



## ASIAN RESOURCE FOUNDATION

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[www.arf-int.org](http://www.arf-int.org)  
[arf@arf-int.org](mailto:arf@arf-int.org)

## **INTRODUCTION TO ARF**

ARF is a peace building organization founded in 1996 in Thailand and operates directly and in partnership with local partners in several countries across the Asian region, which includes India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia, Korea and Japan.

ARF is a network organization. Our staff, partners and beneficiaries come from diverse backgrounds including peace and development workers, women and youth leaders, religious leaders and media activists. ARF has various types of peace and development operations and also operates in conflict, disaster and underdeveloped settings where it reaches over 50,000 beneficiaries each year.

ARF School of Peace Studies, which has been culminated into the International Institute of Peace and Development Studies (IIPDS), has been offering capacity building and outreach programs at regional, national and grassroots levels for communities affected by poverty, unemployment and conflict to women, youth leaders, media academicians and peace and development workers since 2005.

ARF's approach is participatory and bottom up based on horizontal spirits. ARF's capacity building programs and dialogues are not only based on the equilibrium between theory and practice, but also translation of complex issues into simplistic and fun approaches which enable its partners, beneficiaries and participants to internalize different concepts by relating to their personal experiences. This is how ARF approached and transformed its programs to cater to the needs of different individuals and group all over Asia.

## **ARF MISSION**

- Encourage and support capacity building of local organizations through management and leadership training, cultural promotion, innovative technology and environmental rehabilitation.
- Cooperate with the academic institutions in research work on sustainable development policy and facilitate exchange of experiences the meetings, seminars and publications.
- Mobilize fund through donation and support education for children, youth and women and income generating activities to improve the quality of life of the urban and rural poor and under privileged people in Thailand and other countries in Asia.
- Support the creation of sustainable democratic institutions and to promote and support peace initiatives around Asia.

## **ARF BOARD**

### **President**

Asst. Prof. Dr. Niramit Kunanuwat  
Email: niramit\_kun@dusit.ac.th

### **Vice President**

Mr. Adul Pooyatorn  
Email: adulpoo@hotmail.com

### **Treasurer**

Ms. Kevalin Varnakovida  
kuncat2012@hotmail.com

### **Secretary**

Miss Lekha Paireepinath  
Email: lekha.daeng@yahoo.com

### **Member**

Ms. Manassanun Pongnorrawit  
Email: manassanan.pong@gmail.com

### **Member**

Ms. Pradthana Koythong  
pradthana.ks@gmail.com

### **Member**

Miss Wipawa Chuenchit  
Email: wipawa.c@gmail.com



## **INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES (IIPDS)**



IIPDS is a training and capacity building center located in a rural setting in Nong-Chok, 40km from Bangkok city-center. The Conference Center can seat up to 40 participants and provides on-site accommodation.

IIPDS, in collaboration with Asian Resource Foundation (ARF) and Asian Muslim Action Network (AMAN), has been offering courses, trainings and workshops on peace, development and human rights since its launch in 2004.

IIPDS hosts interfaith forums/dialogues to find practical solutions to on-going social issues, organize round tables for NGOs and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) on specific themes like rethinking the roles of NGOs and CSOs in facing emerging challenges, climate change, alternatives to external grants, rethinking of political power, migrants and stateless people's issues, etc.

IIPDS courses target youth, school teachers, college and university lecturers/professors, scholars, journalists, human rights and political defenders, middle level NGOs/women's organizations and social workers from all over the world and who share the same passion of approaching peacebuilding and conflict transformation effectively and creatively.

Every year 150 to 200 youth and mid-level professionals join IIPDS courses, for a total of 2000+ alumni from all over the globe.

## Mental Health in Effective Social Work and Peace Building



Conflict is normal in a Society. However, the question is how to address, manage and transform this conflict so that it brings peace to the parties and communities as a whole. Thanks to the interactive approach of the classes, the participants learned how mental and physical health are the cornerstones of effective Social Work and Peace Building. The participants also had the chance to go on a field trip to the ancient city of Ayutthaya, where they had the opportunity to sense the cultural history of the Siam kingdom. A visit to an ancient Buddhist temple also gave them an insight of the religious essence of the Buddhist majority Thais.

