

# CARITAS means LOVE

**The Organisation:** Caritas is a Bangladeshi, local, national, non-profit, development organisation, established by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh (CBCB) to carry out activities of human welfare and development. Caritas was founded in 1967 as the eastern branch of Caritas Pakistan. It was superseded by CORR (Christian Organisation for Relief and Rehabilitation), which became a national organisation on January 13, 1971. The name Caritas was re-introduced in 1976.

**Philosophy:** 'Caritas' a Latin word, literally means "charity" or "universal love" which includes all aspects of humanity.

Main features of the Caritas Philosophy are -- to alleviate human sufferings and distress and promote human development in all its forms; to work for the victims in disasters, whether natural or man-made.

Caritas affirmed its belief in the primacy of the human person, put emphasis on integral human development as the real answer to the problems caused by injustices.

Caritas bears witness to the Gospel: operates on the basis of this cardinal principle; invests heavily in people; spreads the spirit of social justice and charity; biased in favour of the poor, particularly the rural poor. Caritas bears witness to a spirituality in development i.e., development is for the whole person -- through the harmonious blending of the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, political well-being of the person integrated in the society in equal dignity as man and woman.

**Aims:** Caritas believes that people are the main resource of Bangladesh; by education, training, organisation and development of this resource Car-

itas hopes to be a partner with them in nation-building.

**Offices & Working Areas:** Caritas has its Head Office in Dhaka and seven Regional Offices in Barisal, Chittagong, Dhaka, Dinajpur, Khulna, Mymensingh and Rajshahi. In all these Regions Caritas is operational in two sectors: Development and Social Welfare, under a central management. Caritas restricts itself to 78 Thanas (sub-district) for integrated development work. During emergencies, such as natural disasters, Caritas is operational in any part of the country, administratively possible.

**Working Approach:** Caritas works for all people, irrespective of race, caste or creed. However, it has a particular orientation to the poor -- the marginal groups and landless -- who comprise majority of the population. Caritas believes firmly in primacy of the human person. By serving people, Caritas serves God.

Caritas strives hard for rural poverty alleviation, human resource development and employment creation through implementing 43 different projects on 11 sectors to raise people from less human condition of the underprivileged to better human conditions.

## MAJOR PROJECTS/ PROGRAMMES

### Welfare Projects

**Disaster Preparedness:** Caritas has a long history of disaster interventions on massive scales. From the greater cyclone of 1970 to the catastrophic floods of 1988, devastating cyclone of April 1991 and destructive cyclone of May 1997. Caritas has been able to the maximum extent of the ability for the succor of the stricken



towards achieving self-sufficiency. Rehabilitation of orphans girls by marriage and orphan children into families to give them a chance to grow up in a family atmosphere.

**Assistance to the Sick:**

Provides service to rural poor patients in the form of securing admission in city hospitals, providing food, shelter and first aid/medicine through two centres at Rajshahi and Mymensingh.

**Visually Handicapped:** Support to Bangladesh National Society for the Blind (BNSB) for eight hospitals, mobile eye camps, school sight testing, ophthalmic training and nutrition research centre.

**Under-Five & Maternity Clinic:** Focus both on curative health care, such as treatment and care of babies and mothers, nutrition, inoculation and vaccination.

**Leprosy Centre:** Treatment and rehabilitation of the leprosy patients and conducting Outreach programmes.

**Drinking Water and Sanitation:** Development of drinking water through sinking tube-wells and digging ring wells. Low cost sanitation programmes: clay made and concrete pit latrines are installed on a community basis to cover a contiguous area.

**Rehabilitation of Drug Addicts (BARACA):** A residential centre for treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts. The addicts who seek such help are provided with therapeutic and psychotropic treatment for their recovery. The centre motivates the addicts in their struggle against the use of drugs.

**Literacy and Health Care Programme (NDC-Dhaka):** To build up school-going habits among the destitutes and the slum children of Dhaka and to give them primary level education. To provide medical and preventive health care service.

