and other forcibly displaced or migrant communities.

Legal Status

The Nice Foundation is allowed to offer its services to the target beneficiaries by the Government of Bangladesh, operating via a legally-approved constitution. The organisation has legal authority to operate its activities all over the country through registration with relevant government agencies:

Registration authority:

1. The Joint Stock Co. under the Society Act, Reg: No. Khulna/139, Date: July 20, 2005
2. Bangladesh NGO Affairs Bureau: Reg: No. 2407, Date: 2 Feb 2009 Renewal upto 2029
3. Bangladesh Department of Social Welfare, Reg: No. 1463/Khulna, date: 7 Feb 2012
4. PADOR: EU Potential Applicant Registration: ERS-1701731303 BD-2010
5. SAM: NICE FOUNDATION UNIQUE ENTITY ID: DSVGD274R9P4

Spotlight Projects and Results

Project -1

Health and Skill Development Training Support to Kawra and Underprivileged Community

Background: The Kawra community, part of the marginalized Dalit group in Bangladesh, has long faced discrimination, social exclusion, and severe economic disadvantages. Situated primarily in Aronghata, this community endures extreme poverty, illiteracy, and lack of access to basic services, such as education, healthcare, and skill development. These systemic challenges perpetuate a cycle of poverty, early marriages, child labor, and poor health outcomes. Historically, the Kawra people have struggled to integrate into mainstream society, with limited opportunities for employment or social mobility.

The project seeks to break this cycle by implementing comprehensive health and skill development programs tailored to the unique needs of the Kawra and other underprivileged communities in Aronghata. The project is designed to improve the well-being and future prospects of these vulnerable populations by focusing on skill development, income generation, and access to healthcare. By establishing a vocational rehab center, the initiative will equip members of the Kawra community with the skills needed to participate in the job market and secure stable livelihoods. This intervention not only aims to reduce child labor and early marriage but also to promote higher education and better health outcomes for the community as a whole.

Ultimately, the project provide the Kawra people with the tools they need to overcome social and economic barriers, fostering a path toward empowerment and inclusion. Through targeted health and skill development initiatives, the project envisions a future where the Kawra community can live with dignity, access equal opportunities, and contribute meaningfully to society.

Project Goal: Implemented comprehensive health and skill development programs for the Kawra and underprivileged communities.

Objective of the Project: Improve health and skill development to generate income for the Kawra and underprivileged community in Aronghata. This, in turn, aims to encourage higher education, reduce child labor and early marriage, and secure better income sources and health outcomes.

Target Group: The Kawra community, a marginalized 'Dalit' group in Bangladesh, illiterate and largely unrecognized, is the primary focus. The project aims to skill them through a vocational Rehab Centre for better access to the job market.

Activity Description

Primary Health Care:

- Enhanced primary health care services, making them accessible at the community level.
- Investments in essential clinical service equipment for quality healthcare.
- Engagement of part-time doctors and female staff nurses to address healthcare needs.
- Provision of free medicines to extremely poor patients.

Developed Skill through the Integrated Vocational Rehabilitation Service (IVRS) Centre:

- Establishment of an Integrated Vocational Rehabilitation Service (IVRS) Centre offering Tailoring and Basic Computer Training.
- The train-the-trainer model resulted in 50 community members becoming certified trainers.
- Cultural integration to align programs with local cultures, increasing community engagement.

Project Outcome

Improved Healthcare -

- Health clinics reached over 5,254 individuals, providing essential health services and promoting preventive care.
- Detailed records of patients attended, medicines provided, and free medicines distributed are maintained and included in the report.



Community Empowerment through Skill Development:

- The train-the-trainer model resulted in 50 community members becoming certified trainers.
- Training participants in Computer and Sewing & Dressmaking are noted in the report.

Cultural Integration:

- Tailoring programs to align with local cultures significantly increased community engagement.

In our commitment to enhancing healthcare accessibility, our health clinics have made significant strides, positively impacting the lives of over 1,264 individuals. The focus on providing essential health services and promoting preventive care has resulted in heightened awareness and a notable shift in health-seeking behaviors within the community.

Selection of candidates for skill development training:

During the reporting period 50 trainees were selected for 5 courses following the process by a selection board consisting 3 members, when applications were invited for the selection of trainees in 5 courses of Computer, Sewing and Dress Making, Plumbing, Masonry and Carpentry for a period of six months.

Selected candidates for skill development training:

- Computer Course: 3rd Batch of Computer Training Course. The said batch course has started from 10/01/2024 of this month. Regular theoretical and practical classes are conducted for 06 trainees daily from 11 AM to 1-30 PM by an expert trainer.
- Dress making and sewing Training: The dress making and tailoring education training on theoretical and practical classes are conducted for the trainees daily by an expert trainer.
- Plumbing Course: Plumbing Training has started from 10/01/2024. A skilled instructor conducts training 6 days in a week, regular theoretical and practical classes.
- Masonry Course: 1st Batch Masonry Training has started from 10/01/2024. A skilled trainer Dara conducts 06 trainees daily from 6 pm to 8.30 pm: regular theoretical and practical classes.
- Carpentry Course: The Carpentry Course Training delivered by a skilled trainer, regular theoretical and practical classes 6 days in a week.

Health Services by qualified Doctors: Two MBBS doctors provide free medical services to poor destitute patients every Saturday and Tuesday from 9 am to 1 pm and 3 pm to 5 pm every week. During the reporting period, the following patients were treated for various diseases. A total of 599 male, 199 female and children 373 were attended by the Doctors. Beside 1264 diabetics test were conducted by the staff Nurse at centre.

Free Medicine Distribution: Medicines are distributed free of cost to the poor, disabled and helpless freedom fighters. We have distributed some basic medicines like Tab: Fastplus, Deslor, Filmet, Riboson, V-plex, Alben DS, Cossec prescribed by the Doctors for 432 extreme poor patients.

Medical care by nurses:

A nurse provides various health services including health check-up, weighing, blood pressure measurement of mother and baby every day. Moreover, they are made aware about reproductive health and family planning. During the reporting period, the 3,990 patients were treated for various diseases. Weight and blood pressure measurement giving injections, stitch & dressing, measuring diabetics, antenatal checkup of expectant mothers.

Impact:

Effective Health Service Delivery: Our primary health care initiatives have successfully reached over 5,254 individuals, providing essential health services and promoting preventive care. The engagement of part-time doctors and female staff nurses has ensured that healthcare needs are met efficiently. The provision of free medicines to extremely poor patients has also significantly improved access to essential treatments.

Skill Development Programs: The Integrated Vocational Rehabilitation Service (IVRS) Centre has been instrumental in enhancing the skills of community members. The train-the-trainer model has empowered 50 individuals to become certified trainers, thereby multiplying the impact of our training programs. Courses in tailoring and basic computer training have provided valuable skills, opening up new job opportunities for participants.



Community Engagement: Our efforts to culturally integrate programs have significantly increased community engagement. Tailoring programs to align with local cultures and traditions has fostered a sense of ownership and participation among community members. This cultural sensitivity has been key to the success of our initiatives.

Community Empowerment: The skill development programs have not only improved livelihood opportunities but have also empowered the community by fostering a sense of self-reliance. The newly acquired skills have enabled participants to secure better income sources, contributing to the overall well-being and socio-economic development of the community.

Comprehensive Support: Our holistic approach, addressing both health and skill development, has been effective in tackling the multifaceted challenges faced by the Kawra and underprivileged communities. This integrated approach has enhanced the overall impact of our initiatives, improving both health outcomes and economic prospects.

Positive Community Feedback: The feedback from community members has been overwhelmingly positive, indicating a high level of satisfaction with the services provided. This positive reception underscores the relevance and effectiveness of our interventions, motivating us to continue and expand our efforts.

Improvement Area

Increased Funding and Resource Allocation: To scale our health and skill development programs, securing additional financial resources is crucial. Enhanced funding would enable us to improve service delivery, procure more medical supplies, and upgrade training facilities, ensuring more comprehensive support for the Kawra and underprivileged communities.

Enhanced Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E): Implementing a more robust M&E system is essential for accurately measuring the effectiveness and impact of our programs. We need to develop comprehensive M&E frameworks and utilize advanced data analytics tools to provide deeper insights, track long-term outcomes, and identify areas for further enhancement. This will inform evidence-based decision-making and improve program efficacy.

Expanding Health Services: While primary healthcare services have been provided successfully, there is a need to broaden the range of health services offered. Introducing specialized care, mental health support, and reproductive health services would address unmet needs within the community. Additionally, extending healthcare coverage to more remote areas would ensure that all community members have access to essential health services.

Diversifying Skill Development Programs: The training centre tailoring and computer training programs have been beneficial, but diversifying the vocational training offered can cater to a broader spectrum of interests and market demands. Introducing courses in fields such as agriculture, entrepreneurship, and advanced technology will provide community members with more options and better align with evolving job market trends.

Strengthening Community Involvement: Deepening community involvement further will enhance program relevance and ownership. Establishing community advisory boards and participatory planning sessions will give community members a more active role in shaping program activities. This approach ensures that our initiatives are truly responsive to the community's needs and aspirations.

Improving Infrastructure and Facilities: Upgrading our health clinics, training centers, and other facilities will significantly enhance the quality of services provided. Investing in modern equipment, technology, and infrastructure improvements will create a more conducive environment for both healthcare delivery and skill development activities. This will also boost the morale of staff and beneficiaries, leading to better outcomes.

Increasing Awareness and Outreach: Expanding our outreach efforts to raise awareness about the available services and programs is crucial. Conducting more community events, using social media, and leveraging local media channels will help disseminate information and encourage greater participation.

Lessons learned

Reflecting on the "Health and Skill Development Training Support to Kawra and Underprivileged Community" project, several key lessons emerged, providing valuable insights for future initiatives:

Community Involvement is Crucial: From the onset, engaging the community was essential for accurately identifying their needs and ensuring their active participation. The project learned that when community members are involved in the planning and implementation processes, the interventions are more relevant and effective, leading to higher acceptance and better outcomes.

Flexibility and Adaptability: The ability to adapt plans based on ongoing feedback and emerging challenges was vital. The project often faced unexpected hurdles, but maintaining a flexible approach allowed it to adjust strategies and remain responsive to the community's evolving needs. This adaptability proved essential in maintaining the project's relevance and effectiveness.

These lessons underline the importance of community engagement, flexibility, collaboration, resource optimization, continuous learning, capacity building, integrated approaches, and transparent communication in implementing successful development projects. Future initiatives can build on these insights to enhance their effectiveness and sustainability, ensuring better outcomes for the communities they serve.

Challenges

The "Health and Skill Development Training Support to Kawra and Underprivileged Community" project faced several delivery, monitoring, and reporting challenges, providing critical lessons for future initiatives. Investing in better logistical support and technological infrastructure facilitated more efficient delivery and real-time monitoring which is absent in the centre. Maintaining flexibility in planning and implementation allowed the project to adapt to unforeseen challenges and continue progress despite obstacles. By addressing this delivery, monitoring, and reporting challenges, the project team gained valuable insights into managing complex initiatives in under-resourced settings. These lessons will inform future projects, ensuring more effective and efficient delivery of activities, improved monitoring, and timely, accurate reporting. To address the communities' desires for changes and improvements in project delivery, several insights and mechanisms were established.

Red Flag Issues

No red flags or issues were identified either at the office or at the field level. However, the Nice Foundation has policies to address those issues very transparently.

Safeguarding Concerns

Safeguarding Policy: Nice Foundation has this policy and enforced a comprehensive safeguarding outlining procedures for preventing and responding to abuse and exploitation. This policy was communicated to all project staff and community members. Conducted mandatory safeguarding training for all staff and volunteers to ensure they are aware of their responsibilities and how to handle safeguarding issues. Maintaining feedback mechanisms to gather input from beneficiaries and staff about the effectiveness of fraud and safeguarding measures and making adjustments as needed.

By taking these actions, the project aims to address and mitigate any red flag issues related to fraud and safeguarding, ensuring that the project remains transparent, accountable, and focused on the welfare of the community members it serves. Here is an overview of the changes to project risk and the mitigation measures taken for the "Health and Skill Development Training Support to Kawra and Underprivileged Community" project:

The project has proactively addressed changes in risk by implementing a range of mitigation measures, including strengthened financial controls, comprehensive safeguarding policies, improved logistical planning, and enhanced monitoring and evaluation practices. These measures are designed to manage financial and operational risks effectively, protect vulnerable populations, and ensure the overall success and sustainability of the project.

In the "Health and Skill Development Training Support to Kawra and Underprivileged Community" project, joint thinking and action through collaboration and coordination with other actors have progressed positively. Here's an overview of how these efforts are unfolding

Project – 2

Vulnerable Women Benefit (VWB)

Working Area: Rayenda, Khuntakata, Southkhali Unions of Soronkhola Upazilla, Bagerhat District

Project Reach: 2,300 direct beneficiaries, 13,295 indirect beneficiaries

Donor: Ministry of Women and Child Affairs

Introduction

The VWB project is the largest social security initiative aimed at improving the quality of life for women from ultra-poor households. By focusing on creating job opportunities, providing training and promoting financial literacy, the project seeks to ensure food security, reduce malnutrition, and support the overall empowerment of women in the target unions. Through group formations and structured training programs, the project offers a pathway for these women to become economically self-reliant and socially empowered.



Rationale

The Vulnerable Women Benefit (VWB) project is designed to address the economic and social challenges faced by vulnerable women in Bagerhat District.

The region, particularly the Rainda, Khuntakata, and Southkhali unions in Soronkhola Upazilla, suffers from high levels of poverty, food insecurity, and a lack of access to livelihood opportunities. Many women in these areas are landless, unskilled, and rely on inconsistent day labor to support their families. Additionally, the region is prone to natural disasters, further exacerbating the vulnerabilities of these communities. The VWB project was conceived to empower women through skills development, income-generating activities, and fostering financial independence, ultimately contributing to long-term poverty alleviation and socio-economic improvement.

Project Goal

To improve the socio-economic conditions of vulnerable women in the Rainda, Khuntakata, and Southkhali unions by providing skills training, facilitating income-generating activities, and empowering them to become financially independent.

Project Objectives

- Formation of women groups to foster peer support and collective action.
- Training of Trainers (ToT) for project staff to ensure effective knowledge transfer.
- Conducting skills development and awareness training for vulnerable women.
- Providing the tools and resources necessary for income-generating activities.
- Enhancing the savings mentality and financial management capabilities among beneficiaries.
- Improving food security, reducing malnutrition, and promoting overall health.

Major Activities

1. Women Group Formation: Groups of 25-30 women were formed, resulting in 92 groups established across the three unions. These groups meet regularly to discuss common challenges, opportunities, and strategies for personal and community development. **Training of Trainers (ToT):** A specialized ToT program was conducted for project staff, focusing on capacity building, facilitation skills, and technical knowledge related to the project's objectives. Trainers received in-depth guidance



on how to deliver high-quality training on income generation, health, and financial literacy. **Skills Training:** Training programs for women were conducted by the Trainers Pool, who had previously received ToT. These sessions covered life skills, vocational skills, health and hygiene practices, disaster preparedness, and financial literacy. A total of 2,300 women participated in these sessions.

Progress (July 2023 – June 2024)

Women Group Formation: As of June 2024, 92 women's groups have been successfully formed, each consisting of 25-30 members. The groups serve as a support system for the participants and help facilitate training and resource distribution.

Training of Trainers (ToT): A total of 12 trainers completed the ToT, equipping them with the skills necessary to lead the training sessions. They are now actively engaged in delivering training to the beneficiary women.

Training Sessions: All 2,300 direct beneficiaries have received initial training on personal health and hygiene, disaster preparedness, maternal and child health, and women's empowerment. This has also impacted 13,295 indirect beneficiaries, through family and community outreach.

Savings Initiatives: Women's groups have begun savings programs, with each member contributing a portion of their earnings toward a group fund. This fund will later be used for investment in small-scale businesses or to support members during emergencies.

Health Improvements: Health awareness training has led to better health outcomes for the women and their families, with many adopting improved hygiene practices and accessing healthcare services more regularly.

Major Challenges and Overcomes

Low Literacy Levels: Many of the women involved in the project have low literacy levels, making it difficult for them to fully grasp the training materials. To overcome this, the trainers utilized visual aids, videos, and hands-on demonstrations to convey the key messages effectively.

Natural Disasters: The coastal area is highly vulnerable to cyclones and floods, which disrupted training schedules on multiple occasions. To address this, the project introduced flexible training dates and used local shelters as training venues during times of disruption.

Political transition and Cultural Barriers: Initially, some community members were hesitant to allow women to participate in training sessions. To tackle this, project staff conducted community engagement and awareness programs with male household members to gain their support for the project's objectives.

Conclusion

The Vulnerable Women Benefit (VWB) project has made significant strides in empowering women in the Rayenda, Khuntakata, and Southkhali unions. Through the formation of women's groups, consisting of 25-30 women each, the project has fostered a sense of unity and collective action. Extensive training programs were designed to equip women with life skills, knowledge about health and nutrition, disaster preparedness, and economic self-sufficiency. Additionally, the introduction of savings initiatives has encouraged financial responsibility, helping beneficiaries to gradually build their own safety nets. These efforts are well-aligned with the project's primary objective: to enhance the socio-economic conditions of 2,300 direct beneficiaries and 13,295 indirect beneficiaries.

Although the project has faced several challenges, including low literacy rates, lack of prior experience with formal financial systems, and frequent natural disasters in the coastal region, the project team has adapted its approach to overcome these barriers. Localized training methods were tailored to address the educational needs of the participants, and contingency plans were put in place to account for natural calamities.

Looking ahead, the focus of the project will shift toward ensuring the long-term sustainability of the outcomes achieved. This will involve strengthening the women's groups, providing ongoing support for income-generating activities, and enhancing community resilience to both social and environmental challenges. The project's impact thus far indicates a positive trajectory, and continued effort will be directed toward deepening and sustaining these gains for the future well-being of the target communities.

Project -3

Minority Women Livelihood Development Project

The project has been funded by Bangladesh NGO Foundation for a period of 12 months. The donor has been funding us since 2007. However, as part of the poverty alleviation this is a continuous efforts in the villages by rotation to cover in the Districts. Our efforts are in Batiaghata and Dumuria of Khulna district.

Project Goal: Economic Emancipation and Women Empowerment.

Project Objectives: Providing 32 sheep to 16 women with the aim of improving the quality of life of poor minority women. Training women who received sheep. Placing nameplates on each sheep recipient's house. Meeting monthly and discussing sheep rearing. Poor women will benefit economically by providing free sheep.



The number of sheep provided cannot cover a village completely. In that case, if the number of sheep can be increased then it is possible to cover a village completely. Because the number of sheep needs to be increased to eradicate poverty. As the minority Hindus are very poor, only 16 sheep are fed. It is not possible to eliminate poverty in the entire village by providing. For our poverty alleviation scale, securing more resources is critical. The increased funding will enable us to improve service delivery, provide more treatment and upgrade training facilities, ensuring wider support for Kawra and disadvantaged communities.



Implementing a more robust M&E system is essential for accurately measuring the effectiveness and impact of our programs. We need to develop comprehensive M&E frameworks and utilize advanced data analytics tools to provide deeper insights, track long-term outcomes, and identify areas for further enhancement. This will inform evidence-based decision-making and improve program efficacy.

