

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



MATI
Bangladesh
Self Defined Rural Development

MATI BANGLADESH
A journey towards self defined sustainable development

MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Adapting to a Disrupted World

The pandemic of COVID-19 has taught us tougher lessons that we have been learning for past few decades in this disrupted world. Bangladesh's national poverty rate rose to 29.5% as of June, 2020 due to Covid-19, which cost tens of millions of people their jobs and brought them down below the poverty line.



Foundation of Mati and work for the people living in poverty gave me a new insight into people's potential towards dealing with their daily struggle with poverty. Living with multiple difficulties in family and don't be hopeless in life is a strong potential of human being who fights and survives in this world with discomfort in every step.

A majority of the leading elites of our society don't note this strength. The experience and opinion of those people could be valued and considered in equal measure. I am summarizing several major findings over the past twenty years of Mati work in Bangladesh and Germany which provides me a multidimensional nature of poverty in rich and poor communities.

I have witnessed some extreme weather events that were striking in their severity and scale: record-breaking widespread floods along with other natural and manmade disasters and essentially the climate change. Witnessed the poverty-related suffering of people. The challenges relate to the environment, food crisis, disease, war, migration, and people living in poverty are suffering most.

Resilience and adaptation will not be long-lasting approach. Many of the factors associated with poverty are familiar attributes related to housing conditions, work, health, food, financial security, etc. which can be found in both worlds. The basic social security system from the government side has to be enforced in Bangladesh. NGO work is a continuous dependence of aid money from the rich part of the world, dominated by a Dependable Structure of the Western World. The accumulation of wealth took place over the past hundreds of years towards the North, based on dominants of economic structure built by the rich countries. Which are rarely considered in descriptions of poverty course which is a major reason for capturing in current poverty traps for many poor countries in the world?

Encouraging the inclusion of people living in poverty and their participation in various policies and programs, including them in the design and decision-making process has yet to be fully carried out by those working in the development sector like Mati NGO. Without identifying and addressing these concerns, achieving socioeconomic well-being in many developing countries will remain an elusive goal."

I am happy to get ahead of another successful year and present the Annual Report of 2020. I am grateful to all the development partners, our target people, the staff, relevant government and local government authorities such as NGOAB, department of social service, local administration offices, city corporation leaders and all other stakeholder for their cordial and continuous supports in our journey.

Now our main focus is to contribute as much as possible to achieving the sustainable development goals as early as possible before the deadline of 2030. We do hope our journey will be smoother and pleasant by dint of cordial supports from all the stakeholders of Mati.

Thanking you

Lenen Rahman
ED, Mati Bangladesh

A photograph of a traditional Matli boat on a river. The boat is a narrow, flat wooden platform with a thatched roof, carrying three people: a woman standing at the front, a woman sitting in the middle, and a child sitting at the back. The boat is surrounded by lush green trees and foliage. The text "AN OVERVIEW OF MATI" is overlaid in the center of the image.

AN OVERVIEW OF MATI

HISTORY OF INCEPTION

Mati is a Non-Government organization (NGO), established in 1997 and registered under the Department of social services in 1998 and under the NGO Affairs Bureau in 2000.

Mati was founded through the personal conviction of its founder Lenen Rahaman that the extreme poverty in rural Bangladesh is a severe form of injustice (as it is anywhere else in the world), which cannot be tolerated in any society that claims to be civilized. With a small group of friends, to whom he shared his basic humanist ideas, came forward to start the first Mati-project in the small village Huzurikanda under Sherpur District. From the beginning, poverty reduction through people's empowerment, especially of women, and self-defined, participatory development methods were at the core of Mati's activities. Since those early days, Mati's activities have continuously expanded, and its mission, vision and goals have been fine-tuned over the years.

OUR BELIEFS

We strongly believe in a universal right to a life in dignity for all human beings. Through all our actions we do our best to reflect the principles of equality, fairness, democracy, good governance and human rights. Conflicts have to be solved solely through peaceful means. We see an intact eco-system as prerequisite for successful, sustainable development and the well-being of all people.



Ever since the beginning of Mati's work, we have put all our good faith and effort – together with our partners on local, national and international level – towards the realization of our ultimate goal: to realize our dream of One World where also secure livelihoods for the poorest of the poor are guaranteed, a dream based on the universal principles of love and compassion for every human being.

We regard our work as a most needed statement of solidarity and fairness, and of maximum companionship in contrast to maximum profit. We perceive ourselves as just one tiny part in the bigger picture of all those who are working towards a better tomorrow for all sentient beings – in this world of plenty.

OUR VISION

Mati aims to join all its human forces, energy, and love in the universal fight against poverty and towards a life in dignity for all human beings, regardless of gender, status, colour or creed.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the organization is to develop a self-defined development process for the marginalized poor farmer and enhance to gear up the people who are called extreme poor through involving them in innovative Agricultural and livelihood development activities.

OUR GOAL

Empower underprivileged and marginalized people for a better life through innovative & environment friendly agricultural interventions and capacity building for a self-defined development.

OUR SUSTAINABLE APPROACH

Since the late 1999, Mati has pursued participatory and people-centered forms of development, specifically focused on women and children. We have keenly observed that there is one big reason why development projects sometimes fail is that there is no backup-support in times of crisis. However this we consider imminent in a country that is so prone to natural calamities. So in order not to lose our achievements mid-way, we try to offer immediate help when possible to support people in overcoming the crisis and in continuing on the path to development.

We believe that societies already hold the tools for their own development in their hands. So together with those concerned, the poor, we try to find ways how to activate these tools. Poor people have a lot of ideas and initiative how to make a change towards the better, what they lack is capital or the access to capital, which would help them make a start. Additionally the poor are often locked into exploitative social structures. So it is Mati's task to access funds, which can be used towards the improvement of livelihoods, in such a way that whole communities benefit.