From the 6th till the 10th of January 2020, IIPDS hosted a workshop on the role of Mental Health in Social Work and Peace Building. Ten social workers, mainly from India and Sudan participated to the 5-day training.

The workshop aimed at empowering the participants with understanding on peace studies and conflict transformation and explained how to handle values, beliefs, desires, and how to manage intra and inter personal conflicts. The workshop enabled the participants to help others resolve conflicts, and ensure better mental health.

## 20<sup>th</sup> School of Peace and Conflict Transformation



From February 22nd to March 5th, 13 international students, activists, scholars and practitioners from Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal and the Philippines gathered at the International Institute of Peace and Development Studies to attend the 20th edition of the School of Peace Studies and Conflict Transformation.

During two intensive weeks, the participants deepened their knowledge on conflict and peace, their understanding on the Asian regional context and exchanged valuable stories in their areas of expertise. The course allowed the participants to acquire a better understanding, both at the local and regional levels, of initiatives that aim at undermining conflicts, at promoting peace and at enhancing resilience in the communities affected by strong hostilities.

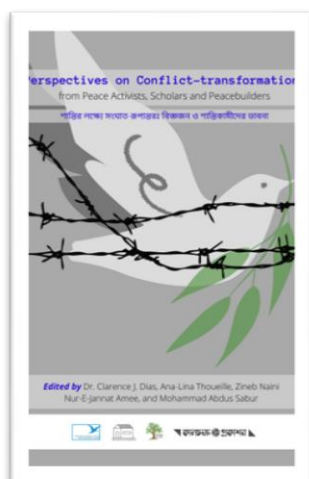
Through activities that aimed at making participants understand the nature of conflict, its dynamic, levels, ways and means in dealing with conflict participants were able to realize that conflict can also be positive and that media and the way conflict is often manifested in front of us turn it into something negative.

The participants also had the opportunity to visit community spaces located in the lively neighbourhood of Nong Chok: the Shaikhul Islam Office of Thailand and the Lamsai Village. During a meeting with the representative of the Shaikhul Islam Office, the group learned about the Muslim and legal provisions concerning the administration of the Islamic organization in Thailand and how politically and culturally the Muslims have been an integral part of the country and that Thai Constitution guarantees the right of teaching and practising their religion.

The context of the 20th edition of the School of Peace was very particular, as 15 other applicants were not able to participate due to travel restrictions caused by the Covid-19 outbreak.

## PUBLICATIONS

### *“Perspectives on Conflict-Transformation from Peace-activists, Scholars and Peacebuilders”*



2020 marked the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the International Institute of Peace and Development Studies – IIPDS. Since its formation in 2000, IIPDS serves as a meeting point of diverse minds, ideologies, professions, gender orientations, languages, religions and cultures from various countries and continents. In close coordination with ARF, the Institute has built the capacity and empowered thousands of youth, women, children and young adults and has hosted dozens of workshops, consultations, roundtables and conferences where senior and junior scholars had the opportunity to exchange ideas and dreams.

In celebration of its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, IIPDS have worked on a publication where senior and junior scholars have contributed to produce more than forty articles around the theme of conflict-

transformation from the perspectives of peace-activists, scholars and peacebuilders.

Organized in seven chapters, the volume starts from authors emphasizing how the need of a meaningful transformation at all levels, of society and governance, is considerably growing, which, other authors argue, requires an increasing respect for cultural diversity, interfaith understanding, mutual trust, and to nurture a deeper level of human solidarity enriched by a higher level of spirituality.

The book goes on highlighting conflict dynamics, and the existing contradictions between the ideal and the reality, with authors analyzing the Rohingya crisis, the reconciliation process in Nepal, the different outcomes of the Spring Revolution, the challenges of the Colombian Final Peace Agreement, and other conflicts which also pose significant mental health challenges. Development induced disasters are also discussed in the book, and how wrong approaches to development and modernization have disturbed local ecology and displaced communities are highlighted.

An entire chapter is expressly dedicated to gather young scholars' thoughts and contributions. Here case studies, beginning from India and Bhutan's foreign policy to the role of youth in the promotion of freedom of expression in Bangladesh and of media in the global society; lead the sequences of constructive actions and reflections.