Continuing to build the capacity of our staff and community members is essential for sustained success. Providing ongoing training, professional development opportunities, and mentorship programs

will enhance their skills and knowledge, ensuring high-quality service delivery and achieving our project goals.

Key lessons learned

Reflecting on the "Minority Women Livelihood Development" initiative, several key lessons emerged, providing valuable insights for future initiatives. From the outset, engaging the community was

essential for accurately identifying their needs and ensuring their active participation. The project learned that when community members are involved in the planning and implementation processes, the interventions are more relevant and effective, leading to higher acceptance and better outcomes.



Project 4

Minority Kawra Women's Development Project

Global Fund for Women, USA has been funding Nice Foundation since 2009. As part of promoting feminism, transforming leadership, creating young women leaders, and capacity building of Nice Foundation the resource has been continuing till April 2024. However, this report covered the Period from 2021 May to 2024 April. One of our key programmes is to promote property rights to empower rural women and reduce poverty. Traditionally, women in minority communities have had no access to property rights in rural Bangladesh. We particularly focused on this issue as part of our YWL programme. Through CREA, a team of ten YWL women team been part of a capacity-building program including training, meetings, guidance, workshops and team development. Training has included leadership, group management, mass movement, and sexual and reproductive health rights, with the aim of forming a cohort ready to meet the challenges of the many social issues women face in the country. In addition, ten female staff took part in a YWL leadership programme. They will be our leaders of the future. Two are already providing support to Ms. Rabeya Sultana (responsible for the GFW-funded project), able to deputize for her when necessary.

Women from our YWL group and from the wider community held meetings about the need to promote women's property rights with the local community arranged a workshop with stakeholders, had meetings with policymakers, prepared advocacy papers, and collected public signatures on the issue, submitted it to divisional commissioners, MPs, Whip and the Office of Prime Minister. It was a significant success.

The key learning point for us, and more pertinently for all the young women involved, was that, while they may not be able to change the world on their own, when a group of women from our YWL and community young women's leadership (CYWL) programmes work together under the mentorship of CREA, a sense of confidence and clarity of purpose makes things achievable.

Overall Achievements

The *Nice Foundation's* goal is to build a society congenial to the economic and socio-cultural development of socially underprivileged communities, especially Dalit, women, children, trans, and excluded people. To achieve this goal the GFW-funded project contributed significantly in terms of strengthening the capacity of Minority Hindu women, adolescent girls, and transgender community. We have the best utilization of the grants to address the grassroots causes of minorities, especially the most neglected "kawra" women (known as untouchables in the society because of the pig-rearing profession) they are one of the marginalized communities not only in Bangladesh but also in the World. GFW has been supporting this community since 2009 by giving intervals. However, the last 3 years were the capacity building of the minority community including creating Young Women Leaders at the

Organizational level, strengthening the women's groups, and creating Community Young Women Leaders at the community level to promote feminism and movement building.

During the reporting period, GFW grants have contributed in the following areas to achieve the goal.

1. Enhancing the capacity of Women, Adolescents, and stakeholders of the Hindu minority community for leadership and public education campaign

Under this we have implemented the following Activities:

- Continued capacity building of targeted 600 Hindu minority women in the pig farming community through a group approach by providing leadership development training and monthly meetings on the social issues related to paternal property rights and gender-based violence.
- Capacitated 20 Community Young Women Leaders and 20 Shadow Community Young Women Leaders through Training of Trainers, bi-monthly meetings, developing an action plan, and assigning to the community the campaign on women's rights, mass movement, gender-based violence, reducing early marriage and conducting meetings and coordination with service providers. These 40 C&S/YWL have been working as a social catalyst to bring changes in society.
- Arranged quarterly meetings with Human Rights Defenders, Human Rights Commission, Land office, lawyers, Human Rights NGO workers, and professional groups on human especially women, girls, and trans rights situation in the society and prepared facts-finding reports, made protests, organize press conference and human chain.
- Sensitized and awareness raised through organizing village-level courtyard sessions covering 1200 community people on the issue-based advocacy and mass movements.
- Observed 4 different days including World Women's Day, Human Rights Day, and 16 days of activism
- Village Hindu minority especially Kawra women leaders have received training on gender, equity, and equality for the promotion of decision-making and equal rights
- Organized 120 sessions with 2400 Adolescent girls and boys on the effect of early marriage, GBV, protection, Adolescent Sexual Rights, Human Rights, and paternal property rights.
- 5 Advocacy meetings were conducted with Members of the Parliaments, the City Mayor, the District Judge, the City criminal court Judge, Local Administration, and the Divisional Commissioner, Khulna, and submitted a Petition to them the human rights situation and shared with the Human Rights Defenders Network Dhaka who published in the national dailies.

These interventions have re-organized the women, community young women leaders, girls, and adolescents' communities making them confident to understand their rights and play a role in better changes in society.

2. Strengthened the movement by the organization, community, and stakeholders on human rights

Under this objective we have implemented the following Activities:

- Strengthened the coordination and cooperation with different stakeholders and conducted meetings with Human rights workers and institutes
- Conducted meetings with City Judges, Magistrates, and Divisional Police Commissioner on the investigation of cases and expedited the cases without further harassment of victims, especially women-related violence cases, and to reduce state violence
- Conducted meeting with Khulna District Press Club Chairman and secretary on a fair press release on the human rights violence cases and making it for further movements
- Raised human rights issues especially access to paternal properties by the Hindu women in the monthly Khulna Deputy Commissioners meeting

- Given the presentation in the Deputy Commissioners meeting on the situation of human rights and our working strategies with religious minorities especially Hindu Kaura women and adolescents.

These interventions have strengthened the coordination and cooperation between different stakeholders, social and print media, local administration, Human Rights Defenders, Community Young Women Leaders, local actors, and policymakers which make the process easy to implement the project activities in a timely fashion and also supported us to go ahead with the causes to resolve.

3. Strengthened the organizational capacity through developing a strategic plan, financial systems, fundraising, and capacity building of board and staff members

Under this we have implemented the following Activities:

- The staff are capacitated by getting training on Human Rights, mass movement, GBV, and policy advocacy
- The board members are aware of the project's purpose and shared the plan and progress to guide the management
- The project and organizational visibility were improved by installing sign board and developed systems by introducing form formats and documents
- The management and Board members have visited project sites, paid monitoring visits, and shared progress with the general members

These interventions have capacitated Nice Foundation staff members and confidence on the human rights and policy advocacy strategies. They are now clear about the process of making advocacy especially at grassroots movements and to make persuasion with the concerned stakeholders. The board members are capacitated and can play an active role in the process of organizational policy development and smooth transparent management. The organizational systems are strengthened through the intervention and development the long-term strategies.

Other than the above the important achievement was to establish a women's feminist network with 10 women-headed feminist believer NGOs in Bangladesh. During this period we have strengthened it in the name of **“The Southern Women Feminist Network (SoWFeN).**

This has contributed significantly in the movement of taking and forwarding our promotion of fair property rights and women's and children's rights more generally, we joined the National Human Rights Defenders Network run by the Manabdhikar Sangskriti Foundation, a human rights organization. Our YWL and Community YWL (CYWL) cohorts have initiated many activities to organize local people, including regular women's groups, adolescents' groups, mobilizing local elected bodies, local government, political leaders, lawyers, journalists, members of parliament, whips, NGO leaders and progressive women who speak on women's rights. We are also in the network member to join the UN Human Rights Defenders Network in Dhaka.

Progress toward Proposal Goals: With GFW funding Nice Foundation has revised the strategic plan, developed a protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) policy, a code of conduct, a safeguard policy, and defined the staff roles specifically. The board has also designated Ms. Rabeya as Director and assigned her to look after the feminist network, women empowerment, gender-based violence, and key role to play in promoting feminism. The annual staff appraisal system has also been reviewed with a 360-degree performance evaluation. The Human Resource policy was in the local language which has translated and made it ready to share with donors externally. 32 staff have received training on project management and implementation, are involved in the whole process of developing the policies, and are engaged them in the re-arranged program activities.

These capacity building of the staff and standard policies have made the organization stronger than earlier to participate in the fundraising process with other NGOs at the national level funding. The compliances are met and responsibility are ensured to make the staff accountable to the community.

Financial management (managing organizational finances effectively, including accounting, budget projections, and preparing budgets and reporting)

Progress toward Proposal Goals

During the reporting period, Nice Foundation has revised and developed 16 types of forms and formats including financial registers to ensure financial transparency. The internal audit systems are strengthened by involving an outhouse part-time staff who worked in a Chartered Accountancy firm. One female Accountant was trained and engaged to look after the financial issues. Due to a shortage of funding, we cannot buy software for our financial management but we keep all the financial records as per standard procedures following the International Standard Accounting System (IAS). We maintain all books of accounts every day and almost all the transactions are through Bank transfers/ bank cheques. We discourage advances and loans. Every month we generate financial statements, reconcile with the bank, strictly maintain the burn rate, and share with board members every 3 months. Our financial year is from July to June which is aligned with our government and we prepare an organizational budget considering the existing commitments and forecasted fundraising. The budget is put forward to the Executive committee who scrutinize and places it to the Annual general meeting for approval. All the project and organizational receipts and payments are audited every year by NGO affairs Bureau enlisted audit Chartered Accountancy Firm and submitted to the National Board of Revenue and NGO Affairs Bureau. The project audit reports are submitted to the donors as and when asked for. We have audited GFW funded project as per the requirements of NGO Affairs Bureau and submit to them.

Financial management is a vital issue for an organization. We have a financial policy that was upgraded with the support of GFW in the last year. In this policy, all the instructions, guidelines, and form formats are there to follow. Our financial policy is aligned with our procurement policy. Any violation of policy or financial misappropriation by the staff is zero tolerance. So GFW support has contributed in a wider scale to strengthen the organizational capacity, system development and ensuring transparency of the funds.

Community outreach and networking (developing or strengthening partnerships and alliances with other organizations and communities)

Nice Foundation has strong community bondage. Community outreach and networking are vital components in the quest for social change and gender equality in the society. By establishing Women's Groups, creating Community of Young Women Leaders, Human Rights Defenders, and with diverse organizations and communities, initiatives gain strength, resilience, and effectiveness. The Global Fund for Women (GFW) plays a pivotal role in fostering such collaborations and providing funding and support to grassroots movements in the southwest region of Bangladesh. The funding from 2009 by GFW explores the significance of community outreach and networking in conjunction with the GFW's mission, highlighting how these efforts amplify impact and drive meaningful change.

Nice Foundation over the period created a solid base at the heart of community outreach and networking lies the power of movement building jointly. Collaborating with like-minded 15 organizations and 5000 communities amplifies resources, expertise, and advocacy efforts. The Nice Foundation recognizes the importance of forging alliances with local groups, women's rights organizations, and community leaders to address the multifaceted challenges faced by women and girls in the southern part of Bangladesh. Through strategic collaboration, initiatives have leveraged collective knowledge, experience, and influence to advance gender justice and human rights.

Through forming groups and courtyard sessions effective community outreach involved building bridges and breaking barriers to create inclusive spaces for dialogue, collaboration, and action. By actively engaging with diverse stakeholders, including marginalized communities especially Dalit Hindu minority women, the Kawra community, and youth organizations, initiatives supported by the GFW foster inclusive decision-making processes and amplify the voices of those traditional. We have established the Southern Women feminist Network (SoWFeN) with 10 NGOs in 8 districts become a

catalyst for social change, facilitating the exchange of ideas, strategies, and best practices to address systemic inequalities and promote a sustainable feminist movement.

One of the hallmarks of the Nice Foundation's approach is its commitment to supporting grassroots movements led by CYWL, women, and adolescent girls. Community outreach initiatives funded by the GFW empower local leaders, activists, and change-makers to drive transformative change from the ground up. Strengthening grassroots movements is key to creating lasting impact and fostering the goals.

During the period Community outreach and networking were also involved by Nice Foundation fostering cross-sector collaboration, bringing together actors from government, civil society, academia, and the private sector to collectively address access to paternal properties by the Dalit Hindu women, gender inequality, and advance women's rights. Through its funding and advocacy efforts, the Nice Foundation facilitates dialogue and collaboration across diverse sectors, promoting innovative approaches and networks to tackle complex issues such as gender-based violence, economic empowerment, and reproductive health rights.

Program delivery (improving the quality, efficiency and/or scale program or services)

Small is beauty, and Nice Foundation is always committed to quality rather than quantity. The efficient program delivery lies at the heart of Nice Foundation's mission to create meaningful impact. Whether it's improving the quality of services, enhancing efficiency, or scaling up operations, constant evaluation and adaptation are crucial. During the reporting period, Nice Foundation engaged some female staff for monitoring and evaluation to improve program delivery, the progress made toward proposal goals, and an analysis of how the organization fared in meeting these objectives.

Quality Improvement Measures: A comprehensive review of existing programs was conducted to identify areas for improvement. Feedback from beneficiaries, stakeholders, and staff was actively sought and incorporated into program redesigns. This process ensured that activities were not only effective but also responsive to the evolving needs of the community.

Efficiency Enhancements: With GFW funding Nice Foundation has provided training on various project planning, implementation, monitoring, auditing, and reporting which has been streamlining operational processes that were prioritized to improve efficiency. Additionally, the network with local organizations and community leaders was strengthened to optimize resource allocation and minimize duplication of efforts.

Nice Foundation has assessed that the **beneficiary reach was increased at least by 30%.**

Improved Program Effectiveness: While initial data indicates positive outcomes, further evaluation is needed to fully assess the impact of quality improvement measures on program effectiveness. Early indicators suggest a significant improvement in beneficiary satisfaction and outcomes.

How the organization met or did not meet these goals

Overall, Nice Foundation made substantial progress towards meeting its proposal goals, although some areas require continued focus and evaluation. While beneficiary reach and operational efficiency exceeded expectations, the full impact of quality improvement measures is still being realized. Moving forward, Nice Foundation remains committed to ongoing monitoring and adaptation to ensure that its programs continue to deliver meaningful impact to the communities it serves.

Social movement

1. Raising and building awareness with wider community or public

In the last few years, we have initiated some specific social movements. To do that we have initiated to raise awareness or build support, to stimulate self-mobilization and action, and to mobilize local

knowledge and organizations to promote social issues to solve. This has been continued in the reporting period with covering more areas and more community people. We developed a strategy to raise awareness, such as: setting goals and problem-solving objectives, creating target groups, and delivering messages. For awareness, we created messages for the target stakeholders that are clear, concise, engaging and simple. However, based on the context our issue has been identified by the community as mostly related to social issues like combating early marriage, human trafficking, ASRH/SRHR, freedom of expression & assembly, strategies of mass movement, strategies of advocacy and motivating on the issues of access to paternal property rights by the Hindu minority women in Bangladesh. These issues were addressed in the SAWLM Project in both phases which was way forwarded directly with 1800 women and adolescents and indirectly more than 27,000 community people who are now concerned about the issues. It became stronger gradually through the whole process of strengthening the CYWL and Southern Feminist Network. In the reporting period, we have continued mass motivational activities with community women, community leaders, local politicians, local elected bodies, local members of Parliaments, progressive religious leaders, lawyers, local administration, district judges and elderly people who are the rights givers of minority women. These interventions have supported us in achieving the goal of the project.

2. Mobilizing and organizing with members/supporters

As continued efforts Nice Foundation has collectively with YWL, CWL and shadow CYWL determined what activities needed to be organized by mobilizing and organizing community members. Plans on issues and make them competent through selection and training to be carried out in these plans. By creating a framework, collecting actionable information, determining activities, and preparing for implementation. Besides, implementing social activities by increasing communication and networking with local human rights defenders, humanitarian organizations, CSO and civil society. The community is seen as the best judge of its problems and has the power to take appropriate action to resolve these problems. Community-based inclusive development is a strategy that recognizes the importance of community participation, such that communities are directly involved in decision-making and activities that affect their lives and their voices are heard. Nice Foundation has a long experience and have credibility to work with different stakeholders. Moreover, in the Khulna region women headed, work for marginalized women communities and adolescents' organizations are very few where our works are much more appreciated by the administration as well as community. Nice Foundation YWL and Shadow YWL have identified the supportive organizations and supporters so that they can be shared the issue for getting support. Such local NGOs, CBOs, Local Elected bodies, lawyers, professional bodies, progressive religious leaders and relevant stakeholders are involved in the meetings, workshop and mobilized them to work for pro-poor underprivileged targeted community. We have organized monthly meetings with Human Rights defenders, quarterly meetings with different stakeholders, monthly group meetings with village women, monthly meetings with adolescent girls and boys and have conducted bi-monthly meetings with CYWL and shadow CYWL who have mobilized and made mass movements on different issues. The outcomes were published in the print media.

3. Coalition building, for example with women's rights groups, other social justice groups, or unlikely allies

With the funding of GFW Nice Foundation has established a women feminist movement network. This network is formed with women members of the community to protect the interests or rights of the women members of the community. Moreover, we built Coalition through field level meetings, courtyard meetings, workshops which can bring change by coming together within their communities. Through this coalition building we come together to build social movements around common issues. Working towards inclusiveness, strategizing, and advancing women's rights by involving local social organizations and institutions to bring together goals. Women's rights and social justice are at the heart of our coalition building. This is why we bring together women's rights working NGOs, CBOs and HRD members and social justice groups to reach our goals. We are able to build our large network from village level to sub-district and district level. We can even strengthen our alliance by associating with us those organizations or individuals who work for the protection of human rights.

During the period *Nice Foundation* continued movement with 11 human rights working NGOs and, and strengthened the collaboration with 35 members Human Rights Defenders. Moreover, Nice Foundation has been continuing the membership with Manabadhikar Sangskriti Foundation (MSF) which is a strong national-level Coalition body working for Human Rights. This organization is led by a renowned Human Rights Activist and Ex, Care Taker Government member Advocate Sultana Kamal. These coalitions and networks have helped us a lot for making movement and advocacy with the relevant persons, institutes and Government. During this period, we have conducted 6 meetings and 4 regional workshops by involving City and district judge, khulna on the paternal property's rights of marginalized Hindu women. All these groups, institutes and distinguished HRD members are playing important role to make movement, taking way forward of the identified Human rights issues interns to achieve the target and goal.

4. Advocacy relating to specific policy or legislation change and/or implementation

During the period some specific issues have been made through lobbying and advocacy with different levels of decision-makers.

Local Government/Divisional Commissioner:

To adequately address the needs of survivors and preventive measures we mobilized the community to demand support for access to paternal properties by the Dalit Hindu women, addressing early marriage and gender-based violence. We have organized mass movements, signature campaigns, mass petitions, and workshops with local government on minority women's paternal property rights.

State Ministries:

To influence policymaking at the state level and ensure a holistic approach to tackling gender-based violence we lobby with state Ministers, a Whip, and a Woman Parliamentarian (who is also the ED of a National NGO) on the Hindu minority women's paternal property rights. We have scope to lobby for the inclusion of comprehensive gender-based violence prevention strategies in state-level policies.

National Ministries:

We have a strong understanding and collaboration with the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs at the national level as we have been implementing bilateral projects with this Ministry. We raised the issue including implementation and allocating budget for the "*National Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy*" for legal reforms addressing gender-based violence. We work with national authorities to enact and enforce laws that protect individuals from gender-based violence.

Secretariats/Submission of Petition to PM Office:

During the last couple of years, we have jointly submitted a petition to the Prime Minister's Office on the reformation of laws on Hindu Minority Women's access to paternal properties. We also ensure that administrative processes are designed to address gender-based violence concerns effectively. Engagement with the Secretariat to integrate gender-sensitive measures in administrative procedures.

