

# Arsenic Poisoning Prevention Program (APPP)

Partnering with SIM -Bangladesh

Project Stories and Updates

Helping Provide Water Fit for Life

### Who we are and what we do

As former workers in Bangladesh we are partnering with SIM-Bangladesh on a long-term project to help many more people escape the ravages of arsenic poisoning in drinking water in southern Bangladesh.

This project is entirely supported by donations (tax deductible).

See the bottom of the back page on how to donate.

### Bangladesh Trip

October 19-28, we traveled to Bangladesh. We met with SIM-Bangladesh staff and visited 12 of the villages where their Arsenic Poisoning Prevention Program (APPP) is working. Arsenic levels in these areas are very high. We also met many people affected by arsenic, probably around 100 patients.

The 12 villages are divided between the 3 different areas where APPP is now working; the longer established Faridpur and Saltha areas, as well as Bhanga, the new expansion area that started up last year.

Some main observations noted across all 3 areas:

- Many unaware of arsenic until APPP started working in their village.
- Government has helped in some areas by putting in a few deep wells (not contaminated with arsenic). People can use those if they don't use a home filter.
- But many villages see little in the way of government work in these rural areas; APPP is filling a large void.

• Long-term relationships are very important in having success in dealing with arsenic. APPP works with families for a minimum 3-year period. This has helped greatly to build trust and compliance.

- Villagers were very encouraged to learn there are people in North America who care about what they're going through, and the outreach efforts that we've been doing the last years. Many expressed great thanks for the project, and those supporting it.
- Thankful for filters, but cleaning them on a regular basis (every 3 to 6 months) takes some time and can be tempting to skip for some participants. With new research there are possibilities for simpler cost-effective filters.
- While what they would really love is safe wells, they understand having a filter is a vital stopgap.

Numerous people we saw (some as young as 20 or 30) had cancers or are recovering from cancers, likely caused by arsenic. People talked about spouses, parents, even children that have died from arsenic. This was all before APPP came to their villages. One can imagine the relief it would be for these people to finally know the cause, and have the means to access safe water and start to leave behind the nightmare of illness and death caused by arsenic.



*Patients in this village have many arsenic-related health problems, including: cancer of thyroid, kidney, skin, lung; as well as diabetes & stroke.*

## People's Stories

Man with painful hands: One farmer had very painful hands for 2 years, making it hard for him to work. He'd heard of arsenic but never paid attention as he didn't know the connection between arsenic and the painful hardened patches on his hands. When APPP started working in his village and he learned of the connection, he was able to get safe water and his skin condition improved greatly. He has a lot of respect for the staff and is now a big supporter of the program.



*Many people have very painful hands or feet like this farmer's hands. This can reduce productivity cutting into their limited income.*



Hashia: husband, mother-in-law, father-in-law, and sister-in-law are all arsenic patients. She's so happy to have safe water now, so her children can be healthy. Her area has very high arsenic levels in the drinking water (over 50 times the North American safety limit).

Staff's Mother: She is mother of Anwar, who is on APPP field staff in the new expansion area. She herself is an arsenic patient. She and Anwar live in a small local village, with his younger brother. His mother served us food in their home. She is a main reason why he is passionate about helping people deal with arsenic. It has really helped APPP quickly develop trust and credibility to have a "local boy" on staff, whose own family is dealing with the same problems.

*Hashia. Many of her family are arsenic patients. Arsenic in her area is over 50 times the N. American safety standard.*

### Answered prayers & prayer requests:

- Thank you for prayers for our safe travel in October. That all went smoothly, and our visit was very encouraging to all involved.
- As mentioned in a previous newsletter, a long-time national APPP staff member is shifting into international missions. Pray for guidance for him. A very promising replacement for his position has been found, and will start the end of this month. Pray he'll fit in well with the rest of the team, and build strong, Godly relationships with people being served.

## Will you partner with us? Donation Information:

Use the information below to give online, or by mail or phone. By phone or check, **specify Project #98335 Bangladesh arsenic.** Though all donations are welcomed and needed, the project could especially use recurring donations, providing long-term stability. Donations are tax deductible.

SIM USA: 704-588-4300

14830 Choate Circle, Charlotte, NC 28273

Online donation details: <https://www.simusa.org/give>

- 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: 1-800-294-6918

10 Huntingdale Blvd, Scarborough, ON M1W 2S5

Online donation details: <https://www.sim.ca/donate>

- 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'