

### Alokito Shishu Project's First-ever Foster Parenting : Rajia Finds Her New Family

**Caritas Dhaka Region:** Rajia, a six-year-old girl, has found her new family through the efforts of the Gabtoli Drop-in-Center (DIC) under the Alokito Shishu Project Dhaka region. This foster parenting agreement marks a significant milestone for the Alokito Shishu Project, representing its first venture into foster parenting.

An agreement paper was signed between Caritas management and the Foster parent family of Rajia on July 18, 2023 along with the first payment of Tk.7000/- (seven thousand) in the presence of Child Protection Committee members, local administrative and media personnel. The formal foster parenting agreement was signed between Mr. Jyoti Gomes, the Regional Director of Caritas Dhaka Region, and Mrs. Fatema Begum, Rajia's grandmother. This agreement ensures that Rajia will receive a monthly allowance of Tk. 7000/- for her comprehensive care, including nutrition, education, and other necessities.

Among others, Mahabub Uddin Saj, General Secretary of Mirpur Press Club; Mr. Mijanur Rahaman Bappi, President of Bangladesh Manobadhikar Commission, Darus Salam Thana; Mr. T.L. Robi Das, Secretary of Ward Council-09; Mr. Mijanur Rahaman, a journalist; as well as members of the Child Protection Committee and other project staff were present during the agreement signing ceremony.

Rajia, with the code number 623, was a girl living on the streets and was associated with the Gabtoli DIC of the Alokito Shishu Project. She grew up in the Mirpur Sha Ali Majar area with her family. In 2022, Rajia's mother left the family to marry someone else, leaving her three daughters and one son under the care of their drug addicted father. Since January 2023, all the children started receiving assistance from Gabtoli DIC and its staff.



*In Photo: Rajia is seen being handed over to her grandmother*

### Two Children who ran away from home reunited with their families

**Caritas Mymensingh Region:** Two children named Nazim (13) and Alomgir (14), hailing from Bhangnahati village in Shripur Upazila of Gazipur district, were successfully reunited with their families by the effort of the Alokito Shishu Mymensingh team. They both ran away from home on April 5, 2023 in a fit of anger against their parents.



*In Photo: Nazim is seen with his family in Mymensingh DIC*

This process was achieved through the collaborative efforts of CPC members, local dignitaries, government authorities, the local police, and the community.

Throughout this process, the Alokito Shishu Project Mymensingh team diligently undertook regular observation, motivation, and counseling, ensuring that every step adhered to the principles of project. This encompassed effective communication and the establishment of a network that linked the children, family members, community leaders, and local administrators. It was through these collaborative measures that the project staff orchestrated the successful reintegration of both children into their respective families, each in a different area and at a different time.

## Health Check-up Program for Disadvantaged Children in Mymensingh

**Caritas Mymensingh Region:** The Lions Club of Dhaka in collaboration with Mymensingh Heritage organized a health checkup program for the disadvantaged street children of Alokito Shishu Project. The event took place at the Patgudam Drop-in Center in Mymensingh on May 14, 2023.

Following the comprehensive health checkup program, essential medical assistance was provided to a total of 40 children, comprising 10 boys and 30 girls, of the project. This initiative aimed to address immediate health needs and enhance the overall quality of life for these children.

Besides, the Lions Club International extended a helping hand by providing hearing devices to Ms. Rafia Akter, a 12-year-old beneficiary of the project. Caritas Mymensingh Region, expresses profound gratitude to the Lions Club of Dhaka and Mymensingh Heritage for their magnanimous efforts and outstanding service.



*In Photo: A physician checking up a children in Drop in Center*

## Delight as Children Reap Benefits from the Department of Social Services

**Caritas Mymensingh Region:** In collaboration with UNICEF and Department of Social Services in Mymensingh, Caritas Mymensingh Region distributed essential items among the children of the Alokito Shishu Project at the District Social Service Complex on May 17, 2023.

The benevolent endeavor saw the distribution of a diverse array of items, including food, groceries, clothing, and hygiene kits, extending vital support to a total of 40 children (16 boys and 24 girls) of Alokito Shishu Project.

The provision of essential items not only addressed immediate needs but also resonated with the message of care and solidarity, fostering an environment of positivity and hope. The event stood as a reminder that the collective power of compassion and cooperation can uplift communities and leave an indelible mark on the lives of young minds.

The occasion was graced by the presence of distinguished personalities, including Md. Abul Qayyum, the District Deputy Director of the Social Services Department, and Ms. Farzana Ansari, the Assistant Deputy Director. Their participation symbolized the shared determination of the authorities to ensure the well-being and growth of these young souls.