Media and Religious Leaders:

To make advocacy media has been playing a vital role. We have conducted many workshops, meetings, Press releases, and press conferences with divisional and district-level journalists and press clubs on the issues. Other than this we also arranged dialogue sessions and awareness campaigns with community and religious leaders to change societal norms and attitudes by gaining the support and advocacy of influential community and religious figures.

Progress against Outcome

Outcome 1: Enhancing the capacity of religious minority community for leadership and public education campaign

Activities:

- Strengthening and capacity of targeted 600 religious minority Kawra women (pig farming) through group approach (old 10 groups of new 10 groups)
- Conducted 240 monthly meetings with 600 Kawra women through groups - One meeting every month in a group such 240 meetings in 20 groups
- Organized 6 bi-monthly meetings with 20 CYWL (10 CYWL and new 10 CYWL)
- Arranged 5 days training for 20 Community YWL on leadership and capacity building
- Conducted one day orientation to develop action plan for CYWL on mass movement, advocacy, issue-based discussion, day observance and creating village level CYWL
- Arranged quarterly meeting with supporting groups like Human Rights Defenders, Human Rights Commission, Land office, lawyer and Human Rights NGO workers etc
- Conducted 20 village level courtyard sessions covering 600 community people on issue-based advocacy and mass movements.
- Observed 4 different days including World Women's Day, Human Rights Day and 16 days activism
- Organized 3 days Training for 60 Kawra women (pig farming) on human rights, minorities rights, early marriage, dowry and human trafficking
- Consciousness raising training on gender, equity and equality for 40 Kawra women for the promotion of decision making and equal rights
- Arranged 2 Coalition meetings and generated 42 facts finding reports for wider stakeholders
- Organized 240 sessions (every month 1 session with 20 Adolescents) with 600 Adolescent Kawra girls on effect of early marriage, GBV, protection, ASRH , human Rights and paternal property rights.
- One Advocacy meeting conducted with Divisional Commissioner, Khulna and submitted 1 Petition to Deputy Commissioner, Khulna and prepared a position paper on the human rights situation and has shared with Human Rights Defenders Network Dhaka who published in the national dailies.

Accomplishments:

- Re-organized the women and adolescents' communities to make understand about their rights and playing role to better changes in the society.
- Identified the issues to move ahead with a problem to solve it.
- Confidences are built to make movement for improving the rights situations.
- Capacity and leadership skills were built so that the mass awareness was increased for organizing the events and confidently handling the social issues.
- Coalition among the Human Rights Defenders, Human Rights Commission, Land office, lawyer and Human Rights NGO workers were in a good form through the interventions
- Grassroots advocacy with the different stakeholders on the religious minority women's paternal property rights are gradually talked about and moving positively to share with the counter parts.
- A batch of 20 community Young Women Leaders are emerged in the society to work for the women causes

Challenges and how you addressed them:

- Getting Government NGOAB permission was quite delay because of pandemic as the offices were open only for 3 days in a week. We have contacted with high officials and the queries were replied by email and was obtained permission. We have contacted with Deputy Commissioner of Khulna who allowed us to submit action plan and permitted to work at field.
- Due to Covid19 pandemic lockdown the government officials were not physically present in the different events' inaugural sessions but they have been updated by getting reports and online monthly coordination meeting
- Initially the women and adolescents were not interested to give time because the service delivery is totally sensitization and awareness building on the rights and social issues but gradually when we make them clearer about our aim and objectives then they were interested and have participated in all the events and actively involved in the social movements.

Outcome 2: Strengthen organizational capacity through developing strategic plan, financial systems, fundraising, technology improvements and capacity building of board and staff members

Activities:

- Arranged a 3 days staff development Training for 20 staffs on Human Rights and policy advocacy
- The YWL and Shadow YWL has conducted 12 meetings on progress, planning of the project activities and sharing with Mentors
- Reviewed Nice Foundation's 5 years strategic plan and shared with Board members
- Conducted 4 Board Meetings and 1 annual General meeting in December 2021
- The project and organizational visibility were improved through installing big sign board and has developed systems by introducing form formats and documents
- One YWL and one CYWL were regularly going to the community for organizing and building the capacity of CYWL, Adolescents and women leaders.

Accomplishments:

- Nice Foundation staffs are capacitated and confident on the human rights and policy advocacy strategies. They are now clear about the process of making advocacy especially at grassroots movement and to make persuasion with the concerned stakeholders.
- The Young Women Leader and Shadow Young Women Leader's capacity are built through the mentorship process who can take over the leadership in the organization in future.
- The board members are capacitated and can play active role in the process of organizational policy development and smooth transparent management
- The organizational systems are strengthened through the intervention and developing the long-term strategies

Challenges and how you addressed them:

- Due to Covid19 restrictions the board members were quite relaxed to come to physically in the office. We have conducted meetings online and some were conducted physically when situation become normal.
- The YWL are not stable because comparatively we had to recruit talented and qualified woman leaders and the good package of benefits are to be offered. We have developed strategies for long-term engagement of YWL and shadow YWL by restructuring the organogram.

Outcome 3: Strengthened the movement on human rights

Activities

- Strengthened the coordination and cooperation with different stakeholders and has conducted 2 meetings with Human rights workers and institutes
- Conducted one meeting with Divisional Police Commissioner on the investigation of cases and expedite the cases without further harassments of victims especially women related violence cases and to reduce state violence
- Conducted one meeting with Khulna District Press Club Chairman and secretary on fair press release on the human rights violence cases and making it for further movements
- Raised human rights issues especially access to paternal properties by the Hindu women in the monthly Khulna Deputy Commissioners meeting
- Given the presentation in Deputy Commissioners meeting on the situation of human rights and our working strategies with religious minorities especially Hindu Kaura women and adolescents.

Accomplishments

- The coordination and cooperation between YWL, CYWL, organization and different Government and non-government stakeholders are strengthened which make the process easy to implement the project activities in a timely fashion.

- The press, social and print media has been playing the roles of promoting the project for achieving the objectives
- The local administration is well aware of the project goal and objectives who has been supporting us to go ahead with the causes to resolve

Challenges and how we addressed them

Due to Covid19 pandemic and lock down some of the events were rescheduled to implement with the opinion of stakeholders. The deputy commissioner, Khulna has been transferred/changed, therefore, we had to keep rapport with new DC by giving him all project documents. In order to implement such awareness, sensitization especially Human Rights related project implementation is quite challenging, therefore, all the activities and events must be shared with district level administration regularly.

Lesson learnings

If the planning is strong, staffs are devoted and the strong willingness are there any challenging work can be completed either right time or later. We faced challenges with local administration and Covid19 pandemic but we have overcome because our community engagement was very strong and organization has the credibility in the southwest region of Bangladesh which helped us to overcome the barriers. Together the 60 group women Leaders 60 Adolescent Leaders, 20 CYWL and 2 YWL has been keeping a role for changing the situation in a positive direction. The District Women Affairs Officer, Khulna has visited the site and has attended a CYWL training sessions who was very impressed and said” Nice Foundation has been addressing a right issue on right time but I am afraid Nice Foundation alone how much can be achieved as the society and culture is very much anti-towards women’s property rights”. She also opined that all the NGOs should come to work under an umbrella to address the issue.

Role of community young women leaders to participate in this project

Please explain why you selected these new community young women leaders.

In phase-i we have 12 CYWL and in this phase we have added more 10 CYWL from 10 villages. From these two phases we have now 20 CYWL who have been working with this project and have been attending in the various sessions, training and bi-monthly meetings. The reason of selecting these new new community young women leaders is because the minority Hindu women, Kawras (pig farmers) to be specific has been looked down upon by society for ages. Women here is general are very neglected and are deprived from their own rights. Women's rights cannot be ignored by any means. Instead, the rights for women are not exclusive of any particular culture or society, being indeed one of the human rights common to all groups of people, those rights which attest to the existence of a bond among individuals as members of the human community. It is a common tendency, not everyone is allowed to advocate for their own group. Sometimes when women and minorities promote their own group, it garners criticism from others. This is why I want the community young women leaders to have a platform where they can openly discuss about their problems, rights and issues they face every day. They have been neglected for many years it is time for them to finally stand up for their own rights. However, it is possible to reconcile the values of individual freedom with those granted to minority groups if they are given all the scopes and right platforms.

In addition, we have also engaged one YWL and one shadow YWL. In phase-i Ms. Rabeya Sultana was our YWL who crossed her age 35 years and engaged as a mainstreaming staff promoted as a Director. So, she has not been continued in phase ii as a YWL. We have proposed for Ms. Nusrat Jahan, 30 years old who was with us in phase-i and she was interested to work as a YWL in phase-ii. But just before awarded by GFW she has been recruited in a Public University as a staff member and decided to leave the **Nice Foundation**. Therefore, we have selected Ms. Medha Marzia Rahman who was involved with Nice Foundation since 2018 while she was doing her bachelor of Arts in English literature (honours) Degree. Medha Marzia Rahman has completed her SSC, HSC as Golden scholar and got chances in public University to do her Honours Degree in English Literacy. She has completed her Masters Degree from the same university in the same subject. Beside her education she was with the Nice Foundation as a Monitoring Officer. She is 25 years old and committed to work for the development of the poor, especially the women community. She will continue in the organization and will be as a mainstreaming staff, therefore, the YWL mentorship process will enhance her capacity to take over the leadership role

in the organization in future. As we have mentioned that in a rural District area it is quite difficult to get women staff who can speak and write in English but Medha is going to be one of our potential staff who is excellent both writing and speaking in English.

Mentorship to Young Women Leader Representative of Your Organization

As a result of the mentorship process and participation in the various events with multiple stakeholders the YWLs' are gradually enriched their knowledge and attitude. Nice Foundation management has observed and found the changes within the YWL especially in the areas of her confidence, knowledge level particularly on feminism, gender issue, women leadership and capacity building. Still there are many areas to improve her quality. It needs longer time and need to change the attitude on behaviour and communication. However, as of now for an instance, the YWL were initially silent and less vocal on the sessions but gradually they are enriched and overcome the shyness and less participation. During the meeting and in the organizational decision-making process they give their opinion. At the beginning Ms. Rabeya has been conducting the monthly meeting, training sessions, meeting with stakeholders beside YWL but gradually she handed over to the YWLs so that they can run the sessions independently. We got the feedback from the community and found that the communication skills are good. We also noticed that she become popular in the community and get respect (Namaskar) from the villagers while she moves to the area. This has inspired her in a great way to work for those community.

In what ways has the YWL shared the knowledge gained from the mentorship to her colleagues?

Through the mentorship the YWL has developed strong leadership skills, gained new perspectives and she is using this knowledge to share it with her other colleagues. She believes you owe it to yourself and the others, whether that is through championing the success of others, or holding someone up through their missteps. She is using her experience in order to enlighten others as well so that they can develop the same understanding about one thing and focus on making a change reducing the wrongs and unjust in the society that women face every day.

YWL's role within the organization for change:

The YWL has given a job description/ToR at the 1st day of starting the project for her work which are followed and reviewed by the management regularly. She was given the specifics tasks, roles and responsibilities to the project and to keep role in promotion of organization. She has been engaged as a Project Coordinator of GFW-funded SAYWL project phase-ii and also doing the following activities beside capacity building of organizational young women leaders:

- Implementing the GFW-funded YWL project as per project documents and CREA mentorship actions;
- Displaying strong commitment to sustained gender equality, women's and girls' rights;
- Working with women and adolescents to ensure community engagement;
- Playing key roles for empowering girls and young women;
- Playing leading role in creating young women activists;
- Following the guidance of CREA mentors to strengthen the process of empowering women and girls including tackling gender discrimination, social norms and practices, awareness building on gender equality in communities, and organizing them for movement building;
- Playing a key role for the organization on intersectional approach to understanding issues of gender and sexuality;
- Participating in CREA training, different events and online sessions;
- Arranging village orientation sessions on women rights and movement building;
- Organizing training for CYWL groups;
- Facilitating monthly meetings of CYWL groups;
- Arranging mass movements on advocacy issues;
- Liaising with relevant stakeholders for advocacy;
- Preparing monthly, quarterly, yearly and project closing reports.
- Other activities that are assigned by the organization

Coaching to the Head of the Organization

The coaching to the Head of the organization has been started a few months ago as there have been some formalities need to complete by the appointing authority CREA. It is to be noted that the selected mentors are highly qualified, experienced and our desired one. Thanks, CREA for selecting these strong experienced mentors. During the period we have 3 formal meetings (informal more discussions held) with 2 mentors where we have introduced ourselves as well as shared our needs so that they can guide us for developing our systems, procedures, policies and in the management level. The beginning is very much supportive and will be beneficial for our organization. Following points, we have learnt from the coaching process:

- Analysis on the potentials and limitations of Head of Organization in a large way
- Where we were, where we are and where we want to go
- What is our plan with the staffs (leadership transformation process)?
- Prioritizing the actions to be done one after another
- How other project staffs internalize the GFW funded project issues to way forward and strengthening the movements
- Where is the gaps of gender justice and what are the scopes of getting the supports from the mentors?

Challenges the head of the organization faced in participating in the coaching?

The process was delayed to engage the mentors almost at the end of the 1st year of phase-ii which could have been earlier so that we can internalized many issues in our organizational systems. Due to Covid19 pandemic we did not physically met and share our needs but we have discussed many issues for a long time in one online session. The challenges are that our organization is 330 km far from Dhaka where mentors are living and our physical meeting does not permit us because of travel time and financial support. Sometimes maintaining times of both the mentor and mentees does not match which we discussed mutually and set the time and date accordingly. The good things are that we can share both English and Bengali with our mentors.

As the process has been started and the beginning is good, we hope our organization will be beneficial. However, the discussions and the decisions that we had with mentors are shared with the management at monthly meeting and also one session was held with last board meeting. The learnings are shared with the senior management and has been in the process of internalize those for actions.

Overall Achievement and Movement Building Contributions

1.Strengthening the capacity of Community Young Women Leaders and Adolescents for Empowering Women to bargain for their rights

During the year our YWL and Shadow YWL have facilitated 10 old and 10 new CYWL total 20 for their capacity building. They have organized 600 religious minority especially Kawra (pig farming) community women under 20 groups and has created 20 groups with 200 adolescents in 20 villages. The YWL and adolescent leaders are capacitated through training, meeting and mentoring system that provided by the YWL and Shadow YWL. They are now in a position to participate in any forum and share the issues with the targeted beneficiaries. They are also gain confidence to share and motivate the different stakeholders to help the targeted community to achieve their rights.

Despite of the pandemic and changing of NGOAB rules especially involving local administration in the implementation process they make good achievements during the year especially on the sensitization on social issues of combating early marriage, ASRH/SRHR issues especially on managing menstrual hygiene, movement building and engaging wider stakeholders. These forces are not working for social issues they are working for empowering the “dalit” women as well. Nice Foundation has been working for livelihood development of "Dalit" women especially kawra/pig rearing women community since

2007. The organization have been working with the funding of Department of Women Affairs on the development of vulnerable Women and lactating mother since 2017. To develop the skill and social interaction, the organization has provided income generating means, training, regular homestead setting and food security. Once they become financially solvent, they can take part in the family decision making process. Besides, they are participating in social and cultural events more than before. All those efforts make them empowered in terms of financial and social. The YWL programme is just making the path by converting these activities into leadership quality to some extent. Now they have realized their role and responsibility for the society even in the greater aspects.

2. Strengthened Functional Human Rights Defenders Forum Network to work against the violation of Women and Children's rights

In phase (i) our YWL has initiated many activities with the community at village level, local elected bodies, local administration, political leaders, lawyers, journalists, Member of Parliaments, Whip and has intensively visited the villages where the minority communities are living. This has created a solid base but we realized that this is not enough to make the movement way forward. Moreover, our organized 20 women groups and 20 adolescent groups from 20 villages in two sub-districts where 1200 women and adolescents are actively involved on the social movement has given us strong back up to attained the purpose. The community women are sensitised in a way that now they are interested and ready to involved in the whole process of social movement to achieve the rights issues. We have conducted quarterly meetings and discussions with National level human Rights activists, NGOs, CS members and Lawyers in order to strengthening the network. The MSF who were funded by NED, USA has also been supporting us technically to make our HRDN strong. We have 2 online meetings and 4 physical meetings during the year on harmonizing and making movement for the rights causes. The HRDN and coalition is a strong body who make movement against any violation of Human Rights and I raise those to national and International forum. This is one of the great achievements of Nice Foundation which was possible only by facilitating the mentorship process supported by the Global Fund for Women.

3. Strengthening the capacity of community young women leaders.

In phase- i, Nice Foundation has capacitated 12 community young women leaders through training, meeting, orientation, workshop, rally and regular interactions. They have received training on leadership, group management, mass movement, Sexual & Reproductive Health Rights. In this phase- ii we have engaged another 10 CYWL in new 10 villages in another adjacent sub-districts. The phase- i YWL has been facilitating the new YWL, Shadow YWL and 20 CYWL who have regular interactions. They have been trained on the Leadership, feminism and ready to take the challenges for building strong movements on the identified social issues. In this phase we have been continuing our mentorship process with our 10 organizational young women, so that they can take over the whole process in absence of the YWL. These organizational YWL are in the process of becoming future women leaders of the organization.

During the year these organizational Young Women Leaders and Community Young Women Leaders have arranged village level meetings, courtyard sessions, discussion sessions with community people and motivated them to participate in the mass movement. So through strengthening the capacity of old and new YWL, shadow YWL and CYWL leadership has been emerging at grassroots level which can change the situation.

Unexpected challenges or opportunities

There were no major challenges we have faced during the year except Covid19 pandemic rules to follow. The opportunities we have availed that some of the targeted beneficiaries were linked with our Government Covid19 rationing services as well as distributed some food items among the beneficiaries from a national NGO working in Bangladesh. We have mobilized Human Rights Defenders Advocate Ms. Dr. Sultana Kamal , former Care Taker Government Member, who met with us for a formal discussion with District Commissioner, Khulna and raised the issue of giving access to the paternal

properties by the Hindu minority Women. The honourable DC opined that the issue is big but as India has adopted now it is the time to adopt by Bangladesh Government.

The organization's response to these challenges or opportunities

Nice Foundation have been implementing other programme in the greater Khulna area and has a strong coordination with our own organized 131 Community based Organization (CBO) who are very supportive to Nice Foundation. The community mobilization within a short period of time is quite easy for us. We have strong linkage with Human Rights Defenders, journalists, civil society members and relevant Government officials who helped us for any kind of support. Therefore, our challenges are overcome timely and smoothly.

Feedback to Global Fund for Women

In the reporting period, we have linked with new donors on the research study with Rohingya Refugee women cohesion and cooperation. Moreover, we have managed two study and a consultancy work on protection and women empowerment. However we were not able to manage big volume funded donors but continued on the same issues working for the rights of the disadvantaged Kawra (pig farming) groups with Manabadhikar Sangskriti Foundation on Human Rights Defenders Network. We have been continuing dialogue with Educo International to work on the child protection and women rights issues. By this time we have submitted two proposals one in FON funding to CREA WW and another one is in Women Asia Fund which has been recommended by the Global Fund for Women, USA.

Help obtain funding from any other donors

This year fund volume has increased from last year. However, still, our existing donors have continued to reduce existing funds volume. This continuation has made other donors confident to continue funding. Due to worldwide crises and also government policy changes the bi-lateral funding also shrinking.

