

Community transformation

Families living in the flood plains of Bangladesh



Helping women to gain skills, knowledge and confidence to provide for their children and lift themselves out of poverty.

Background

Bangladesh, suffering from extensive corruption, disorder, and political violence is one of the poorest countries in the world. Situated on the world's biggest river delta, it is also subject to harsh monsoon seasons and floods, which regularly devastate thousands of lives.

Women living in these increasingly poor conditions are also oppressed by a culture which tolerates and even permits the inhumane treatment of them. Commonly married as children, denied an education and a voice, women struggle to free themselves from this poverty and injustice that they endure. Consequently, nearly half of all children in Bangladesh suffer from malnutrition (one of the most severe rates of malnourished children in the world).

Food for the Hungry have been working in Bangladesh since The Liberation war of 1971. For the last ten years FH has been running a community development programme, particularly focused on working with women to improve their status.

Proposal

The primary tool in this programme is running local learning and savings groups. Each supportive women's group helps 12-20 disadvantaged women to realise their potential and find new hope and self respect. Women are encouraged to contribute to their own group savings account, and receive literacy, health, legal and business training. Working together, women are able to develop the skills and confidence that they need to provide for their children and protect them from disease and exploitation. We currently run over 613 groups.

Target population

Over 1,800 women and their families in 150 learning and savings groups.



Time frame

Trained FH staff members lead and support these groups, until they are self sustaining, and eventually help groups to unite and form a Community Organisation: a local organisation that helps its community.

Each organisation can represent up to 70 groups. This process takes an average of 10 years.

Finance

The annual cost of running this programme is £65,000.