The role of civil society and students' organizations' struggles and initiatives in spite of shrinking democratic space in various countries is also pondered upon in the publication.

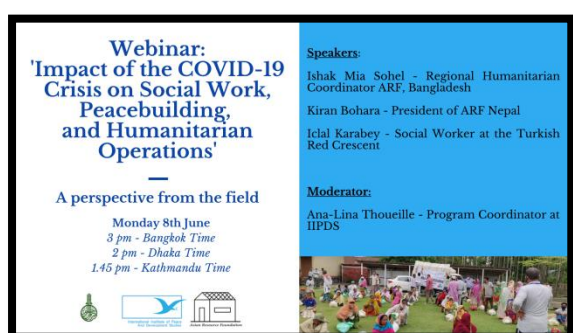
With the goal that this collection of articles will serve as a resource for further studies and research, IIPDS will conduct online discussions upon the publication of the book, which will be available in the beginnings of 2021.

## WEBINARS

Since March 2020, ARF and IIPDS have lived the consequences the COVID-19 crisis, which halted movements around the world, greatly impacting the original agenda of the Institute, which was full of capacity building training, workshops and consultations, with more than 300 expected participants from around the world.

As the prospect of a 'return to normality' slowly faded away, ARF and IIPDS, decided to resort to online tools in order to continue their aim of inspiring constructive discussions around issues and topics that counts.

For this reason a series of Webinars was launched, which gathered great participation from IIPDS alumni, ARF partners and the peacebuilding community.



### ***'Impact of Covid-19 crisis on social work, peacebuilding and humanitarian operations'***

*8<sup>th</sup> June 2020*

The webinar focused on the impact of COVID-19 on social work, peacebuilding and humanitarian operations, on the nature of the response and on the challenges and opportunities brought by the crisis. It

addressed the possible new dimensions of humanitarian, peace and social work brought by the COVID-19 crisis.

This webinar collected the testimonials of three aid workers working in the field, from Bangladesh, Turkey and Nepal. They explained how they adapted their response to the new challenges brought by the pandemic and how they managed to use the crisis as a vehicle for transformation, towards a more inclusive and effective aid system. More than 30 persons, mostly IIPDS Alumni and ARF partners, participated in the webinar. Testimonials from aid workers from Pakistan, Iraq and India also contributed to enrich the discussion and confirmed that the COVID-19 outbreak is globally challenging for aid organizations and aid workers.



### ***‘Women and Girls: Asian Experiences’***

*8<sup>th</sup> July 2020*

Over the last years, the concept of "empowerment" has become more and more popular in the development and aid sector. Empowerment is now increasingly used and connected to social development groups such as poor people, youth, women, older persons,

persons with disabilities, indigenous people

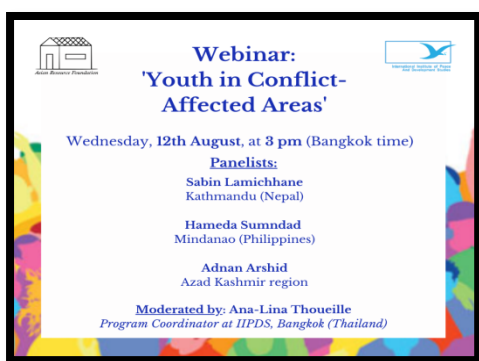
and marginalized people. It means achieving gender equality and is a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world.

The speakers of this webinar, from Nepal, Iraq and Bangladesh, talked about the state of play in terms of women's empowerment in their countries and shared good practices that can be replicated at a local level. They also highlighted different methods to empower women and girls and made the participants reflect upon the diverse dimensions of empowerment.

The webinar gathered approximately 30 persons, majority of which are followers of ARF, AMAN and IIPDS social media accounts.

### ***‘Youth in Conflict-Affected Areas’***

*12 August 2021*



The specific issues faced by youth in areas affected by conflict entail both challenges and opportunities. From the impact of the conflict on young people and their future, to the innovative initiatives of young people who want to turn the page on violence and participate in building peace, the challenges are many. Youth, as civilians, are often the first victims of conflicts, and the impacts on these lives “under construction” can be

devastating in physical and psychological terms. On the other hand, young people are also a prolific source of ingenious initiatives that aimed to create a better society and governance, in the face of the structural and social problems derived from the conflict.