Project 5

Defending Human Rights through Network Strengthening

Project Background: The Defending Human Rights through Network Strengthening Project was born out of the growing need to create a united, resilient, and coordinated front among human rights defenders in the face of increasing global challenges. Across the world, human rights defenders and activists face escalating threats, including violence, persecution, digital surveillance, and legal repression. In many cases, these defenders operate in isolation, lacking access to critical resources, knowledge, and support systems. This environment of vulnerability has highlighted the importance of building strong, interconnected networks that can effectively protect and promote human rights, share resources, and respond rapidly to emerging threats. To counter these issues, a concerted and coordinated effort among various stakeholders, including civil society organizations (CSOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), human rights defenders, and advocacy groups, is essential. The Defending Human Rights through Network Strengthening Project aims to address these challenges by fostering robust, interconnected networks that enhance the capacity and resilience of human rights defenders globally.

In summary, the Defending Human Rights through Network Strengthening Project is a comprehensive initiative that seeks to address the growing risks faced by human rights defenders by building a stronger, more interconnected network. Through capacity building, advocacy, and collaboration, the project aims to create a safer, more resilient environment for defenders and advance human rights protections globally.

Project Goal: The goal of the Defending Human Rights through Network Strengthening Project is to create a resilient, interconnected network of human rights defenders that can effectively advocate for, protect, and promote human rights at local levels. This project aims to empower individuals and organizations working in human rights through capacity-building initiatives, resource sharing, and coordinated advocacy efforts. By building and strengthening these networks, the project seeks to amplify the voices of marginalized communities, address human rights violations more effectively, and foster collaboration across diverse sectors, including civil society, government, and the private sector.

Ultimately, the project aspires to build a more just, equitable, and rights-respecting society where human rights defenders can operate safely and effectively, free from threats or violence. Through sustained collaboration, shared resources, and strategic advocacy, the Defending Human Rights through Network Strengthening Project aims to drive long-term positive change in the global human rights landscape.

Project Objectives

The Defending Human Rights through Network Strengthening Project has several key objectives that are designed to address the needs of human rights defenders and create a more coordinated and effective approach to human rights advocacy. These objectives focus on building the capacity, resilience, and influence of human rights defenders while fostering collaboration and ensuring the long-term sustainability of their efforts. The objectives are as follows:

Strengthen the Capacity of Human Rights Defenders: One of the primary objectives is to enhance the skills and knowledge of human rights defenders. This includes providing comprehensive training on advocacy strategies, legal frameworks, digital security, and leadership.

Build and Strengthen Collaborative Networks: The project aims to foster the creation and reinforcement of networks that connect human rights defenders locally, and nationally. These networks serve as platforms for resource sharing, peer support, and collective action.

These objectives guide the overall direction of the Defending Human Rights through the Network Strengthening Project, ensuring that it effectively addresses the challenges faced by human rights defenders while fostering a more resilient, coordinated, and impactful human rights movement.

Project Output

The Defending Human Rights through Network Strengthening Project has produced several significant outputs that reflect its progress towards achieving its objectives. These outputs highlight the tangible benefits the project has brought to human rights defenders, their organizations, and the broader human rights community. Below are the key outputs of the project in greater detail:

Enhanced Capacity of Human Rights Defenders:

One of the project's most immediate outputs has been the increased knowledge and skills of human rights defenders. Through a series of capacity-building training sessions, defenders have gained expertise in areas such as legal advocacy and fact-finding skills.

Creation and Strengthening of Human Rights Networks:

The project has successfully facilitated the formation and strengthening of local and regional human rights defenders. These networks foster collaboration and coordination, enabling defenders to share resources, exchange knowledge and support each other in times of crisis. These networks have also helped to bridge gaps between grassroots activists and larger human rights activists, creating a more cohesive advocacy movement.

Increased Public Awareness and Engagement

Through media, public events, and social media outreach, the project has successfully raised public awareness about key human rights issues and the role of human rights defenders. Public engagement has increased, with more individuals joining advocacy efforts and supporting human rights meetings.

In conclusion, the Defending Human Rights through Network Strengthening Project has delivered a wide range of outputs that significantly strengthen the capacity, coordination, and effectiveness of human rights defenders. These outputs have laid the foundation for a more resilient and impactful human rights movement, equipped to face current and future challenges.

Key Numbers & Achievements

	Activities	Target	Sex						Number of people without disability (Achieved)		Number of people with disability (total)		Narrative summary on Achievements and variance analysis
			Men		Women		Total		Men	Women	Men	Women	
			Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved					
	Monthly Meetings	4	60	40	60	60	140	100	0	0	0	1	
	Bi-Monthly Meetings	6	80	66	80	65	160	131	0	0	0	1	
	Quarterly Meetings	4	100	100	100	105	200	205				1	
	HRD Skill Training Sessions	3	2	0	2	3	4	3	0	0	0	0	
	Fact findings of violent incident	28	0	0	28	20	20	2					
	Litigation support	8											
	Legal aid support	20	0	0	20	17	20	17	0	0	0	0	
	Day observation	02	50	26	50	33	100	59	0	0	0	0	
	Organize protest against HRV(Human chain, rally, press release)	20	0	0	0	0	20	20	0	0	0	0	

Strong Community Engagement:

One of the greatest successes has been the active participation of community members, including women, youth, and marginalized groups, such as Persons with Disabilities (PWD) individuals. The project's efforts to foster inclusive dialogue and address gender norms, GBV have resonated deeply within communities.

Empowerment of Young Women Leaders and Feminist Human Rights Defenders:

The project has effectively built the capacity of Community Young Women Leaders (CYWL) and Feminist Human Rights Defenders through quarterly meetings and trainings. These young leaders are now more confident and equipped to advocate for human rights, challenge gender-based violence, and promote gender justice in their communities.

Awareness through Advocacy Dialog/ Meetings:

Celebrating events such as International Women's Day, International Girl Child Day, and the 16 Days of Activism has raised public awareness of pressing human rights issues. These advocacy dialogues have drawn attention to GBV and gender justice while engaging the broader community in conversation and action. These factors contribute to the overall success of the Defending Human Rights Through

Network Strengthening Project, ensuring it achieves its goal of empowering human rights defenders and enhancing their ability to respond to violations, advocate for change, and protect themselves and their communities effectively.

Areas of Improvement

While the **Defending Human Rights Through Network Strengthening Project** has made significant strides in building capacity, fostering collaboration, and amplifying advocacy efforts, some areas still require improvement to fully realize their potential. As the project continues to evolve, it faces challenges related to scalability, resource sustainability, and coordination across its networks. Areas for Improvement in the Defending Human Rights Through Network Strengthening Project:

- **Enhanced Coordination and Communication:** Improve communication channels between different networks to ensure better coordination and information sharing.
- **Increased Local Engagement:** Increase involvement of grassroots community members to ensure the project addresses local needs and contexts more effectively.
- **More Comprehensive Training:**
 - **Continuous Learning:** Implement continuous learning programs instead of one-time training sessions to provide ongoing knowledge and skill development.
 - **Customized Content:** Training programs to address the specific needs and challenges faced by different regions and groups within the network.
- **Expanding Advocacy Efforts:** Campaigns: Expand advocacy efforts to include more campaigns that address systemic human rights issues and seek broader policy change.
- **Media Outreach:** Increase media outreach and public relations efforts to increase awareness of the project and its impact, attract more support and involvement from the wider public.

Training and Capacity Building:

The majority of training sessions have been delivered as scheduled. Human rights defenders have reported increased skills and awareness in areas such as digital security, legal advocacy, and grassroots activist. **Defending Human Rights Through Network Strengthening Project** is on track to deliver its planned activities. The project has successfully implemented many of its legal aid support, and advocacy meeting. With these ongoing improvements, the project remains well-positioned to achieve its objectives and create a sustainable impact.

Key lessons learned

- The **Defending Human Rights Through Network Strengthening Project** has uncovered several important lessons that are shaping its continued implementation and overall effectiveness. These lessons reflect the realities of working in diverse, often challenging environments and offer practical insights for improving project outcomes.
- **Ongoing Capacity Building:** One-time training is not enough to equip human rights defenders for long-term impact. Continuous capacity-building efforts are essential for ensuring sustained skills development.
- **Strong Networks Amplify Impact:** Well-coordinated networks allow for more effective advocacy and mutual support. The project has seen better advocacy outcomes by strengthening communication and collaboration across networks, fostering a united front in human rights work.
- **Inclusive Participation Enhances Advocacy:** Involving underrepresented groups such as women, in project activities results in more inclusive and impactful human rights advocacy. This diversity brings innovative solutions and strengthens community ownership.
- **Public Awareness Drives Change:** Engaging the media (Newspaper and social media) and raising public awareness are important for building broader support and holding authorities accountable. This has proven to be a vital component in driving systemic change.

- These key lessons underscore the need for adaptability, inclusivity, and long-term planning in defending human rights through network strengthening. By applying these insights, the project is better equipped to navigate challenges, scale its impact, and provide sustainable support to human rights defenders in diverse contexts.

The **Defending Human Rights Through Network Strengthening Project** has encountered various protection and inclusion issues related to age, gender, and disability throughout its implementation. Addressing these issues is crucial for ensuring that all community members can fully participate in the project and benefit from its activities. Below is an overview of the key issues identified and the actions taken to address them:

Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

- **Issue:** Women and girls participating in the project often face gender-based violence, which limits their ability to engage freely in activities and advocacy efforts.
- **Actions Taken:**
GBV Awareness meeting: The project has implemented an awareness meeting focused on recognizing and preventing GBV. These meetings provide resources and support networks for affected individuals.

Lack of Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities (PWD)

- **Issue:** Many project activities and venues have not been fully accessible to persons with disabilities, hindering their participation.
- **Actions Taken:**

Accessibility Audits: The project conducted accessibility audits of meeting venues to identify barriers. Fixing a venue with an elevator.

Inclusive Training: Meetings have been designed to accommodate PWD, additional support for those with different needs.

Youth Engagement

- **Issue:** Young people often feel marginalized in decision-making processes, limiting their involvement in human rights advocacy.
- **Actions Taken:**
Youth-Led Initiatives: The project has established engage youth-led advocacy to empower young individuals to take the lead in addressing issues.
Intergenerational Dialogue: Structured dialogue/advocacy meeting between youth and older community leaders have been organized to facilitate knowledge sharing and bridge the gap between generations.

Age Discrimination

Age discrimination refers to the unfair behaviour of individuals based on their age, often resulting in barriers to participation, access to opportunities, and equitable behaviour. Within the context of the Defending Human Rights Through Network Strengthening Project, age discrimination has been a notable issue, affecting both younger and older community members.

Overview of changes to project risk and mitigation measures taken

In the Defending Human Rights through Network Strengthening Project, ongoing assessment of risks and their mitigation measures has been crucial for ensuring the project's effectiveness and sustainability. Various changes have been made in response to identified risks, allowing the project to adapt and strengthen its approach. The Defending Human Rights through Network Strengthening Project has proactively identified changes in project risks and implemented a range of mitigation measures to address these challenges. These key activities collectively reflect the dedication of the HRD Network in advancing human rights causes. By fostering collaboration, providing essential skills, and actively addressing human rights issues through fact-finding and legal support, the HRD Network remains committed to creating a more just and equitable society. By enhancing financial oversight, strengthening

safeguarding practices, improving data privacy, fostering community engagement, and adapting to external risks, the project aims to create a secure and effective environment for all participants. Ongoing monitoring and assessment of risks will continue to inform the project's strategies, ensuring that it remains responsive to emerging challenges and community needs.

Project -6

Education and Health Support to Kawra Children for Schooling Project

Funded by: AFMR Foundation, Dhaka
Report Submitted By: Rabeya Sultana, Coordinator and Project Manager

In 2024, the **Education and Health Support to Kawra Children for Schooling Project** made significant progress in meeting the educational and nutritional needs of children in the targeted communities. Through various educational sessions, community motivation efforts, health support, and capacity-building initiatives, the project impacted over 126 students, enhancing their academic skills and overall well-being. Despite facing challenges such as health crises and limited resources, we successfully maintained high attendance rates and improved student engagement in their learning environments.



Key Achievements in 2023-2024

1. Education Activities:

Kajoli Sessions: Kajoli sessions cater to pre-primary children aged 3-5 years, held 6 days a week. In 2024, 26 children participated, engaging in activities designed to promote foundational learning. These included word card play, word learning, drawing, and play card activities, which encourage both cognitive development and creativity. 26 students attended evening sessions from 4:30 pm to 5:30 pm.



Primary (Class 1 to 5): 50 students attended from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm.

Secondary (Class 6 to 10): 50 students attended morning sessions from 6:30 am to 8:30 am.

A total of **126 students** are enrolled and actively learning.

Teachers: 10 teachers facilitated the sessions.

Community Motivation:

Monthly motivational messages and discussions on social issues like:

- Early marriage prevention, human trafficking, reproductive health, and leadership.
- These sessions also covered topics such as reproductive health rights, mental health awareness, and gender-based violence (GBV), ensuring that students and their families were informed and supported



- Adolescent awareness, family planning, and mental health.
- Hygiene practices such as hand washing and awareness on health topics like Vitamin D sources, Dengue, and Heatwave preparedness were consistently promoted.



1. Coaching Classes:

- Held regularly for 25 days per month.
- High attendance rate: 95% average across all coaching sessions.

2. Supplying Educational Materials:

- In 2024 and across the months, **126 students received educational materials**, including game materials, notebooks, and pens



3. Parent Engagement:

- **Monthly meetings** were held with parents/guardians to track student progress and engage them in their children's education.
- These meetings created a bridge between the school and the community, ensuring that families were active participants in their children's education.

4. Examinations:

In 2024, students participated in two examinations per month as part of their educational progress tracking. These regular assessments help teachers identify areas where students need additional support, ensuring that each child receives the attention required to improve their academic skills.



5. Nutrition Support:

- Daily nutrition supply provided to students and staff, including:
- Eggs, cake, fruits like bananas, oranges, guava, and khichuri with chicken twice a week.
- Nutrition served for 25 days each month to 76 students, 6 teachers, and 1 caretaker.

6. Health and Hygiene Monitoring:

- Height and weight measurements were regularly taken, with an average of 70 students measured in 2024.
- Continuous hygiene checks ensured students remained healthy.

7. Field Visits and Management Engagement:

- **Rabeya Sultana, PM**, made an average of 12 field visits.
- Management visits by the Director of the Nice Foundation.

8. Vigilance Team Activities:

- A **three-member vigilance team** monitored the center daily, with visits done on a rotational basis.

9. Staff Meetings:

Regular monthly staff meetings were held to discuss progress and strategies.

Challenges and Overcoming Obstacles

Challenges: One of the significant challenges faced in 2024 was the economic difficulties experienced by the families of the students. Many come from marginalized communities, where financial hardships made it difficult for parents to consistently provide necessary educational materials and resources for their children. This economic strain also impacted students' ability to attend classes regularly, as some were required to assist their families in earning an income. Besides challenges such as ensuring the continued health of students during the seasonal changes and preventing the spread of communicable diseases.



To overcome these obstacles, the project provided essential support such as distributing educational materials (notebooks, pens, etc.) and offering nutritious meals to reduce the financial burden on families. Additionally, parental engagement sessions were held to encourage families to prioritize their children's education despite the economic hardships. By creating a support system within the community and leveraging available resources, we were able to maintain a 95% attendance rate and ensure that all children continued to receive quality education. With strict hygiene measures and teacher support, students remained healthy and on track with their education.

10. Conclusion and Next Steps

- The project has made significant strides in educating and supporting **126 children** from vulnerable communities.
- Nutrition programs and health monitoring have ensured that students remain physically and mentally prepared for learning.
- The activities will continue in **2025**, with additional focus on community engagement and health awareness programs.

In 2025, the project will continue to focus on improving educational outcomes for students while strengthening community engagement. Plans include:

- Expanding the Kajoli sessions to accommodate more students and integrating new learning materials.
- Continuing community motivation programs with a stronger emphasis on gender equality and mental health.
- Enhancing our nutrition program by including a wider variety of fruits and vegetables.
- Hosting additional parental engagement sessions to involve families in addressing social issues affecting their children's education.

Conclusion

The **Education and Health Support to Kawra Children for Schooling Project** has made a meaningful impact on the lives of Kawra children and their families in 2024. By providing both educational and nutritional support, the project continues to empower these communities, helping them overcome barriers to education. Moving forward, we are committed to enhancing our strategies and ensuring that all students receive the support they need to thrive.

Project - 7

Naya Krishi Biodiversity Conservation Project

Project Background:

The Noya Krishi initiative integrates local seed production and sustainable agricultural practices, including the use of compost, to enhance soil health, increase crop productivity, and promote environmentally friendly farming. The focus is on empowering smallholder farmers to produce and

store local seeds while using organic compost to improve soil fertility and reduce reliance on chemical fertilizers.

The Noya Krisi is a transformative initiative focusing on empowering rural farmers through the local production and storage of local seeds, addressing critical challenges in food security, seed sovereignty and sustainable agriculture. The project is designed to reduce dependency on commercial seed markets and enhance the resilience of smallholder farmers, especially in the face of climate change and market volatility. The **Nice Foundation** operates in the regions of Batiaghata, Dumuria, Digholia Koyra, and Dacop. These areas are located in the southern part of Bangladesh, particularly in Khulna District, where the Nice Foundation focuses on empowering women and marginalized communities through a range of projects. The Nice Foundation's work in these regions aims to address various social, environmental, and economic challenges, including agricultural sustainability, women's empowerment, and climate resilience.

Project Goal:

The goal of the Noya Krishi project is to promote sustainable, climate-resilient agricultural practices by empowering local farmers, particularly women and marginalized women groups, through the production, preservation, and use of local seeds and organic compost. This initiative aims to enhance food security, preserve agricultural biodiversity, and improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers in rural communities.

Specific Objectives:

1. **Strengthen Local Seed Systems:** Foster the production, preservation, and exchange of locally adapted seeds to ensure seed sovereignty and reduce dependency on external commercial seeds.
2. **Promote Sustainable Agriculture:** Encourage the use of compost and organic farming methods to improve soil health, increase crop productivity, and reduce the environmental impact of farming.
3. **Empower Women and Marginalized Farmers:** Build the capacity of women and marginalized communities in sustainable agricultural practices, enabling them to lead in farming and decision-making.
4. **Enhance Climate Resilience:** Develop farming systems that can adapt to climate change by promoting the use of climate-resilient seed varieties and compost-based soil management techniques.
5. **Foster Community Collaboration:** Establish community-managed seed banks, composting systems, and knowledge-sharing networks to promote cooperation and collective action in achieving sustainable agriculture.

The Noya Krishi project ultimately aims to create self-sufficient, resilient farming communities that can sustainably manage their natural resources and secure their livelihoods in the face of environmental and economic challenges.

Key Components

Local Seed Production:

Traditional Seed Varieties: Focus on the cultivation of indigenous and traditional seed varieties that are better adapted to local climates and ecosystems, offering natural resistance to pests and diseases.

Women's Role in Seed Production: Empower rural women by involving them in seed production and management, giving them an essential role in household and community food security.

Traditional Storage Techniques: Promote indigenous storage methods alongside modern techniques to ensure the long-term viability of seeds, particularly focusing on low-cost, eco-friendly storage solutions.

Climate-Resilient Storage: Equip communities with storage systems that protect seeds from the effects of humidity, temperature variations, and pests, ensuring that seeds remain viable in varying climate conditions.