## House Repair Support Transforms the Life of Sun Robidas

**Caritas Rajshahi Region:** Sun Robidas, a street children associated with the Alokito Shishu Project, had been living in challenging circumstances with his 52-year-old grandmother, Sumita Robidas in the Ramkrishna polly slum under Rajshahi City Corporation.

Their house was in dire need of repair, exposing them to various vulnerabilities. However, a ray of hope shone upon them when they received a much-needed boost for house repair on 7 May 2023, Sumita Robidas was granted a sum of 12,000/- (Twelve thousand) taka for house repair from the Sister of Missionary of Charity in Mohisbathan, Rajshahi in the presence of the staff of Alokito Shishu

This support not only restored the physical safety of their home but also brought immeasurable joy to Sun and his family. The transformed living conditions provided a secure environment where Sun could thrive and pursue his dreams without the shadows of uncertainty.

Sun Robidas now resides in a safe and well-maintained home. The support for house repair has not only positively impacted his immediate living conditions but has also infused a renewed sense of hope and optimism into their lives.

Speaking about the transformation, Sumita Robidas shared, "The assistance we received for house repair has brought so much relief to our lives. Now, Sun can focus on his studies and enjoy his childhood without worrying about the safety of our home. We are profoundly grateful for this support."

## Recovered After Drug Treatment, Shojib Secures Employment in Workshop

**Caritas Dhaka Region:** Fifteen-year-old Shojib has successfully reintegrated into society by securing a job at a workshop, thanks to the treatment and support he received from Mohammadpur DIC Alokito Shishu Project.

Born to a day laborer father and a domestic worker mother, Shojib, the second among three siblings, faced neglect due to his family's financial struggles. His life took a troubling turn, leading him to drop out of school, fall into drug abuse, and engage in unethical activities for sustenance.

After discovering Mohammadpur DIC on November 3, 2022, Shojib found solace in its activities and was determined to change his life. Seeking refuge from negative influences, he embraced the Night Shelter under the guidance of the Outreach Officer. With the officer's support, he reconnected with his parents, who were keen to help him recover. They raised Tk. 9,000 to fund his treatment at the 'Apon Gaon' Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Center in Shingair Upazila, Manikganj district.

Alokito Shishu Project further extended its assistance by contributing Tk. 32,000 for his four-month treatment, which proved transformative. Post-treatment, Shojib recognized his aptitude for technical skills over formal education and chose to pursue vocational training. Presently, he is gainfully employed in a private workshop, fulfilling his aspiration for self-sufficiency.

## Perves to receive long term support until he finds a stable employment

**Caritas Dhaka Region:** Perves, a six-year old street child of Gabtoli Drop-In Center of Alokito Shishu Project, Dhaka region, has been reintegrated into society with long-term support from the 'KANON' project of Ahsania Mission. He will receive all kind of support until the age of 18.

An agreement was signed between his mother and the Ahsania Mission authority, ensuring that Perves remains under their care until he completes his education and finds stable employment.

Perves, who spent his days at the Mirpur Majar area, faced numerous challenges in the absence of his mother, Fulora Begum, who was also a street child and is involved with sex work. Begging for food and resorting to petty theft became a way of survival for the young child. However, hope arrived when his mother attended a community meeting at Majar area, where she was informed about the Drop-in-Center-DIC of Alokito Shishu project. Accompanied by his mother, Perves made his way to the Gabtoli DIC, where he soon found companionship with other children from the Majar campus.

Regular visits to the DIC became a part of their routine, and as time passed, Fulora Begum expressed her desire to secure a better future for her son. This marked the beginning of Perves' case management for long-term support, under the guidance of the Outreach Officer.

## BARACA Girls DIC organizes Cultural Program

**BARACA:** BARACA Girls DIC of Alokito Shishu Project organized a cultural program marking the International Women's Day on March 8, 2023.

The cultural program, designed to honor and uplift women's achievements, commenced with an opening ceremony featuring speeches from BARACA Girls DIC's leadership. They highlighted the significance of International Women's Day and the vital role women play in society.

One of the highlights of the evening was a mesmerizing dance performance by a group of talented girls from the center. The event brought together a diverse group of 27 participants, comprising dedicated staff members and enthusiastic children from the center.



