

FRIENDSHIP'S RESPONSE TO HUMANITARIAN CRISES IN 2017

2017 - A year of exceptional challenges

2017 has been a year of exceptional challenges for Bangladesh. It faced not only its most severe floods in recent years, but also had to deal with a massive humanitarian crisis when more than 700,000 Rohingya people fled from Myanmar to Bangladesh after 25 August 2017.

BACKGROUND

Bangladesh is recognized as one of the most vulnerable countries to the effects of global warming and climate change. The country has a history of extreme climatic events claiming hundreds of thousands of lives and regularly destroying infrastructure and peoples' livelihoods. Yet in the past 20 years, it has managed to reduce the number of deaths, injuries and losses due mainly to improvements in preparedness and in the organisation of relief efforts by the government and different development agencies, including Friendship.

RECOGNISED EXPERTISE

Over its 16-year history Friendship has gained experience both in improving infrastructure and community planning to help with preparedness for disasters, as well as in post-disaster relief and reconstruction. This includes building cluster villages on raised plinths, installing tube wells, water treatment plants and other WASH facilities, reconstructing housing, and building adapted schools and clinics. Friendship has also developed a strong logistics and HR mobilization capacity that enables it to act promptly and efficiently when disaster strikes. The rapid assessment of needs and deployment of services by Friendship in the context of the Rohingya crisis is a clear illustration of this capacity to use its expertise and mobilize its teams. The early invitation from the Bangladeshi army to take part in the coordination of the camps with other international NGOs clearly demonstrates true recognition of Friendship's expertise.



A STRUCTURED APPROACH

In order to continuously improve its emergency response mechanisms and to ensure that its response to disaster affected communities is effective and efficient, Friendship has developed and formalized its “Emergency Response Guideline” in order to:

- Equip Friendship’s staff with procedures and practical tools to be applied in preparing communities for disaster risk reduction
- Continuously strengthen and enhance its humanitarian response capacity
- Mobilize all available resources in its network to adapt to emergency situations
- Combine the expertise of its multiple sectors to work together to provide solutions.

APPLYING INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

Friendship’s emergency response process is based on the Incident Command System (ICS), a standard emergency management system. Friendship’s management team is experienced in working in difficult conditions and major disaster situations. In line with ICS, it acts quickly when disasters strike, working together with other organisations to provide immediate relief. All Friendship’s managers and team members are trained to comply with these guidelines, with Bangladesh Standing Orders on Disasters (SOD) and with international standards such as “The Sphere Handbook”* and “Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability”**.

The Guideline is based on a carefully structured communications tree that clearly defines the information flow between the field and Head Office as well as the roles and responsibilities of community-based staff, field officers, district coordinators and official bodies. It is a living document that takes into account information gained from recent emergencies.



*Sphere was initiated in 1997 by a group of NGOs to develop a set of universal minimum standards in core areas of Humanitarian response. Its philosophy relies on 2 beliefs: first that people affected by disaster or conflict have the right to live in dignity and therefore a right to assistance, and secondly that all possible steps should be taken to alleviate human suffering arising out of disaster or conflict.

**Core Humanitarian Standard sets out nine commitments that organisations and individuals involved in humanitarian response can use to improve the quality and effectiveness of the assistance they provide. It facilitates greater accountability to communities and people affected by crisis.



PARTNERSHIP SUPPORT

Over the years, Friendship has built a solid reputation as a reliable relief and multi-service provider during major emergencies. Its proven track record and recognized abilities in disaster preparedness, disaster relief and post-disaster rehabilitation helped place Friendship at the forefront of the emergency and humanitarian response during the 2017 floods and the Rohingya crisis, and, thanks to the professionalism and capacity demonstrated on site by its teams, helped to accelerate support from a broad range of partners, including:

- **NGOs** (Eriks (Sweden), Secours Islamique France (SIF), Friendship International Network, American Refugee Committee (ARC - crowdfunding by Jérôme Jarre and the Love Army), Action Contre la Faim (ACF), Mercy Corps)
- **Foundations** (SANOFI, Fondation Mérieux, Suez Environnement, Fondation de France, Fondation de Luxembourg, Fondation Bruneau, Wells Fargo)
- and **Institutional funders** (French Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Crisis Centre, SIDA/SMC, ECHO and DFID (via ACF), Luxembourg Ministry of Cooperation ...).