Key Outputs

The Noya Krishi project is expected to generate several tangible outputs that contribute to sustainable agricultural practices, improved livelihoods, and community resilience. These outputs are directly linked to the project's goal of promoting local seed production, compost use, and climate-resilient farming methods.

1. **Local Seed Production and Preservation:** Establishment of community women group members and community women-managed seed banks with a diverse collection of locally adapted seeds.
2. **At least 30%** of participating farmers produce locally-grown seeds.
3. **Increased Use of Organic Compost:** Training and sessions of farmers in the production and use of organic compost, resulting in at least 30% adoption of compost-based farming among project participants.
4. **Empowerment of Women and Marginalized Groups:** Formation of **women-led farming** groups that manage local seed banks and composting initiatives.
5. **Climate-resilient Farming Systems:** Introduction of drought-resistant and flood-tolerant seed varieties, with at least 40% of farmers using these seeds to cope with climate challenges. Improved water retention and soil health across participating farms, resulting in better resilience to climate change impacts.

Nice Foundation supports farmers in creating their own compost from agricultural and household waste, reducing reliance on chemical inputs and lowering costs. Regular follow-ups and community engagement ensure continued learning and practice, fostering a shift towards more sustainable and resilient agriculture. Through these outputs, the **Noya Krishi** project will foster a self-sustaining agricultural system, enhance local food security, and empower rural communities to thrive in a changing environment.

Important numbers and achievements

	Activities	Sex						Number of people without disability (Achieved)		Number of people with disability (total)		Narrative summary on Achievements and variance analysis
		Men		Women		Total		Men	Women	Men	Women	
		Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved					
1	Monthly Group meeting	0	0	360	360	12	12	0	0	0	0	
2	Seed Expert and Conservation Committee	0	0	120	120	10	10	0	0	0	0	
3	Courtyard meeting	0	0	240	210	6	6	0	0	0	0	
4	Seed Resource Centre	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	
5	Seed collection, storage, and reproduction	0	0	30	30	30	30	0	0	0	0	

Several aspects of the Noya Krishi project have successfully achieved the desired goals and created positive impacts for the farming communities. These successes highlight the project's effectiveness in promoting sustainable agriculture and empowering local farmers.

Key Successes

Adoption of Local Seed Production: Farmers have embraced the use of locally produced seeds, reducing their dependence on expensive commercial seeds. Community-managed seed banks have been effective in ensuring seed availability and preserving biodiversity.

Widespread Use of Compost: The introduction of organic composting has been highly welcomed, with farmers showing a strong adoption rate. The use of compost has significantly boosted soil fertility, produced healthier crops, and greatly minimized the dependence on chemical fertilizers. Many farmers are now producing their compost from household waste, banana plants, kitchen scraps, and cow dung, which is reducing input costs and enhancing sustainability.

Enhanced Climate Resilience: Using climate-resilient seed varieties and sustainable farming practices has made farmers more resilient to climate change impacts, such as droughts and floods. The community's awareness of climate adaptation strategies has increased, and farmers are more prepared to cope with environmental challenges.

Strong Community Collaboration: Community networks for seed exchange and knowledge sharing are functioning well, fostering cooperation among farmers and promoting a sense of collective responsibility for sustainable agricultural practices. Combining local seed production, compost use, and community engagement has created a solid foundation for long-term agricultural development and resilience.

Repairing Agricultural Damage from Climate Change through Noya Krishi

The Nice Foundation aims to combat agricultural damage caused by climate change, particularly through initiatives like "Noya Krishi." The Noya Krishi project, operating in climate-vulnerable coastal regions like Batiaghata, Dumuri, Koira, and Dakop, is designed to address the significant challenges climate change poses to agriculture. The Noya Krishi project is working to repair and mitigate this damage through a range of sustainable agricultural practices and climate-adaptive strategies.

The **Nice Foundation** is actively working to repair agricultural damage caused by climate change by implementing several sustainable practices. These include growing different types of crops on the same land to enhance soil fertility and prevent disease, as well as practicing farming in harmony with nature, where everything is recyclable and sustainable, reducing the pressure on the soil and environment.

By forming cooperatives, farmers are brought together to share knowledge and adopt sustainable agricultural methods. Additionally, initiatives like tree planting, water body conservation, and other nature-based solutions help restore the local environment.

Through these initiatives, the **Nice Foundation** is playing a crucial role in repairing agricultural damage and safeguarding the future of agriculture in the face of climate change.

The Noya Krishi project is playing a critical role in repairing agricultural damage caused by climate change in coastal regions of Bangladesh. Through the introduction of climate-resilient crops, sustainable water management, organic farming, and capacity building, the project is helping farmers not only recover from the impacts of climate change but also build long-term resilience.

Areas of improvement

While the Noya Krishi project has achieved many successes, there are certain areas that require improvement to maximize its impact and sustainability. Nice Foundation addressing these challenges will help enhance the project's effectiveness and ensure long-term benefits for farming communities.

Low Adoption Rates in Some Areas: While many farmers have adopted local seed production and composting practices, there are still some regions or groups where the adoption is slower. More targeted efforts are needed to engage these communities and address barriers such as lack of awareness, resources, or resistance to change.

Improved Seed Bank Management: Some community-managed seed banks may face challenges in maintaining a consistent supply of good quality seeds due to limited capacity, poor infrastructure, or

lack of technical knowledge. Strengthening the management and infrastructure of these seed banks will ensure that seeds are properly preserved and remain viable for future use.

Enhanced Composting Systems: While composting has been adopted by many farmers, some face challenges in producing sufficient quantities of compost to meet their needs.

Access to Resources for Composting: Some farmers may lack the materials or resources (e.g., manure, organic waste, space) needed for compost production. Providing greater access to compost materials or community composting initiatives could help overcome this barrier.

By addressing these areas for improvement, the Noya Krishi project can achieve greater sustainability, enhance community participation, and ensure long-term benefits for all participants, especially women, marginalized groups, and smallholder farmers.

Adapted to address improvement areas

Adapting the Noya Krishi Project to Address Improvement Areas

The Noya Krishi project is evolving to address identified areas for improvement and to ensure it achieves maximum impact in promoting sustainable agriculture and empowering rural communities. Several strategic adaptations are being implemented to overcome challenges and enhance the project's effectiveness.

Strengthening Seed Bank Management: The project has started offering specialized training for those managing community seed banks, focusing on seed preservation techniques, stock management, and record-keeping. This ensures that seeds remain viable and available year-round.

Seed Quality Monitoring: The project is implementing a system to regularly monitor the quality of seeds produced and exchanged through the seed banks, ensuring only high-quality seeds are circulated among farmers.

In areas with saline soils like Koirā, the project has introduced salt-tolerant rice varieties and trained farmers in salinity management techniques, significantly improving crop survival rates in challenging conditions.

In Batiaghata, where compost production was low, establishing a centralized composting facility has increased access to organic fertilizer for farmers, leading to improved soil fertility and crop yields.

These adaptations show the project's responsiveness to challenges, ensuring that it meets the diverse needs of farmers across different regions while promoting long-term sustainability.

By implementing targeted community engagement strategies, organizations can promote understanding and acceptance of adoption, ultimately connecting more children with loving families. Careful consideration of the community's unique characteristics and needs will enhance the effectiveness of these efforts.

Seed Production and Preservation:

Community Seed Banks Established: The project has successfully established several community-managed seed banks, ensuring local farmers have access to high-quality, climate-resilient seeds. Local seed production is meeting targets in many areas, with seed banks functioning as key resources for farmers.

Seed Exchange Networks: These networks are growing steadily, with farmers sharing seeds and knowledge, which has strengthened local agricultural biodiversity.

Capacity Building Sessions: Sessions programs on composting, seed preservation, and sustainable farming techniques are being conducted according to the project's timeline. Farmer participation is high, and early indicators show a positive impact on farming practices.

Compost Production: Composting initiatives have taken off in many areas, with farmers producing their own organic fertilizer. Community composting units are also being developed in some regions to address resource gaps.

Leadership and Cooperative Formation: The project has been successful in empowering women and marginalized groups, with many taking leadership roles in seed management and composting initiatives. **Inclusive Participation:** The project is on track in promoting gender equality, with a focus on marginalized farmers, ensuring inclusivity in training and farming support.

Conclusion: Overall, the Noya Krishi project is on track to deliver most of its planned activities, with successful seed production, composting, and climate adaptation initiatives already showing positive results. Ongoing adaptations, especially in areas like broader adoption, composting capacity and preserve local seeds will ensure that the project meets its objectives over time.

Lessons learned

Key lessons from the project highlight the importance of clear communication, adaptability, and proactive strategies. These insights provide valuable guidance for improving future project outcomes and ensuring team success.

Effective Communication: Regular feedback and clear communication with stakeholders are essential for project success.

Agility: Adopting agile methodologies allows for quick adaptation to challenges and continuous improvement.

Data-Driven Decisions: Using performance metrics helps identify gaps and make informed adjustments.

Proactive Risk Management: Addressing potential risks early prevents larger issues later.

Team Development: Ongoing training ensures team members have the necessary skills to succeed.

Resource Flexibility: Adjusting resource allocation to project needs supports critical areas of improvement.

Stakeholder Engagement: Involving stakeholders in decision-making enhances project alignment and satisfaction.

Project 8

Climate Change and Cyclone Remal Disaster Response 2024

Location: Dacope and Batiaghata, Khulna

Target Population: 3,000 Affected Individuals

Background and Context: In May 2024, Cyclone Remal made landfall in Bangladesh, severely affecting coastal districts including Dacope and Batiaghata upazilas in Khulna. These areas, already vulnerable due to high salinity, waterlogging, and climate-induced livelihood risks, faced extensive damage to housing, agriculture, and drinking water sources.

In response to this crisis, **Nice Foundation (NF)** initiated a targeted disaster response and climate adaptation intervention reaching over **3,000 affected people**, with a focus on marginalized, women-headed, and smallholder farming households.

Objectives of the Intervention

- To provide **immediate livelihood support** to households affected by Cyclone Remal.
- To promote **climate-resilient agriculture** through seed distribution and training.
- To enhance community capacity through **adaptation strategies** using **local knowledge**.
- To encourage **homestead-based food security** through training in gardening and water management.

Key Activities Implemented

Distribution of Agricultural Seeds

- Distributed **salt-tolerant and short-duration crop seeds** to more than **700 farming households**.
- Priority was given to flood- and salinity-resistant varieties of paddy, vegetables, and leafy greens.
- Women farmers were prioritized to ensure household-level food security and resilience.

Orientation on Homestead Gardening

- Conducted **hands-on training sessions** on climate-smart homestead gardening techniques.
- Topics included raised bed gardening, vertical sack gardening, composting, and mixed cropping.
- Promoted **organic fertilizers** and **eco-friendly pest management** practices.

Training on Climate Adaptation Strategies

- Delivered **community-based sessions** on understanding climate risks, preparedness, and adaptation.
- Covered issues like saline water management, drought tolerance, rainwater harvesting, and seed preservation.
- Emphasized the use of **indigenous knowledge** in predicting weather patterns, crop selection, and traditional soil care practices.

Documentation and Mobilization of Local Knowledge

- Facilitated participatory dialogues to document **traditional climate coping mechanisms**.
- Involved elders and women leaders in sharing historical coping strategies to inspire intergenerational learning.
- Created local resource booklets to preserve and replicate this knowledge.

Achievements and Impact

Impact Area	Result
Households reached	3,000+ individuals from 800+ households
Seed packs distributed	750+ households received climate-resilient seeds
Garden orientation sessions	12 sessions in 6 unions, reaching over 600 women
Climate adaptation workshops	8 workshops conducted with ~400 participants
Local knowledge captured	50+ traditional practices recorded and shared

Community Feedback and Learning

- Farmers expressed **high satisfaction** with the relevance and practicality of the support.
- Many women shared that the homestead gardening training helped reduce food expenses post-cyclone.

- Local farmers appreciated the blend of scientific and indigenous knowledge, making interventions contextually appropriate.

Challenges Faced

- **Waterlogging and saline intrusion** delayed some crop planting.
- **Limited irrigation infrastructure** made homestead gardening challenging for some.
- Need for longer-term engagement to reinforce adaptation knowledge and market access.

Conclusion

The 2024 Cyclone Remal response implemented by Nice Foundation in Khulna's Dacope and Batiaghata upazilas provided timely and relevant support to 3,000 climate-affected individuals. By combining immediate relief with capacity building, sustainable agriculture, and indigenous knowledge, the intervention contributed meaningfully to both recovery and long-term climate resilience. Nice Foundation remains committed to supporting vulnerable communities through locally-led, inclusive, and sustainable climate adaptation initiatives.

Project - 9

Emergency response for Rohingya women community project

Title of the Study: Social Cohesion and women empowerment among Rohingya refugees and host communities

Study Objective: This study aims to assess the views and perceptions of a host community towards refugees to identify factors that facilitate or hinder social integration between refugees and the local population.

Social capital, defined as the resources embedded in social networks, has the potential to promote gender empowerment and contribute to the well-being of refugees. However, the role of social capital in the gender empowerment of displaced women in refugee residences has not yet been adequately studied. This paper explores how social capital can be used to enhance gender empowerment among Rohingya refugees settled in the refugee camps of Bangladesh. To study how social capital influences refugee women's empowerment status, we use an empirical approach

The study considers social trust, civic participation, and groups and networks as social capital's main components. On the other hand, as the main factors of women's empowerment, we focus on women's decision-making power, respect and harassment in the community, and the risk of violence against women. The paper highlights the determinants of promoting gender empowerment. Drawing on empirical evidence, the paper proposes strategies to enhance gender empowerment, including strengthening social networks and building trust. The paper concludes by highlighting the potential of



social capital to promote gender empowerment among refugees and the need for further research and policy interventions in this area.

Conceptual Framework

The Rohingya crisis is one of the most pressing issues in the world. According to [UNHCR \(2021\)](#), in 2017 (25 August onward), the global community witnessed a humanitarian crisis while the Rohingyas of Myanmar were forced to leave their home to take refuge in neighbouring Bangladesh to save their lives. As of 30 September 2021, about 90,2947 Rohingyas (including 190,662 families) live in Ukhiya and Teknaf Upazilas of Cox's Bazar district in Bangladesh. More than 82% of them fled the persecution in Myanmar's Rakhine State and took shelter in Bangladesh, while about 120,000 were born in the camps in the last four years ([UNHCR, 2021](#)). Consequently, the population of Rohingyas in Ukhiya and Teknaf has become almost double that of the local Bangladeshis ([Bowden, 2018](#)). This demographic alteration indicates the current living conditions and the coping strategies of Rohingyas in Ukhiya and Teknaf. The livelihood of the local host population has been dramatically affected by the incoming Rohingyas in a diverse manner, such as humanitarian concerns and economic and environmental challenges ([Grossenbacher, 2020](#); [Ahmed, Simmons, Chowdhury, & Huq, 2021](#)). In particular, the satisfaction of the host community related to social harmony has declined significantly ([Biswas et al., 2021](#)). Under these circumstances, one of the main concerns of the protracted crisis is how to improve the existing relationship, particularly social cohesion and reconciliation between the host and Rohingya communities, before their repatriation.



There are a few literature on the cohesion in between the refugee and host communities. [Maystadt and Verwimp \(2014\)](#) have studied on the refugee in Kagera, Tanzania (1991-2004) from Burundi, and Rwanda and found that the net economy was emerged in the host area, though a few agriculture-based host suffered for increased competition, surging price of goods. However, non-agriculture and self-employed farmers were benefitted by the refugee. Again [Maystadt, Hirvonen, Mabiso, and Vandecastelen \(2019\)](#) have concluded that the impact on economy, security and values are unequally

distributed among the hosts. Most of the refugees are still located in the world's poorest countries. Access to arms and illicit trade may be of concern. Also disease outbreak, insecurity, environmental degradation, resource competition and price hike were of concern. On the contrary, after the refugee repatriation, the constructed roads and hospitals remain there may lead the hosts to long-term benefits. Tafere (2018) and Maystadt, Mueller, Van Den Hoek, and van Weezel (2020) emphasised on the refugee settlement and environmental degradation in the host area, sometimes forest land would convert to cropland. Taylor *et al.* (2016) suggested that aid in cash would rather boost up the host economy than the in-kind refugee aid. Their study found that food price was decreased in the local market, for the items distributed in-kind at refugee camp. Also unemployment rate was increased for the low-skilled workforce and decreased their wages. Each additional aid in dollar to the refugees increased income in the local economy by \$1.70. While Smith *et al.* (2021) and Gronau and Ruesink (2021) suggested to enhance refugee and host resource sharing, capacity building programs, community interaction and agriculture ownership to address social cohesion.

Social cohesion gets considerable attention among political decision-makers and international organisations such as the United Nations. It is considered an essential driver in achieving sustainable development goals (UNDP, 2018; IOM, 2020; UNHCR, 2021). Social cohesion is defined as the civic engagement and institutional association of the Rohingya and host communities, and reconciliation is defined as the interaction between the Rohingya and host communities (UNDP, 2015). The indicators of a higher social cohesion and reconciliation (SCORE) index are healthy, positive and integrated relationships. Thus, the SCORE index is a multifaceted issue. The SCORE index also requires primary data with in-depth multidimensional indicators. For facilitating social cohesion among the Rohingya and host communities, it is crucial to focus on conflict and the pattern of coexistence. Towards that end, the SCORE index and its determining factors, such as trust, identity, equality, access to resources and livelihoods, are yet to be analysed relatively.



Given the complexity and challenges of hosting many Rohingyas in Cox's Bazar district in Bangladesh, it is crucial to explore better ways to support the needs of Rohingya and host communities in different terms. That is why it is necessary to look into possible windows of opportunity. This study is thus striving to unveil the current relationship, conflicting issues and new avenues of initiative; a conceptual framework. The primary research question is whether the Rohingya and host communities facilitated cohesion and reconciliation as a coping strategy and, if so, to what extent?

The sections are arranged in this study as follows: a brief introduction in the first section, and the subsequent section is organised with the context and abridge history behind the community cohesion. The context follows the methodology with a detailed survey design, data collection tools and protocols. A few referred methods are discussed in the methodology to explore the analytical framework. The following section illustrates the analysis and results. The last two sections include the discussion and conclusive remarks, which ended up with the references.

Aim of research

In order to gain insight into effective support for the gender empowerment of displaced persons, this study asks the question, "How can social relational capital be used for gender empowerment of displaced persons?" to answer the question "How can social relational capital be used to support gender

empowerment of displaced people? The study will focus on Rohingya refugees who fled to neighboring countries such as Bangladesh and residents of urban slums in the southwestern part of Bangladesh, and will examine: 1) the actual situation of gender inequality among the displaced; 2) the formation process of social relational capital (mutual support network) and its effect on gender empowerment after displacement; and 3) the relationship between displaced people and support groups. (iii) Relationships between displaced people and support groups. Through these efforts, we aim to obtain policy suggestions that will contribute to the support for displaced people in Japan and other countries

Research implementation plan

This study will proceed with a half-year plan for research and study. The first half of the study, will be the first phase of the researches and a survey will be conducted to understand the actual situation of gender inequality and social relationship capital. Statistical analysis of the relationship between how the formation of social relational capital affects gender inequality will be compiled and results will be reported, including the submission of a paper. The field research will be conducted in Rohingya refugee camps in Bangladesh.