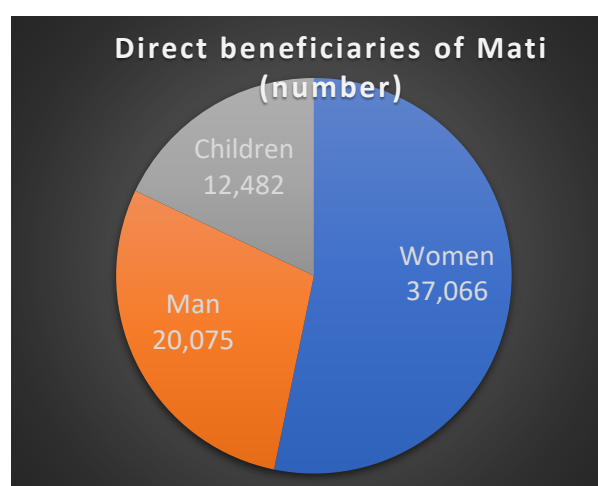
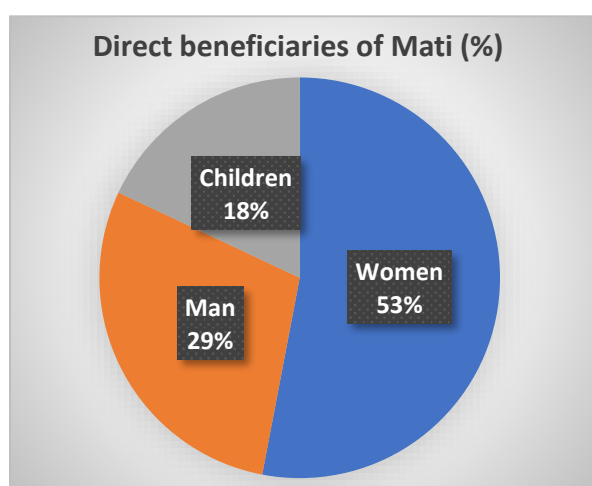
Our ultimate goal is for our people to achieve independence, so that they do not need our programs anymore, because they can manage on their own. We see our role as mediators to help them climb up on the first steps of the development ladder and from there to continue on their own. We believe that our task is to break up dependencies not to create them. Yet, there are people who are beyond the capacity to help themselves, we do not close our doors on them either.