The Rohingya Crisis

From the end of August 2017 onwards, over 700,000 Rohingyas have been forced to flee from mass atrocities. Crossing the border from Rakhine State in Myanmar to the Cox's Bazar area in Bangladesh, they left everything behind in the hope of finding safety.

António Guterres (UN Secretary General) described this crisis as "the world's fastest developing refugee emergency and a humanitarian and human rights nightmare".

Severe Floods in 2017

"The 2017 floods in Bangladesh are thought to be the most severe in 100 years. More than a third of the country has been submerged. At least 115 people have died and more than 5.7 million have been affected. The government and NGOs are struggling to cope with the extent of the disaster and warn of risk of disease as well as shortages of crucial supplies including food, medication and clean drinking water. More than half a million homes have been damaged while over 400,000 hectares of farmland have been destroyed."

(Source: The Guardian)

2017 CRISES RESPONSE HIGHLIGHTS IN FIGURES

2017 FLOODS

DISASTER RELIEF

- Food relief distributed to 12,000 households, with special assistance to pregnant women, elderly and disabled people
- 1,500 families received emergency dry food packs
- 100 tube wells and 100 latrines have been provided in flood affected areas
- 50 temporary latrines installed to ensure appropriate sanitation
- 30 temporary tube wells installed to ensure access to safe drinking water
- 278 families (in total 690 persons) and 270 cattle rescued
- 760 people and their cattle and poultry sheltered on Friendship's 6 plinths
- 781 people sheltered in 12 Friendship schools.

THE ROHINGYA CRISIS

HEALTHCARE

- 130 professionals recruited for the work in healthcare only, 85% of whom work in direct service delivery
- One Birthing Centre established - serving around 100 patients a day including normal deliveries, basic laboratory facilities and maternal health consultations
- One comprehensive Maternity Clinic has been established to serve both people from the camps and local host communities. The clinic is competent in caesarean section, normal deliveries and general consultation, and has advanced laboratory facilities. The facility operates 24/7 and is attended by qualified gynaecologists and medical officers
- 5 Basic Clinics have been built so far, each operating with 2 paramedics, 1 Friendship Community Medic Aide, support staff and security guard; 8 more Basic Clinics should open by mid-April 2018
- Friendship's existing mHealth (mobile phone application based healthcare) app has been customized and deployed in Rohingya zones. Already 12 teams, each comprising one paramedic and one organizer, have been trained on mHealth and deployed within the Rohingya camps
- 24 Satellite Clinic teams travel from door-to-door, providing healthcare services, free medicine and referrals to basic clinics, maternity clinics and other referral points
- 750 food packs have been distributed
- 700 medical kits have been distributed to households.



CHILD FRIENDLY SPACES

- 2 units are currently operational. 11 more will be operational by mid-April 2018
- Each Child Friendly Space is staffed by one supervisor, two facilitators, and volunteer(s), each serving 150 children and 30 women (with focus on pregnant women and nursing mothers)
- Different tools are in use to assist children with learning and creativity, with the ultimate objective of helping them come out of the trauma. Moreover, women are being trained on basic craft making skills in order to keep them engaged.

WATER ACCESS, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH) SUPPORT

- 60 deep tube wells established, each accessible by 300 individuals
- 180 latrines (gender-segregated)
- 150 bathing spaces (gender-segregated)
- 2,500 hygiene kits provided to households (soap, bleaching powder, sanitary napkins, slippers, dustbins etc).