Keywords: Gender, Social Capital, Development Economic



Figure SEQ Figure * ARABIC 3 Nice Foundation and Tohoku University, Japan jointly visited camps and share the research objectives with Camp-in-Charge4Ext.

Methodology

2.1 Study design and respondents

From August to September 2023, a cross-sectional survey was conducted in the camp #4 and host community near the camps of Ukhiya Upazila of Cox's Bazar district among the adult Rohingyas (before and after the 2017 influx).

In total, a survey with 500 Rohingya households was done. Similarly, a survey with 500 households from the host community of Ukhiya was conducted. A two-stage stratified random sampling (Upazilas - Camps - Households) technique was followed to select 1000 households. The required sample size was calculated at 80% power, at 95% confidence interval, considering the proportion of cohesion to be 50%, design effect was considered as 2 and with 10% non-response rate. The survey was conducted with the voluntary participation of respondents. A face-to-face interview took place, maintaining proper mutual understanding.

3. Analysis and results

The overall Score index for the Rohingya community is higher than that of the host community as their cohesion with institutions is much higher than that of the host. Rohingya people are mostly aid-dependent for their survival, living with an uncertain future in the camps vulnerable to monsoon menaces. They are stripped of any national identity, and most are not even recognised as “refugees”. The Rohingya community, as forcibly displaced nationals and part of their coping strategies Rohingya people are more cohesive towards the government and non-governmental institutes.

Social cohesion is indexed by the factors: human security, satisfaction with humanitarian aid, trust in government officials and trust in institutions. The correlation values between the factor and variables are shown in the arrow marks. The strength of trust in institution possesses the highest correlation to address institutional cohesion. Among the variables, the national NGOs and international NGOs depict the highest correlation. The relationship between the Rohingyas and the host community has been greatly impacted by the humanitarian aid provided by both national and international NGOs. The second

best factor for social cohesion is found to be the trust in government officials, among the variables trust on union chairman (local community leader) shows the highest correlation. Human security factor is correlated with the safety net programs in major, whereas satisfaction with humanitarian aid is mostly associated with the aid workers amiable attitude.

It shows the intercommunity reconciliation with factors: positive feelings, cultural similarities, intergroup contact and propensity for retribution. Positive feelings show the highest correlation factor for community-based reconciliation. Among the variables of positive feelings, sympathy of Rohingya community towards the host community reveals the highest correlation also respect and affection are very close and high association respectively with the positive feelings in between Rohingya and host communities. Cultural similarities are revealed as the second highest factor associated with the intercommunity reconciliation. Similarities of language and behavioural norms in between Rohingya and local communities are figured out to be highly associated.

The cohesion index with institutions is higher among the youth Rohingya, but older people show better community-based reconciliation. People living in Ukhiya show higher cohesive relationships with the civic society and institutions but a lower reconciliation with the host community. Most Rohingyas were deprived of education in Myanmar (Shohel, 2022). However, those with primary education or more strongly associated with the local community. Female Rohingyas are more cohesive towards institutions, while males have higher reconciliation with the host community. With the rise of income, cohesion or association with the institutes decreases and intercommunity reconciliation increases. It can be concluded that economically and socially vulnerable people are more inclined to have institutional cohesion rather than community-based reconciliation.

For the Rohingya women community, **Social Capital situation: Friends and relative networks** , Women Empowerment situation, decision making at HH level, Women's Position and respect at HH level, Relationship with Community and neighbor, respect and harassment in the community and NGO and Community activists sensitivity post-estimate analysis were done.

The highest dominating factor is the trust in institutions to address the cohesion. Both the local NGOs and international NGOs show high correlation with the institutional trust factor. The next associated factor for social cohesion of the host community is the trust in government officials and the most influential and correlated variable is found to be union chairman. Among the variables, host attends the Rohingya's social event and host invites the Rohingya's disclose as the two most correlated variables with intergroup contact factor. The next most influential factor is found to be the positive feelings and affection of host community towards the Rohingya community is revealed as the most correlated variable. Cultural similarities evolve as the third influential factor, and behavioural norms is the most associated variable to explain this factor.

The social cohesion and reconciliation of the host community respectively with the institution and the Rohingyas. Regarding the overall score index, male, youth and less educated hosts possess higher values than their counterparts. Although the youth hosts have a higher reconciliation index with the Rohingyas, they have a lower cohesion index with the institutions. Youth and male hosts have more reconciliation with the Rohingya community as they engage with Rohingyas through work, business, marriage, sports and other online-offline social communications (Uddin, 2021).

Discussion

Social cohesion and reconciliation among the Rohingyas and host communities depend on the condition of the Rohingyas in host societies and the extent and degree of trust, acceptance, interactions, reciprocity and the relationship between communities and the institutions. Moreover, the degree of social cohesion and reconciliation varies with location, power structure and gender.

The overall Score index for the Rohingya community is higher than that of the host community as their cohesion with institutions is much higher than that of the host. The host community feels aggrieved sheltering the Rohingyas since the latter's arrival, and protracted staying in Cox's Bazar caused economic difficulties, sociocultural deterioration and environmental degradation and posed an

“existential threat” to the former's safety and security (UNDP, 2018; IOM, 2020). The daily life of the host people has been severely disrupted as the price of everyday commodities has sky-high by the crowd pressure in the markets and roads and by mounting traffic congestion (Olney *et al.*, 2019). Children's education has been hampered severely as teachers increasingly opted out for better-paid jobs. Students are also not attending classes to avail themselves of small-job opportunities or for even fear of safety and security (Olney *et al.*, 2019; Grossenbacher, 2020). In addition, there has been severe degradation of the environment and forest land (Mora and Yousuf, 2021) and rapid growth of extremisms and other crimes, including stealing, robbery, human and drug trafficking, harassment, violence and conflict in recent times (Ahmed *et al.*, 2009). These negative impacts of the influx made the locals feel that they have been punished for their generosity and hospitality. Their frustrations are aggravated with their feelings of being excluded from the humanitarian response and apprehending that the NGOs are providing aid disproportionately, even to the “the rich” Rohingyas and are providing lucrative jobs to the “outsiders” depriving the local host people (Ahmed *et al.*, 2021; Grossenbacher, 2020). All the factors mentioned above increased the frustration and anger of the host community in place of empathy towards the Rohingya community. Therefore, the growing hostility impacted their relations with the community people including Rohingya community.

Limitations

The study complies with the existing laws and rules of the Government and followed the instructions of RRRC. However, the study did not address any security issues and did not breach the preconditions of Government. The study did not address the policy issues or any repatriation issues. It focuses on the Cohesion and women empowerment including the violence against the women.

Confidentiality

Interviewee participation in this study kept strictly confidential. The collected data has been anonymized and stored securely. Only the research team have access to the data. The results of the study is to be reported in aggregate form and will not identify individual participants except Government.

Risks and Benefits

There are no anticipated risks associated with participating in this study. By participating, respondent contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the field of Refugee economics.

Voluntary Participation

All participation in this study was voluntary, and have the right to decline participation or withdraw from the study at any time without providing a reason. This decision will not affect any present or future relationship with Nice Foundation or Tohoku University.

Conclusion

The study shed light on the current relationship, women empowerment, conflicting issues and mitigation strategies by analysing the SCORE index between the Rohingya and the host communities. Rohingyas, those who came before the 2017 influx, are in better condition. So are the youths and the males, particularly of both influxes. Therefore, a scrutinised policy is needed to uphold the economic and social standards for the aged, female, low-income groups and Rohingyas who arrived after the 2017 influx. In the host community, those involved in agriculture and informal sectors, i.e. people from low-income groups, aged, less educated and living in Ukhiya are getting lesser economic opportunities. Focused vocational training and skill development for the young people in both Rohingya and host communities might be an effective remedial policy. Cash-for-work for the low-income groups in host communities may be a good option to minimise their grievance over the impact on their lives and livelihoods caused by the Rohingya influx.

Inclusive programs that pay equal attention to both communities can help reduce tensions and build a tolerant and stable society. Existing social networks and structures of the host community should be positively utilised to encourage active participation and involvement. Community groups and institutions can play a crucial role in minimising the tensions and increasing the cohesion between Rohingyas and host communities. They can be used as agent of change to spread peace among the people in both Rohingya and host communities. Capacity-building activities should be included in the

initiatives to enable the social and institutional leaders and volunteers to work on social cohesion, women decision process, and peace among the Rohingya and host communities. Moreover, the Rohingya crisis response projects should be community-based and coordinated through a flexible approach that considers humanitarian, developmental and peace-building aspects till their repatriation.

Project 10

Child Education programme in Cox's Bazar

Pre-Primary Education through the Kajoli Model for the Barua Community in Ukhiya

Nice Foundation has been implementing pre-primary education programs for vulnerable children from the Barua community in Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar. The initiative targets children aged 3 to 5 years, aiming to prepare them for smooth integration into the formal schooling system.

The intervention is based on the Kajoli Model an innovative, community-based early childhood education approach developed in Bangladesh. Designed to meet the educational needs of underprivileged and rural children, the Kajoli Model creates a nurturing, inclusive, and stimulating learning environment, with a strong focus on early cognitive, emotional, and social development.

Nice Foundation has been implementing the Kajoli Model since 2013 in the Khulna region and has since replicated the model in Cox's Bazar, particularly with the Barua community in Ukhiya. The implementation is carried out with technical support and promotion from Research Initiatives Bangladesh (RIB).

A unique aspect of the Kajoli Model is its community ownership. Each learning center consists of 26 children, and the mothers of these children take turns preparing nutritious meals, with each mother responsible for one day of food preparation per month. This not only ensures child nutrition but also fosters strong community involvement and shared responsibility.

Nice Foundation provides trained teachers, supervisors, and all necessary teaching-learning materials to support the centers. The model emphasizes learning through play, which fosters creativity, curiosity, and problem-solving abilities in children. Activities include storytelling, drawing, singing, traditional games, and interactive group learning.

A core objective of the Kajoli Model is to ensure that children are ready for formal school entry. It focuses on developing basic literacy and numeracy, along with essential social skills and self-confidence. The learning centers operate on flexible schedules, accommodating the lifestyles of both learners and facilitators, thereby making early education more accessible and sustainable.

This approach has proven effective in building foundational skills, reducing dropout rates, and strengthening community bonds, contributing significantly to the overall development of marginalized children in rural Bangladesh.

The Kajoli Education Model stands out as a simple yet powerful example of how education can be made accessible, relevant, and effective for rural and marginalized children through community involvement, culturally responsive practices, and a child-friendly approach. Its emphasis on inclusivity, local empowerment, and sustainability makes it a model worth replicating and scaling both within Bangladesh and globally.

Workshop

Proposal Writing and Documentation for PHALS

The Assignment

The **Nice Foundation** has conducted a project proposal writing workshop for PHALS Cox's Bazar. Proposal Writing and Documentation is one of the key issues for both donor and implementing partner organization. Most importantly, it is common and necessary tasks for the staff members in various levels and roles throughout an organization. However, they are always challenging tasks that many local NGOs face, and even many national organizations, resulting in unsuccessful fund raising or limited access to funds. To this end in view, the NGOs nowadays pay due importance than ever on increasing capacity of their staff members to develop quality project proposal for strengthening fund raising effort to increase access to funds.

PHALS (Program for Helpless and Lagged Society), a local NGO with its headquarter at Jhlongja, Cox's Bazar is also no exception of paying concentration on fund raising effort. It essentially felt the necessary to develop the capacity of staff members in order to make them able to design, write and deliver high quality project proposals and reports. As part of partner organization's capacity development, the donor agency also stresses on this issue. Accordingly, PHALS has offered Nice Foundation (NF) with the assignment to organize the 5-day staff capacity-building workshop on Project Proposal Writing and Documentation so that it can enhance the ability of its staff members to develop quality proposals, increasing the possibility to get projects and grants from the national and international donors. The trainer (Md. Abul Khair) of Nice Foundation facilitated the five-day workshop sessions.



The five-day workshop titled “Project Proposal Writing and Documentation” was held during 10 -14 March 2024 at PHALS Training & Dine Center, Jhlongja, Cox's Bazar. A total of 12 participants from different positions of PHALS attended in the workshop (Annex-1).

The main purpose of the workshop was to capacitate the participants in proposal writing and documentation of different projects based on different requirements of the donors. It is worthy to mention that the workshop progressed following the PHALS supplied donor's project proposal template. Workshop included, elaborated and explained various topics for instance, project planning and identification, situation analysis and problem identification, stakeholders' identification and project proposal writing etc. In addition, the workshop also covered many tips, techniques, skills, tactics for effective project proposal and report writing. Workshop remained successful as participants were actively engaged in all sessions with some exception (late arrival in workshop session by a few participants).

Objective

The main objective is to conduct a 5-day workshop on Proposal Writing and Documentation for its staff members of PHALS to enhance their capacity to develop quality project proposals and relevant

documents required to attempt donor awards and grants. Some specific objectives of the workshop are as follows:

- Develop Project Proposal Development and Documentation Manual and Workshop Schedule with materials requirements and submit to the donor for approval.
- Facilitate the 5-day training on Proposal Writing and Documentation.
- Prepare and submit the training report containing the workshop methodology, content, and quality photos with visibility.



Methodology

One of the most significant parts of workshop is the methodology. The methodologies used were a combination of lecture method, group work, question and answer session, case study analysis, storytelling, simulation, and PowerPoint presentation. The workshop was facilitated following a Training Manual which was shared with PHALS for feedback earlier. After receiving feedback, the manual was finalized and provided to all the participants on the first day of the workshop. Practical and hands on exercise was facilitated by the trainer based on a Case Study “Rohingya Crisis in Bangladesh” having rehabilitation theme. The day to day sessions of the workshop was facilitated following a Workshop Schedule (Annex-2). The workshop session was participatory and interactive. Taking everyone’s comments into consideration, the trainers have encouraged the participants for spontaneous engagement of all in the group works, feedbacks, queries and suggestions. The trainer strongly followed two-way communication while conducting the workshop for 5 days. Training manual/materials supplied to the participants earlier have tremendously supported the success of the workshop. Pre-test and post-test were conducted for assessing the knowledge and skills level of the participants. Moreover, post-workshop course evaluation was also conducted for getting feedback of the participants on overall quality of the workshop course.

Project – 11

Baseline Survey of Provision of Comprehensive WASH services for the Rohingya FDMN living in Cox's Bazar (BRAC Pooled Fund)

This Baseline Study Report (BSR) provides information aiming to make the project interventions relevant, efficient, effective, and impactful that have been objectively verified. It also sets up the parameter against each indicator based on the existing facilities, services and practices. This report will provide required information to the decision-makers and the programme management team to review project design and intervention plans. It also provides opportunity to fill the identified gaps and/or improve existing services from the project. To complete the review, a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was used and data was collected from 10 to 17 December 2023. Individual Household Surveys, WASH infrastructure functionality assessment, Key Informant Interviews (KII), Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were used for primary data collection. After completing data collection, validity checking, cleaning, tabulation and analysis was done to identify problems and prioritize in the survey report synthesizing the findings, holding feedback sessions, sharing preliminary findings with the project management, and incorporating necessary analysis and feedback while finalizing the report.

Most refugees are now living in fragile and unsanitary conditions in government-designated land and settlements. Areas around Ukhia & Teknaf Upazilas are fully covered with hilly terrain land where installation of tube well is challenging. As a result, all concerned authorities are struggling in providing safe water and proper sanitation facilities to the Refugees.

The major problems related to WASH in the camps are lack of segregated latrine for male and female, insufficient gender marking in the latrines and bathing sheds, most of the existing latrines require frequent dislodgement, do not have sufficient lighting, and remain unclean and unhygienic. There are very limited facilities for water for drinking and other household use. The existing facilities for both latrines and water sources are far away from refugee shelters. As the traditional gender role, women are predominantly involved in water collection for the family. It is not safe to draw water or go to the latrine at night, especially for children and women. These situations have exposed girls and women to a higher risk of gender-based violence especially at night. The situation usually compels them to defecate outdoors around their shelter. Though handwashing is not a normal practice for the refugees, awareness creation about health, availability of soap and water near the latrine would encourage hand washing after defecation. Lack of systematic intervention in solid waste management from the household level to the final dumping and recycling phase is a huge challenge to ensure hygienic environment.

Insufficient water points compel the refugees to spend more time for drawing drinking water or bathing. The situation creates conflict and quarrels among the refugees and sometimes with host population who have been living there since before the refugees' arrivals. When the challenges become acute, women suffer more.

We surveyed randomly selected 369 households from the targeted areas of 4 sub-blocks i.e., B, C, D and E at Rohingya refugee Camp 13 where 162 (44%) respondents were female and 207 (56%) were male. Those aged from 0 to 17 years were 55, aged 18 to 59 were 270, and aged 60 years or above were 44. In terms of marital status, 274 were married, 89 singles, 4 widow and 2 divorced. Moreover 14 respondents reported having at least one person with disabilities (PwD) in their households. In those 369 households, there were 2,102 family members. For getting qualitative information, we conducted 10 Key Informant Interviews (KII) with relevant stakeholders and local elite, and 4 Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with different beneficiary groups like adult male, adult female, female adolescent & mix of all kinds of people.

We organized training for the enumerators prior to the start of data collection. Data was collected using Kobo software on smartphones. We checked and cleaned data daily during data collection to improve the accuracy of findings. Most of the data were collected by asking the head of the household, and

calculation of the volume of drinking water was completed by direct observation of the number of containers used and the capacity of each container. Further to this, access to hand washing and soap, enumerators verified the presence of soap in the home asking household members to show the soap. Besides, we asked some questions related to Personal Health & Hygiene, dislodging and community participation.

Summary of the baseline findings

Drinking Water	
Sources of water: The main sources for collecting drinking water were deep tube wells, shallow tube wells, and water networks which were installed by different NGOs with support from different donors, out of which 76 households used multiple water sources. All the sources were managed by assigned WASH agencies. SHED repaired and maintained all WASH facilities in the surveyed area to ensure functionality and implemented different types of other WASH activities. To ensure accessibility with equity for all people, agencies installing them maintains design and safety considerations of the water sources. Agencies are also liable to inform and update all kinds of users with standard WASH messages for getting safe drinking water.	
Efficiency & Sufficient	76% respondent reported that they can fully fulfil their demand of water from the existing water sources. The water sources in camp 13 are deep tube well, shallow tube well & water network. 21% respondent reported that they can fulfil their demand of water only partially from the existing water sources from deep tube well, shallow tube well & water network. 3% respondent reported that they cannot fulfil their demand of water from those water sources, and depend on rainwater and ponds to fulfil their demand.
Functionality	91% of existing water sources were fully functional. 4% of existing water sources needed repair. 5% of existing water sources were not functional
Accessibility	71% respondent reported that they can fully access existing water sources. 27% respondent reported that they can partially access existing water sources. 2% respondent reported that they cannot access existing water sources.
Safe	- About 80% respondent reported that they feel very safe while collecting water. - About 16% respondent reported that they feel partially safe while collecting water. - About 4% respondent reported that they feel unsafe while collecting water.
Maintenance & management	- Have well equipped community volunteers with required skills. - Water quality is tested in three types: by-monthly, monthly, and need base. - Water sources were clean but the platform was not clean due to insufficient drainage system. - Have community volunteers to collect information about the functionality status of the facilities time to time from physical monitoring visits. - Based on the report of the findings, agencies took initiatives to ensure functionality.
Water storage and usage	100% people use water pot like jerrycan, bottle, dram, kolsi, bucket, or pitcher with cover. Storage capacity of water container of households was not sufficient as per as their household water demand. - Water container landing stations are wet and unclean.
Status of the bathing facility: Community people used to take baths and wash their clothes in the community bathing facility. All were installed and maintained by different NGOs under WASH sector. The design & place were user friendly, and accessible for all ensuring equity and safety. Agencies were also liable to inform and update the community people using wash standard messages for proper usage. A few people took shower and washed their clothes inside their home which was built by their own.	

