

In August 2024, the low-lying districts of Bangladesh were severely flooded. These included Moulvibazar, Habiganj, Sylhet, Feni, Cumilla, Noakhali, Khagrachhari, Brahmanbaria, Chattogram, Lakshmipur, and Cox's Bazar. As per the rapid need assessment conducted by Oxfam, the flooding affected 58% of the total population in Noakhali (2.2 million out of 3.6 million) and 61% of the total population in Feni (1 million out of 1.6 million) districts.

Under the leadership of Dr Fatima Akter, Chairperson and Associate Professor at the University of Dhaka and host of the ADN—Bangladesh Chapter, teachers, students, and two ADN Future Leader Interns, Ms Sadia Afrin Sayfa Negaban and Mr Mohammad Fahimul Islam from the Department of Meteorology, provided dry food relief to 700 disaster-affected families in the immediate aftermath of the floods.

Between September and November 2024, Prof Nibedita Ray-Bennett (ADN's Founding President) raised £750 from the UK, USA, Japan, and Bangladesh using the GoFundMe platform to support Dr Akter's flood response. The objective of this fund was to support women of reproductive age group's menstrual hygiene, provide students with stationery packs, and contribute to recovery by regenerating agro-farming and reconstruction work.

On 19 November 2024, Prof. Ray-Bennett handed the donation to Dr Akter in person, and the Bangladesh Chapter members decided to focus on the first two responses only.

In the first week of December 2024, Dr Akter and the ADN Future Leaders Interns (among others) distributed stationary packs, which included pencils, erasers, sharpeners, notebooks and sanitary napkins to 200 children. Medical supplies, including antifungal medicine, saline, and multivitamins, were also provided to support health and recovery during this challenging time. The children were from Chitholia Nasir Uddin High School of Feni district from 6th to 9th grade.



Photo 1: Chitholia Nasir Uddin High School children from 6th to 9th grade.

After receiving the stationary pack, one student said:

“Receiving all these new stationeries is something I never imagined. It feels like a fresh start, almost like the beginning of a new year.”

Many students, particularly the girls, were excited to receive this much-needed support. Some shared lighthearted moments as they discovered they had matching pencil boxes in their new school bags.

This relief effort underscores ADN's mission to reduce avoidable disaster-related deaths locally. It aims to offer assistance wherever possible to help affected communities regain their daily routines for long-term resilience. This initiative also highlights the Department of Meteorology's ongoing commitment to disaster management and humanitarian aid, further strengthening its role in supporting vulnerable communities in Bangladesh.



Photo 2: The UK flood relief fund delivered to the Bangladesh Chapter lead



Photo 3: Stationery packs distributed to the children

Authors:

The highlight is written by Ms Sadia Afrin Sayfa Negaban and Mr Mohammad Fahimul Islam.

© Avoidable Deaths Network, 2024