**Assistance to Charitable Dispensaries:** Provide medicine and basic medical equipment to 48 charitable dispensaries and clinics; provide vaccine for immunization of children.

**Malaria Programme:** Provide curative services to the affected people after investigated by qualified doctors of Caritas Mobile Teams in the malaria-prone remote areas. Offer awareness and preventive services and distribution of treated mosquito nets.

**Development Projects**

**DEEDS (Development Extension Education Service):** It began in 1979 and started operating in 24 Thana with the ob-

jectives of empowerment of the rural landless marginal families (partner group) through a continuous process of non-formal educational approach. The partner group people are helped to be resourceful so that they are capable of appropriating resources for themselves.

In all 24 working Thanas a net-work of APEX has been formed. Till June '97 5,846 groups have been organised with 107,499 members (female 60,231) and their group-capital amounts to Tk. 53.6 million.

Phasing out from old areas replication of the same development education-process began in another 27 adjacent Thana since July '91. In these area 5,474 groups (female 2,914) are already formed with 103,425 members as on June, 1997.

**Integrated Women Development Project (IWDP):** To further empower the once powerless womenfolk through formal and non-formal education with a view to help them develop with human dignity. So far 1,612 groups have been formed with 30,541 members and group savings amounts to Tk. 8.5 million.

**Integrated Human Development Project (IHDP):** Aims to promote socio-economic development and attitudinal change of the poor and the marginalised tribal community irrespective of the Barind Tract areas, by imparting literacy and numeracy, help to form small homogenous groups and organise training on various professional skills.

**Integrated Community Development Project (ICDP):** To motivate and organise the ethnic communities of greater Mymensingh areas for socio-economic development by way of human development training, income generation and awareness on health education.

**Training, Evaluation, Resource and Counseling (TERC):** Provides project-oriented training and evaluation services to the Caritas Regions and sister organisations. Publication of newsletters, reports and booklets in Bangla and English is another function.

**Caritas Development Institution (CDI):** Provides both short and medium term training courses to social workers and leaders on social analysis and development issues. In-depth study and evaluation of projects are also conducted. Research is an integrated component with an applied character.

**Formal Education Programme (FEP):** The programme

has taken up multiple initiatives to bring about a time-befitting reform and change in the arena of education. In order to enrich the professional skill both short and long term training is being imparted to the teachers of those institutions which pertain to this project. Opportunities have also been created for pupils to take part in extracurricular activities.

Moreover, this project is engaged in repair, extension and construction of some particular school buildings. With a mission school as the nucleus, a dozen or more schools are involved in year round interaction on specific issues.

**MAWTS (Mirpur Agriculture Workshop and Training School):** A workshop for repair and manufacture of agricultural machinery and a training school which offer 3 years courses for both field and shop mechanics. Appropriate technologies developed include "Rower Pump", "Seed Drills", "Improved Ploughs", "Harrow", etc. Many new ideas are being tried & tested. It operates on a "learning while earning" principle.

**Trade Schools (Regional & Mobile):** Provides an opportunity to enhance the young poor boys and girls a professional skill for life through a six-month vocational or trades training, such as in carpentry, mechanical, electrical, plumbing work, etc. under the Mobile Trade project and one year course under the 7. Regional Trade Schools.

**Underprivileged Children Preparatory Education Project (UCPEP):** Develops school-going habit among the school children of rural communities who are deprived of education for want of consciousness of guardians, grinding poverty and lack of school nearby. Universal Primary education is a basic human right, which Government alone cannot provide.

**JCCIP (Joint Caritas CRS-Irrigation Programme):** The principal function of JCCIP is the Mini Irrigation Programme (MIP). In fact it was initiated in 1983 to popularize the use of "Rower" & "Tara" hand tube-wells and 3" low-lift pumps among the poor farmers. In mechanical irrigation input costs (machine & fuel) eat up profits.