The speakers talked about their experiences as youth workers and young people in areas affected by the conflict or in peacebuilding processes. In engaging presentations three socially engaged speakers from Nepal, Mindanao and Azad Kashmir highlighted how social engagement helped them to overcome conflict and build peace.

## EDUCATION PROGRAM LOMEF



The Lorraine Robinson Education Fund (LOREF) was established in 1998 in the memory of Lorraine Joyce Robinson, a great mother and a renowned teacher from the United States of America who devoted her career for the betterment of children. In 2003, the fund was renamed to add the memory of Maeve Coughlan, also a proud mother and famous singing teacher from Ireland, to become the Lorraine Robinson and Maeve Coughlan Education Fund (LOMEF). Both women made life changing impacts to the young people they taught.

LOMEF is administered by ARF and its programs target children from poor and vulnerable communities to enable access to formal and informal primary level quality education. It also builds the capacity of community-based NGOs that apply for its funding and supports health services and humanitarian assistance in disaster affected areas.

LOMEF funds a range of programs throughout Asia, Africa and South America with grants that cover the cost of school materials and teachers' salaries.

## THAILAND

With the financial assistance of USD 4,000 from LOMEF, 250 children received educational materials in Baan Doi Chang School of Chiangrai, Thailand. This school is located in the rural area of Mae Saruai District of Chiangrai Province. Most of the students in this school come from the poor hill tribe families whose parents cannot afford uniforms for their children to go to school. The project was successful with a coordinated effort of ARF vice president Mr. Adul Pooyathorn in providing materials to the needy children.



Similarly, LOMEF, with the grant of USD 1,300, supported 70 children (29 Male and 41 Female) with uniforms in Nong Chok area Thailand. The children were selected from 8 different schools in the area. Altogether 11 students from Kindergarten, 38 students from Primary and 21 students from Secondary level were benefited by the project. Most of the families in Nong Chok area don't have proper job enough to bear the cost of uniforms for their children. All of the family members thanked LOMEF/ARF for providing generous support especially in the crisis of Covid-19 pandemic.



## PAKISTAN

With a grant of USD 1,000 from LOMEF, ARF Pakistan provided uniforms and books to 50 students at a school in Bagh Kashmir, Pakistan. Bagh is a most under -privileged area and majority of the families are daily wage earners so they can't afford school education including school uniforms and books. The main aim of the project was to facilitate the learning process of needy children by providing essential materials and to motivate them for regular attendance in the school.



## VIETNAM

LOMEF in partnership with Youth Coordination Centre in Vietnam (YCCV) distributed educational materials to the poor school children in the Elementary Schools of Tong Dau and Tan Mai communes in Northern part of Vietnam. The Tong Dau is a highland area where the main population are Thai and Dzao ethnic groups. The children were selected by teachers of the Elementary Schools and their Parents' Board.

Total 307 school children, 148 males and 159 females received warm uniforms and educational materials such as notebooks, school bags, and books. All the teachers, parents and school children are very happy and are grateful to LOMEF/ARF for creating opportunity to the poor little children to make them warm in such a freezing winter. The project was implemented with a total grant of USD 3000 from LOMEF.



### Teacher's Salary Support

LOMEF has supported community schools in areas where the government has not or cannot establish a school. These schools do not usually have a government funded teacher. To run the school LOMEF provides partial teacher's salary to those school constructed and run by community, family or individual philanthropist. LOMEF also takes into consideration the sustainability aspect of such projects and seeks to assure that they can be self-sustained in some years. In 2020, LOMEF provided teacher's salary to the 116 teachers and volunteers of community schools in Bangladesh, Sri-Lanka, India, Pakistan, Philippines, Cambodia, Uganda and Rwanda.



In March 2020, the government issued lockdown directives and imposed serious restrictions on public gatherings and free movement of people in Arua, Uganda. All schools and colleges were closed. In order to facilitate the emerging education challenges during pandemic; Aliba Parents Nursery and Primary school put in place alternative methods for their pupils and teachers to continue with their lessons by introducing Home Learning Support Program. They zoned the villages, created designated learning spaces and developed schedules for their teachers to continue teaching and evaluate the progress of children. The Aliba nursery school was established and is supported by LOMEF/ARF.

