

MATI ANNUAL REPORT

ম্যাটি
Mati
Bangladesh
Self Defined Rural Development

MATI NGO

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20
21

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3 FROM THE FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

4-7 AN OVERVIEW OF MATI
-History of Inception
-Our Believes
-Our Vision
-Our Mission
-Our Goal
-Our Sustainable Approach
-Our Beneficiaries
-Our Working Area

8 OUR PROGRAMS
Major Programs of Mati

8 SDG TO ACHIEVE

9 PROGRAMS HIGHLIGHT 2021

9 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL SECURITY PROGRAM

9-13 IDAEP PROGRAM
MATI-COOPERATIVE
PORONTO BELA

13-16 AGRICULTRE AND FOOD SECURITY
-Promotion of Organic Agriculture
-Kitchen Gardening
-Sack Gardening
-Installation of Individual Drying Facilities
-Organic Farming

16-17 SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM
FREE LUNCH PROGRAM FOR THE HUNGRY PEOPLE

17-21 HEALTH AND WASH PROGRAM
-MPHCC
-MATI Eye Care Centre
-Physiotherapy
-Wash Activities
-ESTABLISHMENT of a PHARMECY & OOUTPATIENT CLINIC at KZH

22-25 QUALITY EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
-Projapoty Day Care Centers
-MATI Eco-primary School
-Student Support Program
-Student Scholarship for Paramedic Courses

25-26 VOVCATIONAL TRAINING AND HUMAN REOURCE DEVELOPMENT

27-29 ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE AND DISASTER MANAGMENT PROGRAM
-Awareness Campaign on Climate Change Issues
-Clean City Campaign
-Building Climate Change Resilience and Adaptation Strategies
-Climate Change Network (CCN) and Greater Mymensingh Emergency
-Emergency Safety Materials and Safety Awareness

29-30 RESEARCH, ADVOCACY AND CAMPAIGN PROGRAM

30-32 MOEDEL SDG VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT

FROM THE FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The year 2021 was quite challenging due to a pandemic for all of us. For the Mati organization, as we don't have enough resources and permanent donors for our regular work, unfortunately we had to face several funding difficulties to run our program. Many of our work is charity based and need regular basis funding. Nevertheless, we have a good team of working forces, who believe in our work, which makes us strong as a Mati organization.

Mati organization and it's work has a special concentration to build their own staff by helping them to raise a Mati family for our future work. Several programs which are focused specifically to the young adolescent by stipend program lead to our objectives to develop our own staffs.

Mati Eco Village is a living community for many staff with family and kids, it's a lively living community with children growing up with Mati's culture.

Once the children adopt the working environment of Mati and live together with different cultures and religions, they have a big motivation to obtain the Matis work for all people in the society of ethnicity, culture and religion.

I believe in people's potential regardless of which background he or she comes from, Mati is a good platform to practice these objectives.

I am happy to get ahead of another successful year and present the Annual Report of 2021. 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 Rahaman
ED, Mati Bangladesh

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, he 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 ecosystem as a prerequisite for a 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, color or creed.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the organization is to develop a self-defined development process for the marginalized poor farmers and 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 the capacity building for a self-defined development.

OUR SUSTAINABLE APPROACH

Since 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: 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.

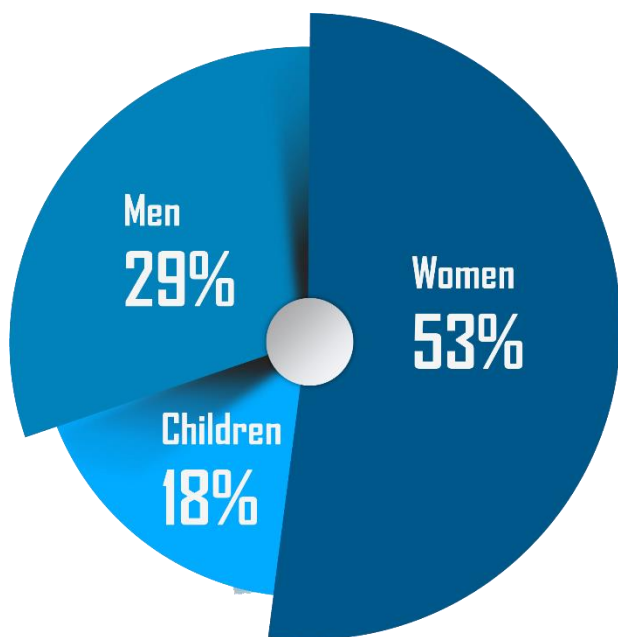
We believe that societies already hold the tools for their own development in their hands. So together with those concerned, the poor, we try to find ways to activate these tools. Poor people have a lot of ideas and initiative on how to make a change towards the better. What they lack is capital or the 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 community's 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.