**Community Health and Natural Family Planning Programme (CH-NFP):** The project has 3 main functions -- viz. a) awareness for mothers and child care, b) fertility awareness education (FAE), and c) encouraging practice of ovulation method & family planning. Couples are taught the ovula-

tion method of NFP through individual instruction, group seminars and workshops. While achieving planned parenthood it cultivates greater harmony in family-life.

**Fish Farming (Fisheries Development Programmes)** -- Aqua culture in 8,648 ponds and tanks; as many as 3,631 groups are involved as a collective income generation scheme and to produce a total of 6,173 metric tons of fish.

**IMPACT of Caritas Programmes**

The following statistics indicates the impact of Caritas programme activities: under the development programmes so far 15,143 groups (female 8,531) were formed with 0.27 million members (female 0.158 million), savings accumulated at Tk. 119.79 million and a total of 117,597 income generation projects were undertaken; 2.45 million couple were given fertility awareness education (Ovulation Method); 1,777 million saplings were distributed for plantation. 354,078 number of participants were attended in 12,646 training courses under DEEDS; 12,856 youths received skill (technical) development trainings; 20,011 Tube-wells/Tara pumps/ring wells were distributed; 60,796 PWD latrines were installed; 77,693 meters of silk fabrics were produced; 2.95 million man-days employment opportunities were created under RWP and 2.35 million man-days under TDR; 8,27 million patients were treated under BNSB and 0.76 million patients were operated; 777 number of roads were constructed; 3,356 number of bridges/culverts (pucca/RCC/wooden/iron) were built.

**Conclusion**

Caritas has ONE programme comprising 43 different projects: the central goal is to create communion and community among all peoples in all our working areas, as well as through the 216 NGOs whom we support in their own working areas.

This is a task that needs continuous investment in human resources, for generation after generation. But, in the words of Pope John Paul II

"It takes people from less human conditions to more human conditions in life".

Caritas has toiled in an organised and sustained manner.

This year Caritas celebrates its Silver Jubilee with only one resolve: to serve God's dearest and poorest, with more dedication, skill and devotion.

## Pope John Paul's Peace Message

Continued from page 8

own intrinsic demands: the first, of which is respect for truth... Another essential requisite for forgiveness and reconciliation is justice, which finds its ultimate foundation in the law of God and his love and mercy for humanity.

In view of numerous situations today calling for reconciliation, on which the process of peace greatly depends, the Pope makes an appeal to everyone to devote themselves in an active and practical way to the work of reconciliation. Reconciliation comes from God who is always ready to forgive those who turn to him and turn their back on their sins.... Divine love is the foundation of the reconcilia-

tion to which all of us are called'.

Pope John Paul II's 1997 Peace Message concludes with a call to everyone to 'become an instrument of peace and reconciliation'. The Pope asks religious leaders not to let hatred enter their hearts but to proclaim peace. He asks parents to be for their children 'a reflection of God's love and forgiveness', and to make 'every effort to create a united and harmonious family'. Educators are called to teach young people the true values of life', and to lead them to live the virtues of tolerance, understanding and respect.

Young people must learn to live with one another in peace,

Our warmest felicitations on the auspicious occasion of the National Day of The Holy See (Vatican)

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New organisation floated

By Staff Correspondent

A new organisation styled as Khaleda Zia's Ideals and Democracy Research Association (KIDRA) was floated recently with an aim to create opportunity for education, research and practising democracy, says a press release.

A 13-member national executive committee of KIDRA was formed with Prof Shaheda Obaid, M A Hashem Raju and Obaidul Kabir Swapani as its president, general secretary and organising secretary respectively.

SSMCH urged to improve services during holidays

The Health and Family Welfare Minister, Salauddin Yusuf, has directed the SSMCH authorities to improve its services and take special care of the patients during the holidays, reports UNB.

The minister gave the directive while paying a surprise visit to Sir Salmullah Medical College and Mitford Hospital (SSMCH) in the city yesterday.

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