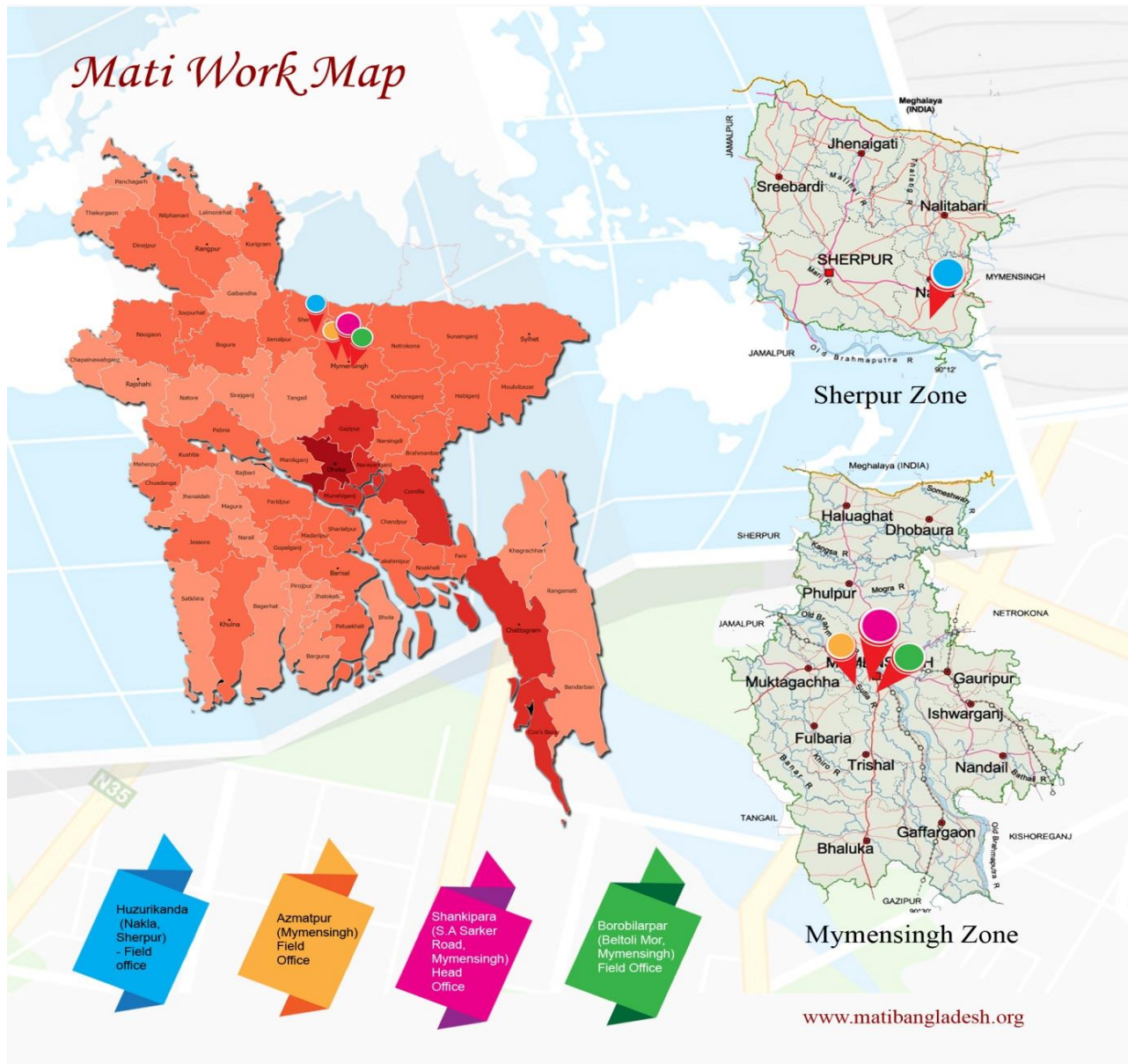
OUR BENEFICIARIES

Mati focuses on extreme poor people, marginalized farmers, share croppers, especial focuses on women, religious minorities, Dalits, physically challenged children and disadvantaged sections of the society, predominantly in both rural and areas.

Mati works with 69,623 direct beneficiaries through different programs while the indirect beneficiaries are more than 250,000. Among the direct beneficiaries 53% are women, 29% are men and 18% are children.



OUR WORKING AREA



Division	District	Upazila	Union	Village/ward
Mymensingh	Mymensingh	1	4	40
	Mymensingh (Urban Slums)	-	-	10
	Sherpur	1	3	30
	Jalampur	1	1	20
Dhaka	Tangail	1	1	10
Total	4	4	8	110



Agriculture & Food Security



Economic Development & Social Security



Environment & Climate Action

OUR PROGRAMS



Health & WASH Program



Quality Education & Human Resource



Community & Social

MAJOR PROGRAMS OF MATI

The major programs of Mati are -

1. Economic Development and Social Security
2. Agriculture and Food Security
3. Environment protection and Climate Action
4. Health and WASH
5. Quality Education and Human Resource Development
6. Research, Advocacy and Campaign



Moreover Mati has strong capacity and actions on emergency response to natural disasters like flood, cold wave, river erosion, cyclone etc.

THE SDG GOALS TO ACHIEVE BY MATI'S PROGRAMS

Mati directly or indirectly addresses the following SDGs through its Programs and the programmatic strategies and approaches. The program directly strive to achieve the SDG-1& 11 by Economic Development and social security program, SDG-2 by Agriculture and Food Security program, SDG-3 & 6 by Health & WASH program, SDG-4 & 8 by Quality Education & Human Resource Development Program, SDG-7,12 & 13 by Environment protection & Climate Action Program while the SDG-5 & 10 are mainstreamed in all the program because women and marginalized people are prioritized in all programmatic supports & services in order to reducing Gender inequality and all other forms of inequalities prevailing in the society.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS 2020

MATI focused more on Sustainable Development, Women Empowerment and Better Livelihood of the poor in 2020 by introducing Mati Farmer Cooperative (COOP). Women or girls made up more than 70% of the program participants who have better income, improved food security, increased access to health services, quality education and empowerment as a whole.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL SECURITY PROGRAM

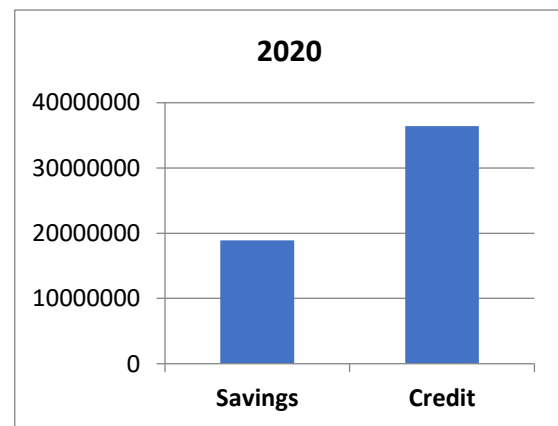
IDAEP PROGRAM

Integrated Development Approach for the Extreme Poor (IDAEP) is a kind of core program of Mati which was started in 2009. The extreme poor families are supported from the program with interest-free credit for developing their livelihoods through income generating activities so that their basic human needs are fulfilled.

Mati started the “savings and credit” program under the IDAEP. The families receive an initial interest free loan of maximum BDT15,000 for investment in income generating activities considering their choice and capacity. The families are encouraged for regular savings so that their economic strength and security are increased. The credits are provided only to the women members of the households in order to enhance the women empowerment.

Side by side Mati integrates the target families of the program are integrated with the health, family planning, WASH, childcare, child education, agriculture & housing programs of Mati including vocational & other skill development training awareness raising activities for their holistic development.

Starting with 100 women in 2009, until the end of 2020 total 2277 women of 105 groups from 20 villages have a savings of BDT 1,88,96,073. In 2020 the loan outstanding was BDT 3,64,16,487 that the women members have taken for the purpose of investing in income generating activities like crop production, cow-goat-chicken rearing small business, rickshaw-van-auto purchase, as well as for the purpose of house construction



or repairing, setting tube-well or water pump, installing sanitary latrine, treatment, children education etc. that helped to increase their income, improve livelihood status, improved health, WASH, education etc.



MATI COOPERATIVE

The poor rural people who are specially smallholder farmers have been struggling to survive in the context of commercial agriculture which is promoting by the government. But the workforce who are migrating to the urban areas being uprooted from agriculture and becoming slum dwellers to live a subhuman life. Such migration is also creating many social, health, educational and environmental problems along with vulnerability in livelihoods. On the other hand, the agriculture is going into the hands of corporations who are promoting chemical agriculture which is devastating for soil, environment and human health. Moreover, the traditional & sustainable family farming is going to be disappeared.