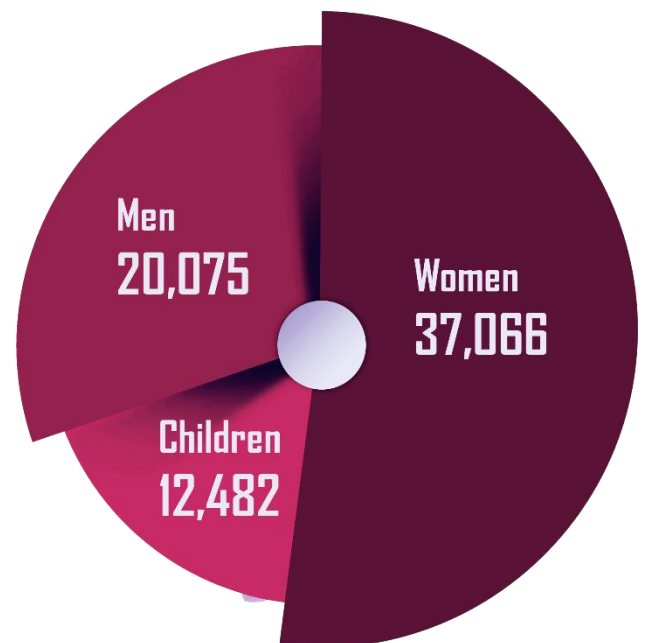
OUR BENEFICIARIES

MATI focuses on extreme poor people, marginalized farmers, sharecroppers, with special focus on women, religious minorities, Dalits, physically challenged children and disadvantaged sections of the society, predominantly in both rural and urban 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.