CONNECTIVITY AND SAFETY

- Friendship's carpenters have built 5 bamboo bridges, allowing access to healthcare and other services
- Following an energy needs assessment for Friendship Basic and Maternity Clinics and Toilet Clusters, 120 solar-powered street lamps as well as solar lighting solutions for all WASH facilities have been installed.

REFORESTATION

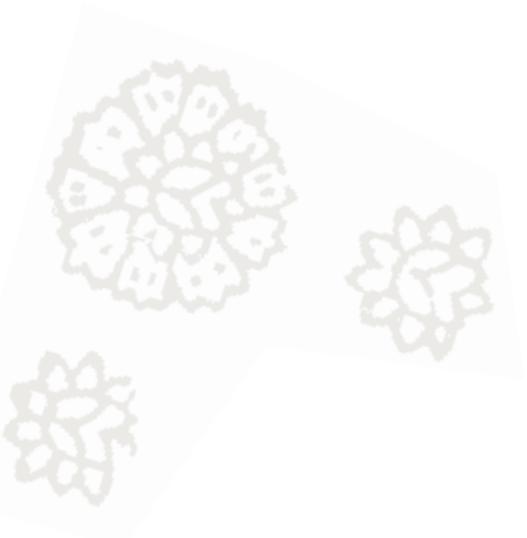
- A reforestation pilot project is underway in the hilly areas of the camps (where trees have been cut down in abundance to create spaces for accommodation) in order to mitigate soil erosion and the risk of landslides during the monsoon season.

FLOOD RESPONSE – FUTURE PLANS

As the risks associated with the impact of climate change in Bangladesh increase, Friendship plans to continue to develop its Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Management Sector as one of its core activities.

Improving the preparedness of vulnerable communities in advance of disastrous events helps save lives and enables them to recover more rapidly from emergencies. Friendship plans to:

- Extend Disaster Risk Reduction coverage to 113 communities in eight districts
- Strengthen Standard Operating Procedures including contingency planning and the assignment of 600 staff
- Conduct periodic meetings with local government administrations to share communities' requests, coordinate efforts and ensure access to public services during emergencies.



ROHINGYA CRISIS – FUTURE PLANS

The sheer volume of the influx of forcefully displaced Rohingya people into Southern Bangladesh since August 2017 means that the need for humanitarian aid in this area will continue for the foreseeable future and will require the allocation of significant resources. Friendship will continue to focus on those areas where its skills and expertise are most relevant, supporting not only the Rohingya in camps, but also the host community in the region. These activities will be financed from specifically allocated emergency funding sources, so that Friendship's core activities in other areas of Bangladesh will be able to continue as planned.

In the immediate future, plans include:

- Complete planned construction and operate 13 Basic Clinics, with funding from both institutional and private donors, as long as the crisis situation remains
- Complete planned construction and operate 13 Child Friendly Spaces with dedication and efficiency
- Expand the mHealth programme by training and deploying 12 more paramedic-led teams
- Further expand the Satellite Clinic programme in the Rohingya zones
- Provide capacity building and skills development training for the Rohingya population
- Provide risk awareness training (fire and landslides)

- Expand the solar electrification project in the Rohingya zones
- Further strengthen the referral mechanism for persons requiring advanced level healthcare and mental healthcare
- Establish tree plantations to prevent soil erosion.

Friendship began its work in this region very effectively in emergency mode to help meet immediate needs. Simultaneously, over recent months, a major effort has been undertaken to construct the necessary buildings (such as the Clinics and Child Friendly Spaces) and infrastructure (such as tube wells, latrines, bridges and street lamps). Friendship's focus will now shift to the operation and maintenance of these essential facilities and sustain the impact created on the communities.



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<https://friendship.ngo>

Friendship is registered as
a charity in Bangladesh.
It is also registered as such
in France, Luxembourg,
the Netherlands and
the United Kingdom.