In such a context, MATI has taken a new initiative to develop farmers' cooperative for sustainable development of the smallholder farmers who are absolute majority among the rural poor people. MATI has conducted a survey on vast majority of people involved in agriculture and farming in which it was found that the farmers are shifting their thousand years' traditional organic farming to the commercial farming to increase the crop production. In this circumstance, MATI aims to bring back that organic culture and as a part of this, through the market research, MATI started this program this year and the registration of this programme under the department of cooperative of the government of Bangladesh is in progress to develop a value chain model by the COOP with a view to ensure better market access of the farming families & women empowerment.

Value Chain Model of Mati Cooperative



So far the cooperative have 2277 members and all of them are women from 20 villages of Mymensingh, Sherpur and Jamalpur District. . The foundation stage of the cooperative is going on through a participatory process.



Mati COOP has already planned to open a COOP input shop for solving input related problems of the farmers by making all possible inputs available for the farmers. After full operation of the shop on a bigger scale, which may take a little longer the COOP will take the dealership of the different inputs so that the farmers get quality inputs at reasonable prices or even in credits.

Mati COOP has also planned to establish a storehouse to store the non-perishable crops of the COOP members at Chandrakona Bazar under Naklaupazila of Sherpur district so that the COOP members can preserve their crops during growing season when the prices remain low to sell during off season when the prices usually goes to high in order to ensure better prices for the farmers.

PORONTO BELA [for the social security of elderly people]

Living with dignity is a right of the elderly people. But, unfortunately, in Bangladesh the elderly people have to depend on their son or daughter very often as a burden on them. Especially in the poor families the older people used to lead very pitiful life depriving of their basic human rights. Elderly people usually suffer from different kinds of elderly diseases for which handsome amount of money as treatment cost which their family can't afford.

In such a reality, MATI came forward to resolve the issue starting a support program for elderly people who are completely vulnerable by Mati's own funding from which each of the 8 beneficiaries receives an amount of Tk.1000 every month since June 2010. As a part of this ongoing support program, in 2020, MATI continued the support as usual with its very limited own fund. MATI aims to expand the program in near future if it is possible raise adequate fund.

Besides, the special allowance Mati always provide special healthcare services to the elderly people under Mati's healthcare program. Mati also advocates with local government bodies so that the elderly people among Mati's beneficiaries get the Elderly Allowance from the government.



AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

PROMOTION OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

- ***Farmer Training on Organic Agriculture***

Promotion of organic agriculture is one of the core activities of Mati in order conservation of soil health, environment protection, combat the detrimental effects of climate change as well as enhancing production of safe and nutritious food for food security of the country.

For the purpose capacity building of the farmers is a key strategies along with the technical, inputs and financial start-up supports. In 2020 total 240 women members received both theatrical and hand on training on organic agriculture production, preservation and processing and also received the aforesaid supports provided by the development partners of Mati namely MISEREOR, MATI e.V and FVBBB.

The participants of the training are engaged in production of different organic inputs like vermicompost, botanical pesticides as well as different crops by following the methods and techniques of organic farming.



Picture-5: Training of the target group



Picture-6: Demonstration of vermicompost production in the training

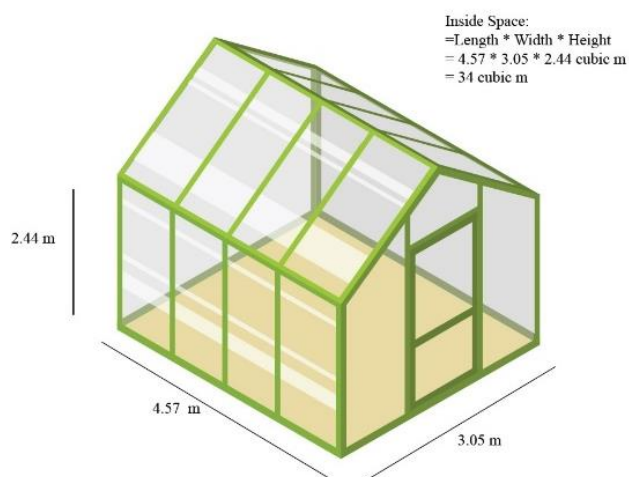
- ***Kitchen Gardening***

Throughout the Mati's working area where the families have a little land at their homestead establish Kitchen Gardens. During 2019, a total of 467 women have produced different kinds of vegetables both in summer and winter season in their Kitchen Gardens. The major part of the vegetables produced in the garden were mainly consumed by the families that improved their food & nutrition security status while a good number of them also earned some extra income for their family by selling the surplus to the market that also help in enhancing women empowerment



- ***Developing Individual and Community based Drying and Storage System***

The project target groups are collectively installing 6 community drying domes in their common courtyard for common use by them. One dome is being set at Mati eco-village Huzurikanda also for community use by the members of Huzurikanda Farmer cooperative and also for demonstration purpose. The families who are cultivating organic rice, pulses, spices etc. were selected for using the drying dome. Each dome which is in fact like a greenhouse of 4.6m x 3.0m x 2.4m = 33.1m³ volume made with steel frame covered by plexiglass walls and roof.



Measurement of the drying house



Community based drying dome under construction

- *Installation of individual drying facilities*

Total 40 families are given start-up aid to establish individual drying facilities. Considering the utilities the families made two types of small dryers with technical support from Mati. Most of the families have already started drying their winter crops like chilies, turmeric, dry fish, tomato and other hand-made items for selling to the market at higher prices. The other type is also made of wood, black cloth and polythene sheet. Only a few families made this type of dryer which is more suitable during high moisture condition. The dryers is expected to play very important role in developing value chain of the women's products leading to their economic development and empowerment.



