



# WORLD BANK BANGLADESH NEWSLETTER

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## South Asia Development Marketplace: Turning Ideas into Action

Twenty-one civil society organizations from across South Asia won grants from a \$840,000 award pool funded by the South Asia Region Development Marketplace (DM) held on August 5, 2009 in Dhaka. The theme for this year's DM was "Family and Community Approaches to Improving Infant and Young Child Nutrition." Malnutrition is one of the world's most serious health problems and the single biggest contributor to child mortality. The winners received up to \$40,000 each to implement innovative ideas on how to improve nutrition in their respective countries. Four proposals from Bangladesh were amongst the winners, including one receiving the People's Choice Award.

The World Bank Vice President for South Asia, Isabel Guerrero hosted the DM to raise commitment to addressing malnutrition in South Asia.

## Interview with HIV/AIDS and STD Alliance Bangladesh, Winner of People's Choice Award at Development Marketplace

The proposal from HIV/AIDS and STD Alliance Bangladesh (HASAB) aims to promote the nutritional status of malnourished children of commercial sex workers and families of people living with HIV/AIDS. Dr. Nazneen Akhter, Executive Director speaks about her experience and her project after winning the People's Choice Award.

*HASAB has focused on HIV/AIDS for the past many years. We have been working directly with vulnerable communities, like Sex Workers (SW) and People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLHA). Our field based learning was that, improvement in nutrition is one of the central issues when addressing the quality of life of PLHA and SW's children. This project is an innovative concept to address the vulnerability among the SW and PLHA children who are poor, stigmatized because of their disease, and also noticeably undernourished. Their parents and care givers know little about their children's health and nutrition status as well as the basic nutrition and feeding practices that can help their children. This 18 month trial project will give the opportunity to improve the nutrition of vulnerable children and also create awareness among parents and community leaders on sustainable healthy feeding practices. The unique feature of this project is the complimentary and interlinked approach of addressing vulnerability through Human Rights, Health Care and Nutrition focused initiatives to create a synergistic effect with the co-operation of diverse development partners.*

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## Additional Support for Padma Bridge



The proposed Padma Bridge is estimated to boost the country's overall GDP by 1.2%. The Padma Bridge will contribute significantly to poverty reduction and socio-economic development of the south-west region. Isabel M Guerrero, World Bank Vice President announced an additional \$160 million, in addition to the committed \$300 million, for the Padma Bridge project during her visit to Bangladesh in August. "The World Bank will support the priority sectors of power and infrastructure, human resources development, social safety nets and water resources management, including the Padma Bridge," said Guerrero.

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## Educating Professionals to reduce risk of Land Acquisition

While infrastructure development is vital to reducing poverty in Bangladesh and for the country's economic growth, there is no denying the negative effects of land acquisition. As land is needed for development projects, many people suffer when they have to resettle elsewhere. Special attention thus needs to be given to produce equitable compensation and restore the livelihoods of affected people during the resettlement process.

The BRAC Development Institute (BDI) and the Department of Architecture of BRAC University in collaboration with the World Bank, the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Australian Agency for International Development (AUSAID) have designed a postgraduate certificate course "Management of Land Acquisition, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (MLARR)" The first of its kind in Bangladesh, the program aims at educating a cadre of highly skilled professionals with specific training on land management issues, with a focus on the preparation and supervision of land acquisition and resettlement actions plans. The 3-month intensive course was delivered in the Summer semester of 2009 and the first group of graduates was celebrated at the MLARR Graduation Ceremony and Job Fair on August 26 at BRAC Inn. The course is now an integral part of BDI and will be delivered again in the Spring of 2010

## New Project Approval

### Increasing Access to Electricity in Rural Bangladesh

Only 40 per cent of Bangladesh's population has access to electricity. Investing in grid electricity alone will not realize the Government of Bangladesh's goal of universal access to electricity by 2020. The World Bank approved an US\$130 million additional financing for the Rural Electrification and Renewable Energy Development Credit to increase access to electricity through installation of affordable Solar Home Systems in rural areas. This additional financing will be used to provide electricity to 300,000 households through solar home systems. The project has since 2003 connected 600,000 consumers to the electricity grid and provided 320,000 consumers with Solar Home Systems. The project will support an ongoing renovation of the electricity distribution network and provide financing for renewable energy projects such as biomass and biogas power plants, solar water pumps and solar mini grids.

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## In Focus

Munnu Begum wants her children to achieve what she herself could not. "Education is very important. Had I been able to continue my education, things would have been different. But poverty robbed me of that opportunity," says Munnu of Gaibandha district. Only a few years back, Munnu could not imagine that she would ever be able to send her children to school. She had a difficult life, working as a day-laborer - often she could not buy enough food for the family.



However, those days are over. As a hardcore poor of Polashgachhi village, she joined Jibikayan Group (JG), a livelihood support forum. And thus Munnu Begum began her new life - under the program Notun Jibon.

The Social Investment Program Project (SIPP) that started as a small scale pilot in two of the poorest districts of Bangladesh – Jamalpur and Gaibandha has now expanded to 10 more districts affected by recent floods and the cyclone Sidr. The project, now known as Notun Jibon, targets the hard core poor who can not avail themselves of micro-credit. Notun Jibon's community driven approach has helped the poor form their own institutions, and the project provides funds for investment and small-scale lending. Notun Jibon has successfully demonstrated that poor villagers have the capacity to prioritize needs, manage resources, and implement subprojects. It has also

demonstrated the leadership ability of women, who occupy the majority of decision-making positions in the village institutions.

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## Project Snapshots

### The Arsenic Mitigation Program that became a Model

Chougacha, one of the worst arsenic affected areas, has become a model for many parts of the country, after a home-grown intervention saved hundreds from arsenic consumption via drinking water. The approach addressed arsenic and bacteriological contamination, hygiene behavior change, system operation and maintenance, while establishing the foundation for potential future ground water resource regulation. Now other upazilas have started replicating the Chougacha model in their locality to ensure arsenic free drinking water for their people. This has been possible under the Horizontal Learning Program which aims to ensure dissemination and knowledge sharing of such good practices among upazilas all over Bangladesh to increase people's access to safe water and sanitation.

The Chougacha model has built much more than mitigation into their arsenic screening process. For BDT 30 households are developing cheap mitigation options (i.e. switching from unsafe to nearby safe sources), protecting their sources against bacteriological contamination, receiving cheap support services and identifying the risks of arsenic contamination in the food chain.

*Please send your comments, questions, and articles for the next issue to [bangladeshinfo@worldbank.org](mailto:bangladeshinfo@worldbank.org)*