### **Improvement of facilities and school construction**

One of LOMEF's important areas of support is in the development of infrastructure of community schools initiated and supported by LOMEF. This also includes upgrades of the dilapidated structures which allow both safety and comfort to students coming from very poor communities. The support includes building materials, labor charge for construction, sports materials, furniture (bench, desk etc.) and chalk boards. In 2020, LOMEF extended its support to complete a school in Bangladesh, build a new school in Kashmir Pakistan, and to build a session hall in Northern Samar, Philippines.

### **BANGLADESH**

With the financial support of USD 7340 from LOMEF, the construction of NAF Junior High School is in progress. Despite the COVID Pandemic, NAF has completed the plaster of roof, walls and floor of the building and fixed the doors



and windows of the class rooms. It is hoped that the improved class room facilities will create a healthy environment for learning and teaching. Total 45 Students and 4 teachers will be benefited from these facilities immediately and the future students will continue to use these facilities for many years.

### **PHILIPPINES**

With the financial assistance of USD 66500 from LOMEF, SHIFT foundation, reconstructed a session hall in Northern Samar, Philippines. The Stuart Hall or the SHIFT Session Hall will

be used for seminars and training especially for students, farmers, women and youths. The SHIFT Session Hall was destroyed by a typhoon on December 3, 2019. The reconstruction of session hall began in February 2020, was stopped for 3 months (April to June) due to COVID 19 crisis. Construction continued in July to November 30, 2020. The hall is now almost ready to use with the facilities of tables for individuals, electric fans and sound system inside the hall.



## NEPAL

With a grant of USD 1250 from LOMEF, ARF Nepal handed three table tennis tables and other sports materials to the head teacher in a ceremony organized by Kuleshwor Awas Secondary school in Kathmandu Nepal. Sports are considered as an integral component of education and child development. It is hoped that the children of poor families who cannot afford the private school fees, will have some opportunity to do physical exercise in school time. It will be helpful for their physical and mental growth. The teachers are hopeful that the children will generate positive energy through sports, concentrate more on studies and attend to school regularly.



## PAKISTAN

With the financial support of US\$ 8500 from LOMEF, a new primary school construction is in progress in a hilly village of Bagh Kashmir, Pakistan. According to the report from our local partner, the ground levelling and filling has been completed by using two different kind of digging machines. The community people are helping to carry necessary items to the



construction site, donating some stones and preparing food for the labors and workers. The school is expected to provide formal education to more than 80 children in the first year and aims to add more children in the following years.

## INDIA



With a grant of USD 3000 from LOMEF, Social Service Trust (SST) provided furniture such as school bench, table, cupboard and chairs to Iqra community



school which is situated in Madhubani Bihar India. The children used to sit on the floor due to lack of benches and they had to suffer a lot especially during rainy season. The school team is overwhelmed by the support of LOMEF/ARF in providing school education to the children of a poor community.

## Individual Scholarships

The major objective of the scholarships is to enable high potential, committed and bright students, both girls and boys from rural and urban low-income families to achieve higher education. The program covers partial financial support and scholarship amounts varying according to the level of studies and their duration. The supported cash is used by the students to pay fees, or purchase books and other educational materials or subsidize rental expenses.

## India

With the financial support from LOMEF, Right Track awarded scholarships to 14 needy and meritorious students for graduate level study. The scholarship is of great help for the students aspiring to continue their higher studies. The Students are very happy to receive Scholarship during COVID Pandemic because all the students come from very low economic background. Most of the parents of students are jobless and it is very hard for them to arrange money to continue their studies at college. It is hoped that the



students could buy some books for studies and pay their fees for few months. Since most of the students are from very poor families, the LOMEF scholarship has helped them to gain confidence and motivated them to do better in their studies.