The women are drying different food items in the Individual dryer



- **Organic Marketing**

In order to enhance the promotion of organic farming and ensuring profitable prices for the organic producers, MATI has started developing a supply chain of organic products from the target people to urban consumers. At present, only a few non-perishable products such as rice, mustard oil, pulses, and spices are being supplied on a piloting basis while the perishable products like vegetables, fruits, chicken egg, milk and also chickens are sold to both local and urban consumers twice in a month. Mati staff provides help the farmers to take orders from the consumers and supply accordingly. Mati has been trying to establish a value chain of organic products and establish an organic shop at Mymensingh town with support from MISEREOR, Germany.

In order to strengthen the initiative, recently, the target people have organized themselves under farmer cooperative and they have already decided to take organic production & marketing initiatives by the cooperative. MATI has decided to facilitate the process of development of cooperative in order to establish it on an institutional base. The capacity building process of the target people to manage the cooperative successfully & independently will take some time.

By the end of 2020, a total of 700 farmer families are engaged so far to produce organic crop at homestead and in the field in 20 villages of Sherpur, Jamalpur & Mymensingh district.



SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

The poor children coming to the Mati Eco-school from the poor & extreme poor families are generally remain hungry. Moreover, they have to stay at the school from morning to afternoon with empty stomach resulting in less concentration on study and poor health & nutritional status.



Considering this, Mati started School Lunch Program in 2012 that has been continuing since then. During 2019, all the students of the school were provided healthy lunch on daily basis to improve their nutritional status. Moreover, the students enjoyed the lunch that helped to increase their school attendance as well as concentrate to their study.

FREE LUNCH PROGRAM FOR THE HUNGRY PEOPLE

Huge numbers of hungry people move to and fro in the town of Mymensingh, in fact, all over Bangladesh in search for food to meet their hunger. Sometimes they get food, but sometimes they don't. Sometimes, they get some wasted food from the houses, only a plate of rice, fresh or rotten, may help meeting their hunger but neither the hunger of mind nor the nutrition demand (hidden hunger) is fulfilled.



Considering this, since 2006, in Sankipara, Mymensingh, where Mati's head office is located, MATI has been feeding around 100 people with a free lunch with healthy & rich diet every Thursday of a week which was continued throughout 2020.

Mainly mothers with children and old people come from the nearby Dalit community and the street baggers also used to come to take the lunch at Mati's head office once in a week. During the pandemic of

COVID-19 instead of free lunch emergency food supports were provided to the families along with the safety materials like facial mask & soap.

HEALTH AND WASH PROGRAM

MPHCC, HEAD OFFICE MYMENSINGH AND HUZURIKANDA, SHERPUR

With a view to ensuring good health & the wellbeing of the urban and rural poor people MATI first started its health services for a Scheduled Caste Hindu minority (Dalit) community living close to the Mati Head office at Sankipara in 2005. Then Mati Primary Health Care Center (MPHCC) was established in the compound of the MATI head office in 2009 with extended services for the poor & extreme poor people living in the Mati's working area in Mymensingh district. Then over the years the service area has been extended to urban slums of Mymensingh City Corporation and the villages of Mymensingh, Sherpur and Jamalpur districts in Bangladesh by turns.

Activities & Achievements in 2020

Activities	Achievements
Health Awareness Meeting and Training	63 Trainings
Free treatment & medicine support	349 Patients (Medicine Cost BDT69,615)
Field Level Health Camp	13,145 Women
Family Planning Services	68 Women
Women Pregnancy and Post Delivery Services	20 Women
Physiotherapy services	34 Patients
Children Milk Support	15 Children (Cost BDT7,910)
Referral Services	125 Patients
Discounts for Treatment	15 Patients (BDT9,870)
Facial mask distribution for COVID-19	10,000

Note: COVID-19 Pandemic severely affected the activities and achievements during 2020. Emergency health awareness and safety services were provided instead.



MATI EYE CARE CENTRE, HUZURIKANDA

Mati has been providing eye-care services to the poor people of Mati's working area with support from 'Foundation Bridge Balingen-Bangladesh (FBBB)' Germany, in collaboration with BNSB Eye Hospital, Mymensingh. The activities & achievements are presented in table below.

Since the beginning of 2017, MATI has been supported by FBBB in establishing a medical competence center at the Huzurikanda site in order to develop Mati's capacity in providing both general and eye care services in a sustainable manner.

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic the regular healthcare services are disrupted because of the restricted movement of the staff and people. However, despite the adversities the health staff worked to raise awareness of the people on precautionary measures to combat COVID-19 pandemic.

Activities & Achievements in 2020

Activities	Achievements
Eye Center Patients	754
Prescription for Spectacles	706
Spectacles prepared/ Spectacles Support	661
Eye Screening camp	40
Identification of Cataract	174
Distribution of medicines	649
Cataracts operation	181
Patient screened in the field	5220
Awareness sessions on COVID-19	38 (approx. 2000 participants)



PHYSIOTHERAPY

Ms. Steffi Rettenmeier a German Volunteer started the project “Physiotherapy in Bangladesh” at “Mati” NGO in Mymensingh in September 2010. Since then, many volunteer physiotherapists use to come to the working villages of Mati and provide physiotherapy services to the persons with different types of disabilities. A mixed group of patients consisting of children and adults receive the services on a regular basis.

In February 2020, Ms. Steffi came to Bangladesh and provided physiotherapy services to 27 people with different kind of disabilities. Due to COVID-19 no more volunteer could visit to Bangladesh this year.



