



PHOTO: COURTESY OF PORIBORTON KORI FOUNDATION



PHOTO: COURTESY OF GIVE BANGLADESH FOUNDATION

# The youth steps forward FOR FLOOD RELIEF

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MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

Recent floods have had catastrophic effects on the lives of many people across the country, causing a severe insufficiency of resources, along with the increase of waterborne diseases such as dengue. In response to this situation, several youth-based organisations started working to provide relief and support to the communities battling this crisis. We talked to the teams of some of the organisations to get a better idea of the current landscape.

### Footsteps Bangladesh

The social organisation began its flood relief campaign on June 17. The entire team worked tirelessly to send emergency supply packages to at least 2,585 people in the most remote villages in Sunamganj and Sylhet under its Disaster Resilience Programme (DRP).

Launched in 2020, the DRP intends to aid and rehabilitate vulnerable communities



PHOTO: COURTESY OF OBHIZATRIK FOUNDATION

experiencing various forms of disasters. The DRP team has designed two types of emergency packages; an emergency bucket of dry food, medicine, soap, lighters, torches and water for 340 families and another emergency bucket of groceries containing rice, potatoes, lentils and other survival tools for 300 families in Sunamganj. In addition, Footsteps also distributed around 2,100 cooked meals in the Derai and Tahirpur Upazila.

The organisation is also planning to deploy its Dreamwater Portable Filter, which can convert flood water into drinking water, in flood affected areas of both Sunamganj and Sylhet. At the same time, they will soon begin their home rehabilitation and mitigation efforts, once water levels come down in the northeast.

### Give Bangladesh Foundation

The organisation began its flood relief program on May 23 by distributing packages containing dry food, saline and medicine to 300 water-locked families in the Chhatak Upazila of Sunamganj. They were the earliest responders to the situation in Jamalganj Upazila of Sunamganj, and reached out to 400 families across 4 villages with dry food, candles and water purification tablets. The same ration was also distributed to 100 families in Chiksha village of Tahirpur.

Moreover, 300 people, sheltered in houseboats, received cooked meals.

This weekend, their team went to Chhatak to assist 400 families with heavier ration packages.

### Poriborton Kori Foundation

The foundation their fundraising activities on June 16, with a swift distribution of aid. Their flood relief package initially consisted of biscuits, puffed rice, flattened rice, drinking water, saline, medicine and reusable sanitary napkins.

They also distributed cooked meals among 1,200 people from three villages in Tahirpur near the Tanguar Haor watchtower. So far, they have extended their support to 15,000 people.

Soon, the team will provide displaced families with financial and technical assistance to restore their houses. The organisation also conducted an event, "Stand Up for Sylhet", in collaboration with Naveed's Comedy Club to raise funds for Sylhet and Sunamganj.

### Jaago Foundation and Volunteer for Bangladesh

Jaago Foundation and Volunteer for Bangladesh actively engaged in flood relief activities, supported by an energetic group of young volunteers. So far, the organisations have helped more than 100,000 people.

Their current relief packages include flattened rice, jaggery, fresh drinking water, water purification tablets, candles, and lighters.

The organisation's campaign, "Bangladesh ekta, sara dibo shobai", invites people to support their volunteers in their relief distribution efforts.

### Obhizatrik Foundation

The Obhizatrik Foundation has been supporting flood victims through various activities and welfare programmes. They prepared cooked meals for 23,000 people in the Sylhet and Sunamganj areas.

They also distributed emergency dry food to over 1,500 people in Kurigram and Sylhet.

In the future, they plan to implement Project Shokkhom to create micro business models that will provide livelihood to 500 families.

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## eBLAZE wins at Farmcraft 2022

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

EMK Center's eBLAZE, is an American Space eSports club in Bangladesh. It is affiliated with the North America Scholastic E-sports Federation (NASEF) and intends to create an atmosphere where the youth can channel their love for video games. Their goal is to create a safe space where gamers will be able to develop their skills, engage in different kinds of games, maintain their mental wellbeing, and gain expertise in blended learning.

This year, three teams from eBLAZE won the NASEF Farmcraft International Tournament 2022. Around 68 countries with over 1,000 teams participated in the tournament, over a range of categories and the winners were selected in three



PHOTO: COURTESY OF EMK CENTRE

categories: Junior division, Senior division, and All Ages division.