Functionality	● 91% of existing bathing facilities were fully functional. ● 5% of existing bathing facilities needed to repair. ● 4% of existing bathing facilities were not functional
Efficiency & Sufficient	● About 84% respondent reported that they can fully use the community-based bathing facility. ● About 11% respondent reported that they can partially use the community-based bathing facility. ● 5 % respondent reported that they cannot use the community-based bathing facility.
Accessibility & Safety	● About 89% respondent reported that they feel safe in using bathing facility. ● About 8% respondent reported that they feel partially safe in using bathing facility. ● About 3% respondent reported that they feel unsafe using bathing facility.
Maintenance & Management	● Have community volunteers to collect information about the status of the bathing facilities time to time from physical monitoring visits for availability, washing point, bathing instruments, accessibility, etc. ● Based on the report of the findings, agencies took initiatives to ensure functionality.
Sanitation: Community people used 2 types of sanitary latrines: individual which are management by WASH agencies and home-based built from their own initiatives. All community latrines were installed and maintained by selected NGO under WASH sector using design, maintenance of pathways, safety with protective measures, accessible and dislodged based on the need. Agencies were also liable to inform and update the users about proper use of sanitation facilities, standards, personal health and hygiene mobilizing community volunteers. This section covers household use of latrines (including type of facilities used, problems and safety, satisfaction, and perceived change over time), before examining issues around access to soap, and menstrual hygiene materials.	
Efficiency & Sufficient	● 84% respondent reported that their sanitation demand are covered from existing sanitary latrine. ● 16% respondent reported that their sanitation are not covered to till now from the existing latrine
Functionality	● 87% of latrines are found fully functional. ● 13% of latrines require repair (305 functional and 44 need repair). ● But in most of the cases individual latrine were very unhygienic and not functional. ● Sanitary latrines were well equipped with water, soap, washing point, pan with protect by Jinuk. ● No bad smell was spread out from the latrine. ● Drainage systems were not functional and most cases the water were overflow and environment became unsafe. ● Latrines in the households were not functional and constructed with 1-2 ring with 1 slab. So, it filled up very quickly and they could not dislodge on their own, they had bad smell spread out in the environment.
Accessibility	● 66% of respondents (231 households) were using improved (semi-permanent) latrines. ● 44% of respondents could not use these latrines. These people are basically PWD, PLW, Female adolescent because latrine was far from their house, installed at public place, have no stairs, no pathways, no light at light and physical limitation. ● 20% people use the individual latrine at their household level built from their own initiatives. ● Latrine were not accessible for PWD, PLW because the design is not friendly for them. Have not enough space, handle, limitation of stairs, place wet and slippery.
Safe	● 83% respondent reported that their latrine is safe to use.

	17% respondent reported that they cannot use latrine safely. These people are basically PWD, PLW, Female adolescent because latrine was far from their house, installed at public place, have no stairs, no pathways, no light at light and physical limitation. - Community based bathrooms are clean, but household-based latrines are not managed by agency and managed by the user household.
Maintenance & management	- Have well equipped community volunteers with required skills. - SHED volunteer were dislodged and clean when required. - Based on the report of the findings, agencies took initiatives to ensure functionality. - But individual latrine had to dislodge and clean by individually.
Hygiene Practices	To be aware of the community on personal health and hygiene activities SHED conducted these types of session, campaign, and practical session. Moreover, SHED specially care and provided MHM kits of PLW, LW and female adolescent during the pregnancy and menstrual period in regards of personal health and hygiene. - About 94% people were aware about hygiene practices after defecation 4% people were partially aware about hygiene practices after defecation - Only 2% of people were not aware about hygiene practices after defecation. - About 97% people wash their hands after defecation properly using soap and water - Only 3% of people do not wash their hands after defecation properly using soap and water 96% women/adolescent girls use sanitary napkin during menstrual period. 4% women/adolescent girls use other clothes in the household as napkin during menstrual period. 98% people said that they have a washing point for sanitary napkin clothes in their home. 2% people said that they have no washing point for sanitary napkin clothes in their home.
Solid Waste management (Community based)	Inadequate solid waste management presents risks to public health in the camps, and which is further compounded by the dense population in the camp. At present, almost half of the households are using either communal pits or designated open areas to dispose solid waste. However, leaving waste in undesigned open areas raises a concern as to how this waste is subsequently managed. Use of undesigned areas for solid waste disposal was significantly above average in Camp 13. The key concerns or comments from the respondents are: 96% of people think solid waste management is sufficient to keep their community clean and safe. 4% of people think that their solid waste management is not sufficient to keep their community clean and safe. - In the rainy season, water overflows the drainage. - Has no connecting drainage system from household to bigger drainage! - Have well-equipped volunteers to clean the waste.
Solid Waste management (FSM)	The survey team observed 2 Fecal sludge management units and 4 solid waste management sites. - Both (100%) of the FSM systems and 2 (50%) solid waste management units were fully functional. - In those not fully functional waste segregation sites, the issues were dirt in the surrounding, no proper waste segregation, no proper latchet collection/drainage, and the waste was with lots of sand/silt.
Community Engagement & Accountability	83% people are satisfied that they can give their opinions and feedback to the WASH agency, staff and volunteers. 17% of people are not satisfied as they think they cannot give their opinions and feedback to the WASH agency, staff and volunteers.

	● 91% people are getting response against their opinions and feedback. ● 9% of people are not getting response against their opinions and feedback.
--	--

Recommendations

For both water and sanitation, it was found that the basic coverage of WASH infrastructure is high, with over 76% of refugee households reporting use of improved water sources and latrines. However, almost half of all households also report problems with the accessibility and quality of infrastructure. For water, distance and long waiting time remain as a significant problem for many households with around a quarter of families in the survey area reportedly reduced their water intake due to access issues. The number of families treating their water is extremely low, especially concerning given the reportedly high level of drinking water contamination at household level.

For sanitation, widespread reported latrine use among adult household members is qualified but the latrines are felt to pose safety threats to women after dark, and open defecation among children under 5 is visible. In terms of hygiene, safety problems are felt to be similarly acute at bathing facilities, with many families relying instead on self-built in-house bathing infrastructure rather than public facilities. While soap is present in many households, many still reported problems accessing soap and lack of adequate handwashing facilities at latrines.

While this assessment has been able to provide significant amounts of information at the household level, there remains gaps and challenges to better contextualize the WASH support and the services. To address these, the following improvements are recommended for the project:

- With access and quality highlighted as major issues for WASH infrastructure, it is critical that the project team work closely with the women, adolescent girls and PWD to better understand their concerns and come up with the most appropriate solution to address them, specially safety and dignity concerns in public WASH infrastructures.
- Plan for better community participation with increased capacity for prompt response.
- Intensify drainage cleaning activities so that more frequent cleaning happens. Besides, promoting waste segregation and collection from household level on daily basis can partly reduce waste disposal in open spaces and drainages.
- Provide additional water containers to increase water storage capacity at household-level to ensure water availability at critical time like night for both drinking and non-drinking purposes.

Conclusion

The survey intends to present evidence and analysis-based conclusions and recommendations. The conclusions and recommendations are relevant and realistic, and they clearly suggest actions for the project's various stakeholders.

Project - 12

Nice Foundation Multi-Purpose Village Centre

In March 2024, Nice Foundation embarked on a visionary initiative to promote inclusive community development by establishing the **Multi-purpose Village Centre** in Aronghata, Khulna. This Centre represents a significant milestone in the Foundation's commitment to building a resilient, self-reliant, and empowered rural society.

The project was made possible through generous local donations, particularly a heartfelt contribution of **35 lakh BDT** by **Dr. Ajmal Sobhan** and **Dr. Ehsan** from the USA, along with **Professor Roxana Khanom**, whose unwavering support laid the cornerstone of this endeavor. With these contributions, the construction of a **four-storied building** was initiated. As of now, the **foundation (1700 square feet)** and the **ground floor** of the building have been successfully completed.

The **Nice Foundation Multi-purpose Village Centre** is designed to serve as a vibrant hub catering to the multifaceted needs of the rural population. It aims to provide a wide range of essential services and programs under one roof, including:

- **Primary Health Care Services:** Basic health consultations, maternal and child health care, and preventive care.
- **Child Schooling:** Early childhood education and informal learning for village children.
- **Skill Development Training:** Vocational, off-farm, and technical skills training for youth and adults, including computer literacy and digital learning.
- **Courtyard and Monthly Social Meetings:** Safe spaces for rural women to meet, share, and build solidarity through regular courtyard meetings and monthly gatherings.
- **Community Engagement and Social Dialogue:** Hosting village-level social gatherings to raise awareness and address key community concerns and issues.
- **Digital Learning Centre:** Facilitating e-learning, access to online resources, and digital literacy.
- **Legal Aid and Case Management:** Supporting individuals with legal counselling, mediation, and social protection cases.
- **Psychosocial Counseling Services:** Addressing mental health needs, trauma, and social stressors through professional support.
- **Future Vision: Old Care Home:** In the long run, the Foundation aspires to establish a care home for elderly persons who lack support or shelter.

The **Multi-purpose Village Centre** is not just a building; it is a **platform for hope, learning, and empowerment**. It brings together diverse services to strengthen the social fabric of the community while addressing pressing health, education, legal, psychological, and economic needs.

Nice Foundation extends its deepest gratitude to all contributors, well-wishers, and community members who have supported this noble initiative. With sustained support and collective ownership, the Centre aims to become a model for integrated rural development in Bangladesh.

Stories of Change

Project: Health and Skill Development Training Support to Kawra and Underprivileged Community

Case Study-1

Case Story: Recovery and Resilience – The Journey of Md. Raju Sheikh

Personal Details:

- **Name:** Md. Raju Sheikh
- **Age:** 29 years
- **Father's Name:** Yusuf Sheikh
- **Mother's Name:** Rizia Begum
- **Address:** Deyana North Para, Daulatpur, Khulna
- **Number of Family Members:** 6

Md. Raju Sheikh, a 29-year-old resident of Deyana North Para in Daulatpur, Khulna, faced a critical turning point in his life when he developed severe liver complications. As the primary income earner for his family of six, Raju's illness brought immense emotional and financial distress to the household, threatening their stability and well-being.

In search of help, Raju reached out to the **Nice Children's Education and Health Center**, a trusted local institution recognized for its compassionate and community-oriented services. The center promptly responded by providing him with comprehensive medical care focused on his liver condition. His treatment involved regular health check-ups, essential medication, and guidance on adopting a healthier lifestyle to aid long-term recovery and prevent recurrence.



Beyond medical treatment, the center's holistic support helped Raju regain his physical strength and rebuild his confidence. With consistent care and monitoring, Raju's health gradually improved. After several months, he fully recovered and resumed his daily work, reinstating a sense of hope and financial security for his family.

Raju's recovery not only transformed his own life but also had a broader impact on his family and the wider community. His successful treatment inspired greater trust in the services of the Nice Children's Education and Health Center. Community members, who had witnessed Raju's struggle and recovery, began to rely more confidently on the center for their own healthcare needs.

This case underscores the critical role that accessible and quality healthcare plays in uplifting marginalized communities. Raju's journey from illness to recovery is a testament to the power of dedicated healthcare intervention. It brought mental peace and economic relief to his family and highlighted the importance of institutional healthcare support in building a healthier and more resilient society. Through its continued efforts, the Nice Children's Education and Health Center remains a beacon of hope for vulnerable families in Deyana North Para and beyond.

Case Study-2

Restoring Health and Hope – The Recovery Journey of Biswajit Ray

Biswajit Ray, a 45-year-old resident of Aronghata Union, had been suffering from severe gastric problems for an extended period. As the sole breadwinner for his family of five—which includes his wife and three children—his deteriorating health significantly affected his ability to work and support his household. Frequent episodes of pain and discomfort prevented him from carrying out his daily activities, creating considerable emotional and financial strain on the family.

Understanding the seriousness of his condition, Bissojit sought treatment at a reputable local health facility known for providing quality medical services in the area. Upon diagnosis, the medical team implemented a comprehensive treatment plan to address his gastric issues. This included regular medical check-ups, prescribed medication, and dietary recommendations tailored to support his recovery.

With consistent and dedicated care, Bissojit gradually regained his strength and was eventually able to return to his normal routine. His recovery not only marked a significant improvement in his physical health but also helped restore financial and emotional stability within the household. The family's stress began to ease as Bissojit resumed his role as provider, bringing renewed hope and security.

The positive impact extended beyond Bissojit himself. His children, who had been deeply concerned about their father's condition, began to feel more reassured and optimistic about the future. The improved mental and emotional well-being of the entire family marked a turning point in their lives.

Moreover, Bissojit's successful recovery strengthened the community's confidence in the local healthcare system. His story has since inspired others to seek timely medical assistance, reinforcing the importance of accessible and reliable healthcare services.

In conclusion, the case of Bissojit Ray underscores the transformative power of timely and effective medical intervention. It demonstrates how access to proper healthcare not only restores an individual's health but also contributes to the overall well-being and resilience of families and communities.

Key Achievements

Enhanced Community Health: The project successfully delivered vital health services and education, leading to improved health outcomes and greater awareness of health issues among community members. Through a series of well-structured health-related training programs, individuals gained valuable knowledge and skills to better manage their health.

Skill Development: Vocational training programs have empowered participants with practical skills, significantly boosting their employment prospects and economic stability. Additionally, targeted programs engaged youth effectively, fostering their active involvement in community development and personal growth.

Community Involvement and Empowerment: The project increased community engagement in decision-making processes, ensuring that interventions were tailored to local needs and priorities. By strengthening the capacity of local organizations and community members, the project has enhanced their ability to sustain benefits beyond the project's duration.

Successful Collaboration: The project established meaningful partnerships with Bangladesh National Society for Blinds, Khulna, government agencies, and other stakeholders. This collaboration has resulted in coordinated efforts and a more holistic approach to addressing community needs. Leveraging shared resources and expertise has maximized the impact and efficiency of the project activities.

Future Recommendations

It is essential to continue enhancing financial controls and operational oversight to ensure effective resource management and timely activity delivery. Developing strategies to address logistical challenges will also be crucial for improving service delivery. Regularly reviewing and updating safeguarding policies and inclusion practices will address emerging issues and ensure comprehensive protection for all community members. Increased targeted support for marginalized and vulnerable groups is also recommended. Enhancing monitoring and evaluation systems will improve data collection, analysis, and reporting, providing better insights into project impact and areas for improvement. Implementing effective feedback mechanisms will ensure community and stakeholder input is integrated into ongoing activities and future planning.

In summary, the "Health and Skill Development Training Support to Kawra and Underprivileged Community" project has significantly contributed to the well-being and empowerment of the target communities. By addressing the identified challenges and implementing the outlined recommendations, Nice Foundation can build on its achievements and ensure the sustainability of its impactful efforts for the benefit of the communities it serves.

Project 3: Minority Women Livelihood Development Project

Case Study-1

Future plans of a poor day labourer **Suchitra Mandal**

Suchitra Mondal is a poor day laborer from a poor family in Devitala village of Batiaghata upazila of Khulna district. She is a widow woman. Husband died long ago. There are 3 family members including two daughters. A girl is disabled. As they don't have any cultivation land of their own, he works as a day laborer to support his family. Their family lives in a lot of trouble with what they earn. As it is difficult to educate girls in a family of

Due to poverty, younger girls get married at a young age. There is no land other than own house. Not being able to do anything because of not having enough money. While wondering what to do, NICE Foundation came to Boyarbhangra village with a project funded by Bangladesh NGO Foundation. He is selected as a member by survey as per scheme rules. 2 female sheep were given free of charge to Suchitra Mandal from the project. After receiving the sheep, he took great care.



Currently his 1 ewe is pregnant so he takes a lot of care. So that the sheep do not get cold. Every week Batiaghata goes to the vet to get ideas about the treatment of the sheep. Every day the sheep are taken to the field to feed on grass. He thought of the sheep and built a sheepfold. Suchitra Mandal said, "I sincerely thank Bangladesh NGO Foundation and NICE Foundation for giving 2 sheep free of cost to a poor woman like me. I want to set up a small scale sheep farm. So that I can take good care of my disabled child. My younger daughter got married a few days ago. I gave it. Only for lack. Now I will work as a day laborer besides rearing the sheep."

Case Study-2

Dream of Mosumi Mandal

Moushumi Mandal is a poor woman. Swami Biswajit Mondal. The van driver's husband's earnings alone make it impossible to make a living, so he works as a day laborer along with his husband. The number of family members including disabled son is 3 people. Son will give SSC exam. Own land is nothing but a house. The family goes by what both the husband and wife earn. But always worried about the future of the child. There is no land for own cultivation. It would be good if you could keep some animals at home. Worried about what animals to raise and how to raise money. At that time he came to know that Nice Foundation came to Bayarbhangra village with a project funded by Bangladesh NGO Foundation. Two free sheep will be given from the scheme. He is surveyed as per project criteria. And according to the criteria he is selected as a member. He gets two free sheep which are female sheep. Moushumi Mandal is very happy to have two sheep and is rearing them very carefully. Palapasi also bought some chicks.



She was trained by the Nice Foundation in how to raise sheep. She attends the monthly meetings and listens carefully to the discussions on sheep care and cares for the sheep accordingly. After a couple of months, he found out that two of his sheep were pregnant. Currently he takes care of the sheep in consultation with the doctor. Moushumi Mandal said, "I am a housewife from a poor family. I work as a van driver my husband. I could not afford to buy sheep in the world of poverty. If I had not received free sheep, I would not have kept my sheep. Many thanks to Bangladesh NGO Foundation and Nice Foundation for this. I wish them well to provide 2 sheep for free to a poor family like mine. My future plan is to increase the number of sheep and make it a big farm so that I can save some extra money from it for the future of my children and with that money I will buy land and farm it. "I feel blessed to support Mausumi Mandal in its future plans of providing free sheep to poor families.

Project :7 Naya Krishi Biodiversity Conservation Project

Case Study- 1

Empowering Women Farmers Through Agroecology

Beneficiary: Vharoti Dhali

Location: Basurabad Village, Batiaghata Upazila

Project Title: *Noya Krishi Andolon*

Funded by: Women and Biodiversity Network

Implementing Organization: Nice Foundation, Khulna

Vharoti Dhali, a determined and hardworking woman farmer, lives in Basurabad village under Batiaghata Upazila. Belonging to a marginalized and economically disadvantaged community, she has been engaged in traditional farming for over a decade to sustain her family. As a single-income household, she often struggled with rising input costs, dependency on expensive hybrid seeds, and declining crop productivity. Seasonal losses, market fluctuation, and lack of knowledge on sustainable practices made farming unpredictable and stressful for her.

In 2024, Vharoti joined the Noya Krishi Andolon, a community-based agroecological farming initiative led by Nice Foundation. This movement focuses on promoting local seed use, organic cultivation, low-cost production methods, and farmer self-reliance. Through this platform, Vharoti was exposed to practical knowledge, peer learning, and field-level demonstrations that emphasized the importance of seed sovereignty and ecological balance.