*In Photo: Children are seen performing a dance at BARACA*

## Minhaj Uddin, Who Ran Away from Home, Reunited with His Family

**Caritas Mymensingh Region:** Md. Minhaj Uddin, a 12-year-old boy who ran away from home on February 15, 2023, has been reunited with his family on March 9, 2023. Minhaj was enrolled in a madrasa in the fifth grade, but he had little interest in pursuing studies at the institution.

Unhappy with his father's strict rules, Minhaj, whose father was a retired army officer, made a pivotal decision on February 15, 2023. Without informing his family, he discreetly left his home in Swatashwar village, situated in the Manoharganj upazila of Comilla District, and boarded a train. His journey led him to Mymensingh Railway Station.

On February 16, during routine outreach activities, Sourav Mia, a dedicated peer educator working on the Alokito Shishu Project, noticed Minhaj sitting in a corner of the station, looking frightened and withdrawn. Sourav approached the boy and initiated a conversation. Recognizing that Minhaj was alone and in need of assistance, Sourav Mia introduced him to the services provided at the DIC (Drop-In Center) located in Patgudam in Mymensingh.

On March 9, 2023, in the presence of Md. Mohiuddin Ahmed, Acting In-Charge of the Railway Police Station, Minhaj was reunited with his elder brother, Md. Mannan, and his uncle, Md. Jasimuddin, on behalf his father. The moment Minhaj was brought back, his elder brother, Md. Mannan, was overcome with joy, expressing his profound gratitude to the Alokito Shishu Project Mymensingh team and the Railway Police Station's In-Charge, Md. Mohiuddin Ahmed.

In a heartfelt video call, Minhaj's father conveyed his appreciation, saying, "I am deeply grateful to have my child back; thank you, Alokito Shishu Project Team. May you all be blessed for your compassion and dedication."



*In Photo: Minhaj is being handed over to his family*

## Coordination Meeting with GO and NGOs held

**BARACA:** A meeting was held with the participation of a total of 26 individuals representing 11 like-minded service providers on June 8, 2023 at BARACA. Coordination meetings are scheduled to occur quarterly, involving diverse like-minded GO, NGOs and educational institutions.

Representatives from prominent organizations such as the Salvation Army, Lido, Rising Bangladesh, SAF Center, INCIDIN Bangladesh, Inner Wheel NGO, Operation Generation, Boost, BRAC, World Vision, Haibatnagar Government School, UCEP Nalgola Technical School, Urban Health, MC Sister House, and the Department of Social Welfare actively participated in this coordination meeting.

These coordination meetings have led to the establishment of institutional connections and the provision of a range of services. Notable achievements include counseling services for five children from Nagar Shastho Kendro, educational opportunities for ten children, the contribution of educational materials (396 books) by World Vision, the facilitation of a study opportunity for one child at UCEP Nalgola Technical School with a nominal tuition fee of 100 taka, provision of day care and nourishment for children at sub-centers, as well as the distribution of disability allowances, elderly allowances, Eid allowances etc. facilitated through the Department of Social Services.

## Capacity Building Training on Adolescence and Drug Abuse

**BARACA:** With the aim of improving the quality of life of street children and increasing their life skills, BARACA Alokito Shishu Project provided training on adolescence and the bad effect of drugs to children on May 2, 2023.

As a result of training, children became curious about themselves and ask questions. They have become aware of the various changes of puberty and know the do's and don'ts.

Also, on 6th June 2023 A total of 30 girl children of BARACA Alokito Shishu Project Girls DIC and team participated in Adolescence training organized by World Vision. Training was provided by Mrs. Shabnam Panna and Muhi Akhter.

## Refresher Training on Anger and Street Management held

**Caritas Central Office:** In an effort to enhance the skills of staff members and improve the well-being of at-risk street children, Alokito Shishu Project organized a two-day-long refresher training program on Anger and Street Management at Caritas Bangladesh central office on 16 and 17 May, 2023.



*In Photo: Participants of Anger and Stress Management Training Program pose for a picture*

Sukleash George Costa, Director (Program) of Caritas Bangladesh, inaugurated the training program with a warm welcome speech. Moderated by Kusum Gregory, Program Officer of the project, the sessions were led by Dr. Lipy Gloria Rozario, the Director of Healing Heart Counseling Unit.

The training aimed to equip the staff members of the project with effective strategies to manage anger and effectively address the unique challenges faced by street children. Throughout the two-day program, Rozario covered a wide range of important topics including case management, self-care, ways to improve positive hormones, professional and personal life balancing, and non-violent communication. The program witnessed active participation from a total of 26 staff members from Dhaka, Rajshahi, and Mymensingh regions associated with the Alokito Shishu Project.

