

Project Summary

This project's ultimate goal is to help the camp-dwelling Urdu-speaking community in Bangladesh secure their land rights and upgrade their housing and infrastructure. Starting in late 2019, our first phase included focus groups of youth, women and camp officials to hear their baseline thoughts about these issues, and begin some basic social and physical mapping of the camps. In 2020, during Phase II we expanded on these efforts by conducting a formal household census and establishing a support network of block leaders and project advisors. This preparatory work will continue into Phase III, in 2021, where we report the findings of our survey back to the community in block meetings and discuss their ideas further, work on detailing our geo-referenced maps of the camp housing and infrastructure, and initiate small projects to demonstrate the success of community-led development.

After catalyzing the community, we will formally establish a community development corporation (such as a community land trust) to negotiate and facilitate the transfer of land title to the community residents, as well as lead the upgrading efforts. These later phases will be primarily funded by the residents or specific funds set up for land acquisition.

Phase II Summary

1. Community Outreach - We have identified and met with our Board of Advisors as well as Community/Block Leaders.

Advisors

- Michael Slingsby - former UPPR (UNDP) development specialist
- Mushroofa Hossain - legal expert & media consultant
- Khondoker Hasibul Kabir - architect & community facilitator
- Huraera Jabeen - World Bank consultant & BRAC professor - urban planning

Community Leaders

Block meetings were held in Geneva Camp, and one large group meeting was held in AdamJi. The leaders discussed the housing and land rights situation and drew out preliminary maps of their blocks, which were helpful to guide the official mapping work (Phase II.II). The leaders also carried out some initial small projects including Covid-19 relief work (distributing food - in

Geneva Camp) and building a new block of toilets (in AdamJi Camp). Peer exchange was also conducted between the youth / block leaders in the two camps.



Peer Exchange and Meetings in AdamJi Camp – October 2020

2. Mapping & Housing Survey - We conducted a census in Geneva Camp and Adamji Camp regarding (a) demographics, (b) current housing conditions and investments, (c) tenure security concerns and land/housing goals for the future. Each house was also identified as a point-file on the camp maps, however we'd still like to add additional geo-location details for the physical infrastructure that we identified in Phase I. This work will carry over into Phase III.

Several months were spent creating and revising the questionnaire in collaboration with Cadasta, as well as preparing for two day-long trainings for each camp's surveyors. The survey was then conducted rapidly in December and January, and reached every household. Three months were then spent cleaning and analyzing the data.

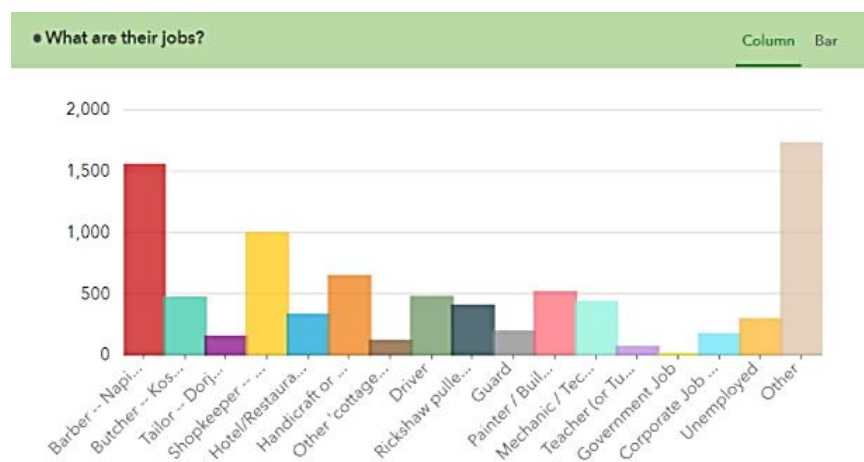


Day-Long Survey Training in COM's office - Dhaka - December 2020

Preliminary Results

Demographics

- 5,846 households surveyed in Geneva Camp; 2,312 households surveyed in Adamji Camp
- 72% of respondents were female
- 91% of respondents are Bihari (6% Bengali)
- 3.75 average household size (22,000 total population)
- Over 90% of adults now have Bangladeshi national IDs
- Job Types - 19% barber, 3.75% unemployment (see table below)
- 11% of households are using their house for economic activity (e.g. jorier kaj, other cottage industries, small shops)