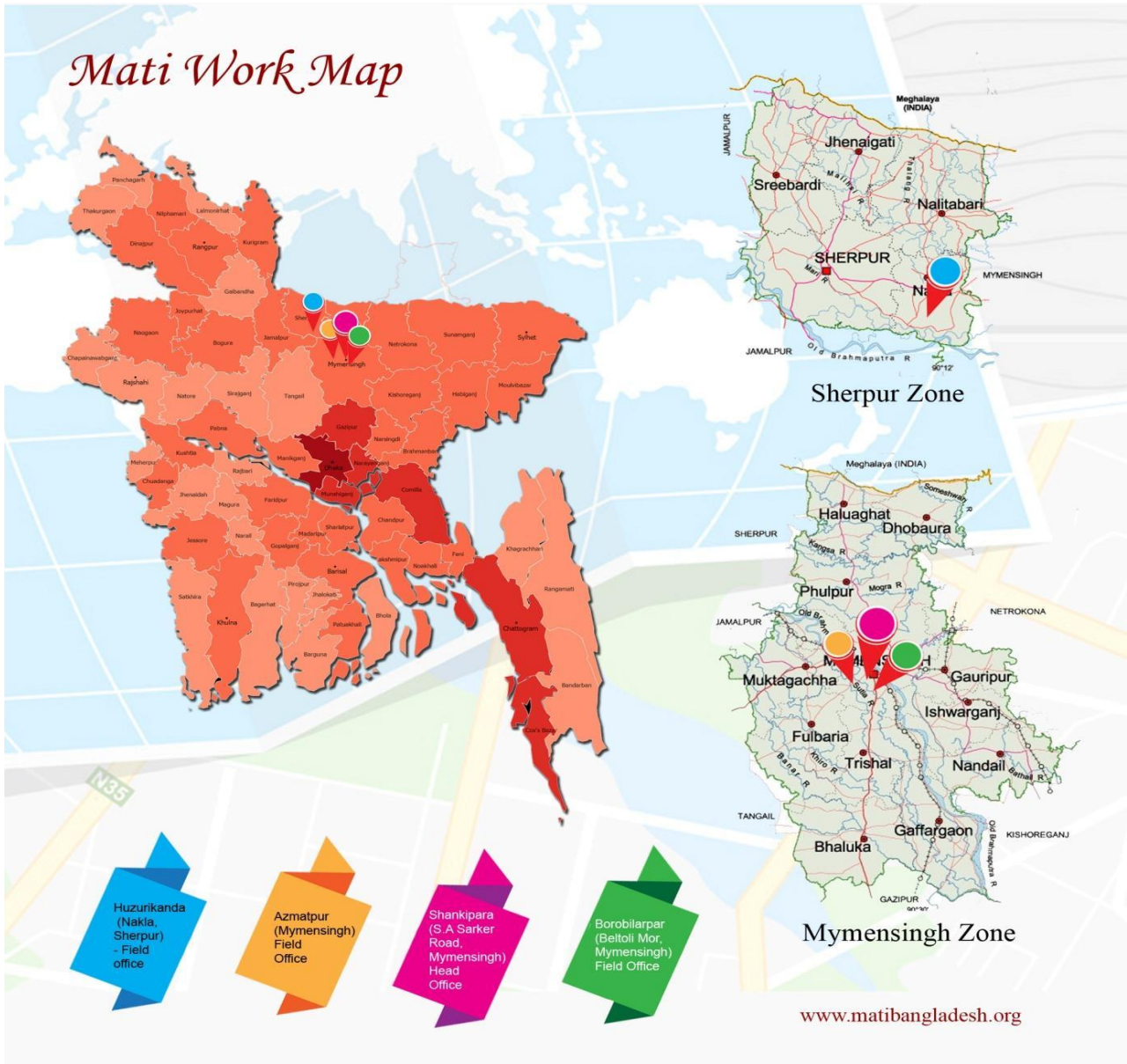


Direct beneficiaries of Mati (%)



Direct beneficiaries of Mati (number)

OUR WORKING AREA



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

OUR PROGRAMS:

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 (Sustainable Development 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 strives 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 programs 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.



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 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 by 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 a maximum of 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 to enhance women empowerment.

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

Starting with 100 women in 2009, until the end of 2021 a total of 2279 women of 110 groups from 20 villages reached savings of BDT 57,01,566. In 2021 the outstanding loan was BDT 1,69,52,174 which female members have taken to invest in income-generating activities like crop production, rearing small businesses for cow-goat-chicken, rickshaw-van-auto purchase, as well as for house construction or repairing, setting tube-well or water pump, installing sanitary latrine, treatment, children education etc. that helped to increase their income, improve their livelihood status, improved health, WASH, education etc.

MATI COOPERATIVE

The poor rural people who are especially smallholder farmers have been struggling to survive in the context of commercial agriculture which is promoted by the government. But the workforce who are migrating to the urban areas are 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, agriculture is going into the hands of corporations who are promoting chemical agriculture which is devastating for soil, the environment and human health. Moreover, traditional & sustainable family farming is going to disappear.

In such a context, upon a series of discussions with farmers and based on their decisions MATI has taken a new initiative to develop farmers' cooperatives for sustainable development of the smallholder farmers who are the absolute majority among the rural poor people. MATI has conducted a survey on the 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 commercial farming to increase 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 in April 2019. The registration of this program under the department of cooperative of the government of Bangladesh is in progress to develop a value chain model by the COOP to ensure better market access of the farming families & women empowerment.

Value Chain Model of Mati Cooperative



So far the cooperative has 2279 members and all of them are women from 18 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 the 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 the growing season when the prices remain low to sell during off season when the prices usually go higher 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 very often have to depend on their sons or daughters as a burden on them. Especially in the poor families the older people used to lead very pitiful lives depriving them of their basic human rights. Elderly people usually suffer from different kinds of elderly diseases and the treatment costs are very high which their families can't afford.

In such a reality, MATI came forward to resolve the issue by starting a support program for elderly people who are completely vulnerable. Since June 2010 8 beneficiaries have been receiving 1000 Taka by MATI's own



fundings. As a part of this ongoing support program in 2021, MATI continued the support as usual with its very limited own fund. MATI aims to expand the program in the near future if it is possible to raise adequate funds.

Besides the special allowance, MATI always provides 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*

The promotion of organic agriculture is one of the core activities of MATI in order to conserve 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.

