

Following the tragic incident at the Spectrum Sweater factory, Carrefour was quick to react in commissioning the Friendship organisation to provide short and longer term relief support.

Here is a short summary account of events prepared by Friendship, followed by the Friendship flow chart of Savar Rehabilitation Project up to September 2005:

Government bodies and authorities took charge of the rescue work following the building collapse on the **11th April 2005**.

As Friendship does relief work with the underprivileged communities in the city, Mr Enam Relief Programme Officer and the Assistant Director Programme Mr. Munir Hossen, from the Friendship office visited the site on the **13th April**. Mr Enam, visited the TNO (local administrative body in charge of records) to get an assessment of the situation.

On the 17th April, Friendship was contacted by the country representative of Carrefour in Bangladesh, to inform them that Carrefour had decided to help the victims of the tragedy. Carrefour asked Friendship to assess the requirements of the victims and to extend help, in terms of treatments or rehabilitation, to all those needing it. Friendship were asked to give Carrefour a budget for the requirements.

The Friendship team visited the site on the **19th April**. Carrefour arranged for Friendship to meet the people who could help them to go on to the site (which was barricaded) and ask for necessary information.

Friendship immediately contacted the relevant organizations working directly with the victims. They were: the army, the police, the local District Commissioner, the TNO and the factory officials via the BGMEA.

Human Rights organizations had started making inquiries but no interventions were seen being made by them at this stage.

From the 12th till the 18th April the emergency relief work was carried out. The rubbles of the building structure were removed by the army.

Those needing urgent medical attention were taken to the relevant hospitals where they received treatment. The factory owners through the BGMEA were, apparently, bearing the cost of the treatment.

Friendship then did an assessment of the emergency requirements for the beneficiaries. It was found that emergency health was being taken care of under the supervision of the Factory / BGMEA and police. They were being treated in government and private clinics like Enam Medical Hospital and Rabeya Clinic. It was difficult for private organizations to intervene at this stage, for these victims.

Most of the other victims had left the site and were not contactable.

Crowds would gather around the site (this was still cordoned off and under the control of the army / police) asking for information or giving information of missing persons. Friendship, with the help and agreement of the local police, opened a book on site in which all inquiries by friends and family

members of the victims were gathered. This was later kept with the police as there were no other records of inquiries available, but information in it was shared with Friendship.

Records of the number / names of workers on role call that evening or the total number of workers working in the factory were unavailable, as it was told that they had been destroyed with the building. No official records were available from the factory.

On the 21st April Friendship submitted to Carrefour, the project proposal for the relief and rehabilitation work which needed to be urgently done for the victims and their families. Carrefour agreed on the principal and a budget for the intervention was submitted and agreed to by the **26th April**.

Immediately by **27th April** assessments, identification cooperation with the victims and families and inquiries for urgent needs were started.

According to the Labor Organizations Friendship was the First amongst the NGOs and even other bodies, to start the relief work.

The human rights organizations were organizing their activities, Ain O Shalish Kendro, BLAST, Kormojibi Nari, were also starting their work. This work involved seeking legal aid for the victims or for organizing legal fights against the owners of the industry. This process is ongoing till date.

By mid June National Garments Workers Federation, Jatiya Garments Sramik Kallyan Federation donated some money among the victims especially for injured. This had been received from international bodies and organizations.

Sromik league (labor organization of Bangladesh Awami league) provided preliminary medicine cost for 18 injured persons.

Oxfam also took an initiative to help the victims through garments labor organizations.

Please check the Flow chart below for the sequence of events of co-operation for the rehabilitation of the victims:

Friendship Flow Chart of Savar Rehabilitation Project

Step 1

12th April 2005

Friendship informed about the incident of the Garments collapse at Savar through Electronic Media and Print Media on the 12th April 2005.

Step 2

13th April

Friendship visit to the site by Assistant Director Programme and Relief Programme Officer and report given to Executive Director.

Step 3

17th April

Carrefour contacted Friendship Executive Director to extend help to the victims of the tragedy. Friendship Executive Director called a meeting with higher officials (BGMEA, Ain O Shalish Kendro and Labor Unions) to discuss what Friendship could do for the victims of the Savar Garments Tragedy, in accordance with Friendship's rules and policies.

Friendship decided that at the first stage the most important intervention the beneficiaries needed was medical and food, and later alternative sources of income. Then the requirement would be to find jobs for the healthy workers and counselling in different fields.

The primary concern at this stage of relief work was to look after the victims. At this stage there was no other intervention from any other organization for dealing with the victims.

Step 4

24th April

After a brief initial survey a proposal for helping the victims was given to Carrefour by Friendship. The proposal was for primary stage intervention for relief and rehabilitation of the victims and not for any policy matters, as in emergency relief this is a secondary stage intervention.

Step 5

26th April

Carrefour agreed to the method of intervention and the budget.

Step 6

From 27th April

Work for data collection on the incident and victims, from different sources, were immediately started upon. Victims were identified.

The sources were:

- The incident site
- Eyewitness
- Rescue worker
- Local Police Station at Savar
- Local Govt. Administrator Office (TNO)
- Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka District
- BGMEA Office
- Hospitals where the injured were admitted
- Garments Office (Gate Keeper)
- Garments Labor Organizations

Human Rights Organization e.g. Ain O Shalish Kendro
Friends and families of the victims
And victims as well

Step 7

Around 20th May

There was a meeting with Carrefour local office, information dissemination, understanding for undertaking a rehabilitation program for the garments victims were discussed and agreed.

Program Planning

Rehabilitation of victims' and their families
Treatment for injured persons – needing medical intervention even after the primary treatments was done.
Food and education support of victims families
Banking support e.g. opening Bank Account
Application collection for arranging jobs for jobless

Meeting with all staff for undertaking and implementation of the project within Friendship was done.

All victims, whose addresses were found, were reached, either through the post or by Friendship staff going and locating the victims in over 28 districts.

Appropriate authorities in the Government, Trade Unions and BGMEA were notified and Rehabilitation Project for the victims of Savar Tragedy was launched.

Identifying and organizing the victims and exploring the demands from the victims were considered.

Step 8

1st week June 2005

The responses of the victims were coming in and the first date of direct rehabilitation work was set. The applications were received with proper documents e.g. the certificate of appropriate authorities for identity, heir, attested pictures etc.

Till August 31st 2005

280 different cares were given to 116 different victims and families

Distribution of rehabilitation material to the victims' families and treatment.

Follow up of injured persons of the incident.

Bank support help given to families of the BGMEA monetary benefits.

All needing new jobs provided their verifiable applications, and these were submitted to BGMEA.

Friendship also took the initiatives of finding jobs for 8 of the victims directly.

Step 9

August and September 2005

Follow up of post rehabilitation

Planned:

Step 10:

September 2005

- Planning and developing new programs for those victims and families who have failed to cope and maintain their livelihood
- Find ways to directly benefit the workers / labors in the factories.