WASH ACTIVITIES

As mentioned earlier Mati has been providing credit support to the families under the savings & credit program. Moreover, sometimes the development partners of Mati also provide supports for installing sanitary latrine and drinking water pump or tube well because a good number of the families in the working area are still deprived of the safe drinking water and sanitation facilities. In the year 2020, 30 families received support from Stiftung Bruke to install tube well and sanitary latrine at their homes.



QUALITY EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

PROJAPOTI DAYCARE CENTERS

[for the children of poor working mothers living in the urban areas]

Many mothers from the poorest families in Mymensingh face a similar dilemma: they have often migrated from the countryside to the city, where they do not have the social network of the extended family that regulates childcare. The women have to work to ensure the survival of their families. Either the children are left to fend for themselves while the mothers are away from home, or an older daughter cannot finish her schooling because she has to look after the younger siblings instead. Girls who could not go to school themselves often become the mothers of the next generation in poverty already in their teenage years.



In such a situation, since 2015, MATI with support from Caritas Switzerland and Caritas Luxembourg established 8 Day Care Centers (DCC) in the city of Mymensingh, 2 rural DCC in Azmatpur village of Mymensingh district and one in Huzurikanda village of Sherpur district while one DCC was established dedicatedly for the disabled children at

Mati campus of Huzurikanda for total 710 children throughout the project period (2018-20) while 320 children from 313 families received the services in 2020.

The DCCs not only offer children from the urban slums a safe place to be a child while their mothers work but also help to compensate for developmental deficits that they suffer due to poverty. In this way, they are prepared for the transition to regular school. The concept applied here is called “Essence of Learning”. It was developed by Beatrice Rutishauser Ramm, a Swiss expert on early childhood development.

Unfortunately, at the end of December 2020 the project has been phased out. So, the DCCs are closed at the moment except the 4 DCCs run (3 rural DCC including the one for disabled children and one at Mymensingh town) by Mati’s own financing.



MATI ECO-PRIMARY SCHOOL, HUZURIKANDA

In order to make the quality education affordable for the poor families, MATI started its first free school at MATI eco-village at Huzurikanda called MATI Eco-School. At the Mati eco-primary school, 280 students are currently being provided with quality education. In 2020, 160 new students are enrolled in the school, among them 88 are boys and 72 are girls.

The school offers education up to class-V plus one year of pre-school class totally in free of cost. There are 5 female and 3 male teachers in the school. The students of Mati eco-school avail very good results every year with a good reputation. Apart from the regular classes, students also involved with extra-curricular activities like sports, cultural activities, gardening, nursery & plantation and environmental education etc. The teachers are trained to teach by following the Swiss education method “Essence of learning” in all classes.

Moreover, in order to ensure secured education & reduce drop out of the children of poor families after the primary education, Mati has recently started a special savings program called “school savings program”. Under the program the parents of every student of the school are encouraged to deposit BDT 100 per month so that the family can continue their education by taking education loan from the program. Mati also provide a monthly scholarship BDT 500 to the poor students from its “Student Support Program (SSP)”. In 2020, a new building of the school has been constructed with support from “Global Playground NY-USA”.



STUDENT SUPPORT PROGRAM (SSP)

Child marriage is one of the root causes of high drop out of girls from secondary & higher education. Because of the poverty the poor parents used to arrange marriage for their daughters at childhood ages. In order to address the problem Mati has started the SSP to support the parents who choose school instead of marriage despite their extreme poverty since 2005.

In 2020, total 237 children (34 boy and 203 girls) from Mymensingh, Jamalpur and Sherpur district received a monthly stipend of BDT 500 each which is a sum of approx. BDT 200,000 per month. Four development partners of MATI namely Stiftung 100, Stiftung Brucke, Stiftung Balingen and Mati e.V. supported the SSP.



Apart from the monthly stipend the students get extra support for instance school registration fees, buy expensive stationery products, health Support, etc. They are also provided with different hands on awareness education and training on health-related issues and they are engaged in social development and environmental protection activities.



STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP FOR PARAMEDIC COURSE

Bangladesh has a lack of qualified health professionals to provide quality health services, especially in rural areas. The rural underprivileged people are mainly dependent on unskilled medicine sellers for their primary health care services which is a matter of great concern for all.

In such a context, Mati Bangladesh started an initiative with friends and partner organizations especially “Foundation Bridge Brucke Balingen (FBBB)” of Germany entitled “Job creation for young adolescent girls and boys, enrolment in vocational training institutes and practical training at Mati health care project in the north of Bangladesh” since January 2016.

So, far 10 paramedic students have been supporting to conduct their courses in Taleb Ali MATS (Medical Assistant Training Institute) at Mymensingh. Four students have already completed their courses while the 6 students are continuing their courses. Due to COVID-19 pandemic the course completion is delayed. Side by side of the courses the students are learning from hands on training at Mati Primary Health Care Centre.



VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

MATI has identified the high occurrence of unemployment among young adults, especially among those with a rural background, as a major socio-economic concern. MATI has further identified the absence of sufficient affordable and effective vocational training facilities for the general public as the major obstacle for young people from under-privileged families to obtain a technical qualification that would provide them with the necessary skills and certificates for improved job-placement chances.

Therefore, Mati has been offering several training courses for creating employment opportunities for the young adult especially for the females since 2000. Mati has already moved far ahead in establishing a training institute named Mati Vocational and Technical Training Centre (MVTTC) offering five training courses at this moment. MVTTC has already got conditional approval from the Technical education board to run training on two trades entitled 1. Computer Office Application and 2. Electrical House Wiring. For getting approval for other courses the necessary infrastructure and facilities have to be completed as soon as possible.

During 2020, MVTTC has offered five training courses for 322 trainees (70 boys and 252 girls) in 24 batches as presented in the table below.