The capacity building of the farmers is a key strategy along with the technical inputs and financial start-up support. In 2021 a total of 325 female members received both theoretical and hand on training on organic agriculture production, preservation and processing and also received the aforesaid support provided by the development partners of MATI namely MISEREOR, Mati e.V and FVBBS.

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.

- *Kitchen Gardening*



Throughout the MATI's working area families have a little land at their homestead to establish Kitchen Gardens. During 2021, a total of 504 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, which 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 helped 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 purposes. 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 a steel frame covered by plexiglass walls and roof.

- ***Installation of individual drying facilities***

A total of 40 families are given start-up aid to establish individual drying facilities. Considering the utilities, the families built 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 them 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 conditions. The dryers are expected to play a very important role in developing the value chain of women's products leading to their economic development and empowerment.

- ***Organic Marketing***

In order to enhance the promotion of organic farming and ensure 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, eggs and milk are sold to both local and urban consumers twice a month. MATI staff 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 cooperatives and they have already decided to take organic production & marketing initiatives by the cooperative. MATI has decided to facilitate the process of development of the cooperative in order to establish it on an institutional basis. The capacity building process of the target people to manage the cooperative successfully & independently will take some time.

By the end of 2021, a total of 829 farmer families are engaged so far to produce organic crops 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 generally remain hungry. Moreover, they have to stay at school from morning to afternoon with an empty stomach, which results in less concentration on studying and leads to a poor health & nutritional status.

Considering this, MATI started the School Lunch Program in 2012 that has been continuing since then. During 2021, all the students of the school were provided with a healthy lunch on a daily basis to improve their nutritional status. Moreover, the students enjoyed the lunch that helped them to increase their school attendance as well as their concentration on their studies.

FREE LUNCH PROGRAM FOR THE HUNGRY PEOPLE

A huge number of hungry people move to and from the town of Mymensingh, in fact, all over Bangladesh in search of 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 meet 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, providing a healthy & rich diet every Thursday of a week which will continue throughout the year 2021, but because of the Corona, 100 people were given the same value of dry food things every Thursday without direct cooking.

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 the 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 2021

Activities	Achievements
Health Awareness Meeting and Training	261 Trainings (Hk-136, My-125)
Free Treatment & Medicine Support	1360 Patients (Medicine Cost BDT 1,71,588) (Hk-4530, My-1360 & Cost Hk-78177, My-93,411)
Field Level Health Camp	3750 Women, (HK-2,796 & My-954)
Family Planning Services	628 Women (Hk-232, My-396)
Women Pregnancy and Post Delivery Services	422 Women (Hk-375, My- 47)
Physiotherapy Services	194 Patients
Children Milk Support	10 Children (Cost BDT5,273)
Referral Services	155 Patients
Discounts for Treatment	75 Patients (BDT20,007)
Facial mask distribution for COVID-19	13173 (Hk- 5074, My-8099)

Note: COVID-19 Pandemic severely affected the activities and achievements during 2021. 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 the chart 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. Current activities at KZH are routine eye examinations &

treatment, spectacles services, prevention of onset and advance of retinopathy as well as LASIK surgery.

Moreover, the eye surgery supports are provided either by arranging the eye camp at KZH or in collaboration with the BNSB (Bangladesh National Society for Blinds) Eye Hospital Mymensingh and Ispahani Islamia Eye Institute & Hospital, Sherpur, The Lion Eye Hospital, Dhaka etc.

There are two paramedic doctors currently at KZH. Both of them obtained their diploma from government institutions and are registered with the Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council. In 2021, three new members have joined the KZH team who have successfully proven their skill and capacity during their probation period.

Activities & Achievements in 2021

Activities	Achievements
Eye Center Patients	5084
Prescription for Spectacles	1747
Spectacles Prepared/ Spectacles Support	1398
Eye Screening Camp	88
Identification of Cataract	309
Distribution of Medicines	4530participants & cost-78177
Cataracts Operation	62
Patients Screened in the Field	6934
Awareness Sessions on COVID-19	262 (approx. 6419 participants)

PHYSIOTHERAPY



Ms. Steffi Rettenmeier a German Volunteer started the project “Physiotherapy in Bangladesh” at MATI NGO in Mymensingh in September 2010. Since then, MPHCC has been providing regular physiotherapy services, especially considering the needs of persons with disabilities (PWD). Volunteer physiotherapists from Germany visit MATI and provide physiotherapy services especially for patients with PWD and paralysis, accidents, etc. on a regular basis.