### **Health Care Initiatives**

In respond to the local needs of poor and low income families, Nomijan-Aftabi Foundation (NAF) with the support of LOMEF, established a community hospital in a remote village of Joypurhat named Harunja. The hospital has outdoor services for pregnant mothers, child care, diabetic treatment and indoor services for those who need special care. In 2020, total 3458 patients' have received treatment with medicine



subsidies. A minimal charge from patients helps to cover some of the hospital operational costs. However, the support from LOMEF worth USD 15000 in the year 2020, has been crucial to provide a medicine subsidy and salaries for Doctors and Nurses to run the hospital. During the outbreak of corona virus, the hospital has taken preventive measures by launching public awareness such as distribution of Covid-19 leaflets, mask to patients, hanging banners, posters, hand washing soap and hand sanitizer. The number of patients during Covid-19 pandemic went down because the people were hesitant to visit hospitals due to the fear of



coronavirus infection. It is hoped that the number of patients will be increased as soon as the situation comes to normal. Meanwhile, NAF Hospital and Diagnostic center in Joypurhat organized a free medical camp and a consultation meeting on the occasion of 45<sup>th</sup> martyrdom anniversary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. More than 70 poor and helpless people of Joypurhat area received

free treatment and medicines through the medical camp.

### **Non-Formal Education in Argentina**

With the financial support of USD 10000 from LOMEF, FUNDACION NUTRIR SALTA started a non-formal education project for the mothers of malnourished children to improve the quality of family life through literacy and job training at work. It also provides knowledge to the mothers regarding



health and hygiene with a hope to be health references for their children. There has been some Improvements in the health of the children of those mothers who attended the program. Total 344 mothers participated proactively in the literacy and crafts workshop, managing to sustain their level of attendance throughout their stay at the center. Mothers acquired the ability to be aware of situations that endanger the health and hygiene status of their children.

## Humanitarian Assistance



LOMEF, in collaboration with ARF Partners, has been providing assistance during the massive humanitarian crises in different countries. To address the emergency need of poor families during lockdown, Nomijan– Aftabi Foundation (NAF), distributed essential food packs to low income families in Joypurhat Bangladesh. A total of 850 families received food packs and each food pack

contained 5 Kg of rice, 1 liter of cooking oil, 1 Kg of lentils and 1 piece of antiseptic soap. The main objective of the project was to provide emergency relief to the families who were working in the informal sector and suffering from lockdown due to COVID-19 Pandemic. The project was implemented with a total grant of USD 5000 from LOMEF.



## COVID–19 effect and the role of teachers

Although LOMEF funded schools were closed, some of the teachers played an active role in keeping the children busy at home by providing home tasks and learning materials. Teachers paid home visit to learn about the situation of children and they advised them to stay home and complete their lessons. Some



teachers were active in raising awareness about the safety measures and were communicating with children through phone calls and motivating them for drawing and story writing. Whereas some were trying to focus on home schooling through radio broadcast. Especially in Rwanda, they have provided small radios to the children to follow classes and have arranged a facilitator to help them during their studies.