## Awareness Session on Drug Addiction Held to Educate Students and Teachers

**BARACA:** In a proactive effort to combat the growing concerns surrounding drug addiction, an intensive awareness session was organized by Alokito Shishu Project Psychologist Ms. Tania Sultana at St. Gregory School and College.

The event held over the course of three days from January 21 to January 24, 2023, gathered significant participation from both students and teachers, with 918 students and 22 teachers engaging in the informative sessions. With the motto of "Be aware, be safe," the awareness session aimed to equip participants with crucial knowledge about the perils of drug addiction, its implications, and preventive measures.

Tania Sultana addressed the audience with insightful presentations, real-life case studies, and testimonials that shed light on the devastating impact of drug addiction on individuals, families, and society as a whole.



*In Photo: Tania Sultana is seen delivering lecture on drug addiction at St. Gregory School and College.*

## Media Advocacy on Simplification of Birth Registration for Street Children held

**Caritas Mymensingh Region:** A Media Advocacy event titled "Simplification of Birth Registration for Street Children and Access to Government Safety Net Facilities." was held at Mymensingh Regional Auditorium of Caritas Bangladesh by Alokito Shishu Project on 14 June 2023. The event aimed to address the challenges faced by street children in the birth registration process and their access to essential government safety net facilities.

The event saw active participation, with a total of 31 participants representing various Government Organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations, city corporations, the Department of Social Services, local police stations, national and local print media outlets, educational institutions, child protection committee members, and selected children and parents.

## Caritas Germany Representatives Visit Alokito Shishu Project in Mymensingh

**Mymensingh Region:** a delegation of representatives from Caritas Germany embarked on a two-day visit to the Alokito Shishu project in Mymensingh. The delegation included Ms. Angela, Ms. Anna Lena, and Mr. Shodd, who arrived on the 19th of March and concluded their visit on the 20th of March, 2023.



*In Photo: Representatives from Caritas Germany pose for a picture*

During their stay, they had the privilege to explore the multifaceted initiatives undertaken by the Alokito Shishu Project in Mymensingh. They engaged with the heart of the project by visiting the Drop-in Center (DIC) and the Night Shelter, both of which serve as essential components of the initiative, providing vital support to vulnerable children in the Mymensingh city.

The delegation's commitment to understanding the grassroots impact led them to other vital areas within the community. They embarked on visits to the railway station, Kanchijuly Park, and various slum areas under the jurisdiction of the Mymensingh City Corporation. This hands-on approach allowed them to observe the project's influence on the ground, gaining valuable insights into the challenges faced by the community and the remarkable efforts being made to address them.

Throughout their visit, the representatives engaged in constructive dialogues with a diverse range of stakeholders. These interactions included discussions with the children benefiting from the project, as well as their parents, guardians, community leaders, members of the child protection committee, and local donors. The culmination of the visit was also marked by a sharing meeting with the dedicated staff members of the project.

## A total of 677 Beneficiaries Received Healthcare Services from Caritas Dhaka Region

**Dhaka Region:** A total of 677 beneficiaries, including 435 children, 242 family and community members, received healthcare support from Alokito Shishu Project under the Caritas Dhaka Region over the past three months. Treatment support has primarily been provided to children for conditions such as fever, colds, coughs, headaches, skin diseases, diarrhea, Peptic Ulcer Disease (PUD), and abdominal pain.

Furthermore, a total of 44 children received specialized treatment through various hospitals and clinics for conditions including ear infections, positive HBS Ag results, tonsillitis, mumps, oral TB infections, nasal infections, eye injuries, Dengue, and Typhoid.

Medicine support has been sourced from two pharmacies and two hospitals. An MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) has been signed with Medinet Hospital, enabling children and their family members to access treatment and pathological tests at discounted rates.

## BARACA Holds Child Protection Committee Meeting

**BARACA:** A meeting of the Child Protection Committee took place, with a total of nine members on June 7, 2023 at BARACA. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss school and family visits for the school-going children of the Centre. A child has been returned to the family with the help of the Child Protection Committee.

Throughout the months of January to June 2023, a total of three bi-monthly meetings were held at BARACA. These meetings focused on addressing child-related issues.

The Child Protection Committee has been instrumental in facilitating the reintegration of children into their families. Their efforts have played a significant role in resolving family conflicts, addressing cases of social neglect, confronting instances of physical and mental abuse, as well as tackling issues related to child drug addiction. This committee actively contributes to the overall development and well-being of children and families.