After 100 days of intense competition, "eBLAZE Air", and "eBLAZE Fire" under the supervision of their sponsor, Isthiaq Ahmed, acquired first and second place in the senior division category. Team eBLAZE Air included Muhammad Bin Mosleh Howlader, from Adamjee Cantonment Public School; Md Reza E Rabbi, from European Standard School; Mohtasim Billah, from Scholastica, and Md Suboh Islam, from Rajuk Uttara Model College.

Team eBLAZE Fire consisted of Ashrafur Islam Asif, from Chittagong Polytechnic Institute; Tayeba Azrin Nazifa, from Dr Maleka College; Shafaul Al Sifat, from Jatir Janak Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Government College, and Md. Ashfaqul Islam Chowdhury Alvi, from Motijheel Govt Boys High School.

"eBLAZE Earth" was announced as the winner in the "All Ages Division", under the supervision of their sponsor, Ashfaqur Rahman.

The members were Alfaz Uddin Mahmud, from Darul Irfan Academy; Farhan Labib, from Shaheed Police Smriti College; Abu Mohammed Riyad Ahasan, from Al Hidaayah; and Raian Mahmud Rafin, from Phulpur Pilot Model Government School.

Farmcraft 2022 was a Minecraft tournament where participants showcased their agricultural knowledge through Minecraft education in the global arena. It challenged the participants to successfully create farms and grow food within the game, by applying and adopting agricultural production techniques in unique environmental biomes. Minecraft is a simple game, resembling a creative sandbox that gives players the ability to make entire worlds and share ideas with one another, no matter how far apart they are.

"This is a significant accomplishment not only for us, but also for Bangladesh in the global e-sports arena. As we take this moment to congratulate all the team members, we would also like to thank all of the participants, as well as their sponsors and parents, who have supported their gaming efforts," shared Asif Uddin Ahmed, Acting Director, EMK Center.

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# IYCM promoting rights and opportunities for youth around the world

AKHLAKUR RAHMAN

Md Sajib Khandokar, a youth hailing from Barisal, founded the International Youth Change Makers (IYCM), a social organisation with the intent of bettering Bangladesh in 2012.

With the slogan "Change yourself, change the world," IYCM started its relentless journey by providing school uniforms to students who were struggling financially in the rural areas of Barisal.

"My passion for social service comes from my experience during my school days," said Sajib Khandokar. "I was in the sixth grade, when one of my friends could not attend school due to not owning a uniform. This was because his father was a rickshaw puller, and could not afford to buy him one."

"Back then, I gathered all the money by saving my lunch allowance, and gave it to my father to buy him a uniform," added the social worker.

Since then, Sajib became an ardent volunteer for multiple social service platforms including Save the Children, Plan International, and National Children Task Force (NCTF) amongst others.



PHOTO: COLLECTED FROM FACEBOOK

"Between 2004 and 2008, I worked with multiple social platforms as a volunteer. However, in 2008 I joined Save the Children as a Child Rights Promoter."

Sajib was also the central president of NCTF in 2007, being selected from all the leading heads of NCTF across every

district of Bangladesh.

After forming IYCM, Sajib and his fellow youth change-makers spearheaded multiple projects with the aim to ensure the well-being and rights of every child, which primarily included targeting marginalised families who could not

afford to educate their children, and homeless orphans.

"Initially we reached out to multiple schools with hopes that they would enlist these children and bear their education expenses," mentioned Sajib. "Fortunately, these school teachers supported us in

admitting them to their schools and also helped waive their tuition fees."

IYCM have already provided 50 financially struggling children by funding their education. Aside from this, they also helped many others by enlisting them in schools and helping them avail tuition fee waivers.

IYCM is already active in 15 districts across the nation, with 158 youth change-makers and 15,000 registered volunteers. Moreover, IYCM now has a presence in over 76 countries all over the world, supported by 600 youth ambassadors.

"The biggest problem we as social workers face is not having enough connections to access certain societies or institutions," mentioned Sajib.

"Currently, IYCM is planning to establish a learning centre named "Shotti School" where underprivileged children can access quality education, while also learning how to be a responsible human being," concluded the change maker Sajib.

Sajib is currently residing in Germany, leading the youth change-makers committee over there. Simultaneously, he continues to work as a volunteer for Plan International and United Nations Bonn.