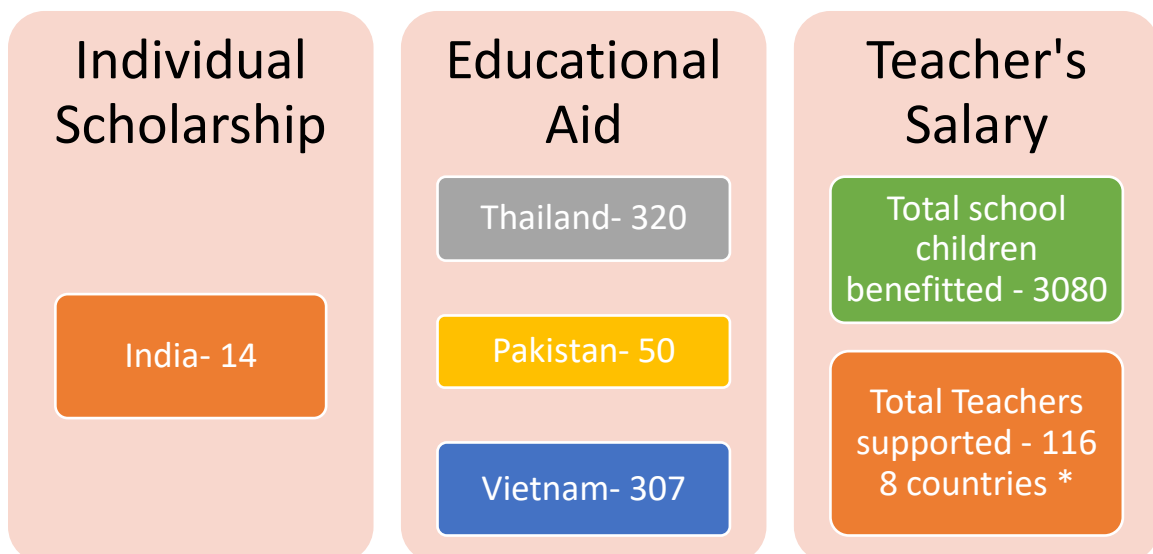
## LOMEF review meeting

A LOMEF review meeting was held on 5-6 March, 2020 at the International Institute of Peace and Development Studies (IIPDS), Bangkok Thailand. The LOMEF sponsors along with the partners from Philippines, Thailand, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal attended the meeting. The meeting was very helpful in developing some ideas in terms of project sustainability and modality. The discussion was mainly focused to strengthen project partners and develop a blue print for a model school through which schools can compare and identify gaps for further improvement. The meeting identified some components for a model school such as relevant curriculum, funding and financial plan, community support, relationship with other agencies especially government, capacity development of teachers, facilities in the schools and five-year implementation planning. All the partner schools have been requested to comply with the characteristics of a LOMEF model school and plan accordingly.



## LOMEF support in figures 2020

### Education Support Beneficiaries



Total s\*Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, Philippines, Cambodia, Uganda and Rwanda

## HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE



ARF responds to immediate disaster needs in collaboration with community based NGOs and international aid agencies. Its emergency team has been assisting in the rebuilding of communities and delivery of critical aid through distribution of essential items in disaster-affected countries since 2000.

Thanks to the relentless work of country field officers, partners and alumni network, ARF ensures that resources are used efficiently and that programs are responding to the needs of the populations.

### **COVID-19 challenges**

Due to the COVID-19 emergency, more than a billion people faced lock downs and, as a consequence, millions lost their jobs and earnings. Urban and rural poor, as daily wage earners, shelter less people and marginalized farming families are the most severely impacted by the pandemic. Shutdowns of shops and businesses have deprived thousands of people of an income and have exposed them, and their families, to significant food security risks.

With the help of dozens of volunteers, staff and partners, all committed to offer relief to the most disadvantaged people; ARF reached our hands to thousands of families. In the exceptional emergency COVID-19 pandemic has created, the challenges encountered due to social distancing requirements, restrictions on movements and to limitations on public gatherings were extensive.

Despite those limitations, with the help of local authorities in some cases and through adapted approaches in implementations in particular areas, like delivering food packages at the doorsteps of the beneficiaries, all the distributions could be completed successfully and safely.

## **THAILAND**

### **Urban Refugees**

ARF, in collaboration with AMAN, has been distributing food packs from early 2000 to urban refugees of Bangkok. 2020, however, saw a spike of refugees and asylum seekers seeking help in order to get end meals. Because of Covid-19 pandemic, their economic situation has consistently deteriorated, as the informal jobs they had disappeared with the implementation of a strict lock down, leaving them, and their families, without economic support.

In 2020 ARF distributed around 1,500 food packs to as many refugee families and asylum seekers coming from Afghanistan, Cambodia, China, Jordan, Iraq, Pakistan, Palestine, Syria, Sri Lanka and Vietnam. Most of the refugees and asylum seekers fled armed conflict and religious persecution in their home countries.

ARF continues to explore ways to facilitate the life of urban refugees and asylum seekers, who live in constant fear, danger and insecurity.

## **BANGLADESH**

Bangladesh is a densely populated country with large number of poor and unemployed people. Rural poverty is very high in Northern districts of Bangladesh and most of the people live in rural areas, depending on agriculture for their livelihood. Every year, major parts of the country are affected by cyclones, drought, river erosion and flooding which bring severe consequences on people lives and livelihood. As a result, rural people remain poor. Because of the extensive lock down imposed by the Bangladeshi government, thousands of people lost their income, particularly daily wage earners, maid servants and floating people who live on the footpath and temporary shelter, as well as marginalized farming families and garment workers. As the month of Ramadan is considered holy by the Muslim majority population, the loss of an income is felt even more distressing.