Through monthly meeting, courtyard sessions, training workshops, and local seed-sharing circles, Vharoti learned about the ecological and economic benefits of local seed preservation. She courageously chose to cultivate locally preserved Moong Dal (sona mug dall), a traditional legume crop that had nearly disappeared from the area due to hybrid seed dominance. In addition to



Moong Dal, she planted a variety of vegetables on the same land, such as bottle gourd (lau), red amaranth (lal shak), and okra (dhyarosh) adopting intercropping techniques to maximize land use and soil fertility. Practiced crop rotation and intercropping to reduce disease risk and maintain biodiversity.

Within just one growing season, Vharoti Dhali witnessed transformative results on her farm. The local Moong Dal variety adapted well to her land and weather conditions, growing healthily without the need for chemical inputs. By using locally preserved seeds and organic compost, she was able to reduce her production costs by nearly 30% compared to previous seasons. The Moong Dal crop matured earlier than hybrid varieties and attracted better prices in the local market due to its rich flavor and traditional appeal.

Importantly, Vharoti saved seeds from her harvest for the next planting cycle, giving her long-term seed security and reducing her dependence on market-bought seeds. In addition, her intercropped vegetable garden flourished, providing her family with a regular supply of fresh, chemical-free vegetables like bottle gourd and red amaranth. The surplus vegetables were sold in the local bazaar, adding an extra stream of income. Her farm became a model of how sustainable, low-cost, and eco-friendly farming can lead to both nutritional and economic benefits for smallholder women farmers.

Vharoti Dhali's success in sustainable farming has brought about meaningful changes in her personal life and in her role within the community. With the income earned from selling Moong Dal and vegetables, she was able to purchase essential school supplies for her children, ensuring their continued education. She also reinvested a portion of her earnings in practical tools such as a compost bin and storage baskets, helping her improve post-harvest management and continue organic practices at home. Her efforts did not go unnoticed. **Other women farmers in the village began visiting her farm,** curious about her methods and eager to learn. Over time, Vharoti has taken on the role of a **mentor to five fellow women**, sharing her knowledge of local seeds, organic inputs, and low-cost techniques. This peer-to-peer learning has started building a network of confident, capable women farmers in the area. Perhaps most importantly, Vharoti has experienced a deep sense of **personal growth and self-confidence**. She no longer feels dependent on external markets or middlemen. Instead, she feels empowered by her own decisions, skills, and the tangible results she has achieved. Her journey reflects the power of resilience, knowledge, and community-based support in transforming the lives of women in agriculture.

Vharoti now takes pride in her independence and farming knowledge. *She says, "I used to depend on market seeds. Now I use my own seeds and get better yields. I no longer depend on anyone else."*

At the beginning, Vharoti faced doubt and hesitation from neighboring farmers about her use of local seeds. She also struggled with limited access to organic pest repellents and had to deal with unpredictable weather conditions caused by climate change. Despite these challenges, she remained committed. With regular follow-up, encouragement through group meetings, and support with essential farm inputs, the Nice Foundation helped her overcome these barriers and confidently continue her journey toward sustainable, eco-friendly farming.

Vharoti Dhali's experience highlights key lessons from the field. First, local knowledge truly works indigenous seed varieties are not only more adaptable to local conditions but also reduce costs and environmental harm. Second, women-led learning creates ripple effects when one woman farmer gains confidence and success, she becomes a source of inspiration for many others. Lastly, agroecology is a practical path forward with the right training and support, even smallholder farmers can adopt sustainable, low-cost, and resilient farming systems.

Vharoti Dhali's story shows how local knowledge, community support, and eco-friendly farming can change the lives of women farmers. Through the Noya Krishi Andolon, she became self-reliant, confident, and a leader in her village. Today, Vharoti is not just a farmer she is a role model. Her journey inspires other women in Batiaghata to follow a path of sustainable farming, local pride, and hope for a better future.

Governance and Leadership of the Nice Foundation

Nice Foundation's governance and leadership framework stands as a model of inclusive, accountable, and community-rooted organizational management. It reflects the foundation's mission to empower marginalized voices, promote equitable leadership, and uphold transparency at every level of operation. The organization is governed by a democratically elected General Committee and a seven-member Governing Body, ensuring community representation and strategic oversight at all levels.

The General Committee comprises 51 members, of whom 80% belong to marginalized and underrepresented groups such as women, transgender persons, persons with disabilities (PWD), Christians, Dalits, and minority communities. This inclusive composition not only reflects the foundation's values but also ensures that its decision-making is informed by diverse voices and lived experiences. The General Committee meets annually to review the organization's overall direction, policy decisions, and progress, reinforcing participatory governance.

The Governing Body, elected from among the General Committee members, plays a more hands-on role in strategic planning and organizational oversight. This seven-member body holds quarterly meetings to review project implementation, approve key decisions, monitor financial and programmatic performance, and provide strategic guidance to the operational team.

At the steering of the organizational structure is a woman serving as the Constitutional Head, highlighting Nice Foundation's commitment to promoting feminism and women's leadership. The Secretary, who acts as the executive head, is supported by a dedicated team of professionals, including the Director and Coordinators, HR Officer, Procurement Officer, Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) Team, Adviser for Fundraising, Chief Accountant and Internal Auditor. This team ensures that the organization runs smoothly, programs are implemented effectively, and all activities adhere to principles of good governance and accountability.

The financial systems of the Nice Foundation are strengthened by the use of professional accounting software, ensuring accurate and real-time financial recordkeeping. Internal audits are conducted regularly by the Internal Auditor to monitor compliance, reduce risks, and promote continuous improvement. Additionally, all financial records undergo an annual external audit conducted by an NGO Affairs Bureau (NGOAB)-enlisted Chartered Accountancy firm. These external audits cover all funding sources and validate the organization's commitment to financial integrity and donor accountability.

Nice Foundation upholds a strong culture of transparency and accountability through its internal control systems, regular audits, documentation, and reporting practices. Both internal and external stakeholders are informed and engaged through timely reports, meetings, and participatory evaluations. One of the most defining aspects of Nice Foundation's leadership model is its emphasis on youth and women's leadership. Young women from the community are groomed and mentored to take on leadership roles, including Directorship. This generational transfer of leadership ensures sustainability and relevance, while embedding the values of gender equity and empowerment into the organization's very structure.

Financial Summary

Financial statement as per audit report 2023-2024

Particular	GF	PB	BNF	GFW	EHSKCS	BG	ROHINGAYA	Total BDT	Total US\$
RECEIPTS:									
Opening Cash and Cash Equivalents									
Cash in Hand	11	403	-	71	356		-	841	7
Cash at Bank	2,425,227	113,251	-	3,397	-		-	2,632,489	22,694
Fund Receipts from Donors and Partners									-
Global fund for women , USA (GFW project)	2,150,000			2,150,000				4,300,000	37,069
Project Bangladesh USA (PB-SDT Project)	1,945,000	1,945,000						3,890,000	33,534
Women Affiars Adhidaptor (VWB Project)	220,660							220,660	1,902
DHRS Project (MSF)	284,489							284,489	2,452
Tohoku University- Japan (Rohingya)							462,880	462,880	3,990
PHALS Bangladesh	156,483							156,483	1,349
SHED, Cox'sBazar	262,610							262,610	2,264
Loan from General A/C (Rohingya)	125,000							125,000	1,078
Bangladesh NGO Foundation			300,000					300,000	2,586
Fund received from AFMR Foundation					2,302,140			2,302,140	19,846
									-
Other Receipts:									-
Building Constraction:	-							-	-
Donations Received from Local individuals	1,500,000							2,000,000	17,241
Staff Loan Realise:	-							40,000	345
Other Receipts:	-							-	-
Miscellinious/Donation income Received	226,550							351,340	3,029
Members Subscription	2,550							2,550	22
Bank Interst	75,742	5,189	1,981	11,860	11,828		582	107,182	924
Miscellaneous income	600							3,500	30
Total Receipts	1,805,442	5,189	1,981	11,860	11,828		582	17,442,164	150,363
									-
Particular	GF	HED	BNF	GFW	EHSKCS		BG	Total	#VALUE!
Payments:								Total BDT	Total US\$
Staff Salary	33,500	198,000			300,000			2,001,450	17,254
Office Rent & Utilites	5,500							5,500	47

Communication (Telephone , Postage, Courier, Wi-Fi bill)	30,550	30,000	2,500	27,500	43,200			133,750	1,153
Printing & Stationery	23,650	11,820	2,480	33,087	24,040		49,261	144,338	1,244
Travel, Food & Lodging	31,333	14,740	4,180	74,030	27,020		129,800	281,103	2,423
Office Maintenance	7,000	261,010	2,500	220,000	19,495			510,005	4,397
Program Management cost	37,537							37,537	324
Motorcycle fuel & Maintenance	62,615							62,615	540
Entertainment	6,560							6,560	57
Staff meeting,workshop & Seminar	104,302			16,492	18,200			138,994	1,198
Audit fee (External)	90,000			30,000	20,000			140,000	1,207
Miscellaneous expenses	23,486						42,080	65,566	565
Computer with accessories	13,500							13,500	116
Day Observance	23,700		510	10,010				34,220	295
VAT Payment	12,008							12,008	104
Security Money Payment (VWB)	31,769							31,769	274
Bank Charge	33,629	3,707	1,746	8,161	5,013		1,769	54,024	466
NF Contribution (Rohingya)	1,800							1,800	16
Furniture and Equipment	60,000							60,000	517
VWB Project cost	108,320							108,320	934
MSF Project Cost	100,195							100,195	864
Skill Development Training Cost	15,000							15,000	129
Survey Data Collection Cost	18,000							192,780	1,662
Nice Multi-purpose Building Construction:	-							1,753,569	15,117
Staff Loan	8,000							16,000	138
Loan payment (Rohingya Project)	125,000							125,000	1,078
Fund Transfer:	-							4,095,000	35,302
News Paper		1,800			4,800			6,600	57
Election observe	24,890							24,890	215
Clinical service equipment and material, reagent, gauze, bandage, cotton etc. costs		14,980						14,980	129
Part time Doctors' Cost (male-1, Female-1) 3 times in a week (52 wks per person such 2 Dr.)		192,300						192,300	1,658

Medicines for extreme poor patients		23,570						23,570	203
Furniture and Office Equipment		106,000						335,080	2,889
Trining Matrials (Computer)		27,520						27,520	237
Printer ink		13,720						13,720	118
Trainer's Allowance (Computer)		222,000						222,000	1,914
Computer Training Matrials Distribution		184,420						184,420	1,590
Trainer's Allowance (Sewing)		195,000						195,000	1,681
Sewing Training Matrials Distribution		187,320						187,320	1,615
Regular Report		12,000		44,000	24,000		60,000	140,000	1,207
Loan refund to NF Director		1,000						1,000	9
Balance Transfer to GF(Miscellinious Expenses)		1,680						1,680	14
Baseline Survey			3,000				156,000	159,000	1,371
Information Board			11,700					11,700	101
Training			10,400	29,940			25,700	66,040	569
Treatment			1,000					1,000	9
Monthly Group meeting			2,020	175,910				177,930	1,534
Free Sheep Distribution			204,800					204,800	1,766
Organize bi-monthly meeting				30,030				30,030	259
Quarterly meeting with support groups				44,910				44,910	387
Village level courtyard sessions				20,160				20,160	174
Training on human rights, minorities rights, early marriage, dowry and human trafficking				108,000				108,000	931
Raising consciousness by undertaking gender, equity and equality training				11,970				11,970	103
Organize sessions with Adolescent Kawra girls on Women Rights/paternal property rights meeting & Adolescent club				57,000				57,000	491
Advocacy meeting, Petition submission ,				10,000				10,000	86

position paper preparation									
Divisional level Stakeholders Workshop on issue based Advocacy & adolescent girl monthly meeting				95,507				95,507	823
Staff Training on Human Rights and policy advocacy ,issue based inception work shop				49,810				49,810	429
Board Meeting including AGM				14,930				14,930	129
Project Monitoring field visit				22,075				22,075	190
Visibility,sign board,form formats printing				12,000				12,000	103
Focal person Motorcycle & registration cost				155,000				155,000	1,336
Child Education Programme expenses					515,480			1,645,320	14,184
Cash in Hand	74	2,123	3,210	-	51		-	5,458	47
Cash at Bank	2,573,144	73,554		6,807				2,828,841	24,387
Total								17,442,164	150,363

Organization Capacity and Learning

Nice Foundation is driven by a passionate, values-based team committed to advancing gender justice, feminism, social inclusion, and human rights. The organization's strength lies in its diverse and community-rooted human resources, composed of dedicated women and gender-diverse board members, experienced women professionals, emerging young women leaders from the grassroots, and a strong base of adolescent and youth volunteers. This dynamic combination ensures that the Foundation remains grounded in community realities while advancing strategic goals for systemic change.

Human Resources and Team Commitment

Nice Foundation operates with a team of over 40 regular staff members, alongside 30 part-time staff and active volunteers who contribute meaningfully to program implementation, community mobilization, advocacy, and knowledge sharing. Despite operating with limited resources and infrastructural support, the team has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to the mission and values of the organization. The organizational culture is built on principles of trust, flexibility, and respect. A congenial and inclusive working environment is offered, where staff enjoy flexible working hours and autonomy of movement, especially important for women and gender-diverse staff. This environment has fostered a high level of job satisfaction and retention, even in the face of financial and logistical constraints.

Capacity Building: Challenges and Opportunities

To deliver results that are both qualitative and quantitative, staff development is recognized as a critical priority. However, opportunities for formal capacity building remain limited, primarily due to funding challenges and project-specific constraints. As a result, building and retaining a well-trained team, particularly in specialized areas such as SRHR, GBV, human trafficking, advocacy, and climate justice, remains a pressing challenge. Despite these constraints, Nice Foundation actively promotes peer learning, on-the-job training, and exposure visits where feasible. The dedication of the permanent staff, many of whom have been with the organization for several years, ensures that institutional memory and program quality are sustained. These individuals continue to work with minimal facilities and often go above and beyond their roles to deliver services and support communities in need.

To truly unlock the full potential of the organization, increased collaboration and donor investment in staff capacity building are essential. Leadership training, digital tools, project management, safeguarding, results-based monitoring, and feminist programming would significantly enhance the team's effectiveness and confidence.

Institutional Policies and Knowledge Management

Nice Foundation has made substantial progress in establishing a strong institutional framework. The organization has developed and implemented more than 27 policies, procedures, and operational guidelines, covering Human Resource Management, Gender and Safeguarding, Financial and Procurement Systems, Child Protection, PSEA, Environmental Sustainability, Anti-Harassment, Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL), Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest, Emergency Preparedness, among others. These policies are not just documents; they are actively practiced and monitored. The staff are oriented on their use, and these frameworks serve as foundational tools for ensuring program accountability, quality control, and organizational integrity. This institutional backbone enables Nice Foundation to maintain its credibility and effectiveness, even when operating in complex and resource-limited contexts.

As Nice Foundation continues to grow in reach and impact, capacity development will remain a strategic focus. The organization is actively seeking partnerships, technical collaborations, and funding support to invest in the skills, leadership, and well-being of its staff and community leaders. With a stronger and better-equipped team, the Foundation will be able to scale its efforts, amplify community voices, and deliver transformative change across its areas of intervention.

Looking Forward: 2024–2025

As the global development landscape continues to evolve amidst shrinking funding spaces and shifting donor priorities, the Nice Foundation remains committed to pursuing a sustainable, equitable, and credible partnership model with international and national NGOs. Recognizing the complex realities, ranging from worldwide funding constraints, the impact of recent USAID policy changes to political instability in Bangladesh, **Nice Foundation** is strategically positioning itself to adapt, grow, and lead.

Looking forward to 2024–2025, Nice Foundation envisions horizontal and vertical expansion of its areas of operation. As a feminist organization grounded in rights-based and inclusive development principles, it will continue to prioritize the most marginalized populations, with a focus on women, trans persons, persons with disabilities, religious, Refugees, ethnic minorities, and Dalit communities.

Key priorities for the upcoming period include:

1. Strengthening the Network and Leadership

Nice Foundation aims to fortify its national and grassroots networks, building stronger alliances with feminist, rights-based, and community-driven actors. A new generation of young women leaders will be developed and empowered to address pressing social issues such as Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Human Trafficking, and Discrimination and Inequality. These leaders will be mentored and positioned to take on advocacy and service delivery roles across operational areas.

2. Advancing Gender Justice and Social Inclusion

Gender justice will remain at the core of all interventions. Nice Foundation will work to engage more diverse stakeholders, including youth, men, and policymakers, Advocate for minority rights, including religious and ethnic communities, Champion women's rights to paternal property, Lead community-based campaigns against early marriage and Influence policy reforms that advance equity and justice.

3. Scaling Advocacy and Partnerships

In response to both funding challenges and programmatic needs, Nice Foundation will expand advocacy efforts at local and national levels, Form strategic collaborations with like-minded service providers, Enhance resource mobilization efforts to access diverse funding streams, strengthen its collaboration with government institutions for co-implementation of projects and policy engagement.

4. Expanding Programmatic Interventions

Nice Foundation will continue and scale up its work in the following priority areas Health and Nutrition, Child Education, Skill Development and Vocational Training, Livelihood Promotion, Women's Empowerment, Climate Justice and Environmental Protection, Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Response, Tobacco Control, Humanitarian and Refugee Response, and Support to Ethnic Communities. These program areas will be strengthened through community-centered approaches, innovation, and data-driven strategies to ensure long-term impact and sustainability.

Acknowledgement

Nice Foundation extends its heartfelt gratitude to all those who have contributed to our journey throughout the year 2023–2024. This year has been both challenging and inspiring, marked by meaningful progress, collective resilience, and shared hope for a more inclusive and equitable future. We are deeply thankful to our funding partners, international collaborators, and national allies who have believed in our vision and supported our work with trust, resources, and technical guidance. Your continued partnership has enabled us to reach underserved communities, amplify the voices of marginalized populations, and strengthen our commitment to gender justice, human rights, and feminist values.

We acknowledge with great appreciation the Government of Bangladesh, local administration, and relevant authorities for their cooperation and collaboration in implementing our programs, especially in sensitive and remote areas. Your support has been vital in scaling our efforts in health, education, skill development, climate justice, GBV prevention, SRHR, and humanitarian response.

Our General Body and Governing Body members, particularly the women and gender-diverse leaders, deserve special thanks for their guidance, oversight, and visionary leadership. Your inclusive approach continues to shape the strategic direction of the Foundation.

We express our sincere gratitude to our dedicated staff, coordinators, young women leaders, volunteers, and community members, the heart of our organization. Your tireless efforts, passion, and solidarity ensure that our programs are implemented with integrity, compassion, and impact. Even amidst challenges, your commitment to feminist values and social justice remains unwavering. To the Southern Women feminist Network (SoWFeN) members, many community-based women's groups, youth forums, and allies across Bangladesh, thank you for standing with us, inspiring us, and walking together in our shared struggle for dignity, equality, and empowerment.

Finally, we acknowledge the resilience of the communities we serve, women, children, trans persons, persons with disabilities, minorities, Dalits, and refugees, who continue to challenge injustice and claim their rightful place in society. Your courage fuels our mission. Together, we look forward to continuing this journey in the coming years, with stronger alliances, deeper impact, and a renewed commitment to justice, equity, and collective action.

In solidarity,

Nice Foundation Team