Unfortunately, due to the outbreak of Corona Virus, no volunteer physiotherapist could come to Bangladesh in 2021. However, physiotherapy services have not stopped for this and will be taken up as soon as the pandemic allows for it. Meanwhile, 194 disabled children from MATI's disability schools received regular physiotherapy services from MATI's trained staff during the reporting period.

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 support for installing a sanitary latrine and drinking water pumps or tube wells 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 2021, 35 families received support from Stiftung Brücke to install tube wells and sanitary latrines at their homes.



ESTABLISHMENT of a PHARMACY & OOUTPATIENT CLINIC at KZH

In 2021, a Pharmacy and outpatient clinic have been started at KZH campus with support from German donor agency SEZ through FVBBB which are under operation since mid of April 2021. The dispensary is named by the Mati Cooperative as “Mati Dispensay” taken the brand name Mati (Soil). It is worthy to note that the Pharmacy or Dispensay is developed under the entrepreneurship development initiative of the Coop while Mr. Babu Mia is the Entrepreneur in order to make is self-run. The Dispensary is equipped with refrigerator, lockable cabinet, table, chair, bench etc. A diploma doctor is sitting regularly in the outpatient clinic during 3pm to 9pm assisted by a paramedic and the pharmacist.

On an average 50 patients are getting services from the outpatient clinic every day. The patients are also getting quality medicines at lower cost from the pharmacy while the extremely poor patients are also getting some medicines free of cost from the Health Security Program of Mati Cooperative. For the major diseases the doctor use to refer the patients to the nearby government hospitals located at Upazila and district headquarters or at Mymensingh Medical College and Hospital where Mati has established good linkage with to get better health services at a cheaper cost. Patients pay for the medical services they receive, depending on their income situation. MATI subsidizes the actual costs from donations and additional income from better-off patients.

The KZH has also been supplied with a few primary medical equipment and free medicines for strengthening the services for the general health patients. The general health staff at KZH also arranges the periodic health camp for serving the patients living at remote villages of Charland.

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 already in their teenage years who could not go to school themselves often become the mothers of the next generation in poverty.

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 DCCs 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 a total of 710 children throughout the project period (2018-2020) 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 for 4 DCCs running (5 rural DCCs including the one for disabled children and one at Mymensingh town) by Mati’s own financing. Currently 154 disadvantaged children are benefiting from these day cares.

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, 312 students are currently being provided with quality education. In 2021, 161 new and old students are enrolled in the school, among them 73 are boys and 88 are girls.

The school offers totally free of cost education up to class 5 plus one year of preschool class. There are 10 female 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 are also involved with extracurricular 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 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 an education loan from the program. MATI also provides a monthly scholarship BDT 500 to the poor students from its “Student Support Program (SSP)”.

STUDENT SUPPORT PROGRAM (SSP)



Child marriage is a menace in Bangladesh that can only be overcome through education. It is one of the root causes of high drop out of girls from secondary & higher education. Because of poverty the poor parents used to arrange marriages 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 2021, a total of 241 children (36 boys and 205 girls) from Mymensingh, Jamalpur and Sherpur districts receive a monthly stipend of BDT 500 to 1000 each which is a sum of BDT 150,000 per month. Four development partners of MATI namely Stiftung 100, Stiftung Brücke, Stiftung Balingen and Mati e.V. supported the SSP.

Apart from the monthly stipend the students get extra support for instance school registration fees, to buy expensive stationery products, receive 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 with “Foundation Bridge Brücke 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 supported 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 the COVID-19 pandemic, all educational institution was shut down for one and a half year therefore the course completion is delayed. Side by side with 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 adults 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 2021, MVTTC has offered five training courses for 354 trainees (80 boys and 274 girls) in 29 batches as presented in the table below.

Table: List of ongoing training courses offered by MVTTC

Sl.	Course Title	Total no. of trainees			Total no. of batches
		Girls	Boys	Total	
01	Computer Training	32	35	67	8
02	Sewing Cutting Training	53	0	53	7
03	Cooking/Gastronomy Training	64	20	84	7
04	Carpentry Training	0	25	25	1
05	Agricultural Organic Training	125	0	125	6
	Total=	274	80	354	29

ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE & DISASTER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

- *Awareness Campaign on Climate Change Issues*

Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries to Climate Change. In solidarity with the 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 the 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 in 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”. A total of 11 cyclists took part in the bicycle rally, travelling around 200km covering 4 districts and 5 upazilas. The campaigners discussed the climate change issues in the schools, colleges, with local government leaders and local administration offices during the campaign.

