



LHCF Newsletter

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Food prices spike in Bangladesh — LAMB Project feels the impact

Over the last few months, Bangladesh has seen the worst food shortages since the famine of 1974. The rice imports on which Bangladesh depends have been dramatically curtailed, and almost three million tones of Bangladesh's own rice crop were decimated last year by two monsoon floods and November's Cyclone Sidr. The UN says that even an abundant 'boro' rice harvest, Bangladesh's main rice crop, may not avert the deepening food crisis.

Peter May, Director of LAMB Project, tells LHCF that locally the price of rice and other basic foodstuffs has risen by as much as 70%. There has, of course, been no corresponding rise in people's wages. (Even if you have the means to pay, buying rice is not straightforward. The supply is unreliable and people are hoarding rice). In a country where half of the population is below the food poverty line, spiralling food prices can only compound health problems for those who already go hungry.

So what does this mean for LAMB Project? As a supporter, you'll know that LAMB Hospital is distinctive: thanks to the Poor Fund, no patient is turned away because of an inability to pay for treatment. Fees are heavily subsidized, and patients are asked to pay only what they



Shanti, right, was helped by the Poor Fund. LAMB social worker, Rekha*, holds her baby

can afford. (Please read Golapi's story overleaf—just one example of a family helped by the Poor Fund). But the cost of food means that even fewer of LAMB's patients have the resources to make even a modest contribution towards the cost of treatment. LAMB Project will continue to put patients' health and welfare first, but demands on the Poor Fund are bigger than ever. While LAMB Project's leaders are doing all they can to stretch their own resources, they are also looking to supporters outside Bangladesh to help them to meet this dramatically increased need.

Our response

We are extremely grateful for the money our supporters continue to give to LAMB through LHCF. But if our giving is to keep pace with LAMB's need, LHCF must shift gear and make a sustainable and significant increase in the amount of money we raise for the Poor Fund. The timing isn't great: calls on generosity have never been greater, with urgent need in Burma and in China, and we know that increases in the cost of living in the UK are hitting people hard. Please read the panel, right, to see how you can help LAMB Project to continue its essential work.

Three small things you can do to help (without breaking a sweat)

We salute Rosemary Croft, LHCF trustee and former LAMB doctor, who has raised £1,750 by running a half-marathon this spring. If her example is too exhausting to follow, try these:

1. Use the enclosed sticky label to save spare change in a LAMB Jar.
2. Make sure we have your email address so that we can keep in touch and reduce costs.
3. If you get a tax rebate this year, donate it to LHCF by filling in the relevant box on your tax return, quoting our charity code, LAR98DG. HMRC will do the rest, including, if you wish, making it a Gift Aid donation.

Three big things you can do to help

1. Give regularly via a standing order – this allows us to let LAMB Project know how much money it can expect from LHCF. (Ask us for a form—contact details above).
2. Make a one-off donation to LHCF: send a cheque to the address (top) or donate online at www.lhcf.org.uk.
3. Pray for LAMB staff as they struggle with the impact of high food prices in their own lives, for Peter May as he leads LAMB Project, and for the people who live in the areas where LAMB Project works.

How Shamima is making maternity safer



Shamima* (left) knows how dangerous birth can be if women can't read the warning signs: a relative died from blood-loss after childbirth; her baby did not survive. Just 13% of births in Bangladesh are attended by skilled personnel. But LAMB Project is changing

this. This July, Shamima (20) qualifies as a LAMB-trained Safe Birth Attendant. With experience of at least 20 deliveries to draw on, she'll work with expectant mothers at LAMB's Domadapur clinic. Should things not go to plan, she'll help mothers to get the help they need.

*staff names have been changed at LAMB's request



Golapi and relatives with the twins

Who we are

For new readers: LAMB Health Care Foundation (LHCF) is a UK charity (registered charity no: 110217) providing financial support to the innovative and exemplary work of LAMB Project in north-west Bangladesh. Through clinical provision in its 150-bed hospital and extensive community-based programmes, LAMB Project provides heavily subsidized and often free healthcare to some of the poorest people in the region.

LAMB Project on You Tube!

Go to www.youtube.com and enter "Lamb Hospital Bangladesh" to watch a ten minute film about LAMB's work! If you'd prefer us to send you the film on DVD (at no charge), just let us know.

If you would like a summary of LHCF's finances for 2007 please get in touch and we'll send you a copy!

The Poor Fund: where your money goes

Most of the money raised by LHCF goes directly to the Poor Fund at LAMB Project. (The rest goes to LAMB's other work). Here's just one story of how your money helps to save lives.

Golapi's story

Golapi (see above) is married to a day labourer. Their income is low and it's sporadic. On 12th March this year she was brought to LAMB hospital, ten hours after safely delivering her twin girls at home with no trained help. The babies did not seem to be in any immediate danger: they were a few weeks premature and weighed well under five pounds. One baby was dramatically smaller than the other, possibly due to twin-to-twin transfusion in the uterus. But it was concerns about Golapi's health that brought them all to LAMB: her placenta had not been delivered, and without immediate treatment, Golapi was at risk of infection and fatal haemorrhage.

Golapi was taken to the operating theatre where her placenta was

removed and she was given blood to replace what she had lost. She was reunited with her twins on the Neonatal Ward; she breastfed them, and the babies were given antibiotics. The twins' progress was carefully monitored and they were fed by naso-gastric tubes with expressed breast-milk. The smaller baby thrived, and although she was still small by any measure, by the time she was discharged at ten days old she weighed four pounds and was putting on weight well.

Golapi's other daughter, however, developed severe jaundice. Untreated, this can develop into kernicterus, a serious but preventable condition that causes brain damage and can be fatal. Too many babies in Bangladesh develop kernicterus, with devastating

consequences. However, Golapi's little girl was in safe hands at LAMB hospital. She was given phototherapy and a full blood exchange transfusion. Her jaundice level dropped to normal. Golapi and her twins were discharged on 22 March 2008, healthy and feeding well.

Without the Poor Fund, Golapi (which means 'rose' in Bengali) and her daughters could not have received the emergency treatment and ongoing clinical attention that they needed.

Thank you so much for supporting this life-sustaining, life-transforming work.

For details of how you can donate to LAMB's work via LHCF, go to www.lhcf.org.uk.