

Building a Brighter Future



Southern Bangladesh

3 Year Project: Jun 2023 to May 2026

Total Budget: \$192,000



Economic Empowerment

Year 2 Budget: \$66,500

Overview

This project focusses on the rural poor who are particularly disadvantaged. It aims to strengthen 72 Self Help Groups (SHGs) and establish them under Village Development Foundations (VDFs), registered with local authorities. This will help deliver a sound capital base to invest in small business and income generating activities. VDFs are trained in leadership, management, communication, advocacy and financial capacity to empower them as agents of social change, to initiate business and build capacity of SHGs, including fostering their access to government resources and disability support services. The 1300+ SHG members meet weekly to receive training in economic development, agriculture, food security, gender and justice issues. The project also aims to organise children/youth into clubs promoting health, sport, recreation, leadership and education in child rights and protection.

Impact for June 2024 - May 2025

50

50 Self Help Groups (SHG) were formed

43 women's groups and 7 men's groups, a total of 957 new members. 322 members took out loans from their accumulated savings and invested in diverse, small-scale income generating activities. Training on leadership change/elections, accounts & record-keeping took place.



Three Village Development Funds (VDF) and

35 SHGs successfully opened group bank accounts. Funds are now deposited directly into accounts and loan disbursements are processed exclusively through the bank, eliminating handling of cash and enhancing financial transparency, security and accountability.

38



10

Linkage and Advocacy

12 of the 957 SHG members live with a disability. Ten widow allowance/pension/disability cards were issued due to advocacy and links forged with officials and service providers to improve access to gov't services. Community groups were trained in rights of the elderly and people with disabilities.



Adolescent Social Clubs engage 200 youth

(120 girls & 80 boys). They meet regularly to raise awareness of child rights, reproductive health and prevention of child marriage. Sessions discuss leadership, future career planning and gender-based violence.

200



Poly Rani's Story

I live with my husband, his parents and our child. I didn't go to school and didn't contribute financially to our family income, which left me feeling trapped and helpless. In 2023, I joined a self-help group and my life changed. I learned valuable skills and gained confidence. I did a 3mth sewing training course, took out a loan and bought a sewing machine. At first, I just made clothes for the family, saving money on new garments. Then my neighbours started ordering their clothes and my reputation grew. The income I earn pays for our child's education and eases the financial pressure on my husband, who runs a small medicine shop in the village. I feel empowered and capable, supporting my family's future.

Thank you for enabling hope in hard places