- *Clean City Campaign*

Like every year, MATI arranged a campaign called ‘Clean City Campaign’ on the 1st day of the New Year 2021 in order to reduce environmental pollution. Moreover, MATI was able to continue the operation of the district waste collection system in Sankipara, where 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. We thank 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 Luxembourg. The project was started in April 2017 and ended in March 2020. As a part of adaptation measures, MATI is actively working on a regular basis beside the Brahmaputra river basin, Mymensingh and Sherpur districts.

In 2021, 119 households received financial support for SACK gardening, storage of crops and different alternative livelihood options such as: Boat Purchase, Cloth Business, Grocery Shop, Milk Business, Cow Rearing, Tea Stall, Vegetable Shop, Rickshaw-Van Purchase etc. The

women came forward breaking through the social barriers to them in doing business which are traditionally men's business.

Besides this, 2150 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 distributes the saplings of fruit, timber and medicinal valued trees in Mymensingh and Sherpur district in which MATI ensures the participation of MATI volunteers, local elites, SSP students, parents of the MATI School as well as local government bodies with the aim of a climate change mitigation measure. As a part of the consistency MATI planted in 2021 8,000+ saplings of fruit, timber and medicinal valued trees covering the crucially important locations like schools, school-adjoining area, villages, roadsides and char areas Mymensingh and Sherpur district.

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

Since its inception in 1997, MATI has been raising awareness in Mymensingh and Sherpur districts by organizing massive campaigns to address the root causes of climate change. In order to spread the campaign across the region, MATI organized a network called 'Climate Change Network' (CCN) almost a decade ago to sensitize a group of civil society people and organizations to work together. The members are a loose network of member organizations.

MATI is hosting the Secretariat of the Network and Mr. Lenen Rahman, the ED of MATI is the Chairperson of the Network. The network is primarily engaged in advocacy and public awareness campaigns on the issue of climate change.

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

The trained staff 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 62 community awareness sessions with participation of around 2500 people 4800 people in the villages and urban slum areas and then the participants of the sessions disseminated the messages in their respective communities approximately 28500 people.

MATI also distributed 12,500 facial masks and 3150 soaps to the poor people of its working area and to the working people 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. MATI 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 Dimensions 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 findings of the research works.

Bangladesh Team is supposed to organize 10 big-scale workshops to disseminate all the National findings and international merged dimensions. Target Participants for these workshops are general people, government authority, academics, students, social workers, activists.

Unfortunately, till the end of 2020 due to the COVID-19 situation arising worldwide we had to stop this initiative which was supposed to start from the last week of March 2020. Most of the target institutes are still not open for all for this kind of program. As the situation did not



come to a stable situation and any kind of big gathering is still prohibited, we could not organize any workshop in 2020.

Though we also have to face some difficult times in the year 2021, we successfully completed 5 physical dissemination workshops with a total number of 186 participants. In these 5 programs, we have tried to cover several professionals, Institutes, and locations.

Model SDG Village Development

The activities that 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. Peter Haas and Mrs. Bettina Mühlen-Haas and their organization Stiftung Brücke for their cordial financial & technical support and 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 a key target project to achieve through awareness campaigns.

“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 especially the female members. During the reporting period 100 families who received financial support in 2019 continued to receive credit support 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 increased. They were also inspired to accumulate their savings in order to improve their financial strength.

Besides income generation the families also got credits to improve their water and sanitation facilities by installing tube-wells/water pumps and sanitary latrines. During the reporting period, 20 water pumps and 20 toilets were installed by the target families by getting the credit support 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 a 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 centers located mainly at urban levels. The team also brings awareness to the families on health & hygiene issues on a regular basis. On an average 50 patients benefit 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 people received special health care support including awareness on COVID-19 in practicing the safety measures and safety materials like face masks 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 contributes to their economic empowerment as well.

As early marriage of girls is still an immense problem in the villages, 46 girls received school sponsorship support during the reporting period so that they can continue their study. At the same time, MATI 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 15,000 saplings of different fruits, timbers and medicinal trees were distributed to the students against the target of 15,000 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.