Table: List of ongoing training courses offering by MVTTC

Sl.	Course Title	Total no. of trainees			Total no of batches
		Girls	Boys	Total	
01	Computer Training	23	25	48	6
02	Sewing Cutting Training	40	0	40	5
03	Cooking/Gastronomy Training	64	20	84	7
04	Carpentry Training	0	25	25	1
05	Agricultural Organic training	125	0	125	6
	Total=	252	70	322	24



- ***Awareness Campaign on Climate Change Issues***

Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries to Climate Change. In solidarity with global fight against global warming and climate change, Mati Bangladesh has been working with a strong team of climate fighters, climate guides, and hundreds of student volunteers and a NGO network in its working area under Mymensingh division.

In order to raise awareness of the mass people on climate change issues Mati along with the network partners organize different events on the occasion of ‘Annual Campaign Week on Climate Change’. Like previous years, during 24-29 February 2020, MATI Bangladesh organized a six daylong cycling campaign around greater Mymensingh division with the slogan “We control Climate Change - cycling for a better climate in Greater Mymensingh”. Total 11 cyclists took part in the bicycle rally, travelled around 200km covering 4 districts and 5 upazilas. The campaigners discussed the climate change issues in the schools, colleges, local government leaders and local administration offices during the campaign.



- ***Clean City Campaign***

Like every MATI arranged a campaign called ‘Clean City Campaign’ on the 1st day of the New Year 2020 in order to reduce environmental pollution. Moreover, Mati was able to continue the operation of the district waste collection system in Sankipara, which 100 households have joined. For a small monthly fee, the household waste is picked up daily by a bicycle rickshaw converted into a garbage truck and taken to the landfill.

Mati is supported by 30 children and teenagers aged between 5 and 25 years, who regularly motivate their neighbors with small actions to keep the area clean. Thanks to the City Corporation of Mymensingh for taking the cleanliness program under the City Corporation especially for the garbage created in the houses.



- ***Building Climate Change Resilience and Adaptation Strategies***

Mati Bangladesh implemented a climate project entitled “Building Resilience and capacities of climate change affected poor farming families in the Brahmaputra Char Basin” with support from Caritas Luxemburg. The project was started in April 2017 and ended in March 2020. As part of adaptation measures, MATI is working beside the Brahmaputra river basin, Mymensingh and Sherpur districts actively on a regular basis. In 2020, 104 households received financial support for SACK gardening, storage of crops and different alternative livelihood options like- boat purchase, Cloth Business, Grocery Shop, Milk Business, Cow Rearing, Tea stall, vegetable shop Rickshaw-van purchase etc. The women came forward breaking though the social barriers to them in doing business which are traditionally men’s business.



Besides this, 2034 persons received skill development training on agriculture and alternative income sources, by the professional trainers.

- ***Setting tree nursery and plantation campaign***

Every year, MATI plants and distribute the saplings of fruit, timber and medicinal valued trees in Mymensingh and Sherpur district in which MATI ensure the participation of MATI volunteers, local elites, SSP students, parents of MATI School as well as local government bodies with the aim of a climate change mitigation measure. As a part of the consistency of that in 2020, MATI planted 10,000+ saplings of fruit, timber and medicinal valued trees covering the crucially important locations like schools, school-adjoining area, villages, roadside and char area Mymensingh and Sherpur district.



- ***Climate Change Network (CCN) in Greater Mymensingh***

Since very inception of the organization in 1997, MATI has been raising people's awareness on eliminating the root causes of climate change through arranging massive campaign in Mymensingh & Sherpur district. In order to spread the campaign throughout the region MATI has also sensitized a group of civil society people and organization to work together by organizing them in a network named 'Climate Change Network (CCN)' almost a decade ago. This is in fact a loose network having 28 member organizations located in Greater Mymensingh district the present Mymensingh Division.

Mati host the Secretariat of the network while the ED of Mati hold the position of the chairperson of the network. The network is mainly engaged in advocacy & mass awareness raising campaign on the issues of climate change.

- ***Emergency Safety materials support and safety awareness***

The trained staffs of MATI Bangladesh disseminated the messages on the safety measures for COVID-19 to almost its entire target people both at rural level and urban slums at Mymensingh town. For this MATI arranged about 50 community awareness sessions with participation of around 2500 peoples in the villages and urban slum areas and then the participants of the sessions disseminated the messages in their respective communities approximately to 25000 peoples.

MATI also distributed 10,000 of facial masks and 3000 soaps to the poor people of its working area and to the working peoples on the streets such as rickshaw-van-auto pullers, small traders, daily laborers etc. on the streets of Mymensingh town who are bound to come out for work to earn their livelihood.