Housing Conditions & Investments

- 1.3 Average number of floors / rooms occupied by each household
- 70% percent of households have lived in the camp since the 1971 war
- 18% rent and 82% own their homes
- 80% of rental landlords also live in the camp
- 50% of households built their own home / conducted major improvements
- 10% spent over 350 lak taka
- Renovations included:

| Answers | Count | Percentage |
|---|-------|------------|
| Added a new floor / 2nd, 3rd and 4th story | 1,750 | 21.45% |
| Added a new roof / skylight | 1,276 | 15.64% |
| Added a kitchen area (e.g. counters, fridge, stove) | 541 | 6.63% |
| Build own toilet / bathroom | 1,677 | 20.55% |
| Installed running water | 1,642 | 20.13% |
| Installed electricity | 1,124 | 13.78% |
| Installed tube well | 332 | 4.07% |
| Other | 158 | 1.94% |

- Approximately 50% relied on household savings to make the renovations, 56% used a loan from a savings group, 17% got a loan from a bank (note total is more than 100 as they could select multiple sources of capital).
- Main housing problems/concerns:

| Answers | Count | Percentage |
|------------------------------------|-------|------------|
| Water supply to house | 4,826 | 59.15% |
| Garbage | 4,836 | 59.27% |
| Electricity | 2,987 | 36.61% |
| Lack of cooking facilities | 2,239 | 27.44% |
| Lack of living space/small shelter | 4,025 | 49.33% |
| Security | 2,073 | 25.41% |
| Other | 1,001 | 12.27% |

Tenure Worries & Housing Goals

- 68% feel worried about holding onto their property in the future due to lack of formal tenure
- Only 45% believe they will be evicted in the next 5 years (due to multiple threats over the decades with no action)
- 53% want to be rehabilitated on camp land
- 80% of those who want to be rehabilitated on camp land say the reason is that this is where their jobs and family is, while 34% claim they have invested too much into building their property to abandon it

- 87% of those who want to be rehabilitated outside the camp say it's because of crime in the camp, and 70% say it's because of cramped conditions
- 33% would like to live in a multi-family building, whereas 67% would like a single-family house
- 67% would like to join a community-led organization to work on solutions to their tenure insecurity and cramped living conditions!

3. Organizational Development - Due to delays caused by Covid-19, this work will largely be carry over into Phase III. After re-organizing the camp leaders and advisors, we will discuss forming a Community Land Trust or other kind of nonprofit development corporation to manage land acquisition/titling and housing/infrastructure upgrades. That said, during Phase II we have had initial discussions with advisory community development corporations including Imkaan, Cano Martin Pina and Catcom.

Al-Falah Bangladesh:

The organization Al-Falah Bangladesh was formed in June 1981 to take over the Dhaka Camps project from an NGO HEED Bangladesh. It is registered with the NGO Affairs Bureau of Bangladesh as a non-political, non-religious, non-profit social welfare NGO. Al-Falah Bangladesh is the only registered NGO in Bangladesh, which has pledged in its Constitution to work for the Urdu speaking Bangladeshi citizens to rehabilitate them socially and economically in the mainstream of the society by increasing their access to education, skill, health and economic opportunities. The mass of this Urdu-speaking community lost the privileges of social living being the worst victims of political and historical developments in 1971 that downgraded their social, cultural and economic status from top to bottom level. Since its foundation, Al-Falah has been delivering health services in Geneva Camp through its project Al-Falah Model Clinic. Since 2007, our focus has shifted to education & skill development through Education Development Program (EDP) which established Foundation schools and sponsorship program for the camp based Urdu-speaking poor male and female students to continue their education from pre-primary to Degree level. Another project is for skill development, under which community students are being trained on basic computer literacy.