

Arsenic Poisoning Prevention Program (APPP)

MCC Bangladesh Alumni/SIM-Bangladesh Partnership

Project Stories and Updates

Helping Provide Water Fit for Life

It has been an exciting time since the last newsletter last November. The first expansion area in Bhanga, located ~ 45 minutes south of the long-running project area, has become firmly established. It now has full staff.

This newsletter highlights some of the work done, at both the expansion site and the longer running site. Both areas together form the SIM



Doctor checking patient in new expansion area of Bhanga at Medical Camp (see below story)

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Medical Camp



Doctor talking to patients in Bhanga

Medical Camp was held in February in the now established expansion area of Bhanga south of the older area of SIM Bangladesh's Arsenic Program in SW Bangladesh.

Medical camp happens 1-2 times a year, when medical doctors come into the project area. There they examine people for possible arsenic poisoning symptoms. They provide medical advice and treatment as needed.

Project Update

The arsenic project has been very busy. There are now 5 main activities of the project:

Since the start of the fiscal year (July 23):



Arsenic Project Staff providing a lesson on arsenic

*There have **been over 750 educational sessions** reaching out to ~4500 people. Educational sessions are vital.

There is little in the way of extension in many places regarding arsenic symptoms, effects, prevalence, etc.

- 1) Educational Sessions
- 2) Well Testing
- 3) Providing Water Filters
- 4) Medical Screening/Assistance
- 5) Establishing Nutrition Gardens

*There have been **over 1550 wells tested for arsenic**, with over 80% being seriously contaminated with arsenic (over the national standard of 50 ppb), benefiting close to 15,000 people.

As with education, there has been little in the way of testing for many years in many areas. Testing is important, so people know what they have and can make informed decisions.

*There have been **~650 water filters distributed** to homes with highly contaminated wells and no safe water source nearby, benefits over 6600 people.

When more than 80% of wells are contaminated, it can be difficult to find a safe water source. Filters are a quick fix for this kind of problem.

*There were **965 patients medically screened with a total of ~1450 medical treatments**.

Medical assistance for this problem is scarce in rural areas, especially for the poor who are hard put to pay for medical costs.

*There were **135 nutrition gardens established**.

This is a relatively new part of the program. It has been shown that a nutritious diet with plenty of vegetable and herbs that provide needed vitamins help fight arsenic poisoning.

The majority of the figures above naturally come from the longer running site since the new site has been running for a much shorter period of time.

However, the new program is starting to serve many people. With both sites now as part of the project, many more people will be helped over a year's time.



Arsenic sampling kit for testing wells. This was when we were in Bangladesh in 2022 surveying area near where Bill used to work.

Stories

The story below is about a woman and her family, who live in the new expansion area of Bhanga. They were unaware that their well had high levels of arsenic. The story tells how they were helped and are now drinking arsenic free water due to the help of SIM Bangladesh's Arsenic Poisoning Prevention Program, APPP.



I am Mrs. Salma Begum. My age is 42 years old. My family members are five, my husband, two sons and one daughter.

The tube well drinking water in my house had a lot of iron. So, I have been looking for a filter for a long time. A neighbor of mine purchased an arsenic removal filter. That made me wonder how I could get an arsenic removal filter. Then Moriam, a government health worker in my village, took me to the Bhanga APPP

As per Moriam's advice, I took the tube well water sample with me when visiting the APPP Bhanga office. Atiyar, the staff of the APPP office tested my tube well water for free, and he tells me that the tube water has 200 ppb of arsenic. I was provided with an arsenic removal filter.

Now I am very happy that we can drink pure water, free of arsenic and iron. For this we thank God and thank the new APPP office in Bhanga.

Information Online

The website for the project has been completely revised. We now also have Facebook and Instagram for the project. The addresses are:

Website: <https://www.arsenicbangladesh.com/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/arsenicbangladesh/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/arsenicbangladesh/>

SIM Bangladesh also has a website for the arsenic project—Arsenic Poisoning Prevention Program (APPP). The address for it is:

<https://simbd.org/appp/>

Closing thoughts

We are very glad that much progress has been made since last year at this time. The new expansion project is now a reality. It already is helping many people. This newsletter spoke of the medical camp held in February where many people, who had symptoms of arsenic poisoning, were seen by doctors.

Also there was a story of Mrs. Begum, who had the determination to seek out information from the new APPP arsenic project. She and family now have a secure, safe water supply, for which she thanks God.

We will follow her example and give thanks to God for His guidance and help in bringing this project about. We also thank Him for laying on people's hearts to help provide support for the project.



Rural scene in Southern Bangladesh. Close to here, is one of SIM Bangladesh arsenic projects

Prayer

We give thanks to all those who have a heart for the needy and want to share God's love with others, whether it be with this project or in other concerns. We ask Him to help them with their own concerns and problems.

Please continue to help those who are having a difficult time accessing a safe water supply. We are fortunate in having safe water. But for many people, whether in Bangladesh or other places around the world, this is a problem. We know you care for all of us, including the most needy, and you are leading others to help. This gives us hope. Amen

Donation Information

To make donations to this project, use the information below to give online, or by mail or phone to your country's SIM office. By phone or check, be sure to specify Project #098335 Bangladesh arsenic. Although all donations are welcomed and needed, the project could especially use recurring donations, to provide long-term stability. Donations are tax deductible.

SIM USA:

<https://www.simusa.org/give>

704-588-4300

14830 Choate Circle

Charlotte, NC 28273

Online donation detail:

- Under 'I want to support a specific SIM worker or project' type 'arsenic' and select 'Arsenic Awareness & Alleviation Program – Bangladesh'
- Select your contribution amount
- If desired, check 'make this an ongoing monthly gift'
- Fill in payment details & your info, then click 'submit donation'

SIM Canada:

<https://www.sim.ca/donate>

1-800-294-6918

10 Huntingdale Blvd.

Scarborough, ON M1W 2S5

Online donation detail:

- Click on 'Search Projects'
- In the search box, type 'arsenic' and select 'arsenic awareness and alleviation program'
- Enter donation amount & click 'add to basket'
- Check 'Recurring' if you want to make a monthly donation
- Fill in payment & billing info; then click 'process gift'