ARF and AMAN, in partnership with Muslimehelfen from Germany and LIFE from France, has reached more than 30,000 families with no income, distributing food packs aimed at

easing the economic burden of food. Despite the difficulties encountered by ARF/AMAN staff and volunteers in distributing the food due to the lock down and the restriction of movements, with the help of the authorities they successfully managed to reach all the determined families, spreading the benefit to more than 100,000 people.

The Lorraine Robinson and Maeve Coughlan Education Fund (LOMEF) also contributed, through the Nomijan-Aftabi Foundation (NAF), to alleviating the food crisis aggravated by the Covid-19 emergency, by distributing 5,000 \$ worth of food packs to disadvantaged people in Joipurhat district, Bangladesh.

### **Cox's Bazar Refugee Camp**

There are currently over 1 million Rohingya refugees living in 32 camps of Cox's Bazar who fled genocide in Rakhine state of Myanmar. All refugee camps are overcrowded, needs are immediate and enormous, and resources are stretched. Moreover, in the beginning of May, a fire destroyed 673 shelters. Incidents like those are frequent in the overcrowded camps. The Rohingya refugees need everything – food, shelter, clothes, healthcare, clean water, education and others. Aid and charity organizations are trying hard to address the basic needs of refugees. Food is one of the immediate needs of refugees. The refugee camp host community is also fighting poverty and lack of employment opportunities.

ARF/AMAN Action Despite having received the funds necessary for the distribution of food packs for families residing inside Cox's Bazar refugee camp, the actual distribution was initially put on hold due to the denial of authorization by the government to access the refugee camp. The distribution took place as soon as the authority gave the authorization and the entrance of the refugee camp was deemed secure.

ARF/AMAN team also succeeded in distributing food packs to poor families in the host community of Cox's Bazar.

### **NEPAL**

Nepal has experienced a slight economic growth in the past few years, however, about 31.2 per cent of the population that are estimated to live between \$1.9 and \$3.2 a day face significant risks of falling into extreme poverty, primarily because of reduced remittances, foregone earnings of potential migrants, job losses in the informal sector, and rising prices for essential commodities as a result of Covid-19. Islam is a minority religion in Nepal. According to the 2011 Nepal census, Nepal has 1 million Muslims comprising 4.4 per cent of the population of Nepal. 38 per cent of Nepali Muslims live in poverty. Several hundred Rohingya have sought refuge in Nepal. Yet, though they have escaped the fighting in Rakhine, life in Nepal is not without its problems for those who are often called the most repressed people in the world. There are approximately 300 Rohingya living in hastily constructed shelters in Kathmandu, many of whom live in Kapan, while other reports state

that some 600 are spread out over Nepal. However, due to their precarious situation, a rigorous report about their numbers and whereabouts is difficult to get.

In 2020 ARF and AMAN team, with the collaboration of MuslimeHelfen from Germany, distributed food packs to almost 5,000 poor families.

Thanks to this contribution more than 20,000 people, both Rohingya refugees and nationals, benefited from food and winter relief.

## **INDIA**

Two-thirds of people in India live in poverty: 68.8 per cent of the Indian population lives on less than \$2 a day. This makes the Indian subcontinent one of the poorest countries in the world; women and children, the weakest members of Indian society, suffer the most. India is the second most populous country after China with about 1.2 billion people. The country has enjoyed a very high growth rate over many years and is one of the largest economies in the world. However, only a small percentage of the Indian population has benefited from this impressive economic boom so far, as the majority of people are still living in degraded poverty. India is one of the world's top countries when it comes to malnutrition: more than 200 million people don't have sufficient access to food, including 61 million children.

With the recent enforcement of a strict lock down beggars and daily wage earners have lost their already meagre income and the risk of starvation has become very real.

ARF and AMAN team, with the collaboration of Muslimehelfen from Germany, in 2020 reached out to 7,000 families with no income and a total of approximately 30,000 people. The distributions took place in Assam (Barpeta, Bongaigaon and Goalpara villages), Bihar (Darbhanga and Madhubani villages) and in West Bengal (North 24 Parganas and Kolkata city).

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[arf@arf-int.org](mailto:arf@arf-int.org)