- ***Emergency Food Support to the Covid-19 Victims***

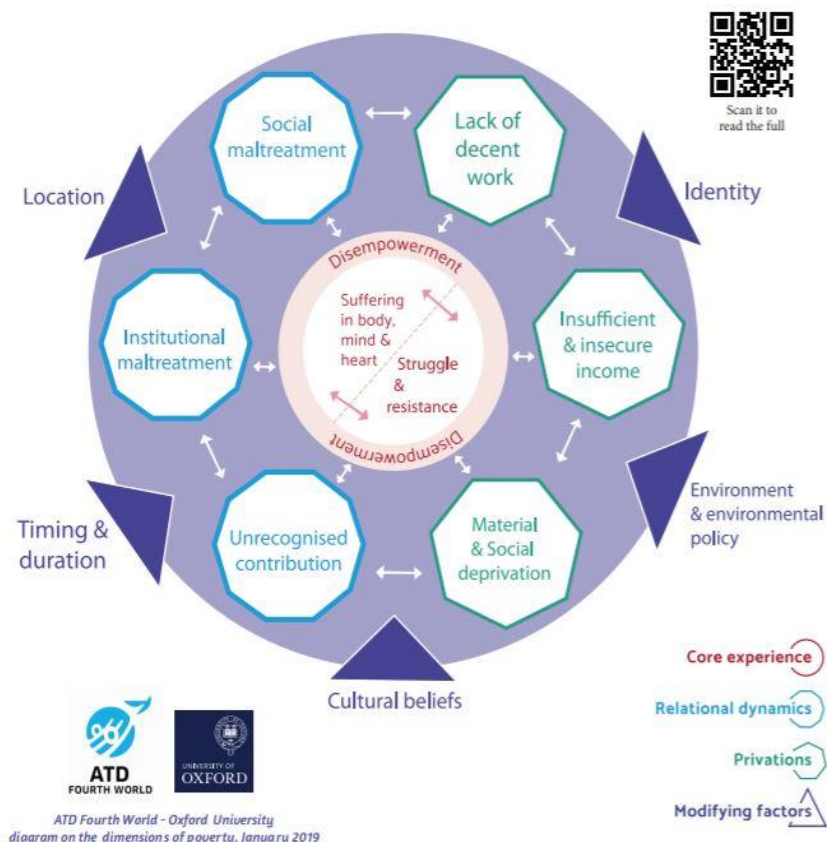
It is reported in different studies that due to the economic shock of COVID-19 at least 20 million new people have been driven under the poverty line. The people living hand to mouth especially the day laborers, van-rickshaw pullers, small traders etc. and many have lost their work and income due to the lockdown who are in the face of starvation with their families. Therefore, side by side the government and other agencies Mati has provided food support to 1124 families for 3 months during and after the lockdown.



RESEARCH, ADVOCACY & CAMPAIGN PROGRAM

• **Research on hidden dimension of poverty:**

In 2019 MATI has completed the international research on “The Hidden dimension of poverty”. The research was implemented both in the global north (France, UK, and USA) and the global south (Bangladesh, Bolivia, and Tanzania) in collaboration with the University of Oxford and ATD Fourth World. The research was three years long. The uniqueness of this research is that a new participatory research approach, known as “Merging of Knowledge (MoK)” and introduced by ATD Fourth World, has been followed. In 2020, ATD has provided further support to disseminate the finding of the research works.



Scan it to read the full



- **Model SDG Village Development:**

The activities are being implemented in the SDG villages directly address seven SDGs viz. Goal-1: No Poverty, Goal-2: Zero Hunger, Goal-3: Good Health & Wellbeing, Goal-4: Quality Education, Goal-6: Water & Sanitation, Goal-8: Decent Work & Economic Growth and Goal-13: Climate Action while Goal-5: Gender Equality is at the center of the all activities where women & girls are the main target people of the project. Thanks to Mr. Mr. Peter Haas and Bettina Mühlen-Haas and their organization Stiftung Bruke for their cordial financial & technical supports & guidance in implementation of the interventions.



However, the activities, which are being implemented in the villages, are focused on the areas of income generation, health & hygiene, water & sanitation, housing, child education and environment protection for mitigating climate change etc. Promotion of organic agricultural practices was also one of the key activities not only for the food security of the target people but also for environment protection and sustainable production & consumption. Eliminating social stigma especially for the women like violence against women or domestic violence, child marriage, eve teasing etc. is also key target project to achieve through awareness campaign.

“Savings & credit program” which is free of interest was taken as one of the key strategies for not only poverty alleviation but also sustainable development of the poor & extreme poor families specially the women members. During the reporting period 100 families who received financial support in 2019 continued to receive credit supports from the “Savings and Credit Program” to invest in income generation activities like chicken, duck, goat & cattle rearing, small business, sewing, carpentry, van purchase, land lease etc. Thus the level of income of the families has been increased. They were also inspired to accumulate their savings in order to improve their financial strength.

Besides the income generation the families also got credit to improve their water and sanitation facilities by installing tube-wells/water pump and sanitary latrine. During the reporting period, 20 water pumps and 20 toilets are installed by the target families by getting the credit supports while the families contributed one third of the costs.

The MATI healthcare team used to offer regular on-site consultation on medical problems fortnightly with free of cost medicines, which gives the villagers unique opportunity to be examined and treated at their doorsteps. Thus poor & working women can save their time & money required for taking treatment from the

government or private health care center located mainly at urban level. The team also aware the families on health & hygiene issues on regular basis. On an average 50 patients become benefited from this per month, most of whom are women and children, as they usually remain untreated with limited family financial resources. During the pandemic period COVID-19 the people received special health care support including awareness on COVID-19 in practicing the safety measures and safety materials like face mask and hand sanitizers.

The women who received agricultural training at the beginning of the project have been continuing to receive hands on training and technical support from the project staff to successfully implement their kitchen-gardening activities where they grow vegetables for their own consumption and by following organic farming practices. By selling the surplus the women are also earning some extra income that contribute to their economic empowerment as well.

As early marriage of girls is still an immense problem in the villages, 46 girls received a school sponsorship support during the reporting period so that they can continue their study. At the same time, MATI has started to work with the surrounding schools and a team of social workers is now active in educating students on the bad impacts of early marriage, dowry, eve teasing, and drug addiction etc. through the school awareness program.

During the reporting period only 10,000 saplings of different fruits, timbers and medicinal trees were distributed to the students against the target of 10,000 saplings for planting in the surrounding villages and roadsides, canal sides and the premises of schools and other institutions for environment protection and climate change mitigation. The achievement was hampered due to closure of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic period.

